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SEE PAGE 70
FOR DETAILS

TRAVEL IN TIME



THIS EDITION of Mercedes Driver has been an absolute joy to pull together. Hot on the heels of our bumper R107 and R129-themed issue (grab a copy at bit.ly/issuesamd),

we've journeyed through more than seven decades of Mercedes passenger car production. Along the way, we've enjoyed time with an AMG C205 C63, an R129 SL 500, a C114 250 CE and the pair of Gullwings proudly promoted as our cover story. Separated by fifty-six years of automotive success, they offer two very different flavours of the same basic design concept.

Being able to bring together a 1954 300 SL and a 2010 SLS AMG was an opportunity not to be missed. The same is true of the trio of 1950s diesels we've managed to assemble. The Gullwings might be able to steal the show, but were it not for the popularity of the W136 170 D (and Db), the Borgward Hansa 1800 D and the W120 180 D, Mercedes might not be in business today. You might now be pointing at this page and asking what a Borgward has to do with Mercedes production cars, let

alone the survival of the company. Read the feature on page 74 and all will become clear.

In something of a theme for this issue, we've taken a step back in time to examine the origins and subsequent success of AMG. From humble roots, the Affalterbach concern has been producing ballistic Benzes for more than five decades. The marque's most recent offerings embrace turbocharging technology where once huge-displacement powerplants ruled the roost. As if to prove the point, the 302bhp AMG CLA 35 announced its arrival in dramatic fashion by wowing the world in New York City just before we went to press. Offering an accessible route into AMG ownership for our favourite manufacturer's growing youth oriented customer base, the cool coupe packs style, performance and practicality in a pleasingly priced package. Rest assured, Mercedes' future looks as pleasing as its illustrious past.



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MINISTRY OF SOUND

Bike racer and pro tuner, Barry Burrell, has created a 600bhp
AMG C205 C63 making all the right noises

WORDS **Emma Woodcock** PHOTOGRAPHY **Adrian Brannan**



Thwam. Thu... thu... thwam. A big capacity bent eight hammers at the air, over-speeding the rear axle and sending the car into a graceful slide. You can believe your eyes! This is an up-to-the-minute AMG C63 coupe and it's drifting. In a world where battered BMWs and aggressively cambered Nissans form the status quo, this Mercedes' sideways stance leaves you brimmed with questions. This is no standard AMG experience. Barry Burrell is no ordinary Mercedes owner.

Bike racing fans may well have heard of him before now. He made his name wrestling single-litre monsters at the front of the British Superbike field, yet he's every bit as excited by high-speed four-wheelers. As if to prove the point, he established Speed Ministry, a one-stop tuning shop capable of making both car and driver quicker. "I've wanted to do something like this for years," he tells us. Why not stick with powerful bikes?

"Enthusiasts drive and tune their cars all year round. Motorcycling is a far more seasonal pursuit," he explains.

After opening its doors in March 2018, Speed Ministry forged a reputation for extracting big power and enhanced chassis dynamics from M-badged Bimmers, but Barry wanted a fresh challenge. A C205 C63 was the answer. Now, no good tuning company would leave their demonstrator standard for long, and Speed Ministry is no different, which is why the car was quickly transformed into a monster. A full Akrapovic Evolution Line exhaust came first, the system's titanium pipes arcing into an active crossover allowing output gases from both cylinder banks to mingle before the tune-fun combo hits bulky valves. The result is a distinctive aural revolution. "It's actually a little quieter from inside the car," smirks Barry. "The titanium dissipates sound quicker than standard pipework, but the tone is a far crisper. It's a quality system." A set of matte carbon-fibre exhaust surrounds provide the visual clout to match. »

Above Imagine seeing this filling your car's rear-view mirror

The Akrapovic kit was quickly paired with a Pipercross air filter, ensuring the twin-turbocharged four-litre V8 could breathe freely before its date on the rollers. Speed Ministry produces its own custom maps, designed and executed by an in-house calibrator. "We were keen to explore the power a tuned C63 might produce," Barry stresses. "When we started the project, few companies were playing with the W205 AMG platform. We wanted to be at the forefront of this new wave of Mercedes modifying, so you can imagine how pleased we were when, after we coursed through line after line of ECU code, our development vehicle delivered more than 600bhp on the dyno. I was impressed," he grins, suitably proud of a job well done.

