

**INSIDE**

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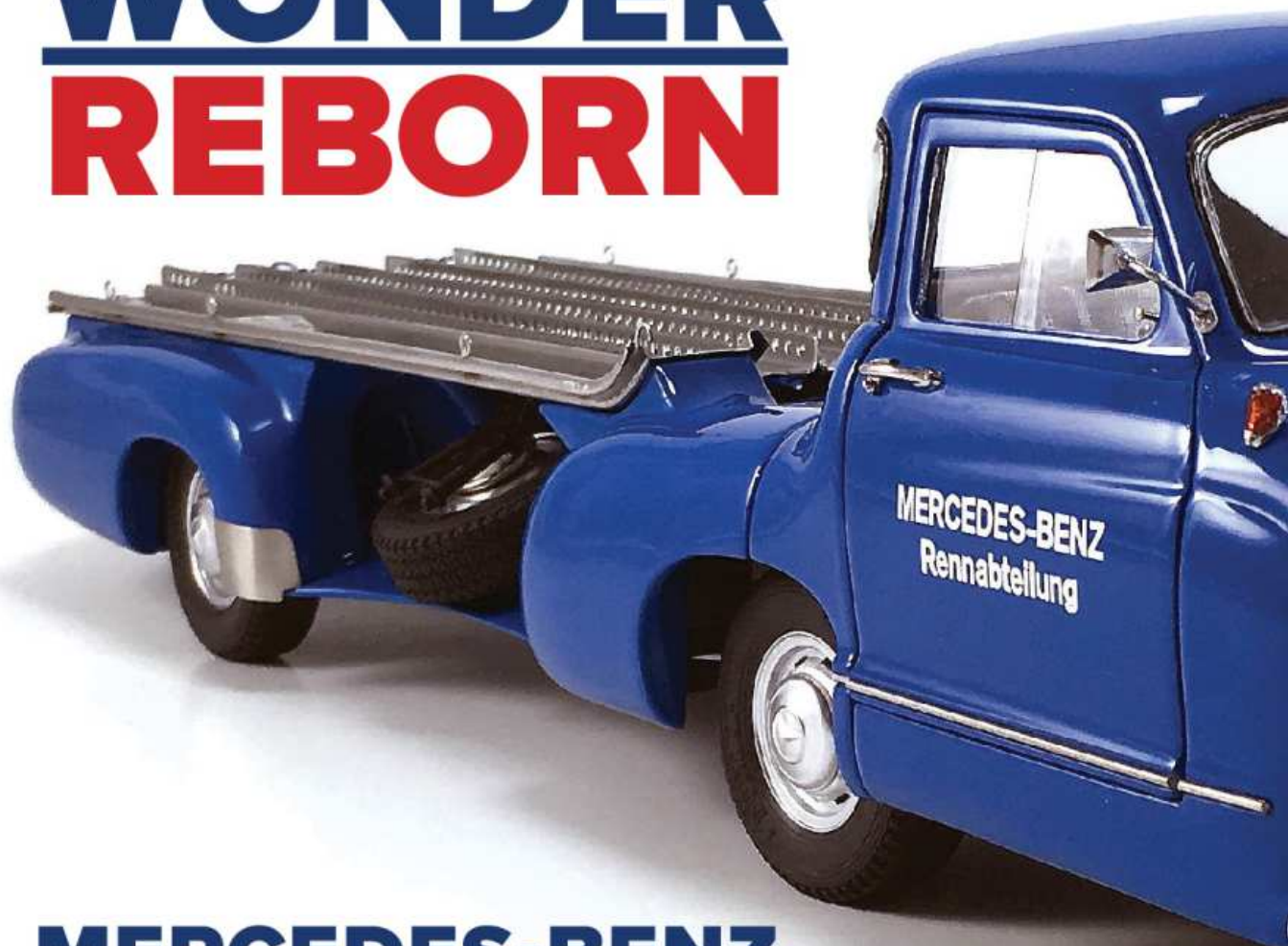


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# THE BLUE WONDER REBORN

1:18



## MERCEDES-BENZ RACING CAR TRANSPORTER

Produced by CMC

Review and images by William de Boer

Sexy. Sleek. Fast. Curves in all the right places. Is it a Ferrari 312P? A vintage Porsche 911? No, it's the Mercedes-Benz Blue Wonder Renntransporter in grand and glorious 1:18 scale!

CMC has released the revised edition of the 1954-55 Mercedes-Benz Racing car transporter. This model (item #M-143) has several upgrades which differ in some details from the original 1:18 release (item #M-036). We will discuss the differences later.

Mercedes-Benz has been a legendary automotive icon since the late 1800s. Carl



Benz and Gottlieb Daimler created history by entering successful racing cars in the first official races in 1895. Years of development and success followed, especially during the Grands Prix of the 1930s. Cars that won on Sunday tended to sell better on Monday, and racing gained popularity among spectators and fans. Fast-forward to the early 1950s: Alfred Neubauer, the Mercedes-Benz team manager, wanted his development department to come up with a fast racing car transporter that could handle 'urgent' loads. Team members were ecstatic with the very efficient transporter, as its speed in transport allowed them to gain a few more hours to complete setups and repairs on racing cars with less stress and greater care. This gave the team an advantage of sorts over its competitors. Besides taking the beloved and beautiful Mercedes W196 and 300 SLR racing cars from race to race, its true value was in quickly whisking the cars back to the factory for fast repairs that could not be completed at the paddock.

