



14 QUEENS GATE PLACE MEWS, LONDON, SW7 5BQ  
PHONE +44 (0)20 7584 3503 E-MAIL CARS@FISKENS.COM



# 1998 MERCEDES BENZ CLK GTR

## 1998 Mercedes CLK GTR #011

- One of two factory cars for the 1998 FIA GT Championship, the final V12 CLK GTR built
- Winner of 1998 Silverstone 500 kms with Mark Webber and Bernd Schneider
- Housed in two legendary collections since sale by Mercedes.
- Bare tub rebuild by ex-Williams F1 engineer Tim Preston and Cars International Service
- Supremely eligible for Le Mans Classic and Endurance Racing Legends

The Mercedes-Benz CLK GTR is widely considered as one of the most dominant race cars in the history of automobile racing, so dominant in fact it effectively caused the collapse of the FIA GT championship in 1998. Chassis 011 is the sole new car built for 1998, with the 82.9kg tub completed on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, and believed to be uniquely constructed to utilise both the V12 and the forthcoming CLK LM's V8 engine installations. This car was also the last CLK GTR to win a race before being retired by the factory team and replaced with the CLK LM, both models driven by reigning FIA GT champion Bernd Schneider in partnership with future Formula 1 ace Mark Webber.

Mercedes-Benz's motorsport story is one of supremacy in every attempt they have made, and the CLK GTR's GT1 adventure was no different. From the 1930s Grand Prix W125 Silver Arrows to the 1954/55 300 SLRs all the way to the 2010s Formula 1 program successes, the German team has hardly ever known the meaning of the word "lose."

After the 1955 Le Mans tragedy, Mercedes disappeared from the face of motorsport for more than 30 years, only to reappear in partnership with the Sauber Group C team in the late 1980s, winning at Le Mans in 1989. The 1990s saw the comeback of Mercedes-Benz in motorsport in a big way though, with the Stuttgart-based team battling on 3 fronts. In DTM, the Mercedes 190E Evos took the German touring car championship by storm, while in Formula 1 Mercedes partnered up with McLaren for their great return to the pinnacle of motorsport. Late in 1996, the decision was taken to add a 3<sup>rd</sup> program to the Mercedes AMG calendar when the FIA announced the FIA GT Championship's formation following the BPR series' demise. Many consider this GT1 era to be the apogee of GT racing, whereby teams were let loose to play with some very broadly worded regulations, mandating for just 25 homologation examples to be produced, therefore allowing teams to create the fastest and most extreme GT racing cars ever. After the domination of the McLaren F1 GTRs at Le Mans and in the BPR Global Series in 1995, Porsche's Norbert Singer was the first to plunge into the GT1 loopholes with the 911 GT1, taking the battle to the updated 1996 F1 GTRs. Mercedes was soon to follow with the even more extreme CLK GTR.

The project was ratified on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1996 and Daimler executives immediately put huge pressure on Chief of Motorsport Norbert Haug's team to have the program up and running for the first race of the 1997 season. Rather amazingly, just 128 days later, the finished car was drawn up, built, tested at the Jarama circuit in Spain and ready to be brought out to Hockenheim for Round 1. In what remains perhaps the greatest understatement in the history of racing, Head of AMG Mr. Aufrecht reported to Haug after the Jarama test: 'Er fährt... sieht gut aus' ("It drives... and looks good"). The GTR was fitted with a race-derived version of AMG's M120 V12 engine, bolted straight onto the car's carbon fibre and aluminium tub, producing 600hp in race trim and allowing the CLKs to reach in excess of 205mph. The '128-day car' encountered a few teething problems at the beginning of the 1997 season, as one would expect from a car built in such a short time. The CLK GTR's first win came at the 4<sup>th</sup> Round of the championship at the Nürburgring, and it would from then on be the class of the field, securing wins at all but 2 of the 8 remaining races of the season and with it the Constructors' and Driver's championships

1998 would be another commanding season for Mercedes, with the CLK GTRs and later CLK LMs winning every single race of the Championship, securing the drivers and constructors' trophies once again. Chassis 004, 005 and 006, which had done most of the heavy lifting in 1997, were either retired to the Mercedes museum in the case of 004, or leased off to the privateer Team

Persson to compete in the full 1998 season. Meanwhile, 011 was built up as a brand-new chassis over the winter, proudly wearing number 1 for reigning champion Bernd Schneider to drive in partnership with young Australian ace Mark Webber, before the replacement V8-powered CLK LMs were brought in. This chassis was to be the last CLK GTR and last GTR to win a race.

As fully detailed within the 200+ items of supporting period running documents on file, Mercedes AMG first used 011 to test the new 1998 upgrades on a 4-day 1,640km test at Jerez from 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> March 1998, where the focus was testing the V8 engine which would be implemented in the replacement CLK LM. With the V12 engine now fitted, a further test was carried out at Oschersleben on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April, before the car was dispatched back to the German race track for Round 1 of the season on 12<sup>th</sup> April. It was immediately evident that the winter break did not hinder Mercedes AMG's run of form, as despite Porsche's revised 911 GT1 '98 clinching pole, the CLKs proved dominant in the race with 011 finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> to the winning sister car (003) of Zonta and Ludwig.

For Round 2 of the championship at Silverstone, Schneider started a lowly 5<sup>th</sup> position on the grid but quickly made ground in the race's opening stages. First dispatching teammate Klaus Ludwig in the sister CLK GTR and catching the front-running Porsches and Panoz, Schneider quickly found himself fighting for the lead. Eventually, an unscheduled trip to the pits for McNish's 911 followed by a clash between the leading Panoz of David Brabham and trailing 911 of Uwe Alzen gifted the lead to Schneider in 011, a lead he and Webber would never relinquish, relying on the CLK's bulletproof reliability. The upgraded V8-powered CLK LMs were brought in from the 3<sup>rd</sup> round at Hockenheim onwards, making the Silverstone win the last for the V12 CLK GTRs.

011 was therefore retired from racing and kept by Mercedes Benz until it was sold to avid historic racer and collector Andreas Knapp Voith. Circa 2010, she then passed to another prominent European collection, before being acquired by the current owner in 2016. The latter had the car fully recommissioned by ex-Williams F1 Team Senior Engineer and HWA (AMG) consultant Tim Preston and his ex-F1 engineering expert team at Cars International Service in order to bring her back to track ready and full running order! 011 has since appeared at various demonstrations and events in recent years, including at the Supercar Driver Secret Meet at Donington in 2022 and the BPR/FIA GT class at the Pebble Beach concours in 2024.

Stalwart of the infamous late 1990s GT1 era, this Mercedes-Benz CLK GTR is a works, race-winning and recently recommissioned example of perhaps the greatest GT racing car of all! Kept in three of the great European race car collections since being released by Mercedes, chassis 011 is an incredible opportunity to acquire an important piece of Mercedes and endurance racing history. Eminently eligible for the greatest events, either as a competitive entry for all of the top historic racing events, including Le Mans Classic and Peter Auto's Endurance Racing Legends series, or as a very strong contestant for the greatest concours, 011 is certain to be the star wherever seen!

**POA**























