

Binz KAROSSERIE

A N A M E F O R Q U A L I T Y



Station car with rear wing door



Station car with rear flap door



View of the seat for three people through the side door



View of the loading compartment through the side door



Binz
KAROSSERIE

LORCHER KAROSSERIEFABRIK BINZ & CO.



A N A M E F O R Q U A L I T Y



**Mercedes-Benz Station Car, Type 190, 180, and 180 D,
with *BINZ* all-steel superstructure.**

A racy, elegant station car has been developed from the Mercedes-Benz limousine. The exterior lines of this car follow modern trends and comply with present-day tastes. A sturdy all-steel structure provides stability and strength. Four side doors fitted with regulated windows make for easy approach to the driving and rear seats. The rear side windows are firmly set into rubber mouldings. The large rear window ensures an uninterrupted view out of the back.

The linoleum-floored loading compartment in the station car is approachable from the back through a large wing door that can be locked. Alternatively, the station car may be fitted with a flap door in the rear, divided horizontally and lockable. The comfortable seats are sprung with interlaced coil springs and covered with MB Tex artificial leather. The front seat is adjustable. Single seats are available at extra charge. The rear seat can be folded forwards so that the loading compartment is correspondingly enlarged. The doors and dome are similarly covered with MB Tex artificial leather. The spare wheel is kept on a shelf under the loading compartment. Next to it there is another shelf for tools and equipment.

The interior and exterior dimensions can be seen from drawing 453. The vehicle is painted with artificial resin enamel in all standard colours. Special enamelling and lettering are available at extra charge. In all models the pay-load is about 550 kg (1210 lbs).

Four-door chassis with partial body.

Subject to modifications in design and interior appointments.



