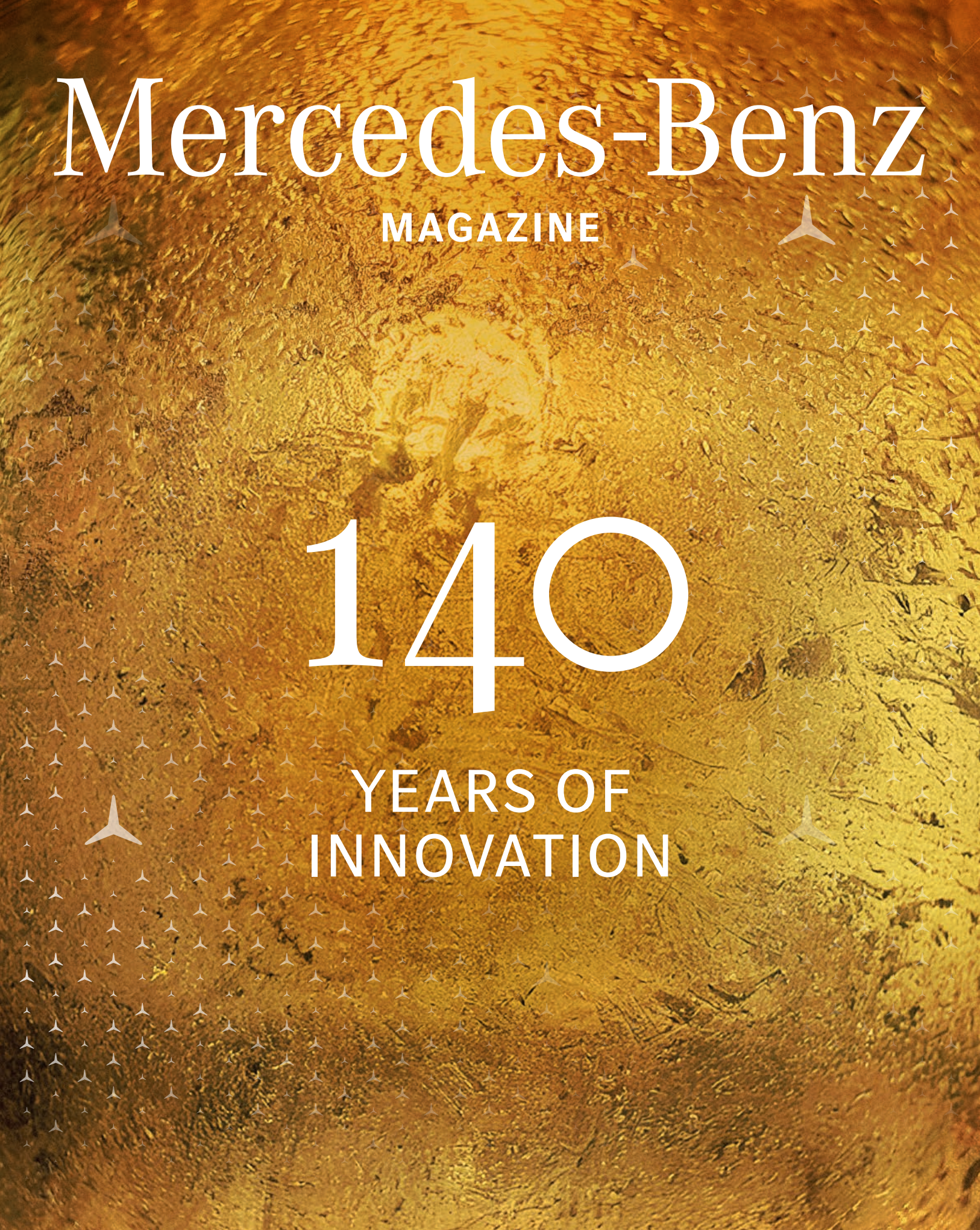
Mercedes-Benz

MAGAZINE





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WAHRE WERTE
Wellendorff

Mercedes-Benz

SIMPLY OUTSTANDING.

The all-new electric VLE.
Welcome home.



140 YEARS OF INNOVATION

Learn more about the VLE. Latest updates and information online: https://go.mercedes-benz.com/new-vle

The availability of the equipment, functions, features and services shown depends on the respective vehicle model, the individual configuration and the respective market.

Mercedes-Benz VLE 300 electric | combined energy consumption: 20.7–18.4 kWh/100 km | combined CO_2 emissions: 0 g/km | CO_2 class: A[1]

[1] The specified values were determined in accordance with the prescribed measurement procedure WLTP (Worldwide harmonized Light-duty vehicles Test Procedures). The energy consumption and CO2 emissions of a passenger car depend not only on the efficient utilisation of fuel or the respective energy carrier by the car, but also on the driving style and other non-technical factors.

Dear Readers,

140 years after Carl Benz filed his patent for his automobile, we find ourselves at a very special point in our history. It is a moment that fills us with pride – and at the same time makes us feel humble. For despite all the changes that have taken place over the past 140 years, one thing has remained the same: our commitment to building cars that inspire people.

We celebrated the anniversary of the automobile on 29 January 2026, alongside the world premiere of the new S-Class. It was a special moment that marked the start of a unique journey: three S-Class models are bringing our brand promise, “Welcome home.”, to 140 locations across different continents. In each of these places, we meet people, hear their stories, and see how our brand is a unifying force around the world. You can read more about this in our cover story.

Brand new in this issue: the first all-electric C-Class. It is redefining its segment whilst remaining true to itself. Elegance, comfort, intelligence, safety, and sportiness are taken to a whole new level, making every journey a special experience. For decades, it has been one of Mercedes-Benz’s most popular and best-selling models and continues to set new standards. To me, it clearly demonstrates: the C-Class was never just a car – it was always a promise.

As the inventors of the car, a pioneering spirit is in our DNA. But for me, this is more relevant today than ever before. It is about having the courage to think outside the box – in technology, design, and, above all, in every moment our customers experience with us.

I’m delighted that you’re joining us on this journey.

Yours truly,



Mathias Geisen
Member of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG, responsible for Mercedes-Benz Cars Sales & Customer Experience



Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

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Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG, Matthew Jones


140 YEARS. 140 PLACES.
DRIVING HISTORY
140 YEARS OF INNOVATION



The Andes, Chile

With “140 Years. 140 Places.”, Mercedes-Benz looks back at the stories of the people, moments, and milestones that have shaped the company’s history over the past 140 years. A journey spanning 50,000 kilometres to 140 destinations across six continents

Text by Katalina Farkas
Photos by Mercedes-Benz AG



March. The story of every journey is not always best told from the beginning. Take this one, for example, which starts right in the middle. We are in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in the Deep South of the USA. At the heart of international car production. It’s not the start or the end of a journey we’re talking about here, but a significant stop along the way – a milestone that comes with a very special sound. Any lingering doubts that the southern states follow a rhythm all of their own are blown away the moment the Million Dollar Marching Band takes to the stage on this particular Tuesday morning.

With trombones, drums, and trumpets, the musicians from the University of Alabama herald the world premiere of the new GLE and the new GLS, which are manufactured at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Tuscaloosa. These two vehicles not only mark another chapter in the history of Mercedes-Benz SUVs, but they also represent a milestone in the history of the factory: since the plant began production in 1997 and the first M-Class rolled off the production line, more than five million vehicles have left the factory. It is an achievement that is well worth celebrating.

For this reason, another guest will be on the premiere stage today, which has been set up right in the middle of the factory: “Gottlieb”, one of three brand-new S-Class saloons that rolled off the production line in Sindelfingen near Stuttgart two months ago – and immediately set off on a round-the-world tour. Gottlieb – along with “Bertha” and “Carl” – arrived at the factory premises in Tuscaloosa the night before. The three S-Class saloons have already





MERCEDES-BENZ U.S. INTERNATIONAL PLANT

Here in Vance, Alabama, near Tuscaloosa, stands one of North America's most important car manufacturing plants. The first car rolled off the production line on 14 February 1997. Since then, the plant has produced over five million vehicles.

Covering around 600 hectares and two main sites with approximately 650,000 square metres of roofed floor space, the facility produces exclusively SUVs: GLE, GLS, GLE coupé and AMG variants – and, in future, the GLC as well. Some 8,500 to 9,000 people work here every day, around 5,800 of whom are permanent staff.

The plant has transformed the entire region economically. In the late 1980s, coal and steel were key industries. Following their decline, Mercedes-Benz took on the role of an economic anchor, not only creating direct jobs but also fostering a dense network of suppliers in the surrounding area.


140
YEARS.
140
PLACES.
AROUND THE WORLD
GUIDED BY
MERCEDES-BENZ

covered several thousand kilometres, crossing national borders, traversing endless plains, and passing through some of the world's largest cities. The fact that they actually made it to Tuscaloosa on time is nothing short of a logistical masterpiece. But let's start at the beginning.

A MAJOR PREMIERE – AND AN EVEN BIGGER IDEA

January. It's cold in Stuttgart, but the atmosphere at the Mercedes-Benz Museum is as heated as it is euphoric. On 29 January – exactly 140 years after Carl Benz filed his patent for the "Benz Patent-Motorwagen 1" – the world premiere of the new S-Class is being celebrated here. Under the anniversary slogan "140 Years of Innovation", the Mercedes-Benz icon once again proves itself to be a technological masterpiece on the anniversary of the automobile, with every detail carefully refined.

The launch also marks the start of something bigger: a journey around the globe that will not only introduce a new vehicle to the world, but also celebrate 140 years of the automobile. And the benefits that come with it: Individual mobility. Unlimited freedom. A personal connection.

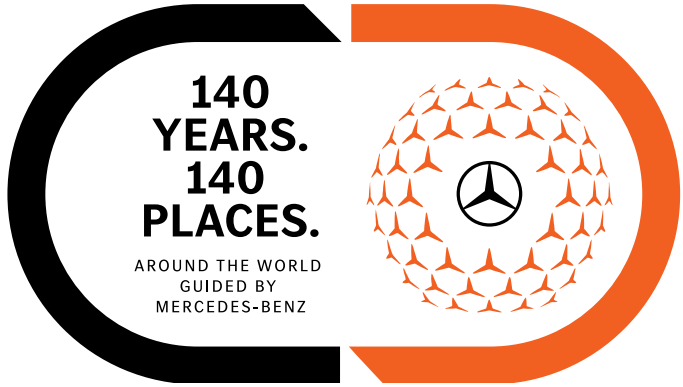
THE STARTING SIGNAL (OR: FIRST THINGS FIRST)

The epic tour commences on 29 January 2026: our three new S-Class saloons hit the road immediately after the world premiere event, operated by a team of experienced test drivers from Mercedes-Benz working in shifts. Driving long distances is part of their job, but they usually focus on how the vehicles perform. This time, they are expressly invited to stop and get out.



14 DECADES – TIM BENGEL

To mark the 140th anniversary of the Patent-Motorwagen, German artist Tim Bengel created "14 Decades" – a large-scale work inspired by 140 years of innovation", depicting four key figures from the company's early years. Tim Bengel lives and works in Esslingen, near Stuttgart – and is therefore right on the doorstep of the birthplace of the automobile. He became known for his distinctive collages made of black sand, white sand, and gold leaf, a technique he developed between 2014 and 2015.

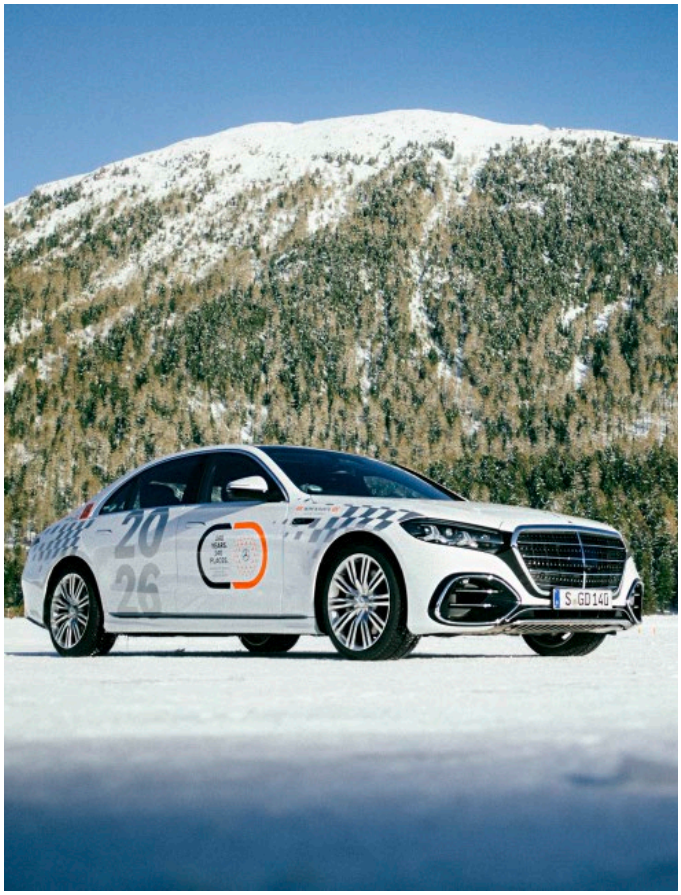


The history of the automobile is driven by innovation. And written by people

Their first stops tell the story of the early days, each one a chapter in 140 years of innovation and mobility. The birthplace of Gottlieb Daimler in Schorndorf, the garden shed in Bad Cannstatt, where the internal combustion engine was invented, and the chemist's in Wiesloch, where Bertha Benz stopped during her legendary journey to top up the fuel for her "Model 3" patent car.

But it's not just about retelling history. Equally important are the new encounters: everywhere they go, Bertha, Carl, Gottlieb, and their crew members meet friends and supporters of the brand. In Switzerland, they drift – in the utmost comfort, of course; after all, they are S-Class cars – across a frozen lake. And in Nice, they are greeted by over 200 fans and enthusiasts who have lined up their Mercedes cars along the harbour promenade, ready to set off on a group drive later on. It's a journey full of excitement, with new sights to discover at every turn – both along the Route Napoléon and at the La Cochera Classica workshop in the north of Madrid, which is brimming with vintage Mercedes treasures, including "Gullwing" models and historic S-Class cars.

Speaking of old treasures: on their journey from Madrid to Paris, the S-Class cars follow in the footsteps of the racing driver and






AMG
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20
26
140
YEARS.
140
PLACES.
140 YEARS OF INNOVATION
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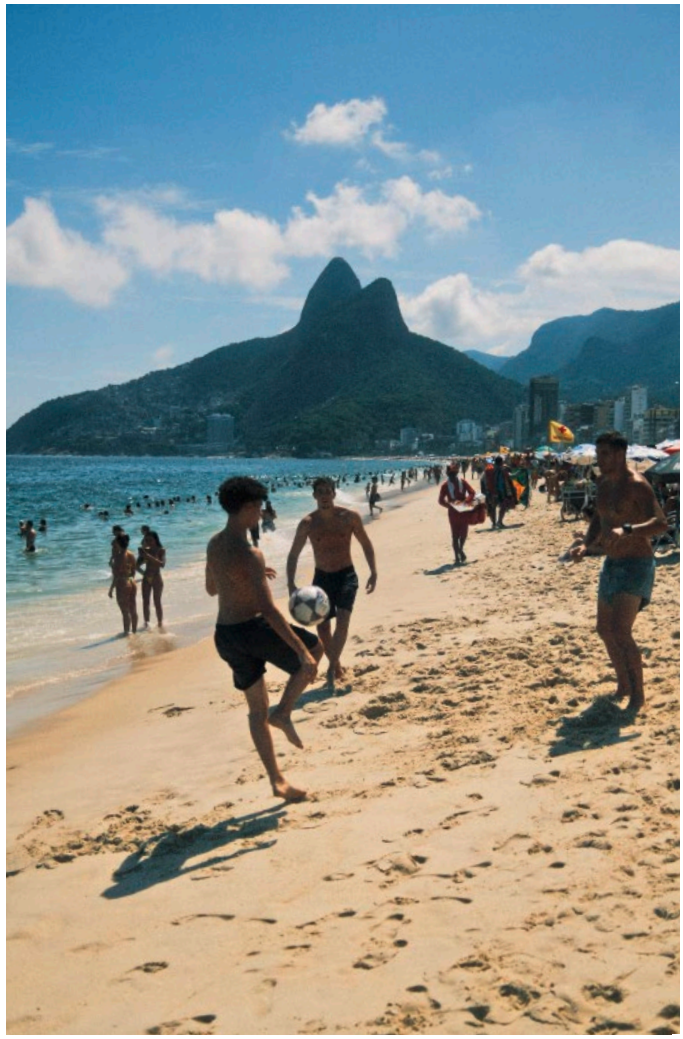
Nice, France



motorsport pioneer Émile Levassor, and in Spa, Belgium, they get a taste of the racetrack atmosphere for themselves. Although rather unusual for vehicles of their size, the three S-Class models certainly cut a fine figure on the legendary “Ardennes Rollercoaster”. Especially alongside a replica of the Mercedes-Benz 300 SEL 6.3, the original of which went down in motorsport history as the “Rote Sau”. In 1971, it left its much lighter rivals trailing in the dust at a 24-hour race and surprisingly finished in second place.

As they clock up a long succession of towns, the rear windows of the S-Class cars fill up with souvenirs. At each stage, the vehicles are given a new, specially designed sticker, which the crew members proudly affix. “There is a new surprise every day” was the conclusion reached by one of the team members after the first three weeks in Europe. “We do have a rough plan – but no one was able to do a recce, no one was able to check the route beforehand. We just have to take it as it comes. But that’s precisely how such amazing encounters and moments keep happening. You simply can’t buy them for money.”

