

Grand Prix models BE1302 – BE1339

Original for Mercedes models: W201,W124,S124,C124,W126,R107,R129



Background

Becker has been supplying Mercedes car radios for decades. Historically names like Monza, Europa, Grand Prix and Mexico have been used from the 70's till the end of the 20th century.

Looking at the 80's and 90's, the decades where Mercedes sold over a million of W201's and W124's, one can distinguish the following Becker model names :

- Avus
- Monte Carlo
- Europa
- Grand Prix
- Mexico

Slowly the W201 and W124 are being cherished as young-times (i.e. future old timers) and purists start seeking the original radio's, or at least a radio that fits the time of build. As the availability radio's in good condition is declining, second hand prices for some of the Becker models are increasing on the market. The Mexico is the most desirable, especially the later models with 'diversity'. These models are so called 2-block systems, where the dual-tuner is placed in the trunk. Very often only the front end is being offered on the second hand market, as well additional wiring needs to be put in place.

Here, I will be focussing on the different Grand Prix models, the 'second best' high end, easy and quick to install in your car. You will possibly find some interesting models as well within this range.

Disclaimer

The creator of this document gathered this information from various sources, like internet and various Becker Operation Instruction manuals. Although he tried to verify the information as much as possible, he cannot be held responsible for any mistakes made or liable for any consequences.

He has no relation to the Becker or Mercedes companies, so these companies can't be held liable either.

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Model overview

Please note: The overview is in order of type number. The sequence of release by Becker/Mercedes is not necessarily in that order.

Type	Name ¹	Voltage	Language	1 or 2 unit system ²	RDS ³	fix or best ⁴	Autostore (AST) ⁵	Dual tuner /Diversity ⁶	Cassette or CD	CDC-steering ⁷	nr. of speakers ⁸	Output	Line-Out	Frontpanel	Display	Available as ¹⁰	Rare-ity ¹¹
BE1302	Grand Prix 2000	12V	German	1	yes	BEST	no	no	Cassette	no	2	2x20W	no	black with silver	Wide	ab werk	*
BE1305	Grand Prix 2000	12V	English	1	no	-	no	no	Cassette	no	2	2x20W	no	black with silver	Wide		****
BE1310	Grand Prix 2000	12V	English	1	yes	BEST	no	no	Cassette	no	2	2x20W	no	black with silver	Wide		****
BE1311	Grand Prix	12V	German	1	yes	FIX	no	no	Cassette	yes	2 or 4	4x10W	no	black with silver	Wide		****
BE1315	Grand Prix	12V	German	1	yes	BEST	no	no	Cassette	no	2	2x20W	no	black with silver	Wide		****
BE1319	Grand Prix 2000	12V	German	1	yes	FIX	no	no	Cassette	yes	2	2x20W	no	black with silver	Wide	ab werk	**
BE1320	Grand Prix 2000	12V	German	1	yes	FIX	no	no	Cassette	yes	2 or 4	4x10W	no	black with silver	Wide		****
BE1326	Grand Prix 2000	12V	English	1	no	-	no	no	Cassette	yes	2 or 4	4x10W	no	black with silver	Wide		****
BE1330	Grand Prix	12V	English	1	yes	FIX	yes	no	Cassette	yes	2 or 4	4x10w	no	full black	Wide	MB aftermarket	****
BE1339	Grand Prix	12V	English	1	yes	FIX	yes	no	Cassette	yes	2 or 4	4x10w	4-channel	full black	Wide	MB aftermarket	****
BE1341	Grand Prix 2000	24V	German	1	yes	BEST	no	no	Cassette	no	2	2x20W	?	black with silver	Wide		*****

Notes to the table:

1) Naming

The name was either Grand Prix or Grand Prix 2000. It seems that the Grand Prix (w/o 2000) has been introduced after the 2000-series, although there could also be a connection to whether the radio was only delivered at the dealer (not orderable from factory).

2) 1 or 2-block system

All Grand Prix models were 1-DIN block systems, as compared to the Mexico series (from the end 80's-begin 90's) where all models (except one/some) were 2-block systems.

