

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes-Benz debuts first Concours de Zoom with Jay Leno, Martha Stewart and ilk

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The Mercedes-Benz Concours de Zoom was a unique twist on a bricks-and-mortar concept that took advantage of the COVID-19 lockdowns and turned it to the automaker's advantage. Image courtesy of Mercedes-Benz USA

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker Mercedes-Benz USA hosted its first Mercedes-Benz Concours via Zoom video conferencing with celebrities participating as the U.S. lockdowns restrict regular activity for a large chunk of the population.

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The Mercedes-Benz 2020 Concours de Zoom, as the May 1 digital event was called, featured Jay Leno, Ludacris, Martha Stewart, Rickie Fowler, Madelaine Petsch, Bloomberg's Hannah Elliott and Cole Walliser, as well as Mike Kunz from the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center and host Rob Moran, communications director of Mercedes-Benz USA.

Show and tell

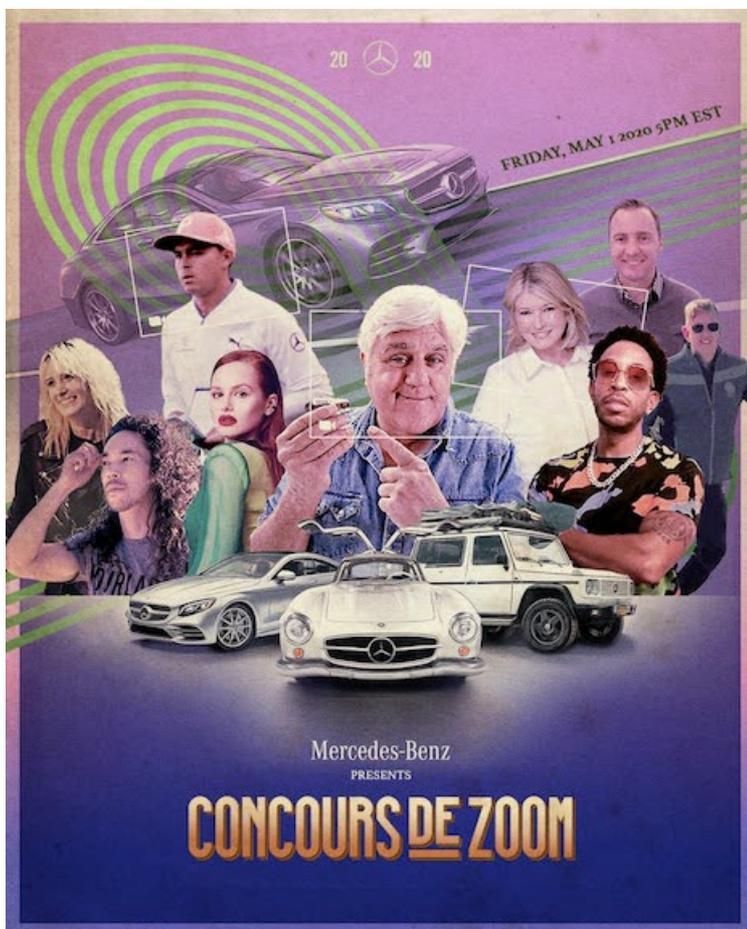
The appropriately named Concours de Zoom virtual event featured iconic Mercedes-Benz vehicles alongside their high-profile owners during this time of social distancing.

Each prominent participant showcased their prized Mercedes-Benz and shared a few things they love about their vehicle.

At the end, a donation was made to the American Red Cross on behalf of the participants.

Classic vehicles that were showcased included a 1908 chain-drive Mercedes with a Benz Aero engine nicknamed Rabbit-the-First, a 1956 300 SL Gullwing, a 1972 Mercedes-Benz 300 SEL 6.3, 1972 Mercedes-Benz 600 Kompressor, a 1988 560 SL and a 1991 G 300 D.

