

**TOYS "4" BOYS**



*By Paul Dugan*

**H**aving spent the last fifteen years rebuilding a 1963 Mercedes 230SL from scrap to concours condition I thought this would be yet another opportunity to inspire articles from our readers. Sure you all have toys... so let's hear about them.

The car pictured above is the result of much hard work and research, also an example of what you can find to do on the hot weekends in Riyadh. The car was originally shipped to Saudi Arabia in 1963 by the then German Ambassador and after passing through several not so caring hands I was fortunate to purchase the hulk.

After promising my wife in 1985, that if we stayed one more year in Saudi I would buy her a Mercedes! - the hulk I purchased to fulfill this promise arrived on the back of a truck with the engine on the back seat, however it was as promised, a Mercedes!

Today some 18 years later and many hours of sweat and toil we are still in Saudi and the SL from the sixties is getting more and more popular on the classic car market. Its fans are spread all over the world and are often united in local clubs that keep a close contact with each other. Subsequently the market value of the cars is on its way up.

The advantages of the 230 SL compared to its successors are the nimble handling and the sporty stiff suspension. Disadvantages are the drum brakes, some overheating problems due to the lack of an oil-cooler and some minor niggles that were phased out in consequent updates over the years this series was in production.

Light colours flatter the 230 SL. The car in the photo wasn't in excellent condition; the interior was worn out and the engine leaked a bit of oil (a common SL problem). Some bits and pieces of the trimming were missing. But if you think of it as a thirty-year old car

It's estimated that only 3% of all produced 230 SLs are in excellent original condition. About 49% are in a lousy condition but still can get a good price (near the original purchase price) because there is so much demand. Restoring these cars can be quite profitable.



**Performance**  
Top Speed 121mph

**Dimensions**

Wheelbase	Track		Length	Width
	Front	Rear		
7' 10.5"	4' 10.5"	4' 10.5"	14' 1"	5' 9.25"

**250 SL 1966-1967**

For those of you that are Mercedes enthusiasts, the rarest but also most unpopular SL is the 250 SL. The black one in the picture below was beautifully restored and complete with hardtop (you can see it on the photo behind the car, standing upright). It was sold within a day...

The unpopularity of this type is undeserved. It may have been produced for only eleven months, but it more or less combines the good things of the two other types. It still has the nimble and sporty handling of the 230 SL, but now combined with the more modern disc brakes and oil cooler. And most of the minor problems this series started out with in 1963 were already resolved at the time the 250 SL was introduced.

The price that a good 250 SL can fetch is ordinarily about 20% below that of a good 230 SL. The more recent production years and the fact that about 43% of the cars are in excellent original shape make me feel good about the long term commitment and investment, but it's a pity my wife has still not had the opportunity to drive her Mercedes in Riyadh which sits with 81,000km on the clock.

