



The Cars Will be the Stars at StarFest® 2012

For almost as long as people have owned and driven automobiles, the more enthusiastic among us have gathered to show off our cars so that other aficionados could admire their classic beauty, artful engineering, superb condition and historic preservation. Showing a collection of cars in an architecturally exciting environment adds to the event's ambiance by providing beautiful surroundings to compliment the luxurious and sporting cars, and provide memorable backgrounds for photos. Today's best known Concours d'Elegance (literally, a "competition of elegance") have featured the stunning natural scenery of Pebble Beach and Amelia Island or classic architectural backdrops like Lake Como's Villa d'Este or Michigan's stately Meadowbrook Hall.

Surely one of the beautiful and memorable events of StarFest® 2012 will be the Concours d'Elegance, planned for Saturday and Sunday, September 29-30. Scheduled on the meticulously manicured grounds of the 1920's Frank Lloyd Wright designed and art deco-inspired Arizona Biltmore Resort, this is certain to be one of the most scenic venues in StarFest® Concours history. Prime specimens of nearly every vintage and model of Mercedes-Benz are expected to grace the gardens and fountains at what will be a spectacular show. But there will also be categories for pampered and cherished weekend cruisers and daily drivers.

So how exactly do cars "compete" at a concours? Most concours provide an opportunity for owners to meet and have knowledgeable independent "judges" evaluate the condition, cleanliness and authenticity of their cars. Cars are assigned to "classes" with similar models, that is, sedans compete against sedans, SUVs against SUVs, and SLs against SLs of similar vintage. All entries will compete in "show" or "street" categories, and numerous classes will assure judging against similar cars. Naturally, vehicles that have been well maintained and/or restored true to their original design and condition will score well. But there are also "preservation" classes where original, time-warp examples are favored for their survivor status and original, unmolested condition. And there will be a "modified" class where

more creative members can show off how they've chosen to express their Mercedes-Benz's individuality.

MBCA concours judges will use a new 100-point scale to score participants' vehicles. After judging, the winners – usually several in each class – will be rewarded with trophies at the very special Concours Awards Banquet.

All of us are proud of our cars and many of us spend inordinate amounts of time cleaning and polishing them. But, a well-maintained and well cared for daily driver can score well in this event, too. So whether you have a pristine 300SL "gullwing" or a modern-day E350 or SL 63 AMG, there will be other MBCA members excited to show and have their cars judged alongside yours. The number of cars ultimately entered will determine the number and makeup of classes.

Something new for this year's StarFest® Concours will be a second display/media day that will be advertised and opened to the public. Open display and judging will occur on Saturday, and the cars will remain on the secure Concours field through Sunday. This will allow even more enthusiasts to see our cars on the Biltmore lawn and will help increase awareness of MBCA and our National Events. So bring a picnic or plan to watch from the Biltmore's Café patio. Of course, if you're heading to the StarFest® driving events on Sunday, you may miss the media day, but there'll be plenty of cars around for Sunday's display. Either way, you won't want to miss the fun at the gala Awards Banquet on Sunday evening.

Start planning now to enjoy the drive to the Arizona Biltmore. Experience the thrill of driving onto the lush Concours field and placing your favorite Star among the 125 years of Mercedes-Benz heritage being assembled for the StarFest® 2012 Concours d'Elegance. Start primping and polishing now! Bring out the dust rags, Q-Tips and leather cleaner! You'll feel as good about your Mercedes-Benz as the very first day you drove it home. Please see our ad on the adjacent page and visit www.StarFest2012.com for registration information. See you in Phoenix!

Chuck Stanford Jr.

See you on May 5th for the Concours Judging School

If you haven't already seen the article about this year's StarFest2012 Concours d'Elegance in the March-April STAR magazine, take a look. You'll get a great feel for the fantastic event coming to Phoenix and the Arizona Biltmore this fall.

Part of preparing for such a spectacular event is making sure we have an adequate staff of trained concours judges to help evaluate the beautiful cars presented in the Concours. Not sure how this is done? No worries! We have a plan! With nearly 100 beautiful Mercedes planned at the concours, we'll need about 50 judges. We'll need you!