February. South America awaits. From Rio de Janeiro, Gottlieb, Carl, and Bertha drive south towards São Paulo along Brazil’s most beautiful – and highest – roads. They meet Mercedes-Benz Clubs and discover the breathtaking natural scenery. They also visit an unassuming workshop where the mechanics share their favourite Mercedes anecdotes with the guests from Stuttgart.









In Uruguay, a meeting with the local classic car community is scheduled in the capital city. The country is small, but interest in the S-Class models from the German headquarters is huge. The members of the Montevideo Classic Car Club – one of the leading local organisations when it comes to the maintenance and restoration of classic cars, as well as the preservation of the brand's technical heritage – are enthusiastic about the project to circumnavigate the globe.

Further south, the S-Class cars stop at the Museo Fangio in Balcarce, Argentina, which is dedicated to the motorsport legend Juan Manuel Fangio. In 1954 and 1955, Fangio won the Formula 1 World Championship in the Mercedes-Benz W 196 R, known as the "Silver Arrow", thereby cementing the brand's reputation for precision and engineering excellence with which it remains associated to this day.

The Andes greet the convoy with their vast expanse and surreal hairpin bends – a landscape that is almost impossible to put into words. What remains from this journey are not just the images of impressive cars on spectacular roads – but also the people, the encounters, the stories.


S CB 140
S 88 140





The Andes, Chile



New York City, USA

The three S-Class saloons have already covered several thousand kilometres, crossing national borders, traversing endless plains, and passing through some of the world's largest cities

FROM SOUTH TO NORTH AMERICA

In March, the S-Class cars resume their journey in the USA, in Miami, Florida – and head straight to the Sebring International Raceway. One of the world's most historic endurance races – the legendary 12 Hours of Sebring – has been held here since 1952. It goes without saying that Gottlieb, Carl, and Bertha have to stop there too. Benjamin Ortega, who is hosting the North American leg of the journey as part of the YouTube series to accompany the trip, is impressed by the spirit of motorsport that permeates everything here.

Filming and editing take place around the clock – and we're happy to do so in the S-Class. "We call it our editing suite," laughs Ortega. "The back seat is a great place to work. We've achieved more there than anywhere else." The country is vast, its scale is colossal, and the distances are long. And yet: "I never once worried about a long, ten-hour drive. It was just so easy."



Designer Colm Dillane, founder of KidSuper

From Florida, the journey continues along the east coast to New York, where we are greeted by spring weather. There, the artist and creative director KidSuper – who has had close ties with Mercedes-Benz for years – spontaneously organised a block party in Brooklyn. “It was one of those events that just happened quite spontaneously,” recalls Ortega. “Simply turn up, food, drinks, a DJ – and bring your Mercedes if you have one. What started as a party turned into this crazy car meet-up!” For Ortega, this fits into a bigger picture: “Mercedes-Benz is one of the few car brands that feels like a family. Everyone we met in North America who was driving a Mercedes had a story to tell.”

THE NEXT STOPS AWAIT

The sky glows a soft red over Alabama as Bertha, Carl and Gottlieb leave the factory in Tuscaloosa. The S-Class models have made their debuts at the SUV world premiere. Tomorrow, the tour continues westwards to Texas, Nevada and California. After that, it’s even further afield to Australia, Asia and Africa, then returning to Europe before arriving back in Stuttgart in October. Home – with more than 50,000 kilometres clocked. Lots of new stickers on the windows. And knowing that they’ve met many new friends and old companions and made new memories along the way. Not to mention the realisation that the history of the automobile is driven by innovation – and written by people.

Follow “140 Years. 140 Places.” online via our Mercedes-Benz Community Hub:
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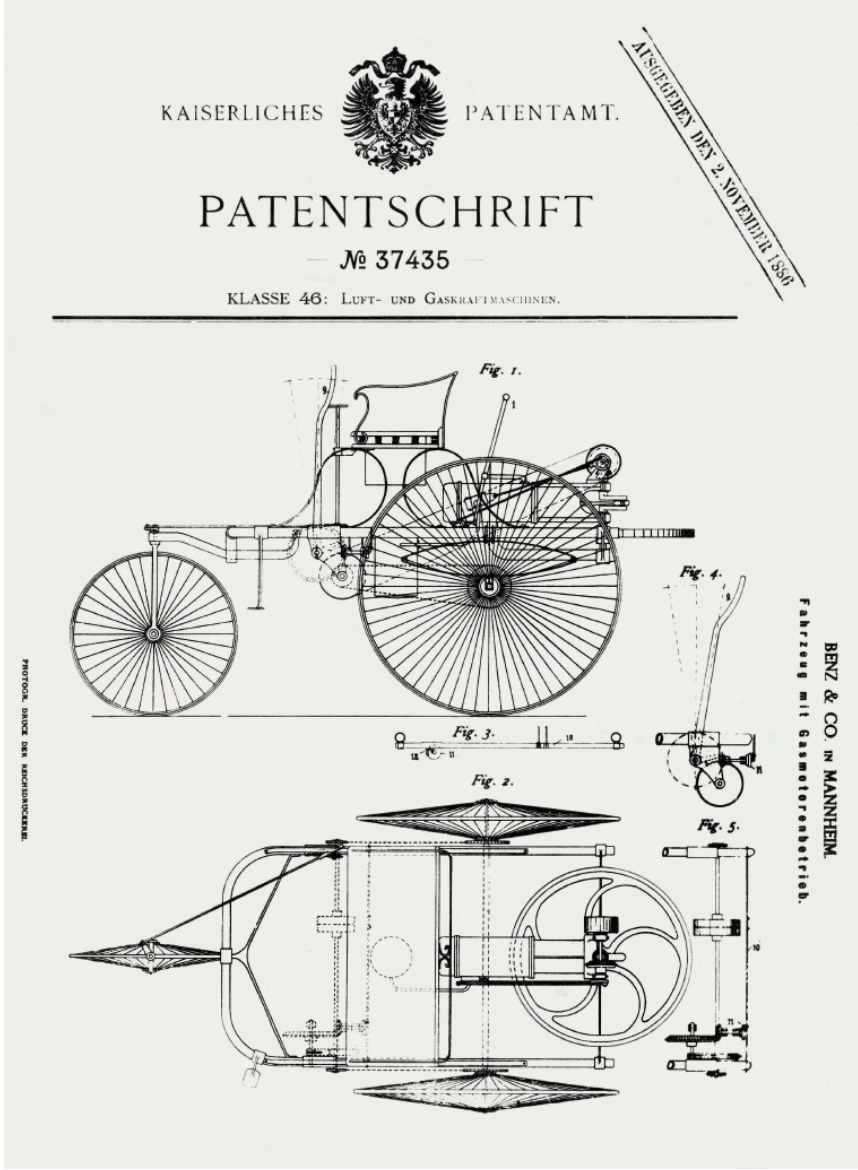
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DID YOU KNOW?

How well do you know the brand with the star? Here are some of the most glorious moments in the extraordinary history of our brand

1886:

THE YEAR IT ALL BEGAN



The Gutenberg Bible, the Magna Carta, and the German Imperial Patent No. 37435, which marks the beginning of modern mobility, are all recorded as documents of extraordinary value for the history of humankind in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. On 29 January 1886, Carl Benz registered his "gas-powered vehicle" at the Imperial Patent Office. With his 0.75 hp, three-wheeled vehicle, the engineer from Mannheim had developed the first car in the world. This invention paved the way for the success story of Mercedes-Benz and continues to shape how we travel, work, and live, even 140 years later.



1976: a pit stop during the world-record run by the C 111-II in Nardò.

WHEN RECORDS ARE SET

The list of world records that have made their way into the history books in "140 Years of Innovation" is long. Here are five of the most impressive demonstrations of top performance.

In **1909** the so-called "Blitzen Benz" surpassed the 200 km/h mark for the first time at Brooklands in England.

In **1938** the W 125 "Silver Arrow" set a record that stood for 80 years when it exceeded 432.7 km/h on a public stretch of the autobahn near Frankfurt.

In **1976** the legendary C 111-II test car rolled up to the start in Nardò and set three world records in three days for vehicles with diesel motors, including covering 10,000 km at an average speed of 252.2 km/h.

In **2005** the E 320 CDI drove 100,000 miles – about 160,000 kilometres – in 30 days in Laredo, Texas.

In **2025** the all-electric CONCEPT AMG GT XX broke a world record by driving 5,479 kilometres in 24 hours on the Nardò Ring. Also record-worthy was that the journey ended after 7 days, 13 hours, 24 minutes, and 7 seconds, covering 40,075 kilometres, which is the equivalent of driving around the world.

MB KIDS

SUPER SMART SNIFFER DOG



Dogs are normally known for their keen sense of smell, but Aris the robot dog has exceptionally good hearing. All by himself, he strides around the Mercedes-Benz factory in Düsseldorf, even climbing steep steps without falling down. So what is he doing? Aris is using his excellent ears to listen for a very specific sound. He is trying to detect a quiet hiss. It is so quiet that people can't even hear it. But Aris can. If he hears a hiss, he stays put and sounds an alarm. The hiss means that air is escaping from the pipelines through teeny-tiny holes. Aris lets people know that they need to come and fix the holes. Without help from our robot dog, the holes would only be discovered much later. Maybe they would never be discovered. What is more, our four-legged friend can even read meters and knows whether the escape routes out of the building are clear.



Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG

MINIATURES OF THE MODERN ERA

Text by Lutz Schilling
AI-generated photos by Sevda Albers
Model: Gabrielle Dubois / PARS Management



140 YEARS OF INNOVATION



Whether they are toys or collectables, model cars are, above all, one thing: little time capsules, miniature representations of their respective epochs. Each one tells the story of an era, of the innovative spirit of its time, of social movements, and of what was considered possible back then.

Reason enough to embark on a journey through time with Mercedes-Benz model cars*, including automotive icons from the last 140 years. Gabrielle is an AI-generated model who will take us on a journey through the eras and present the cars that inspired our collection. Not as a historical reconstruction, but as a playful interpretation.

Just like us, AI looks back on past decades from the perspective of the present. In doing so, the AI highlights the extent to which any vision of the future can only be a product of its time. And that automotive innovations are constantly taking place – but never in isolation

1886 (pp. 30–31)
The age of electrification meant electric lighting could be used everywhere, enabling people to work at any time of day. On 29 January 1886, Carl Benz applied for a patent for his motor car, thereby inventing the automobile, though it is unknown whether he did this by the light of a bulb or by candlelight.

*The 1:18 models are not shown true to scale.



1954

Motorised urban traffic and the private car have become symbols of post-war reconstruction . Right at the centre of all this: the legendary 300 SL “Gullwing”. This car was to become a design icon and is not only the dream car of its time, but also a techno-logical pioneering model thanks to its direct petrol injection system, which originated in motor racing.



1959

The new medium of television is fascinating – and brings the glimmer of the world into every home. The 220 S, also known as the “Fintail”, attracts attention on the road with its unmistakeable American influences. Innovation in safety: the first production car to feature a rigid passenger cell with crumple zones.



1963

Cinema is becoming the dominant medium of a new youth culture and is shaping young people's style and self-image. The Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman epitomises the luxury and technology of its era. As a luxury car, it fulfils the highest expectations and features technical innovations as standard that, taken together, are unique and ahead of their time – like the shock absorbers that can be adjusted from the steering column whilst driving.



1968

Society is undergoing change and challenging traditional ways of thinking. And at Mercedes-Benz, a “new generation” is also bringing a breath of fresh air: the “Stroke Eight” is the first model series to feature a semi-trailing arm rear axle, offering significantly improved handling combined with a high level of driving comfort.



1970

The jet plane makes it possible: distant destinations come within reach, and private air travel is becoming increasingly commonplace. Well ahead of its time is the world's first car to be developed entirely on a computer: the C 111 experimental vehicle. Particularly futuristic: the glass-fibre-reinforced plastic bodywork and the Wankel engine, which sounds like a jet engine when running at full throttle.



1976

Portable cassette players allow music to be enjoyed on the go. People define themselves through their personal soundtracks. This also applies to the 450 SEL 6.9 with a Becker cassette radio. Other standard comfort features include hydropneumatic suspension with height adjustment, central locking, air conditioning, and headlamp wipers.



1985

The PC is becoming part of everyday life and, for many, marks the first step towards digitalisation. It may not be digital yet, but it's a trailblazer nonetheless: the S-Class, which was already fitted with a regulated three-way catalytic converter in the mid-1980s to reduce emissions.



1998

Information and communication are shifting to the web. Being online is part of everyday urban life. If you're looking to escape the daily grind, the elegant and powerful SL 500 Roadster is the perfect choice. It owes its reputation as a pioneer in safety to its automatic roll bar, which deploys when there is a risk of the vehicle rolling over – an innovation in automotive engineering.



2025

Connectivity, resource conservation, and sustainability are key contributors to smart and liveable cities. A major lever here is the electrification of the transport sector. This is epitomised by the electric CLA, which offers high efficiency and digital intelligence and has been named European “Car of the Year 2026” by a jury of automotive journalists.



Find the model cars and all the details at **benz.me/modelcars**

MY MERCE

Texts by
Katalina Farkas





Photos: Aram Boghosian, private archive, Daniel Camino

DES



For many owners, a Mercedes-Benz is more than just a car – it is full of memories, a source of pride. It can be a project or even a life's work. Sometimes even a piece of home. For 140 years, vehicles bearing the star have stood for innovation, progress, and timeless elegance. At the same time, however, they are also an indispensable source of the most wonderful stories and memories. We asked people from all over the world about their experiences with their cars from different decades, what memories they associate with them, and what they plan to do with them in the future. One thing quickly became clear: 140 years of innovation means millions of anecdotes and stories – far more than could ever fit on these pages

DEN DIMAS, JAKARTA, INDONESIA
G 300, 1996

"We live in Jakarta. Our G 300 is our family car. We use it to take the children to school, run errands, and commute to work. It's the car for everything we need to get done in our daily lives. What I particularly appreciate about the G-Class is its immediacy. I'm a content creator who tests various cars and motorbikes. I find the G-Class to be honest, practical, and full of character. You sit tall and have an excellent view. My children love sitting so high up and watching the city go by. The interior is spacious, and the build quality remains impressively solid to this day. The G-Class has been around since 1996 – and, as a timeless car, still looks as fresh as it did on the very first day.

There are so many memories I associate with the car: our first camping trip together, when my son was still very small and would crawl around in front of the car at the campsite, and children's birthday parties where presents and snacks filled the boot. My son is now five years old and already a real fan. I recently fitted some new wheel rims, and he noticed straight away.

We often go on trips with Mercedes Jip Indonesia, a community of G-Class enthusiasts. We are united by values such as solidarity and a love of adventure – family-friendly adventures, that is. We head out into the countryside together, occasionally leaving the tarmac to go off-road – but we do it sensibly, so that everyone can enjoy it. Officially, it's a car community. But it feels more like a family."





Photos: private archive


“My children love
sitting so high
up and watching
the city go by”



“Driving the coupé is more than just getting from A to B. You can really feel the innovation, the craftsmanship, and the beauty”



TOMMY AMAKER, BOSTON, USA
280 SE 3.5 COUPÉ, 1971

“I’ll never forget that moment. It was my first year at college, and the team doctor for our basketball team pulled up in his 1971 Mercedes 280 SE 3.5 coupé. I fell in love with the car straight away – the tobacco-brown paintwork, the palomino interior, the sunroof. At the time, I said to him: ‘One day I’m going to buy that car.’ Three years later, when he retired, he gave me a call. He told me that he wanted to pass the car on to someone who would appreciate it as much as he did: I drove it home that day, and I still have it now – over 35 years later.

It’s more than just metal and leather. It’s a memory, a story, a link to the past. Even when it was brand new, it was ahead of its time: a 3.5-litre V8 engine, electric windows, an electric sunroof – not many cars were fitted with these features back then. Driving the coupé is more than just getting from one place to another. You can really feel the innovation, the craftsmanship, and the beauty. People stop, smile and ask questions. Strangers become friends. The car’s history, including the fact that it was once owned by a country singer, brings it to life – like a bridge between eras. Just like basketball – I coach at Harvard University – it builds connections, tells stories, and reminds me why passion matters.”

Photos: Aram Boghosian, Daniel Camino

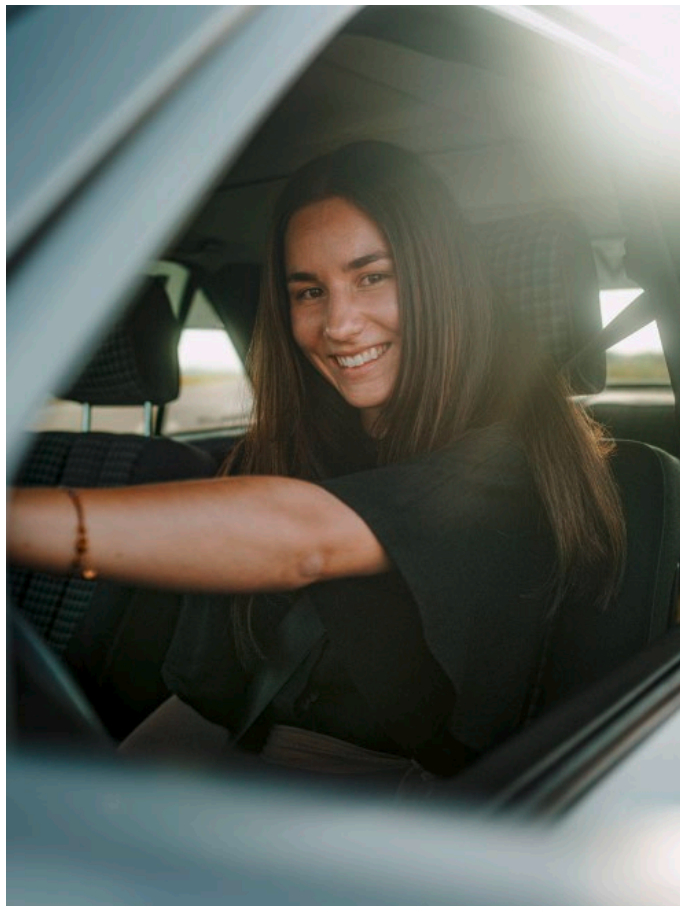
LEA NIEDERMEIER, MUNICH, GERMANY
190 E BERLIN 2000, 1992

"My car is a practical vehicle, not just for show. That might come as a surprise to many. I drive almost 6,000 kilometres a year. Wherever I stop, people come and chat to me about the car. It truly is unique, there are only 180 of them in the whole world. I did my apprenticeship at Mercedes-Benz and trained as an automotive sales assistant. You could say the star is etched into my brain. I know the brand, I love the cars, and I've never wanted to drive anything else – Mercedes is simply cool.

