

# The Enchanted Star

50 Years Young!



New Mexico Section

1967-2017

November/December 2017

## Weekend in L.A.: Part I of III

An Auto-holic's Chronicle of the Richest Car Culture in the World  
Scott Brinkley

My first full day in L.A. was one of two exclusives I would receive during my stay. After years of binge watching his YouTube channel (and subsequently his CNBC program), I was finally going to get to see the innards of the legendary *Jay Leno's Big Dog Garage*. If the clouds parted, birds started chirping, and California sunshine beamed down on me that day, I would also get to meet the man himself.

Arriving in Burbank, my companions (MBCA Toronto Section members and friends who happened to be in the area) and I pulled up to the *Garage*. The setting is unmistakable if one follows the YouTube channel or CNBC program. After a few handshakes and introductions to some of his incredible staff, I am inside. This is one of those moments in life where one pinches himself to ensure he is conscious.

Anybody who has even the most fleeting pulse for automobiles and the associated culture could spend days looking at the artwork on the *Garage* walls. Then he or she looks down and sees the collection; fueled up, keys inside, battery tenders guaranteeing max cranking amps for when the owner wants a spin. That includes the Mercedes-McLaren SLR nestled in with its Anglo supercar brethren. Fifteen minutes later, we get to the section that would have made spending all of my airline miles to go to L.A. worth the trip had my visit ended there: the Mercedes-Benz section of the *Garage*.

Given Mr. Leno's history with the brand, it would not be far-fetched to say it is to him what that other German car company (and W124 500E collaborator) is to his fellow comedian Seinfeld. When we spoke briefly on the phone prior to my trip, he mentioned the [W111 280SE 3.5 restoration](#) he and his staff had just completed. It did not disappoint, nor did the 600 Grosser, the 6.3, or the mint E55 AMG.

Wishing every moment thereafter I could have bottled the scent of the leather in the 3.5 coupe, we journeyed on for over two hours, drool napkins in tote, as we heard about one of the most tastefully assembled and well-preserved car collections on the planet. Pristine octogenarian Packards and Duesenbergs serve as reminders of a time when America competed at the highest pricepoints (and levels of engineering) in the luxury automotive market space. A [Packard-built Rolls-Royce Merlin engine](#) stands as solid evidence. His serial number 12 2005 and 2017 Ford GTs served as potent reminders of why Ford is my favorite American brand (besides the fact that I learned how to drive in one).

Just as we were about two-thirds of the way through the tour, the roll-up garage door opened just as it had so often in *Garage* YouTube and television content. In drove one of the most innovative vehicles ever to grace a General Motors showroom; the Corvair Rampside pickup truck. As the truck approached, the silhouette became unmistakable. The clouds had parted. I was about to meet Jay Leno.

After brief introductions, Mr. Leno had to dash off in search of the head of design for a very large Japanese car firm who, with his companion, had long ago left the tour group in search of whatever inspiration was needed for their next design. No matter, he promised to catch up with us, and we had plenty of remaining automotive jewels on which to feast our eyes.

At the conclusion of the tour, Mr. Leno rejoined us for photos and took time with each of us. A more generous host we could not have had. I consider myself a richer person having met him.



## NM Section Enjoys Jemez Drive and Supper in Santa Fe

Six members and guests of the New Mexico Section enjoyed a gold-tinged autumn romp through the Jemez Pueblo and surrounding mountains on 04 November. Tires gripped, steering connected, and ABS brakes grabbed as the troupe of Mercedes executed hairpins with a precision only a German-tuned suspension can offer. Another member and her guest joined for a bountiful wood-fired meal at Santa Fe's warm and inviting El Nido restaurant.



Rubin Howard, Media Director for MBCA Toronto Section, and the author, flank the namesake of *Jay Leno's Big Dog Garage*

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**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS**

Cheryl Herbert	Johnny Hauser	Brian & Karen Hudson	Jack Sheppard
Ken Ronzone	George Cusack	Ricardo Espat	Zachary Benjamin
Joe Wellborn	Valentyna Sopyn	Janusz Wilczynski	Gaar Strattan

**10% DISCOUNT**

Mercedes Benz of Albuquerque offers  
 10% parts and labor discount with any service!  
 Show your membership card for discount.

