

The SILVER STAR



Mercedes-Benz Club of America • Sierra Nevada Section • June 2020



Newsletter Editor
 Marcus Dodson
 1840 Wendy Way
 Reno, Nevada 89509
 (775) 997-9901

marcus@dodsonpublications.com
 sierranevada.mbca.org
 facebook.com/SierraNevadaMBCA

MBCA National Office
 (800) 637-2360 • www.mbca.org

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**JUNE DINNER
 CANCELLED**



540K Special Roadster

A Socialite's Accessory Becomes an Infamous Treasure

by Ali Turner, Reporter for the Automotive Industry

In 1936, 19-year-old Henning von Krieger was given a 540K Special Roadster as a graduation gift from his mother, Prussian Baroness Josephine von Krieger. The family was no stranger to luxury automobiles, as they had already collected a Franay-bodied Packard Cabriolet and a Rolls-Royce Phantom II. Henning, who had just recently reached the legal driving age, was now sporting what was to become one of the most infamous Mercedes-Benz® cars in history.

When World War II broke out across Europe, Josephine and her family moved from France to Switzerland, defying Nazi orders to return to their home in Germany. Henning turned his

540K Special Roadster back into the Mercedes-Benz factory for service and repairs, and arranged for it to be garaged in Switzerland. Once the car made its way to Switzerland, it didn't take long for Henning's sister, Gisela, to adopt the beautiful automobile as her own. Not only was the car gorgeous on the outside, it had incredibly modern luxuries for its day, including a Telefunken radio, a full-leather dashboard, and a burl wood writing table that stowed neatly beneath the glove compartment.

Gisela herself was infamous among the social elite in Europe, and her beauty was mesmerizing. A dead-ringer for Marlene Dietrich, she fre-

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PRESIDENT'S EXHAUST



Warming Up

Keeping Busy & Looking Forward to the Future



Many people are enjoying the warm weather as they leave their homes to take a drive or go on a walk. Not being able to travel or get together with friends and family has been a real challenge for some. Vence and I are keeping busy with a garden and a new puppy, and I hope all of you are finding ways to pass the time and stay healthy, too. I think we are all ready for places to open up so we can get on with our lives in a way that seems more normal.

As of right now, the Mercedes Benz Club of America Sierra Nevada Section doesn't have any events planned, and it will likely remain that way until more businesses and places are free to have larger groups. We are looking into the

possibility of a drive and an outdoor picnic, and whatever we plan, we will be sure to be compliant with current safety and health guidelines. Be sure to follow the Mercedes Benz Club of America Sierra Nevada Section on Facebook @SierraNevadaMBCA for all club updates. Vence and I are so excited that the next phase of reopening has begun, and hopefully we can all get together again soon.

Stay safe and healthy,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gail V. Wells".

President



Attn: Marcus Dodson
1840 Wendy Way
Reno, Nevada 89509
(775) 997-9901
marcus@dodsonpublications.com
sierranevada.mbca.org
facebook.com/SierraNevadaMBCA

SIERRA NEVADA OFFICERS

Gail Wells, President
(307) 763-1701
blackswan342@gmail.com

Patti Settember, Vice President & Events
(770) 852-1522
topat83@aol.com

Christy Dodson, Secretary
(775) 771-7777
christy@dodsonpublications.com

LaVern Lipinski, Treasurer
(775) 882-4697
lipinski3541@gmail.com

Vencil Wells, Director-at-Large
(818) 667-9745
vencil@vencil.com

Bill Shepherd, Immediate Past President
(775) 826-0388
billshep@sbcglobal.net

Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor & Webmaster
(775) 997-9901
marcus@dodsonpublications.com

Marc Dodson, Membership Chair
(775) 771-1080
marc.v.dodson@gmail.com

SIERRA NEVADA MBCA FORMER PRESIDENTS

Marc Dodson • 2011
Gary Dyer • 2012 & 2013
Sherry Avilla • 2014
Don Williams • 2015 & 2016
Gary Dyer • 2017
Bill Shepherd • 2018 & 2019

The Silver Star is the official publication of The Sierra Nevada Section of MBCA, however, opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Sierra Nevada Section, MBCA, or its officers.

WELCOME NEW SIERRA NEVADA MBCA MEMBERS...
Jerome Polaha — Reno, NV



THE FULLY RESTORED 540K SPECIAL ROADSTER.