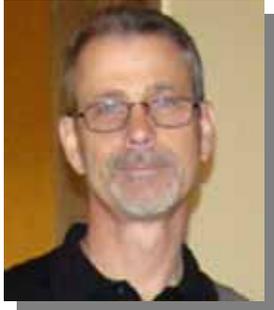
Mark May 5th on your calendar and join us for a MBCA Concours Judging School. National Concours Chief Judge Pete Lessler will be visiting the Desert Stars and will hold a day-long class to show us how to judge the cars we all love. We'll even have test cars on hand to show and tell. Have a thing for 450-560 SLs? You're our

guy! Prefer the classic W111-body coupes and cabriolets? Sign me up! Newer sedans? Come on down! Features and details vary from car to car, but whatever your favorite class Mercedes, the judging principles are the same. We'll teach those principles so that teams of judges can cover the field and evaluate each car's authenticity, condition, and cleanliness. We'll cover the new judging sheet and practice on members' cars. Plan to share knowledge of features and learn much, much more.

The class will be FREE and venue is TBD, but save the date and e-mail Chuck Stanford, Jr at CStanford@DesertStars.org to save your spot. We'll be back to you with location information as soon as it's available. See you on Saturday – plan on beginning about 10:00.

Chuck Stanford Jr.

President's Message:



Now that we have a year with 366 days in it, I'll have to decide what I will do with all that extra time. Between family, home, club and work I have come to the realization that of all the things we have in this world, time is one of our most valuable assets. As with most other commodities you can buy time, sell time and even save time. Though you cannot really make more time, we can allot the time we have to things that matter. To the 30 year old raising a family and holding down a job, saving for the future there is never enough time. For the 70 year old that has worked hard their entire carrier, raised a family and is free from the bonds of a job, they will have nothing but time. As for me I am over the apex, between the two, and am looking foreword to more time. So it makes little

difference if you are 30 or 70, I believe that our time is finite. So think about the time you have and use it wisely. And put it towards the things that matter.

I hope to see you at an event or Star Night soon.

Bud Cloninger, President
Desert Stars Section

Star Night

Join Ron and Rhonda Borino and other Desert Star members for dinner. This club event is designed to be a casual evening of fun, food, drink and conversation. We will discuss past and future club events as well as any other topic of interest. New members are encouraged to attend this event. The location will move throughout the valley and is scheduled for the 3rd Thursday unless there is a conflict. Attendees are responsible for their food, drinks and the portion of the gratuity assessed by the establishment. Due to seating arrangements these events are limited and members must RSVP to Ron Borino at 602-550-9939, before the dates listed for each event.

Do you have a favorite restaurant suggestion? If so, feel free to email your idea to Ron at rlborino@hotmail.com. Perhaps we can use your idea in an upcoming event. Restaurants must be able to accommodate at least 20 people preferably in a separate space and if possible be a locally owned facility, resort, hotel, etc. We want to try great places all over the valley.

The next Star Night is:

Thursday, March 15th beginning at 6:00 P.M.

Does award winning wood fired pizza and handmade pasta trip your trigger, then let's head to the 2011 Food Networks Choice "Best Pizza in Arizona" winner. That would be *The Parlor Pizzeria* located at 1916 East Camelback Road, Phoenix. Their phone number is (602)248-2480 and website is <http://www.theparlor.us>. We will meet at 6:00 p.m. RSVP's must be received by the 13th of March. The restaurant does not take formal reservations but will seat us in the same area to the best of their ability.

Thursday, April 19th beginning at 6:00 P.M.

I listened to one of the members and they suggested this restaurant. *Greektown Restaurant* is, as you might guess, a 100% Greek owned restaurant, serving an authentic, classical taste of Greece in Phoenix. The restaurant is located at 8519 N. 7th Street, Phoenix. Their phone number is (602) 674-8881 and their website is www.greektownrestaurant.com. We will meet at 6:00p.m. RSVP's must be received by the 14th of April.

