

ST. LOUIS GATEWAY SECTION NEWSLETTER



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MBCA Mission Statement:
To Elevate The Mercedes-Benz
Experience Through
Knowledge, Camaraderie,
and Exceptional Events.

UPCOMING 2024 EVENTS

ECHO BLUFFS LODGE STATE PARK
Eminence, MO | Saturday, Sept. 14th –
Sunday, Sept. 15th

FALL PICNIC Sunday, October 20th
Chesterfield, MO | Addie's Restaurant

HUNTER CLASSICS TOUR, HUNTER ENGINEERING COMPANY

Wednesday, July 17th | ST. Louis, MO

This is another event that you won't want to miss! St. Louis Gateway Section member and Chairman/CEO of Hunter Engineering Company, Steve Brauer, has graciously invited us to visit and view his extensive collection of prewar cars (1903 thru post war 1994). Many of these cars have been award winners in prestigious shows like Pebble Beach.

Mr. Brauer's collection also includes memorabilia such as mascot collections, grille badges, and hood ornaments. Join us promptly on Wednesday, July 17th, at 3:30 p.m. at Building D on the Hunter Engineering Company property, 11250 Hunter Drive, St. Louis.

As you would expect, we are very fortunate to be invited to view this wonderful collection. As such, the policies in place are somewhat stringent, to assure that strangers not affiliated with the St. Louis Gateway Section do not wander in and join our group. We will be preparing nametags for ALL members who have provided an RSVP to the event. Maps will also be forwarded to those who have RSVP'd.

For those interested, when we finish the tour at approximately 5:00 pm, we will go to dinner at the Trainwreck Saloon in Westport at 314 Westport Plaza Drive.

There is a limit on the total number of persons who will be able to tour the Hunter Classics Tour and we MUST have an accurate number of attendees for the restaurant. RSVP to Rick Siefert at rick.siefert@att.net no later than July 10th, so that arrangements can be finalized with nametags and preparations made with tour management. Also, include a cell phone number with your RSVP.

SLGS NIGHT AT JAZZ ST. LOUIS

Thursday, August 15th | Featuring the Blake Mickens Quintet

What: MBCA Jazz St. Louis Night featuring the Blake Mickens Quintet (See: [Blake Mickens Quintet | Jazz St. Louis \(jazzstl.org\)](#))

When: Thursday August 15, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Where: Jazz St. Louis – 3536 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63103 (Basically, across the street from the Fox Theater)

Cost: FREE to the first 24 registrants!

Details: 24 seats have very generously been reserved by the owners of Jazz St. Louis for our club. Once we have 24 registrants, this event will be full. Admission is free to those who pre-register. Food and beverages are available at normal cost, prior to the performance.

Parking: Available along the street in front of the Club and in the parking lot across the street from Jazz St. Louis.

How to Register: RSVP to Joe Walsh at jeejwalsh@gmail.com by August 10th so that we can get an accurate headcount for seating.

INFO ABOUT THE BLAKE MICKENS QUINTET:

Blake Mickens is a seasoned bassist and music instructor with nearly ten years of professional experience. Mickens' musical journey started during his formative teenage years when he performed in rock bands before branching out to embrace other various musical genres. From there, he joined high level jazz ensembles like the St. Louis Legacy Ensemble and The Jazz St. Louis All Stars. Today, Mickens balances his passion for performing with a dedication to teaching. He has been the education associate at Jazz St. Louis since 2023, actively engaged with the Jazz Academy program and other educational initiatives offered by the organization. As an educator, his objective is to equip students with the tools to understand music as more than just notes on a page, discovering that music is a language.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HELLO ST. LOUIS GATEWAY SECTION MEMBERS!



HELLO FRIENDS!

St. Louis Gateway Section members were once again entertained with three special events during April, May, and June. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves at the Knoll Family Farm in April, had a great drive and lunch in May at the historic Wittmond Restaurant in Brussels, Illinois, and in June participated for the 25th year in the St. Louis European Auto Show. As in every previous year, our club donated to a significant

charity that was associated with the Show.

Our upcoming events and activities are also ones that you will definitely want to join us for. We have another rare opportunity to visit and view SLGS member, Steve Brauer's wonderful collection of cars and memorabilia in July, a VERY limited chance to join us for Jazz St. Louis in August, a road trip and overnight visit to the beautiful Echo Bluff State Park in Eminence, MO, and a repeat performance of the excellent Fall Picnic in October at Addie's Restaurant in Chesterfield, MO.