540K Special Roadster

(Continued from Page 1)

quented the most prestigious international events and could easily be found perusing the shops in Paris and the beaches of Cannes. She was elegant and privileged, known far and wide as one of the most fashionable women in the world. Perhaps her greatest and most impressive accessory was her brother's 540K Mercedes-Benz.

After the war, Gisela continued to

drive the car and even brought it with her to New York City on the R.M.S. Queen Mary when she moved to the United States in 1949. Zumbach's, the famous foreign car garage on Manhattan's West Side, serviced the car while it was in New York. Sadly, Henning died in 1959 of cancer, and Gisela found herself back in Switzerland to mourn and settle her brother's estate. The

roadster didn't follow her to Europe, and instead it was put in storage at her summer home in Greenwich, Connecticut, where it remained for over 30 years.

Gisela, who was no stranger to attention from the opposite sex, found that her 540K Special Roadster garnered her even more attention from men. "Love

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540K Special Roadster

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of good cars is said to be men's purest passion," she famously said. One man, George Maley, was solely interested in Gisela's roadster. An auto collector and historian, Maley hired private detectives in the 1970s and 1980s to track down Gisela as she bounced around Europe and the United States. Much to his dismay, the Baroness would not part with her Mercedes, as she considered it the last link to her carefree days as a European royal.

The car remained in Gisela's possession until her death in 1989, but as she had no will and no heirs, her estate was incredibly challenging to settle. Despite

owning multiple residences, valuable bank securities, and countless pieces of diamond jewelry, Gisela died in squalor and was buried in a pauper's grave. Years went by before a classic automobile specialist, David Gooding, learned about the black, two-seater Mercedes held in storage in Connecticut from Gisela's estate lawyer.

Elated by the find, Gooding traveled from California to Connecticut and was amazed at his discovery. Inside the vehicle were old driving maps, Gisela's white driving gloves, and lipstick-stained cigarettes in the ashtray. Neglected for decades, the paint was peeling and it was covered in dust. The Connecticut license plate was from 1956. Another discovery was the 1936 receipt from Daimler-Benz that contains delivery notes, a sales confirmation, as well as a "Heil Hitler!" salutation.

"Of all the great, long-lost cars I've ever seen, the von Krieger Special Roadster was, by far, the most memorable," Gooding reminisced. "It was truly a time capsule from

a bygone era and had an incredibly haunting presence."

At more than 17' long and 6' wide, the von Krieger Special Roadster is about the same size as a modern Chevrolet Tahoe SUV. The front of the car has a split grille offset by a pair of round headlights that sit atop a polished chrome bumper. A supercharged eight-cylinder engine lives below a long, glossy black hood. The interior is brown leather, with wood and chrome accents. Fenders travel over the front wheels before sloping downward under the doors, serving as a footstep. The car's lines curve upward over the rear wheels, finishing in a wide, low tail. A chromed Mercedes star ornament sits atop the hood and a miniature von Krieger family crest is painted on the driver's door. The car has a top speed of 115 mph.

In 1999, the von Krieger Special Roadster went through a complete restoration and went on to earn the coveted best-in-class honors at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in 2004. Luxury car enthusiasts and collectors all agreed that it was one of the finest relics of the Mercedes brand, but its true value had only ever been speculated. One of the most impressive features of

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**GISELA
VON KRIEGER.**



540K Special Roadster

(Continued from Page 4)

the car is that the engine and chassis numbers match. Often, prewar-era Mercedes had finicky engines that needed to be replaced, sometimes more than once.

The Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is a charitable event held each

year in August in Pebble Beach, California, as the finale of Monterey Car Week. It is considered the most prestigious automotive charity event in the world and is colloquially known as a competition of extreme elegance. Prewar and postwar collector cars are judged for au-

thenticity, function, history, and style, and are often grouped into different time periods. Proceeds, which have exceeded \$20 million over the years, have supported the United Way of Monterey County, the Pebble Beach Company Foundation, and other assorted local and national organizations.

It wasn't until 2012 that the 540K Special Roadster was officially sold at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance for the staggering price of \$11.7 million. That is a far cry from its original \$7,000 price tag, even with inflation. In the 1930s, Mercedes-Benz owners were privy to extremely personalized craftsmanship, as it was the height of prewar German automotive engineering. Experts have dubbed the von Krieger Special Roadster as the automotive equivalent of a coveted Picasso. "The von Krieger Special Roadster's complete restoration, beautiful story, and thoroughly documented history make it absolutely extraordinary," expressed Gooding. 





