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**TESTED: Oldsmobile's sophisticated 88 LSS,  
Toyota Celica GT, Land Rover Defender 90.  
GR8 Vanity PL8S, Flat-out on a run-flat Eagle.**





and determined to succeed on his own.

After a close inspection of this car, there's little more that needs to be said about the young Mr. Feyhl, except that he's quite prickly when things don't go his way. His car shows supreme confidence; he started for El Paso on a completely

untested suspension package (probably his factory contacts eliminated the usual need for trial and error). He's a perfectionist; modifications throughout the car are highly detailed and beautifully done. He's aggressive; the name RENNtech appears

on the decklid, on the license-plate surround, on the exhaust tips, on the front fenders, on the engine cover, and three times on each hub cover.

As we plugged in our radar-and-laser detectors and made ready for the first day's

## RENNtech 500SL

This Mercedes hot rod shows as well as it goes.

Even a brief glance at the RENNtech 500SL will persuade you that its creator, Hartmut Feyhl, is as much artisan as tuner. His car's meticulously applied, glorious yellow paint—extending even to the wheel spokes and the arms of the windshield wipers—and his carbon-fiber composite hub caps cannot be overlooked.



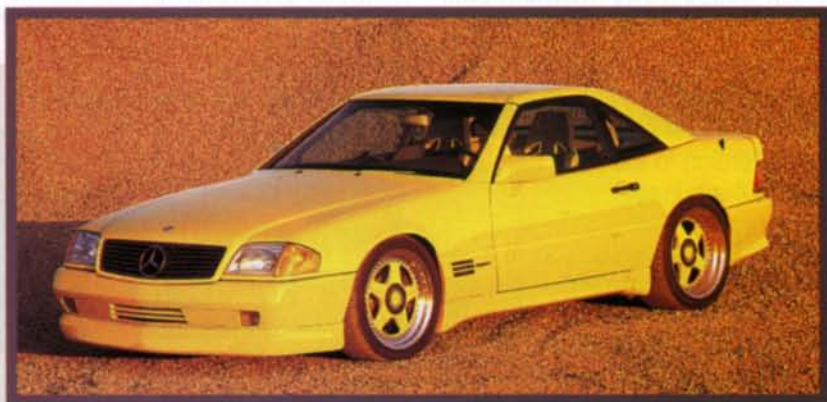
A peek inside confirms the notion that this 500SL is as much show car as hot rod. The bright yellow and gray leather interior, with contrast-

ing stitching, covers every interior surface—even the mirror housing. The workmanship is exquisite and the effect is riveting without being garish.

This particular car also uses high-tech composites as interior trim. The panels flanking the transmission tunnel as well as part of the shift knob are carbon-fiber and Kevlar moldings, which are rich, warm, and smooth. The yellowish Kevlar fibers in the gray resin even complement the leather trim.

Feyhl, the head of RENNtech, has devoted considerable attention to the "optical qualities" of his cars—as he puts it in his German-accented speech. But his background includes eleven years at AMG, the premier Mercedes tuning firm in Germany, and his cars reflect AMG's—and his own—autobahn bloodlines.

Under the hood lies a V-8, punched out from 5.0 to 6.0 liters and fitted with



headers, hotter cams, an extrude-honed intake manifold, a low-restriction air-cleaner, and catalyts that flow more freely. The result is 440 hp, which flows through a beefed-up four-speed automatic to a 2.47:1 limited-slip differential (stock is 2.65).

Feyhl beefed up the SL's underpinnings with stiffer and lower springs, thicker anti-roll bars, firmer Bilstein shocks, harder bushings, and beefier brakes and Pirelli P-Zero tires, 245/40-18s in front and 275/35-18s in the rear on 8.5 and 10.0-inch-wide O.Z. wheels.

Feyhl also put the SL on a 400-pound diet by substituting Recaro shell-type seats for the electric-motor infested originals, using lighter sound-proofing, and removing the convertible top and much of its complex mechanism.

These changes transform the 500SL into an explosive hot rod. It hits 60 mph in 4.6 seconds, covers the quarter-mile in 13.0 seconds at 111 mph, and runs solidly into its 6200-rpm cutoff at 182 mph. The RENNtech SL can corner at 0.93 g and stop from 70 mph in 161 feet.

It all adds up to an SL that's remarkably agile. You can hurl it into corners with confidence and rocket away from the apex while holding the car in perfect balance with the responsive throttle and precise steering.

Despite its performance, the souped-up SL is not a nervous thoroughbred. It idles smoothly, its exhaust note is subdued, and its muscular suspension remains nicely supple. Best of all, the RENNtech SL feels solid enough to run sub-five-second 0-to-60s forever.

The downside to the RENNtech

mods is money—they virtually double the SL's price to about 200 grand. But Feyhl's workmanship, performance, and refinement simply amplify the original product. You shouldn't be surprised that his price does the same. —Csaba Csere

**Vehicle type:** front-engine, rear-wheel-drive, 2-passenger, 2-door convertible

**Price, stock (1994)/modified (1991):** \$108,148/\$200,000 (estimated)

**Engine type:** DOHC 32-valve V-8, aluminum block and heads, Bosch KE-Jetronic engine-control system with port fuel injection

**Modifications (1994 prices):** engine: bore +4mm, stroke +6mm, honed intake manifold and high-volume air cleaner, low-restriction exhaust system (\$40,000); 2.47:1 rear-axle gearset (\$4000); suspension: lower and stiffer springs, stiffer shocks, larger anti-roll bars, urethane bushings (\$10,000); brakes: 4-piston aluminum front calipers with 13.0-inch rotors, 2-piston rear calipers with 12.0-inch vented rotors, stainless lines (incl. w/ suspension mods.); wheels and tires: O.Z. Futura 3-piece composite wheels with Pirelli P-Zero tires (\$5500); body: air dams, spoiler, side skirts, custom paint (\$10,000-est); interior: Recaro seats, custom yellow leather trim with carbon-fiber and Kevlar accents (\$30,000)

Displacement, stock/modified	304/363 cu in
Power (SAE net), stock/modified	315/440 bhp
Transmission	4-speed automatic
Wheelbase	99.0 in
Length	176.0 in
Curb weight	3782 lb

Performance:	stock	modified
Zero to 60 mph	6.3 sec	4.6 sec
Zero to 100 mph	15.1 sec	10.8 sec
Zero to 130 mph	28.3 sec	18.5 sec
Zero to 150 mph	N/A	29.0 sec
Street start, 5-60 mph	N/A	4.7 sec
Standing 1/4-mile	14.6 sec	13.0 sec
	@ 99 mph	@ 111 mph

Top-gear passing time,		
30-50 mph	3.7 sec	2.8 sec
50-70 mph	3.9 sec	2.9 sec
Top speed	155 mph	182 mph
(governed/redline limited)		
Braking, 70-0 mph	175 ft	161 ft
Roadholding, 300-ft-dia skidpad	0.82 g	0.93 g
Racecourse time		56.9 sec
EPA fuel economy, city driving	16 mpg	13 mpg
C/D observed fuel economy		16 mpg