



40th anniversary of the Mercedes-Benz G-Class

Press Information

## Big birthday for the off-road classic

06 February 2019

Congratulations on 40 years during which time there has been no way but up for the Mercedes-Benz G-Class (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) since 1979: on the one hand, this refers to the outstanding off-road capabilities of the vehicle presented in 1979 and, on the other, the fact that it has remained true to itself and its values for almost 40 years. From the very start, there was also no way but up for the G-model with regard to its status as an automotive icon. For decades, the G continuously evolved from a useful off-road vehicle with high ride quality on the road. The constant development work of Mercedes-Benz ensured that the vehicle always remained fresh and up to date.

Stuttgart. The world première of the 460 model series G-model took place between 4 and 9 February 1979 in Toulon, France. On this occasion, the Mercedes-Benz press kit emphasised the values of “uncompromising off-road and on-road capability” as well as “maximum variety of use”. These aspects also apply to the new G-Class of the 463 model series that has been built in Graz, Austria, since May 2018. In addition to these elements there is the tradition of performance and unique character. The G-Class has grown into this role over the past decades with ever more success.

### Joining forces for the G

The history of the G-model began in the summer of 1969. At the time, Daimler-Benz AG and Austrian Steyr-Daimler-Puch AG entered into talks about a possible cooperation. Both manufacturers offered vehicles with excellent off-road capabilities as part of their product ranges: the Mercedes-Benz Unimog as

well as the Puch Haflinger and the Puch Pinzgauer. In 1971, the idea of jointly building an off-road vehicle was fleshed out for the first time. It was to combine extreme off-road capabilities with good handling on the road. Probably as early as in the autumn of 1972, CEOs Dr Joachim Zahn (Daimler-Benz AG) and Dr Karl Rabus (Steyr-Daimler-Puch AG) then came to a basic understanding on jointly developing the light-duty off-road vehicle. The construction team was headed by Erich Ledwinka, Chief Engineer of Steyr-Daimler-Puch.

The development then progressed with force. The first wooden model was created by April 1973. The first roadworthy prototype was already being tested in 1974. Photos in the technical description published internally in 1975 showed how quickly the designers and engineers arrived at a design that already came very close to the eventual G. The final styling with the clear profile was defined by Mercedes-Benz Design headed by Bruno Sacco. The stylists masterfully combined the large, smooth surfaces of the vehicle body with the technically defined characteristics such as large approach and departure angles as well as a relatively large vehicle height with a rather small overall width.

The G-model has been built at the Puch plant in Graz-Thondorf from the outset. This plant is also where the new 463 model series G-Class has been assembled since May 2018. Mercedes-Benz has been supplying components including engines, axles, steering systems and large stamped parts from various sites in Germany to Graz since 1979. Series production started in February 1979 shortly after the vehicle's world première, and Geländefahrzeug Gesellschaft (GfG), founded by the two companies in 1977, was in charge of this process.

The G was initially launched on the market as the 460 model series: a universal off-road vehicle with a comparatively plain interior but a great deal of attention paid to the drivetrain. The selectable standard-fit all-wheel drive with its one hundred per cent interaxle differential lock and optional differential locks on the front and rear axles, which have been standard equipment since 1985, ensure optimum off-road handling characteristics. The frame design and rigid axles with coil springs were aimed at versatility and robustness off the road. The 240 GD and 300 GD models with a diesel engine as well as the 230 G and

280 GE with a petrol engine were available at the production launch. There were two different wheelbases (2,400 and 2,850 millimetres) as well as different body styles (open vehicle, closed station wagon and panel van with closed side walls). In addition to the 460 model series with a 12 V on-board electrical system, Mercedes-Benz offered the 461 model series with a 24 V on-board electrical system for military customers. Its CKD (completely knocked down) version was designated as model series 462.

### **Success stories**

A continuous advancement process for the G-model began shortly after its market launch, which would prove to be the key to its lasting success. Important steps included the standard-fit power steering (first in the 280 GE and 300 GD, from 1987 in all models) and standard-fit differential locks (1985) as well as the introduction of a closed-loop, three-way catalytic converter (from 1986 initially as special equipment in the 230 GE) and the anti-lock braking system (ABS) in model series 463 from 1990. The optimisation of comfort and safety was embodied, among other things, by the standard-fit combination of the most capable vehicle dynamics and all-wheel-drive systems starting in 2001. It comprised the electronically controlled 4ETS traction system, the Electronic Stability Programme ESP<sup>®</sup> and BAS Brake Assist.

