





Classic Driver Magazine Mercedes-Benz SL 'Pagoda' 27 January 2013

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# Greatest Pagoda Racing Victory

## Celebrating the Anniversary of Eugen Böhringer's victory in the Spa-Sofia-Liège Rally

By Albert de la Torre  
Photos from the Daimler-Chrysler media archive

Just 40 years ago to the month, shortly after the Pagoda's world premiere at the Geneva Motor Show, Germany's star rally man Eugen Böhringer, the 1962 European Rally Champion, and co-driver Klaus Kaiser drove their 230 SL to a spectacular victory in the Spa-Sofia-Liège Rally, the "Marathon de la Route". What was more, they won it by a comfortable margin. Since that race was recognized as the world's most demanding rally, both for the car and for the crew, that success really meant something. With his victory, Böhringer put the 230 SL in the tire tracks of its legendary predecessor the 300 SL, which had won the '55 and '56 editions of the event run at the time from Liège to Rome and back.

Eugen had won the previous Rome-Liège-Rome event in a 220 SE "fintail" and the usual car for the '63 season was the more powerful 300 SE. For the "Marathon of the Road" he made an exception. His two previous

experiences of this rally had taught him that it would be maneuverability that would win the race. The new W113 was the natural choice except for the fact that the car was not yet available and all units were in Geneva for its presentation. So Böhringer, Karl Kling (Racing Manager), and Fritz Nallinger (Technical director) started working on the project. On March 25<sup>th</sup>, Nallinger recovered three of the Pagodas from Geneva, one of which (red colour, chassis #000014) went on to win the rally as car number 39. (*This is the car that appears in the W113 Pagoda SL Group's logo. – Ed.*) On April 23 it was officially announced that a 230 SL would take part in the rally with Eugen Böhringer and Klaus Kaiser at the controls.

Given that the Pagoda was entered in the production car category, main modifications were limited by the sporting regulations. The few changes that had to be made to incorporate the lessons Böhringer learned are listed on the opposite page.

From the start of the rally on August 27, there was a fierce battle between Rauno Aaltonen's Austin-Healey 3000, Böhringer's Pagoda, and Eric Carlsson's Saab. Other tough competitors were Makinen and Paddy

Hopkirk in their Healeys. Heavy downpours flooded part of the route along the Adriatic and brought large boulders onto many roads. Most competitors lost time as a result. Despite all of this, Böhringer and Aaltonen left Yugoslavia with the loss of just 4 and 3 minutes respectively. While climbing the precarious Vivione, Aaltonen misjudged a corner and terminally damaged his big Healey. Once Eugen was informed of this the remaining 900 km to Liège was a relative easy walk. The 230 SL took overall victory with Carlsson's Saab 15 minutes behind. When they arrived at the finish line in Liège on August 31, after 92 hours and approximately 6100 km (from 5500 to 6600 km depending on the source), they were exhausted but happy. Only 20 of the 119 starters had finished the arduous race.

The triumph was commemorated at that year's IAA in Frankfurt in September. Among the Mercedes-Benz exhibits, together with the gleaming new 230 SL and 600 models, was Böhringer and Kaiser's winning Pagoda, still wearing its "S-RV 441" license plate and showing real dust from the rally.

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Böhringer keeps ahead of the competition (DC Media Archive)



Victory celebrations were well deserved (DC Media Archive)



# The Elusive ZF 5-Speed Transmission

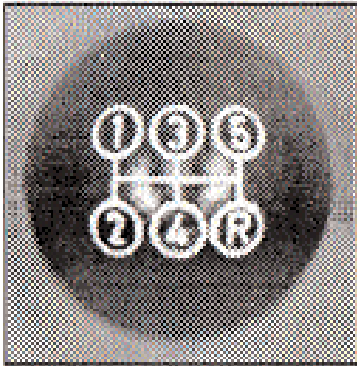
By Michael C. Egan

Little known to the majority of 230/250/280 SL owners is the optional 5-speed transmission which was available for these models and others in the Mercedes lineup from 1965 through May of 1969. Daimler-Benz subcontracted with Zahnradfabrik Friedrichshafen AG (ZF) to furnish their 5-speed type S5-20 transmission. Subcontracting to ZF was not new to D-B, of course; they had called upon ZF to furnish differentials and the first 150 steering boxes for the illustrious Gullwing.

