
1969 Mercedes-Benz SL Pagode

Lot sold	USD 77 966 - 111 380 EUR 70 000 - 100 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1969	Condition	Used
Country VAT	IT	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	White
Lot number	35	Car type	Convertible / Roadster

Description

- Car with US market specifications.
- Not recent restoration, excellent condition.
- Eligible for the Mercedes-Benz Mille Miglia Challenge
- Perfect working order: atruly daily driver

The model

The codenumber W113 is the design number of the second series of cars belonging to the SL Class, produced in three versions by Mercedes-Benz between 1963 and 1971 and known worldwide with the "Pagoda" nickname. The 190 SL, which had enjoyed wide acceptance for several years, was aging and the Stuttgart-based company decided to start designing a new spider (improperly called a roadster). The project was born around 1961: three were the demands of the Daimler-Benz top management towards the managers of the various departments involved in the project: the car had to be quick, comfortable and roomy; it had to be made using up the resources already available and should have an attractive line. As for the mechanics, it was decided to use the W111 series as a base: the chassis was the shortened one of the 220 SEb, equipped with a more powerful engine, built starting from the 2.2-liter M180 that equipped the Heckflosse (the sedans with the tail fins). On the security front, what had already been tested by engineer Béla Barényi with the W111 series was repeated, introducing a shell with a crumple zone in the event of a collision. The body design was sketched by the team led by Paul Bracq, under the supervision of Friedrich Geiger. The US market

was an important and strategic market: it was decided that the car's line should have been more modern, able to compete with that of the Chevrolet Corvette. The factory's management judged the car's first drawings too going-ahead; however the design department resisted and the result was presented at the 1963 Geneva Motor Show: the new roadster officially named 230 SL was born. The car was characterized by taut and dynamic lines, which also suggested some competitive ambitions, confirmed by Böhringer's victory in the Rally Spa-Sofia-Liège in 1963. But the temper was, above all, that of a fast and comfortable gran turismo. In some details it retained a family-feeling with the W111 sedan, as in the vertically developed headlights. The most peculiar aesthetic feature was the shape of the hardtop, which presented a concave shape towards the center. The technical reason was to reduce the frontal aerodynamic impact and maintain habitability in height for the two occupants (mindful of the lesson of the Zagato sports cars, but with a diametrically opposite style). The trick brought the popular nickname Pagoda to the 230 SL and following W113 models. Many were the cars equipped with a canvas top, whose owners had also requested an hard-top, which made it virtually a comfortable coupé. The mechanical scheme was classic: rear-wheel drive, longitudinal front engine, 4-speed manual gearbox, but the 230 SL also featured some new features. New was the M127 II, a 6-cylinder in-line fuel-injected engine, with 2308 cc for 150 hp. The rear swing axle was new. The standard gearbox was a manual 4-speed transmission, but a 4-speed automatic was available as an option and, from September 1965, a 5-speed manual was also available. The engine offered good performances. Due to the geometry of the rear axle, the car was challenging in the wet. The power assisted disc/drums brake system was very effective. In 1966 the roadster version was joined by the Hard-top Coupé, in which the rigid roof, however removable, was standard and the elimination of the soft top mechanism made it possible to add two rear folding seats. In December 1966 the 230 SL was replaced by the 250 SL, identical, except in the displacement of 2494 cc. There were technical updates, but the overall performances remained almost unchanged, except in the torque data, to improve the driving flexibility. After just over a year, the 250 SL gave way to the 280 SL with a displacement of 2778 cc. The M130 engine type of the 280 SL arises from the reworking of the 2.5 liter engine: the bore of the cylinders goes from 82 to 86.5 mm, while the stroke remains unchanged. The M130 marked the final evolution of the M180 single shaft engine. The modification brings the block to the limit: the cylinders are modified and an oil cooler is mounted. Each engine is now bench-tested before being mounted, guaranteeing the power specifications. The power, this time, rises to 170 hp and there is a further increase in torque. The maximum speed of 200 k /h is the same of the 230 SL, but the acceleration from 0 to 100km/h drops to 9 (from 11.1). From January 1967 to March 1971, 23,885 Mercedes-Benz 280 SLs were produced and more than half were sold in the United States. The W113 series, in March 1971, was replaced by the R107.

The car

The Mercedes Benz 280 SL, with chassis no. 113.044.12.009209, is a car born with the US market's specifications. The models for North America present a series of small differences. The most obvious are the sealed beam headlamps required in the United States instead of the typical Bosch vertical headlights. Other differences include the guards on the chrome bumpers, the lateral reflectors (later lights), the shorter final drive ratio that allowed a quicker acceleration but reduced the top speed. The parking light function on one side, typical of German cars, was eliminated. The 280 SL engines for the US market required modifications for the emissions controls: the valve timing was softer, the compression ratio was reduced and the injection pump was modified. The power, thus, dropped from 170 hp to 160 hp. The most popular US options: 4-speed automatic transmission, white-wall tires, both on the car in this lot and air conditioning. The Mercedes Benz 280 SL, with chassis no. 113.044.12.009209, after a long life in the United States, arrived in Europe, first in Germany and, finally, in Italy where it was regularly registered in 2013. The car is finished in ivory color, with brown soft-top and interior and is fitted with the typical white-wall tires. The soft top is in perfect condition, as well as the hardtop. The condition of the car is excellent, the result of a not recent restoration and of regular care and maintenance. The Mercedes-Benz SL of the W113 series, compared to the previous model, is a true leap forward in time; its line is in fact still up to date and modern, despite the timeless charm that emanates from every detail. A rare balance of rationality and elegance. The model, like most cars in Stuttgart, can be used almost daily and for long journeys, without reliability

problems. The performances are still brilliant, even for the current standards, the comfort is great. The automatic transmission gives a pleasant drivability to this example, even in the hectic urban traffic: very rare for a classic car. Since it was built in 1969, it is eligible for the Mercedes-Benz Mille Miglia Challenge (Group E: Mercedes-Benz models built from 01/01/1958 to 31/12/1969).

State of the Art

Not recent restoration. In excellent conditions and perfectly running.

Litterature

- Matthias Rocke, Helmut Baaden, Das neue grosse Mercedes SL buch, Heel, Germany 2002
- James Taylor, Factory-Original Mercedes SL, Herridge & Sons, UK 2012
- Andrew Noakes, Mercedes SL Series, The Complete Story, The Crowood Press, UK 200

Documents

Recent registration and Italian plates in order.

Eligibility

- Mille Miglia. Eligible to the Mercedes-Benz Mille Miglia Challenge (Group E).
- Giro di Sicilia. Eligible.
- Targa Florio. Eligible.
- Goodwood Revival. Eligible
- Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti. Eligible.
- Coppa delle Alpi by 1000 Miglia. Eligible.
- Winter Marathon. Eligible.
- Nürburgring Classic. Eligible.
- Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Eligible.
- Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. Eligible.
- Chantilly Arts & Elegance Richard Mille. Eligible.
- Concorso d'eleganza Villa D'Este. Eligible.

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