Interior view through the large rear door



Mercedes-Benz Typ 300
Krankenwagen
Aufbau Miesen (Bonn)
etwa 1955



Mercedes-Benz Typ 300
Bestattungswagen
Aufbau Kässbohrer (Ulm)
etwa 1955



Mercedes-Benz Typ 300
Bestattungswagen
Aufbau Lueg (Essen)
etwa 1955

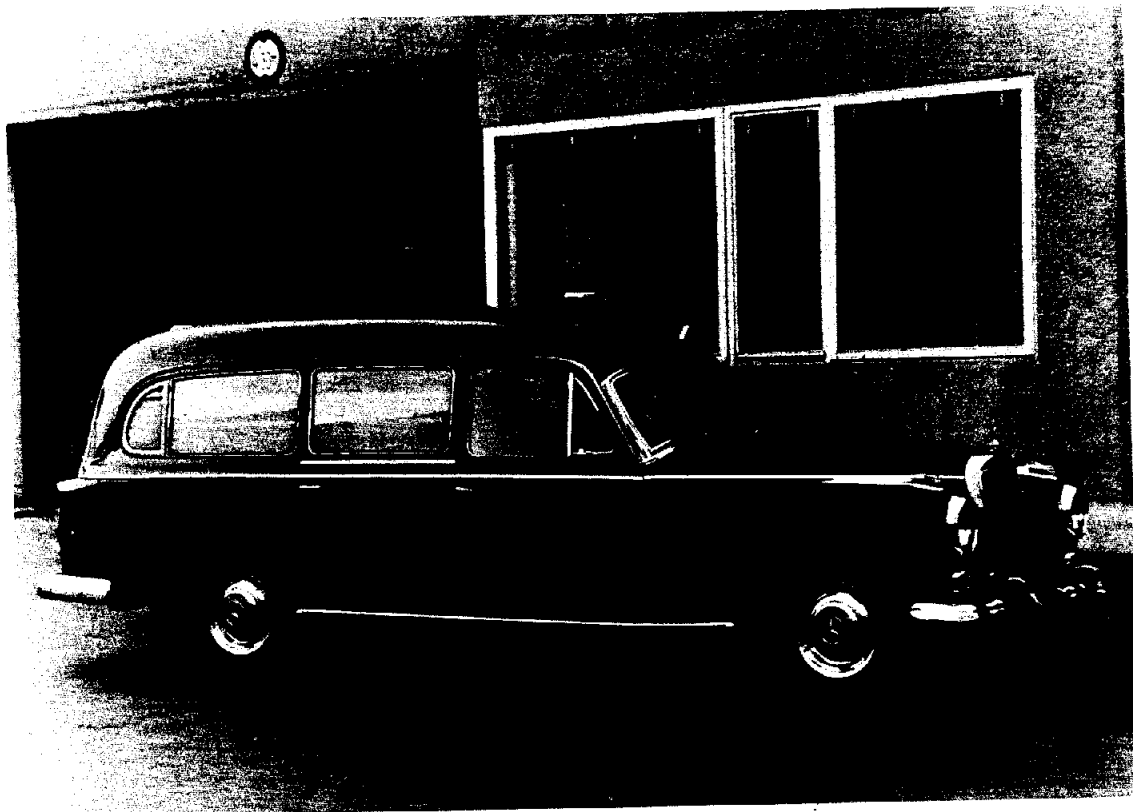


Mercedes-Benz Typ 300
Kombiwagen
Aufbau Binz (Lorch/Württ.)
etwa 1957

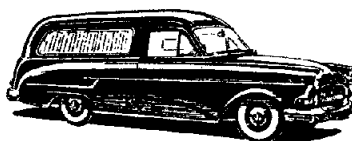


Mercedes-Benz Typ 300 d
Krankenwagen (für Bern)
Aufbau Binz (Lorch/Württ.)
1958





Die fünfziger Jahre



Als sich im Laufe der fünfziger Jahre die westdeutsche Wirtschaft mit Hilfe von amerikanischem Kapital und unter Einsatz aller emsigen Kräfte die man aufbringen konnte, stabilisierte, verschwanden allmählich auch die Behelfs-Fahrzeuge, auf die man während der ersten Nachkriegsjahre angewiesen war.

Die deutsche Automobil-Industrie erholte sich zusehends und innerhalb weniger Jahre entstand eine bemerkenswerte Marken- und Typenvielfalt, die maßgeblich zu dem beitrug, was man schon bald das „Wirtschaftswunder“ nannte.

Auch im Bestattungswesen wurden neue Automobile angeschafft. Die meisten Limousinen der damaligen Zeit eigneten sich als Basisfahrzeuge und auch mancher Mittelklassewagen der fünfziger Jahre war groß genug, um einen Sargraum unterzubringen. Man erlaubte sich auch wieder einigen Prunk, der sich vornehmlich im erfindungsreichen Gebrauch von Chromteilen zeigte. So wurden beispielsweise die Bestattungswagen auf Mercedes-Pkw-Fahrgestellen nicht selten mit dem Chromschmuck teurerer Modelle versehen, wodurch es mitunter nicht ganz leicht fällt, den eigentlichen Wagentyp zu identifizieren.

Die Karossiers machten aus einem Pkw einen Bkw (Fahrzeuggattungsbezeichnung für Bestattungskraftwagen) und entwarfen immer ausgefeiltere Versionen. Die Leichenwagen der fünfziger Jahre stellen teilweise ganz besondere Kleinode der Fahrzeugbaukunst dar. Einige Aufbau-Hersteller spezialisierten sich auf Bestattungs-

fahrzeuge und schufen mitunter perfekt proportionierte Karosserien, die nicht selten Einzelstücke blieben. Manche der Abbildungen auf den fol-

genden Seiten zeigen solche Fahrzeuge, hinter deren harmonischer Linienführung sich so manches Serien-Auto späterer Jahre verstecken kann.