**BILL SHEPHERD
WITH HIS 1964 230 SL.**

A Car, a Woman, & a Case of Wine

How an Air Force Pilot Came Back to the States With More Than He Planned

by Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor

The Mercedes-Benz® SL-Class is arguably the most iconic automobile that the German luxury vehicle maker produces. It is a grand tourer sports car, with the designation SL being derived from the German term *super-leicht*, meaning super light. It was originally tailored to post-war American luxury performance car enthusiasts, and it is designed for high speeds and long-distance driving. First introduced in 1954, the Mercedes SL has seen a variety of innovations over the decades, and continues to dominate the roads today. In the 1960s in post-war Germany, one American airman, who would later become one of the presidents of the Mercedes Benz Club of America Sierra Nevada Section, fell in love with three things: his future wife, German wine, and his new 1964 230 SL Mercedes-Benz.

In the late 1950s, Bill Shepherd was studying electrical engineering at Duke University in North Carolina. The Korean War had ended just a few years earlier, yet the draft was still in effect in the United States. During Shepherd's senior year at Duke, he began serving the United States as a Cadet Commander in the school's ROTC program. However, his curriculum felt stagnant, especially since the transistor was not

yet widely adopted, and Shepherd found himself intrigued at the idea of becoming a pilot. After meeting with his ROTC leadership, he made his way to Valdosta, Georgia, to attend flight school at Moody Air Force Base.

Pilot training in Georgia lasted one year, and a student's standing in the class determined their next duty station. Since Shepherd worked hard and was one of the top graduates in his class, he was able to choose to continue his service in Germany as a fighter pilot in F-102 planes. In 1962, he relocated to Germany and took up post on the Hahn Air Force Base, nearly two hours from Frankfurt. Located in the Hunsrück, a mountainous area in the middle of the country, Hahn Air Force Base was the perfect place for a young bachelor to set up camp. Even the accommodations were unique, as Shepherd and another pilot rented a castle that was owned by the regional Forest Meister, a German federal employee. Luckily for Shepherd, though, he wasn't going to be a bachelor for long.

One evening, while enjoying some drinks at the officer's club at the nearby Ramstein Air Base, Shepherd was introduced to Lori, with whom he shared mutual friends. They hit it off immediately and began a romantic relationship. Lori, an American, was also sta-

tioned in Germany as a first grade teacher on one of the United States' military bases. They maintained their budding relationship despite Shepherd routinely having temporary duty assignments across Europe.

While planes may have been the reason Shepherd moved to Germany, they weren't his only mode of transportation. During his first few years at Hahn Air Force Base, he drove a Sunbeam, which he wrapped around a tree while driving with a Danish pilot. Thankfully, he suffered minor injuries, but the Sunbeam was toast. Next came a Porsche, a considerable upgrade from the Sunbeam, and it also helped him fit in amongst his German counterparts. Shepherd had his heart set on another German-made car, and to his luck, his landlord was able to help him make the dream a reality.

The Forest Meister, a well-known and connected German official, had a doctor friend that lived near the border between Germany and Luxembourg and had a Mercedes-Benz he was willing to sell. Shepherd arranged to pay \$2,500 for a 1964 230 SL six-cylinder two-door Mercedes, and his dream of owning the luxury car was realized. The 230 SL was a new design when Shepherd acquired his, and it featured

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THE HUNSRUCK REGION OF GERMANY.



BILL'S 230 SL IN GERMANY

A Car, a Woman, & a Case of Wine

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a low waistline, curved greenhouse windows, and a detachable hardtop.

The young pilot immediately fell in love with his new SL. He drove the car from Switzerland to Italy, and with nerves of steel, pushed it to 120 mph on the Autobahn, the controlled-access highway system in Germany. A trip to Stuttgart, Germany, allowed Shepherd

to have a mechanic upgrade any parts on the car that would not satisfy American motor vehicle required standards.

In September 1966, Shepherd was preparing to leave Germany and return to the United States, reuniting with Lori in San Francisco, California. He was a little nervous about shipping his car overseas, as the instructions from the

shipping coordinator were a bit strange. Shepherd was instructed to leave his Mercedes at a nearby fueling station, with the keys hidden under the mat. According to his directions, he was to be reunited with his beloved car six weeks later in Northern California. As anyone can imagine, he was incredibly

(Continued on Page 8)

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LEFT: BILL AND LORI SHORTLY AFTER MEETING IN GERMANY. BELOW: MOSEL WINE.



A Car, a Woman, & a Case of Wine

(Continued from Page 7)

reluctant to leave his beloved automobile at a random gas station.