I bought my 190 E in Duisburg after taking a train there with a one-way ticket from Munich. At first, I was sceptical because the car was so dirty. There were bits of cobwebs everywhere. But the sporty body kit was great, and the rest of the car was in top condition. And I definitely didn't want to take the train back, so I bought the car there and then. At the time, I actually assumed it was just a standard 'Baby-Benz' and bought the car without really knowing much about it. It wasn't until a few days later that I realised it was a rare model.

I added the 'Berlin 2000' stickers later – first the teddy bears, then the signatures of people supporting the 'Olympic Games in Berlin 2000' campaign. I stuck everything on myself, sometimes using a magnifying glass and a Matchbox car as a template. Before that, I had the car reconditioned and valued, so I know every inch of it.

The best moments actually happen on the motorway. Thumbs up, indicators on, little children shouting: 'Dad, look!' Every day in the car brings new encounters. I love the fact that it creates stories that stick with you, whether they're brief interactions or little anecdotes with fans."

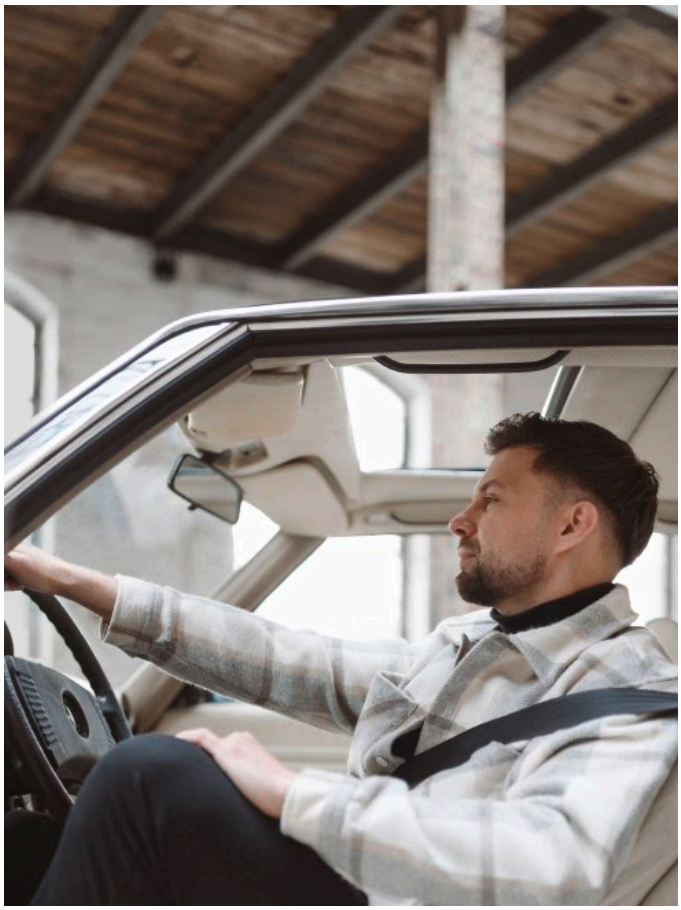


"Wherever I stop, people come and chat to me about the car. It truly is unique and there are only 180 of them in the whole world"



“I come from a family of Mercedes enthusiasts, which is why I feel such a deep connection to the brand”





RICCARDO MANNHOEFER, BERLIN, GERMANY
450 SLC COUPÉ, 1973

“Berlin, Alexanderplatz. I’m stopped at a red light with my sunroof open, listening to music, when suddenly this rapper waves at me. Someone who isn’t exactly known for his polite manner. He walks over to me, grins at me, and says: ‘Great car!’ That really stood out to me, although people have often approached me about my SLC in Berlin. I drive around town a lot – past the Victory Column, for example, to the Café am Neuen See. People are always delighted to see me. They smile, say hello, and wave. I get the feeling they’re just happy for me and my beautiful car. There’s no envy.

I come from a family of Mercedes enthusiasts, which is why I feel such a deep connection to the brand. I suppose I’m quite a nostalgic person. To me, the SLC is as sporty as it is classic. With its standard eight-cylinder engine, the 107 series offers an unrivalled driving experience. I love the louvre windows, which are unique to Mercedes-Benz, and the elegant coupé silhouette without a B-pillar. I also really wanted a car with electric windows, which were available as an optional extra at the time. Before I bought the car, it had been sitting in a barn for years. I then restored it with my dad. It was quite an experience. So I always associate it with him and the time we spent together.”

Photos: Daniel Camino


B OA 997 H

“We love this car. In the jungle, you really get that 4x4 feeling”





INGA AND INGO BARTSCH, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA
450 SL RALLYE, 1974

“We acquired our car in 2021 – a true classic: a 450 SL, built in 1974. We were looking for a convertible that would allow us to drive through the jungle and get up close to the parrots. The 450 SL caught our eye right from the start. We converted it into a rally car, inspired by the original rally cars from the C and R 107 series of the late 1970s.

Our focus was on authentic details such as the original BBS-Mahle rims, the Petri steering wheel, and the iconic halogen headlights. Of course, underbody protection is also essential. We raised the vehicle slightly and widened the track – so we can drive anywhere, even through streams, and really enjoy our adventures.

We love this car. In the jungle, you really get that 4x4 feeling. But driving through the city with the roof down has a charm all of its own. We also offer tours by car: through the rainforest surrounding the Arenal Volcano, cruising the river landscapes and mangroves of the Pacific coast, or exploring remote jungle roads in the interior. We drive through small villages, along gravel tracks, and across shallow rivers. On the way, we stop regularly to watch the animals: parrots in the treetops, monkeys by the roadside, sloths high up in the trees.

But the vehicles themselves are also a constant source of genuine entertainment. One car is enough to cause a commotion, but when there are several of them on the road, even the police stop, get in the car, and ask if they can take a photo. Old vehicles like these are simply a joy to drive – on all kinds of roads, both in the jungle and in the city.”

Photos: David Klammer, Birgit Fuchs, Klemens Holzleitner

BIRGIT FUCHS AND KLEMENS HOLZLEITNER
INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA
290 GD PUCH, 1998

"Klemens and I spent four years travelling through North and South America in our Puch, a 290 GD from 1998. We bought it from the Austrian military and completely dismantled it in preparation for our tour. It took us almost two years. We handled and cleaned every single screw and put each one back in place. I got to the point where I could hardly wait to finally get going.

It's hard to put four years into words. I can't really say what the best part was. I suppose it was those special little moments along the way that have stuck in my mind. The morning atmosphere in Patagonia – just the two of us, not a soul in sight. Or autumn in Alaska, when you're driving through the mist and suddenly the sun breaks through, making the colours glow. At times like that, we just sat in silence.

For me, what makes our Puch special is the sound of the engine. Our old diesel. It doesn't sound spectacular, but there's something steady about it, something dependable. I really love that. I have to say, the car is incredibly robust. We haven't had a single major problem in the last four years. That makes you feel good – especially when you're travelling so far away.

At the moment, the car is in the garage. But we're already thinking about where we could go next. We have loads of photos from the trip. I printed one of them out and gave it to Klemens for his last birthday. When I look at it, I feel a deep longing. There's so much going on out there. You get to experience so much. Time passes differently than it does in everyday life. And there are certainly plenty of possible destinations."





"We're already thinking about where we could go next"



Photos: Robert Grischek





JANA STEIGER, BERLIN, GERMANY
220 SE, 1962

"I like things with a patina. Visible signs of wear and tear tell stories, and that's exactly what interests me – which is why I'm studying restoration. I'm not keen on recreating things just as they were when they were new. Traces of use are part of life. They are the reason an object interests me in the first place. My 'Fintail' comes from Sweden, and you can still tell. On the front of the car above the radiator grille, there are small dents caused by gravel. And then there's this little roller blind in front of the radiator grille, which I can pull down from inside the car to stop the engine from freezing in cold weather. I think details like that are brilliant.

One day, I found an old folding ruler in a pocket of the driver's door, probably from the '70s or '80s. The original owner was a building contractor. I sometimes imagine that he used to carry this very same folding ruler around at his building sites. Of course, I don't really know, but it's fun to make up these stories.

When I bought the car in 2023, I actually only intended to try it out for a year or two. I wanted to take on something new. But I really do love driving it, whether in the city or in the countryside around Berlin. Now I can't imagine ever selling it."





“You don’t just drive a car like that. You have to feel it”

HERMI KÜRNER, WELS, AUSTRIA
170, 1931

“Whenever anyone asks me where I got this lovely car, I always say: ‘I married into it.’ In 1964, my husband spotted the car while he was driving an empty coach through Carinthia and bought it there and then. It has now been in the family for 62 years. What’s more, it is a truly unique vehicle – the only 170 model from 1931 still on the road.

It still has its first engine, a six-cylinder that produces 32 hp. Everything is original. We haven’t replaced anything, neither the gearbox nor the differential. The car was completely overhauled in 2015. This year, the engine was fitted with new crankshaft bearings, a spur gear, and new valve springs.

My husband and I used to run a coach company and organised countless trips over the years. I have travelled two and a half million kilometres around Europe by bus. Driving wasn’t just my job – it was my life. I feel at home everywhere. In Tirana just as much as in Stuttgart.

In 2000, my husband retired and closed the company down. After that, we went on quite a few trips in our classic cars. But he died suddenly six years ago. We were together for 50 years. I felt like I was only half a person. I couldn’t get into our ‘oldie’ any more. When I sat in the car, I felt as though he was sitting behind me.

One year after his death, I decided I had to do something about it. I went on a long journey around the Balkans. That’s where my husband and I met, and we had the best times there because we spent so much time driving together. I did the tour in my ’74 ‘Stroke Eight’. It felt like I had closed that chapter of my life with Gerhard, my husband. After that, I was able to get back into the 170. I drove along the Adriatic coast to Tirana, took a trip along the Danube to the Black Sea, and drove as far as the Amber Coast. I entered car rallies and won them all.

These days, I prefer to travel on my own – even at the age of 76. I enjoy not living by the clock anymore, as I had to back when I was a bus driver and tour guide.

Stepping into the 170 is like stepping into another world. You don’t just drive a car like that. You have to feel it. Listen to it and be alert. On the motorway, I usually drive at around 82 kilometres per hour. That suits the car best, when the differential is at its smoothest. The car has a three-speed Maybach gearbox with overdrive and semi-automatic control. It takes a lot of the strain off you on the motorway. So I just sit there in the car and wave to the lorry drivers as they overtake me.”

Photos: private archive, Patrick Pilz

“This car is a way of life”



ROBERT FARKEN, BOULDER, USA
560 SL, 1988

“My car is a 560 SL, built in 1988. To be honest, I had no idea what was in store for me. But when I went to the US, I decided to be open to new experiences and do unconventional things. And then there was this car. I bought it from a mechanic, who in turn got it from an elderly man who had moved from California to Colorado. Of course, such an old car is bound to need maintenance from time to time. This automatically means you have to find out more about it. So gradually, you begin to understand how it works – or, indeed, why it doesn’t. I’m just getting the hang of it. I actually think that’s pretty cool. It’s not like modern cars, which beep at you all the time. I really like that.

This car is a way of life. Just cruising. Soft and relaxed. Almost as if you’re floating. I live in Boulder, right on the eastern edge of the Rockies. It’s a crazy place. First there is this flat, wide expanse of land – and then, out of nowhere, there are mountains. As soon as you drive off, you can see this panorama. When I drive to my training sessions, I sometimes take the longer routes along back roads that stretch on forever, past ranches and always with the mountains in view. It’s really relaxing.

I’m a middle-distance runner and I train here with a running group. And I have to say that I feel so much more ready to train after the drive here in my car. Not stressed by the rush-hour traffic, but in a good mood. It really does have a positive effect on you. For me, the car is part of the whole experience. My training, the mountains, that feeling of freedom. I really want to take the car back to Germany with me when my time here is up. Unless I win a medal at a World Championship first. If that happens, I’ll give it to my coach – I promised him I would.”



MONIKA BETHGE, STUTTGART, GERMANY
170 S, 1950

"When my father was a little boy, he had this neighbour. A manager, as we would say today. Every morning, the neighbour was picked up by his driver in a 170 S. And my father stood there open-mouthed and thinking: 'When I grow up, I'd like to have a car like that too.'

It was a real childhood dream – one he was able to fulfil years later. As a Mercedes-Benz employee, he was dispatched to Thailand for two years, and there he came across one of these very cars, albeit in a state of complete disrepair.

It was a Sindelfingen vehicle that was exported by a Swiss company in 1950. It was used as a taxi in Bangkok and had been painted eggshell grey, in five thick coats. The dashboard had been cut open to make room for the taximeter. It was equipped for tropical climates with ventilation slots in the bonnet instead of heating. So it was somewhat sensitive to the cold. But my father brought it back to Sindelfingen.

He doesn't drive the car anymore, but my brother still uses it to chauffeur many a happy wedding couple. These vehicles are just like people – full of quirks and oddities, so you can't just get into the car and drive off. It needs preheating, then you have to pull the choke, and the clutch travel is huge. That's motoring in the truest sense of the word. It does take a bit of work. And it takes feeling. You need to be familiar with the sound of the engine so that you can tell when something is wrong. This car is something really special. Almost like a member of the family. You have to treat it with respect and take great care of it. My dad said we could sell it one day, but we'll never do that."

"This car is something really special. Almost like a member of the family"





Photos: Dieter Rebmann


SCHAFFRATH
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CALLA
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SCHAFFRATH1923.COM

A CLASSIC, REINVENTED

Text by Lutz Schilling



THE NEW C-CLASS

140 YEARS OF INNOVATION

The new electric C-Class embodies what Mercedes-Benz has stood for over the past 140 years: driving automotive progress through a pioneering spirit and innovation. As well as featuring its highlights, we also look back at its roots



The origins of the C-Class – the 190
The 190 embodies the automotive promise of the 1980s – it has technical precision, serves as a cultural status symbol, and feels like a sports car. Affectionately known as the “Baby-Benz”, it proves that compactness and efficiency do not preclude premium standards but rather redefine them.

MERCEDES-BENZ C 400 4MATIC electric | Combined energy consumption*: 18.5–14.1 kWh/100 km | Combined CO_2 emissions*: 0 g/km | CO_2 class*: A

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG



Functional and designed to ergonomic standards
The interior of the Mercedes-Benz 190 features a clean design with high-quality craftsmanship and is entirely focused on functionality, comfort, and durability. The 190 E 2.3-16 adds sporty touches – with more contoured seats, striking details, and a driver-focused ambience.

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG



A first-class interior
Analogue and digital aesthetics blend seamlessly, with a large trim element linking the centre console to the instrument panel and the MBUX Hyperscreen. The ambient lighting along the lower edge of the trim enhances the floating effect.



Athletic and durable
The coupé-like silhouette and powerful GT rear end highlight the new C-Class's long-distance capabilities. Accordingly, it boasts a range of up to 762 kilometres[1] (WLTP) and can be charged for up to 325 kilometres[2] just in ten minutes.

[1] The actual range depends on numerous factors, such as individual driving style, environmental conditions, battery aging, auxiliary consumers such as air conditioning, optional equipment, tires, payload, and route profile, and may therefore differ from the WLTP value specified.

[2] The specified recharged range (WLTP) after 10 minutes was determined using the maximum DC charging power in accordance with ISO/SAE 12906 under the conditions described therein.



Role model and trailblazer
The recipe for success: impressive driving dynamics, refined aerodynamics, efficiency, and safety on a par with higher-end models. Between 1992 and 1996, battery-electric prototypes of the 190 E were true pioneering models and contributed to the electric heritage of Mercedes-Benz – and thus also to that of the new electric C-Class.

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG



Performance pioneer
Power, aerodynamic kits and spoiler styling turned the Evo 1 and Evo 2 models, developed for motorsport, into a cultural phenomenon. They set the direction at Mercedes-Benz: with the launch of the C-Class in 1993, this philosophy became firmly established, and AMG became an integral part of the model range.

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG



Status and presence
The iconic illuminated grille dominates the front and offers a new take on the classic chrome grille. Its animations visually accompany the opening, closing, and charging of the vehicle.



Iconic look
The signature design of the standard LED High Performance headlamps, with their innovative star design, and the “visor” look of the light elements give the new C-Class an unmistakable appearance both day and night.



Distinctive and well-balanced
The front end of the 190 features a clean, understated design: precise lines, a distinctive grille, and balanced proportions. The rectangular headlights emphasise the vehicle's technical and functional character and define its focused, timeless appearance.