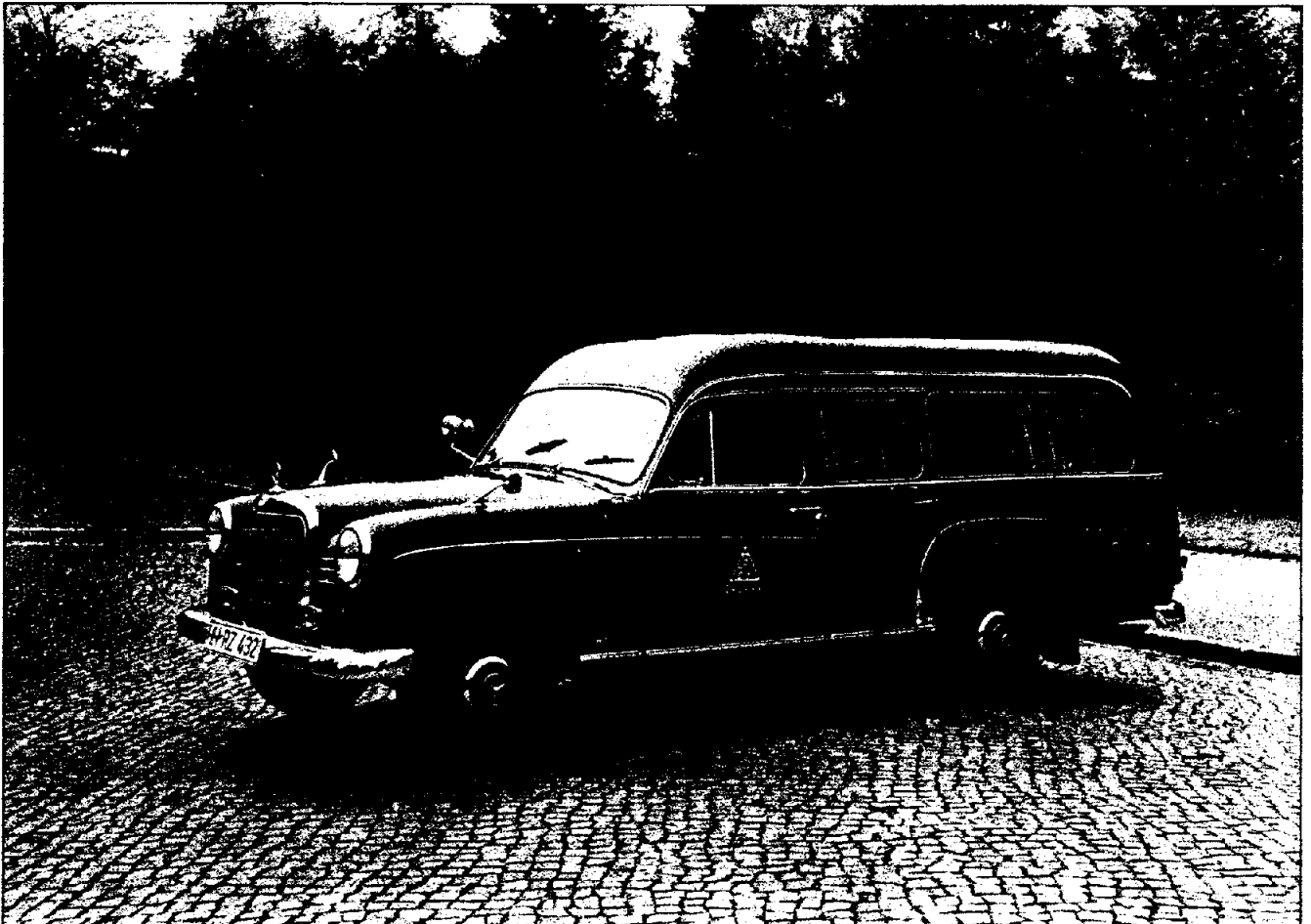
Fahrzeuge aus dem Hause Daimler-Benz sind auch heute noch im Bestattungs-gewerbe weit verbreitet. Langlebigkeit, Zuverlässigkeit und ein positives Markenimage sind die Faktoren, die viele Käufer diese Entscheidung treffen lassen. Beide Abbildungen zeigen Wagen des Typs Daimler-Benz 220, der auf der Frankfurter Automobil-Ausstellung im April 1951 sein Debut gab. Der obere Wagen wurde von Stolle in Hannover karossiert, der Aufbau auf dem unteren Bild wurde bei Miesen in Bonn angefertigt. (26/14)



Als der Mercedes-Benz 180 im Jahr 1953 vorgestellt wurde, war er das erste Fahrzeug mit Pontonkarosserie aus der Stuttgarter Edelschmiede. Zumindest in den Reihen der konservativen Styling-Experten stellte der 180er eine Design-Revolution dar. Wegen des ansprechenden Äußeren, der günstigen Innenmaße und der technischen Ausgereiftheit entschieden sich auch zahlreiche Bestattungsunternehmen für diesen Typ. (26)



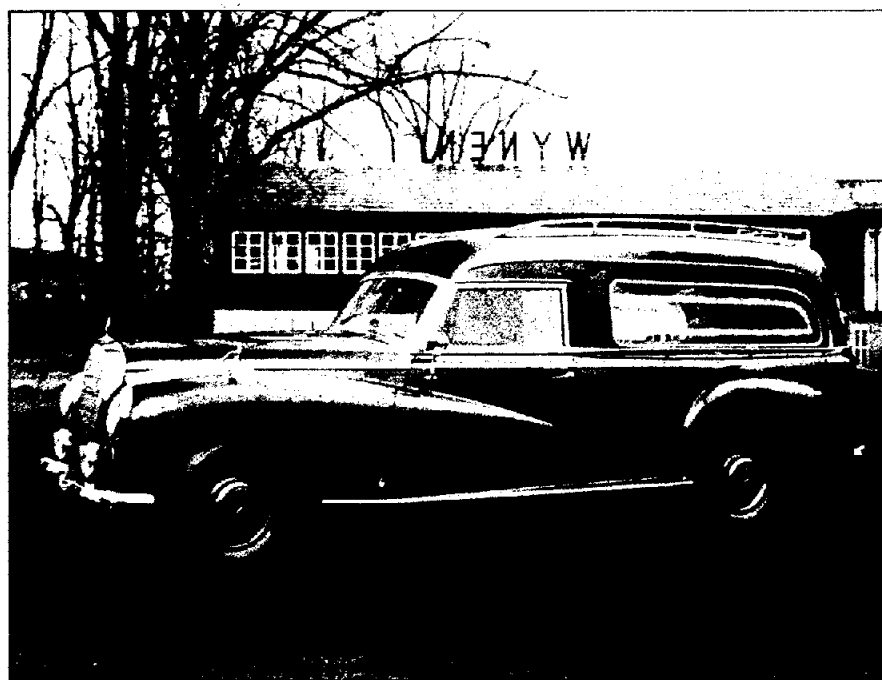
Daimler-Benz 220 S aus dem Jahr 1959 mit Rappold-Karosserie aus Wülfrath. Zu den serienmäßig vorhandenen Blinkleuchten auf den Kotflügeln wurden noch die Blinker des „kleinen Mercedes“ 190 montiert. Frei nach dem Motto: „doppelt geblinkt, läßt es sich besser abbiegen.“ (17)



