

# STAR TRACKS

Volume 11, Issue 4

Fourth Quarter 2015 



## 2015 Holiday Party

The Northern New Jersey Section's holiday party was held on 6 December 2015 at The Brownstone in Paterson NJ. The Brownstone is one of NNJ's premiere event spaces, featuring exquisite food and amazing architecture inspired by the artisans of the early 1900's. As always, members participated in Toys for Tots by bringing a gift to place under an elegant Christmas tree.

We had 68 members and friends in attendance to enjoy our holiday festivities. Our members were greeted as they walked in by a slide show put together by Carl Schwartz. His superb photography skills highlighted our very successful June Jamboree '15. As everyone got settled they took their seats at intimate tables in classic Mercedes-Benz colors, and mystery bags and envelopes.

Carl captured this exciting event, which you can log onto our website [mbcannj.com](http://mbcannj.com) to view the album.



to take the mystery bags. Inside each mystery bag was either a Mercedes-Benz mug or hat.

Thank you to all that attended and helped to make this a successful event! I look forward to seeing you all again, spread the word at how wonderful it was! I'd love to see even more of our members and friends at our next holiday function.

The Brownstone put together an amazing spread of delightful food for us to enjoy, including, Penne and Vodka Sauce, PEI Mussels, Giant Shrimp Francaise, Chicken Savoy, Braised Short Ribs, Lobster Risotto as well as assorted Veggies and salad. Everyone agreed it was an abundant and delicious feast!

We played a variation of the left-right game to decide who got



### President

Matt Huda  
[mercedesmattnnj@gmail.com](mailto:mercedesmattnnj@gmail.com)

### Co Vice Presidents

Ken Spingarn  
[KHS@openix.com](mailto:KHS@openix.com)

Shelby Rhodes

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Amy Wilcox

### Treasurer

Lucille Chabala  
[LuluChab@aol.com](mailto:LuluChab@aol.com)

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[mercedeslady1@verizon.net](mailto:mercedeslady1@verizon.net)

