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FACTS & STORY

Fritz B. Busch Mercedes-Benz Dieselstar (Germany, 1975)

RACING

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A successful Diesel

In 1975, a fellow German decided to demonstrate the capabilities of diesel power in a most unusual manner. Fritz B. Busch was a 52-year-old journalist well known to fellow German auto enthusiasts through his editorial work published in "Stern" and "Quick" as well as his performance driving pursuits.

In his workshop in his castle in Wolfegg, he worked meticulously on his record car and went for the chassis of a Formula 2 race car as a basis. To improve the performance of the standard 79 hp-strong five-cylinder engine of the Mercedes W115 240 D 3.0 he installed an AiResearch turbocharger, a more powerful BOSCH fuel injection pump and adjusted the displacement to exactly 3 liters according to the regulations. Overall and after all tuning measures the car had a performance of 187 horsepower. The five-cylinder engine was fitted into the Formula 2 chassis. Busch created a wedge-shaped body from aluminum sheet. The bodywork was drawn over the sides purposely to eliminate any lift that would destabilize the vehicle at speed. He named his creation 'Dieselstar'.

For his record attempt he chose the test track of Volkswagen in Ehra-Lessien, Germany. On November 16, 1975, Fritz Busch climbed into his wedge-shaped machine and began accelerating for a standstill to top speed! It required 5.6 seconds to drive from a standstill to 100 km/h, but that was only a mark on the way to a record! By the end of the run, he achieved a speed of 253.7 km/h, a speed of 157.64 miles per hour! This top speed enabled driver and "car" to set a record of 136.1 km/h from a standing start over a distance of one kilometer ... almost 85 miles per hour. It was a significant increase over the previous record of 113.4 km/h. Thus, Fritz Busch was immortalized as a successful class record holder for diesel-powered vehicles. The VW Test Track posed its own challenges as it was curved track rather than a long and straight track as usually used for record attempts. He had to steer the car around the closed course!

Fritz B. Busch died in 2010 at the age of 88.

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