



TRI-STAR



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RESIDENT'S MESSAGE SECOND QUARTER 2021

by Don Klug

Greetings fellow Finger Lakes
Section MBCA Members,

What we think as normal is
something we're all looking
forward to. It appears that
some of the restrictions we
have been living with are
beginning to ease in 2021 with
the introduction of the Covid
vaccines. Progress!



However, the old normal has changed and as we regather for our
social activities of club events expect to see some change. Shown
above is a picture of what a normal Mercedes Benz Grill used to
look like. Of course, a Mercedes Benz grill looks a bit different
today. Our new normal will no doubt be different too.

The Sonnenberg Gardens Fathers' Day car show will be June 20th
and our club has agreed to set up our regular club section to
display our cars. The annual picnic will again be hosted by
longtime member 'Red' Kosinski, at his home in Scottsville on July
11th. This event is always a top notch gathering. Red supplies the
meats and the club supplies an assortment of refreshments. Bring a
dish to pass and your bathing suit. Red's pool is beautiful. This
year the picnic will also serve as our annual meeting, albeit a short
one.

Continued on Page 2

National MBCA Director at Large Jim Roberts has arranged for the 2021 Performance Driving Event at Watkins Glen, now re-scheduled for July 25th. Our club, National and the Lotus, Ltd have held this event for many years now on one of the most desirable tracks in North America. Set your calendars for these events.

As a club, we want to return to something social and normal. This of course means that we need champions willing to coordinate other events between August and October. For instance, how about another car rally trip in September or October?. This can be discussed at our picnic/ annual meeting.

Another item in need of discussion is membership. Discussions have been ongoing this past year from National down to regional levels. I am sharing with you here some of the numbers provided by North East Regional Director Drew Webb in upstate New York as well as National.

Our own FL Section has lost three members over all, dropping to 87. In 2020. Our neighbor to the west, Niagara Section have remained static at 110 while to the East, Hudson-Mohawk has increased 29 to a membership of 256.

Drew Webb also shared with all of the section presidents that at the end of 2020, MBCA National noted a member increase of 1,420 over 2019, an 8% increase. While this is good news, Drew Webb, noted that 3,489 new memberships in 2020 were from the rebate program offered through the National and Mercedes Benz dealerships partnership. National decided to shorten the lead time of membership that allowed immediately joining MBCA at a dealership to obtain a significant discount on a new MB vehicle. The time requirement has now been extended back to 30 days; it remains to be seen how much that extra waiting time will affect the ongoing membership increases. I suspect our new member numbers from the program will decrease.

Let's hope that it still contributes to a fair number of new members; our individual section challenge will still be to retain a fair number of these new members by making them feel valued and welcome. New members should feel so pleased with us that they will want to continue membership in the club. Of course, there may be several different characteristics to new members. People buying cars at the dealer may be different car buyers than many of today's younger Mercedes Benz vintage car buyers. Elsewhere in this newsletter Dave Tobin has shared a message titled "Generation Shift", about who is purchasing vintage cars from long time Mercedes Benz's owners and club members. Thank you, Dave. Looking forward to sharing your most recent Mercedes Benz experiences. Happy driving.

President Don Klug

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The FLMBCA Newsletter of 3rd Quarter will be published on August 1st 2021.
Please access Newsletters by visiting our Website:

Fingerlakes.mbca.org/section-newsletters

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME, and thank you for joining us!

James Secor

Manlius, N.Y.

Mohammed Tariq Sheikh

Victor, N.Y.

*Current members :
Please remember to **renew!***

Upcoming Events

Performance Driving Event at Watkins Glen

National MBCA Director at Large Jim Roberts has arranged for the 2021 Performance Driving Event at Watkins Glen, now re-scheduled for July 25th. Our club, National and the Lotus, Ltd have held this event for many years now on one of the most desirable tracks in North America. Set your calendars for these events.



Annual Picnic

The annual picnic will again be hosted by longtime member 'Red' Kozinski on Sunday, July 11th.



Performance Driving Events for 2021

by Jim Roberts, DMD MBCA, Director at Large-Performance Driving Committee

The MBCA Performance Driving Committee is pleased to announce a provisional partial schedule of 2021 events: Contact Jim Roberts Jertoosaver@bellsouth.net for more information.