I want to give a personal shoutout to our St. Louis Gateway Section Officers and Board Members. It is these dedicated Ladies and Gentlemen that make our Section one of the strongest and most active Sections in the Mercedes-Benz Club of America.

Recognize this two-year-old with his Dad? Yep, it's me, nearly 70 years ago with my first Mercedes.

Check out the hood ornament!



Gute Fahrt Liebe Freunde
(Have a Good Trip Dear Friends !)

Rick Siefert
President
St Louis Gateway Section

2023 MBCA SAINT LOUIS GATEWAY SECTION Officers & Board Members

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UPCOMING EVENTS

ECHO BLUFFS LODGE/STATE PARK

Saturday, September 14th – Sunday, September 15th | Eminence, MO

Want to go on a road trip to a place that has a beautiful fall scenery, a crystal-clear river with majestic dolomite bluffs, and wild horses? This amazing panorama can be found about 2½ - 3 hours from St Louis (depending on how fast you drive your Mercedes). The place is **Echo Bluffs State Lodge**. It is Missouri's newest state lodge and it opened in 2016.

This is NOT your average state lodge. I was a skeptic and do not consider myself a camper or rustic woods woman. I have stayed at Echo Bluffs twice and still marvel at its beauty and wonderful accommodations. It offers 16 lodging rooms, including 4 suites and cabins, some with a view of the beautiful dolomite limestone bluffs. All of the rooms include king sized beds, sleeper sofas, microwaves, refrigerators, fireplaces, WIFI and flatscreen TVs. There is a restaurant onsite, along with a small gift shop that also carries firewood and snacks/drinks. You will also enjoy the hiking and paved walking trails on the property.

The St. Louis Gateway Section has reserved a block of rooms for Saturday, September 14th and Sunday, September 15th. You can decide if you want to stay one night or two. We will be having a happy hour reception Saturday at one of the larger cabins and then meeting for breakfast Sunday morning. The rest of the weekend is yours to relax.

Please RSVP **NOW** to me, Jean Oranski (your Host) at 314-239-9740 or emery11618@gmail.com. **And, you'll want to make your reservations early as we only have a set number of rooms reserved.** The reservation number is 855-999-6980 and state that you are with the Mercedes Club of St. Louis. Check out the website for the Lodge at <https://echobluffstatepark.com/>

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HISTORIC WITTMOND HOTEL & RESTAURANT

Sunday, April 28, 2024 | Brussels, Illinois

On April 28th, St. Louis Gateway Section members visited the Wittmond Hotel & Restaurant, a historic establishment in Brussels, Illinois. For over five generations the Wittmond has served locals and travelers in Calhoun County. Founded by German immigrant Conrad Wittmond, and still run by his descendants, the site features a full bar and a family-style restaurant known for its made-from-scratch dishes. No dining destination better captures the nostalgia of a drive along the Great River Road than the Wittmond Hotel. Its American-style, home-cooked classics and general-store vibe transport guests to a time when the chicken was fried in lard, fresh-made sausage meant the family was missing a pet pig and no one had ever heard of GMO corn.



Although the hotel rooms are no longer operational, club members enjoyed the original hardwood floors, antique furniture, and traditional meals made with local ingredients, evoking a sense of timeless hospitality.





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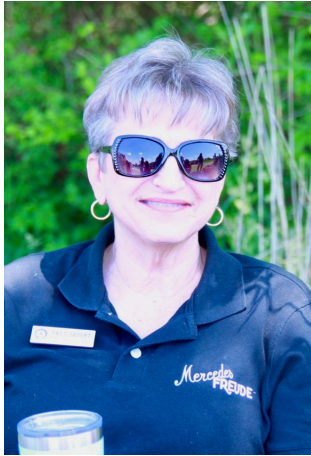
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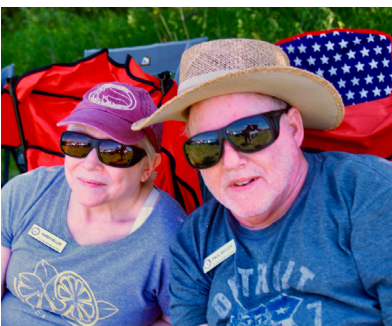
Sunday, May 19th, 2024 | Fults, Illinois

St. Louis Gateway Section members enjoyed the opportunity of a lifetime, as they paid a visit to the Farm that Ed and Tina Knoll own, along with their sons, Fritz and Alex and their families, in Fults, Illinois.

Members parked their Mercedes around the restored 1900 New York Central wooden caboose for a photo shoot. The caboose is livable, with AC, heat, kitchen, shower, etc.

