



DRAFT #2

Mercedes/NY Auto Show Speech

Roll “Multiple Portraits” :60; Michelle to Stage at end of video

Slide: Michelle Cervantez, VP Marketing, Mercedes-Benz USA

Good afternoon and thank you for joining us.

Springtime. Time for the new to emerge, renewal and a special time for relationships. Of course, springtime in New York has been especially inspirational for telling tales of romance and falling in love. A fact certainly not lost on artists, filmmakers and songwriters.

Or carmakers!

Stage lights focus on classic 300SL display, signature Gullwing doors raised high for dramatic effect.

It was here in New York City 50 years ago that Mercedes-Benz introduced the world to a legend and sparked America’s love for the Mercedes-Benz brand...the incomparable 300SL Gullwing.

Slide: celebrities with classic SLs

An icon -- raced by champions, driven by movie stars and most importantly, cherished by car enthusiasts of every generation.

While the 300SL is admired the world over, it owes much of its history to America and the affection displayed by a single influential individual.

Slide: Max Hoffman

Conceived initially as a purpose-built competition car, the 300SL became a road car when American Mercedes-Benz importer Max Hoffman urged the factory to build it. Of the 1,400 units built from 1954 to 1957, 1,100 found their way to America.

Slide: Black & White Images from "Relationships" campaign roll on the LED screen

An enduring love for Mercedes-Benz continues to this day, with so many Mercedes-Benz owners enjoying long-lasting relationships with their vehicles.

It's why we enjoy the highest owner loyalty in the industry. And with 72 percent of all Mercedes we've ever sold in the U.S. still on the road, it's a love affair that can last a lifetime.

It's this devotion that inspired our new brand campaign, which we call "Relationships." It features real Mercedes-Benz owners with the vehicles that have touched their lives. The campaign illustrates the

soul and substance of our brand – what makes Mercedes-Benz
“Unlike Any Other.”

(For discussion: We included this next section to bring these relationships to life – two legends who will resonate most favorably with the audience. Two legends uniquely linked to Mercedes.)

Some of these relationships have transcended into legendary partnerships. And today, we're pleased to have two living legends with us.

Slide: Jesse Alexander and John Fitch

Two gentlemen who are part of Mercedes-Benz racing history – one who helped to document our triumphs from behind a camera lens. The other achieved them from behind a steering wheel, as the only American to race for the Mercedes-Benz “works” team. Ladies and Gentlemen, photographer Jesse Alexander and racing driver, John Fitch.

FITCH AND ALEXANDER STAND FROM FRONT ROW.

Transition to SL65 AMG Anniversary Edition Rob, this transition now seems a bit abrupt -- see suggested text below

The Mercedes SL went on to become the most successful luxury/performance roadster ever. Imitators have come and gone, but the original remains the benchmark and blueprint. Turning 50 this year, the Mercedes SL has never looked or acted so young. So it's time to celebrate.

The fifth-generation SL is a design, technology and performance tour de force ...a car that fully lives up to the icon status accorded classic SLs.

Today, we're proud to introduce our next classic ... the ultimate SL ... the Mercedes SL65 AMG.

REVEAL SL65

Slide: SL65 interior, exterior, engine

The SL65 AMG is simply one of the most powerful and exclusive roadsters in the world today. It's powered by a hand-built 6.0-liter, twin turbo V12. And like every AMG, its powerplant is signed by the technician who built it. A philosophy we call... *One Man, One Engine*.

Performance is truly staggering – *604 horsepower* and a massive 738 lb-ft. of torque. Mercedes will offer fewer than 500 of these magnificent cars in the U.S. market over the next two years. And here's the anniversary cake -- only 50 fortunate Mercedes enthusiasts in the U.S. will be able to buy the example you see here, the SL65 AMG Anniversary Edition.

The traditional color for a 50th anniversary may be gold, but we couldn't resist painting this very special model in the great tradition of historic Mercedes-Benz racecars. We call it Silver Arrow Metallic, and it's paired with an AMG black Nappa leather interior with anthracite carbon trim.

The SL65 AMG reminds us that only Mercedes can outdo Mercedes.

Transition to CLS

With the SL65 AMG, Mercedes honors its past while remaining focused on the future, and we channel the passion of an ongoing 50-year love affair into future

products. That is how -- over the past 10 years, Mercedes-Benz has gone from offering four model lines in America to ten. This fall, that grows to eleven.

