



Vancouver Island Section

May, 2015

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CALENDAR

New Models & Technology, Sun. May 24
Seahorse Rally, Sun. Jun 7
Board Meeting, Tues. Jun. 16
Advanced Driver Training, Thu. Jul 16 or Fri. Jul. 17
Motor Gathering, Sun. Aug. 16
Summer BBQ, Sat. Sep. 12
Salt Spring Tour with the VIR-PCA, Sat. Sep 19
MB's Safety Technology, Sun. Oct. 4
Morning Coffee, Sun. Nov. 15
Annual Party, Sun. Dec. 12.

More information about upcoming events is inside

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Coming Events

New Models & Technology, Sun. May 24

Three Point Motors will host members and guests as we look at and experience Mercedes-Benz's new models for the last year. On hand to make the introductions will be our tour guide David Rabii and the C400, C300, GLA250, ML400 (gas), E400, B250 4-Matic, Smart electric convertible, and possibly an S63 AMG.

The event will start at 11:30 am. A German BBQ lunch will be served, with the opportunity for short test drives after. A charge of \$10 per couple will be used to cover the cost of the meal. **Please reply to organizers Hazel and Dennis Ostrowerka ([click](#)) to let them know you're planning to come.**

We'll meet in the service area at Three Point Motors.

Okanagan Valley Wine Weekend, June 5-7

The BC Stars section is planning a weekend of fun and wine exploration in the southern Okanagan Valley. If you want to go be sure to reserve your hotel, the Coast Osoyoos Beach ([click](#)) at 1-(800) 495-6525. Mention Mercedes-Benz Club rate.

The hotel is in a scenic and convenient location close to restaurants. Saturday dinner is at Burrowing Owl ([click](#)) at 5:30 pm. Other wineries on the itinerary are Tinhom Creek, Desert Hills, La Stella and Stoneboat among others.

This event starts in Vancouver. Contact [Joseph Anthony](#) to RSVP and get more details.

Seahorse Rally, Sun. June 7

On the other hand, if you're looking for a shorter drive that weekend, try our section's Seahorse Rally. This drive will explore the highways, byways, twists and turns of the back-roads near Victoria. Definitely not a high-speed event, this non-timed rally competition will take you down some roads you don't often travel and will test your powers of observation. The event will be scored on the basis of answers to questions about signs along the route. It's about a two hour drive ending at a lunch stop. Because this is the MBCA, all the roads are paved. The entry fee is \$10 per car.

We'll meet for a pre-event coffee at 10 am at the Tim Hortons in the Save-On Foods plaza, on the Pat Bay Highway north of Uptown Mall and just south of Marine Way. **Drop me a note before June 3 ([click](#))** if you're planning to come, please, so we can set the reservation for lunch.

New Members!

Francois Panetta – Nanoose Bay - 99 CLK320)

Renewing Members!

Ralf & Valerie Hasenfuss

John & Cordelia McIntosh – 93 500SEL

Jon Mills

David Rabii

Thank you!



Breakfast, Mill Bay

A good driving day greeted the 18 members and guests who made the trip to Bridgeman's Bistro for breakfast on April 26th. We had two tables in the centre of the enclosed patio, looking out over the marina and the boats passing by. The restaurant was very busy and the service a bit slow, but the conversation flowed in recompense and we had a good time. After breakfast we were drawn to the parking lot, like moths to a candle, to gather around Rob Watson's new S550. Nice car, Rob!

We'd unwittingly chosen the same weekend as a major junior rowing regatta hosted by Brentwood College, a few hundred metres down the shore from the marina. I arrived early at the marina and strolled to the end of the dock to watch a few of the final races. As interesting as the races was the sight of rowers headed up to the starting line on a route that took them quite close to the dock. Those I saw were all in fours and eights, some of them cruising on the sculling equivalent of cylinder deactivation—half the rowers with feathered blades—while others warmed up in strong style. I was also intrigued by the flight of an aerial drone, which backed down the course ahead of the races, sending its video images to a mammoth TV screen on Brentwood's lawn. Brentwood College has trained several rowers who went on to become Olympians, and I enjoyed reflecting that some of those kids in front of me were earning their way to bigger things.