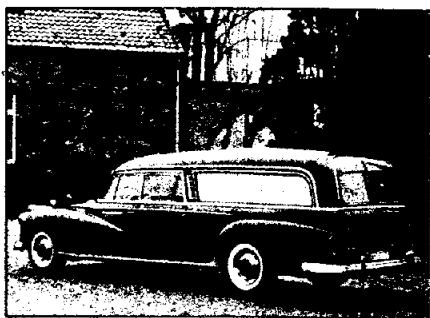
Daimler-Benz 190 aus dem Jahr 1960. Dieser Typ unterschied sich vom Vorgänger 180 unter anderem durch eine breitere Kühlermaske sowie Stoßstangen ohne Hörner. Der Aufbauhersteller dieser Version ist nicht bekannt. (9)



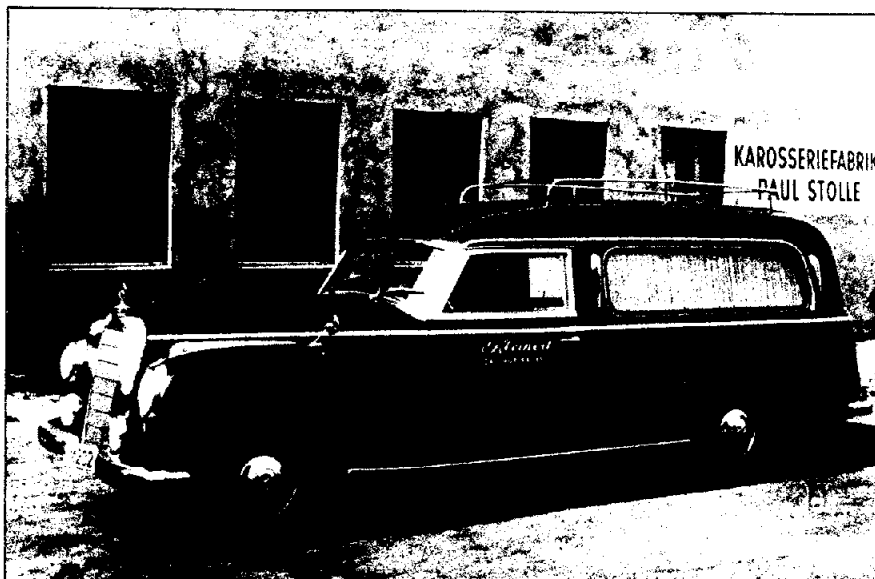
Ein weiterer Mercedes 220, diesmal mit einem Bestattungswagenaufbau von Stolle in Hannover. Gerade weil sich die Fahrzeuge oft scheinbar gleichen, ist es bei näherem Hinsehen interessant festzustellen, daß gerade die kleinen Unterschiede das optische Erscheinungsbild der individuellen Blechkleider nachhaltig beeinflussen. (26)



Der erste Kanzler der Bundesrepublik, Konrad Adenauer, pflegte täglich zwischen seiner Villa in Rhöndorf und dem Bundeshaus in Bonn zu pendeln. Als standesgemäßes Gefährt wählte er für diese Fahrten den 300er Mercedes, in den man auch problemlos mit Hut einsteigen konnte. Der Nimbus des Bundeskanzlerwagens veranlaßte manchen Bestattungsunternehmer in den fünfziger Jahren, dieses Auto anzuschaffen. Der Preis hierfür war allerdings beachtlich: die Limousine kostete 22000,- DM (1954). Hierfür konnte man schon ein gepflegtes Reihenhhaus erwerben. Der Umbau zum Bestattungswagen schlug dann nochmals kräftig zu Buche. Der abgebildete Wagen wurde 1954 von Miesen in Bonn karossiert und mit einer bei Bestattungswagen nur selten anzutreffenden Dachgalerie versehen. (14)