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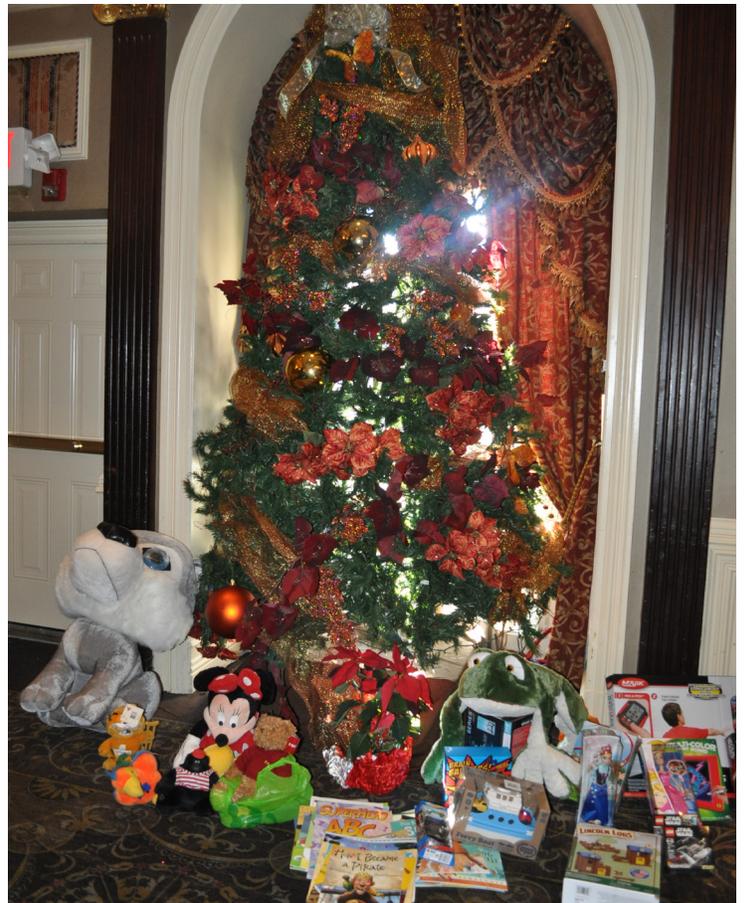
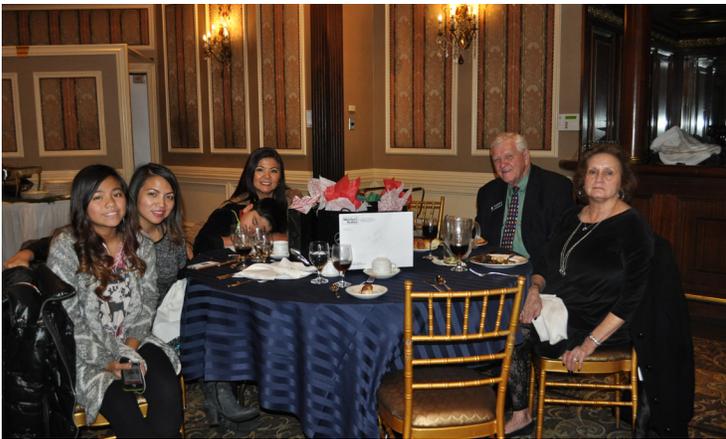
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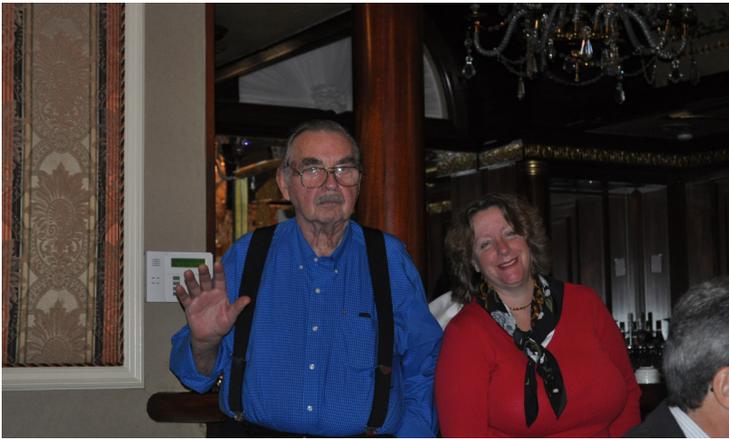
Carl Ian Schwartz  
[Carlianschwartz@mac.com](mailto:Carlianschwartz@mac.com)

### Treasury Report 2015

Beginning balance \$20,134.65  
Money In \$9557.16  
Money Out \$ 9393.28  
Ending Balance 20,298.53









# Christmas 2015

The first snowflakes have yet to fall at Falkenhorst, nonetheless wintertide is already upon us. But when the sky is blue and the temperatures quite balmy why should it be hard to get into the spirit of Christmas? We just have one more manifestation of the natural environment for which to be grateful. Merry Christmas one and all!

The year 2015 which is now fast slipping off the wall calendar started for me with the January musicale of the Steinway Society, which this year celebrated my father, Joseph E. Bleimaier's one hundredth birthday. Of course, he left us nineteen years shy of this anniversary, but he would have thoroughly approved of the piano recital presented by the brilliant Svetlana Smolina in his honor. The program featured 19th Century keyboard compositions by Viennese masters and honorary Danubian romantics.

The shining light of enthusiast motoring burned brightly in the firmament of my hobbyist activities this past year. Marina & I took the gold for the second year in a row in the Porsche Club of America Zone One Rallye (time, speed, distance) which draws teams from across New Jersey, New York, New England and eastern Canada.

We were thrilled to be able to attend both the Amelia Island Concours d' Elegance in Florida and the Pebble Beach classic car weekend on the Monterey peninsula. The high point from my perspective was the recognition of the Porsche 914 as honored marque and model at Amelia Island. As a long time 914 apologist, I felt uniquely vindicated and gratified. My commemorative article on this mid-engine sport car of the '70s appeared in PorscheForum. Other automotive themed essays were published in Nines, the SAAB Club's national magazine and Mercedes StarTracks.

