

The 190SL According to Bruce Adams

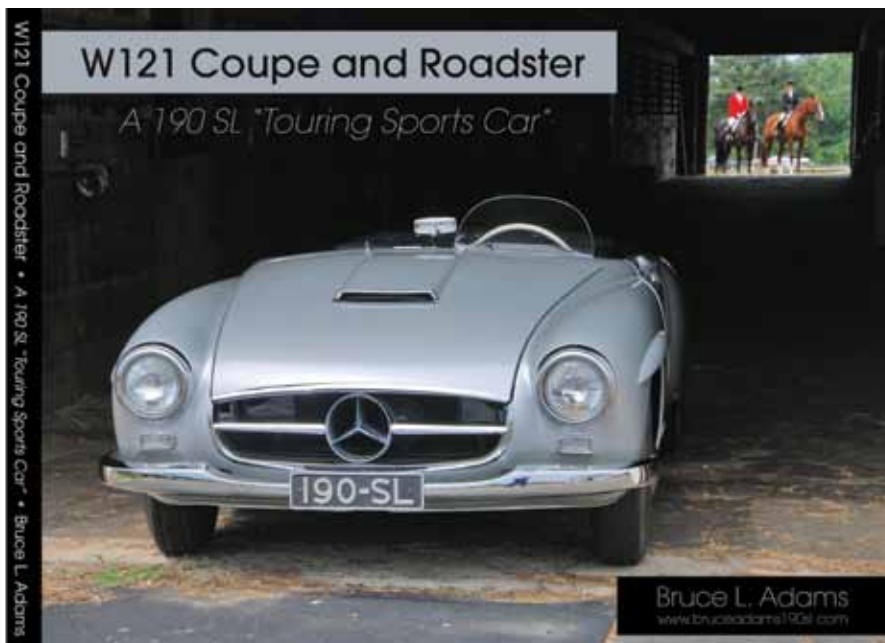
REVIEW BY RICHARD SIMONDS

Bruce Adams has, in 305 pages, yet again, captured the essence of the 190SL sports car by assembling original artwork, ads, vintage pictures, and contemporary materials for those who have a passion for the 190SLs. If his fine writing, intimate knowledge of the W121 and commitment to creating an excellent publication do not get your enthusiast's heart pounding with excitement, you are moribund – or at the least, not an enthusiast.

This is definitely a book that helps fuel the passion of 190SL owners, admirers and all Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts. Bruce has organized it into a forward and five major chapters. Each of these chapters shines with information and images that tell the story from a different perspective than his *Restoration and Ownership Guides, Volumes I and II*.

In the Foreword, Gary Anderson points out that the 190SL is a fine touring sports car and does not need to be compared to the 300SL that was its contemporary. The 190SL is comfortable for touring, a joy to drive, and was not one of those "he-man sports cars that required drivers to endure discomfort in the pursuit of performance." Anderson continues, "Only recently have we begun to discover that these attributes make the 190SL a desirable car in its own right, one that doesn't ask us to make sacrifices. Instead, it rewards us with smooth, pleasurable personal motoring unlike any other automobile of its period."

A Beginning: In this chapter Adams starts with a story of how the prototype was



designed and built for the New York Automobile Show in a scant five months. Max Hoffman wanted the 300SL Gullwing and a less expensive roadster at the New York show on Feb. 6, 1954, so the Daimler-Benz engineers and fabricators had to move with all dispatch. And, they did. There are original photographs of engineering drawings, craftsmen building wood bucks, management talking, factory assembly of the prototype, original programs from the show, and photographs taken by a friend of mine who was an airline pilot and sports-car enthusiast and who attended this international Automobile show at the Seventh Regiment Armory for the grand sum of \$1.25 – for adults. Pictures illustrate the recreation of the 190SL Exhibition Car done by Bruce Adams that was featured in *The Star*, November-December 2010 issue.

Buyers Guide: This chapter starts with a brief history of the W121 and a production chronology, looks at various issues facing a buyer, provides specifications, value estimates, with valuable information about restoration approaches, and ends with period artwork and illustrations of the 190SL over the years.

Visual Changes: Here Adams has devoted 95 pages to artwork, full-page photographs, production tables,

and brochures that illustrate production changes the factory made between 1955 and 1963. The restorer or a concours d'elegance judge would do well to memorize these pages, which cover every part of the 190SL. The last two pages are filled with scans of a 1958 Price List for Mercedes-Benz automobiles.

Technical Tips: Enthusiasts will find this chapter filled with reams of information that can help them pursue the hobby of car restoration and maintenance like a pro, starting with the purchase of a lift. We read on to learn about chrome plating, retro braking systems, fuel tank restoration, halogen sealed-beam headlamps, generator-to-alternator conversions, air filters, floor mats, Roser leather, transmissions, vintage short wave radios, ignition, luggage options, spark plugs, classic tires, brake boosters, steering boxes, water pumps, changing fluids, engine oils, fuel pumps, ending with 190SLs and their owners in a series of full-page pictures.

Touring Events: You will find a compendium of articles about touring events, car club activities, camping trailers and your 190SL, followed by a medley of full-page color photos of Mercedes-Benz SLs on the road, factory photos featuring SLs, ending with beautiful photos and ads of 190SLs in various settings.

In summary: If you are passionate about 190SLs, other SLs, and Mercedes-Benz, you need this book! 🚗

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