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG



Driving dynamics and comfort at their finest
The key ingredients: a powerful electric motor with an innovative two-speed transmission, the optional AIRMATIC air suspension with intelligent chassis control, and rear-axle steering.

Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

JUNKERS

AIRCRAFT



THE ORIGINAL IS BACK

The JUNKERS A50 HERITAGE

Experience pure nostalgia with this tribute to the legendary 1929 sport aircraft. Fly solo or with a passenger in an ultralight of the 600-kg class – equipped with the latest safety standards.

Experience how technology and heart combine!

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“IMPACT IS CREATED THROUGH INTERACTION”

Minutes by Robert Göring



Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

Ida Wolf heads Development Innovation and Operations at Mercedes-Benz. She tells us what appeals to her about her role and why, for her, innovation is a question of attitude

My own motoring history began when I was 18, and it was a modest start. The somewhat stiff reverse gear on my Peugeot 206, nicknamed “Olivier”, proved a challenge in every parking space, and to make matters worse, the car had the turning radius of a lorry. Nevertheless, it gave me a sense of freedom. These days, I drive a Mercedes-Benz GLE and enjoy the comfort and safety. The fact that my work helps all drivers to have those same feelings makes me proud.

I’m not the sort of person who needs to be centre-stage. I love what goes on behind the scenes: walking through our workshops, chatting with colleagues, or seeing a prototype on wheels for the first time. It’s moments like these that make me realise why I love my job: this is where the ideas that shape our products are born.

What makes my role in the R&D division particularly exciting is the wide variety of tasks. We support a vehicle from the initial concept right through to production and beyond. We examine processes such as digitalisation, intellectual property, and the recycling of materials at the end of their life cycle and ensure they are aligned with one another. It all makes my job so fascinating. I think if you look at issues in isolation, you lose sight of the bigger picture, because impact is created through the interaction of different factors.

This year at Mercedes-Benz, we are celebrating “140 Years of Innovation”. Not every idea we had made it into the car – but not a single one was wasted. They all opened up new perspectives for us and helped us move forward. What matters most is continuity and the courage to keep going. If we had stopped asking questions after the Benz Patent-Motorwagen, we wouldn’t be where we are today: right at the forefront. For me, innovation is less of a goal and more of an attitude: it’s about remaining curious and questioning the status quo.

Where is mobility headed in the future – and what does tomorrow’s society expect from it? This is the question we ask ourselves every day. We don’t just observe trends. We take them a step further – and anticipate the changes they will bring about. Take artificial intelligence, for example. Two years ago, we were discussing when it would become a reality for our teams. These days, we don’t just use AI at work – it’s also part of our lives. This shifts our focus away from the question of the technology itself and towards the issue of responsibility. How can we use AI effectively? How do we bring it to life for our customers?

Equally groundbreaking developments are autonomous driving, hyper-personalisation, and the next step in e-mobility. These are all issues that will transform our industry – and which we at Mercedes-Benz don’t just want to accompany, but also shape. With a strong brand and 140 years of automotive history behind it.

SELMA SELMAN

Text by Dr Anne Vieth

Selma Selman, “Ophelia’s Awakening”, 2024
Oil on a Mercedes bonnet, 75 x 140 x 40 cm, Mercedes-Benz Art Collection, © Selma Selman



Photos: Jürgen Altmann (Stuttgart), Mehmed Mahmutović; courtesy of Selma Selman

The MERCEDES-BENZ ART COLLECTION is one of the most prestigious corporate art collections in the world. Director Dr Anne Vieth presents her highlights here. This time: the painted bonnet of an A-Class – the work of an artist with a long and deep emotional connection to the Mercedes-Benz brand

Right from the start, the brand has sought a close relationship to art and design, a testament to the innovative power of Mercedes-Benz. This creative openness is clearly visible in the long list of visual artists who have driven and continue to drive vehicles by Mercedes-Benz out of an aesthetic conviction. The artist Selma Selman takes this fascination one step further by using doors and bonnets of Mercedes-Benz models as her canvases of choice. In muted colours, she paints self-portraits and documents scenes from her life on these used car parts. Like the motifs, these discarded Mercedes-Benz parts also help tell the artist's personal story. The daughter of a scrap dealer, she grew up in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where she spent time in the workshop learning about hard work and the responsible use of materials. The practice of recycling had a lasting impact on the artist's life. After all, a retired Mercedes-Benz wasn't junk – it contributed to the livelihood of the family, who, as Romani, belong to one of the oldest minority groups in Europe.

Her unconventional canvases are therefore a part of Selma Selman's identity and reveal her strong emotional connection to the brand. Her early success as an artist allowed her to purchase her very first Mercedes-Benz. Around that same time, she also founded the organisation "Get the Heck to School" (Marš u školu) to give Romani girls around the world access to education.

Selma Selman's art is an act of resistance with a focus on those who are often overlooked or who are trapped in rigid social structures. She continuously scrutinises stereotypical female gender roles – including those ascribed to the women in her own family – without ever presenting women as victims. Instead, she highlights their strengths to show how much potential is squandered through social oppression. Her life and work revolve around the individual right to self-determination.

"Ophelia's Awakening" is part of a series of the same title in which the artist places Ophelia from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" in a new light. She is no longer portrayed as a passive woman driven to madness, ultimately drowning in a brook, but instead as a confident and bold figure. Vulnerability and determination – two of Selman's main artistic themes – are expressed through the act of stepping on a nail. Her paintings, performances, videos, and writing lend expression to anger, desperation, and the urge to break through existing power structures in equal measure.

"Ophelia's Awakening" is currently on show at the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart. Selma's works can also be seen in the exhibition "Power Lines. An Exhibition of the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection" in Budapest.



Selma Selman in her first Mercedes-Benz, 2020

Find out more about the **MERCEDES-BENZ ART COLLECTION** and current exhibitions at **benz.me/art**

VISION: ICONIC

Text by Katalina Farkas



140 YEARS OF INNOVATION

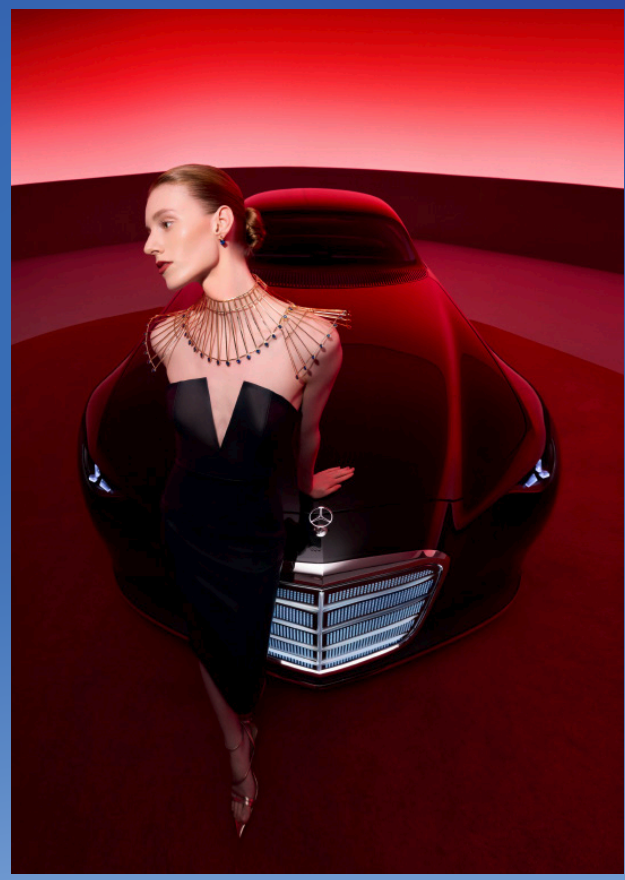
A GENUINE STATEMENT

A bit more of everything please! In the 1920s, this was the credo not just for fashion, but also car design. An all-pervasive belief in progress manifested itself in clear silhouettes and bodywork. There was no false modesty when it came to the selection of colours and materials. Anything was possible, from gold and chrome to ebony, velvet, and silk. Car bonnets were long, radiator grilles bold, interior furnishings contoured and confident. The art deco design language exuded opulence while conveying sophistication and elegance.

The Vision Iconic, which was introduced in 2025 at Shanghai Fashion Week, pays homage to this era alongside the associated Capsule Collection, also presented in Shanghai. This collection of outfits is inspired by the colour scheme and materials of the show car. In total, there are six outfits featuring casting pearls, metallic threads, velvet, and feathers in designs that could have come straight from the Roaring Twenties. The top with feathers, the geometric necklace, and the night blue jumpsuit may well be dazzling on the catwalk, but these statement pieces could just as easily have turned heads in a 1920s speakeasy.

The show car itself is reminiscent of the W 111, W 108, and the Mercedes-Benz Pullman. It appears majestic, with velvet, handwoven leather, and mother-of-pearl inlay adorning the interior. However, it also conveys unmistakable optimism for the future, as demonstrated by the solar paint as well as various neuromorphic computing applications. This novel computer architecture is based on the neuronal structures and processes of the human brain.

The Vision Iconic is thus a pioneer in two senses of the word. Firstly, it reflects the optimism of the Golden Twenties to show how the brand's design legacy looks when combined with pioneering technology. Secondly, it demonstrates exactly why neo deco – a fresh take on art deco – was declared one of the most exciting design trends of the year.





Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG

THE ART OF ARRIVAL

Text by Christina Finke



Photos: 2026 20th Century Studios, Mercedes-Benz AG

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2

IN THEATERS MAY 1





There are characters who enter a room. And then there are those who make an entrance. In “The Devil Wears Prada 2”, Runway Magazine’s editor-in-chief Miranda Priestly undoubtedly belongs to the second category.

Twenty years after making their iconic turns as Miranda, Andy, Emily, and Nigel, Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, and Stanley Tucci return to the fashionable streets of New York City and the sleek offices of Runway Magazine in the eagerly awaited sequel to the 2006 phenomenon that defined a generation.

For Mercedes-Benz, too, this brings things full circle: an S-Class was part of 2006’s visual DNA, and now the brand is celebrating its return to the big screen with an even stronger presence. This time, the Mercedes-Maybach S-Class is the hero vehicle for Priestly – embodying the timeless elegance and refined power that define the world of high fashion and luxury. What connects Maybach and “The Devil Wears Prada 2” is a shared philosophy: power doesn’t need to loudly announce itself – it’s felt in the details. Additionally, other vehicles from the Mercedes-Benz and Maybach portfolios can be seen in the film, reaffirming that cars with the three-pointed star are timeless and never go out of fashion.

Shortly before the film’s release, the new Mercedes-Maybach S-Class was unveiled to the public – along with an exclusive MANUFAKTUR one-off model designed for the film’s world premiere in New York City. “The Devil Wears Prada 2” debuted exclusively in theatres on 1 May 2026.



BRIDGES, BAYOUS & BEYOND

Text by Katalina Farkas and Lutz Schilling
Photos by Matthew Jones

140 YEARS OF INNOVATION



Right in the heart of Houston: unspoilt nature, a fascinating history, and a welcoming home that combines both. For our anniversary edition, we visit the Bridge House – a place that honours its past and uses it as a basis to create something new

The first thing that hits you – almost literally – is the humidity. The heat hasn't quite taken hold yet on this sunny day in March, which for the locals is still only mildly warm. Nevertheless, you already get a taste of the sweltering temperatures for which Houston is famous, and which often start to rise as early as spring.

Houston is one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country and the fourth-largest in the US. In the past, this Texan metropolis experienced a boom fuelled by oil and gas that turned it into a globally recognised energy hub. Today, rocket technology and cutting-edge medical research are driving the city's seemingly unstoppable growth. It is no wonder that the sheer scale of the motorways here is impressive, even by American standards. They criss-cross Houston, encircling the city – sometimes spanning more than 20 lanes, if you include the many slip and feeder roads – and connecting the region's many different centres like lifelines. The traffic is busy, sometimes slowing and stopping before moving at high speeds again. It's a good thing that we always feel completely safe in our Mercedes-AMG E 53 HYBRID. As is typical for cars in this country, it is heavily motorised, and we can always rely fully on its driver assistance systems.

AN OASIS IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

Our destination is the Bridge House, a single-family residence designed by Lake Flato Architects, adorned with numerous design awards. At first glance, its location seems incongruous with the wild and somewhat rugged landscape of Houston. We drive through a neighbourhood that is reminiscent of the America we know from the movies. An America that reflects the American Dream with its pursuit of more, of a life framed with immaculately manicured lawns in front of low-rise wooden houses and basketball hoops in oversized driveways.

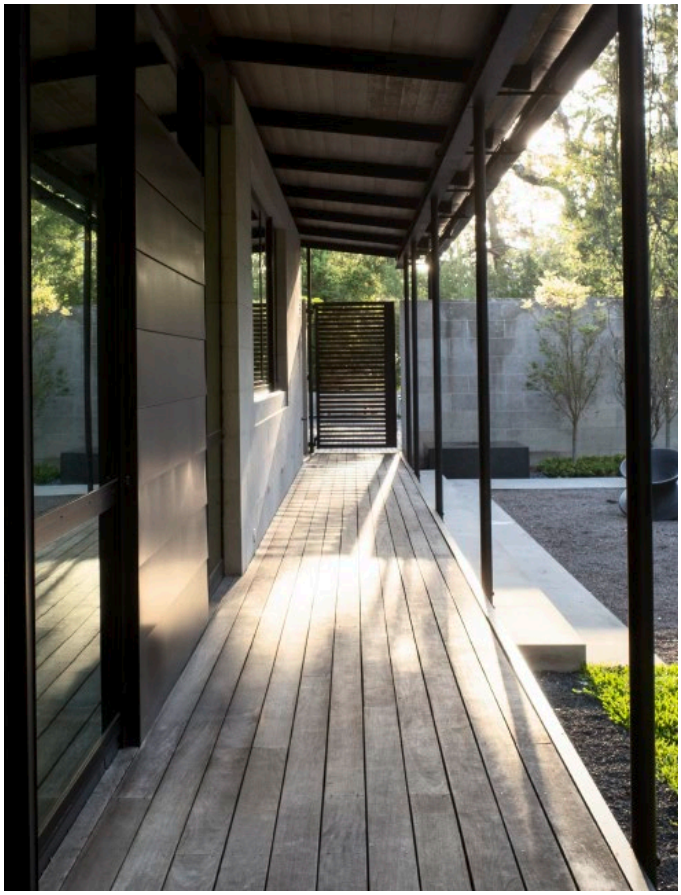
And then, almost abruptly, the scene changes. The grounds of the Bridge House defy the orderliness we have just witnessed. We are surrounded by dense vegetation, towering pines, and spreading oaks, interspersed with undergrowth, palm trees, and ferns in a patch of unspoilt woodland that seems to defy the usual suburban aesthetic. The path to the house doesn't lead up a driveway, but straight into this greenery.

MERCEDES-AMG E 53 HYBRID 4MATIC+ Estate
Weighted, combined energy consumption*: 18.4–17.8 kWh/100 km plus 3.5–3.1 l/100 km | Combined fuel consumption discharged battery*: 9.5–8.9 l/100 km | Weighted, combined CO_2 emissions*: 80–70 g/km | Weighted, combined CO_2 class*: B | CO_2 class discharged battery*: G

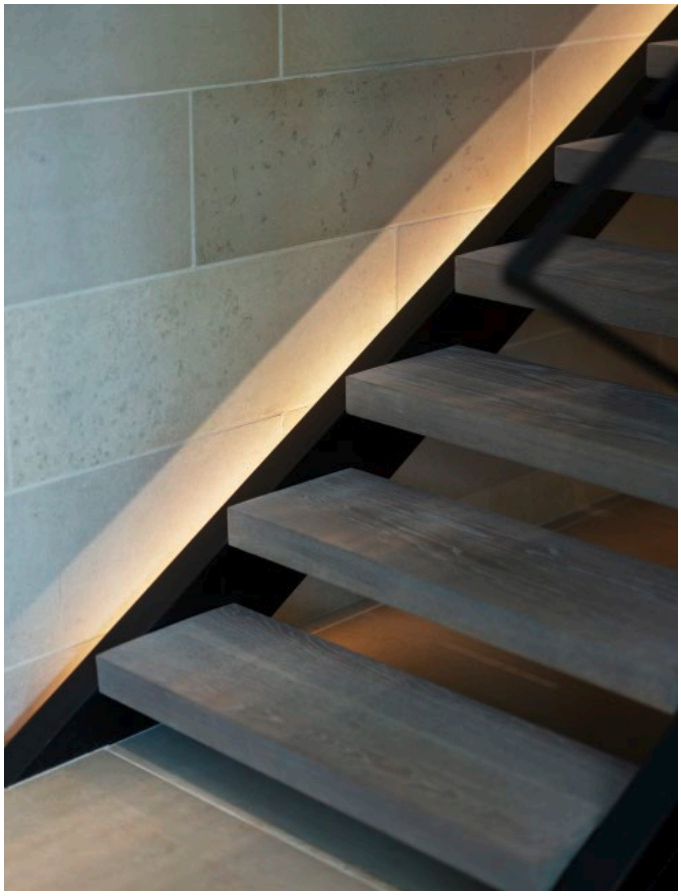


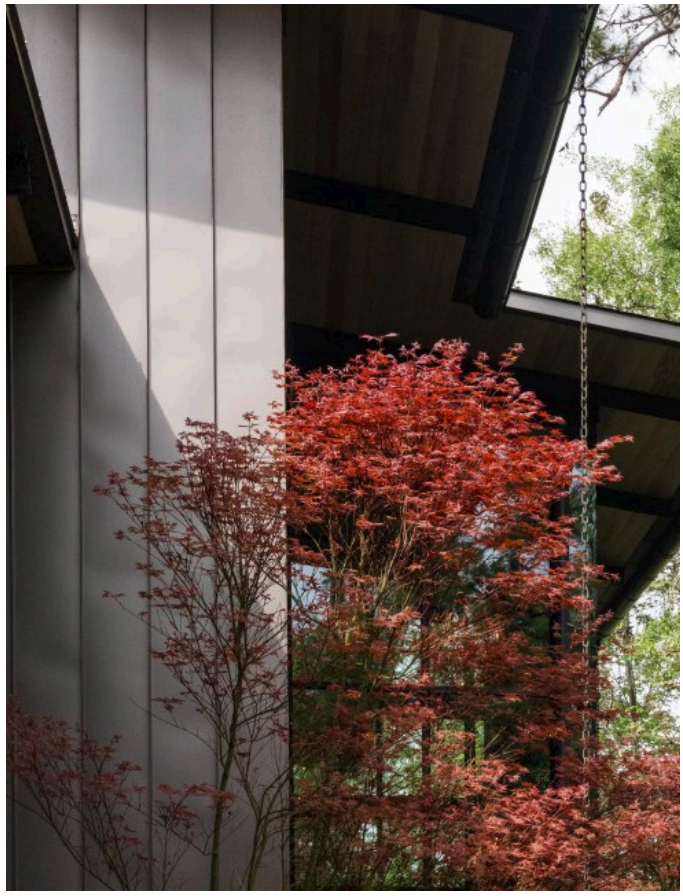












As we reach the Bridge House, park our car in the designated parking space, and get out, we are already missing the pleasant coolness of the car's interior. Anyone wishing to visit the Bridge House needs to brace themselves for the rising temperatures and high humidity before they walk the last few metres to the house.

