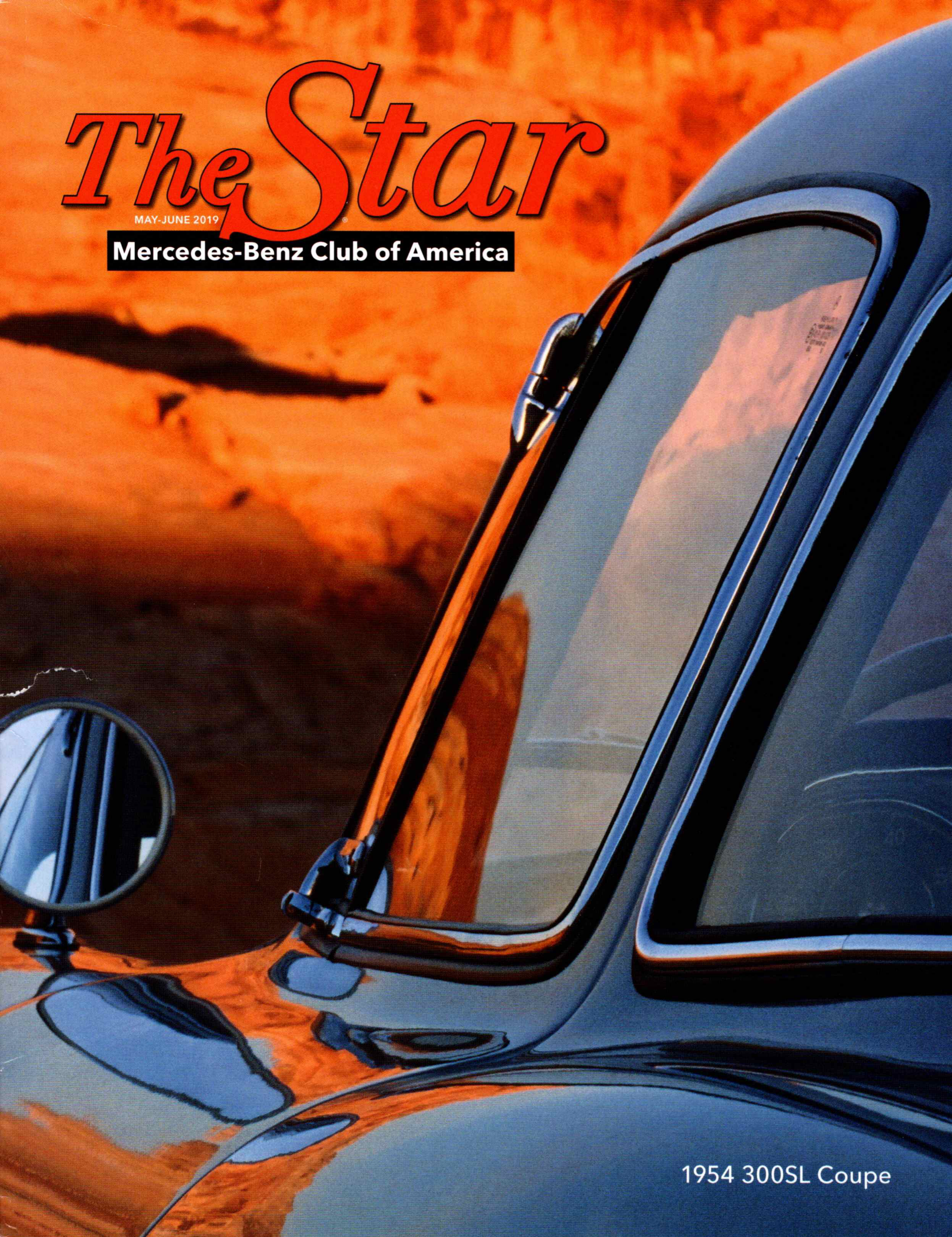


# *The Star*

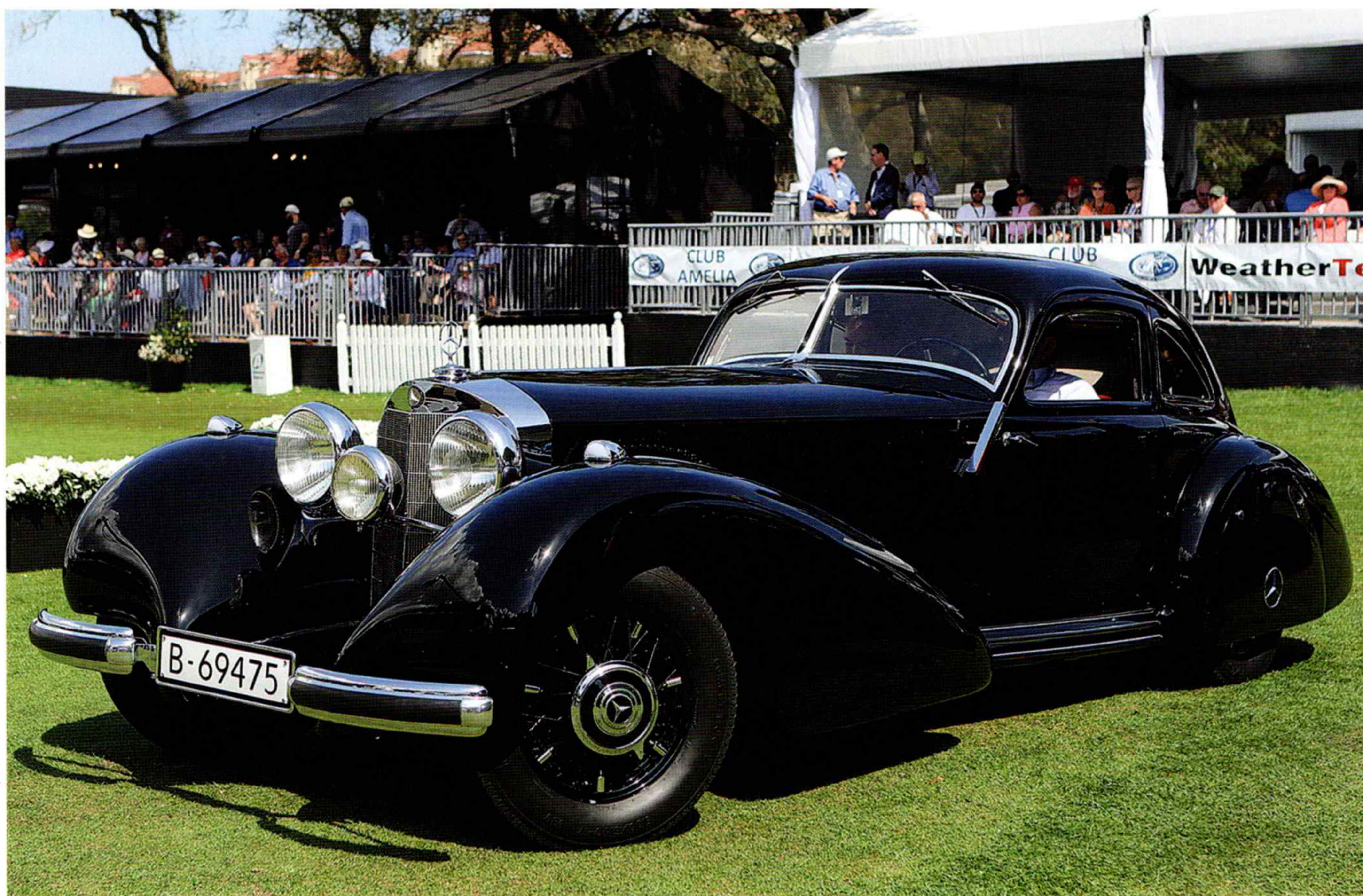
MAY-JUNE 2019

**Mercedes-Benz Club of America**



1954 300SL Coupe





# HIGH-SPEED SPECIAL

The Keller Collection's 1938 Mercedes-Benz 540K Autobahn-Kurier crowned Best in Show at the 2019 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance

## STAR REPORT

ARTICLE GARY ANDERSON • IMAGE DENIS L. TANNEY

The prestigious Best in Show Concours d'Elegance at Amelia Island this year was awarded to a stunning one-of-a-kind prewar Mercedes-Benz coupe, black with swept-back fenders and fastback body. Only recently restored, it was the Mercedes-Benz 540K Autobahn-Kurier presented by The Keller Collection at the Pyramids, Petaluma, California.

The *stromlinienform* (streamlined) body style, built on the W129 chassis, was presented at the Berlin Car Show in March 1934. The brochure explained that this new styling was designed specifically for the high speeds of the new Autobahn superhighways Germany began building in 1932. Only 761 cars of any design were produced on the expensive W129 chassis, with either the 5-liter or 5.4-liter

supercharged engine, before the model was terminated in November 1939 during the change-over at Daimler to wartime production. Only six were built with the Kurier body, and only two of those were equipped with the supercharged 5.4-liter engine. The first was exported to Iran in 1937; whether it still exists is not known.

The remaining 540K Kurier – the last Kurier to be built – left the Sindelfingen plant on October 26, 1938, driving to Gibraltar for delivery to a Dr. Ignacio Barraquer. After the end of the war, it was driven by the Barraquer family in Europe until it was sold to The Keller Collection in 2004. Keller restored the unique automobile to its stunning original condition: As Best in Show at Amelia Island, the effort was worth the reward – and the award.

