

Mercedes Benz 300SL – 300SLR - 190

The heartthrob of sports car purists for years, the Mercedes Benz 300SL “gullwing” coupe ruled the production car roost here from 1956 through 1959, usually in the hands of Ray Rairdon. The three-litre, six-cylinder M-B 300SL was called “the finest sports car in the world” by Sports Cars Illustrated magazine in 1956 and few could argue. It had one of the first successful fuel injection engines to be offered on a production car, working with an engine that produced 220 hp from 2996cc. When the 300SL Roadster replaced the coupe (1400 Gullwings were made) in 1958 one was naturally offered for Ray Rairdon to race. He was not impressed with the car, and turned down the opportunity, paving the way for Dave Troffer to take over driving chores and have great success (but he never could quite beat Ray). The stock roadster was heavy—300lbs—and its 6-cyl. Engine, beefed up from that of the gullwing produced 250 hp out of 2996ccs could not handle the load when it too came to racing. Owner Ed Purvis and driver Troffer got as much out of their model as anyone in the world, winning many production events over the years they raced. Both models today are highly prized and bring top dollar in the collector car market.