Those few metres, however, could not be more beautifully designed. A slender bridge made of light-coloured wood and a metal railing spans a narrow stream bed that winds its way across the grounds in front of the house. It looks rather inconspicuous amongst the towering palm and pine trees on one side and the huge oak on the other side of the bridge. What's more, it's almost completely dried up at the moment. But appearances can be deceiving. The ravine is not merely decorative, but essential infrastructure. When it rains, it channels the water into a nearby stream that flows into Buffalo Bayou. But more on that later.

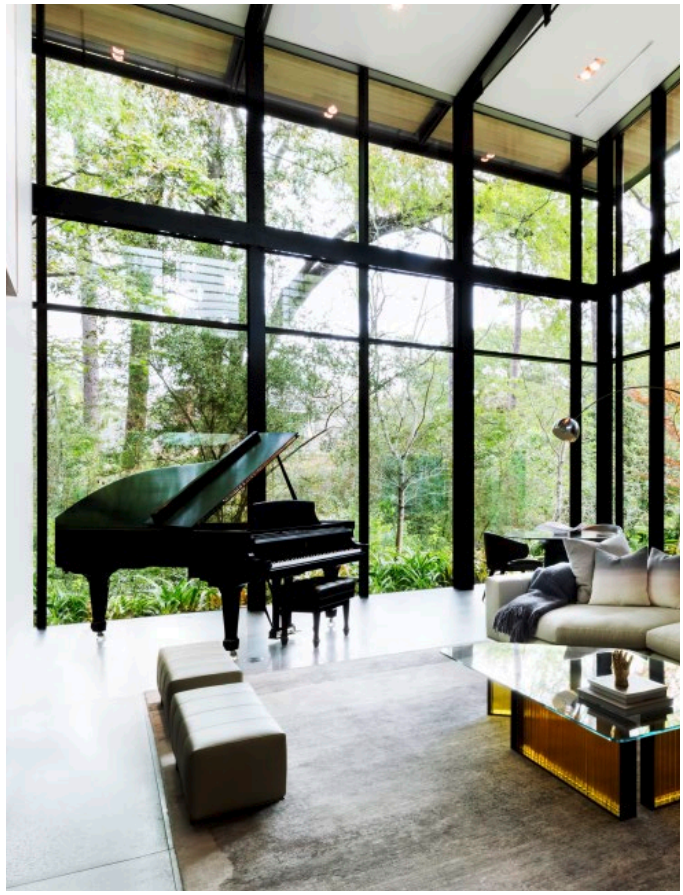
APPRECIATING THE LOCATION'S NATURAL BEAUTY AND CHARACTER

Back to the bridge that gives the place its name, which leads to the elegant two-storey building with its central window spanning both storeys. Steel beams support the large glass surface. The light filtering through the canopy casts playful patterns onto the dark metal cladding parts of the house, whose colour and vertical structure echo the mature pine trees on the property. The bronze colour of the metal cladding is modelled on pine bark, and the spacing between the vertical metal segments corresponds to the width of the trunks. A detail that may not immediately catch the eye, but which illustrates Vicki Yuan and Lake Flato's attention to detail. The rest of the façade is clad in warm limestone, which is typical of the region.

"Our approach is to honour the natural character of a place. Its history, its ecology, and its terrain," says Vicki Yuan, who is responsible for the design of the house. The owners, Sharalynn and Tim Fenn, were already living on the property – in an older house that included a bridge that could be crossed by car, which meant that the location became quite popular.

The new bridge was to remain a defining feature, but no longer be drivable. Yuan explains that the bridge formed the starting point for the architectural design and, as it happens, also gave the house its name. However, parts of the old bridge still remain and have been incorporated into a path that winds its way around the ravine at the back of the garden.

The design and planning phase of the house was carried out in close consultation with the Fenns, who



"The owners are very meticulous and precise, and this is reflected in the Bridge House. Our close collaboration has resulted in something truly unique"

VICKI YUAN, ARCHITECT







particularly valued the privacy afforded by the dense woodland on the site. “One of their greatest wishes was to preserve all the trees. Not a single one was to be felled.” This meant that the new floor plan had to resemble that of the old building. “The previous house was actually perfectly aligned with the lie of the land. The new design, on the other hand, was a bit sleeker and more compact,” says Yuan. The Bridge House is not just a residential building. It has the relaxed feel of a remote holiday home – and all this in the heart of one of the largest cities in the USA.

A WINDOW TO NATURE

The two-storey, light-filled living room also creates a sense of spaciousness, with its huge, protruding window jutting out into the evergreen landscape. “This window is the centrepiece of the house,” says Yuan. A unique work of art in its own right, surrounded by pictures painted by renowned contemporary artists from all over the world that line the walls and ledges. “It creates an interaction between art and nature that gets you thinking,” says Yuan. The owners also confirm this. “It feels like living inside a work of art, where everything complements each other and fits together seamlessly,” says Sharalynn Fenn. “Art that lives and breathes,” Tim adds.

The connection with nature also continues inside the house, where the warm, natural walnut panelling contrasts with the clean, white surfaces and runs as a recurring feature through the various areas of the house. The interior design was conceived by Lauren Rottet of Rottet Studio.

LIGHTNESS AND AIRINESS

The bridge inside the house is Yuan’s design. It provides an architectural touch that pays homage to the site’s history. Halfway to the ceiling in the living room, there is a walkway that connects the upper rooms. It looks just the same as the new bridge that now leads to the house. “The wooden slats of the bridge let light in,” says Yuan. “Nothing should detract from the airiness of the room.”

The main room is the living room. It is fully in keeping with Yuan’s concept, feeling light and spacious without you feeling lost in it. A bespoke wooden panelling, inspired by the vertical slats of the house’s exterior façade, separates the dining area from the entrance hall, creating a spatial division that does not feel confining.



VICKI YUAN

For around two decades, Vicki Yuan has been working at Lake Flato on high-quality residential and hospitality projects that showcase craftsmanship and a deep connection to their surroundings. She values a collaborative process between clients, design teams, and craftspeople and endeavours to find bespoke solutions that develop from working together so closely. She is convinced that well-designed architecture enhances everyday experiences and creates timeless authenticity.



"Tim and Sharalynn wanted to create a home that was comfortable for everyday living, yet stylishly refined to entertain guests," says Yuan. That's why she and her team created a "working kitchen" that can be hidden behind a walnut louvered door, as well as a "social kitchen": a large round table with a counter that invites people to talk.

The Bridge House is as welcoming as it is aesthetically pleasing, and – at the owners' express request – it is thoroughly sustainable. "As well as employing a range of technical solutions, we have also used locally sourced materials that have withstood the local conditions for years. Even though there are only a few clouds in the sky today, Houston suffers from heat, humidity, and storms," explains Yuan.

"BAYOU CITY" – A GIFT TO HOUSTON

This is another reason why the city is known as the "Bayou City". The ground is marshy, and when it rains, the soil cannot absorb all the water. The problem is solved using a dense network of natural and artificially extended waterways called bayous. These run through the town and drain away the large volumes of water that fall in a very short space of time during heavy rain. Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou are not merely geographical terms. They have shaped the city's structure and its development since time immemorial.

At the same time, the bayous are more than just critical infrastructure. Along their banks, you can find parks, footpaths, and quiet areas, offering a contrast to the dense, car-centric city. These green corridors bring nature into the city whilst serving as a reminder that Houston could not survive without this water management system. The ravine in the grounds of the Bridge House may have seemed rather unremarkable when we arrived, but it is actually part of precisely this system. It has already protected the house from several floods by collecting rainwater and channelling it towards the larger bayous.

"The house is a tribute to natural waterways, inspired by the lightness of a bridge," says Vicki Yuan as she bids us farewell. We leave the property behind us, walk back across the narrow bridge, get in the car, and drive away. First along narrow roads, then wider ones, and finally we reach the wide expanse of the motorways again.

Our AMG E 53 accelerates effortlessly, carrying us alongside Buffalo Bayou towards the city centre. And yet a touch of the Bridge House lingers – the tranquillity amongst the trees, perhaps the natural way in which the architecture and the landscape blend together there in perfect harmony. And every time we cross a bridge, we think of the Bridge House once again. Not as a spectacular alternative to the city, but as a retreat that shows just how close together the two can be.



IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE



Visionaries provide new impetus and create experiences that can touch and inspire us. With their courage to pioneer new paths today, they can shape the world of tomorrow. We would like to introduce you to three trailblazing individuals demonstrating the power that creative visions can hold

Texts by Katalina Farkas and Robert Göring



REVOLUTION IN THE SKY: ELOA GUILLOTIN

Eloa Guillotin comes from Brittany – a region that smells of sea and seaweed rather than aluminium and hot turbines. Despite this, ever since she was a child, the ISAE graduate has been fascinated by everything that moves in the sky, from aeroplanes to stars. Her dream of becoming an astronaut eventually led her to the prestigious aerospace university in Toulouse, in the south of France, which has been at the heart of European aviation for decades. It was there, together with two fellow students – Hugo Tarlé and Valentin Chomel – that the idea for the project of a lifetime was born, based on a vision of how to radically transform the way we fly. In 2020, the trio founded the aviation company Beyond Aero, breaking new ground by developing innovative aircraft that are powered by hydrogen and fuel cell technology, making the planes environmentally friendlier, yet cost-effective. "We spent the COVID-19 pandemic continually working on Clayton Christensen's theory of disruptive innovation. How can we move beyond carbon-based aviation and its environmental impact whilst still ensuring that European air travel remains economically viable?" This was the key question the trio asked themselves.

Since then, the aeronautical engineer and her team have been working towards their goal to launch the first six-passenger business jet for short- and medium-haul flights from European runways. Guillotin is not at all deterred by the fact that the BYA-1 prototype is not expected to become a production model until 2030. "Ten years may seem like a long time, but for the transformation of aviation, it is actually only a short period," she explains with calculated optimism. Backed by solid and reliable investors, this bold Breton is firmly convinced that her vision will take off. Profitability is always at the top of her agenda. After all, she already started several small businesses when she was still a first-year student. From her point of view, the lengthy certification processes are the biggest obstacle before an aircraft can enter series production. Plans for a state-of-the-art and equally disruptive manufacturing facility, as well as for the hydrogen jet itself, were already drawn up some time ago. The technology was also proven to work perfectly when the two-seater prototype made its maiden flight in 2024. As you would expect, Eloa and the entire Beyond Aero team celebrated with typical French savoir faire and the finest French champagne.

ELOA GUILLOTIN
The French aviation pioneer aims to develop a fuel-cell-powered business jet and bring it to market. Find out more at **www.beyond-aero.com**

Illustration: Mathis Burmeister/2 Agenten; Photo: ©Beyond Aero

ON THE POWER OF CONNECTIONS: DR COMFORT PEACE AYIKORU

Her goal is as urgent as it is deeply personal: Dr Comfort Ayikoru wants to prevent newborns from dying from avoidable causes. Her particular focus is on babies who have had an especially early, and consequently often difficult, start in life: premature babies born before the 37th week of pregnancy. For them, the first weeks are often a precarious balancing act, threatened by infection, weight loss, and hypothermia.

"In 2020, my cousin's newborn daughter died after being born prematurely," says Ayikoru, who now lives in Kampala, Uganda. "The clinic was unable to provide her with intensive care. We rushed her to another hospital, but on the way there, her body temperature dropped too low. It was a tragic, devastating loss for the whole family. I would have loved to meet my niece and watch her grow up."

Later, Ayikoru studied medicine in Mbarara, Uganda. She began to investigate. "I read everything I could find on the subject and spoke to fellow students and experts." Together, they set out to find a solution to a problem rooted largely in infrastructure. In many parts of Uganda, neonatal care remains critically limited. Only a small number of clinics are equipped with neonatal intensive care units. "Incubators, in particular, are too expensive for most facilities," she says. "That's where we saw an opportunity. And that's why we developed BuriCare."

The BuriCare Baby Carrier is a carrier system designed for newborns, allowing for skin-to-skin contact, thereby helping to stabilise body temperature and providing an effective approach to caring for premature babies. The so-called "kangaroo care" method is also recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), but it is far from universally practised. Sensors embedded in the carrier monitor temperature, heart rate, and oxygen saturation and sound an alert when readings fall into a critical range.

To make production as resource-efficient as possible, the team at BuriCare, which is supported by beVisioneers[1], relies on sustainable, locally produced fabrics made from renewable raw materials. The first pilot phase is set to begin shortly, with the product due to be launched in three years' time. "We've been working on this for so long," Ayikoru says. "Sometimes the task and the challenges ahead can feel overwhelming. But our vision and our dream are bigger than any of the problems. When I think of the lives we could save, it inspires me to keep going every day."

BEVISIONEERS
More information on the beVisioneers Fellowship can be found at **bevisioneers.world**



[1] beVisioneers: The non-profit organisation The DO School Fellowships gGmbH independently developed the Mercedes-Benz Fellowship and is responsible for overseeing it. Mercedes-Benz funds the programme with donations. The seed capital for the fellowship was raised by auctioning a 300 SLR "Uhlenhaut Coupé" from 1955. The beVisioneers Fellowship reflects important elements of Mercedes-Benz's corporate citizenship strategy, promotes ecological sustainability, and creates a strong sense of community.

Photos: beVisioneers: The Mercedes-Benz Fellowship, private archive



A GREEN VISION FOR CITIES: PAMELA CONRAD

Pamela Conrad's job has undoubtedly changed the way she views urban structures. Whenever she visits a new city, she finds it hard not to notice the urban design: pavements, lawns, materials – as a landscape architect, she notices every single detail, no matter how small. She notices because she sees both the challenges and the opportunities: "I can see what could be changed for the better, which is why I'm so optimistic."

Conrad was born with a natural sense of practical optimism. She was born in the Midwest, where she grew up on a farm in Missouri. Living far away from any urban areas, nature was an integral part of her everyday life. "The farm has made me who I am today. Especially the closeness to nature. But when I went to college, I realised just how rare such a connection is." As a landscape architect, she feels she can re-establish that connection. "It felt very empowering to create places where people can experience nature within cities."

Pamela Conrad also knows that landscapes can achieve far more than simply making cities more beautiful. Parks, university grounds, and streetscapes can contribute to cooling down overheated districts, promoting biodiversity, and sequestering carbon. "It's not just about creating beautiful places," she says. "The aim is to create resilient landscapes that can help us tackle some of the challenges we face."

In her work, Pamela Conrad uses a tool for measuring carbon footprints. She developed the tool herself because she recognised the need for it. "I wanted to know the carbon footprint of the project I'm working on," she recalls. She assumed there would already be a calculation tool for this. When she couldn't find one, she simply set about developing it herself.

What began as a spreadsheet became a digital tool called "Pathfinder". It enables designers to measure the carbon footprint of landscaping projects, thus helping them to rethink materials, paving, and planting. Today, more than 16,000 projects worldwide are recorded in the tool.

Today, Pamela Conrad is an avid advocate for approaching landscape design differently and speaks at UN climate conferences about the mission that continues to drive her: "I dream of cities that are full of life, with meadows instead of sterile lawns and trees that shade the streets. They are places where people can reconnect with nature as part of their everyday lives. It is a beautiful vision," says Conrad. "And it's very green."

PAMELA CONRAD
You can find out more about her work, her mission, and the "Pathfinder" tool on the website of Pamela Conrad's design studio, Climate Positive Design:
climatepositivedesign.org/

CAR INNOVATION



How do we shape the automotive industry's journey of innovation, and where is it heading? Dr Jörg Burzer, member of the Mercedes-Benz Group AG Board of Management and Chief Technology Officer, and Prof. Dr Stefan Reindl, CEO of the Institute for Automotive Economics at Nürtingen-Geislingen University of Applied Sciences, explore this topic

Interview by Lutz Schilling
Photos by Verena Müller

The anniversary of the car was celebrated earlier this year. What does this moment mean to you?

