

MBCA-GWS quarterly roundup



Summit Point Never Disappoints

A Look at the Roads Traveled this Summer



The Nurburgring may be just shy of 4,000 miles away from Reagan National Airport in D.C., but a mere 75 miles away from that airport is Summit Point Motorsports Park which has a replica of the famed Karussell corner, complete with concrete paving and banking. For the Third Year in a row, MBCA-GWS returned to the Shenandoah Circuit at Summit Point Motorsports Park for its annual Track event. This year we moved the event from October to June in hopes of better weather and we were rewarded. The worst criticism I can muster of the weather was there were a few clouds - a marked improvement over rainy, cold, and windy seen at our past two events.

This year we saw a field of nearly 80 registrants driving at the Shenandoah Circuit. And we introduced five people to the world of high-performance driving through our "Taste of the Track" program, which gave participants the following: one classroom session prior to lunch, parade laps at highway speeds during the lunch hour, one "full pace" instructed track session, and credit for two future MBCA|GWS Autocross events for the 2019 season.

Full day participants got four on-track sessions, for a total of about two full hours of track time through the day. If you participated and have not yet completed the survey, please do so now - it will assist us in planning next year's event: Complete the Survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/DY5KZH2. We are already beginning to plan for next year, and are looking to return to the same circuit around the same time of year, so keep your eyes peeled for the official announcement!

PHOTOS: We had the good fortune of having Jaclyn Heck on hand to photograph the event for us (again) this year. You can find her photos here on Flickr (www.flickr.com/photos/jaclynheck/albums/72157709088888198) and you can thank her directly by email at jaclynmheck@gmail.com.



Inside: President's Letter • Where We've Benz: Summit Point Review • Upcoming Dates • SUV Guide: Getting to know the GLE, GLS, GLC, GLB, GLA, and Gelandewagen • and more! See more on Facebook and at gws.mbca.org

President's Letter

Summer has moved way too fast, and I am hoping that many opportunities to drive your passion have occurred this year. The Club is experiencing another banner year. The July Club Summer Picnic was a great success as was the Route 66 Drive and Dine that followed. Summit Point saw a record number of attendees of all ages driving fast or on Parade Laps at highway speeds. A dedication and pure joy for the automobiles was palpable, and as always, there were a few surprises.

This year we are stepping in line with National! "What is the push?," you may ask - well, we are working to increase membership. Tom Mewborn has graciously taken on the task to champion the Greater Washington Section as Membership Chair. When you see him running in and out of the dealers delivering brochures or galavanting around the area to connect with Club members - give him a warm hello.

Everything that happens in the Club is about, dependent on, and intended to benefit you - the members. The Greater Washington Section of MBCA is a unique and diverse chapter. We are large and encompass a robust distance. The MBCA-GWS Leadership, with the help of many members who consistently step up to the plate to assist at events, are working hard and just a little different than the status quo - and refreshingly so.

Our goal is to enhance our signature events and add key activities as suggested and championed by those members with an interest. We are currently lining up events for 2020, so please feel free to forward your thoughts on current and potential activities. And if you can champion an event - we would appreciate it even more!

Hoping to see you on the roads driving!

Kind Regards,
Rugger



Rugger Smith
MBCA-GWS President



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Master Technician and Owner Reese Sherbaf oversees every single job that comes through the shop and treats each car like his own. He started working on Mercedes Benz cars over 40 years ago and his love for fixing cars has given him the nickname "Car Doctor."

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October

13 Autocross

November

1 Hilton Head
Concours d'Elegance
10 Autocross

December

1 Autocross

January 2020

26 Starfeast

Your SUV Guide to the GLE, GLS, GLC, GLB, GLA, and Gelandewagen

Mercedes-Benz has the SUV for Every Occasion

What once was considered a truck, is now more luxurious and safer than could have been imagined.

Words by William West Hopper Photos Courtesy of MBUSA

With the American consumer purchasing more SUVs each year, Mercedes-Benz continues to lead the pack. Little did we know twenty years ago when the first ML rolled out of the new US Factory in Alabama that SUVs were beginning a market battle with the minivan. Now in 2020, Mercedes-Benz offers more SUV models in all sizes than ever before. From the smallest-GLA up to the old-school and completely redesigned G-Wagen. These "utility" vehicles are laden with technology and even more luxury touches, meeting every need, except for the drop top one.

