

1992 MERCEDES BENZ SSK GAZELLE ROADSTER REPLICA

1992 Gazelle Roadster – Mercedes Benz SSK replica

Owners: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Engine, etc.: Original version: inline 6 cyl.; 414 cu. in., 6.8 liter; 225 hp; supercharged single overhead cam; 0 – 60: 14 seconds; 116 in. wheelbase; 3,750 lbs.

Our car is a replica of a 1929 Mercedes Benz SSK Roadster made by Classic Motor Carriages.

Only 40 Mercedes-Benz SSKs were ever built, with the SSK standing for “Super Sport Kurz” (German, “kurz” meaning “short”).

Designed by Ferdinand Porsche, it had a supercharged 6-cylinder, 7-liter engine producing between 200 and 300 horsepower. It was the last car designed by Porsche before he left to found his own company.

The SSK was based on the earlier Mercedes-Benz S but the chassis was 19 inches shorter which made it lighter and more agile for racing.

“The 6.8-liter S type 36/220 was a long and relatively low four-seater of rakish lines and blistering performance, nowhere near as heavy as it looked because the huge cylinder block was a light-alloy casting, and nowhere near as clumsy as it looked because the steering geometry was superb and the controllability of the car exceptional. From it came the 7.1 liter SS, the short chassis SSK, and finally the ultra-sporting and drastically lightened SSKL.” (Source: http://uniquecarsandparts.com/heritage_mercedes.htm)

In 1929 the SSK was the fastest car in the world, capable of over 130 mph. It was commonly referred to as “The Mighty Mercedes” and the “Fastest Sports Car in the World”.

They were produced from 1927 – 1932. Many were crashed while racing and then cannibalized for parts. Only four or five original models remain, making them one of the most sought-after and valuable cars in the world.

An SSK in almost original condition sold at auction for \$7.4 million in 2004, making it the second most expensive automobile ever sold at that time.

One magazine article about the SSK called it the “Rembrandt of iron and rubber”.

Classic Motor Carriages started in 1978 and closed in 1994. The company was taken to court in 1994 for misleading customers as to the quality, delivery time, and required assembly time for its kit cars. The Florida Attorney General filed suit on behalf of several hundred of its customers and the company agreed to pay \$2.7 million in compensation. Its owner, George Levin, continued to operate a company under the name Street Beasts until it closed in 2010 and its plant, molds, and machinery were auctioned off.

Sources: <http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z10058/Mercedes-Benz-SSK.aspx>
<http://auto.howstuffworks.com/10-most-expensive-classic-cars4.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercedes-Benz_SSK
http://uniquecarsandparts.com/heritage_mercedes.htm (History)