Prof. Reindl: The patent application in 1886 marked the beginning of personal mobility. And this is not just a matter of technology. It has become a defining feature of modern societies, without which our lives today would be inconceivable. I am fascinated by the fact that the car is a feat of engineering, but is also a matter of design and, above all, of practicality. That still impresses me.

Jörg Burzer: Two aspects of the incredible social change the car has brought about are particularly important to me: individual freedom and self-determination. Over the years, a sense of freedom has developed, which has found expression, for example, in an iconic design language. Just look at the 300 SL “Gullwing”.

Today, Mercedes-Benz is a global corporation. How does this benefit the culture of innovation?

Jörg Burzer: Innovation is always linked to competition. That’s why a global network is important for ensuring that competitive factors – such as technologies and social needs, which are not the same everywhere in the world – are taken into account in the development process. Take China, for example. There, topics such as electric mobility, digitalisation, and autonomous driving constantly present us with new challenges.

The culture of innovation varies from market to market. One of the differences compared with Germany is the approach to risk. In Germany, where we build outstanding cars such as the GLC, perfectionism is highly valued. But sometimes you just have to get started, even if it means taking a step back later because of mistakes made.

Prof. Reindl: Looking at Germany, I don’t think we’re in such a bad position. Patent applications, research intensity, and investment in research and development are above the EU average. In that respect, we have a strong research base. The real sticking point is the ability to scale up quickly and secure venture capital to get things off the ground. The mentality and mindset here in Germany are not the same as, say, in Silicon Valley. That holds us back.



PROF. DR STEFAN REINDL
Professor Dr Stefan Reindl has been in charge of a wide range of research projects at the Institute for Automotive Economics (Institut für Automobilwirtschaft, IfA) since 1997. He has been leading the institute as scientific director and CEO since 2018.



DR JÖRG BURZER
Jörg Burzer has been a member of the Board of Management of the Mercedes-Benz Group AG since 1 December 2021. As a board member, he heads the Development & Procurement division and is also chief technology officer. In this role, he is responsible at the Group level for the end-to-end development process at Mercedes-Benz Cars, as well as for procurement.

Professor Reindl, you are educating the next generation. What qualities do young people need today to drive innovation?

Prof. Reindl: In my view, young people need three things: Firstly, depth of expertise. We teach economics, but a sound understanding of the technology is essential in order to apply it effectively in management. Secondly, systems thinking and interdisciplinarity. Mobility today is an interconnected system. It ranges from energy supply and software to regulatory issues, the user experience, and sustainability. And thirdly, the ability to implement innovative projects in an agile manner and to learn from the process. In other words: test quickly, learn from the data, and repeat with improvements. The reality today is that innovation cycles are becoming shorter, driven by digitalisation and AI.

Jörg Burzer: The major innovations we need now are conceived as systems and modules, featuring intelligent interaction between hardware and software and our own operating system, which we call MB.OS (Mercedes-Benz Operating System). This has an impact on how we collaborate on development, particularly at a global level. For example, we are working with our partner Nvidia on our automated driving system. In China, however, we work with Momenta. This enables us to cater to the needs of individual customer groups. Expectations in China are different from those in Europe, for example.

The complexity involved in innovation is much greater today, and systemic thinking is a key concept in this context. And we also need to be brave. Not in the sense of risks associated with the product. But take Carl Benz, who was very brave. And in Bertha Benz, he had a practical partner who, as a courageous and strong woman with a high degree of self-determination, went on to bring the technology to the roads. These things always go hand in hand.

Mercedes-Benz talks about constantly reinventing the car. What do you mean by that? And furthermore, is there such a thing as "typical" Mercedes-Benz innovations?

Jörg Burzer: Groundbreaking innovations and inventions that we have introduced into our models and the automotive industry in collaboration with partners include safety innovations like ABS, ESP, and PRE-SAFE, for which the Mercedes-Benz brand is renowned. We are currently developing systems for autonomous driving, which we introduced to the S-Class in 2021 at Level 3. Currently, we are working on Level 4 projects using the new S-Class as the basis for our robotaxis – not yet in Germany, but hopefully soon.

"In Germany, perfectionism is highly valued. But sometimes you just have to get started"

DR JÖRG BURZER

It is important never to stand still or rest on one's laurels when it comes to innovation, but to keep moving forward. Just as Carl Benz's patent was merely the start of a journey of innovation that we are continuing. One difference from the past is that, initially, as many innovations as possible were reserved for the top-of-the-range models. In today's global marketplace, that is no longer an option. In key sectors such as software and electric mobility, innovation cycles have become too fast for this. You have to constantly reinvent yourself and keep coming up with new ideas.

Professor Reindl, many technological innovations in these systems remain invisible to motorists. How are they actually perceived? And which innovations make a difference?

Prof. Reindl: Many innovations are perceived through effects. The customer notices that the car is safer and more reliable, offers greater comfort, and is more efficient. Take safety, for example. At first, features such as ABS, airbags, and ESP needed explaining,



but their practical benefits soon made them standard features.

Perception also arises through “moments of truth”. When a car remains stable in a critical situation, when a driver assistance system reduces stress, or when its range and fuel economy prove impressive in everyday use, that is when technology becomes emotionally engaging and credible. That is why the innovations that make the biggest difference are often those that work not just on paper, but in everyday situations, and do so reliably.

Jörg Burzer: Many of our customers are in close contact with us and write to us. What always touches me deeply is when customers tell us that they were involved in a serious accident and survived, or even managed to walk away unharmed, and then specifically thank our engineers for making that possible. That makes me proud to work for Mercedes. Looking far into the future, it’s possible to imagine scenarios in which all cars drive autonomously and accidents can be completely avoided. For me, that’s a vision that inspires many of us here. A genuine purpose: to protect people – whether they are passengers in the vehicle or other road users.

What does responsibility in development mean to you?

Jörg Burzer: Our overall responsibility is to always demonstrate the benefits to the customer while also offering the highest possible level of safety – particularly for us at Mercedes-Benz.

Prof. Reindl: Specifically regarding the benefits for customers in the field of electric mobility – which, technologically speaking, has long since ceased to be a niche topic – market opinion remains somewhat divided. E-mobility is perceived as innovative when it offers tangible benefits and a well-rounded package: quiet and smooth driving, lower running costs, easy charging with transparent electricity prices, and digital integration. That is why ecosystems of charging infrastructure, charging current, and the relevant services related to electric mobility remain key factors in the market’s success.

Jörg Burzer: You’re absolutely right. However, the short innovation cycles in electric mobility are also a



“The best innovation is the one you no longer recognise as an innovation in everyday life, because it has become the norm”

PROF. DR STEFAN REINDL

reason why some customers prefer to wait for better batteries or higher charging capacity. I think we have made progress in Europe, and particularly in Germany. And because we want to provide our customers with a simple and seamless e-mobility and charging experience, we also offer the entire electric vehicle ecosystem from a single source. We are convinced that our comprehensive range of vehicles, including the new CLA, makes electric mobility an attractive and competitive part of the customer experience.

With Tomorrow XX, you have launched a technology programme focused on recycling. What exactly is this about?

Jörg Burzer: Recyclability is a key consideration for us in the development process. Tomorrow XX features over 40 different concepts. Battery recycling is a specific example. In 2024 we became the first car manufacturer to open a recycling plant, enabling us to close the battery recycling loop using our own facility. This shows that we are not only constantly improving electric drive technology, but are also thinking ahead to what comes next and, for example, working on solutions for the end of a battery’s life.

Prof. Reindl: When it comes to batteries, we have no choice but to focus on the circular economy. Added to this is the challenge of repairing traction batteries – even though the batteries remain functional for longer than initially thought. They rarely break down completely,

but in some cases we still need standardised repair solutions – and that is what we are working on at our training centre, Zukunftswerkstatt 4.0, in Esslingen. Last but not least, the vehicle must be designed in such a way that it can remain in service for as long as possible without the need to replace it entirely or replace any of its components.

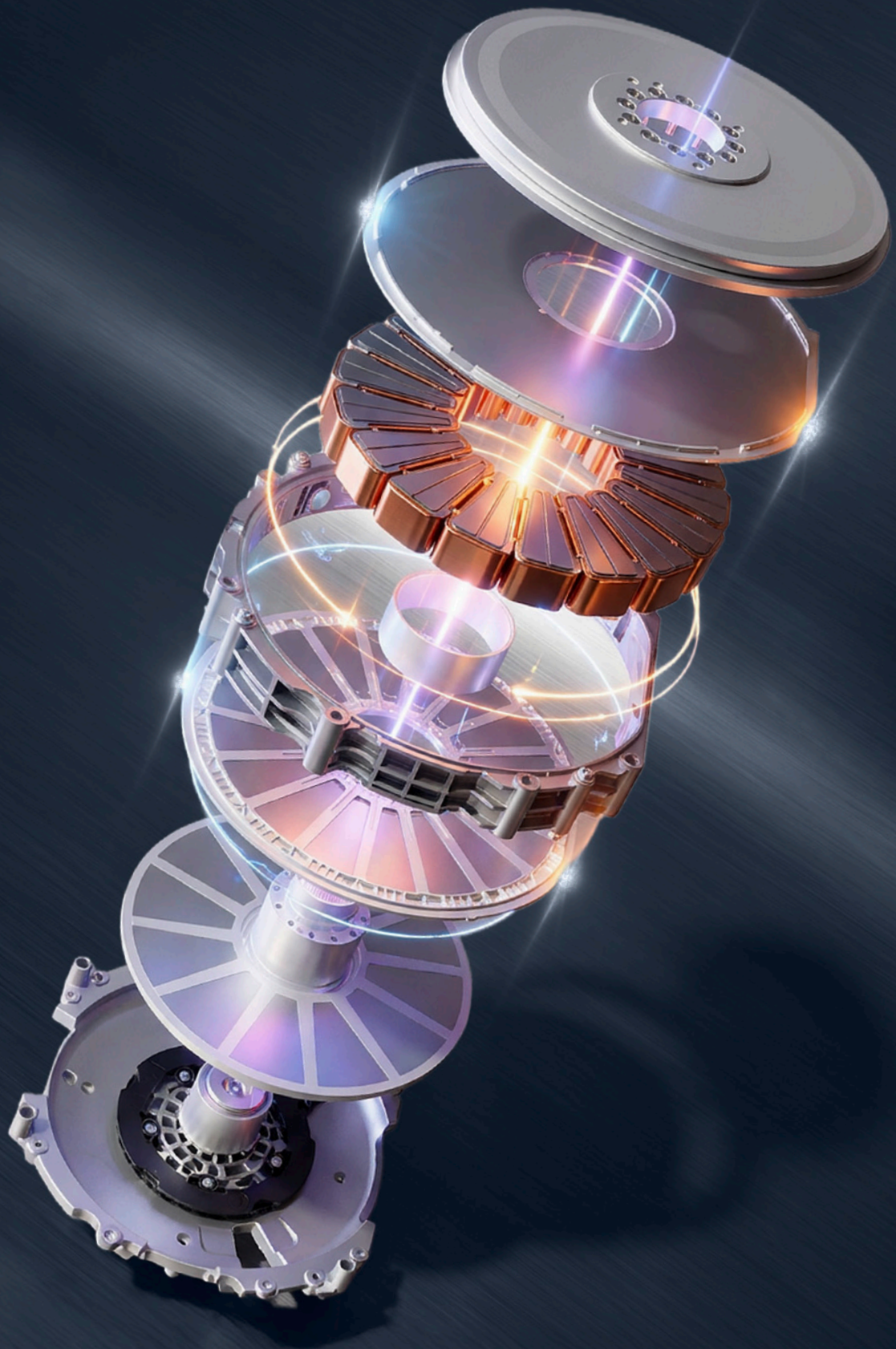
Jörg Burzer: This is where the second major area of innovation comes into play: software and the so-called software-defined vehicle. Without the need to replace hardware or recycle components, we can use over-the-air updates to continuously bring new innovations to the vehicle, just like with a smartphone. Our operating system MB.OS enables us to meet the required standard.

Finally, a look ahead: What Bertha Benz moment would you like to see next?

Prof. Reindl: Just as the long-distance drive of 1888 proved that the car is suitable for everyday use, I hope – applying this to the present day – for a moment when sustainable mobility becomes “simple”. The customer uses their eco-friendly vehicle, charges it seamlessly, has a clear understanding of the costs and carbon footprint, and finds that the system works reliably. The next major leap forward would be the seamless integration of vehicles, energy, software, infrastructure, and cost transparency, which turns innovation into everyday reality – and thereby builds acceptance.

Jörg Burzer: For the next generation of customers, perhaps in ten years’ time, we will have vehicles in which the driver can operate the car without having to steer it themselves. To me, this is an innovation that will completely transform the field of mobility.





140 YEARS OF INNOVATION

Axial flux motor
ELECTRIC PERFORMANCE REDEFINED

Texts by Christof Wenig, Lutz Schilling, and Robert Göring

Just in time for its "140 Years of Innovation" anniversary, Mercedes-AMG is launching the electric axial flux motor into series production. With no less than three of these innovative electric motors, the Mercedes-AMG GT 4-Door Coupé delivers top performance at a whole new level. The engines have already demonstrated what they are capable of – setting 25 world records in the CONCEPT AMG GT XX on the high-speed oval circuit in Nardò, southern Italy.

In addition to the AMG High Performance Electric Battery, the axial flux motors played a key role in the high-tech car's record-breaking run. The name says it all: in an axial flux motor, the electromagnetic flow runs parallel to the axis of rotation. In conventional electric motors, it flows perpendicular to it. What may sound like a minor matter has significant consequences.

NARROW DISCS WITH PLENTY OF POWER

The stator and rotors – the main components – are designed as narrow discs. Two rotors enclose the stator like a sandwich. This arrangement of the discs ensures optimum power transmission, as the electric field generated by the stator in the centre acts directly on the outer rotors.

The motor on the front axle is just nine centimetres wide, whilst the two motors on the rear axle are only around eight centimetres wide. But it's not just about saving space. It's also about power delivery. In the high-tech CONCEPT AMG GT XX, the three motors together deliver over 1,000 kilowatts. That's more than 1,360 hp – a level of power that can be called upon not just once for a brief moment, but repeatedly.

THE POWER OF THREE HEARTS

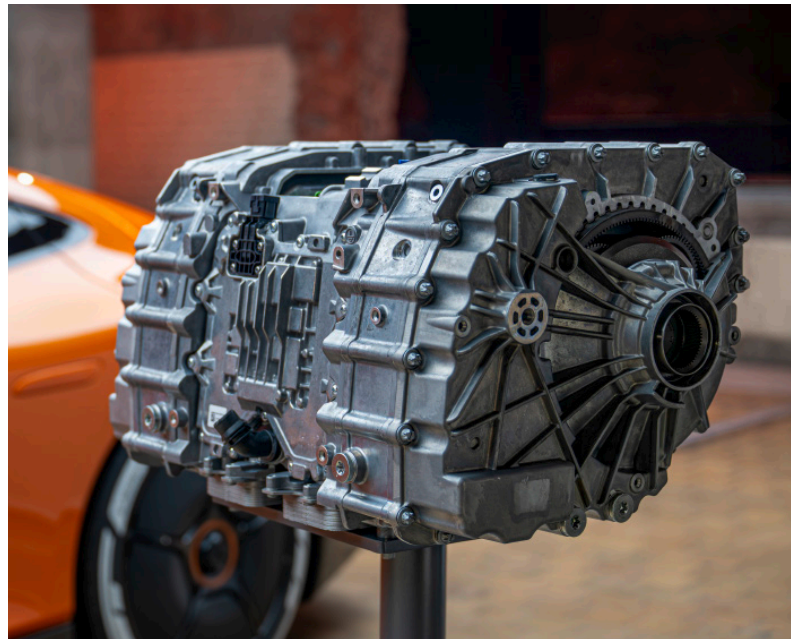
In the AMG GT 4-Door Coupé, the three axial flux motors work together. There are two motors on the rear axle, while the front motor acts as a booster and is only activated when extra power or traction is required. This reduces energy consumption and increases efficiency.

The so-called disconnect unit is responsible for the lightning-fast connection and disconnection of the front drive unit. This complex, computer-controlled process takes place seamlessly, with the driver completely unaware of it at all – high-tech at its best.

INNOVATION SQUARED

The engine isn't the only new feature. For its manufacturing operations at the Berlin-Marienfelde site, Mercedes-Benz has revised or developed around two-thirds of its production processes, 35 of which are being implemented on an industrial scale for the first time. These include efficient laser technologies, innovative joining methods, and AI-supported processes. Most of these innovations were developed in-house and have resulted in over 30 patent applications.

Find out more about the axial flux motor in our YouTube video: **benz.me/techexplainedAxial**



Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG



Innovative technologies

THE NEW S-CLASS – READY FOR TOMORROW

On 29 January, exactly 140 years to the day since the automobile was patented, Mercedes-Benz will unveil the new S-Class to the public for the first time. With more than 50 per cent of the vehicle's features newly developed, revised, and refined, this is the most comprehensive update to the flagship range in a generation. What's next? Building a robotaxi ecosystem in collaboration with technology partners such as Nvidia and Momenta, as well as mobility providers such as Uber and Lumo. The new S-Class is the ideal car for this, as it combines luxury, safety, and cutting-edge technology. It is based on a so-called fail-safe system and incorporates redundancies for steering, braking, computing power, and the power supply. Together with the Mercedes-Benz Operating System (MB.OS), this provides the ideal foundation for a driverless shuttle service in America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.



