

Restored to its original condition

Trolleybus society is happy about historical bus



During the transfer of bus number 151 to the trolleybus museum in the car park of the Romantikhotel Gravenberg (left to right): Martin Schreiber, Bruno Missaglia, Dietmar Hartkopf, Oliver Stein, Lutz Lüpkes and Wilfried Clotten representing the sponsor Siepmann.

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The vehicle with the registration number SG-OM 151H extends fleet of the trolleybus museum.

By Timo Lemmer

Much has been done in bus number 151. And yet the quarter-hour drive from the parking lot of the Romantik-Hotel Gravenberg to the depot of Stadtwerke looks like a leap into another time.

The Mercedes-Benz O 035 has been restored to its original state. Many things could be acquired from a Berlin museum, some were reconstructed in detail, others were simply still present.

Front right above the driver, the old bus number from duty times in Solingen, the city of blades, is displayed: it's number 151. Windows and stickers have remained intact. Schwarzfahren (fare evasion), which cost then 60 DM, and in addition to the Germany flag with explanation in German, among others, that of Yugoslavia. In English, there was no explanation of the fine at that time.

The people on the streets and those who wait at the bus stops for a modern public bus, look - sometimes interested, sometimes surprised. Again and again they wave. The beige-brown paint reminds of the old cityscape. It is noisy, it is hot - and yet the handful of passengers look happy when they get off the bus at the bus depot: the mammoth project "Wagen 151" was a success. The members of the trolleybus museum are satisfied.

"We have reached our most important goal," says coordinator Dietmar Hartkopf. Because his society is now flexible, can participate in September at the bus classic car meeting in Mönchengladbach - and above all: meet customer requests for tours outside the trolleybus network. Because the two historic buses which are currently in use, are very popular. And they can only be used in the trolleybus network.

The trolleybus society wanted to enlarge its fleet, and now after several years, it is done. The hotel parking lot was therefore chosen intentionally: whether Rūdenstein, Wipperaue, the romantic hotel - the desired wedding destinations can now be added to the route.

The bus which originally was painted bright red with white lettering "Das Solinger", has traveled over 700,000 kilometers. Once the model was the most popular type in Solingen, it was procured 61 times from 1972 to 1984. After its restoration by Rein & Becker in the Hessian town of Sinn the bus was transferred to Solingen at a maximum speed of 75 km/h. "It was running faultlessly. Like a new car - with broken air conditioning", joked Oliver Stein from Rein & Becker.

For about ten years the bus was standing in the depot. In the beginning, much work was done by the society members, and with the support of the partner Siepmann, such as body or paint. Wilfried Clotten of the traditional company which is now producing in Saarland but is also back in Solingen, says: "We want to get involved here at a local level. And it has become really beautiful. "

"We have reached our most important goal."

The members of the trolleybus society agree. Their chairman Lutz Lüpkes says: "The bus is in an as new condition." Now the bus with the car number 151 is back. With its new registration: SG-OM 151H.