Alas, on Labor Day weekend, after Marina & I returned from the historic vehicle races at Lime Rock in Connecticut, incendiary locomotive tragedy struck. A fuel line came loose in the engine compartment of my '73 Porsche 914 spewing gasoline unto the hot engine. My fire extinguisher was to no avail and by the time the fire department arrived my faithful mechanical companion of decade's standing was burnt to a cinder. Under the inspiration of strong emotions, I penned a very personal dirge entitled, "914, Farewell My Numbered Love." I have now just acquired a Porsche Boxster from a fellow Porsche Club member. I suppose I cannot get by without an open car and a growling engine situated behind me where conventional cars would have a back seat.

I am pleased to announce that three of Marina's automotive themed art photographs took well deserved first place prizes in the Porsche Club Schattenbaum competition this year. So much for things vehicular.

My article, "The Intelligentsia and Social Movements," appears in the current volume of the Proceedings of the Lomonosov Conference. Once again in 2015 I was invited to participate in the Conference on the Intelligentsia at



**CHRISTMAS 2015**

**Surely it is not the arrival of the winter season;  
No that can hardly be the true and genuine reason  
To be jolly, merry and to rejoice;  
To sing out with loud and boisterous voice.**

**Forsooth, let us recognize & celebrate the ultimate holiday;  
Commemorating the banishment of anger, hatred and dismay.  
It is the anniversary of the birth of an all powerful Conception;  
Unprecedented and revolutionary from the very inception.**

**That man and his Creator can be at peace;  
That sadness and guilt can find release.  
Now grace prevails and the meek inherit;  
Trumping wealth, power and feign'ed merit.**

**So, colleagues, one and all, join with me  
In joyous Christmas revelry!  
JKB**

Moscow University in late August. This year my topic was, "The Intelligentsia and Religion." I think some of my conclusions may have a certain relevance in view of the current, international newsworthiness of Islamic based movements. I take the rather obvious, but apparently controversial, position that the message of Christ is the last best hope for humankind. Only if we harken to His message will the peacemakers be blessed and will the meek finally inherit the earth upon which they have so long toiled.

Leaving Russia after the Conference, I participated in a genuine adventure, spiriting the eight-year-old child of a prominent refugee out of that country and to a hopefully bright future in the New World. It was all quite legal, of course, but yet the caper had certain colorful dramatic elements. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to have played the role of a real life scarlet pimpnel. Further to the Eastern European theme a couple of my articles appeared in Russia last year. A historical essay dealing with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Commissar Order broke some new ground I think. I am honored to continue to be a guest legal commentator on a weekly radio program sponsored by the Russophone, Word of Life Church, in Philadelphia (Radio Vektor, 860am). I also appeared as a guest once this year on another Russian language station discussing recent federal court decisions which impact immigration.

Perhaps it will be possible to picture what an unreasonably diversified existence I lead when I mention that I tried a case in Lumpkin, Georgia before a federal administrative law court and spent a week in Tishomingo, Oklahoma studying smoothbore gunsmithing at Murray State College. What a way to banish boredom!

From the warm hearth-side at Falkenhorst please accept warmest good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a wondrous 2016!

John K.B.

Falkenhorst

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# From the President ..... Matt Huda

As we close out 2015 I'd like to share with you all some thoughts. First and foremost I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and got to spend it with friends and family. Our unusually warm fourth quarter certainly made everyone's commute much easier.



I would like to take a moment to thank our board members who tirelessly work behind the scenes to put events together. We regularly meet to make sure our calendar stays on track and come up with new and exciting things to do. Anyone who has interest in becoming more involved to make our events even more successful is welcome to join us.

As we welcome 2016, your board members and I have been busy working on an exciting calendar of events which I hope to see everyone at. Below is a proposed list of events we can expect to see this coming year.