Although this option was available to all SL buyers through model year 1967 (and European buyers after that), few took advantage of the opportunity.

**“This option would have added about \$460 to the base price of approximately \$7,000 for a 280 SL.”**

It received little-to-no publicity in the U.S., and it is rarely found on US-spec SLs. This option would have added about \$460 to the base price of approximately \$7,000 for a 280 SL. Note, however, that the 5-speed option was not available for U.S.-delivery Model 1968 250 SLs nor any U.S.-delivery 280 SLs. The reason is that starting with model year 1968, certain modifications had to be made to the manual transmission linkage in order to actuate the fuel cutoff switch that was made necessary by the U.S. vehicle emission regulations that took effect then. Due to the small demand for the 5-speed, D-B chose not to invest in the engineering and support that would have been needed to adapt it to comply with these regulations. It can therefore be assumed that any Model 1968 or later Mercedes with a ZF 5-speed transmission encountered in the US is either a European car that was brought in under an exemption to the EPA regulations or a US-spec car that was retrofitted.



## Production

A total of only 885 W 113 chassis SLs were originally equipped with the ZF transmission. In recent years though, a number of SL owners have replaced their original transmissions with a 5-speed. I understand that this conversion was also performed on a small number of W 198 300 SLs, using bell housings that were cast in this country.

The table below shows the distribution of ZF transmissions across Mercedes vehicle types. The types -057 and -058 replaced types -032 and -033, respectively; type -064 was adapted for the membrane-type clutch plate of the 280 SL. Gear ratios were the same in all MB transmissions except the very limited production types, -068 and -069, which had substantially lower numerical ratios in 1st, 2nd and 3rd (e.g., 3.32 vice 3.92 in 1st gear). The D-B part number for the ZF transmission for 230 SL and

Production Data		
Model	ZF Type Numbers	Number Produced
230/250SL	1025 000 032, -057	533
300SE	1025 000 033, -058	280
280SL	1025 000 064	350
230/250SL	1025 000 068	5
300SE	1025 000 069	3

250 SL is 113 260 07 04; for 280 SL, it is 113 260 07 04; for 280SL, it is 113 260 09 04.

It should also be noted that the ZF 5-speed transmission was superseded in May of 1969 by the MB G 76/27-5. The MB transmission, which is characterized by side-mounted shift levers, was optionally available on later vehicles, including the European R 107.

The ZF “Maltese Falcon” transmission remains elusive to most seekers. When found, it is usually priced in the \$4,000 to \$5,000 range; this for a used transmission that can easily incur additional overhaul costs in excess of \$3,000 to put it into first-class condition. When properly installed in place of a standard transmission though, this gearbox can appreciably increase a vehicle’s value.

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# An Introduction to Data Cards

By Klaus Drexler<sup>1</sup>

[ *Editor's note:* Klaus, a native of Germany, received an engineering degree from the Technical University in Munich and started work in the R&D area of Daimler Benz in Stuttgart-Untertuerkheim in 1968. This was about two months before his W 113 was produced, but the two would not meet before 1982. In 1977, he transferred to Mercedes-Benz of North America in New Jersey, USA. After a 30 year career at DBAG/MBNA he retired in 1998. He is an active member of the Group and his Pagoda was featured on the back cover of Pagoda World issues 2 and 3. Klaus has compiled an extensive body of work on Data Cards and the various codes used in building and identifying our Pagodas. This is his first article in a series which explains this critical information. Due to space constraints we will not be able to present all the material, but just the core details. The comprehensive edition will be in the book the Group is planning to publish in the future. ]