Das kleine Bild links oben und die Abbildung unten zeigen das gleiche Fahrzeug: einen von Pollmann, Bremen karrossierten Bestattungswagen auf Daimler-Benz-Fahrgestell, Typ 300, mit langem Fahrgestell. Der aus dem Jahr 1960 stammende Wagen mit langem Radstand stellt die Spitzen-Kategorie der Mercedes-Leichenwagen dar. Ein solches Fahrzeug dürfte wohl zu seiner Zeit einiges Aufsehen erregt haben, denn es stellte deutlich den Prunk zur Schau, den man sich in der Wirtschaftswunderzeit verdient zu haben meinte. (15)



Ein weiteres Exemplar des „Adenauer“, wie er heute in Oldtimerkreisen genannt wird. Den Bestattungswagen-Aufbau besorgte Stolle in Hannover. Auch bei diesem Fahrzeug wurde eine Dachgalerie angebracht, die zum Transport von Kränzen dienlich sein sollte. (26)





So präsentierte sich der Fuhrpark eines Hamburger Unternehmens im Jahr 1957: Drei Bestattungswagen auf Mercedes-Pkw-Fahrgestellen verschiedenen Typs und zwei Opel-Blitz-Lastwagen verschiedener Generationen, von denen jedoch nur der vordere als Sargwagen eingesetzt wurde. Bei dem hinteren Fahrzeug, einem „Weichblitz“, handelt es sich um einen Gerätewagen für die Grabbpflege. (9)



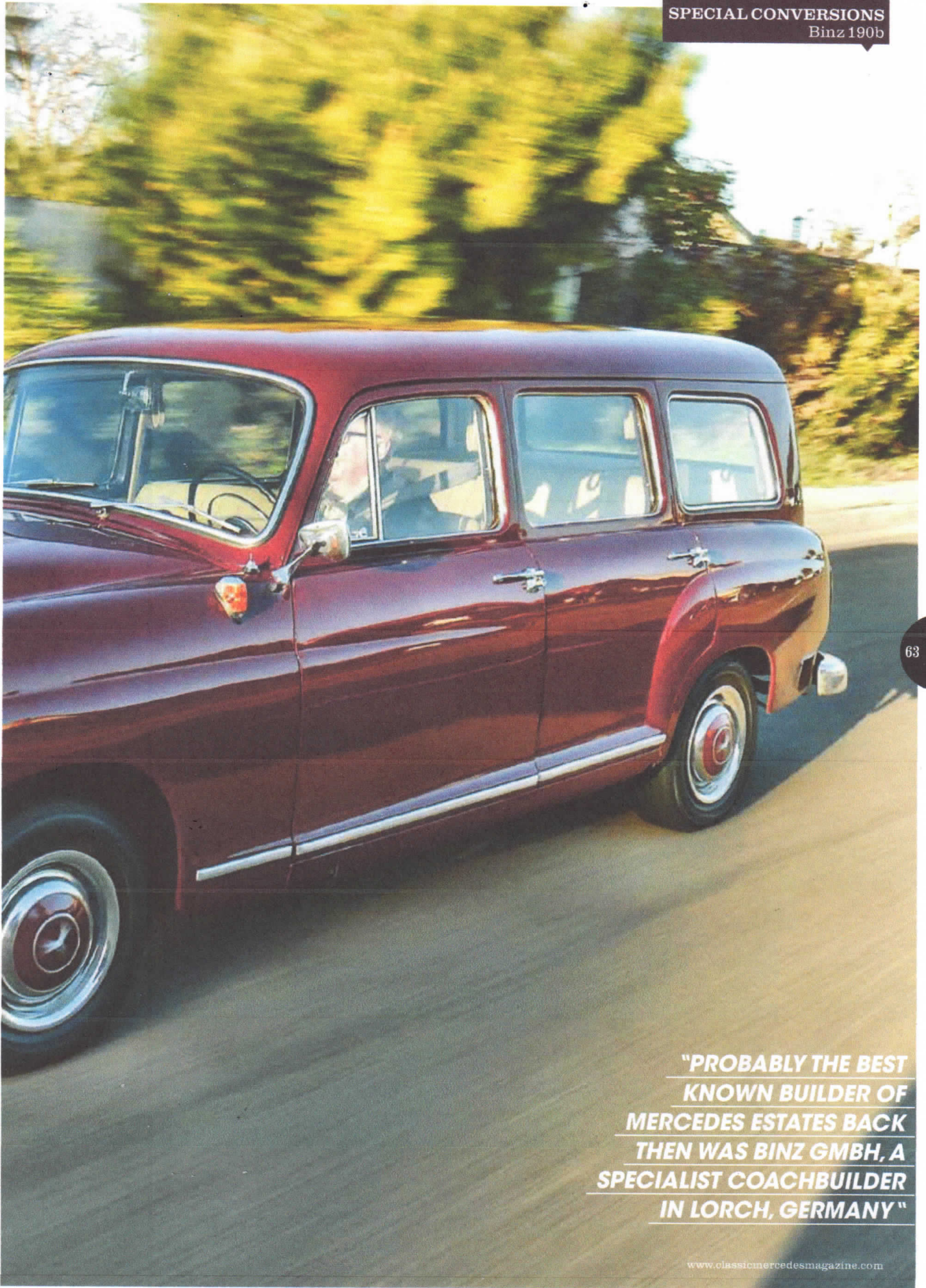
Nur drei Jahre später, im Jahre 1960, verfügte das gleiche Bestattungsunternehmen bereits über eine stattliche Flotte von zwölf Fahrzeugen. Bis auf eine Ausnahme, den Opel Blitz, handelt es sich ausschließlich um Karosserien auf Daimler-Benz-Fahrgestellen. (9)