5 tech facts
THE ELECTRIC MERCEDES-BENZ VLE

1 The first model based on the newly developed, modular, and scalable van architecture.

2 The 800-volt architecture enables a DC charge at up to 300 kW for a range of up to 355 kilometres[1] in 15 minutes.

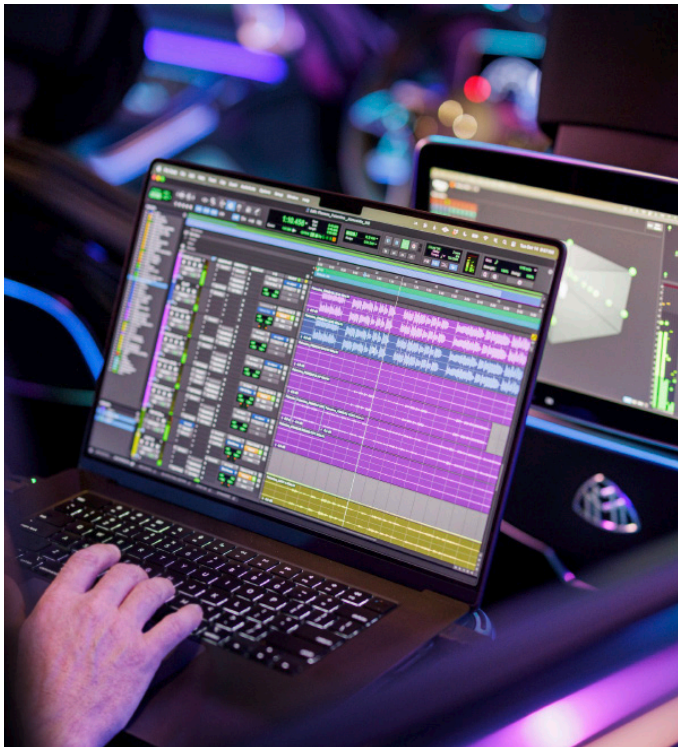
3 With a steering angle of seven degrees, the rear-axle steering reduces the turning radius by 1.3 metres to 11.6 metres.

4 The AIRMATIC air suspension uses Google Maps data to lower the vehicle as much as possible whilst driving, thereby keeping aerodynamic drag – and consequently energy consumption – to a minimum.

5 The fourth generation of MBUX, based on the Mercedes-Benz Operating System, incorporates artificial intelligence from ChatGPT, Microsoft Bing, and Google Gemini.

[1] The stated range after 15 minutes of charging (WLTP) was determined using the maximum DC charging power in accordance with ISO/SAE 12906 under the conditions described therein.





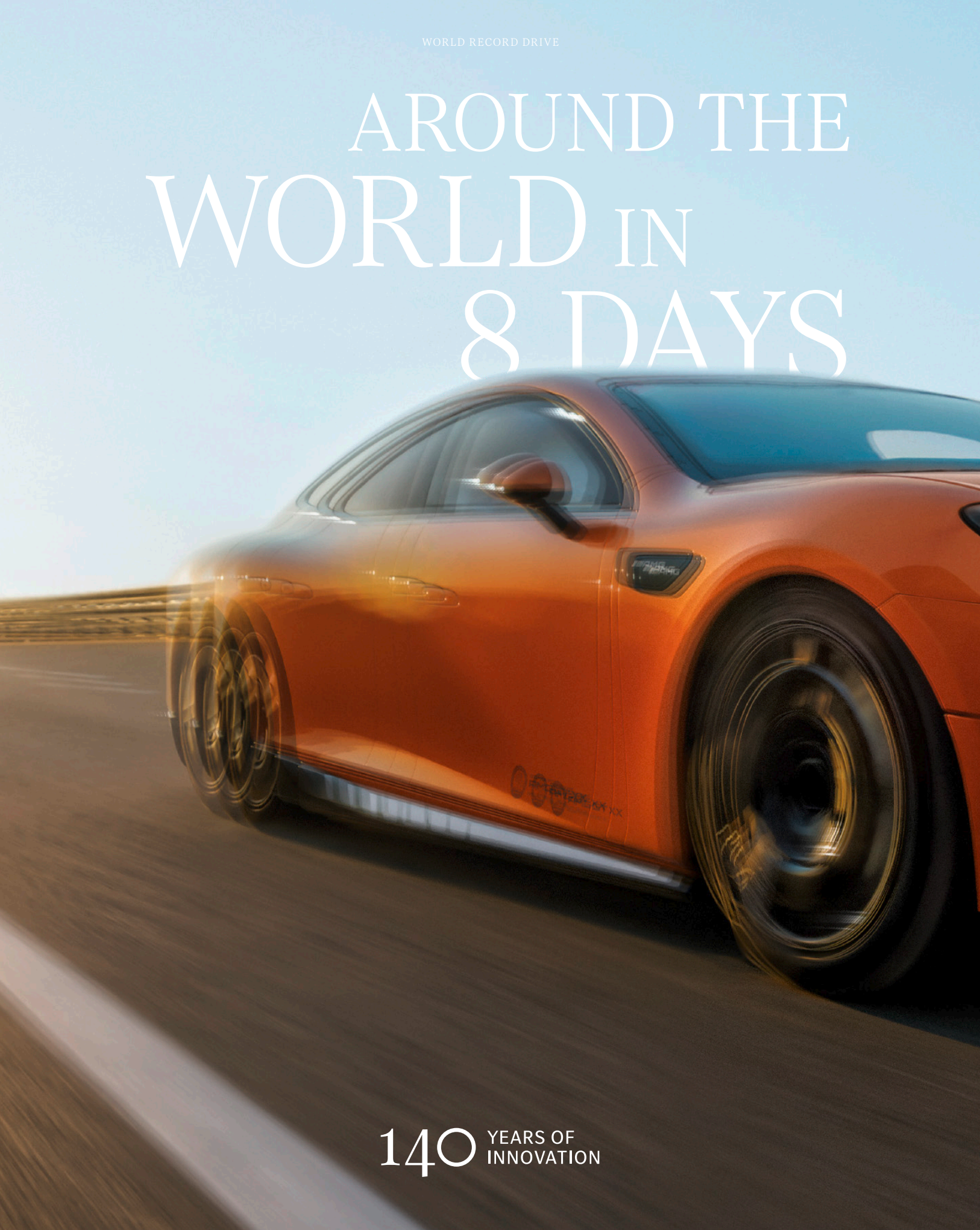
Prototype: studio-quality sound system
"CRAFTED IN A MERCEDES"

Behind this evocative name lies an innovation that transforms the rear of a Mercedes-Maybach into a mobile recording studio for producers, musicians, and creative professionals. The idea is as brilliant as it is simple: plug in your laptop and you're good to go – whether you're stuck in city traffic, on your way to the airport, or just relaxing. Thanks to Dolby Atmos technology, the sound system delivers true studio quality. Each speaker can be controlled individually, making it ideal for precise audio engineering directly via the vehicle's sound system.

GRAMMY® winner FINNEAS is thrilled: "Most people listen to music in their cars – so why not produce it there too?" Mercedes-Benz, Universal Music Group, and Dolby were driven by this very idea in their collaboration on this prototype. They combined immersive audio technology and automotive excellence for a final product that was truly "Crafted in a Mercedes". No stuffy studios, no fixed working hours – creativity flourishes where inspiration and mobile convenience come together.

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG

AROUND THE WORLD IN 8 DAYS



140 YEARS OF INNOVATION



Text by Lutz Schilling
Photos by Basti Hansen

Epic long-distance records hold a special fascination – and occupy a prominent place in 140 years of innovation. The CONCEPT AMG GT XX completed such a test at the Nardò circuit in August 2025, demonstrating exactly what it's all about: achieving goals that were previously thought to be unattainable



It all starts with an idea. And it takes a really good idea if you want to show that a new technology can not only work, but also set new standards. “The main aim was to drive around the world in eight days in the CONCEPT AMG GT XX,” says Oliver Wiech, chief engineer of the new fully electric AMG.EA powertrain architecture, describing the idea inspired by Jules Verne’s novel. Around the world? No, but 40,075 kilometres in one go. “An initial simulation by my team provided the answer: ten days,” he says, recalling the moment when theory and reality clashed for the first time – but not the last.

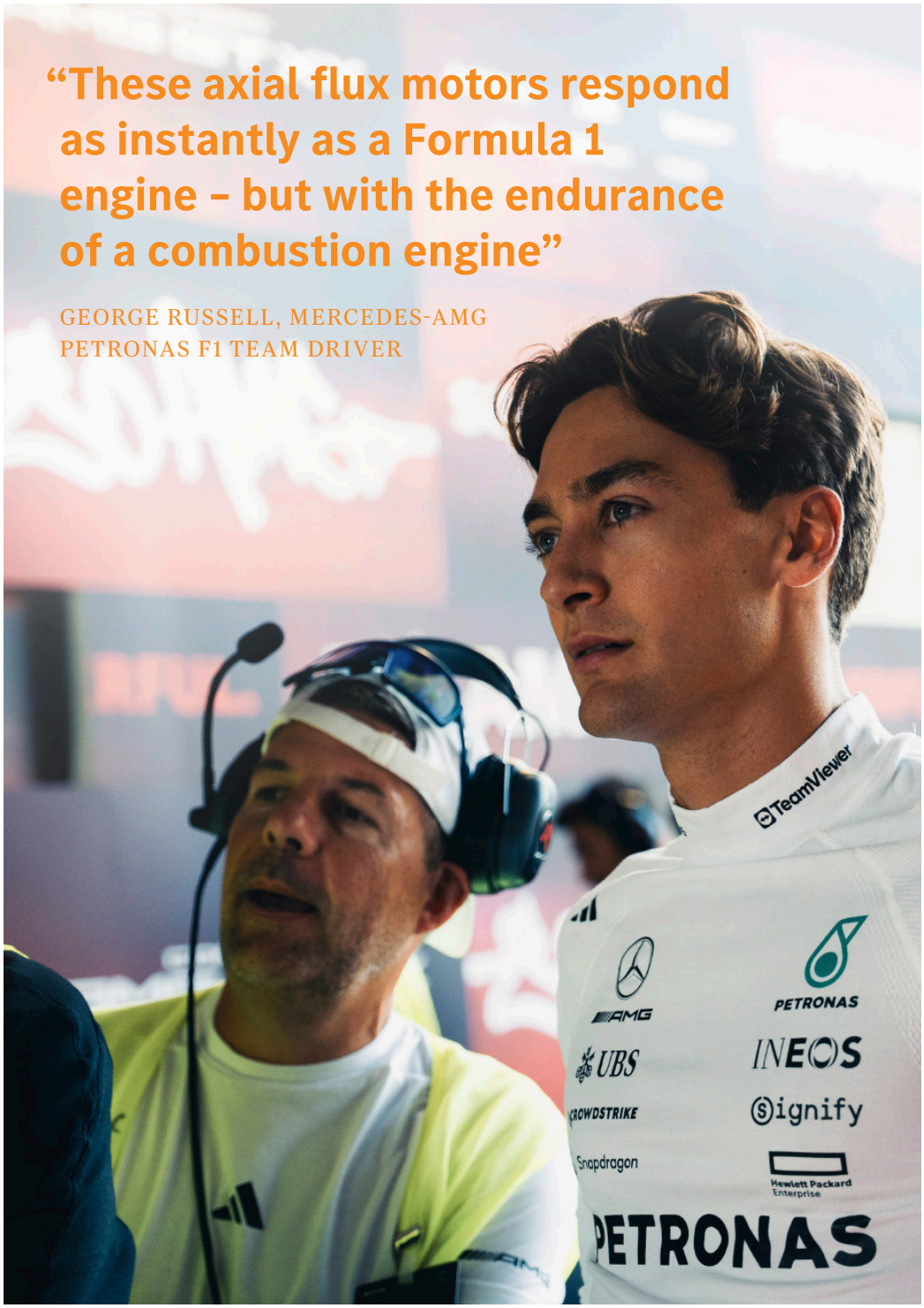
As early as the 1970s and 1980s, Mercedes-Benz set international speed and distance records in Nardò, Italy. The orange C 111 prototypes have made their mark on the high-speed track with world records and are also real eye-catchers. More than 50 years later, they serve as the inspiration for Mercedes-AMG’s concept car. The mission for the likewise bright orange CONCEPT AMG GT XX: to complete a lap around the world in record time using electric power, thereby paving the way for the new AMG GT 4-Door Coupé with its new drive technology.

TRIED-AND-TESTED TECHNOLOGY FOR THE ROAD

The fully electric AMG.EA performance platform in the production model is virtually identical to the record-breaking concept car. The three completely newly developed axial flux motors, combined with the directly cooled high-performance battery and other technical innovations, have one goal: high performance in continuous operation – whether on the racetrack or on the road. But how can a project that aims to cover the distance around the globe along the equator succeed when it has set itself just over a week to complete this 40,075 kilometre journey? The simple answer is: with the best technology, the best team, and the best strategy.

“The project was intended to evoke the literary classic ‘Around the World in 80 Days’ – only ten times faster,” says Gregor Gruber, project manager for eDrive functions and racing engineer in Nardò, looking back on how the idea came about. The first step was to determine what kind of electric powertrain would actually be required to circumnavigate the globe in such a short time. Gruber is not without pride: “I then proposed an initial concept based on our AMG.EA modular system, which was subsequently implemented in a very similar way.” His colleague Tim Wölfel, eDrive specialist and technical director in Nardò, adds: “The aim was also to demonstrate that the

Find out more about the axial flux motor in our YouTube video:
benz.me/techexplainedAxial


“These axial flux motors respond as instantly as a Formula 1 engine – but with the endurance of a combustion engine”
GEORGE RUSSELL, MERCEDES-AMG PETRONAS F1 TEAM DRIVER
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Snapdragon
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PETRONAS


AMG

AMG.EA platform represents a whole new dimension, enabling the combination of high-speed driving and rapid charging."

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE UNDER EXTREME CONDITIONS

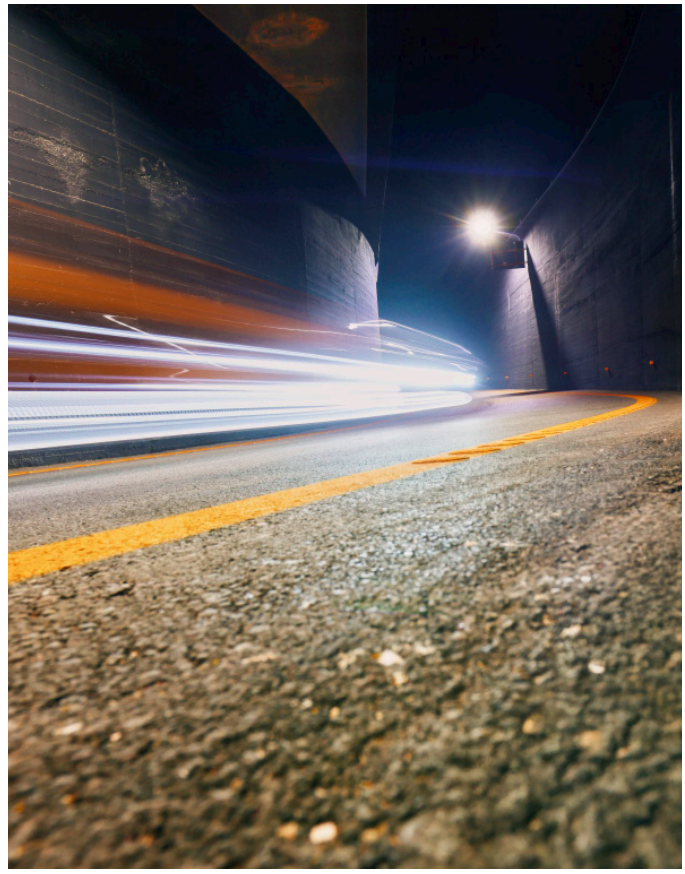
At the Nardò test track: the circuit, featuring banked corners, is located in the southern Italian region of Apulia and is just 12.68 kilometres long. For the record attempt, this means 3,177 laps at a constant speed of 300 km/h. Almost without a break, with temperatures of 35 degrees Celsius in the shade and significantly higher on the tarmac. This is because in August, the Scirocco desert wind repeatedly brings heatwaves and gusty winds, putting additional strain on both people and machinery.

This means the whole team has to perform at their absolute best under extreme conditions. 24/7. There's the development team, which looks after the vehicles around the clock; the pit crew, who are responsible for the charging stations and tyre changes; and the team of firefighters and paramedics, who are on standby 24/7. And the support team in our hometown of Affalterbach is on hand to provide ongoing support via remote diagnosis. External specialists, such as those specialising in tyres or high-speed charging technology, complete the team of experts.

"All the staff, all the drivers, the entire race support team – everyone from the record team – were in Nardò for training purposes when we carried out the final tests there with our test car," says chief engineer Oliver Wiech, looking back with satisfaction on this preparatory phase. Wölfel has a sporty take: "You could compare it a bit to a professional sports team preparing for the final. We left nothing to chance. There was a clear division of roles, intensive training in procedures, error analysis, and optimisation. It was tough, but it also brought us closer together."

THE PERFECT STRATEGY

Wanted: the perfect strategy for covering more than 40,000 kilometres on an oval track in the shortest possible time using a high-performance electric vehicle. Just the right challenge for the British Formula 1 strategists at Mercedes-AMG High Performance Powertrains (HPP). After all, this record attempt is also a race against an invisible opponent: time. And the only person who can stand in the way is yourself.