Not only was Shepherd leaving his Mercedes in the hands of the unknown, he was also transporting several bottles of his favorite Mosel wine. Originating from one of Germany's 13 wine regions, Mosel wine is known for being crisp and light, with a flowery aroma. Shepherd had acquired a taste for Mosel wine throughout his years in Germany. During that time, it was considered customary to bring your favorite foreign wine back to the United States after finishing your military tour, and Shepherd

took that tradition and ran with it. He obtained a foot locker and filled it to the brim with wine bottles, then tucked it away in the trunk of the car, desperately hoping that they would arrive in America unscathed.

Shortly after this nerve-wracking and mysterious exchange, Shepherd was in San Francisco, working for Pan Am. Much to his delight, his Mercedes 230 SL arrived unharmed in San Francisco, and he even found his Mosel wine intact. By the following year, Shepherd found himself in Reno, Nevada, flying for the National Guard and

commuting to San Francisco for his Pan Am duties. He and Lori married in January 1968, and bounced around Europe for their honeymoon.

One day, shortly before the newlyweds were intended to return to the United States, Shepherd picked up a newspaper in Copenhagen, Denmark, and learned of North Korea's capture of the USS Pueblo. The Pueblo incident became an international crisis and major Cold War event. Shepherd's unit was activated into the Air Force once again. Lori took it upon herself to help feed the many airmen that came through their house during the remainder of the unit's involvement in the crisis.

Time passed on, as it always does, and Shepherd settled into an enjoyable and rewarding life as a pilot, father, and husband in Reno. He has remained a luxury car enthusiast, and joined the Mercedes-Benz Club of America Sierra Nevada Section several years ago, and is the current Past-President. Throughout his life, which has seen military service, international moves, marriage, children, and civilian life, Shepherd's 1964 SL has devotedly stood by. Through it all, the car was always there.





LEFT: A SPY PHOTO OF THE NEW SL.
BELOW: AN ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT
THE CAR COULD LOOK LIKE.



New SL Roadster

Mercedes Returns to its Sports Car Roots With New Soft-Top Convertible

by Ali Turner, Reporter for the Automotive Industry

In German, *super leicht* is translated to the English *super light*. Mercedes-Benz® began manufacturing its infamous *super leicht*, or SL, line in 1954 and has continued to innovate the automobile lineup ever since. The 300 SL first came in coupé form, and featured gullwing doors. The two-seater 300 SL roadster came shortly after, in 1957, and also featured gullwings, a mechanical direct fuel injection, and a three-liter overhead camshaft straight-six engine. Known as the fastest production car of its time, the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL would top out at 163 mph, making it a sports-car enthusiast's dream. A favorite of celebrities, notable owners have included Pablo Picasso, Sophia Loren, Clark Gable, Paul Newman, and Yul Brynner.

Mercedes is now reviving the once-legendary roadster to its original greatness by introducing a new model, expected to debut in late 2021. Alongside the new SL roadster, Mercedes will also unveil the next-generation AMG

GT. Spies for the automotive industry have recently spotted a test mule, or prototype car, in camouflage at the Nürburgring in Germany, and it is widely believed to be the new SL roadster.

The new SL will hit the market at just under \$100,000 and will feature many of the original features, as well as modern upgrades. The new SL is meant to replace the Mercedes-Benz S-Class Cabriolet, as the carmaker's new comfortable convertible with a sports car twist. The rumor mill says that a fabric top and small, usable rear seats will come with the new SL, which can be considered a stretched-out and updated version of the two-seater AMG GT. Turbocharged straight-sixes and V8s with 48 V hybrid assistance, a tech-heavy cabin, and a cloth roof will be included on the new SL roadster. The new SL will be rear-wheel drive, have an automatic transmission, and weigh 300 lbs. less than its predecessor. The lighter weight is thanks to the aluminum that is used for the SL's con-

struction, making it feel even closer to its sportier ancestor.

"For me, the most beautiful SL is the original, the 300," said Gordon Wagener, head of Mercedes' design department. "I think we've taken some of that DNA, starting with the proportions and surface treatment. In that respect, the new SL is probably the closest to the first one ever."

Two-door, four-seat grand touring convertibles are a dime a dozen now, but many options across several carmakers' inventories have left the public overwhelmed. However, this new SL roadster is a sight for sore eyes that have been waiting for a luxurious, sporty, four-seat Mercedes option. AMG leader Tobias Moers has already said, "the next SL will reflect the perfect compromise between driving dynamics and comfort." Prior iterations of the SL have leaned towards being a grand tourer and have inched away from its racing past. This new SL roadster, however, appears to have cozied up to its sports car heritage and we are all excited for its unveil. 

