

Mercedes-Benz.

All excellence has a cost, and cost is the harbinger of compromise. Not so with a Mercedes-Benz. Once it has been decided that there is another logical step, that developed to its present optimum, will further advance the marque's leadership, then that step will be taken, regardless of cost or time.

Let us begin with the shape of the vehicle, because first impressions come from the shape. Elements of style in different generations exhibit similarities; the function of something becomes apparent from its shape, and so principles can be recognised which can be described as a Mercedes-Benz design philosophy. Thus it is no accident that all Mercedes-Benz today share visual echoes of cars that go back to the mid-1950's. The link between innovation and continuity is one of the key elements of Mercedes-Benz design philosophy.

Thus design innovations such as those that keep the side and rear glasses free of road grime, the rear light assembly design that achieves the same, the use of horizontal headlights with wrap-around indicators, the ribbed lower rocker panels; all these combine function with style and innovation and continue to be identifiable benefits of the total Mercedes-Benz concept in every model.

The same tight evaluation of ideas is seen in the strictly engineering innovations, such as the ABS braking system, which has revolutionised all dynamic and kinetic rules for a vehicle's behaviour in emergency braking conditions on all kinds of surfaces. The highly-developed and totally-co-ordinated technology exhibited in all Mercedes-Benz engines is another example, as typified by the development of the world's first

production diesel car, the 260D, in 1936 (two thousand diesel cars were built in the first 10 years).

In 1971 only three manufacturers produced diesel passenger vehicles in any quantity. In 1981 twenty-two manufacturers produced diesel passenger vehicles. The pressures of the times did not force Mercedes-Benz into a panic programme to design an efficient car. Quite the contrary. Mercedes-Benz was poised for the needs of the eighties with over 40 years of diesel experience, even to the extent of building two remarkable experimental cars, both coded the C111—that set 12 world speed records and 27 international records in 1976 and 1978.

These vehicles used the remarkable five-cylinder, three-litre diesel engine found in the 300D, with added turbocharging. The astonishing top speeds of more than 325 km/h were achieved with the help of detailed attention to aerodynamics—again, so far in advance of the time, yet so integrated into design for the sake of recognisable function, that the wind-tunnel work had a direct effect on the very low drag factor achieved with the subsequent production models.

From the earliest, all Mercedes-Benz cars have assumed the unspoken responsibility for keeping a driver and passengers alive in almost any circumstances. This begins with suspension and steering, translated into ride and handling and emergency behaviour characteristics that must be totally stable and accurate, no matter what the stress.

The suspension, the result of years of development on the principle of double wishbones at the front, zero-offset steering, anti-dive control, and rear swing axles with anti-roll bars, give

Mercedes-Benz cars a constant behaviour pattern.

In addition, the crash-safety design techniques, pioneered by Mercedes-Benz and now adopted by other car manufacturers in the world, take over when even a Mercedes-Benz cannot alter the inevitable.

That is part of what Mercedes-Benz means by maintaining a design philosophy of total balance for the ultimate benefit of its owners. It has maintained these standards marvellously over the decades, despite the unprecedented challenges of the seventies and eighties. New restraints imposed by fuel costs, package size, weight reduction, aerodynamics...these and a hundred similar efficiency equations have never been unexpected challenges to Mercedes-Benz.

That is because Mercedes-Benz has always been cognizant of the basics of efficiency, that has always formed part of its design philosophy. In other words, Mercedes-Benz did not just yesterday discover the appeal of four cylinders, or diesel power, or fuel injection, or lighter weight, or aerodynamics, or passive restraints.

Daimler-Benz are designing cars for the nineties and beyond.

In conjunction with the West German Government, a development programme has been mounted that has already resulted in the prototype 'Auto 2000', a fuel-efficient and aerodynamic saloon utilizing plastic outer panels, aluminium doors and a soft plastic nose clothing a steel safety structure.

Whatever demands the future holds, Mercedes-Benz will be setting the standard, for no other vehicle manufacturer in the world has been in the forefront of design efficiency for so long.

In pursuit of absolute excellence.



Not only did Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler invent the first practical motor car as such. What set them apart from, and above, their predecessors was that they succeeded where others had failed. They were able to establish a functional design, over and above their peers of the day. Benz and Daimler, who lived 100 kilometres apart in Germany's Neckar Valley—Daimler 12 years older than Benz—never even met.

But amazingly, the principles they established, individually and separately, somehow became the spirit of Daimler-Benz very early in the

history of the company. It remains so today.

If one can assign to these two remarkable men one special characteristic each, it would be as follows: Benz began with a clean sheet of paper, with nothing but the basic patent for Dr. Nikolaus Otto's four-stroke engine, and he drew a car. Daimler, the son of a baker and an apprentice gunsmith, designed the basics of today's quality control systems.

And down through the years the magnificent march has gone...down through the first Grand Prix Mercedes-Benz and the Blitzen Benz; the first

cars from the Daimler-Benz "agreement of mutual interest" signed in 1924.

The Stuttgart and the Mannheim models, the first to bear the three-pointed star in a circle standing proud above the bonnet; the 500K, the 1928 SSK, the amazing Grand Prix cars of the thirties, like the W25B and the W154 and W163; the 220 Cabriolet, the 190 and 300SL and the later racing 300SLR and W196 Silver Arrows. Then into the modern era that encompassed the 1964 220SE coupe, the 600 Pullman, the amazing air-suspended 6.3 litre 300SEL; the SL series of sports cars, the 300 Diesel, and the magnificent S-Class.

It is this continuity, this seemingly-endless ability to keep designing motor vehicles that exceed the expectations of their audience, that has ensured the value of a Mercedes-Benz to its owner over the years. Surveys on what is most accurately called "retained value", regularly demonstrate that over a decade a Mercedes-Benz holds its value exceptionally well.

Now this assumes, naturally, that the vehicle has been well-maintained and cared-for with the intelligent interest that such an investment deserves.

Such an attitude is reinforced by the programme instituted a few years ago by Mercedes-Benz in Australia, by which approved used Mercedes-Benz are given a virtually new car warranty.

It is this kind of faith and understanding that sets a Mercedes-Benz apart from all similar vehicles. Unparalleled engineering and design standards are there, in place, firmly, and have been for almost a century, to ensure simply that a Mercedes-Benz will last long after lesser cars have been discarded.