Saturday 15 May

Talladega Grand Prix Raceway: Alabama – NW Florida and Peachtree Sections will co-host this event between Atlanta and Birmingham. This is a wonderful track for novices, since like Lime Rock it only has 5 turns in 1.4 miles with minimal elevation change. There are wide smooth run-off areas with nothing hard to hit. Mid May weather is very pleasant. Entry is an affordable \$250.

Go to www.motorsportsreg.com for details and registration
Just go down the calendar to the date and track with MBCA.

Sunday 25 July

Watkins Glen: Finger Lakes Section /Lotus, Ltd will host this event on one of the most desirable tracks in North America. Watkins Glen has hosted Formula One for several years along with IMSA. NASCAR uses the “short” course, but we use the full 3.7-mile configuration which has recently been resurfaced. There is over 100 feet of elevation change which adds to the challenge and the gratification. As with all these events we will provide experienced instructors to help you learn to do this safely. This area, like Talladega is scenically beautiful. We are working on additional activities.

Registration is \$350. Go to www.clubregistration.net and scroll down the calendar to 16 June under Lotus, Ltd and MBCA for registration and more information.

Monday 12 September

Salt Lake City Motorsports Park MBCA is not officially sanctioning this event, but it follows a weekend gathering in the area. This is a nice opportunity for our members and we will be on hand to help. Our partners with Lotus, Ltd will take the lead on this one. Details will follow.

Saturday/Sunday 25-26 September

Shenandoah Circuit at Summit Point, WV Greater Washington Section has hosted this very successful event for several years. There is some elevation change in this challenging 2.2-mile, 17 turn circuit. Among the more famous sections are replicas of the Nürburgring’s “Flugplatz” (airport) and steeply banked “Karusel” (carousel).

The weather in late September is delightful. If you are a “leaf peeper” or you just want to drive roads that were built to be fun and beautiful, the nearby Shenandoah National park and Blueridge Parkway should be on everyone’s bucket list.

Contact Fraser Dachille for more information.

Saturday 30 October

Talladega Grand Prix Raceway Alabama – NW Florida Section will partner with the Ferrari Club of America and Lotus, Ltd for this fall event. This is a bit more laid back than most our events. It is an excellent last chance of the year to enjoy your Mercedes-Benz.

This is the time of year that nearby Talladega National Forest, Mt. Cheaha, and the Talladega Scenic Drive explode with color.

Our club has agreed to set up our regular club section to display our cars.



Father's Day Car Show



Sunday, June 20, 2021
11:30am to 4pm

*Gale-Wyn Chicken BBQ
Burgers & Hots
DJ, Prizes, Trophies
People's Choice Award*



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Show Car Entry Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Vehicle Entry

Make: _____

Model: _____

Year: _____ Color: _____

Club Affiliation (if any): _____

Attach additional information if necessary

Show

\$10 per vehicle in advance

\$15 at the gate

Car Club Registration

Model: _____

Club Website: _____

Club Email: _____

No additional fees for club registration

With the exception of service animals, dogs and other pets are not allowed on Sonnenberg grounds and parking areas.

Mail this entry and non-refundable fees to:

Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion
151 Charlotte Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424

All vehicle fees are donation to support Sonnenberg Gardens, a Non-Profit 501(c)3 organization



MERCEDES FREUDE

“The Joy of Everything Mercedes”

MBCA's newest & greatest National Event EVER!

Combining the best and most-popular activities
of both *StarTech* & *StarFest* into one
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Location:

Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort,
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Dates:

Mercedes-Freude - Tuesday, November 2nd - Friday, November 5th, 2021

Legends of the Autobahn East - Saturday, November 6th (Port Royal Golf Course)

Hilton Head Island Concours d'Elegance - Sunday, November 7th (Port Royal Golf Course)

Along with our MBCA Event,
we will be able to experience the kickoff of Legends of the Autobahn-East,
as well as the renowned HHI Concours d'Elegance.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDED, BUT NOT LIMITED TO Welcome Reception, Historic Rally, Driving
Events, Tech Sessions, MBCA Concours/Cars & Cocktails, MBCA Banquet, Golf, and a
Special Limited Visit to the Robert Jepson Collection Tour.

