

Maybach Just Recreated a Century-Old Honeymoon Drive Across the Alps, and We Went Along for the Ride

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We got to experience the trip in the decadent luxury of the automaker's flashy new 2026 SL 680 Monogram.

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Mercedes-Maybach SL 680

A hundred years ago, Dr. Karl Schmid and his new bride celebrated their nuptials with a 10-day honeymoon driving tour, crossing the perilous, snow-covered Swiss and Italian Alps in their stately, open-top [Maybach](#).

The 1,370-mile grand adventure kicked off in Friedrichshafen, Germany, home then to the Maybach-Motorenbau factory, with the couple heading to Lausanne on Switzerland's Lake

Geneva, the great St. Bernhard and Gotthard Passes, stopping off on Italy's Lake Como, before threading their way home.

Back in 1925, Alpine travel was extremely challenging. Most roads were nothing more than unpaved, gravel tracks with steep inclines, scary drop-offs, and switchback curves. Throw in snowstorms, avalanches, and freezing temperatures, and it was a true test of man and machine.

Yet according to Herr Schmid's well-preserved and highly detailed handwritten travel diary and photo albums—now part of the Museum of Historic Maybach Vehicles archives in Neumarkt, Germany—the trip went without a glitch. Seems his open-top Maybach W3, with a custom body by German coachbuilder Spohn and a lusty 5.7-liter, 70 hp Maybach straight-six under its mile-long hood, never missed a beat.

Fast forward 100 years, and to mark the anniversary of the honeymoon adventure, [Mercedes-Maybach](#) PR had the idea of recreating, at least in part, the trans-Alpine adventure. This time, however, it would include some of the latest Mercedes-Maybach models, including the flashy, just-launched [2026 SL 680 Monogram](#), Maybach's first sports car.



The Maybach SL 680 Monogram. *Mercedes-Maybach SL 680*

Which is how *Robb Report* ended up in Friedrichshafen for this sentimental centennial drive, which would retrace many of the roads and locations of that original trip. In addition to the new SL, an all-electric [Maybach EQS 680 SUV](#) was on hand, along with long-wheelbase S 580 and S 680 uber-luxe limos, and a towering GLS 680 SUV.

“Traveling in style is very much a part of the Maybach brand DNA. And while it’s true that many of our owners enjoy being chauffeured, there are those who love to drive themselves. And this kind of trip, combining adventure, romance, and luxury, would have considerable appeal,” says Daniel Lescow, head of Mercedes-Maybach.

Not forgetting that it was an original Maybach that inspired this “honeymoon” adventure, a pair of early examples were dusted off and shipped to Friedrichshafen for the start. They included a rather funereal 1939 SW 42 Pullman sedan from the Maybach museum, which was originally owned by the Spanish Embassy in Berlin.



The 1936 Maybach SW38 four-door Cabriolet. *Mercedes-Maybach*

More interesting, though less original, was the lovely dark blue and white 1936 Maybach SW38 four-door Cabriolet. This started life as just four wheels and was entirely recreated over the course of 18 years by students at the Wilhelm-Maybach School in Heilbronn, Germany.

Yet perhaps the most important “oldtimer” on the drive was the stately 2002 Maybach 57, owned by Ulrich Schmid-Maybach, great-grandson of company founder Wilhelm Maybach,

who was at the event driving his car. His 57 was the very first, new-generation Maybach off the line, and was gifted to the Maybach family by Daimler-Benz in October 2002. It provided a perfect visual comparison with the newest, more low-slung S-Class Mercedes-Maybachs.

After a rousing send-off by the mayor of Friedrichshafen, we were on our way, following the newlyweds' original route, heading deep into the Black Forest, then skirting Basel and Bern, before dropping down into Lausanne on Lake Geneva for an overnight stay at the posh Beau-Rivage Palace hotel.

It was an easy six-hour, 250-mile run, split between the new all-electric Mercedes-Maybach EQS 680 SUV and the decadently-luxurious, cruise-ship-sized S 580 4Matic limousine with its whispering twin-turbo V-8.



The GLS 680 SUV. *Mercedes-Maybach*

For day two's 260-mile sortie, we traded V-8 power for V-12 magnificence, piloting the 621 hp oligarch-class Maybach S680 flagship for the climb up through the snow-capped Alps to 8,100-foot-high Grand St. Bernard at the summit of the St. Bernard Pass. Winter snowfall here averages over 65 feet; the pass had opened literally days before our arrival.

And there to greet us was a pair of adorable St. Bernards, sadly minus their traditional brandy casks, to pose in front of the cars. It was no doubt their distant cousins who had posed for photos in front of Dr. Schmid's Maybach at the same spot back in 1925.

The road up the Col du St. Bernard is still one of the world's great driving roads, with its snaking blacktop, hairpin bends, and spectacular mountain vistas, offering glimpses of towering Mont Blanc in the distance. Despite its considerable bulk, the S680 was in its element, using its prodigious 664 ft lbs of torque to slingshot out of the curves, while rear-wheel steering, adaptive air suspension and all-wheel drive kept it on an even keel through the tightest Alpine curves.

Like the Schmids, we stopped at the ancient l'Hospice du Grand Saint-Bernard at the top of the pass. Founded by Bernard of Menthon (later St. Bernard) around the year 1050, it's still a haven for weary travelers. Monks at the monastery continue to welcome hikers, bikers, and drivers, offering a bed for the night in one of the basic rooms or dorms.



The S 680 and 1939 SW 42 Pullman sedan. *Mercedes-Maybach SL 680*

For the winding trip down the mountain, we grab the keys to the star of the Honeymoon adventure, the 2026 Mercedes-Maybach SL 680 Monogram, resplendent in its monochromatic Opalite White Magno paint and multitude of double-M Maybach logos adorning its black hood and folding canvas top.

This is Maybach's first two-seat convertible and a seductive, though flashier, alternative to Bentley's Continental GTC, Aston Martin's DB12 Volante, and Mercedes' own AMG SL63. While it drives very much like an SL63, with that turbine-like thrust from its 577 hp 4.0-liter twin-turbo V-8, the Maybach is tuned to be a little more relaxed, a little less hyper, and much smoother-riding courtesy of softer springs and dampers. There's even an exclusive

“Maybach Mode” suspension setting which relaxes the steering feel, throttle response, and suspension firmness, for true “boulevardier” cruising.

But tap the “Sport” button and Dr. Jekyll transforms into Mr. Hyde as everything sharpens up, livens up, and displays its AMG pedigree. Off the line, it’ll rip to 60 mph in a claimed 4.1 seconds, accompanied by a snarling exhaust, piped for added effect, through the car’s sonorous Burmester stereo.

At dinner that night, on the terrace of the grand Villa d’Este hotel on the banks of Italy’s Lake Como, where Dr. Schmid and his bride likely stayed (it opened in 1873), Mercedes-Maybach boss Lescow tells us the SL 680 makes a compelling addition to the line-up.

“It’s the sportiest, most extravagant model we have ever created, a true Maybach for the ultimate in open-air driving enjoyment. And the perfect car for an adventurous trip like this, and one, I suspect, that offers rather more luxury and comfort than the honeymooners’ car 100 years ago.”