

PRESS RELEASE

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Recommended reading: Benz Victoria No. 99

An automobile carriage or a "carriage-like" automobile?

Nowadays design and aerodynamics play a key role where automotive development is concerned. But this was not always the case. Pioneering spirits from this branch such as Carl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler initially directed their brainpower at solving technical problems such as the ignition or steering of motorised vehicles. At first glance the Benz Victoria Patent Motor Car looks like a carriage. By introducing this model in 1893 Carl Benz in fact launched the first four-wheeled motorised vehicle that deserved to be called an automobile. What was it that made the No. 99 so special?

The main figure in this book is the ninety-ninth motor vehicle built by Benz. The Victoria was sold to the sewing-yarn manufacturer Alexander Gütermann in Mannheim in the summer of 1894 and remained in the possession of the family for 115 years. Given the high speeds it could reach, its owner was probably the first person in the world ever to be given a speeding ticket. The No. 99 is a phenomenon in numerous ways. Apart from its upholstery it remains in its original unrestored condition and is still road-worthy. The vehicle saw a host of changes over its long life, striking out as a bestseller of the period before becoming a "grande dame" of the classic car scene. Boasting the new Ackermann steering system patented by Benz, the Victoria represented a milestone of technology. Unique testimony of this era exists in the reports penned by Alexander Gütermann and the logbook of his first chauffeur, listing the mileage they covered and including instructions for looking after the vehicle. These documents also tell what it meant to be on the road with an automobile in an age when most people still viewed this "stinky old cart" with great mistrust.

In this book, which also features many attractive illustrations, Karl P. Berthold-Schack offers an informative and fascinating account of the chequered history of the Victoria No. 99. It begins with the early days of motoring, when automotive engineers still were pioneers and drivers true adventurers, and describes its forays into the world of classic car rallies to the vehicle's outstanding role at PS.SPEICHER as a unique witness of bygone technology.

Karl P. Berthold-Schack

Benz Victoria No. 99

Der Motorwagen von 1894 und seine Geschichte

1st edition 2015

120 pages, over 180 illustrations

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