



1960 Mercedes-Benz 220 SE Cabriolet Darin Schnabel ©2016 Courtesy of RM Sotheby's



Lot Number

151

1960 Mercedes-Benz 220 SE Cabriolet

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Chassis No. 128.030.10.003512
Engine No. 127.983.10.000909

- Most desirable and collectible four-passenger Mercedes-Benz of its period
- Equally suitable on the show field, at gala events, and on long highway tours
- Excellent condition; sparingly used since full restoration seven years ago
- Stunning interior wood trim, gauges and controls, and leather upholstery

134 bhp (SAE), 2,195 cc SOHC inline six-cylinder engine with mechanical fuel-injected engine, four-speed column-shift manual transmission, independent front suspension with upper and lower A-arms and coil springs, rear single-joint swing axles with coil springs, and four-wheel hydraulic drum brakes. Wheelbase: 106.3 in.

There are four words every classic Mercedes-Benz enthusiast should know; unibody, ponton, Einspritzmotor, and cabriolet. They describe the four major advances by the company during the mid-1950s, culminating in the production of this flagship automobile in 1960.

A one-piece chassis and body, designed with collapsible components for safety in collisions, replaced the previous body-on-chassis structure in 1953. Replacing the multiple-form body design, the ponton—German for “ponton”—body had a single clean styling line from the headlamp along the front fender across the door panel and terminating at the taillight at the end of the rear fender. For additional power, on this W128 chassis, Mercedes engine developers replaced the earlier carbureted engine with the M127 gasoline injection engine—Einspritzmotor in German, and the “E” in “SE”—using a very early form of mechanical pump-driven system by Bosch to feed fuel into the six cylinders.

Representing the peak of this development period, the company produced a four-seat cabriolet—a body style with a canvas top that folded neatly under the tonneau cover—a style the company continues to use, but only on very special (the “S” in “SE”) models, to this day.

Of practical note, the cabriolet is the most desirable of the three body styles built on the W128 chassis, but the extensive production of coupes and sedans with identical mechanical components means that all parts necessary to maintain the car can be ordered out of the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center catalog. Conversely, this example has all-rare original trim components unique to the cabriolet, including fascia trim, gauges, Becker radio and correct speaker panel, and head rests in excellent original condition. The rear bench seat was a correct option in place of the alternative luggage shelf, all the better for parade use.

This striking example benefitted from a full nut-and-bolt restoration seven years ago at a small independent shop (having previously restored a Pebble Beach entrant for the consignor) in the classic restoration region of Blenheim, Ontario. At the time, the original gray and red color/trim combination was replaced by this stunning and black with tan leather combination correct for the period and model. The cabriolet was subsequently shown with great appreciation at the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance in Michigan, and it was even driven without any mechanical or overheating issues on the Woodward Cruise. Trailered to all shows and events since its restoration, the car has accumulated only about 250 additional miles of the 15,598 miles shown on the odometer.

This lovely 220 SE could continue to be shown with pride in Mercedes-Benz Club of America concours events, or it could transition gracefully and reliably to a practical and comfortable vehicle for organized long-distance tours.