Ron Borino

January

Daniel Withers
Paul Sennewald
Thomas Seeman
Fred Boyd

Welcome New Members



February

John & Sheridan Vingelli
Fritz Gambetta
Norman Merlis
Luke & Lela Milas
Robert Tokle

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- Newsletter Advertising:**
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- Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. All members are welcome. Check with a board member concerning place and time.

Mastodons and a B17 Bomber help provide a Finishing Touch to the 2012 Poker Run!

This year the Desert Stars went back in time over 4 million years to complete a very fun filled Poker Run.

The starting point was at the *Finishing Touch* body shop in Fountain Hills. Manager **Matthew Tilden** went beyond the call of duty by offering coffee, pastries and souvenir Poker Run t-shirts. Matthew's good friend and two-time winner of the Indianapolis 500, **Arie Luyendyk**, visited with the members as they enjoyed the refreshments. I think he may have given **Jim Meece** a few driving tips. ...Oh yeah, the Poker Run...



With the Desert Stars drivers revved up we headed off to the second stop at the *Mesa Historical Museum*. This museum gave us a feel of the challenges our pioneers had when they first settled in Arizona. From dirt fields to the vibrant city it is today, was all laid out in photographs and memorabilia. After picking the next card we were on the road to the next stop at the *Arizona Museum of Natural History*. Fossils, dinosaurs and mastodons abound in this beautifully laid out museum. With all of it's artifacts and exhibits, the one hour we spent

there was not nearly enough time to take it all in. But then again, we had a Poker Run to do. The last stop before lunch was at the *Commemorative Air Force Museum at Falcon Field*. Once we entered the first huge aircraft hanger we were treated with dozens of restored fighter aircraft from throughout aviation history. Our experienced guide moved us from plane to plane telling us of their stories from days gone by. We exited into the next large hanger to behold a fully restored and operational B17 Flying Fortress undergoing regular maintenance. This aircraft was fully accessible to members and many took the time to climb inside and really enjoy a piece of WWII history. Outside the hangers on the tarmac were many more vintage and exotic aircraft that we were all free to walk around and view. Back to the Poker Run.



Everyone gathered at *Anzio's Landing Restaurant* to pick the last card and enjoy a much needed lunch. After participants laid down their cards. **John & Roberta Phin's** 10 to the Ace straight won the day. **John & Marianne Hutchinson** placed second, with **Bob & Diane Thomson** taking home a cool third place. With all of the excitement throughout the day, it would be fair to say that all of us were winners!

Bud Cloninger & Bob Yoder

Memorial Day trip 2012!

We will be taking a guided tour of the Hopi reservation over Memorial Day weekend, starting May, 25-28.

The Hopis live in pueblo villages on small isolated mesas. The mesas are steep sided and have great views. The Pueblo Oraibi started in 1050 and is one of the oldest continuously inhabited villages in North America.

We will also visit *Rock Art Ranch* a privately owned cattle ranch which has some of the finest Anasazi petroglyph sites in the Southwest. The ranch also displays a large collection of Anasazi pots and has a collection of cowboy and pioneer artifacts.

To reach the ranch we will have to travel on a gravel road so bring your SUV or Benz beater.

We should have enough 4 door vehicles signed up so we can carpool to the ranch.

We will be staying at the *La Pasada* in Winslow; plus a motel yet to be determined.

We are asking for a \$100 deposit which may not be refundable due to deposits and cancellation polices. We are limited to 19 people at this time so get your deposit in early! Call Dick Sharp at (480) 661-1325 for availability and questions.

Dick Sharp

In Memory of a Desert Star

I have the sad task of letting members know that **Betty Pottorff** has passed on. Betty (a.k.a. lead foot Betty) was a twenty-year veteran of the Desert Stars and with her husband **John**, she attended many of our events throughout the years.

Betty and John were avid participants in Havasupai's and other events until John passed about ten years ago. Then she partnered up with **Bunny Peterson** to compete in many more annual ralyses. Betty received her nickname after winning first in class for acceleration runs at *StarFest 1992*.

Former section President **Chuck**

Stanford remembered that Betty served on the Board in 1993-1996 and was a champion of accountability and proper procedure. Always sure of foot and mind, Betty drove her 300SDL well past her 90th Birthday. She always made sure it was race ready and spotlessly clean.