An enjoyable lunch was had by all, after which we were entertained with rides in Fritz' retired German Anti-Tank helicopter and Ed's military jeep and APC (Armored Personnel Carrier), which is a tracked vehicle that was used for transporting infantry into battle.





2024 ST. LOUIS EUROPEAN AUTO SHOW

Sunday, June 9th

In a Word – Magnificent! On June 9th, the 2024 European Auto Show, in partnership with ARC, who's mission is to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, was phenomenal, as always. The weather was touch and go earlier in the morning, but outside of a very light and thankfully brief drizzle, cooperation was on our side. This event is one of the highlights of the year for European and exotic car enthusiasts. The sights and sounds were something to behold.

Our St. Louis Gateway Section was well-represented this year and in great company with Aston Martin to the left of us, and Ferrari directly across. How's that for neighbors? We also "permitted" a Rolls Royce to become an honorary member of the MB Crew.

Our tent was well staffed and at least eight visitors took membership applications with them to complete. A huge thanks to John and Brenda Donovan, Steve and Jan Scissors, Frank Perry and Alex Furla for their help in setting up and tearing down our tent, along with staffing it to market the club to new members.



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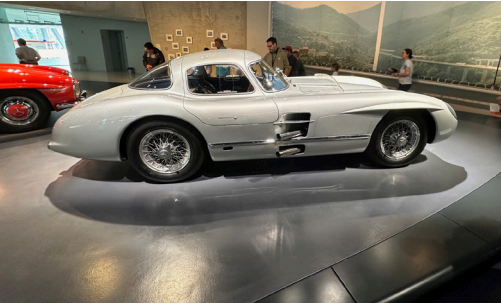
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NEAL LANG'S GERMANY VISIT WITH THE MBCA | JUNE, 2024



This is a one-week, Mercedes-Benz Club of America member experience, where attendees see the real classic cars, actual Mercedes technology, and taste Swabian cuisine, not to mention the scenic areas around Stuttgart Germany. The city itself was the birthplace of many automotive related names, including Bosch, Porsche, and Maybach.

My sister, Sally, and I began our visit in early June. We flew to Frankfurt, and then took a 1-1/2-hour high-speed ICE train ride from the Frankfurt airport to downtown Stuttgart.

Our first visit was to the AMG factory at Affalterbach where we saw the actual engines being assembled. Mercedes's motto is "one man one engine". We observed a man who only builds the V-12 engines. Later, we visited the actual Daimler home site, early workshop, and memorial site.

On the following days we visited the Karl Benz Museum, Mechatronik GmbH where they remake the Pagodas and SE-280 Cabriolets with new/updated components like ABS and AMG engines. We also visited Motor World, the Technic Museum in Sinsheim, where displays of cars, military equipment, and planes reside. Included was a Concord and a Russian TU-144. You can access the planes and walk inside each of them. Another day we visited the fabulous Mercedes-Benz Museum where you ascend to the top of the circular building and then walk down several levels, viewing the many forms of MB history. The museum's most impressive car was a 300 SLR. They had owned two and recently sold one of them at auction for €143 million Euros. The Sindelfingen assembly plant tour was also impressive. It is there where they build and assemble E Class models and GLC SUVs on the same line where gas, hybrids, and electric cars are produced in random order.

Our daily tours started after breakfast with a motor coach to our stops, with delightful meals at superb restaurants. Saturday was the official last day of our trip and was an opportunity to see other sites like the Porsche Museum or shop and lounge around downtown Stuttgart.

Our group had a variety of members from all corners of the US, some with newer Mercedes. One member was from Memphis, who in the 1970s was a teacher in Lebanon. He bought a 1960 Model 190 TAXI and in 1975 drove it through Turkey, crossed from Asia to Europe at Istanbul, then across Europe. He shipped the car to the States and still owns and maintains it. He was looking for a brake master cylinder and the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center is assisting him with this effort.

This was my second time for a superb and truly memorable trip. It is an understatement that Mercedes-Benz owners know they have an extremely well-built machine. However, the tour reminds us of the attention to detail and history of Mercedes-Benz automobiles. That is why we all own a Mercedes-Benz and are proud of it. The next MBCA visit is this September 2024 and I understand that it's sold out. If you are interested in joining the 2025 tour, I recommend you immediately reserve your space once announced. Considering the cost, member opportunity, and visit, it's a week of a memorable experience for all. The trip is well worth it!