“You could compare it to a professional sports team preparing for the final”

TIM WÖLFEL,
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR IN NARDÒ

Adam Allsopp, director of advanced technology at HPP: “In motor racing, it always starts with the strategy. For this record-breaking run, we had to integrate all the vehicle systems into a single simulation in order to highlight the complex trade-offs we were dealing with. For example, the faster we drive, the more energy we use and the more energy we have to put into recharging the battery.” All these parameters, plus countless others such as the weather, have been factored into the simulations. Allsopp is satisfied: “This gave us hundreds of thousands of possible scenarios from which to determine the optimal strategy.”

And what about the 17 different drivers? They were also a key component of the race strategy. Even the routine pit stop following a two-hour stint at a constant 300 km/h is calculated down to the last detail. The drivers must first transition precisely into the coasting phase and then initiate the exact start of energy recovery to capture braking energy.

> **Pit radio:** After three LED lights, ease off the accelerator, and after another three LED lights, pull the steering wheel paddle and change gear. Then you’ll have just the right speed to make it back to the pit using only regenerative braking … lift!
> **George Russell:** Took my foot off the accelerator. I’m coming in now. Oh my God. That’s so impressive.
> **Pit radio:** Change gear!

For an efficient pit stop, it is crucial that the driver waits until the very last minute, making the most of every tenth of a second, until the car comes to a halt and recharging begins. George Russell, Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team driver: “When I first heard about the CONCEPT AMG GT XX and the planned record-breaking run, I thought I’d misheard. I could hardly believe it. But I was immediately over the moon and knew I had to be part of the challenge.”

A NEW LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE ACHIEVED

George Russell is amazed by the car’s handling: “These axial flux motors respond as instantly as a Formula 1 engine – but with an endurance I’ve only ever seen in combustion engines.”

And then the day everyone has been waiting for: 17 August 2025. Tense concentration, focus, and nervousness meet meticulous preparation, professionalism, and confidence. The start goes ahead, and the procedures






AMG



“What we’re doing here is just crazy!”

GREGOR GRUBER,
RACING ENGINEER IN NARDÒ

that have been learnt and practised mesh together like clockwork. The two orange prototypes, each boasting around 1,300 hp, leave the pit lane as if pulled by a rubber band and accelerate to the precisely specified ideal speed of 300 km/h. Round and round they go.

The pit radio sounds through the loudspeakers: “We’ve just set a new 24-hour record. The longest distance ever covered by an electric vehicle in 24 hours.” For a moment, boundless jubilation and euphoria override the perfectly organised order. Gregor Gruber at this very moment: “What we’re doing here is just crazy! Driving for 24 hours straight, okay. But after that, 10,000 km in one go. And then we carry on and on. It’s indescribable!”

The rest is history: 40,075 kilometres in 7 days, 13 hours, 24 minutes, and 7 seconds. And along the way, a further 24 records were broken in passing. Once again, boundaries were pushed and a new dimension was reached. And so, in Nardò, another chapter in the history of innovation at Mercedes-Benz was written.





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Text by Lutz Schilling

INNOVATION EMOTION



When does an innovation become a success, and what role do emotions play in this? We explore these questions and examine what this has to do with the Mercedes-Benz brand promise “Welcome home.”

It is the emotional dimension that sets successful innovations apart from good products

You lace up your trainers and take your first steps. And suddenly you feel like you are walking on air. A glance through the transparent window in the heel proves that you are not just imagining it. You can feel the air with every step. It's a sports shoe that offers a different running experience, a different vibe.

In the mid-1980s, sports shoes set new standards in cushioning technology and gave innovation a new meaning. The technology was made visible and turned into a design feature that could be seen and felt. And suddenly, a sports shoe was more than just a functional product. It became a statement. Part of one's own identity. What made this innovation so successful? Was it just the better cushioning? Or was it something that went beyond mere functionality?

When we talk about the success of innovations, we often focus on their practical benefits. But the innovations that stick in our minds can do more. They don't just take us from A to B. They inspire us. We recommend them, we love them, and sometimes we even defend them. They make our lives easier, bring us joy, inspire us, and fill us with happiness. This emotional aspect is particularly valuable and is a key factor in success.

WHEN INNOVATION BECOMES A PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE

The air-cushioned sports shoe is an example of innovation that you can actually feel. What made these shoes so special was that the innovation could be seen and also became a visual feature. This brings us to the real issue. It's all about the distinguishing characteristic. The combination of functionality and emotion, of tangible improvement and striking design, turned a sports item into a cult product. The emotional impact lay in the feeling of wearing something special. Something that used to be the preserve of professional athletes was now accessible to everyone. It fostered a sense of pride, belonging, and identity.

Photo: Sebastian Wolf/Stills



WHEN TECHNOLOGY TAKES A BACK SEAT

Do you remember the first time you used a full-width touchscreen? No stylus, no user manual. You just swiped across the screen and it responded as if it had been waiting for just that. A simple touch was enough to enlarge the image. It didn't feel like high-tech. It just felt completely natural. As if it had always been meant to be that way.

The first smartphone with a multi-touch display, launched in 2007, transformed the entire industry. At the same time, it transformed our expectations of technology. It was intuitive to use, almost self-explanatory. Children could use it without ever having seen a manual. Older people who had previously been wary of new technology were suddenly swiping through photo albums as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Even unpacking a new phone became a ritual. The packaging opened like a treasure chest and the device lay there like a work of art. The purchase turned into an elaborate spectacle and felt like the start of a new relationship.

Designers now refer to this novelty as a natural user interface. This is how they describe an interface that draws on natural human gestures, thereby allowing the technology to fade into the background and become invisible. The emotional impact? Innovation is seen not as a threat, but as an invitation. As something that welcomes us.

WHEN A SERVICE DELIVERS FREEDOM

The sun is shining. You have 20 minutes. You look at your mobile phone and there it is: a free bike, just 50 metres away. Open the app, scan, and off you go. Whenever you feel like it. No planning, no waiting, no hassle. Just the exercise in the fresh air, the wind in your hair, and that special feeling: today, the city is mine.

Bike sharing services did not reinvent the bicycle. The innovation lies elsewhere: in spontaneous, flexible access to transport, without the need for ownership. No lock, no repairs, no bike rack. Simply the freedom to be on the move whenever you want. Right here, right now. The example of bike sharing shows that emotional impact does not always stem from ownership. In this case, it stems from easy access. The joy lies in being able to tell yourself, "I can do it whenever I want," rather than "It's mine," which comes with far more restrictions. "I can do it whenever I want" sets you free. It creates a sense of urban autonomy.

Photos: Casarsa / Getty Images, Nicholas Parkin / Stills



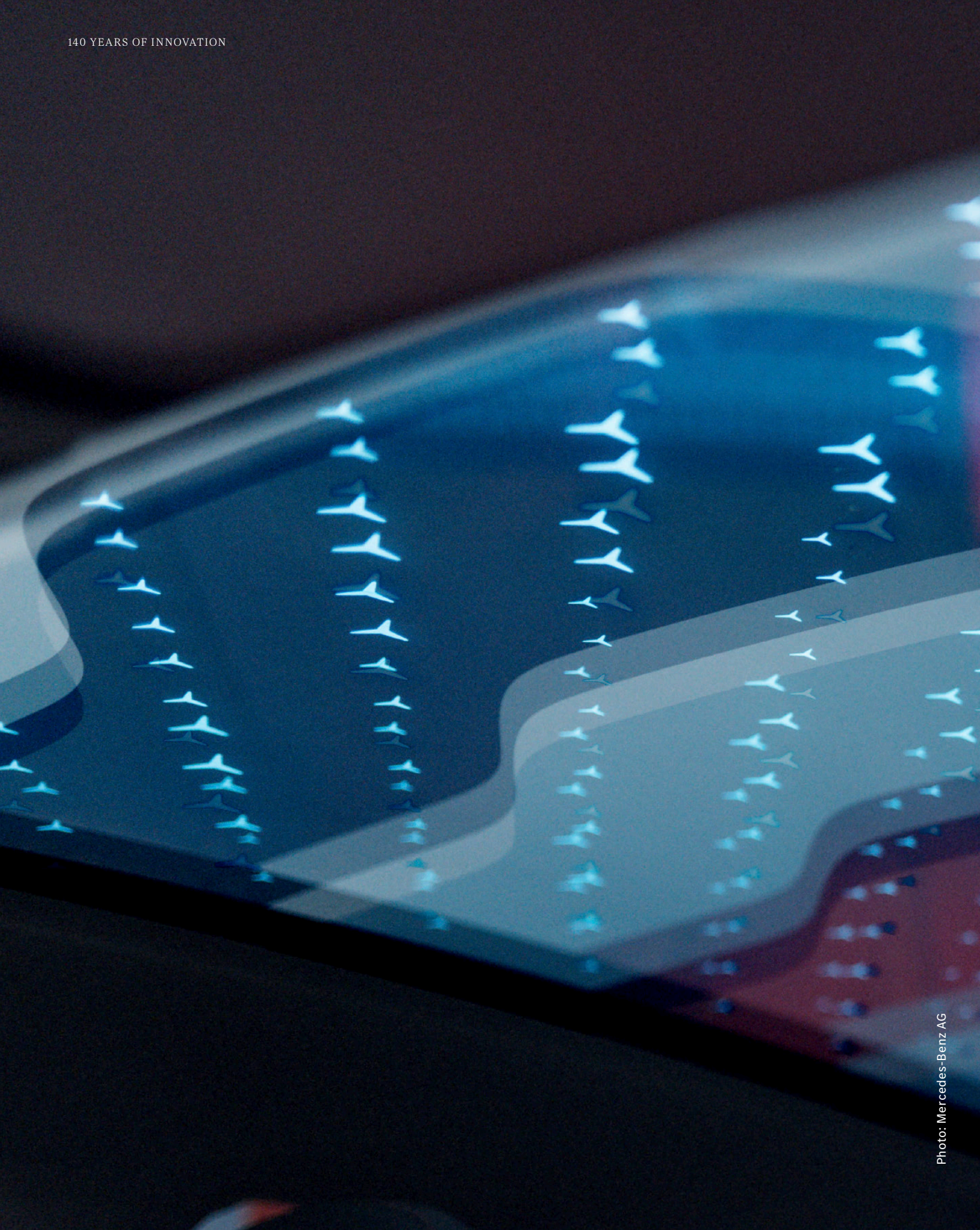
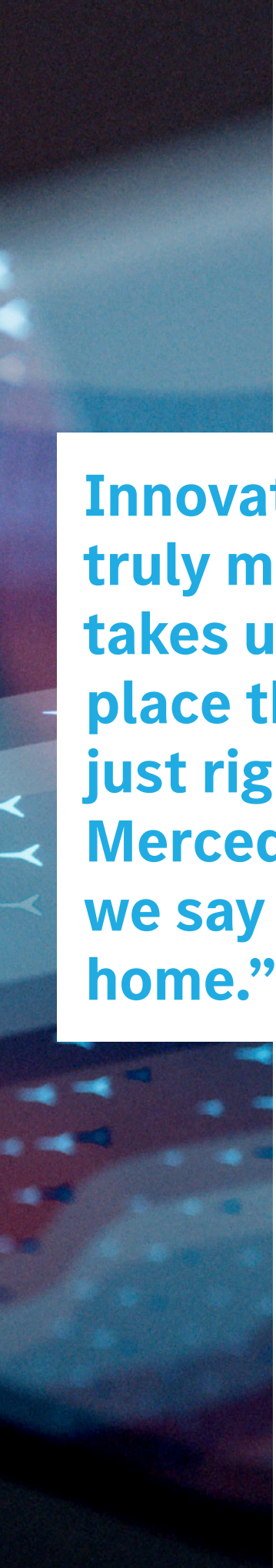


Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG



Innovation that truly moves us takes us to a place that feels just right. At Mercedes-Benz, we say “Welcome home.”

WHEN BEING ON THE MOVE FEELS JUST LIKE HOME

We’ve had a long day. We get into the car and close the door. The world outside gets quieter. The lights dim, the music starts, and the seat adjusts itself. We feel ourselves relax.

The modern, connected car has long since become more than just a means of transport. It is a mobile personal space and our only sphere of privacy when we are in public areas. Driver assistance systems make life easier without being intrusive, and digital integration works seamlessly. Our environment adapts to us, not the other way around. Temperature, ambient lighting, and sound all feel familiar and exactly as they should be.

The car doesn’t just take us home. It actually feels like home. A place where we can relax, where we can be ourselves. The philosopher Peter Sloterdijk speaks of “spheres”, using the term to describe protected spaces where we feel safe. The modern car is just such a space. It is a mobile environment that envelops us and has its very own atmosphere. Not just functional, but above all emotional. A place of comfort on wheels that feels cosy, even whilst on the move.

WHEN EMOTION DETERMINES SUCCESS

What do the various innovations from the four different examples have in common? Each one offers far more than just practical benefits. They illustrate how emotional bonds are formed and how they work in different ways. It is this emotional dimension that sets successful innovations apart from good products. This explains why some technologies transform our lives, whilst others simply exist. It is the reason why we don’t just use certain things, but love them.

Companies that understand this emotional dimension and embed it in their innovations create more than just outstanding products. They build relationships. Innovation that truly moves us takes us to a place that feels just right. A place where technology brings people together rather than dividing them. A place where complexity makes way for familiarity. A place where we don’t just arrive, but feel at home. At Mercedes-Benz, we say “Welcome home.”.

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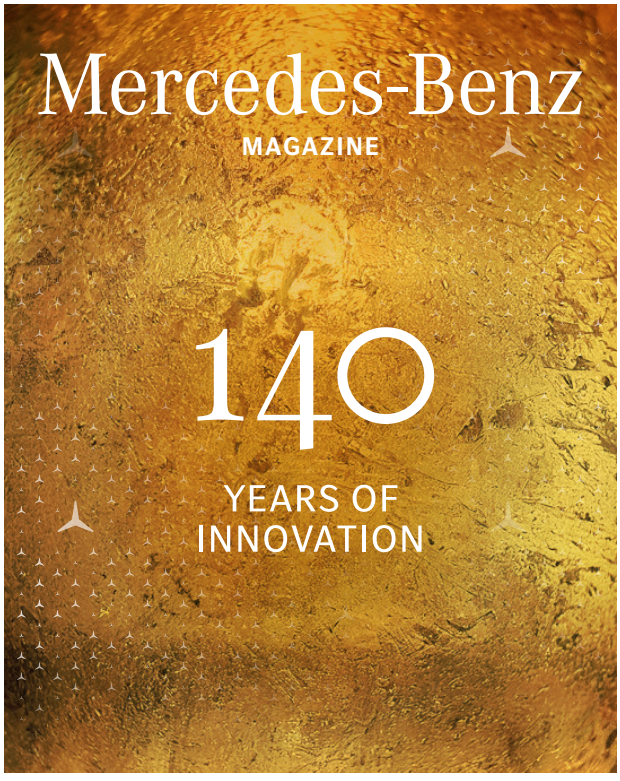
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On 29 January 2026 we commemorated the 140th anniversary of the patent application for the first petrol-powered car, filed by Carl Benz. Innovation and a pioneering spirit have always been deeply ingrained in the DNA of Mercedes-Benz. To mark this anniversary, the current issue explores the multifaceted themes of innovation and progress from a variety of perspectives.

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As an internationally active company, equal opportunities, diversity, openness, and respect are among the core values of Mercedes-Benz. We demonstrate this in the way we think, act, and communicate. All terms used naturally include all genders and identities.

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W 123: FOREVER YOUNG

Few models have had such a lasting impact on Mercedes-Benz's image as the saloons of the 123 model series. With nearly 2.7 million of them built between 1975 and 1985, they continue to be the gold standard in reliability to this day

Text by Christof Wenig

In the years after 1975, the market was characterised by waiting times of more than two years and prices for low-mileage used cars that exceeded the original value. Dealers showed significant interest in purchasing barely used company cars to meet the high demand. It was an ideal situation for any vehicle manufacturer. Mercedes-Benz was able to celebrate a rare success. The coveted models at this time were not some exclusive, high-end rarities, but those in the brand's new mid-range 123 series. This series became so popular in Germany that it sometimes topped the registration charts ahead of other well-established models.

TIMELESS ELEGANCE MEETS SAFETY INNOVATION

There are plenty of reasons why the 123 series was so successful. First, there was the design. Characteristic hallmarks of the new models included a freshly designed radiator grille and the round twin headlamps in two sizes. Next to each main headlamp, there was now another, smaller halogen fog lamp behind the same diffuser. Exceptions were the 280 and the 280 E. As the two top models of the series, they featured rectangular halogen headlamps. The technology used in the 123 series was also inspired by the S-Class. The most significant improvement on the preceding models was the increased stability of the safety passenger cell. The safety steering column was also completely overhauled. In August 1980, the anti-lock braking system was introduced, and the airbag followed in January 1982. The series featured both petrol and diesel engines ranging from 55 to 185 hp.

FROM COUPÉS TO ESTATES – BUILT TO LAST

The bodywork came in all kinds of styles. In 1977, Mercedes-Benz presented a coupé, a long-wheelbase version with up to eight seats, and finally, the first series-production estate car in the history of the brand, the T-Model.

The global popularity of these new mid-range cars was due to their proverbial robustness. The diesel versions in particular showed exceptional durability and long-lasting performance. The 123 series taxis are a prominent feature on the roads of Africa, the Middle East, and South America to this day. It is not uncommon to find cars that have clocked up more than a million kilometres. Nowadays, the W 123 is a permanent fixture in the classic car scene. Fans around the world use the model not just for Sunday drives, but also as everyday vehicles, providing living proof on wheels that quality never goes out of style.

Visit the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart and find out more about the most legendary vehicles in the brand's history: **benz.me/museum**

Photo: Mercedes-Benz Classic


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