SPACE AGE

Mercedes-Benz did not officially build estate cars until 1977, but **Richard Truesdell** found this Ponton wagon in California, built in Germany in the early 1960s – and saved by its present owner from the scrapyard two decades later.

IMAGES Richard Truesdell





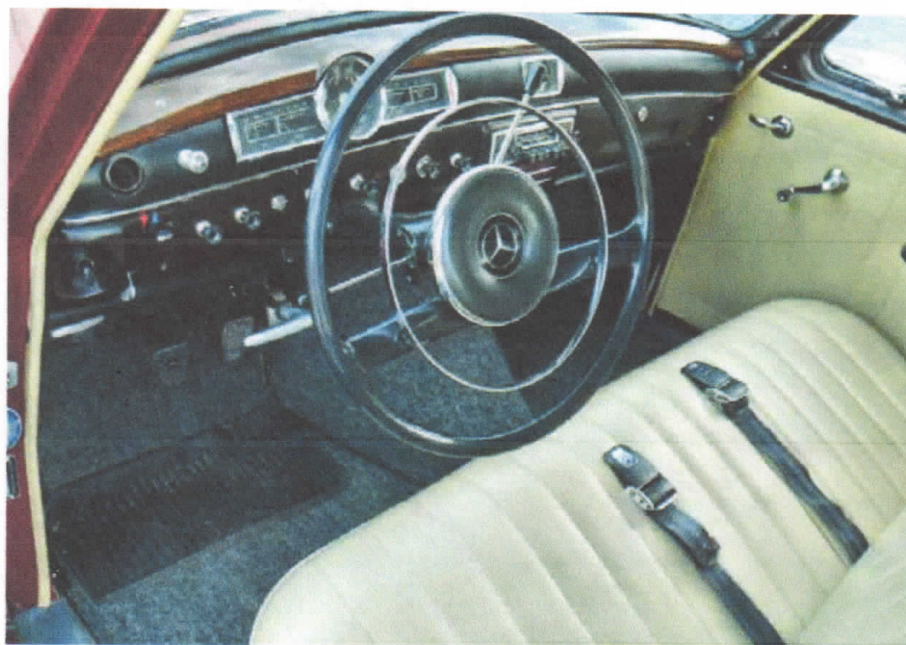
**"PROBABLY THE BEST
KNOWN BUILDER OF
MERCEDES ESTATES BACK
THEN WAS BINZ GMBH, A
SPECIALIST COACHBUILDER
IN LORCH, GERMANY"**

In the United States, estate cars remained popular up until the introduction of the Chrysler Minivans in late 1983. From that point on, traditional station wagons declined in popularity here, with SUVs and car based 'crossovers' being the final nails in their coffin. The traditional American built, rear-wheel drive station wagons are now all but extinct on this side of the pond, the last being the 2005 to 2008 Dodge Magnum, a car conceived when Chrysler was part of the ill-fated, supposed merger of equals of 1999, the DaimlerChrysler conglomerate.