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Mercedes SLS AMG History – Developing a Modern Super Car From Concept to Highways & Race Tracks Across the Globe

By Dave Tobin, Tobin Motor Works



It's interesting how the story behind an industrial product, like a computer or a phone or in this case, a car, can morph into a near legendary tale to be recounted forever at car shows and in garages. "See son, in the early fifties Max Hoffmann figured he could sell a road going version of the 300 SLR race cars to car guys in New York, so he talked to the people at Mercedes and they came up with the 300 SL." This is exactly the kind of story my father told me when I was a child any time we came across an iconic car while we walked the aisles of a car show. Whether a D type Jaguar, Tucker, even a DeLorean, they all had interesting stories and were all innovative in their own way. The SLS AMG too, has an interesting story and I believe its story is one of the reasons the SLS will be remembered well into the future.

The SLS is the first car AMG has ever created from the ground up. If that's not impressive enough when looking at or driving the finished product, consider that they developed it in just 37 months. Before the formal start of those 37 months, about a year earlier, towards the end of 2005, AMG CEO Volker Mornhinweg was doing some AMG soul searching with his management team. "Who are we? Where do we want to be in 2010?" they asked themselves. They decided they were ready to design and build their own car.

The Concept AMG didn't just want to create a sports car; they wanted a super car. They laid out a number of parameters. It must reflect the Mercedes-Benz tradition, and it must rival its competitors from Italy, the UK and the other manufacturers in Germany. Mornhinweg turned to Christoph Jung, the strategic project director who would manage every aspect of the car's development over the convening years. Jung began assembling an internal team to begin work on a concept they could take to the Daimler Board.

They spent the better part of a year putting together their plan. The engine must be in front. It would be set low and well back, requiring a long hood. The cockpit would be set far back with the seating position just forward of the rear axle leaving little overhang in the back for a trunk. Among other things, it had to be light weight and capable of a 0-60mph time under 4 seconds.

The AMG team got together with a group from Mercedes' Sindelfingen based design team led by Professor Peter Pfeiffer to discuss the project. One of the designers in that first meeting, Mark Featherstone, sketched a 'preliminary visual idea with a few strokes.' The group around the table saw hints of the 1950s Mercedes-Benz 300SL in the simple sketch. Everyone around the table figured they were on the right track.

It was at the December 2006 Daimler executive board meeting where Mornhinweg revealed their plan. He went through the usual sales and production charts for AMG's side of the business, outlined their strategy for the year to come and at the end of his presentation added "And beyond that, we recommend building our own AMG super sports car." He promptly unrolled the Featherstone sketch and a hush fell over the room. Board chairman, Dieter Zetsche eventually broke that silence "It looks good!" That's all Mornhinweg needed to move forward, putting together a business case for the project and to work out the technical specifications



Early rendering of the SLS AMG concept.

American Muscle Played A Role. 2007 would prove to be as intense a year as anyone at AMG had experienced. The team had the opportunity they wanted, now they had to figure out what, exactly, they were going to build.

Early in the year AMG ordered a Dodge Viper GTS from the Chrysler Corporation to help with SLS development. AMG engineers figured the Viper would be a good place to start because its tube frame could be modified quickly and easily to accommodate the axles, brakes and power train of the future SLS. They were right. Over the course of the next year they purchased thirteen more Vipers, and became the largest key European account for the Viper brand in the process. The idea turned out to be a brilliant one. By using the basic structure of the Vipers, AMG technical designers quickly had test mules they called 'T cars' that could be driven around the Nurburgring's Nordschleife, measuring data, testing various engineering options and drawing conclusions about the final product.

Fabrication And Testing. The team decided a lightweight aluminum space frame would form the central structure. They would modify an M156 AMG V8 engine to suit the new project. Eventually, more than 120 parts of AMG's 'standard' M156 engine, as found in a C or E 63 for example, would be changed to create the new M159 engine found in the SLS AMG. Attention to weight savings was as important as improved performance, down to the smallest parts. Where steel screws were found in the M156 engine, the M159 engine employed aluminum screws.

A great deal of time was spent on the door design, both traditional and gullwing doors were considered. The team was always conscious of what had come before them and wanted to make sure gullwing doors wouldn't be viewed as a gimmick. They wanted whatever design they chose to fit their modern super car goal. Ultimately, the gullwing door concept was adopted. The team figured the doors would be about the only thing their new car would have in common with the 1950s era 300SL.