## An Exclusive Benefit for Northern New Jersey Section Mercedes-Benz Club of America Members

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\*APR=Annual Percentage Rate.  
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notice. Not everyone will qualify for this rate.  
Other terms and rates are available based on  
our loan underwriting policies.



## 2016 EVENTS

### **January 23 Tech Session- International Auto Sport Inc. Pompton Lakes.**

Father and Son team, Rick Sr. & Rick Jr. will explain the process of wholesale purchasing, and their unique approach to helping people find luxury cars at great prices. Their unique approach of procuring a specific car rather than having their customers buy off the lot brings a boutique experience to the process. [Internationalautosportinc.com](http://Internationalautosportinc.com)

### **February 14- Sweetheart Brunch**

With the T-Bird Club at the Bethwood, Totowa NJ

### **March 20 (proposed)- Antiques Roadshow at Batalia, in Orange.**

Alan Snyder, our very own certified antiques appraiser, will once again take us on a visual history lesson into the past. If you have never been to one of our Antiques Road Shows now is the time to come on out and enjoy the good time had by all. If you have attended in the past, you know how much fun it is and the stories of what the objects are thought to be and what some of them actually turn out to be are quite different and hilarious.  
(Remember the 'soup tureen' that was actually a 'slop pot'?)

### **March 25- April 3 New York International Auto Show** [autoshowny.com](http://autoshowny.com)

## NEW MEMBERS

**John Ajongwen**  
**Jeffrey Arway**  
**Atly Botas**  
**George Crispina**  
**Kevin Dabulis**  
**Douglas Ernst**  
**Anise Hamdan**  
**Philip Horowitz**  
**Mitchell McGuire**  
**James Paraula**  
**Jean Pierre**  
**Anderas Protopapas**  
**Timothy Sweeney**

# MEMBER OF THE YEAR

## Paul La Penta

Paul has been a member of our section since 2006. As a Mercedes-Benz enthusiast Paul has a vast knowledge about everything Mercedes-Benz and shares his knowledge happily with fellow members. Paul is also an integral part of product management for MBUSA, specializing in Designo and AMG products.

For the past few years we have had the pleasure of Paul attending events and showcasing the latest and greatest from Mercedes-Benz, giving sneak peeks to our members of special vehicles that we would rarely see out on the open road and gave us chances to see cars before they were even available to dealers. Most recently our section got to see the new GLC at the June Jamboree and the Maybach at the Deutche Club this past summer.



We say farewell to Paul as he will be leaving our section when he moves to Atlanta at the end of the year. "Paul, thanks for being an outstanding member of MBCA NNJS. Best of luck in Atlanta, Peachtree will surely appreciate you as much as we do!"

## DID YOU KNOW

NNJS is one of the few sections that doesn't charge for most of our events. Many sections of MBCA charge members for every event they attend. In NNJS we believe that our members should be able to attend our events at no or little cost by supplementing fees for our members.

In the past two years we have lost a large part of our advertising contributions in order to supplement events. Also, with the move of MBUSA this past year our overhead for June Jamboree has gone up exponentially. Unfortunately we will not be able to subsidize events as heavily in 2016 as we have in the past and costs to attend paid events will go up in order to provide the experience we have come to enjoy for our club's events.

We ask that our members be understanding of this, and can assist in offsetting these growing costs of running the club by helping us to find new contributors to advertise with us and in return allow us to patronize their establishment.

Reach out to Lucille Chabala if you would like to help. [luluchab@aol.com](mailto:luluchab@aol.com) / 973-731-9133



**T**hanks to our members for the  
**O**verwhelming  
**Y**uletide  
**S**urprises and gifts

**F**or the children of  
**O**ther families who are  
**R**eally struggling at this

**T**ime  
**O**f the year

**T**he  
**S**upport was greatly appreciated



At the annual Holiday Party the NNJS members and their guests once again showed their overwhelming support of this wonderful endeavor that our section has contributed toward for many, many years. The gifts filled the entire back of our white GL450. We dropped the gifts off at a local police station and the officers on duty were astounded at the amount and quality of the gifts that were being donated. The generosity of our section never ceases to amaze me.

