

CLASSIC DRIVER

From Stuttgart to St. Moritz with a ski-laden Mercedes 300SL Roadster

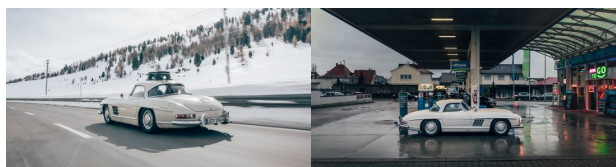
Lead

The Ice might have been cancelled last weekend, but our friends at Mechatronik in Stuttgart defiantly drove into the face of adversity and took their ski-laden Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster to snowy St. Moritz anyway. Suffice to say, it was a weekend to remember...

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Upon hearing the news late on Thursday afternoon that [The International Concours of Elegance had been cancelled due to the outbreak of the coronavirus](#), our good friend Pascal Stephan from the Classic Driver dealer [Mechatronik](#) near Stuttgart was undeterred. After all, his bags were already packed and his skis were affixed to the roof of the magnificent Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster in which he was planning to head to St. Moritz. Why not drive their anyway, he thought, and enjoy a weekend of casual winter motoring in the Engadine?



"I think that these days, which aren't the most encouraging for petrolheads in many respects, we need to get out and enjoy these old cars as much as possible," defiantly comments Stephan. "Creating memories, having fun and meeting people with the same mindset are the reason we love cars and that was going to be the most important aspect of The Ice. It was a place for real enthusiasts to meet up - and real enthusiasts don't care about the weather forecast or putting mileage on their cars. It's nice to look at cars, but heck, it's much nicer to drive them!"



Stephan and his road-trip support crew weren't the only diehard enthusiasts to descend on St. Moritz last weekend, despite the event's cancellation and the looming threat of COVID-19. They were, however, by far the most stylish. Resplendent in White Grey over rich burgundy leather, 'their' 300SL Roadster is a genuine three-owner car. But that's not to say it's a garage queen. "With 79,000km on the clock, this is a car that loves to be driven," Stephan explains. "The second owner, who kept the car from 1974 until 2008, retained every last workshop invoice, which is something we very rarely find nowadays. Plus, it's got a rare factory hardtop, which I really love."



At around 430km, the route from Stuttgart to St. Moritz was not a particularly lengthy one. But it did encompass the picturesque Austrian town of Bregenz on the eastern shore of Lake Constance and, of course, the breath-taking mountains of the Engadine region of Switzerland. And when you're driving a car as undisputedly beautiful as a Mercedes 300SL - oh, and you have the über-talented photographers Alex Penfold and Zach Brehl in hot pursuit - opportunities to stop and take hundreds of photos were abundant. "To be honest, we were happy to stop in any location where we could collect some standout memories."



Saturday was spent snaking up towards and across the Bernina Pass, one of the world’s finest driving roads, high in the Graubünden canton of Switzerland, and entertaining the skiers who’d hit the local slopes regardless of the public health situation. And after a day gorging on the most spectacular panoramic views the region had to offer, let’s just say the 300SL was safely tucked up in bed while the stranded car lovers in St. Moritz enjoyed the best the glamorous Alpine town’s nightlife had to offer.



The return leg to Stuttgart was arguably even more special than the way to St. Moritz, with the sun glistening off the surface of Lake Constance and the Mercedes thrumming away happily. “There were no traffic jams, just empty roads and a perfectly running 300SL,” concludes Stephan. “An average speed of 140kph is pretty impressive when you remind yourself that the car is exactly 60 years old. Besides all the hullabaloo surrounding the coronavirus, it was a perfect weekend.”



With one eye looking to the future and, more specifically, the uncertainty surrounding the European outbreak of the virus, we think it’s inevitable that further international motoring events will be cancelled. But as the Mechatronik team proved with its wintry jaunt to St. Moritz, there’s no excuse to not simply get out and drive, because at the end of the day, that’s the greatest automotive thrill of them all.

Photos: Alex Penfold and Zach Brehl for Classic Driver © 2020

Gallery