Mercedes-Benz Club of America, Vancouver Island Section.
Brunch in Bridgemans Bistro, Mill Bay. 26 April 2015

photo montage: Christo Pandelidis

Keinle Automobiltechnik, Germany

Article and photos by Ann & Alex Wortmann

During our last trip to Germany in September, we drove to Heimerdingen, near Stuttgart, to visit the factory and showroom of Kienle Automobiltechnik – the largest Daimler-independent expert restorers of Mercedes-Benz classic cars in the world. Klaus Kienle, the owner, kindly offered to give us a tour of his amazing facility. The family-owned company specializes in high-end Mercedes-Benz cars such as the legendary 300SL, the famous 600, the pre-war supercharged cars like the 540K, and the formidable classic cars from the post-war era.

Klaus Kienle began his career in 1962 as an apprentice at Mercedes, then became a master craftsman in the “Sports car and state car” division before starting his own company, Kienle Automobiltechnik, in 1984. Klaus, along with his two sons, Alexander and Marc, and more than 80 staff, do all the different stages of the restoration process themselves. This guarantees top-class work, and it shows. Their philosophy of “The Best or



Nothing” is reflected in the classic Mercedes-Benz cars restored at Kienle Automobiltechnik; their down-to-the-last-detail authenticity and perfect craftsmanship and workmanship are impressive.



Kienle Automobiltechnik is organised like a small, largely autonomous carmaker, with the following departments:

- Body shop
- Joinery/upholstery
- Engine construction with test bed
- Auto electronics
- Spare parts and procurement
- Mechanics and tool construction
- Final assembly, finishing
- Sales and brokerage.

The only stage of the process that is farmed out is the paint-spraying. Kienle has a contract with a specialist paint shop that works exactly according to Kienle quality specifications.

They even have a service that we were quite interested in. For a small fee, you can store your own Mercedes at Kienle in a secure and heated garage. The car will be serviced before you pick it up for your European vacation, all the licences and insurance will be up to date. They will even look after the annual government roadworthiness inspection that is mandatory for all vehicles. So all you have to do is pick up your car and enjoy your holiday.



Kienle Automobiltechnik lists some beautiful Mercedes cars that are for sale on their website at www.kienle.com



Stargazing

New Entry-Level Coupe

The British magazine *Autocar* is reporting that MB might replace its present A-class 3-door with a coupe to will compete with the Audi TT. It would be based on a second-generation of the MFA front-wheel drive architecture, the one whose first generation underpins the current B-Class and CLA. This second-generation platform will be a product of the Daimler-Renault-Nissan strategic alliance. Described as being more flexible than today's MFA structure, it will permit greater variation in wheelbase and track widths and will have better storage space for the batteries and gas tanks of hybrids and fuel-cell cars. Nissan will use the platform for the

upcoming Infiniti Q30 and QX30, whose concepts were shown in Geneva in March.



Image: autocar.co.uk



Autocar says the coupe would use the CLA's four-cylinder engine and gearbox and have design elements that draw on the appearance of the AMG-GT. It would be lower and wider than the current A-class 3-door, with a look described as "highly emotional". The interior would be configured as a 2+2, so basically a sports car with rear seats for shopping or small children. The introduction is tentatively in 2019. An AMG model with around 400 hp would appear at the top of the range.

As Daimler's drive to leave no niche unfilled continues, *Autocar* reports that MB is also working on a possible GLB, another entry-level SUV that would compete with the Audi Q1. Audi, incidentally is doing very well these days, having passed both MB and BMW in US sales last month.

Why Self-Driving Cars Aren't Ready Yet

MB's safety technology has reached, possibly crossed, the border of autonomous driving. The S-class is able to drive itself for a few seconds in the absence of driver input. MB has demonstrated the technology for longer-range autonomous driving on the road in Germany (*September 2013 issue*). However, a recent article in *Road & Track* points out that self-driving cars won't be ready for the big time until they work like people ([click](#)).

A couple of examples. Imagine pulling up to a busy four-way stop. Theoretically, he who gets there first goes first. Theoretically, each direction takes its turn. These rules can be programmed without much difficulty. But four-way stops don't function so simply. Drivers often make eye contact or nod at each other. I often waggle my fingers. Non-verbal cues like this are much more difficult to code into a machine. 'Drivers' of autonomous cars have reported that they can become paralysed at four-way stops as the software tries to make a safe decision amid the changing traffic.