Ironically it is European prestige manufacturers like Mercedes-Benz and BMW that still offer rear-wheel drive station wagons in the US, albeit priced way beyond the reach of mainstream buyers. And since its introduction of the S123 range in the late 1970s, wagons have been an important and popular part of the US Mercedes line up, accounting for up to 20 per cent of sales. But before the W123 series, did Mercedes-Benz ever offer estates?

The answer is both yes and no. If you mean factory built station wagons, no. But if the question is did Mercedes offer any estate, then yes, when you consider coachbuilt models from firms like Miesen and Binz in Germany, along with IMA in Belgium, which built the Universal models with full factory approval from 1965 to 1968. Probably the best known builder of Mercedes estates back then was Binz GmbH, a specialist coachbuilder in Lorch, east of Stuttgart in Germany. Binz has a long history of producing custom vehicles, many on platforms provided by Mercedes-Benz.

One quite rare model that was manufactured many years before Mercedes-Benz offered its own factory built estates is the wine red Binz built 1961 190b featured here, owned by long time Mercedes enthusiast Bob Gunthorp, who has an association with the brand dating back to the late 1960s, when he was hired as a technician at Mercedes-Benz of San Diego. Next came a five-year stint at German Motors, an independent shop in nearby Pacific Beach. While there,



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Pontron has the classic
1950s instruments and
steering column shifter.

A bench front seat was
a very common feature
in cars from the 1950s.

The 1980s factory vinyl
was a perfect match for
the original cabin trim.

Maker's plate identifies
who carried out the
conversion, and where.

Instrument cluster is
small, but it displays
all the info you'll need.



he was involved in the purchase of two older Mercedes-Benzes which set Bob on his present course, a 1961 220SEb and a 1967 250SE.

By 1979 Gunthorp had quit full time wage slavery to concentrate on the used parts business he had set up, the Onager Corporation in nearby Chula Vista, not far from the US/Mexican border. This has spawned a service department, which has also acquired a number of Mercedes classics, including this 190b Binz Estate.

The ownership history of this car is not fully documented, but diligent detective work, including direct correspondence with Mercedes-Benz, has pieced together much of its history. It was built on a 1959 petrol engined 190b chassis, one of 349 chassis only 190b units produced for completion as station wagons, ambulances, and hearses from 1959 to 1961. However the total rises to well over 2,200 when other variants, such as 180b/c, and the diesel powered 180Db/Dc and 190Db are taken into account.

"This chassis was delivered to Binz in Germany on September 3, 1959, the commission number being 1,540," says Gunthorp. "In 1964, after completing the transformation into an estate, Binz returned the completed vehicle to Daimler-Benz AG for US shipment."

Further research confirmed that it was shipped to Mercedes-Benz of North America on October 30 1964. For reasons not fully explained, the vehicle was titled as a 1963 model – neither the date the chassis was constructed, nor the time frame in which it was imported into the United States. When Gunthorp contacted Mercedes-Benz USA about its origin he was told, "You have an incorrect chassis number. There was no such chassis number ever used."

When he later received proof from Mercedes in Germany that the chassis number was correct, he again contacted wrote to the importer. "This time they stated that the records from that time period no longer existed," =>

Specifications



Mercedes-Benz 190b Binz Estate (W121)
Engine 1121 1,897cc 4-cyl Power 70bhp@4,800rpm
Torque 103lb ft@2,800rpm Transmission 4-speed manual
Years produced 1959-1961 Number built 349
All figures from Mercedes-Benz

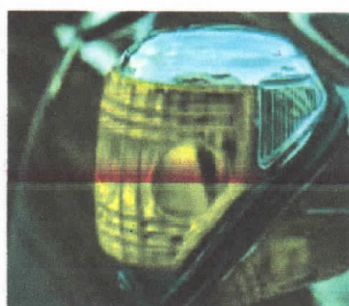
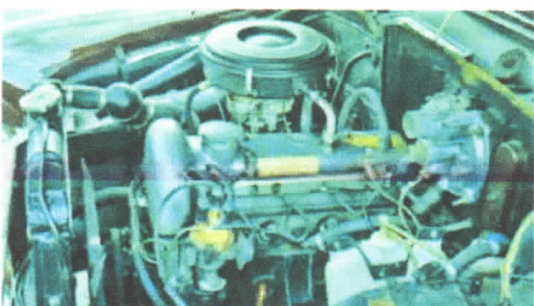


BELOW
Grille badges show
that the owner is a
Mercedes club man.

BELOW LEFT
A radio is fitted in the
dash, one of the basic
Becker Europa models.

**"THE OWNERSHIP HISTORY IS NOT
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DETECTIVE WORK, INCLUDING
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⇒ he recalls. "I have never been able to find out who owned it from 1964 until I bought it in 1984. I believe this station wagon to be one of only 50 that were built specifically to be sold in the United States."