Every new Mercedes-Benz came with two data cards, usually inserted into the pouch in which the Owner's Manual or Service Booklet came. One of these cards contained the key codes, and therefore was suggested not to be carried in the car. The other copy did not contain the key codes and was supposed to be kept in the car to help the technician in the shop order the correct parts. Over the years, and through several owners, often these cards were lost. A copy<sup>2</sup> of the card can be ordered by the car's present owner. Due to the confidentiality of the key codes, proof of ownership is typically required to fulfill an order. Orders can be made through one of the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centers, either in Stuttgart, Germany or Montvale, New Jersey, USA. Also, for a fee, the Classic Centers are offering a new "Zertifikat" which contains the same information as the data card, but which of course was not an original part of the vehicle. The contact information is:

Mercedes-Benz Classic Center  
DaimlerChrysler AG  
HPC 096/R051  
70546 Stuttgart  
Germany

Tel. (country code 49) 711 17 54138  
Fax. (country code 49) 711 17 79054138

Mercedes-Benz USA, Inc.  
Classic Center  
P.O. Box 350  
Montvale, NJ 07645-0350  
USA

Tel. 866-622-5277  
Fax. 201-802-2151

## Example One:

Our first example, shown as "Image A" and detailed on the following pages, shows the data card of a 1964 230 SL. There were a few layouts used for the data card during the W 113 production run from 1963 to 1971 and they will follow. The large letters and numbers are added in "Image A" for legibility and clarification. The numbers in the following text correspond to the numbering on the data card.

Box	Title on card	Translation
1	<b>Fahrzeug-Daten</b>	<b>Vehicle Data</b>
2	<b>Bitte bei Ersatzteilbestellung Fahrgestell-Nr. angeben (Pos.5)</b>	<b>Please provide serial number (box 5) when ordering spare parts</b>
4	<b>Typ</b>	<b>Model</b>
5	<b>Fahrgestell-Nr.</b>	<b>Chassis number/serial number/vehicle identification number (VIN)</b>

To expand on this 14-digit VIN in box 5, it consists of the following elements:

The first three digits, 113, describe the platform, in this case the "Pagoda" SL built from 1963 to 1971.

The next three digits describe the model within the platform, where:

042 = 230 SL

043 = 250 SL

044 = 280 SL

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<sup>1</sup> Disclaimer: The author readily admits that this document may contain errors and omissions!

<sup>2</sup> The "copy" is usually created from microfilm and is often of poor quality.



## Competition Driving In a W 113, Then and Now.

By Rodd Masteller

Photos donated by Marcel Geurts

Of course, as described in the *Motor Sport* advertisement on the opposite page, it all started in 1963 with Bohringer and Kaiser's victory. But is the W 113 chassis still a competitive vehicle some 40 years later? You may recall the *Pagoda World* Issue 4 article on Peter van Es successfully running his 280SL in the annual Winter Challenge in Europe. As evident by Peter's experience, the success of Robert and Marguerite Charrier (see inside front cover of this issue), and the 2006 Winter Challenge class victory by Marcel and Alfons Geurts, pictured here, these cars are still carrying their owners to the winner's circle.

About the experience, Marcel writes, "The best part of this rally was the 4-hour non-stop night loop in the mountains near San Remo, Italy. Four hours of accelerator-to-the-bottom, map-reading driving with 13 timing points. Our competitors in the Masters class were cars like Porsche 911, Ford Lotus, Aston DB 6, etc. My son and I were feeling great about our grey Merc., our best finish now during the past 5 years."

The May, 2006 issue of *Classic and Sports Car* magazine gave full coverage of the event. They summed up the Geurts' efforts with these words:

Marcel at the wheel in a typically snowy section.

"The Dutch father and son pairing of Marcel and Alfons Geurts dominated the 17th Winter Challenge on 11 - 17 March. Their bulky '67 Mercedes-Benz 280 SL battled through treacherous conditions to finish three minutes ahead of fellow Dutchman Burt Dolk and Jan Berkhof's hefty Volvo 122S in Master's class.

The Geurts really excelled on the final evening run when crews were given marked maps just prior to leaving San Remo, allowing no time to research the route."

Marcel and Alfons atop their champion steed.