TONED DOWN

The immense poke, however, came like a wrecking ball. While big numbers generated during the car's time on the rolling road looked good on paper, Barry was keen to tame the beast. A slight detune with a focus on roadgoing driveability has, therefore, culminated in the creation of a more useable performance Mercedes. It's one which currently serves as its master's daily, and thanks to a respectable 575bhp coupled with 570lb-ft torque, it's a C63 still capable of serving up an absolute maelstrom.

With apexes to clip, the Speed Ministry gang wasted no time in refreshing the C63's suspension. "We were going to fit lowering springs, but as soon as I experienced the car after its new map was installed, it was clear we would need a far beefier

setup," Barry recalls. KW Variant 3 coilovers provided the perfect solution. The sophisticated dampers come with a wide range of adjustability, including tweakable ride height, compression and rebound, allowing the user to fine-tune the host vehicle for every driving environment, be it fast-road, track day or competition.

That's not all. Thanks to KW's advanced design, Barry and his team can be sure their C63 will never meet a situation it can't handle. Working to similar concepts, the Variant 3's patented Twin Valve Rebound Adjustable (TVR-A) and Twin Valve Compression Adjustable (TVC-A) technologies use dual-valving to bake in high-speed responses. In short, this means each coilover is pre-set to act predictably when the going gets especially tough. Add a welcome dose of road-racer stance, and it's easy to see to understand why these premium performance dampers have proved so popular.

"They've worked out really well on the AMG," Barry muses. "In standard guise, the rear of the car would come around in unwelcome fashion if you turned into a corner off throttle. It's a condition totally eliminated following the installation of the coilovers, which help with faster, more responsive direction changes as well as encouraging the car to hold the road more efficiently." Thankfully, the change in character hasn't come at the expense of comfort; despite running his AMG with aggressive, circuit-ready settings, the sensational C63 you're looking at on these pages is still a perfectly useable road car. "I thought the KWs would need constant alteration, but there's a sweet spot that's great for both road and track work," he reveals.

Facing page Despite the fact it looks like somebody has sellotaped a Kindle to the dashboard, the AMG's cockpit is a great place to be

Below A smattering of tuning and styling parts sets this C205 apart from the rest, further proving how great the C63 platform is for personalisation



Speed star

As good as the C205 might be, it can't go sideways without the driving talent to match. Enter Elliott Cole, GT racer, precision driving coach and a key member of Barry's team. Working with McLaren and Mercedes itself, he's helped car enthusiasts go faster everywhere from the Arctic Circle to Shanghai's Formula One circuit. If you were wowed by the Green Hell C190 AMG GT R throwing shapes at last year's Festival of Speed, then you'll be interested to know you were witnessing Elliott strut his stuff at Goodwood. A key component of Barry's driving training programme, he's an expert in going fast and making you and your car much, much quicker.





The Speed Ministry Mercedes had the all-out performance to snap necks, but it needed the appearance to match. Building on its previous experience sourcing and fitting bespoke carbon-fibre components to the bodies of BMWs, the team responded by searching Europe for a set of motorsport-inspired add-ons for the C63. "The task was tougher than we thought," Barry says. "The AMG C205 features completely different styling to saloon and estate models." Nevertheless, his band of merry men persisted, leading to reward at the end of a four-month quest; a bounty of lacquered weave now runs all over the car. Up front, heavily curved carbon dive planes and a full-length splitter pointing up towards the wheel arches are bolstered by the presence of striking grille inserts. There's a blunt, stocky spoiler at the rear, while floor-nudging side skirts underscore the sills with lightweight composite. It's pure track-oriented theatre, imbuing the C63 with a level of aggression rarely seen this side of the pitwall.

FORGE AHEAD

One final change completes the visual conversion. Punching out of the arches, measuring nineteen inches at the front axle and twenty at the rear, a set of sparkling HRE P101 alloys were fitted to the car not long before our photo shoot. They immediately elevated this awesome AMG to the status of showstopper. "In terms of quality, nothing comes close to HRE products," Barry grins. Forged from a



DRIVER

Q&A



BARRY BURRELL

First Mercedes
This one

Favourite Mercedes
AMG E63 S 4MATIC+

Best thing about your AMG C205 C63
Without doubt, it's the noise generated by the V8 shouting through the Akrapovic exhaust

Worst thing about your AMG C205 C63
The C205 holds water around the window seals, encouraging streaks on glass and bodywork after rainfall



single billet of 6061-T6 aluminium, each rim combines distinctive, filigree spoke style with minimal weight and immense strength. It's easy to see why Barry fell in love with the wicked wheels.