SUVs with Expanded Safety Technologies

Mercedes-Benz pioneered the premium SUV segment in 1997 with the launch of the M-Class, and continues to redefine the segment to this day. After driving all the different M-B SUV models, they are as different, and just as good, as that first generation W163. Now offering more comfort and safety - but what makes this upcoming crop stand out even more is the technology. Especially in the area of safety, which Mercedes-Benz has always pioneered - the high-tech features have become standard equipment in many vehicles.

It's easy to forget how prevalent autonomous vehicle technology is in new vehicles. Growing in commonality are driver assistance systems (like M-B's Intelligent Drive), active stop-and-go assist, active brake assist, cross-traffic detection, and even the new exit warning which alerts upon opening the car door (even when the car is turned off), if the passenger might encounter a motorcyclist, cyclist, or another vehicle. Some new 2020 Mercedes-Benz vehicles have the option to know what is coming up on the road ahead, by communicating with the other cars as well as the connected infrastructure. Digital interactions are providing up-to-date information and warnings of hazardous situations ahead and informing the driver visually and acoustically, letting them know more than mirrors and cameras could ever have.

While we are on the cusp of big changes in both propulsion and safety technology, it comes at an ever-growing price tag. Buyers are willing to pay for visually pleasing options; the harder sell is getting them to accept and purchase the unseen life-saving features. After driving a car with this new tech, once the car jerks to a stop to avoid a collision, the driver will be immediately reminded of the valuable technology investment.

GLA

You often see these with the Car2Go logos - Daimler's shared ride platform. Rent one using a smartphone app for a quick trip or a long weekend. The GLA is the Baby-Benz SUV - perfect for urban driving. A beefed-up hatchback that comes in either front wheel drive, or all-wheel-drive, this mini-ute is great for the one or two-person family who needs the utility of an easy in-and-out vehicle with limited cargo space.

Seniors are finding it sized right with not too much new technology to learn. Of course, if you want to upgrade a GLA, there are plenty of safety and luxury options: active lane-keeping assist, distance pilot DISTRONIC®, a panorama roof, the Harman/Kardon LOGIC7® sound system, a 12-color ambient lighting, and more. You can also include a few AMG tricks like the GLA 45's night package; for a sportier ride, add the AMG ride control sport suspension with 'RACE' mode for a top speed of 167-mph. The GLA is the gateway to luxury and sporty SUV and is due soon for a refresh. For 2020 there are no changes from the '19 model. Pricing is from \$33k to \$51K.

GLB

The compact luxury SUV market is hot, and the all-new GLB offers aggressive proportions and a strong off-road character. Powered by an efficient four-cylinder gasoline engine and available variable torque distribution 4MATIC, the driver can use the "Dynamic Select" for a sportier all-wheel-drive configuration. It is the first compact SUV to include the versatility of an optional third row with two additional seats, giving the flexibility of room for up to seven passengers, something customers are seeking from all manufacturers.

The GLB features advanced technology along with an extensive list of standard equipment. Being the newest SUV in the lineup, it features Mercedes-Benz's MBUX (Mercedes-Benz User Experience) infotainment system, the latest driver assistance systems, and an impressive list of options like Burmester® surround sound, and 64-color ambient lighting, because of course, you want to look down and see your shoes lit up in various hues of pink. The GLB is a lot of luxury and technology in a compact SUV; it will go on sale by the end of the year, prices have yet to be announced.

GLC SUV and Coupe

GLC has become Mercedes-Benz's largest selling SUV, originally introduced about a decade ago as the GLK, it is Mercedes-Benz's C-Class of mid-sized SUV. Recently updated with a host of new technology and safety features, users can choose between a traditional breadbox exterior or a four-door-coupe. The German four-door coupe styling may be controversial, but the GLC has it in just the proportions, and looks better than it did in the GLE Coupe.

GLC 300 comes in rear-wheel drive or you can option it in all-wheel-drive 4MATIC. Both come with Mercedes-Benz's next-generation 2.0-liter inline-4 turbo offering increased output (255 hp and 273 lb-ft) and lower fuel consumption, as well as reduced CO2 emissions. Its 9G-TRONIC automatic transmission provides a dynamic driving experience.



l to r: GLA, GLB, GLC SUV and Coupe

The new GLC has all the most recent technology available - MBUX, the combination of the standard touchscreen multimedia display, optional Augmented Video for Navigation, standard intelligent Voice Control available via the standard "Hey Mercedes" prompt, and yes, even the newest vehicle-to-X communication, presenting the driver with up-to-date information and warnings of what to expect on the road ahead. LED headlamps and a new 10.25" Center Touchscreen are standard. Upgrade to the AMG GLC63 for more goodies like the growl of the AMG performance exhaust system, and control of the electronically limited slip differential. Add-on options include the AMG aerodynamics package, new upholstery in magma grey/black with yellow accents, and AMG performance seat options. On the inside is a standard 12.3" digital instrument cluster, 64-color ambient lighting and AMG-illuminated door sills as well as a standard multimedia package. Pricing for 2019 runs from \$42,500K to \$80K with the Coupe running \$47K to \$84k (prices excl. \$995 destination & delivery).