In addition, dynamic new models that were highlighted included the A 220, the GLS 550, the AMG S 63 Coupe, the AMG G 63 and the AMG GT C Coupe.



The Mercedes-Benz Concours de Zoom shows the possibilities of video conferencing to connect brands with their audiences at a time when consumers are housebound under COVID-19 lockdowns. Image courtesy of Mercedes-Benz USA

Here were some highlights:

- Jay Leno gave viewers a tour of the Mercedes-Benz section of his garage, showing off some of his favorite vehicles of all-time including his 1972 Mercedes-Benz 300 SEL 6.3 that he called a "factory hot rod" and his 1972 Mercedes-Benz 600. Mr. Leno referred to the 600 as the "ultimate luxury car" and noted that John Lennon, Elvis Presley and Jack Nicholson also owned one in that era as it was "the car to have." Mr. Leno also talked about being in high school and college working at a Mercedes-Benz dealership, admitting that it was a great feeling to own a car such as the 6.3 now because when he was younger it seemed unattainable and it was a thrill for him to just be around the cars and drive them when delivering a new car to a customer.
- Ludacris brought the energy and stardom to the "Concours de Zoom" while he showed off his Mercedes-AMG GT C Coupe saying, "This car is my savior during times like this because it's so therapeutic to get into something like it ... I am the true, fast and furious that's why I am on this call and blessed to be a part of this family." He also talked about giving back in his Atlanta hometown saying, "Man, I have literally been trying to help as many people as I possibly can ... we're giving groceries to 50 different families in the Atlanta area."
- Martha Stewart highlighted her 2019 Mercedes-Benz GLS 550 saying, "This Mercedes is such a safe, practical and comfortable way to drive. It's so important to find comfort in your car; sometimes I'm in mine seven days a week!" Ms. Stewart has a long commute to the office and relies on that time to be productive, catching up on calls and emails.
- Rickie Fowler was excited to show off his Mercedes-Benz S 63 and said, "It's mine and my wife's favorite to drive." He shared he always feels safe in a Mercedes-Benz and loves the speed and performance. Mr. Fowler also spoke about some of his experiences from the Mercedes-Benz AMG Driving Academy. He said, "For me to get behind the wheel and to be able to get that adrenaline pumping like I used to on a dirt bike something I definitely needed. To be able to go into corners hard, get on the brakes, it's been a great time. Whenever I get on the track, it's a good way to let loose."
- Madelaine Petsch boasted about the fact that her Mercedes-Benz A220 Sedan parallel parks for her at the touch of a button. "LA is very hard to navigate ... this car parallel parks for me! The fact that I can press a button and my car will parallel park for me is still exciting a year into having this car." Ms. Petsch also commented on the

red interior saying, "On [TV show] Riverdale, I'm a character who wears a lot of red. I thought it would be fun to have a little hint of Cheryl in my car."

- Hannah Elliot showed off her 1988 Mercedes-Benz 560 SL. Ms. Elliott said she loves her vintage car because of the personality and character. She said, "The thing that I really like about this car is the fact that it has so much style. You can arrive anywhere in the world ... a fancy restaurant, a coffee shop, a hotel lounge, a club and you will always look cool pulling up in this car ... it's almost a 40-year-old car, but it just has a real sense of style and class."
- Mike Kunz from the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center highlighted his favorite car, the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing, while sharing some of the unique features and interesting historical aspects of the vehicle. He said, "This is a 1956 car. This car could go 160 miles an hour This car is a 300 SL coupe, but it's named for its doors ... this stems back to the fact that this is a derivative of a race car ... so it had a frame underneath that didn't allow a conventional door like many race cars, they often don't have doors. You jump in the car, so they created a Gullwing type door."
- Cole Walliser showed his 1991 two-door Mercedes-Benz G-Wagon and shared stories about his trip where he went off-roading on the rocks and cliffs in Moab, Utah. "Scariest, yet most exhilarating thing I've ever done," Mr. Walliser said.

The Mercedes-Benz 2020 Concours de Zoom

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