Valerie Cristiano

# New 2017 Mercedes-Benz E-Class interior raises the bar

Story: Vincent Nguyen



There were a lot of loaded, descriptive words thrown out during Mercedes-Benz's intimate press conference describing the new E-Class. "Luxury", "simplicity", "experience", "high-tech", "beauty"... all of which tie into a hard division between two categories: emotion and intelligence, the yin and yang if you will of the automaker's latest view on what a high-end sedan should be.

The new core of the Mercedes-Benz brand is made up of emotion — things like, according to the company, the contrast between using colors such as red and free movements such as red hot flames - and intelligence - which is simply pure form.



Words only get you a fraction of the way, mind; turned out, Mercedes had a fairly surreal way in mind for me to physically experience the new car.



The setup: four new E-Class models, neatly tucked into its own partitioned nook behind black curtains. In one space, I can try out the Classic model, the standard configuration with the default two-gauge dashboard and various driver-selectable pages set in the screen the analog dials flank.

More interesting layouts appear in the new Sport and Progressive screen designs, with less analog and more digital to play with. The final curtain hides an E-Class fitted with the new, second-generation Burmester 3D surround system - the second-generation to what

wowed audiophiles in the S-Class - with a whopping 23 speakers and two amplifiers for a total of 1540 watts.

## More displays, fewer physical buttons and all-round simpler yet elegant design

After handing over my phones and any recording devices I might have smuggled in with me, I slipped past

the first curtain to experience the Progressive model. Mercedes has given this particular E-Class variant dual 12.3-inch displays with a resolution of 1920 x 720 pixels. Though they're two separate panels, they're covered by a single sheet of Gorilla glass: the resulting visual effect is spectacular, a real sense of a cohesive interface spanning both driver and front-seat passenger.

The obvious comparison is the Virtual Cockpit that Audi has used to great effect in its R8, TT, and most recently Q7 models, which also replaces traditional dials with a far more configurable digital display.

While I do love both implementations - I'm all for anything that gives you better information while you're on the move - I do think Audi's is more striking courtesy of its Google Earth integration, the entire display becoming your navigation screen with small cutouts for tach, speed, and other details. Other than that, though, both allow for drivers to easily change the look of the dials and the type of information being displayed.

The ultra-widescreen aspect of Mercedes' panels, along with the horizontal layout of the dashboard leaves a clean line spanning from the doors up, around, and over to the passenger's door. Engagingly, the split between driver and passenger is clear, yet when I sat on the passenger side, I felt as much a part of the car as I had in the driver's seat.



Speaking of seating, new to the E-Class is a redesigned massage option for giving your glutes special attention. It actually consists of four individual massagers - think of each one as a very large thumb - and you get two per cheek. According to Mercedes-Benz's experts, it's meant to help release strain in your lower back, and you certainly notice their handiwork once they get underway.

Don't get too relaxed, mind; there's still a luxury sedan to pilot. The steering wheel features new touch-control buttons, square-ish touchpads featured for the first time ever on a wheel. Placed at the 3 and 9 o'clock positions, they're perfectly placed to be caressed by your thumbs.



The left controls the driver display, paging through various screens of information about the car in the instrument cluster, as well as changing drive modes and navigation instructions. The right, meanwhile, controls the center stack display, which in turn handles all the infotainment settings.

You're not limited to the wheel, mind. There's the standard touch/scroll wheel in the center console - useful if your passenger wants to take charge - and that's also where you activate the various massage settings for both driver and

passenger. Since personalization is a big theme for the E-Class this time around, there are 64 colors for the interior lighting, which can again be selected using the scroll wheel.

For anyone who's ever used a modern smartphone with a touchscreen, swiping up, down and side-to-side should come as natural gestures. To select, you push down and get a nudge of tactile feedback in return.