MEETING MINUTES

Sierra Nevada MBCA
Board of Directors Meeting
Location: Christy Dodson's Home
Thursday, May 28, 2020

CALL TO ORDER:

Gail Wells, President, called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Directors present were: Gail Wells, President; Patti Settember, Program Director; Christy Dodson, Secretary; Vencil Wells, Board Member; Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor; LaVern Lipinski, Treasurer; and Bill Shepherd, Past President. Also present was Lori Shepherd, Carlos Lucovich, and Gene Lamski.

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Christy Dodson confirmed there was a quorum of directors present.

MINUTES:

Marcus Dodson made a motion to approve the previous minutes as printed in the Newsletter. The motion was seconded by Patti Settember.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

LaVern Lipinski went over the Treasurer's Report. After deposits of advertising funds, the Club has a final balance of \$2,478.92. Marcus Dodson made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Patti Settember.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

Marcus Dodson read the membership report for the second quarter that was submitted by Marc Dodson, Membership Chair. The report included: one new member, Jerome Polaha, Reno, Nevada; and one expired member. The Club has 86 total members as of May 25, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Board Members put forth the idea of not returning 50% of membership dues back to the Mercedes Benz Club of America National. The decision was unanimously approved.

SECTION EVENTS:

- Marc and Sue Dodson's June driving event to Columbia Valley, California, will hopefully be moved to September.
- Marcus and Christy Dodson's July Summer Backyard Party will hopefully be moved to August or September.
- A picnic has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at Bartley Ranch Regional Park in Reno, Nevada. Guests are encouraged to bring their own food and drinks, as well as practice social distancing. Time is to be determined.
- Bill and Lori Shepherd will host a First Tuesday Dinner event on August 4, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. at BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse at The Summit in Reno, Nevada. Guests will order off of the menu, and there will be separate checks for couples or singles.
- The November First Tuesday Dinner event on November 3, 2020, originally hosted by Gonzalo and Kathi Lopez, is now open for anyone who wishes to host the evening.
- A drive/museum visit to Stagecoach, Nevada, might be scheduled for a Saturday in November.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held at BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse at The Summit in Reno, Nevada, on Tuesday, August 4, at 4:30 p.m. prior to the First Tuesday Dinner event.

ADJOURNMENT:

Bill Shepherd made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. Marcus Dodson seconded the motion. The motion was carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christy Dodson, Secretary



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ITEMS OF INTEREST

The National Automobile Museum

Sierra Nevada MBCA is a Proud Sponsor of This Great Museum Here in Reno



Here in Reno, we're lucky to be home to one of the top-rated auto museums in the world, The National Automobile Museum. Your Sierra Nevada MBCA Section is a proud sponsor!

What does that mean to you? Well, since your club is the sponsor of a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing on prominent display at the museum, all of our members get special benefits:

- Members get free admission into the facility, plus a 50% discount for any guests, during normal business hours.
- Members can request free guided tours of the museum, subject to the availability of the tour guides.

• Members receive a 10% discount at the National Auto Museum gift shop. Besides automotive books and car memorabilia, this also includes the full line of Meguiars Automotive cleaning products that are sold through the gift shop.

The museum has our member list on file, so just tell the cashier your name and that you're a member of the Sierra Nevada Section of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America. You'll get your free museum admission and discount at the gift shop.

The National Automobile Museum is located at 10 South Lake Street in Reno, (775) 333-9300.

Sierra Nevada MBCA Name Badges

We encourage all members to wear their MBCA name badges to all Sierra Nevada section meetings and events. WHAT???

You don't have a Sierra Nevada name badge? Right now you're probably thinking, "How can I, a mere mortal, achieve the level of prestige and acclaim of those that proudly display their Sierra Nevada MBCA name badges for all to see?"

