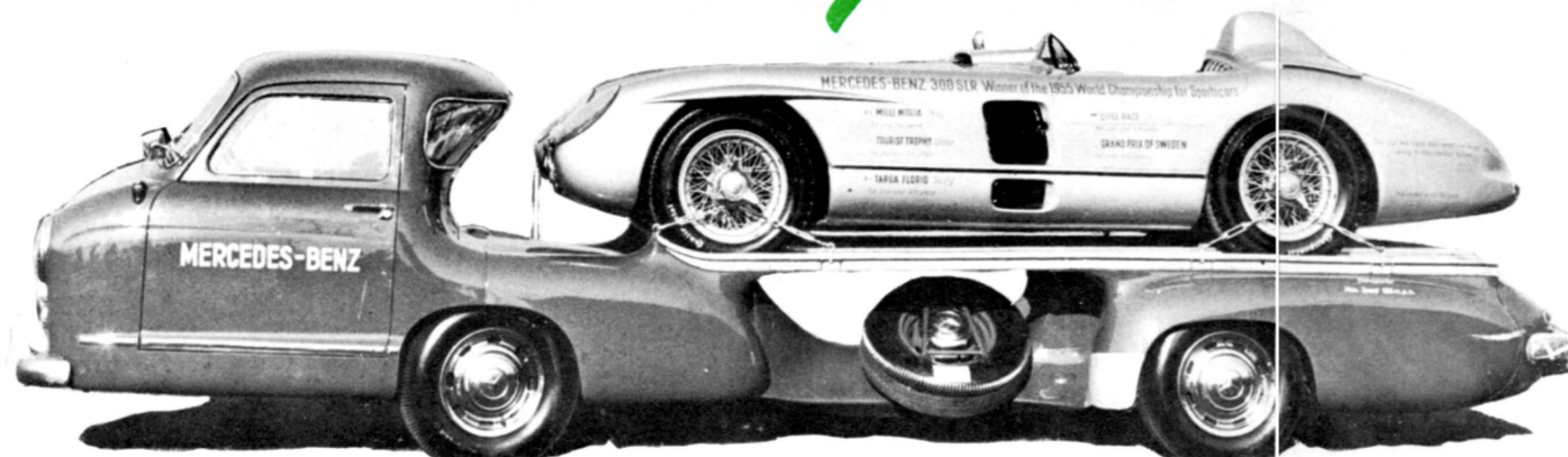




To cut down weight, channels are of light alloy material, and drilled. Tubular support carries weight of race car when loading for transport.

Germany's answer to
the California Pickup

Torrid Transport



Profile of Mercedes-Benz transporter displays unique almost aerodynamic design. Used to carry famous 300 SLR, transporter can cruise at 100 mph with ease. It employs same engine used in Mercedes 300 SL. Top speed—105 mph.

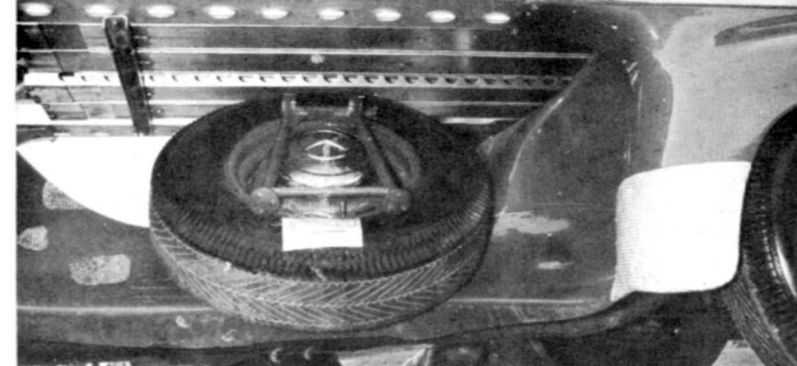
DURING the Thirties when Germany's Mercedes and Auto Union racing teams dominated the competition scene the saying was that "even their trucks were unbeatable." Mercedes in particular ran a fleet of supercharged transporters that lugged both race cars and shop equipment over Europe's roads at speeds up to 100 miles an hour, allowing race car preparation at the factory practically up to race time.

In 1955, when Mercedes repeated their prewar performances by taking the Grand Prix, Sports Car and Production Sports categories, making a clean sweep of the world competition scene, track-wise onlookers were amazed at the speed with which Daimler-Benz could yank a car out of pre-race practice, get it to the factory and return it to the track, all before race time. The answer was, of course, that Mercedes had come up with another hot rod truck — something that should have been expected in view of past performance.

