

*The Sauber Mercedes C9 winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1989 (acrylics with aerograph on paper).*

### 7- Sauber Mercedes C9

Designed by Peter Sauber, with the collaboration of his countrymen Heini Mader and powered by Mercedes-Benz, the C9, for the Group C, was introduced in 1987 and used during three seasons in the World Sportscar Championship. This model represented the confirmation of the huge potential of the small Swiss team and got the second and last win, to date, of the powerful German car manufacturer on the most famous World motorsport race, the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

The car used a conventional chassis, monocoque in aluminum, and also resorted to traditional suspensions, with double wishbone to activate concentric spring-damper

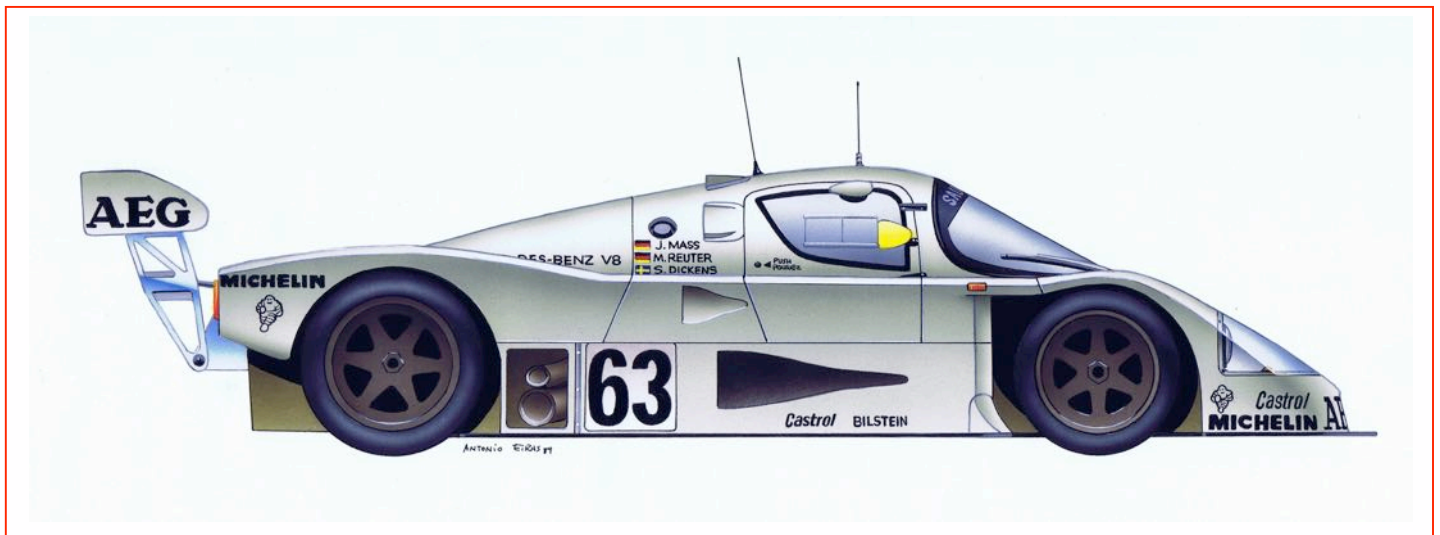
## Modern Cars – Sauber Mercedes C9

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assemblies, with a push-rod type system at the rear. The engine, Mercedes-Benz M117, was a V8 at 90°, of 5 liters capacity, which was fed using two turbochargers KKK, and, for the last and winning season of 1989, the steel head was replaced by a more effective aluminum alloy (M119 version). The power was transmitted to the rear wheels via a manual 5-speed gearbox.

After a modest beginning in 1987, when the car was entered by Kouros Racing, the main sponsor's name, in the following year, already under the colors of AEG, a company of the Daimler group, there was a sensible rise of competitiveness of the Swiss-German team, with five wins and a second place in the Championship, behind Jaguar.

The consecration would come in 1989, the third and final season of C9, with the victory in the Sportscar Championship, winning the title of drivers with the French Jean-Louis Schlesser and the most sought triumph, in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The team was obviously supported by Mercedes and the cars exhibited the official colors of the German car manufacturer, in its traditional silver. In this year, the Sauber Mercedes C9 just did not win one of the races and achieved the first and second places in the mythical French race, which dominated and where they obtained the second highest velocity ever in Mulsanne, at reaching 400 km/h during qualifying practice. This achievement resulted in the immediate reaction of the ACO that had built the chicanes on that straight-line, that remains since 1990!



*Lateral view of the Sauber Mercedes C9 winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1989 (acrylics with aerograph on paper).*

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The drawings of this work were made in close collaboration with the Spanish magazine "Motor 16", especially with my friend Manolo Doménech, great fan of endurance racing, and having been published in a special issue of the magazine in which we recalled the first win of Mercedes at Le Mans, 37 years before, when the 300SL obtained also the top two places on the podium.