The major facelifts in particular represented important development leaps for the technology of the G. For example, model series 463 was launched in 1990 equipped with permanent instead of the previous on-demand all-wheel drive. Subsequently, eight-cylinder and even twelve-cylinder engines were used in the powerful and luxurious G-Class. At the same time, Mercedes-Benz cultivated the tradition of the G as a versatile utility vehicle. In 1990, this role was initially played by model series 460, before it fell to model series 461, launched in 1992. Today, it is the professional variants of the G-Class which carry these capabilities on into the future.

The tradition of exclusive equipment in the history of the G-Class started with refined details such as individual Recaro seats for driver and front passenger, which were available as special equipment from as early as 1981. The interior

was enhanced as standard in 1982. In 1990, model series 463 brought fine-wood applications into the off-road classic that was just eleven years young at the time. This constant change allowed the G-Class to acquire new, private customers. They particularly appreciated the exclusive and powerful variants of the G. A first highlight in this regard was the Mercedes-Benz 500 GE V8, built in small-series production starting in 1993. From 1998, the G 500 then became the standard top-of-the-range model of the Mercedes-Benz G-Class, as the family of off-road vehicles has been known since 1993. The nomenclature of the G thus follows the system established for the other Mercedes-Benz passenger car model series, whereby a letter preceding the three-digit number or a combination of letters designates the class to which the vehicle belongs.

A particularly successful chapter in the history of the G began in 1999: in that year the G 55 AMG became the new top-of-the-range model of model series 463. It formed the basis for the lasting success of the G-Class high-performance vehicles by Mercedes-AMG. Further standards in this regard were set by the G 55 AMG Compressor (2004), the G 63 AMG, the G 65 AMG (both 2012), the G 63 AMG 6x6 (2013) and finally the Mercedes-AMG G 63 of the new G-Class presented in February 2018 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299 g/km\*).

That the G continues to master all challenges successfully in its fourth decade was also demonstrated by other highly exclusive models such as the G 500 4x4<sup>2</sup> from 2015 and the Mercedes-Maybach G 650 Landaulet from 2017, of which only 99 were made. Both variants of the iconic off-road vehicle opened up new dimensions for the G-Class: the G 500 4x4<sup>2</sup> with regard to the yet further improved off-road capabilities thanks to portal axles and the Mercedes-Maybach G 650 Landaulet boasting the highest automotive luxury also off the road.

The new generation of model series 463 celebrated its world première at the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit in January 2018. It transports the strengths of this charismatic performer into a bright future. The first of the models launched is the Mercedes-Benz G 500 (combined fuel consumption: 12.1–11.5 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 276–263 g/km\*),

followed shortly afterwards by the Mercedes-AMG G 63. In December 2018, the G 350 d (combined fuel consumption: 9.8–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 259–252 g/km\*), the third engine variant featuring the state-of-the-art OM 656 diesel engine, celebrated its world première. Once again, the G reinvents itself by focusing on important technical details in the new model series 463 G-Class: for example, with the chassis developed jointly by Mercedes-Benz and Mercedes-AMG, featuring a traditional, rigid rear axle and a double-wishbone front axle with independent suspension. What has not changed are the excellent off-road capabilities – the new G-Class even surpasses its predecessor in many disciplines. And on the outside, the basic credo is: the genes of the G from 1979 will be evident in any G-Class at first sight.

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High-resolution photographs and more press releases:

<https://media.daimler.com>

Up-to-date film and photo material:

<https://mercedes-benz-archive.com/marsMuseum>

Multimedia archive and search system:

<https://mercedes-benz-publicarchive.com>

\* The stated figures were determined based on the prescribed measuring process. These are the “NEDC CO<sub>2</sub> figures” based on Art. 2 No. 1 of Implementing Order (EU) 2017/1153. The fuel consumption figures were calculated based on these figures.

Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official, specific CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for new passenger cars can be found in the publication “Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO<sub>2</sub>-Emissionen und den

Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen” [“Guidelines on the fuel consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and electricity consumption of new passenger cars”], available free of charge from all showrooms and from Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH at [www.dat.de](http://www.dat.de).

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### Captions:

D512398

Mercedes-Benz 230 GE (model series 460), open, short wheelbase, fire service model, built in 1982. Moving vehicle. Photo taken at the press driving event on the history of the G-Class in April 2018 in France.

D512873

Mercedes-Benz 230 G (model series 460), short wheelbase station wagon, built in 1980. Moving vehicle. Photo taken at the press driving event on the history of the G-Class in April 2018 in France.

D513333

Generations of the Mercedes-Benz G-Class: The new 2018, model series 463 Mercedes-Benz G-Class (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*), centre, surrounded by four decades of predecessors.

D513353

Generations of the Mercedes-Benz G-Class: The new 2018, model series 463 Mercedes-Benz G-Class (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*), left, next to a 1993 Mercedes-Benz 500 GE (centre) and a 1985 Mercedes-Benz 230 GE.

18C0340\_03

Mercedes-Benz off-road vehicle as an open vehicle with short wheelbase (2,400 millimetres). Photograph from the internal brochure “Mercedes-Benz Cross Country Car. Technical Description” published in November 1975.

18C0340\_04

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Mercedes-Benz off-road vehicle as a station wagon with long wheelbase (2,850 millimetres). Photograph from the internal brochure "Mercedes-Benz Cross Country Car. Technical Description" published in November 1975.

18C0340\_05

Mercedes-Benz off-road vehicle as an open vehicle with short wheelbase (2,400 millimetres) and a station wagon with long wheelbase (2,850 millimetres). Photograph from the internal brochure "Mercedes-Benz Cross Country Car. Technical Description" published in November 1975.

79F109

Mercedes-Benz "G" model from model series 460, open vehicle. Photograph from 1979.

79F116

Mercedes-Benz G model from model series 460, station wagon with long wheelbase (2,850 mm). Photograph from 1979. With gradeability up to 80 per cent and lateral driving stability even at a 54 per cent tilt, the "G" model overcame even the most difficult of off-road driving situations with aplomb. This was thanks to, among other things, a ground clearance of 21 cm as well as an angle of approach and departure of 36 degrees and 27 degrees respectively.

79F123

Mercedes-Benz "G" model from model series 460. Photograph from 1979. There were four engines, two wheelbases and five different body versions available at market launch.

79F142

Mercedes-Benz "G" model from model series 460, interior. Photograph from 1979. Pushbutton switches as well as the heating and ventilation controls were positioned in the centre of the instrument panel within easy reach of the driver. The superior-quality interior appointments included moulded foam elements covering some of the sheet-metal surfaces.

83F46

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Jacky Ickx and Claude Brasseur won the Paris–Dakar Rally in this Mercedes-Benz 280 GE from model series 460.

814733

Pope John Paul II out and about in his Mercedes-Benz 230 G Popemobile with registration number SCV 7.

1998DIG250

Mercedes-Benz 290 GD turbo diesel from model series 461, station wagon with short wheelbase. Photograph from 1997.

A99F1042

Mercedes-Benz G 500 from model series 463, station wagon with long wheelbase. Photograph from 1999.

A2000F2241

Mercedes-Benz G 500 from model series 463, cabriolet with electrohydraulically operated soft top. Photograph from 2000.

08C1392\_027

Mercedes-Benz G-Class from model series 463, “EDITION30” special model based on the G 500. Photograph from the press release dated 2009.

13C215\_067

Mercedes-Benz G-Class, G 63 AMG 6x6 show car from 2013.

15C144\_001

Mercedes-Benz G-Class, G 500 4x4<sup>2</sup> show car from 2015.

17C966\_010

The new Mercedes-Benz G-Class from model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*). Exterior, “camouflaged” vehicle on the test track on the Schöckl mountain near Graz, Austria. Photograph from testing in 2017.

The new Mercedes-Benz G-Class from model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) celebrated its world première in January 2018.