This one item will not only identify you as an official Sierra Nevada MBCA member, it will:

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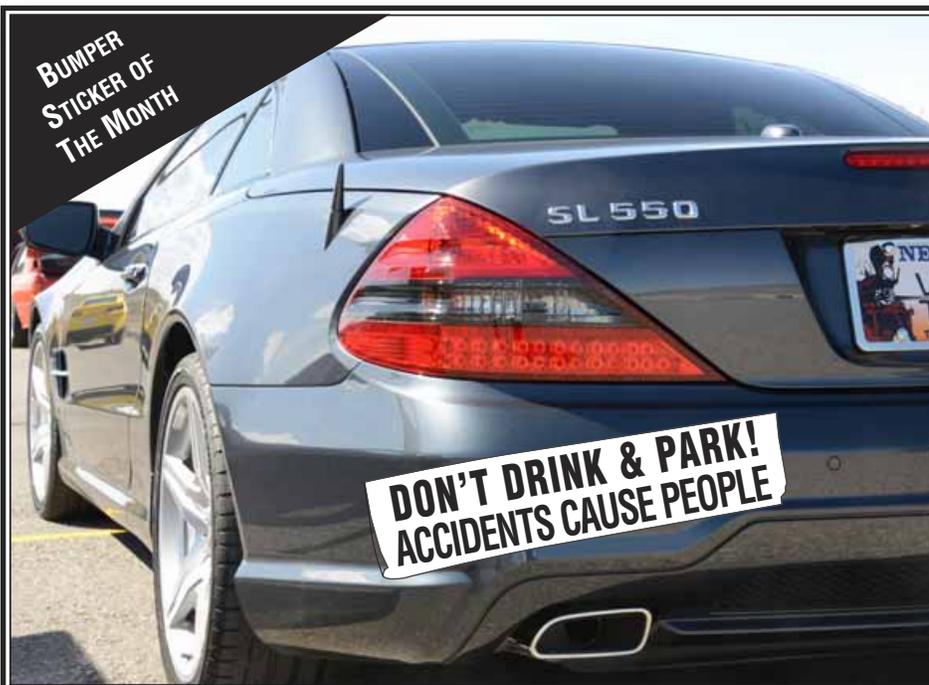
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Be sure and order the magnet-backed version.



EVENTS

June 17, 2020: Picnic, Bartley Ranch Regional Park, Reno, Nevada. Members are encouraged to bring their own food and drinks, as well as practice social distancing. Time To Be Determined

June 20-21, 2020: Aces High Rally & Car Show, Heavenly Village, South Lake Tahoe, California.
www.theshopsatheavenly.com, (775) 265-2087

July 7, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by LaVern Lipinski & Carlos Lucovich, Location To Be Determined

July 31-August 1, 2020: Hot August Nights, Virginia City, Nevada. www.hotaugustnights.net, (775) 356-1956

August 4, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Bill & Lori Shepherd, BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse at The Summit, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Bill Shepherd at billshep@sbcglobal.net or (775) 826-0388

August or September 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA Summer Backyard Party, Marcus & Christy Dodson's home, 1840 Wendy Way, Reno, Nevada, Date To Be Determined

August 4-9, 2020: Hot August Nights, Reno, Nevada.
www.hotaugustnights.net, (775) 356-1956

August 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA Picnic & Play at Bartley Ranch Regional Park, hosted by LaVern Lipinski & Carlos Lucovich, Reno, Nevada, Date To Be Determined

September 1, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Tim & Katherine Wellesley, Location To Be Determined

September 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA Overnight Drive to Columbia Valley, California, hosted by Marc & Sue Dodson, Date To Be Determined

October 6, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Karen & Lloyd Gash, Napa Sonoma Plumgate, Reno, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Karen Gash at karinmrich1946@icloud.com or (775) 851-1439

October 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA Overnight Drive & Wine Tasting to Nevada City, California, hosted by the Board of Directors, Date To Be Determined

November 3, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, Location To Be Determined

December 1, 2020: Sierra Nevada MBCA First Tuesday Dinner, hosted by Marc & Sue Dodson, Sasquatch Tavern & Grill, Verdi, Nevada. To RSVP, contact Marc Dodson at marc.v.dodson@gmail.com or (775) 771-1080

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IN CLOSING

Mouth-Watering Rides

Everyone Likes to Eat & Drive, Why Not put Those Two Things Together?

by Marcus Dodson, Newsletter Editor

(Editor's Note: The following story may have absolutely nothing to do with Mercedes or automobiles, but we feel it's interesting nonetheless. If you have a humorous or interesting story you would like to submit for this column, call us at (775) 997-9901.)

We all remember the beloved ice cream truck that would cruise around neighborhoods on hot summer days. Or, perhaps you're a fan of trying global cuisine from local food trucks perched on the street. Well, some people's love of food has taken their personal automobiles to a whole new level. Check out these wacky, yet oddly delicious-looking, cars de cuisine.