Or, think of the construction zones now emerging with the tourist season. Pylons direct you onto the wrong side of the road. Flaggers control the traffic flow with hand signals, signs and the odd shout. The reduced speed limit sign may be difficult to find, or even absent. All this is difficult for cameras and software to deal with.

Then there are the ethical situations. If an autonomous car is put into a situation where the only alternatives are running over someone's pet, a head-on collision, or driving into a lamp standard, what should it do? Most of us would reject the head-on collision straight away. But I might choose to hit the pet and you might choose to hit the lamp standard. That's a personal choice without a 'correct', programmable answer.

Despite the leaps technology has taken, it still has bounds. The manufacturers continue to push the envelope, with Daimler testing an autonomous long-haul truck in Nevada this month. That's the kind used to pull semi-trailers.

The Printed Part

3D printing is making big changes in the way manufacturers design and test new parts. Perhaps five years ago, drawings for a new part would leave the engineering shop for prototyping, sometimes in-house but often at a facility on another continent. It could take weeks for the finished part to be returned for testing. Some parts were produced by milling, others were made by hand, and their cost would be commensurate with the input of a lot of highly skilled labour.

3D printers work like ink-jets. They spray a plastic powder in layers to build up a solid object according to the engineers' design. Complexity of shape and hollow parts are not a problem. The finished item can even be machined and stress-tested. What used to take weeks can now be done overnight.



Five years ago, a new rear-axle design would be laboriously produced in metal. The engineers would then cut two or three windows into the rear cover, seal in plexiglass panels as windows, put the gear-set inside, spin it up and watch the lubricant flow by shining a light into one window while trying to watch through another. If lubricant sprayed onto the window, it was hard to see what else was going on. Now, a new axle can be prototyped completely in clear plastic, the gears put inside and spun up to whatever speed the engineers desire. Viewing is simpler and the whole procedure saves both time and money.

Bigger things are possible. *Car & Driver* reports ([click](#)) that the US National Lab in Oak Ridge has printed an entire Shelby Cobra replica in carbon-fiber-reinforced-plastic, minus the running gear. Our MBs aren't made that way, at least not yet, but 3D printing is opening up a whole new world for the owners of rare cars in need of parts.

Plug-In Delay

Mercedes-Benz Canada has said that neither the C350 e nor the GLE plug-in hybrids are being made available here because the drive system is still incompatible with 4-Matic. I expect that makes good sense for most of the country, where the winter months of snow and ice make all-wheel drive popular with buyers, but it's a bit limiting on our decreasingly wet coast. The C350 e is not one of MB's current offerings in the USA either. These decisions can be seen as a problem in view of the company's global strategy to move towards plug-ins as a way of reducing CO₂ emissions (*April 2015 issue*). Somewhere in Stuttgart an engineering team is probably hard at work on 4-Matic for hybrids.

Update on GAIN's Motorsport Resort

GAIN-VI provided more information last week about their new motorsport resort in the Cowichan Valley ([click](#)). The track itself will have 19 turns with interesting changes in elevation and topography. Surface grading is underway. Based on the comment that a race driver in an SLS would take 90 seconds to complete a lap, I'd speculate that the circuit's length might be around 3 km, which is in the same ballpark as the late, lamented Westwood circuit and something really to look forward to. The News web page has a good update on the considerations for new circuits, with lots of reference to the designer's F1 experiences ([click](#)).

For Sale



A brand new set of four Continental ContiWinter Contact snow & ice tires size 225/45 R17 91H, mounted on four OE wheels size 7.5J x 17 H2 ET42. These wheels and tires have never even been bolted onto a car. Supplied for the current R172 SLK, they should fit most of the modern car series with offsets down to 32. Retail value is over \$3,000 but Alex Currie is prepared to offer someone a super deal ([click](#)). Get the jump on next winter!

The Back End

Is Germany making too many luxury cars? The downside of MB's new sales records: <http://bit.ly/1FMMg2H>

Peter Cheney shares the seven qualities you want in a highway car, which of course we all own: <http://bit.ly/1ENHOPi>





Bonhams is selling this W108 1966 250S, in England this June. The car is the property of the founding bass player of the Rolling Stones, Bill Wyman. Restored in 1997 it's had one owner from new! The estimate is £20-25,000. Notice the mild positive camber on the back wheels here. This was the final appearance of MB's unique, low-pivot swing-axle rear suspension. Wyman is also selling his Citroen SM, a considerably more interesting car but one promising considerably more trouble for its next owner.