3) RDS

RDS stands for **R**adio **D**ata **S**ystem and is a method of inaudibly transmitting additional information in the FM-band. That means the transmission of information by the station and its evaluation by the car radio. The information may be i.e.:

- Program identification
- Program service name
- Traffic program code
- Traffic announcement
- Alternative frequencies for this program
- Program type (sports, music, news)
- etc.

RDS was not available in all markets (yet), and therefore some of the models were not equipped with this functionality at all.

4) BEST or FIX /AutoBest

Radio stations are not broadcasting necessarily on the same frequency nationally. This means that while you are driving through a country, your favourite station can have multiple frequencies.

Early RDS-models were equipped with a button called **BEST**. This allows the user to manually initiate an automatic search for the best alternative frequency of the program they are listening to.

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Later RDS-models were equipped with automatic initiation for a search of an alternative frequency. This was also referred to by Becker as **Auto-Best** (today known as AF). If the reception quality of the station deteriorates, an automatic BEST-evaluation is made. The function **FIX** allows the user to deactivate this and keep the actual program fixed to a frequency.

Model BE1330 and BE1339 don't have a specific FIX button, but the FIX function is behind the FM-key. All other RDS equipped models show a button BEST or FIX.

5) AutoStore

With this function it is possible to store the eight strongest stations automatically.

6) Diversity / Dual tuners

None of the Grand Prix models listed here are equipped with Diversity (dual tuners).

Diversity was introduced by Becker in 1987 on the Mexico model. It allowed one tuner to receive the actual radio channel, while the other one was overseeing the other channels.

The first model(s) of the Mexico with diversity(s) did not have RDS, which seems to make it unusable today as it is no longer supported in the broadcasting.

7) CD-Changer-steering

This option allows to connect a Becker CD-changer to the radio and control it from the panel. In some cases an Alpine CDC can be connected as well.

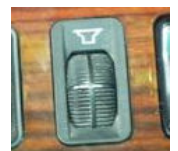
It seems that some Grand Prix models have more functionality for CDC-control than others. It is being said that the BE1311 is equal to the BE1320, however it would have more functionality for CDC.

8) Number of speaker connections

Don't be fooled by what you see at the backside of the radio. Some models came with 4 outputs, however 2 of them were 'blinded' by a plastic cap, and out of function. There is no connection behind them. The red label on top of the radio should show the actual output option.



Next to the speakers in the front, Mercedes optionally delivered speakers in the rear from factory. In order to connect and fade them, a fader-regulator (in German 'Überblendregler') was installed from factory in the console, close to the gear shifter. This allowed to have 4 speakers driven by a radio with only output for 2. Sound quality is perceived by many as being 'deteriorated' by this technology and often by-passed.



9) Connection for external amplifier / Line out

This feature makes the Grand Prix BE1339 very interesting. As the only model, it is equipped with 4-channel line out (LF-RF-LR-RR), which allows you to hook it up to any external amp. So, if you like to keep the vintage radio look, but you like to have 'better' sound from your (hidden) speakers, I guess this is what you want. Becker Specification on the Line out: ca. 340mV_{eff} / 10kΩ. Downside: The BE1339 is very rare and hard to find.



10) Availability as...

It is known for some Grand Prix models to have been delivered only as aftermarket radio. It would have been delivered by the Mercedes dealer for a new car (ordered without radio) or as a replacement. The basic connections are in any case equal for the models specified here.

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11) Rare-ity

How easy is it to find one of the models on the second hand market ? The stars give an indication; the more stars, the more unique the model seems to be. This is based on personal e-bay observations over a period of months. No rocket science here....

Gallery

Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1302



Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1305



Becker Grand Prix

Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1310



Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1311



Becker Grand Prix BE1315



Becker Grand Prix

Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1319



Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1320



Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1326



Becker Grand Prix

Becker Grand Prix BE1330



Becker Grand Prix BE1339



24 VOLT model:

Becker Grand Prix 2000 BE1341