Slide: Vision CLS

In 2003, we first showed the Vision CLS, a concept blending the highly emotional appeal of a coupe, combined with the rational functionality of a traditional sedan. As you'll see, the production version remains true to the original concept. The result, is nothing short of breathtaking.

REVEAL CLS

The CLS500 reflects the aspirations of the modern luxury buyer who is passionate about design, distinction and sheer excitement. Automotive connoisseurs who demand the very best, but don't want to compromise functionality for the sake of aesthetics.

Slide: CLS500 interior and exterior

From bold front to beautifully sculpted tail, the CLS exudes the glamour of a concept car and continues the brand's heritage of inspiring, timeless design.

The CLS is true automotive sculpture, executed with equal parts of style and substance. Based on our renowned E-Class architecture, CLS offers more room for passengers than traditional 2-door coupes. And there are no compromises in the trunk either ...just plenty of space for golf bags or luggage for a long weekend getaway.

And yes, the CLS satisfies the desire for Mercedes coupe performance. The CLS500 will launch in early 2005 with a 5-liter V8 engine, a 7-speed automatic transmission, Airmatic DC suspension and standard 18-inch wheels.

I think we can all agree that the CLS will be love at first sight for many, and another icon worthy of the Mercedes-Benz star.

Transition to SLK

Iconic style is only one quality that has ensured the kind of owner devotion that Mercedes-Benz enjoys. Innovation and performance are two more strands of our brand DNA that spring from the 300SL Gullwing and wind their way through all Mercedes models made since.

50 years ago, the 300SL Gullwing introduced advances that would set the standard for all sports cars to follow. Features like fuel injection and 4-wheel independent suspension, for example, were many years ahead of other sports cars in 1954.

It is in that spirit – and from that same passion for excellence – that Mercedes has created the all-new, second-generation SLK.

REVEAL SLK350

A sports car should stir emotions just by looking at it, and I think you'll agree the new SLK does just that. The striking design makes a bolder statement than before.

Beneath the sleek skin, a new chassis and a new family of Mercedes engines gives the SLK a much higher level of performance. Overall, Mercedes has made the SLK a more compelling machine for driving enthusiasts.

Designers drew inspiration from Mercedes-Benz Formula 1 racing cars. And they also gave the new SLK a strong family resemblance to the SL and the ultra-performance Mercedes-McLaren SLR.

Slide: SLK350 interior and engine compartment

A twist of the SmartKey fires up a deep, rumbling exhaust note that takes us to the heart of the SLK performance story -- a new generation of Mercedes-Benz engines. Our initial model for the U.S., the SLK350, will debut a new 268-horsepower V6.

Customers can choose from a 6-speed manual or new 7-speed automatic transmission with our Touch Shift feature. We project zero-to-60 in x.x seconds with the manual transmission.

Driving dynamics will match this new level of power and acceleration. The new SLK's chassis, suspension and brakes have been tuned for one purpose – to make the driver's jaws ache from grinning. You might think of it as romancing the road.

And I can promise, there will be even more to come from the SLK later on (show quick slide of SLK55 AMG).

The new SLK shares one trait with the first-generation model. Mercedes made a retractable hardtop the price of entry in the premium roadster category. But only Mercedes offers two roadster model lines with this feature – the other being the fifth-generation SL.

When it arrives in showrooms this fall, the SLK will be the only roadster in its segment with a retractable hardtop. Even the top is quicker than before – lowering in just 22 seconds instead of 25. Because who wants to wait for the sunshine?

Inside, the new SLK surrounds the driver and lucky passenger in a classic sports car ambience and feel, with chronometer-style gauges, silver switches and a sculpted dash.

It's another classic high-performance roadster from Mercedes. And, I'm sure, the start of more love stories to come.

Closing

Few brands can claim ownership of as many iconic, classic designs as Mercedes-Benz. The passion that created the first 300 SL Gullwing 50 years ago is as strong as it has ever been at Mercedes. It's why we don't build cars, we create, define and redefine Mercedes-Benz. And we'll keep creating vehicles that make people fall in love and inspire them to forge beautiful, long-term relationships with the brand.

Thank you for sharing your afternoon with us. At this time, I'd like to invite you all up to see the SL65, CLS and SLK.

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