On behalf of the Desert Stars I would like to extend our condolences to Betty's family and let them know that the Desert Stars shine a little less brightly with her passing.

Bud Cloninger



Join Desert Stars for Putting and Lunch at Desert Highlands!

Mark your calendars now. Right Now! Plan on joining the Stars on Saturday March 31st for a great morning of fun, and putting on a 18 hole professional course. After golf, take time for socializing and a great lunch. Be prepared to laugh, this is not serious golf. Please arrive a little before 9:00am so you can choose your lunch from the menu and get over to the greens. Take your time and enjoy the million dollar views. Don't forget your putter, if you have one.

Registration must be received by March 26th, Cost is \$20.00 per person - coffee, tea, soda, tax and tip included. See the registration form on page 6 for details. If you have any questions or wish to donate prizes contact Jim Boyle at (480) 391-1997.

Desert Highlands Country Club is located at 10040 E. Happy Valley Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85255; East of Pima Road in North Scottsdale.

Jim Boyle



	<p>cab-ri-o-let [kab-re-uh-ley] - noun an automobile resembling a coupe, but with a folding top. The 2011 E-Class Cabriolet</p>
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The all new E-Class Cabriolet is the latest addition to the E-Class line-up. The open-top, two-door model, which is here at Phoenix Motor Company, features a classic fabric soft top, making for a stylistically pure cabriolet feeling. Viewed from the side, the new model is an intriguing proposition - with its clear proportions and a flawless cabriolet silhouette.

You need to come by and drive the E-Class Cabriolet and experience the AIRCAP® automatic draft-stop system: always on board and easily controllable at the push of a button. It reduces turbulence substantially for all four seat occupants.

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Registration Forms

Desert Highlands Putting

Saturday, March 31, 2012

Contact Information:

Name(s): Number Attending:

Address:

City: State/Prov.: Zip:

Email Address: Phone No.:

The cost is \$20 per person. Registrations must be received by March 26th.

Any questions call Jim Boyle at (480) 391-1997

Make your check payable to: MBCA Desert Stars; and mail to: MBCA Desert Stars c/o Dick Sharp, 11371 East Cochise Drive Scottsdale, AZ 85259

Memorial Day Trip

Starting Friday, May 25-28, 2012

Contact Information:

Name(s): Number Attending:

Address:

City: State/Prov.: Zip:

Email Address: Phone No.:

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is required. Registrations should be mailed A.S.A.P., after that date call Dick Sharp at (480) 661-1325 for availability and questions.

Make your check payable to: MBCA Desert Stars; and mail to: MBCA Desert Stars c/o Dick Sharp, 11371 East Cochise Drive Scottsdale, AZ 85259

Family Picnic and Clean Car Show

Saturday, March 24, 2012

Contact Information:

Name(s): Number Attending:

Address:

City: State/Prov.: Zip:

Email Address: Phone No.:

The cost is \$20⁰⁰ per person. For questions and additional information, contact Bud Cloninger at (602) 326-6210 or Bryan O'Connor at (602) 620-4795. New members after February call Lou Horwin at (480) 707-0320

Make your check payable to: MBCA Desert Stars; and mail to: MBCA Desert Stars c/o Dick Sharp, 11371 East Cochise Drive Scottsdale, AZ 85259

Desert Stars in High Gear for Defensive Driving

This years Defensive Driving event turned out to be just a warm up for StarFest 2012. Instructors, **Walt Anderson**, **Dick Sharp** and **Bud Cloninger** had the course all laid out as the first attendees started to arrive. Walt gathered members around for the drivers meeting before walking them through the course to familiarize them with the obstacles. Because this is a bring what you drive event, many cars other than Mercedes Benz were represented. Honda, Chrysler and Ford just to name a few.



