

# Restoration of a 1959 Mercedes-Benz 220S Ponton sedan

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I found the car on Craigslist in Austin, Texas in April 2016. It needed help. We got it started, and fuel was coming out of the fuel pump and both carburetors, but at least I knew it would run. It had no brakes. The seats and the door cards had been sliced with a knife. The story I was told was that two owners ago, an angry wife took a knife and sliced all of the seats and doors.



The car was transported to my house in Richardson, Texas but the truck could not make it through the alley to the rear of the house where the garage was. The master cylinder was shot and brake fluid just poured from it. My brother told me, "It looks like it came from the Titanic."

I replaced the master cylinder, bled the brakes, and replaced the fuel pump. That was enough to get the car started (and get it to stop), and with a rag under the carburetors, and a fire extinguisher in the front seat, I drove the car around to the driveway.



With the help of a lift, I removed the engine, transmission, and subframe by lifting the body off of it.





This is the separate U-shaped sub-frame (a.k.a. "Fahrsschemel"), which is rubber mounted to the body shell at three points. It holds the engine, gearbox, suspension and recirculating ball steering.



I cleaned and repainted the engine, transmission, and subframe.



I rebuilt the carburetors, and got the engine running properly.



Then, I removed all of the wood and sent it off to Madera Concepts for repair and refinishing.





Next, I removed the door cards and cleaned out the inside of the doors.

Before:





After:



With the help of Henry at Ray's Automotive Trim, the interior was removed.





Henry installed new carpet, new leather for the seats, headliner and door cards. I installed new window channels and 'fuzzys' as well as cleaned and greased the window regulators. I installed new rubber on the quarter windows, painted the steering column, and installed a new steering wheel and steering wheel button.



Next came the fender wells. The car had Ziebart rust protection (undercoating). Using a heat gun and scraper, I removed all of the undercoating. This left a 'film' behind that looked like oil tar. I was able to remove it by using Xylene and a respirator.





There were some small rust spots on the frame, so I cut the rust out and sprayed rust protection into the frame channels.



Next, I cleaned and repainted the rear differential, axle and undercarriage. The fuel tank was removed, cleaned and reinstalled.



Then, I cleaned the trunk and repainted it.







The Engine bay was next. I redressed all of the wiring with 'split braid'. All of the metal was cleaned and repainted.





Then the subframe, with engine and transmission reinstalled.

Before:



After:



After noticing a leak in the front brake cylinder, I found that they had probably not been serviced since J.F.K. was a young senator.

Before:



Before:



After:



After:



I then removed the bumpers and all of the trim, and had it polished and re-chromed.

Before:



After:





Body Trim:



Next came the body work. Mike and the folks at Best in Show started by stripping the car back to bare metal. It had 3 ½ coats of paint on it. The original maroon, two silver paint jobs, and another silver “Earl Scheib” paint job, which is why it only counted for ½.

Before:







The badging was still visible after it was removed!



Ready to be stripped.



Down to bare metal:







Rust on the lower edges of the hood had to be repaired. New metal, no filler. Also welded the frame opening that I cut out.



Primed and Block Sanded.



Door frames painted.



Body Painted.





Reassembly:





After three years, the restoration is finished!



Happy classic motoring,

John Brady  
Richardson, Texas  
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