The hotel reservation link is open and available to book hotel rooms:

<https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/hilton-head/meetings/mercedes-benz-club-of-america-10302021>

OR reservations can be made by calling Omni central reservation at 1-800-843-6664.

*Ask for the group code:110221MERCEDES. Cost per night, for a Resort View Studio Suite, is \$169,
plus taxes and daily discounted resort fee.*

Further details coming your way in the near future!

Rick Siefert
National Events Chair
rick.siefert@att.net



Advertisement Photo credits:
Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Center
Omni Hilton Head Ocean Resort
HHI Concours d'Elegance

"Tobin Motor Works' April Cars and Coffee"

by Don Klug and Dave Tobin

April finally arrived with green grass, the peekaboo of flower buds, summer cars anxious to roam and Dave Tobin's "Cars and Coffee" pop up event on Saturday the 10th. The invitation plus the temptation to hit the road was too much to ignore after so many months sequestered by the pandemic. So, on a Friday afternoon, off I went to make the 3 hour drive from the hinterlands of Watertown so as to arrive on time Saturday morning to share some camaraderie, coffee and donuts with some old and new friends. Dave Tobin, a long time Mercedes Benz Club member operates a 'Collector Car Sales, Consignment and Brokerage' business in New York's southern tier area of Horseheads. On occasion, Dave has opened his showroom to locals and MBCA Finger Lakes Section members just to offer an opportunity to enjoy viewing some amazing classics.



Tobin Motor Works front entrance and car lot with Saturdays visiting cars and some inventory on display.



Dave Tobin chats with other car enthusiasts at the front entrance to Tobin Motor Works at a Cars and Coffee event April 10th.



Just inside the entrance one finds a collection of amazing vintage and much sought-after Mercedes Benz vehicles.



It was a wonderful opportunity to be able to view these exquisite classic vehicles before they appear at a Concours d'Elegance near you.



Dave anticipates another such event, possibly in late July, with a completely new collection.

We are open to ideas and coordinators for dates in August thru October. A Fall Color Tour is always a 'crowd pleaser' which simply needs someone to coordinate. Please feel free to contact Don Klug at donklug@twcny.rr.com or 315-785-8800 with your thoughts for additional 2021 club events.

Generational Shift: Redefining 'Classic Mercedes'

By Dave Tobin

A couple of weeks ago I received an email from MBCA Finger Lakes Section President Don Klug asking my thoughts on how our local club might appeal to younger members, specifically, MB owners in their 30s and 40s. It's a question that I've been trying to answer for the past 10 years. The conclusion that I've come to is that there is no simple answer to that question. Attracting younger Mercedes enthusiasts to the MBCA is a process and, I believe, it can be done.

In my brief response to him I mentioned a trend in my own business of buying and selling vintage Mercedes at Tobin Motor Works that I've seen developing over the past few years. He suggested I write an article about the subject, so here we are.

I've been observing a serious ownership shift of older Mercedes, mostly cars from the 80s and 90s, from older enthusiasts to much younger ones. As each car was shipped off to its new owner, I strongly encouraged them to join the MBCA with a link to the website and a paragraph about what the Club has meant to me. I know at least 4 of them joined. Here are some examples of this trend, all cars sold by Tobin Motor Works, very publicly, on bringatrailer.com

1992 500 E

Sale Date: February 2021

Sale Price: \$50,000

Odometer: ~ 62,000

Buyer Age: 29

Previous Owner Age: 78

Buyer Location: Illinois

The 500 E is, perhaps, the ultimate collectible Mercedes from the last quarter of the 20th century. Limited production, production involvement from Porsche, a factory performance sedan



that flies under the radar. Part of the appeal is the fact that it's so understated, not unlike the 6.3 from the late 60s.

Tobin Motor Works purchased this car from the estate of a long time MBCA member and car enthusiast in Minneapolis in November 2020. It was a one owner example that was purchased new at Feldmann Imports in Bloomington, MN. The car was inspected and necessary maintenance, about \$3,000 worth, was carried out by Huber's Imported Autos of Golden Valley, MN. All fluids were changed and the rear SLS suspension system was replaced.