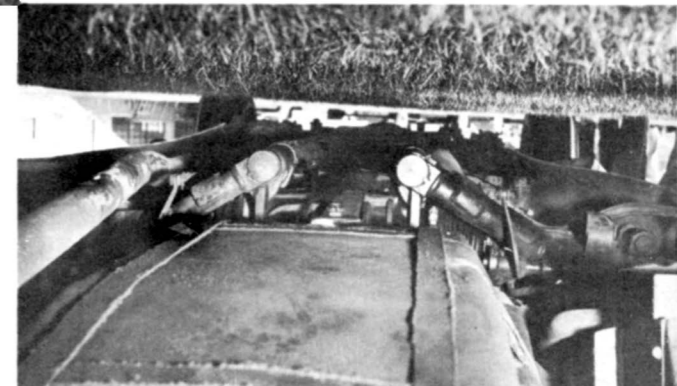
Although not as elaborate in concept as the old Diesel screamers, the new one is just about what could be expected from the engineers who build such machinery as

the 300 SL — very desirable property indeed. From front to back the kinship with the gull-wing coupe is apparent even unto the fuel-injected 300 SL engine that can move the transporter along at 105 miles an hour, loaded with crew and race car. Suspension is by torsion bar and fully independent both front and rear. The rear end uses the low pivot point swing axle pioneered on the 190 SL and the 300 SLR. Brakes, always a high point with Mercedes, are the same huge 257 square-inch binders found on the 300 SL and are augmented by a new Daimler-Benz gadget known as an "exhaust brake."

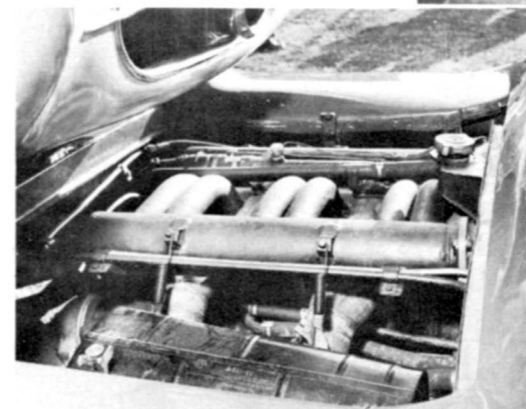
This last piece of equipment is worthy of comment. A pull at a lever inside the cockpit next to the racing-type stub shift lever shuts off fuel at the injector and at the same time partially closes off the exhaust system. The result is that the engine is abruptly turned into an air compressor pumping against the increased back pressure in the exhaust system. Since the force needed to operate this engine-turned-compressor must perforce come from the drive wheels the braking effect of the system can readily be seen. Any tendency to skid can easily be overcome in a



Spare wheel mounted conveniently on body sits between front and rear wheels. Loading channel support lies compactly on spare. All available space is utilized.



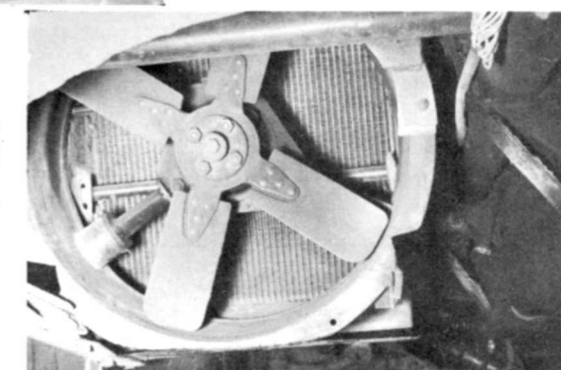
Looking toward front, view shows differential carrier, and extra low pivot points of swinging rear axle.



Photos by Dan Rubin

Engine is placed behind driver's compartment. Oddly enough, water cap is not on radiator.

Radiator and fan assembly located at rear. Fan is driven off driveshaft through set of bevel gears.



Driver's cab and controls. Seating is reminiscent of a fast sports car. All controls are at finger touch, and utilitarian in design.

similar manner to that used on a dirt track race car with its rear-wheels-only braking system. Even the comfortable cab is reminiscent of the 300 SL with its two bucket seats, high center tunnel, race car steering wheel and stub lever.

The truck, ostensibly brought to the United States only as a show platform for the Championship 300 SLR during its Detroit showing, stole the scene completely from its glamorous burden. Queries on the order of "Where can I buy one?" and "When will it be available?" dropped from all sides on Mercedes' New York headquarters. Unfortunately the only answer was an expressive and non-Germanic shoulder shrug; the truck at present is in a category with Uhlenhaut's personal coupe — strictly engineering division property. From the interest evidenced, however, it is certain that word of the clamor will reach Germany ahead of the returning truck and the men of Stuttgart have never been averse to making a buck when possible — in fact it's part of their success formula.

As one Mercedes man put it: "Who knows? Maybe in a year or two . . ." The 300 SL was only a Uhlenhaut play thing a couple of years ago too. #