Great in theory, but since fingers get dirty from greasy food, dirt, or whatever else you might encounter on your travels, I was a little concerned about what could sneak between the openings on the two touchpads. According to Mercedes, though, it's a non issue, since the gap is sealed pretty much tight, and I'd imagine not much of anything can get past and seep into the innards.

Mercedes-Benz's other point of pride is the second-generation Burmester 3D Surround-Sound system. Once an option limited to the flagship S-Class, it's now making its way down through the range to more affordable - relatively speaking, mind - cars.



Yes, with more than twenty speakers embedded at various points through the cabin it's hard to miss the extra money you've spent, but more importantly - even in my limited experience - it adds up to an ear-popping listening experience. Burmester and Mercedes cooked up a special 3D-Sound algorithm, just for the S-Class and E-Class, and it lends even traditional, stereo-encoded tracks a cabin-filling dimensionality unmatched by what you find in most other vehicles.



In addition to 3D-Sound, there are four other preset sound modes that I got to sample. Frankly, I'm left with a yearning for more after listening to Hello by Adele in first Pure mode and then 3D-Sound.

With Pure, as the name suggests, there's absolutely no additional processing; it's intended to be the most unadulterated listening experience, and there's a transparency that certainly suits vocal-centric tracks. Switch over to 3D-Sound, however, and it feels like you're in a whole new space. Mercedes had a sample playlist including

acoustic tracks dominated by drums, and though it's a cliché you really do feel like you're right there on stage. Lastly, there's the Easy Listening and Surround modes, which fall somewhere in-between the two processing extremes.

You're not just paying for speakers and amps, mind; how they're installed is important too. That includes what Burmester and Mercedes call "Frontbase", which sees the woofers integrated right into the car's firewall so that the space in the cross-member and side-member can be used as resonance chambers.

All this new tech, eye-candy, and amazing sound would be for nothing if the rest of the cabin didn't come up to scratch. Happily Mercedes hasn't stinted on its materials, and there are lashings of piano black, open-pore wood trim, leather, and aluminum to keep you suitably cosseted.

My overall impression is that the menu system has become far, far more straightforward to use. That'll be of particular use while on the move, with the UI structure flattened out considerably. Even in my relatively short experience, it proved a whole lot quicker to get to the settings that matter, without masses of scrolling and clicking.



The proof will be on the road, though, and that particular test will have to wait. We'll know more and report back when the new Mercedes-Benz E-Class arrives Stateside for a more in-depth drive experience.

## Millennials are living their childhood through their cars



Julia Seiter in her 124 Coupé from 1990 in Berlin.

**Businesswoman Julia Seiter learned to drive in her mother's 124 Saloon. Her Coupé Sportline from 1990 made her childhood dreams come true. We spent a day with her and her beloved car in Berlin.**

The 90s are enjoying a revival and Mercedes models are now more in demand than ever. For some they are a status symbol, for others a memento with nostalgic value. Julia Seiter, founder of NU Slippers, is the proud owner of a W124 Coupé Sportline from 1990. For her, this car is all about tradition and family history. The 27-year-old comes from a dyed-in-the-wool Mercedes family. At home near Freiburg, the Seiters have been driving Mercedes since the 50s and as a child the cars made a profound impression on Julia. She was allowed to practice in her mother's 124 Saloon on the family land. It's no surprise that a Mercedes Benz was her first car and big investment.— following right in her mother's footsteps. After a long and fruitless search for a 124 Cabriolet, Julia finally opted to buy a Coupé Sportline.

Continued next page

Her 132 hp model in blue/black metallic with dark burr wood, leather appointments and wide sports tires has been a loyal companion since 2013.

The social and economic communications graduate founded the footwear brand NU Slippers together with her aunt, with whom she has been selling simple 400-gram summer shoes made of nylon mesh for the past couple of years. ‘Nu’ is the Portuguese word for ‘naked’ and stands for the breathable material that gives the wearer a feeling of walking barefoot with a polyurethane sole that hugs the foot. Julia found inspiration in Portugal, where some of her family members live. The NU Slippers are produced there and then distributed all over Europe.