The \$50,000 winning bid is a strong price for this car, but not outrageous, another \$4,000 - \$8,000 wouldn't have been a surprise. Because this car was acquired from an estate, unfortunately, there were no service records with the car, which probably held the price back a bit.

1993 500 E 6.0 RENNtech

Sale Date: August 2020

Sale Price: \$59,500

Odometer: ~71,000

Buyer Age: 38

Previous Owner Age: mid 70s

Buyer Location: Tennessee



While a stock 500 E is a capable performer, there are always those owners who want that little something extra. Various firms offered Mercedes tuning in the early 90s, one of the best known is RENNtech. This particular 500 E had receipts totaling over \$58,000 in performance modifications that were performed at RENNtech in Florida in the mid 1990s. Today, there is a segment of the enthusiast community, many of them on the younger side, who are after these cars specifically.

This car was consigned by its St. Paul, MN based owner to Tobin Motor Works in the Summer of 2020. The car was shipped to TMW in New York where the car was prepped for sale. The owner acquired the car directly from RENNtech who acted as sales agent for the previous owner in 2015. Between 2015 and 2020 my client spent almost \$20,000 on various maintenance items and upgrades.

The \$59,500 high bid on bringatrailer.com was a couple of thousand dollars less than the sale price of the last 500 E 6.0 RENNtech modified car that appeared on BaT about 8 months earlier, with twice the mileage. The owner was pleased with the price, we both agreed that it was 'market correct' on that particular day, but it wasn't an exceptional result. The pool of buyers for modified cars such as this is small, so small in fact, that the under-bidder who missed out on the other car about 9 months earlier, was the high bidder for this car.

1997 CL 500

Sale Date: December 2019

Sale Price: \$14,500

Odometer: ~67,000

Buyer Age: 38

Previous Owner Age: 88

Buyer Location: Tennessee



The W140 / C140 body style has been out of favor for a long time. I often hear older MB club members talking about how they don't care for this style. Well, there is a whole new generation that's glad older folks aren't interested, because they are, and good examples can still be found for not a lot of money. To kids who grew up in the 90s, the W140 was THE big Mercedes sedan and the C140 coupes were even rarer and more expensive. They lusted after them when young and now they're in a position to buy them... and they are.

This was a consignment from one of my very favorite customers. This was the last Mercedes he ever bought before he passed away. He was in very poor health when he bought it, but I think buying another car and having it to 'sort out' was what kept him going. He couldn't do much other than talk on the phone, so he was ordering parts, directing the tech he had working on the car to do this and that. He was the kind of guy who even bought wiper blades by calling Tom Hanson at the Classic Center in Irvine, CA. He paid close to \$18,000 for it and spent another \$6,000 or so on various maintenance items. Nobody said a C140 is a 'good investment' although, it may very well prove a good investment for the new owner.

The high bid of \$14,500 was market correct, maybe a touch light. The values of such 'new' cars is heavily dependent upon the odometer, although, people ought to pay more attention to the service and maintenance history than to the odometer in my opinion. The price my consignment client paid for it, at a specialty dealer in South Florida, was outrageous, but they had what he wanted and he was happy to pay that price. W140 and C140 prices are still very reasonable in today's market.

1971 300 SEL 6.3 AMG

Sale Date: December 2019

Sale Price: \$70,000

Odometer: ~25,000 (TMU)

Buyer Age: 46

Previous Owner Age: 85

Buyer Location: Minnesota



The oldest car on the list and the most unique. This car was purchased in Germany in the early 80s, by an Indianapolis based German ex-pat master technician who worked at the MB dealership in Indianapolis for 35 years. No ordinary 6.3, and what made it so special... this car had 4 or 5 pages of receipts from the early-80s from AMG in Affalterbach, all in German, detailing the extensive mechanical and cosmetic modifications that were done to this car upon the orders, of what my consignment customer described as, a 'German Playboy.' A bored and stroked engine, transmission modifications, a velour Recaro interior, vents cut into the fenders, all chrome trim removed and painted black, the list goes on.