GLE

Once called the ML, this is the vehicle that put Mercedes-Benz US manufacturing on the map. Now, as the GLE, it continues to be a trendsetter, representing the level of design, comfort, and safety not found in other SUVs. The GLE steps up the game with more technology, like the EQ boost - taking hybrid and electric technology to a new level. GLE is larger and wider, with a longer wheelbase and wider track, running on 19" to 22" wheels. The list of standard equipment is impressive. The MBUX user interface includes voice control, navigation, 12.3" digital display with touchscreen and matching instrument cluster, a center console touchpad, active parking assist, blind spot assist, keyless-go with hands-free access, and LED headlamps.

Options are plentiful: AIR-BALANCE Package, Head-Up Display, 4-Zone Climate Control, 3rd Row Seat Package, an enlarged panoramic sliding sunroof, Wireless Charging, and MBUX augmented reality among other features. How about electrifying the drive train with E-ACTIVE BODY CONTROL the world's first 48-volt active suspension system? New driver assistance systems further enhance the level of safety of the GLE. The interior is more spacious and comfortable, with an available third-row seat. The Infotainment system boasts larger screens, and along with "Hey Mercedes," you can talk with your hands using the MBUX interior assist, which detects hand and arm movements to control functions. Not sure how one keeps hands on the wheel while doing so, but it's now a thing! I was more impressed than expected when I took the GLE on mountain roads with its new 3.0L inline-6 turbo. Numerous packages added to the \$61,550 base price of the GLE I drove, pushing it to \$96,930 including destination and delivery.

The All-New GLS for 2020

Once called the ML, this is the vehicle that put Mercedes-Benz US manufacturing on the map. Now, as the GLE, it continues to be a trendsetter, representing the level of design, comfort, and safety not found in other SUVs. The GLE steps up the game with more technology - like EQ boost - taking hybrid and electric technology to a new level. Built right here in the U.S.A., the S-Class of the SUV was known simply as the GL; it continues to be the largest and most luxurious of Mercedes-Benz's SUVs.

GLS offers a choice of engines. A new in-line six-cylinder engine intelligently electrified with EQ Boost and Integrated Starter Generator allows for fuel savings that were previously only possible with high-voltage hybrid technology and producing 362 hp and 369 lb-ft of torque, with a further 184 lb-ft of torque and 21 hp available via EQ Boost over short periods. Or bump it up to a 4.0-liter V8 Biturbo engine with EQ Boost for immediate, smooth power with high levels of efficiency. A redesigned interior includes the dual 12.3" digital touchscreen display with the MBUX infotainment system. GLS provides agile dynamics and extensive safety with comfort for up to seven passengers in three fully electrically adjustable rows. All passengers get generous amounts of space and outstanding comfort. The GLS can be ordered with executive seating package: a six-seat option with Captain's chairs, and up to five zones of climate control. Its price starts at \$75,200 and easily tips over the \$100K mark with optional equipment.

GLS-Class

Redesigned for its 40th anniversary year, the G is still big and boxy with distinctive door handles, round headlights (now LED), exposed door hinges, and spare wheel on the rear door. But now it rides and handles more like a Mercedes-Benz than a military transport, all while still carrying the cache of what celebrities choose as a daily driver. The doors are very solid, with the characteristic closing sound, clear evidence of that hallmark "G" functionality. The G's multi-contour seats feature massage functions and are equipped with numerous seat conveniences: memory seating, heating and cooling in the front and rear, and luxury head restraints in the front. The rear seats can be folded down to 60, 40 or 100 percent. And if you want to trick your G out, make it a 4X4 Squared with massive ground clearance and just about anything else you want to add, from design to a new G Manufaktur Program, which allows for more interior and exterior customization, and of course, all the AMG touches.

A run of the mill G550 features a 4.0L V8 bi-turbo engine, and the G 63 raises the bar with a handcrafted AMG 4.0-liter V8 bi-turbo that sends the G up to 60 mph in 4.5 seconds. Pricing for the G550 starts at \$124,500, with the AMG starting at \$147,500. With the right options, the final price falls well into the \$200K plus range.



l to r: GLE, GLS 2020, and GLS-Class

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