

1953 Mercedes-Benz 300

- Lot sold
USD 265 762 - 338 243
GBP 220 000 - 280 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 1953
- **Chassis number** R 186014-3501890
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 329
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
-

Description

Rare UK right-hand drive model
1953 Mercedes-Benz 300 Cabriolet
Registration no. OXP 2
Chassis no. R 186014-3501890

More expensive than the 300 SL sports car and almost double the price of the contemporary top-of-the-range Cadillac, the Mercedes-Benz 300 was one of the world's most exclusive automobiles. It is also historically significant as one of Mercedes-Benz's first all-new designs of the post-war era, debuting at the Frankfurt Auto Show in 1951. The 300's arrival re-established Mercedes-Benz in the front rank of prestige car manufacturers, marking as it did a return to the marque's tradition of building high-performance luxury automobiles of the finest quality.

'To the characteristics of high performance, impressive appearance and fine detail finish which distinguished the big Mercedes models of pre-war days are added new virtues of silence, flexibility and lightness of control, while the latest rear suspension, a product of long experience on Grand Prix cars and touring cars, confers a degree of security at high speeds on rough and slippery surfaces which it would be very difficult indeed to equal,' observed Autocar magazine.

Although Mercedes-Benz would adopt unitary chassis/body construction for its lower and mid-priced cars as the 1950s progressed, the retention of a traditional separate frame for the 300 enabled a wide variety of coachbuilt body types to be offered. The 300's cross-braced, oval-tube chassis followed the lines of the 170 S and 220, with independent suspension all round and four-wheel drum brakes, but incorporated the added refinements of hypoid bevel final drive, dynamically balanced wheels and remote electrical control of the

rear suspension ride height.

Initially developing 115bhp, the 3-litre, overhead-camshaft, six-cylinder engine - used in fuel-injected form in the 300 SL sports car - was boosted in power for the succeeding 300b and 300c models, finally gaining fuel injection in the re-styled 300d of 1957.

Custom built by Mercedes-Benz's most experienced craftsmen, the Mercedes-Benz 300 was luxuriously appointed and trimmed with materials of the highest quality. Fast and elegant, it was one of very few contemporary vehicles capable of carrying six passengers in comfort at sustained high speeds. The 300 was the car of choice among West German government officials, and throughout Europe and the USA was widely favoured by businessmen, financiers, film stars, and politicians. Indeed, 'Adenauer' became the 300's unofficial model name, after German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, its most famous customer. Priced at DM23,700 in 1953, the 300 Cabriolet was among the world's most expensive automobiles of its day, costing some 50% more than the average UK house.

A most worthy upholder of the Grosser Mercedes tradition of pre-war years, this rare 300 cabriolet is one of only 181 built during 1953 out of a total convertible production of 591. Manufactured in December 1953, this car was one of the very few built in right-hand drive configuration, as confirmed by the copy data card, and was delivered new to London where it was registered in February 1954. It is estimated that as few as seven right-hand drive convertibles were built for the UK market. The identity of the original owner is not known, though whoever it was must have possessed a certain amount of courage to drive his/her luxurious German motor car around the streets of a city that still bore all too many signs of war.

The current owner purchased the Mercedes in January 2014 from a Midlands-based restorer but decided to manage the rebuild himself, a painstaking process that would occupy the next four years. He was able to obtain many missing parts from the previous owner, who had stripped the car before selling it the restorer, but the severely corroded floor pans presented a major problem. Wanting to use only genuine Mercedes-Benz parts, and with replacements no longer available, the only solution was to obtain a suitable donor car. Amazingly, another right-hand drive 300 (a saloon) was found in Poland, purchased, and its immaculate floor pans transferred to 'OXF 2'.

All body panels were stripped back to bare metal and E coated to preserve it for the future, the chassis drivetrain and suspension components were all sand or vapour blasted before paint or powder coating. Then chassis, suspension, brakes, engine, and gearbox were all rebuilt, with any new parts required being obtained from marque specialists Neimoller of Mannheim, Germany. The engine was stripped totally, the crankshaft being reground; new pistons/rings, bearings, and valves fitted; the oil pump re-engineered to increase oil pressure; and all parts balanced and/or skimmed where appropriate. It was then reassembled by Anthony Seddon, who builds historic F1 cars, F3 cars, and touring cars.

Fortunately, the interior was in good enough condition to be reused in its entirety - being re-trimmed by an ex-Bentley craftsman with 30 years experience - as was the window glass and all brightwork. The Bosch headlights and spotlights are likewise original items, refurbished at considerable expense. Every nut and bolt used was taken from either the original or the donor car, ensuring complete authenticity. This concern for originality is reflected in the fact that, despite having some minor blemishes, the original rear bumper and number plate plinth were reused rather than being replaced with pattern parts. Built to fit the original cowl, the radiator core is one of the relatively few new parts used. As one would expect, the hood and headlining had to be made anew, the correct fabric being sourced from a specialist in the USA. Repainting the body in its original deep black livery took all of six months to complete, and the quality of finish achieved is quite outstanding.

Offered with restoration invoices and a full photographic restoration history, UK V5C Registration Certificate, this sublime Mercedes-Benz 300 Cabriolet represents a wonderful opportunity to acquire an ultra-rare right-hand drive example of one of the world's most coveted automobiles, eligible for a variety of the most prestigious historic motoring events.

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