As usual, members tackled the obstacles with enthusiasm and at every pass seemed to get better and faster. With everyone's driving confidence high, Walt reconfigured the cones into a perfect auto cross course. After lunch members took turns to see how well they were at using what they learned earlier, on a real autocross course. After drivers turned in several runs, some obviously devious person introduced a stopwatch into the mix. This is where the morning's instructions came in handy and the fun began! With the smell of brakes in the air, drivers pushed their cars a bit farther knowing that the clock was ticking. Over and over again members negotiated the track hoping to shave a few tenths of a second off each run. After everyone had exhausted



themselves we gathered around and shared some laughs and compared times.

It was a great day and it just seems to get better every year! So stay tuned for next year when **Bob & Melaine** will hold their first annual "Smart Car Rodeo".

Below you will find the "unofficial" times for the Autocross with instructors excluded.

First Place: **Kathlen Boyle** - Plymouth? Crossfire (Just a note, her friend **Keven**

Yuse was the time keeper.)

Second Place: **Daniel Keller** – C230 Kompressor (May have had help from his wife **Inge**, who was one of the more aggressive drivers of the day).

Third Place: **Ci Roosa** – 230SL (Equipped with a 302 cubic inch V8 Ford. And may have missed a gate or two).

Fourth place: **Robert St John** – Smart Car (Though the cones were at the same height as the car, he knocked them over with ease).

Bud Cloninger



Never been?
There will never be a better time.



You don't need to be a "veteran" of Concours d'Elegance to win one. You will need peacock-pride in your Mercedes, an appreciation for luxurious outdoor settings and an optimism that you could drive away with a distinctive (and often unexpected) award. Don't let the French translation, "competition of elegance," steer you away. At our September 29-30 Concours, you can have your Mercedes judged in a class of cars of the same model (sedans vs sedans; SUVs vs SUVs, etc) for its condition, cleanliness and authenticity. Register your vehicle in advance. Scintillating. Star-Studded. And only at StarFest® 2012.

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Annual Business Meeting

Save the Date: June 3. This year the meeting will be held at *Seasons 52*, located at 2502 East Camelback Road. Plan on arriving at 11:00 a.m. for pre-lunch, wine or cocktails, followed by lunch and a brief business meeting. Cost will be \$35.00 per person which includes lunch and non alcoholic beverages.

Lunch will consist of an Organic Mixed Greens Salad, your choice of Cedar Plank Salmon, Chef's Market Vegetable Plate or Wood-Roasted Pork Tenderloin followed by a Mini Indulgence Dessert.

Additional information regarding the event and the agenda for the business meeting will appear in the next issue of the *StarDust*.

Robert Schmelzer

Volunteer for StarFest2012!

Volunteers will help and assist in Star Fest activities and planning, including Hospitality, Concours, Driving Events, Registration, Rallye, Publicity and Sponsorship. Events will take place at the *Biltmore Resort* and the *Firebird Raceway*.

StarFest runs from Sept. 28th to Oct. 3rd.

Hosting StarFest is a great honor for the Desert Stars section which is celebrating its 50th anniversary during Arizona's Centennial Anniversary. Being a volunteer is a great opportunity to meet and work with other section members and other MBCA members from all over the country.

Please contact Debbie at dichiyama@me.com if you would like to help and be sure to visit www.starfest2012.com on the web. Also, check us out on Facebook and don't forget to "Like" us!.

Debbie Ichiyama

Looking for an Opportunity to Reach
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Run an Advertisement in the StarDust!
Contact Rich Schulte @ (401)225-2090
or email @ rschulte@DesertStars.org

Scottsdale Auction Week Re-Cap

This nation is suffering a great economic divide between the “haves” and the “have nots” that is tearing at the very fabric of our society. Of course in this case, the “haves” happen to be selling 300 SL Gullwings, and the “99%” are making due with other Mercedes-Benz classics.