*“I learned to drive in my mother’s 124 Saloon. I never touched a bicycle again.”*

-- Julia Seiter

Julia values aesthetics and design, not only in her job but also when it comes to her car. For her, the most important thing is to maintain originality. From the interior appointments to the body, she spared no expense caring for her automotive treasure. For instance, she had a Jensen trucker radio imported from the US to replace the missing Becker Mexico 830. Although this radio is more modern and even has a USB connection, it matches the style of the dashboard perfectly. ‘The display just had to have an amber color with no bright LEDs,’ stated Julia. She had her Mercedes star fitted with a magnet and converted so that it can be removed and re-inserted easily: ‘Otherwise I’d have to buy a new one every week in Kreuzberg.



Looking around Berlin, you hardly see any old Mercedes models sporting their original star. Most owners decided to display the emblem on the radiator grille instead.’ But that was out of the question for her. As a true aficionado, Julia does not like compromise. She made a special trip to Copenhagen just to get her parking discs from Torben Rasmussen. She’s often asked whether she inherited her car from her father. The question annoys her. ‘Men don’t assume that I made a conscious decision to buy my old Mercedes or that I am a fanatical car lover. It’s a shame, but I’m fine with



being the one to surprise them.’, adds Julia. One of her regular pastimes is going on long drives in her Coupé, like a trip to her home state of Baden-Württemberg some 850 kilometers away. For Julia, this is the best time to chat for hours, enjoy the countryside and experience the pure joy of driving. But even on shorter trips in Berlin, Seiter really appreciates her 90s jewel: ‘Even though people often say you don’t need a car in Berlin, it’s unbelievable how much my quality of life has improved. I’m now much more motivated to do things, like take a drive out to the lake, go to dinner in a new restaurant or see a movie on the Potsdamer Platz on the spur of the moment.’

# FOR SALE



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**FOR SALE:** 1979 280 SL, Brown with tan interior. 107k miles. Garage kept. Includes service receipts and documents 1984 till present and service manuals. \$7,000. Contact John for detailed description at [jpsirx@aol.com](mailto:jpsirx@aol.com) or call 718-702-9168



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**FOR SALE:** 1988 560SEC for parts or restoration. Has rear suspension damage and some surface rust. 230,000 miles. Engine and drive train excellent, uses no oil. Good restoration candidate for some-one who knows bodywork. Asking \$1750. Mike Tortorella 732 615 0355

**FOR SALE:** 2003 ML 350 SPECIAL EDITION, Silver Exterior, Black Interior, 78,500 Miles, Six Disc CD Player, Drives well, asking \$4,500. All Inquires, please contact, Barbara Salierno, Princeton Junction, NJ 609-371-3313, or [SaliernoC@aol.com](mailto:SaliernoC@aol.com)

**FOR SALE:** 1985 Mercedes 380SL, light blue with matching hardtop, dark blue leather interior. Excellent condition, mileage: 52,086, One owner garage-kept. Auto transmission, A/C, Power windows, steering, locks, Key entry, AM/FM/Cassette, Cruise control, Regular gas 8-cylinder engine. Hard top + soft top. Asking \$15,000 - Bill Deegan - Tele: (201) 934-9145 Email: [wpd\\_98@yahoo.com](mailto:wpd_98@yahoo.com)



**FOR SALE:** 1981 300TDT MB Station Wagon, garage-kept, maroon with tan interior in good condition. Engine has been rebuilt needs to be assembled and installed. Best offer. Warren Burgher Sr. Please email [xaipovtwb@gmail.com](mailto:xaipovtwb@gmail.com) or call 973-584-7895



**FOR SALE** 1985 300D Turbo Diesel. Teal Green w/black interior. Automatic; automatic windows and sunroof. 250,000 miles. Original owner, always garaged and serviced, never smoked in, all original, no accidents. In-credible condition and runs great. A classic. \$10,000. NJ/NY. Linda Gates 201-306-1576 [setag@earthlink.net](mailto:setag@earthlink.net).