## 18C0006\_02

At the world première of the new G-Class from model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) on 14 January 2018 at the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit, Mercedes-Benz presented the “Stronger Than Time” installation: a 280 GE from model series 460 dating back to 1979 encased in synthetic resin. The fascinating installation was reminiscent of fossilised insects encased in amber (© 2018: Daimler AG, photo by Deniz Saylan).

## 18C0002\_018

World première of the new Mercedes-Benz G-Class from model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) at the Mercedes-Benz New Year’s Reception on 14 January 2018, the evening before the 2018 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS). Dr Dieter Zetsche, Chair of the Board of Management of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, Hollywood actor and former Governor of California, presented the new Mercedes-Benz G-Class.

## 18C0002\_019

World première of the new Mercedes-Benz G-Class from model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) at the Mercedes-Benz New Year’s Reception on 14 January 2018, the evening before the 2018 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS). Dr Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, Hollywood actor and former Governor of California, presented the new Mercedes-Benz G-Class.

18C0089\_028

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The Mercedes-AMG G 63 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299 g/km\*) is the flagship model in the new G-Class 2018 model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*). Exterior in designo mystic white bright with Stainless Steel package. Photograph from 2018.

18C0343\_022

Mercedes-Benz G 500 variant of the new G-Class model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 12.1–11.5 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 276–263 g/km\*), hyacinth red metallic, designo nappa leather, platinum white/black.

18C0347\_009

Mercedes-AMG G 63 variant of the new G-Class model series 463 (combined cycle fuel consumption: 13.1 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299 g/km\*), obsidian black metallic, AMG Exclusive nappa leather in macchiato beige/espresso brown.

18C0345\_091

Mercedes-Benz G 500 variant of the new G-Class model series 463 (combined fuel consumption: 12.1–11.5 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 276–263 g/km\*), brilliant blue metallic, designo nappa leather in espresso brown/black.

18C0387\_001

In May 2018, the first new model series 463 Mercedes-Benz G-Class (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) came off the production line in Magna Steyr, Austria. It is a Mercedes-AMG G 63 (combined fuel consumption: 13.1 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299 g/km). At the start of series production, these individuals came together (from left to right): four employees of Magna Steyr, Günther Apfalter (President Magna Europe & Magna Steyr), Karl-Friedrich Stracke (President Automotive Engineering & Engineering Magna Steyr), Gerd Brusius (Vice President Corporate Sales & Marketing Magna Europe & Executive Vice President Sales & Marketing Magna Steyr), Wolf-Dieter Kurz (Product Group Compact Cars/SUV), Ola Källenius (Member of the Board of Management of

Daimler AG responsible for Group Research and Mercedes-Benz Cars Development), Dr Gunnar Güthenke (Head of Off-Road Vehicle Product Division at Mercedes-Benz), Kurt Bachmaier (General Manager Business Unit G Magna Steyr), Anton Schantl (Vice President Finance Magna Steyr), Wolfgang Zitz (Vice President Complete Vehicle Manufacturing Magna Steyr) and Helmut Wagner (Assistant General Manager Business Unit G Magna Steyr).

18C0429\_01

In May 2018, the first axles for the new model series 463 Mercedes-Benz G-Class (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) will be manufactured at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Kassel. Persons shown –top row from left to right: Miroslav Vucicevic, Prof. Frank H. Lehmann (responsible for the Mercedes-Benz plant in Kassel), Benjamin Moeller, Dr Andreas Gorbach (Head of Global Platform Management), Artur Burghof, Andrej Treichel, Ralf Sonner, Jens Nuhn, Tim Gilga. Bottom row from left to right: Christian Mann, Jan Siebert, Stefan Fricke, Jörg Lorz (Chairman of the Works Council).

D536871

The new model series 463 Mercedes-Benz G-Class (combined fuel consumption: 13.1–9.6 l/100 km, combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 299–252 g/km\*) as a white/red birthday vehicle. To mark the 125th anniversary of VfB Stuttgart sports club, from September 2018 to April 2, 2019, the Mercedes-Benz Museum is showing a special exhibition entitled “On the Move since 1893: 125 Years of VfB Stuttgart”.

18C0997\_016

18C0997\_033

Mercedes-Benz G 350 d (combined fuel consumption: 9.8–9.6 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 259–252 g/km) in brilliant blue metallic and with designo nappa leather in espresso brown/black.