Once again, Scottsdale Auction Week saw several Gullwings collect record-breaking amounts at the gavel. Four Gullwing models (the 300 SL from 1954-56) were up for auction in January: Gooding & Co. sold an alloy-bodied 1955 300 SL Gullwing (number 6 of 29 made, and the first one available at auction in five years) for a record \$4.62 million. Barrett-Jackson created a new high-end collection designed for prime-time Saturday night. This collection included the lowest-mileage Gullwing in existence (a Silver 1954 with only 4,149 miles) which set a new record of \$2.2 million for a steel-bodied example, eclipsing last year’s RM Auctions record by almost an even \$1M. Gooding also sold a beautiful 1957 navy example for \$869,000, while RM made do with

\$159,500 and \$176,000 respectively. Even the “non-original” ones are still doing well, as Barrett-Jackson sold a 280SE conversion (made from the coupe model) for \$26,400, a 16% increase from a very similar conversion sold in 2011.

However, all is not rosy, as many consignors realized with the over-saturated SL market. Several Pagoda models (1963-71) sold for close to 25% below the estimated minimum, with oddities in restoration likely the primary cause. Examples included one with retro-fitted Euro lights, another with a replacement engine, and an



odd “California Coupe” with a rear seat but no soft top mechanism and questionable restoration all being bought well. Pristine models still sell close to full value.

The R107 (1971-89) market is also facing tough times. With too many available during the week, three bargains sold for less than \$5,000. The average sale price hovered around \$10,000, with only four going above \$12,750. Two top sellers were 1986 560SLs: one formerly owned by George Lucas (\$31,900) and a pristine example with only 9,000 miles (\$38,500). Unless the example has ultra-low miles or an interesting (and documented) back-story, it may bring a stronger return if sold privately.

All is not lost for SL owners, however, as R129 models (1990-2002) saw relatively strong sales, especially models with low miles or limited-run “special-edition” examples (and there were plenty of different editions).

There were no 190SLs this season, which is interesting following August’s record-breaking sale in Monterey of singer Sheryl Crow’s 190SL (although all proceeds from that \$143,000 sale went to Joplin, Missouri tornado victims.)

Also missing were quality W126 and W140 S-Class vehicles, though Russo & Steele offered a purple iridescent 560SEC Koenig “fat body kit” custom convertible formerly owned by Minnesota Twins outfielder Chili Davis. It sold for \$27,500.

By the numbers 56 total Mercedes-Benz vehicles sold. Of the 56 M-B Classics, 41 of them (73%) were SLs (“Sport Leicht”) models.

Andrew Flynn



a stunning red 1955 example for \$632,000. In addition, the 300SL Roadster saw its market value continue to rise with three sales between \$660,000 and \$737,000.

Bonhams Auctions, new to Scottsdale Week in their lush accommodations at the Kierland Westin, led the “Over 50” (years old) crowd with a wonderful garnet and black 1937 540K Cabriolet that sold for \$667,000. Surprisingly, Russo & Steele (given their rather broad range of vehicles) sold a 1937 garnet and cream 230 A Cabriolet for \$159,000. Gooding offered a 1959 220 S (Ponton) Cabriolet in cream yellow with a red interior, however auction expert and Auction Dinner guest speaker **Andy Reid** contended that the restoration wasn’t as correct as it could have been, realizing a \$92,400 hammer strike (with no reserve) against a \$130-\$160,000 estimate.

Other notable models were the W111 Cabriolets, which still bring strong returns. Gooding & Co. offered two different 1971 280 SE 3.5 models, one in rich brown, and the other in red, which sold for





Keep your address updated with the MBCA National Business Office at (800) 637-2360, or <http://mbca.org/mbca/addchange.htm>

Save These Dates:

Star Night	Thursday, March 15, 2012
Family Picnic and Clean Car Show	Saturday, March 24, 2012
Putting and Lunch at Desert Highlands	Saturday, March 31, 2012
Star Night	Thursday, April 19, 2012
The British European Auto Tour	Weekend of April 21 – 22, 2012
Concours Judging School	Saturday, May 5, 2012
Star Night	Thursday, May 17, 2012
Memorial Day Trip	Friday, May 25-28th, 2012
Annual Business Meeting	Sunday, June 3, 2012

B.E.A.T. British European Auto Tour!

Listen up guys and gals. The March 16 registration deadline is approaching. This is a fun event for all British and European autos. Go to www.beataz.com for info. Call Bob Yoder at (480) 998 0194 for club participation.



Visit our section website at <http://www.DesertStars.org>