Gunthorp entered the picture on September 15 1984, when he received a call from a woman, about three hours north in Fontana, California, whose boyfriend had recently passed away. "She asked me make an offer on a lot of five Mercedes-Benzes that were sitting in her yard – when I found out that one of them was a 190b estate I purchased all five sight unseen over the telephone," he says. "Of the five cars, only the 190b estate wagon was operable. Before he died, the previous owner was planning to remove the engine and junk the station wagon. I saved it, and junked the other four."

It had all the problems associated with a car that had been sitting outside for many years, the exterior and interior in a sad shape. As is typical in such cases, rodents had decided to

taken up residence in both the engine compartment and interior, this complicating the restoration. "My wife and friends looked over the vehicle and stated, 'Only a complete idiot would try to restore this pile of junk.' I decided to take on this restoration project anyway," says Gunthorp.

He nonetheless found the vehicle to be in very good mechanical condition. The only major component that had to be replaced was the differential, as it was noisy at between 45 and 60mph. In spite of having not been started for many years the engine ran perfectly and just needed tuning.

The interior, because of the rodent

ABOVE
Direction indicators are mounted on the top of the Ponton's front wings.

ABOVE RIGHT
Bob Gunthorp bought the 190d 29 years ago, and got to work restoring it.

ABOVE TOP RIGHT
Binz has earned itself a badge from Mercedes-Benz to mark 500,000km.

ABOVE LEFT
This is a 1.9-litre, petrol engine, but Binz converted some diesel Pontons too.

A contemporary photo of the Binz project, from the Mercedes-Benz archive.



infestation, was another matter, but not an insurmountable one. As Binz used non Mercedes materials to trim the interior, it was redone in 1980s factory vinyl. This turned out to be a perfect match for the colour and texture of the original material. Other trim components were sourced from Mercedes-Benz models of the period. Gunthorp pointed out that the interior lights are from the 300 series cars, which is why the light switch on the dash is chrome instead of black plastic.

As luck would have it, the exterior sheet metal was intact and essentially rust free, but had suffered from years of neglect. Over the years the dented 190b had been repainted an incorrect, non factory cream, but with a little digging Gunthorp found the original colour, the burgundy like Medium Red (Code 516), which fortunately he liked. The restoration started in 1984 and was completed in 1987.

A common characteristic of most of the cars in the Gunthorp collection is that they are definitely not trailer ⇒



⇒ queens. Rather, his cars are restored to a point that they present exceptionally well, but not to the degree that their owner is afraid to drive them. There is a sense of balance that Gunthorp maintains with his collection that is admirable. He does not seek concours trophies, rather he has amassed an collection of unusual Mercedes-Benz automobiles that never fail to catch the eyes of enthusiasts. Nowhere was this more apparent than when he drove the 190b from San Diego to Phoenix, Arizona, to Star Fest, where the 2012 annual meet for The Mercedes-Benz Club of America was held.

"On Saturday, along with fellow San Diego Section member, Mike Cooper, who made the trip with me to Phoenix, we drove in the rally. The rally turned

ABOVE
The austere load bay is tough and durable looking, and has a split tailgate.

ABOVE LEFT
Hardly a graceful looking estate car, but nonetheless a very appealing wagon.

out to be not quite as much fun as we expected, it was too long at about 90 miles, most of that in was city traffic, taking over four hours to complete. It would have been a lot more enjoyable if we had had air conditioning and automatic transmission.

"While I don't consider the 190b to be of show quality, I did enter it in the Star Fest Concours d'Elegance even though the restoration was 25 years old, with just the repaint in 2002," says Gunthorp. "It was quite a hit with everyone at the show. Most of the people there had never seen one of these wagons."

"Having no illusions that my car would win a trophy, I just watched as the trophies were given out," he recalls. "The last three trophies were for the People's Choice, the Judges'

Choice and the Best of Show. By now I was just talking to my friends and half listening to the announcements, when I realised that my name was announced. My 190b had won the Judges Choice award. Naturally I was thrilled because the judges appreciated the station wagon for its rarity and not because it is not perfect restoration."

Preservation, not absolute perfection, is Bob Gunthorp's enduring philosophy. And it is due to his efforts, and those of many true enthusiasts like him, that many rare, and in some cases significant Mercedes-Benz cars, have been saved from oblivion. To him, the rest of us who appreciate these rare cars, surely owe a debt of gratitude.

GM



"A COMMON CHARACTERISTIC OF MOST OF THE CARS IN THE GUNTHERP COLLECTION IS THAT THEY ARE DEFINITELY NOT TRAILER QUEENS"