

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

The Star

Mercedes-Benz Club of America

RETURN
of a **LEGEND**
Reconstructing an Early AMG

BOOK SHELF

Pagodas and Owners

Pagoda Style: Our Stories, Our Pictures, Our Cars. MICHAEL SALEMI, published by author, 2011. \$75 ISBN 9-780578-013886

For those of us who cherish the Pagodas (W113, 1963-1972), this is THE book to own. Michael worked with 68 owners from around the world to capture their stories and their pictures of the 230SLs, 250SLs, and 280SLs that are captivating. Each contributor and his or her car is presented on an artistic double-page spread, designed by the author to complement the car, its owner, and its location.

In addition, Salemi presents artwork and commentary from his meeting with Paul Bracq, the designer of these beautiful machines, as well as some other "artist-in-residence" illustrations that speak to the timeless styling of the Pagodas. The history of development, including derivation of the nickname – Pagoda – is told.

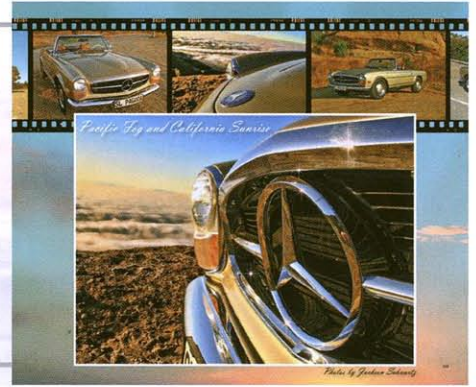
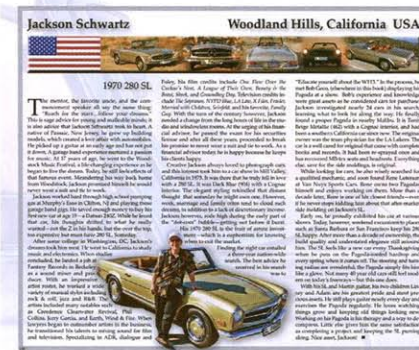
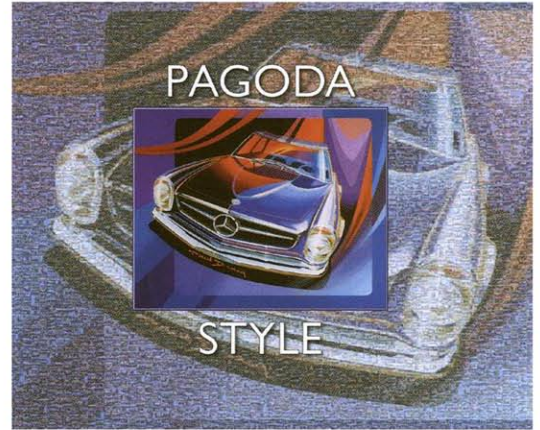
The exquisite photography and artwork are top quality. The printing and binding were completed in Canada.

Yes, folks, it is possible to have an exceptionally high-quality publication on your coffee table that was printed somewhere other than the Far East.

If you wish to purchase a copy of this lovely book, and admire it in your own library, it will be available until copies run out. Only 500 copies were printed, so act now.

Pagoda Style can be ordered directly from the publisher, Michael Salemi, at mdsalemi@sbc-global.net, or from Amazon.com.

Review by Richard Simonds



Gullwings Set Auction Records in Arizona

Marking the beginning of the classic car year, the auctions in and around Scottsdale have consistently raised the bar for the collector hobby. Six auction houses were in Scottsdale this year, up from five last year, with Bonham's as the new kid on the block. The attendance was spectacular. Attendance at Barrett-Jackson, the McDaddy of the Scottsdale events, was up 22 percent going into the last day.

Bidding at each auction was spirited and prices were strong everywhere – there was no indication of the deep and lingering recession affecting these auctions.

One of only 29 made, this alloy-body 300SL Coupe sold at Gooding for \$4.2 million.



Russo and Steele sold a 1937 230A for the record-breaking price of \$159,500.

The high sale of the week was the alloy-bodied 300SL Gullwing sold by Gooding & Co. for \$4.2 million plus buyer's commission, a record for 300SL auction sales and 20 percent more than Gooding's estimate. In my view, the car – restored several times over its lifetime, albeit by some of the best houses in the United States and Germany – was an okay car but nothing over the top. The only apparent value factor was the rarity of alloy-body Gullwings; only 29 were ever built.

Much more significant to me was Barrett-Jackson's sale of a steel-bodied 1954 300SL Coupe for \$2 million plus buyer's commission, another auction record. The previous high sale of a steel-bodied car was \$1.3 million at

B-J Scottsdale last year. Based on these two sales, that would mean that the steel cars have appreciated 50 percent in one year. Rarity is not the factor explaining this sale, but rather the very low 4,149 miles on the odometer and its originality (even having been repainted from silver to white and then back to its original silver, according to the catalog), though a few observers suggested that mileage and originality might be questioned. But for a steel car to bring roughly half the amount paid for an alloy car is a whopper.

Moreover, the high prices paid were surprising because the cars are likely to be restored again to attain the condition that Americans prefer. The only thing we know for sure is that rarity and low mileage are obviously highly valued this year.

B-J sold this Gullwing, with an indicated 4,149 miles on the odometer, for \$2 million.