This is a polarizing car. BaT would only accept it as a no reserve offering, period. Half the people who look at this 6.3 throw up and believe that it's an abomination, the other half drop their jaw and drool, either way, it leaves everyone with their mouth open, gawking. There is an entire group of enthusiasts, many of them younger folks, interested in 'pre-merger' AMG cars... those cars modified by AMG before AMG and Mercedes were really working on joint projects, together. This is perhaps, the ultimate 'pre-merger' AMG car. Long term ownership, fully documented and because it's not something from the 80s, but a true, classic Mercedes that harkens back to AMG's roots and the 'Red Pig' that ran at the 1969 24 hours of Spa with very similar modifications.

At a high bid of \$70,000, this car still holds the record for 'most expensive 6.3 ever sold on Bringatrailer.com'... which is, frankly, strange, because there are plenty of 6.3s that cost more than \$70,000, they just don't wind up on BaT. As a general rule, I don't think BaT is a good place to sell a 6.3, for a variety of reasons, but it was the place for this one, but not without some serious nerves. The high bid was only \$26,500 with about 10 minutes left to go in the auction.

What's most interesting about this one is that BaT was a last resort. The car had been on the market for months with little interest from anyone. I had advertised the car on Hemmings.com over the Summer for \$69,900, it appeared in the November / December issue of the Star magazine for the discounted price of \$66,900.

The new owner explained to me on the phone, right after the BaT auction ended, that he buys pre-merger AMG cars from all over the world and he never thought something like this, a 6.3, a real, classic Mercedes, modified by AMG, even existed. He went on to say that he wouldn't have lost the auction. He was going to win, whatever it took, he wasn't going to stop bidding. This was the 45th car in his collection at that point.

The key to success was a transparent representation of the car with hundreds of photos, good videos demonstrating the incredible engine and exhaust sound of this one of a kind 6.3 and the integration of the long time owner's ownership story.

To reiterate the point that I always try to make to people, about the importance of documentation, without the 4 or 5 pages of receipts from AMG Affalterbach, this would probably be a \$25,000 car.

1993 300 E

Sale Date: August 2019

Sale Price: \$15,650

Odometer: ~59,000

Buyer Age: 40

Previous Owner Age: 87

Buyer Location: Texas



I like to say “A remarkable example of an unremarkable car is still remarkable.” To many, a W124 E class is just a 4 door sedan, and it is. This chassis was the workhorse of the Mercedes line up from the mid 80s through the mid 90s, fashioned into a wagon, sleek coupe and high class convertible. True survivor W124 sedans aren’t easy to find anymore and that’s why this car was remarkable.

Another consignment from my interesting and eccentric client in Pennsylvania, he had purchased this car from Pierre Hedary a few years earlier, after Pierre sorted the car out. It was as fine a W124 sedan as I’d ever seen or driven. As mentioned earlier, odometers have a lot to do with the value of cars of this vintage. 59,000 miles wouldn’t be considered low for an E 320 convertible, but it is considered low for a sedan.

The high bid of \$15,650 surprised the owner as much as it surprised me. I figured this was probably a \$12,000 - \$13,000 car, the bidders on BaT thought differently, and they’re really all that matters. I remember the phone call with the new owner minutes after the auction ended, “This is my first classic Mercedes ever, heck, it’s my first Mercedes!”

I’m not sure I ever thought of a W124 E class as a ‘classic Mercedes’ until that moment, what’s important though, is that somebody else did.

1984 300 TD

Sale Date: October 2018

Sale Price: \$18,750

Odometer: 192,000

Buyer Age: 39

Previous Owner Age: 87

Buyer Location: Rhode Island



The first consignment I received from my customer in PA. I had initially visited him, to see this very car, before I moved to New York, when I still lived in Minneapolis. He had purchased the car a couple of years earlier from a Mercedes tech who runs a shop in southern California. Typical of this engineer and pilot, every system of this car had been sorted and it was cosmetically clean. It was not an original paint car, I figured out with my paint meter and a sharp eye, as it had been represented when he purchased it. Never the less, diesel wagons were really hot in the market during the Summer of 2018 and have continued to come on strong since.

Again, the high bid of \$18,750 surprised us both. Black with Palomino interior proved to be a sought after color combination and Tobin Motor Works’ usual transparent representation, hundreds of photos and various videos put potential buyers at ease. My client would have been happy with \$14,000. When the bid reached \$15,000 he called me and was ecstatic, text messages came in every few minutes demonstrating his delight until it finally ended just under \$19,000.