In 1954, with its deep blue Mercedes-Benz paintwork and eye-catching curves, the Blue Wonder grabbed just as much attention as the cars that were on its loading deck. Not only was this Mercedes transporter sexy, it was also efficient. This transporter turned many heads on the autobahn when it whipped along at high speeds to get back to the factory. The Blue Wonder was certainly fast. It boasted a six cylinder in-line engine with fuel direct injection that put out 192 HP at 5500rpm! This six-cylinder engine is nicely detailed, and can be viewed on the model when the cover is carefully removed with the enclosed tool.

When Daimler-Benz withdrew from racing after the 1955 Le Mans tragedy, the transporter was removed from official service. For the next several years it was used in exhibitions and displayed in museums. It was eventually scrapped in 1967, as apparently Mercedes executive Rudolf Uhlenhaut felt it was too heavy for the Mercedes-Benz museum floor. Years later, in the early 1990s, a replica of the Blue Wonder was rebuilt under the supervision of Mercedes-Benz so



1:1 SCALE VEHICLE ON DISPLAY AT THE MERCEDES-BENZ MUSEUM, STUTTGART, GERMANY  
PICTURES BY MATT WHITE

the public could enjoy its beauty once again.

According to CMC, the original Blue Wonder was one of CMC's best-selling models, and has been sold out for years. The gorgeous curves and multiple functional parts created many appreciative customers. CMC wanted to 'refill the void' and offer a new edition that incorporated details and accessories newly discovered in the period archives. Surely collectors that appreciate historical accuracy in the representation of their models will appreciate the revised details in this new edition of the Mercedes Transporter.

The new details that are incorporated into the REVISED edition include:

- The front signal lights are in orange color.
- The Mercedes-Benz logo on the front hood is three-dimensional, not just a print.
- The rear wheel wells now have metal stone guard plates.
- The ramp supports that are placed over the spare wheels are now black.
- There are now two orange lights on the rear bumper.
- Ramp bed connection tabs are now chrome.
- The rims are now done in chrome silver with silver hubcaps.
- There is now an oval national symbol 'D' on the rear end.
- There are improved ramp connecting catches for safety and stability.
- "Max. Speed 105 M.P.H." is no longer printed on the upper rear fender flanks, as the real vehicle did not have this marking. This is a model that commands attention.

CMC captures the original Renntransporter very well. The design in 1954 was ahead of its time, and the curves flow in such a way that it looks fast just standing still. There's always something to look at, and even the interior is no exception. The floors are carpeted and the instrument panel is nicely visible. The plaid seat designs are well laid out, and it feels like you could just climb right on in! To one's surprise, there's even a key dangling from the ignition. Now that's detail! The long ramps can be removed and set up with the use of the ramp supports that are placed over the spare wheels on the sides of the transporter. It all works well, although connecting the pieces can be a little fiddly. A racing model of your choice can be loaded on the rear deck, and the silver cables can be





wrapped around the knockoffs of the model car for safety. It's amazing the amount of detail and thought that has gone into this model, and CMC should be commended for that.

The model comes in a new style of box inside a white thick paper sleeve bearing CMC art and product information. Naturally all the normal accessories such as polishing cloth, serial number hangtag and information brochure are included. The box itself is finished on the outside in soft faux leather in a lovely shade of Bordeaux Red. Collectors will already be familiar with the shade of red with gold lettering, as this is the style of CMC's personal logo. The box is lined internally with soft beige velvet. Inside lies the styrofoam clamshell that actually holds the model.

While the new style of box offers a touch

of class that complements the model, one wonders if the added expense is passed on to collectors? It also should be noted that the faux leather box was initially somewhat difficult to open, so care should be taken.

There are also paper instructions that describe how to operate the various functions of the transporter, such as the loading ramps and their supports. As always, it is very important to carefully read the instructions in their entirety before exploring the various functions and detail of the model. Please note that in the pictures, the revised edition is the model on the left or on the top. The CMC Fangio Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR shown is sold separately and is not included with the Blue Wonder.

How many times have collectors taken a model home and compared it to book images or period photographs off the internet, only to realize that something was missing or incorrectly done? In this case, it appears CMC has attempted to make their revised model as accurate as possible. Archive photographs can be extremely hard to come by, or hard to use with grainy details. It's nice when a model manufacturer does its homework to maintain authenticity. When a model is expensive and iconic, this attention to detail is what collectors appreciate.

So if you're an avid Mercedes motorsport fan or a collector who appreciates detail, this transporter will look fantastic in your display. It is highly recommended.



### 1954-55 Mercedes-Benz Renntransporter Revised Edition

SCALE: 1:18

ITEM NO: M-143

PRODUCER: CMC

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