With the data collected, thanks to the 'T cars', AMG used their advanced computer simulation programs to further develop the project. It is these programs that they attribute the 'high level of maturity of the first SLS AMG prototypes.' These programs produce such high-quality virtual prototypes, engineers were able to simulate true to life test drives and crash tests without spending huge amounts of time and money with real cars. The first self-propelled prototypes were testing by August 2008. The first three underwent temperature stress tests in Death Valley, CA. Fairly quickly, they had a fleet of 40 aluminum framed, self-propelled test cars undergoing testing in various environments and on various race tracks around the world. Always paying attention to their competition, the AMG engineers ran simultaneous tests on various Italian, British and other German super cars perceived as the SLS' competition. By mid-Summer of 2009 the test fleet, undergoing final testing, the SLS AMG was poised to go into production at the end of 2009.

Release And Reception. The fruits of AMG's labor, the new SLS AMG Coupe, was introduced to the public in September 2009 at the Frankfurt Motor Show. The first customer deliveries began during the first half of 2010.

Between its introduction and the time it started appearing at dealerships, the SLS graced the cover of almost every car magazine in the world. It was well received by the motoring press, a group happy to see Mercedes-Benz-AMG produce a real sports car, save for the inevitable handful who still believed a manual transmission was what made a sports car.

The comparisons between the two gullwings, old and new, will always be made. The 300 SL is an iconic car, an iconic piece of mid-century design. The SLS has received more than 30 international design awards and one has to believe that its design, like so many Mercedes designs, will stand the test of time. Like all new cars, Mercedes included, even SLS models saw significant depreciation after initial purchase and through the time they were still in production. Today, prices have leveled off and, in the case of the SLS AMG Coupe models, prices have started to hold and even climb back towards their original MSRP prices. Enthusiasts and collectors are snatching up the most highly optioned cars with low miles and limited ownership. The SLS will, inevitably, become a classic.

In the end, AMG achieved their goal of successfully creating their own super car with all the modern safety and technology elements with a gentle nod to that which came before them, and they did it all in about 3 years. What a story.

AMG eventually added a roadster version of the SLS with layered soft top and traditional doors as well as a number of 'special edition' SLS models.

This is an abbreviated version of Dave's original SLS article. The original article can be found in its entirety on mercedes-market.com.

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2024 SLGS EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

JULY 17th (Wednesday)
Hunter Engineering Museum Tour

AUGUST 15th (Wednesday) Jazz St. Louis

SEPTEMBER 14TH & 15TH
(Saturday & Sunday)
Echo Bluff State Park, overnight

OCTOBER 20TH (Sunday)
Fall Picnic, Addie's Restaurant

NOVEMBER 2025 Planning Meeting

DECEMBER 8TH (Sunday)
Holiday Party, Greenbriar Hills Country Club

JANUARY (Sunday) New Year's Brunch

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Audrey Biby has 2 SL's FOR SALE – a **1996 SL500**, 110K miles, \$6900 OBO, & a **1982 380SL**, 106K miles, \$2900 OBO. **Contact Rick Siefert (rick.siefert@att.net) for further information and pics.**

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS TO ST. LOUIS GATEWAY SECTION MEMBERS

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PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

Since the last publication of the Gateway News, we are proud to announce
and WELCOME the following new members:

Malcolm Gage

Peter Kelley

Robert & Donna Steinman

Welcome to the St. Louis Gateway Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America.

We have over 200 memberships within a 200-mile radius of St. Louis.

The success of our Club depends on the participation of the members to our scheduled activities. Thank you for joining. We look forward to seeing you at our next event.

LOYAL RENEWING MEMBERS

**Kenneth Barkett
Alan & Judy Barker
Rich Bayers
Audrey Biby
Kathleen & Kip Bilderback
James & Trudy Bruchas
John & Brenda Donovan**

**Ron & Dana Faerber
Kevin Guss
Joan Hecker
Paul Hittler
Richard Lewis
Frank & Luella Perry**

**Craig Seekamp
Rick & Patti Siefert
Bernie Sunier
George & Mary Timberlake
Kory & Linda Wheeler
Ray & Kathy Wiegand**

Thank you for your continued support of our club!

Don't see your "significant other" listed? Then you may not have entered them as associate members with MBCA when you joined. It costs nothing to make them associate members. Simply log on to your MBCA account, scroll down to "Associate Member", click on "Edit", and enter the name. That's it.

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☐ **2 Years \$165**
☐ **1 Year \$85**

Lifetime Canadian & International Member Dues:

- ☐ **Lifetime: \$1600**
☐ **1 Year: \$95**

Primary Member : _____

Associate Member: _____

Primary Email Address (Required)

Associate Email Address:

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

ZIP/Country: _____

Phone: _____

Referred by: _____

Signature

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