As you can see from the ages included with each anecdote above, younger enthusiasts are interested in older Mercedes, especially those cars they can identify with from their formative years. All of these purchases were really meaningful to the buyers, some of them, first time 'classic' or Mercedes buyers or both. I expect to see continued interest in cars of the 1980s, 90s and early 2000s from younger enthusiasts. I also expect to see them look toward older cars, eventually. As they learn more about the Mercedes-Benz brand and its history it's only natural that they will show interest and probably start buying choice, older models like the Pagoda SL, W108 / 109 sedans and, surely, for those who have more discretionary income 190 and 300 SLs.

These younger enthusiasts are interested in Mercedes cars, that's clear. I managed to convince at least 4 of the buyers mentioned above to join the MBCA, but retaining them is the real trick. A '\$55 magazine subscription' or a 'new car discount' isn't enough to keep this generation (or probably any other) around. Once they join, it's the club's job, our job, your job, to provide a relevant and engaging club experience that enhances their enjoyment and ownership experience. If the next generation is to take up the reins and carry the MBCA forward, the club must kindle the same passion in them as the cars they're buying.

*Dave Tobin operates **Tobin Motor Works**, a specialty car dealership located in the Finger Lakes Region of Upstate New York offering sales and consignment for enthusiast and collector cars of all types with a focus on vintage Mercedes-Benz. On the weekends Dave maintains **Mercedes-Market.com** – Your guide to Buying, Selling and Collecting Modern and Classic Mercedes*

Classified ads

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Günter and Astrid arrived here from Bavaria Germany in the late 60's and founded Universal Imports in 1984. Günter created an incredible business that still today stresses quality service and top line vehicles. They raised three children and helped raise seven grandchildren, and built this company from scratch. Sadly, Günter passed away in 2018. Astrid continues in her role of Owner and Vice President.

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The Mercedes-Benz E-Class Is the 2021 Motor Trend Car of the Year

[Mark Rechtin](#) Author

Nov 16, 2020



We know what it means. Or at least what it's supposed to mean. Yet the word *excellence* in today's hyperbolic lexicon has become the go-to endorsement of everything from resort timeshares to pharmaceutical marketing to pork industry remediation. Let's assume for the moment that the word has been somewhat diluted.

Climb into a [2021 Mercedes-Benz E-Class](#), however, and you will immediately understand the true emotional and physical definition of the word, its impact, and its inferred accountability. In sedan, coupe, or wagon form, the new E-Class is a stunning accomplishment. And it is the *MotorTrend* 2021 Car of the Year.

The [Mercedes-Benz E-Class](#) carries the stout imprimatur of old-school luxury, from the graining of the dashboard wood to the suppleness of the heated and ventilated, posture-correct leather seats. But it is also thoroughly modern, from the robust yet efficient responsiveness of its engines to the plethora of high-tech and high-zoot features. The E-Class epitomizes an automotive brand in full, one whose currency in the current zeitgeist of automotive wants and desires is unmatched.

Please enter website below for more information

<https://www.motortrend.com/cars/mercedes-benz/e-class/2021/mercedes-benz-e-class-2021-car-of-the-year/>

How to Protect Your Car From Rodents

CR offers clever solutions to critters nibbling at your wires

By Consumer Reports

Last updated: April 14, 2021

Rats! You can buy the [most reliable car on Earth](#) and still find convoluted electrical gremlins, fluid leaks, and even outright failure when rodents take up residence and begin chewing on wiring, hoses, plastic, and other critical car parts.

This is especially a risk for cars stored over the winter, and those that have been parked for extended periods during the pandemic.

Rodent-inflicted damage is an age-old problem that some observers say is increasing as automakers use more plant-based biodegradable materials to reduce waste. Several class-action lawsuits have been filed against major automakers in recent years alleging that soy-based products were to blame, but these court cases were later dismissed.

Pest control company [Terminix](#) considers the temptations of tasty materials to be a myth, and instead, it blames rodent biology and their need to constantly chew, thereby preventing their teeth from growing too long. It turns out that feasting on cars is more prevalent than you might think.