*Be sure to let MB of Albuquerque know how much  
 you appreciate their support for the Club!*

**COME TO CARS 'N COFFEE ALBUQUERQUE!**

Saturdays, 8:30AM, 7600 Jefferson ST NE  
 (Near Journal Center)



If you plan to attend on any given week,  
 please phone or email Scott Brinkley by  
 preceding Thursday evening.

**Flush my Brake Fluid!?**

*But that sounds expensive...*

Scott Brinkley

Ever since joining the fold in December of 2014 with the purchase of my W220, I have been aware of the Mercedes-Benz time-honored tradition of maintaining the condition of my brake fluid. Coming from a background of rusty, front-drive American cars that got me through graduate school (and to a climate where rust is splendidly unheard-of), the last thing on my mind was a complete flush of my brake fluid. Perhaps it should have been the first.



When adding up all of the other services necessary to maintain a Mercedes-Benz product in peak condition, paying an extra \$150-200 for a brake fluid flush may seem excessive. After all, I *never* flushed my fluid, only adding back in whatever I depleted as a result of a driveway brake job on whatever cash car I was driving at the time. What, then, makes our Benzes so special that products like my recently-acquired '95 A124 (pictured) recommend a two-year brake fluid service interval?

Recall that Mercedes-Benz invented ABS, along with a host of other safety features we take for granted today. This Anti-Lock system relies upon an expensive Bosch pump that makes the cost of a brake fluid service at a dealership look like loose change (\$2617.50 in my A124's case!). Moisture buildup in the fluid over time puts these expensive ABS components-and every metallic



brake line in the system-at risk for corrosion. Moreover, high-performance AMG models used regularly for their intended purpose can suffer heat degradation of their fluid. My little electric pen-style brake fluid tester (an inexpensive Amazon.com purchase) recently scared me to death when it showed a high water concentration

in my A124's fluid. I immediately made an appointment with Mercedes-Benz of Albuquerque's service department. If there is one thing that I have learned with these products, it is NEVER to be penny wise and pound foolish. I would have kept my '97 Oldsmobile 88 with its Buick V6 if that was my intent!

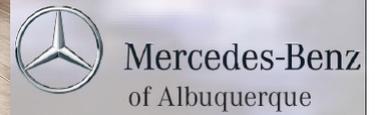
How long has it been since your Benz's brake fluid has been refreshed? Hopefully I have piqued at least enough curiosity to cause you to ask your service advisor the next time your car is in for service. By the way, the MBABQ 10% Discount for MBCA Members works...quite well!





2018-E Cabriolet

8900 Pan American Freeway NE • I-25 at Alameda  
505.821.4000 • [www.mercedesabq.com](http://www.mercedesabq.com)



### **GET FREE MONTHS OF MEMBERSHIP**

Current members who refer a friend to MBCA are rewarded with one **FREE** month of membership for each friend who joins the club. The more people you recruit, the more **FREE** months you receive (no limit). You can also receive **FREE** months of membership you renew: Renew for two years and get two months **FREE**; or renew for three years, get three months **FREE**.

You can pick up membership forms at the MB dealership or contact Marie Haycock at 505.286.1359

## ***Spill the Beans!***

If you have an idea for or have been keeping to yourself a favorite pleasure driving route in New Mexico, I want to know! I would like to organize at least two 1/2 day drives in 2018 with at least one meal stop at a choice New Mexico restaurant. The drive would preferably commence from Mercedes-Benz of Albuquerque, but could easily start from somewhere near Santa Fe given the world-class scenery drives in that region offer. We all enjoy our Benzes (and your President just got his hands on an A124 cabriolet he's itching to drive), so let's exercise them!

Call 330/354-5466 or email the Editor...



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## The Enchanted Star

*The Newsletter for the New Mexico Section  
of the Mercedes Benz Club of America*

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STAMP  
HERE

### Editor

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

We want YOU to participate... Join us and have some fun!

Remember members may invite guests to any event!



### **UPCOMING NM SECTION EVENTS**

- Annual Holiday Party, Albuquerque Country Club – December 03, 2017
- Dealer Appreciation Luncheon – Winter 2018
- Tech Session, Mercedes-Benz of Albuquerque – Spring 2018

*Additional details will be provided in future newsletters and flyers .. so mark your calendars now.*

**TO ACCESS THE MBCA NM SECTION WEBSITE**  
[newmexico.mbc.org](http://newmexico.mbc.org)