## Lutocult

Mercedes-Benz OP312 van Rooijen (Netherlands, 1958)



## **Boat or Bus?**

The idea behind the so-called 'boat-busses' was actually quite simple: To give a bus the look of a boat, but to keep all the features of a standard bus during the alternation of the body. According to this idea various bus designs originated worldwide, but principally in the Netherlands.

This special boat-bus, named 'Huwelijksboot' (Dutch for wedding boat), was one of three identical vehicles. All three busses were built by the body maker van Rooijen in the 1950s. The body maker, based in Montfort (Netherlands) focused its attention to many details of the classical boat building. Even boat enthusiasts should have been delighted at the sight of this boat-bus. A typical shaped and with floorboards furnished ship's bow and poop, two sideways mounted foghorns, a centrally arranged hatches and an adumbrated railing characterized the visual appearance of the vehicle. Whereas the bow made an elegant impression, the two on the roof mounted funnels where more reminiscent of a big ocean liner. On a closer sight one could discover many other details from boat building. A nice gimmick were the loosely dangling tires at the ship's side. Whereas they served as a bumper during landing at the pier in the shipping, they were just they a decorating accessory on the boat-bus.

All three boat-busses were built on the chassis of a Mercedes-Benz OP 312, had an engine with a performance of 120 hp and offered space for 32 passengers. All in all the boat-busses were in no way visually inferior to real ships. Therefore the trip in one of these busses had the flair of a cruise and was a unique experience.

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