We uncovered various technical service bulletins from Ford, General Motors, Honda, Toyota, and Subaru instructing their technicians how to remedy chewed wiring harnesses.

Some Consumer Reports staffers also have stories of small, furry creatures chewing through power steering lines, filling engine intakes with acorns, and plugging up air-conditioning ducts with their nests.

The problems can be severe, ranging from clogging the air filter with nesting materials to damaging the engine wiring harness, which can cost thousands to replace.

"If you see damage from rodents, take action immediately to both deter the animals and keep your car running," says John Ibbotson, Consumer Report's chief mechanic. "Chewed wires are a serious concern and will require professional assessment and potentially repair."

If the wire coating is chewed through, exposing the inner wire, the car may not be safe to drive. In such cases, it can be helpful to use a mobile mechanic, such as those available through [yourmechanic.com](#), to inspect and repair the damage.

Periodically look for signs of furry visitors, such as droppings, urine, scratches, chewed wire, damaged belts, gathered nesting materials, and exposed fiber insulation. Glen Ramsey, senior technical services manager for pest control company [Orkin](#), provides a key reality check.

"There are a myriad of reasons why we've seen an increase in rodent sightings throughout the pandemic," he tells CR. "First and foremost, people have spent more time at home over the last year than probably ever before. When we're home, we notice more."

But that doesn't mean the rodent threat hasn't become a real problem.

"Pandemic-driven restaurant closures forced rodents to find new food sources," Ramsey explains. "Without restaurant waste to dine on, rodents started scavenging new areas, often into residential communities that were still producing food waste."

If you suspect that you do have a rodent problem, inspect and clean the car outside while wearing protective rubber gloves: Rodents can carry diseases.



How to Avoid Attracting Critters

- Ideally, park away from places that are known to draw rodents, such as near trash bins or natural food sources, such as vegetable gardens.
- Park in a sealed garage, if possible, and keep the doors closed.
- Make sure the garage doesn't have stored food and prime nest materials like newspapers, cardboard, straw, rags, and patio furniture cushions.
- Look for gaps around garage windows and doors for possible places that rodents can sneak in. Weather strips under side doors can help seal them. Likewise, inspect the vertical seals on retractable garage doors for damage.
- Don't store trash cans used for food waste in the garage.
- Keep the car interior free from food wrappers; their scent can draw rodents.
- Move the car regularly, discouraging varmints from taking up residence. And occasionally honk the horn before starting the car to scare away any napping critters.

How to Get Rid of Furry Vandals

There are specially made spray products that promise to deter rodents that you could mist under the hood and around the vehicle, if garaged. Peppermint oil and cayenne pepper are reported to deter rodents. Note that spray products will need to be reapplied routinely, because they can wear away and rinse off.

There are ultrasonic devices that emit sounds to deter rodents, but at a frequency that humans can't hear. However, their [effectiveness is in doubt](#).

For storage, placing mothballs under the hood can help. (Don't use them inside the car, or you'll be stuck with that awful smell.)

There is a clever solution in a TSB from Honda: rodent-deterrent tape, essentially an electrical tape treated with super-spicy capsaicin, which Honda describes as "the stuff that puts the fire in a bowl of five-alarm chili." The tape (part number 4019-2317) comes in a 20-meter roll, about 22 yards, and it is available through dealers and [available online](#) (\$43).

We bought a roll of Honda's rodent-deterrent tape to check it out. Beyond the cute rat graphics and gray color, it deceptively seems like regular electrical tape to us humans. There is no tear-inducing odor, but it does carry a label that warns against prolonged exposure to skin. Despite dares and double dares, we did not taste it and will trust that it is potent enough to deter even the most ravenous varmint.

Other suggestions for dealing with rodents under your hood include installing a metal mesh around wiring harnesses and rubber hoses and across any openings where rodents could crawl into your ventilation or intake systems.



Placing rodent traps around the garage can reduce the population, but just be careful of exposing domestic animals and children to poisons or dangerous snap traps.

If the rodents are winning the war despite following these tips, reach out to a local pest control service. They are trained in how to best combat stubborn rodent issues and can address your specific challenges.



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