When it comes to appreciating the finished Benz, the general public is equally enamoured. Indeed, several Mercedes fans have tried to buy the sleek sports machine. Furthermore, an ever-increasing number of AMG owners are sending their cars to Speed Ministry for tuning work following exposure to this excellent C63, meaning V8s and V6s wearing the three-pointed star are pulsing out of the company's premises quicker than we can count! One owner even booked into the workshop on the strength of nothing more than the development car's exhaust note. "I drove past the guy, who was also piloting a C63," remembers Barry. "He tracked me down and booked his car in for the installation of an Akrapovic system the very next day!"

INSIDE TRACK

When customers arrive at Speed Ministry's base, they're treated to a tuning experience like few others. Located mere metres from Mallory Park race circuit and finished in bare brick, the firm's reception area doesn't just look good, it provides visitors with a chance to peek into the workshop and dyno cell. "Our aim is to promote transparency in everything we do," confirms Barry. "It's not all about tuning, though. Driver training courses, track days and an upcoming group tour to the Nürburgring are all proof of my

Picture show

Barry's team and the C63 on the pages before you aren't backwards about coming forwards. Cast an eye over social media and you'll see drifts, donuts and burnouts galore. You might even stumble upon footage of Barry and the AMG going head-to-head at Rockingham with British Superbike racer, James Ellison and his two-wheeled wonder. The footage was filmed for a planned television show we're looking forward to seeing. Add a Donington track day with cricketer, Ben Stokes, and boxer, Carl Frampton, plus drifting with Geordie Shore's Gaz Beadle, and you've got an AMG with real star quality! Kick back and look for the Speed Ministry team on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



company's passion for performance beyond the four walls of a garage."

He remains infatuated with Mercedes' brutish range toppers; late last year, he hosted what's believed to be the biggest-ever AMG Private Lounge meet on British soil, welcoming in excess of sixty owners and their cars. Consequently, the C63 has become a favourite in his fleet. "I was supposed to be getting rid of the Merc following completion of its development work, but I'm definitely keeping the car," he confesses. This isn't the only change of heart he's had in recent times. "I'm about to rebrand Speed Ministry as Mallory Performance Centre," he smiles. "It's a better name and far more suited to the kind of clients we're attracting. It also highlights where we're based without people having to search online!" Ask how the AMG compares to his M4 and he's equally effusive. "The Merc wins every time. It looks great, goes like stink and the noise is amazing!" From DTM-esque decoration to a hammering exhaust note, this force-fed V8 is personalised perfection. 



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New AMG CLA 35 4MATIC debuts in NYC

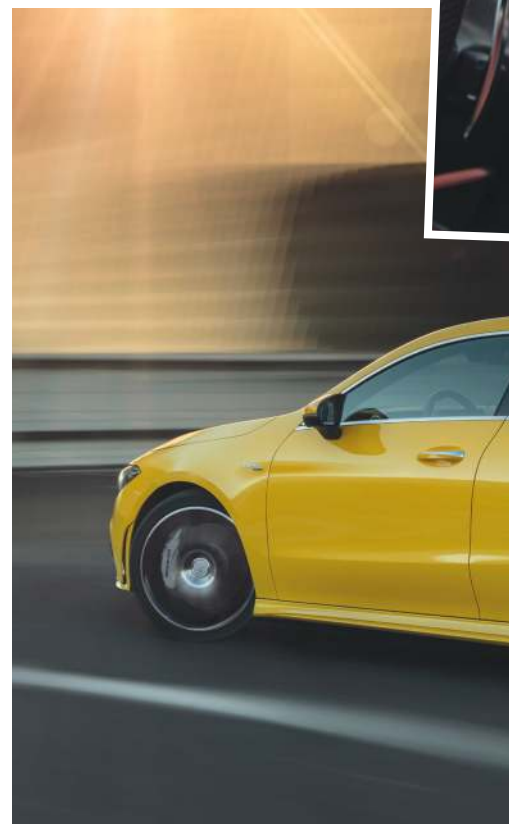
Compact four-door offered with fresh two-litre lump

They say that if the USA sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold. It's no surprise, then, that the motoring world got very excited after Mercedes launched the AMG CLA 35 4MATIC at the New York International Show just before we went to print. Market launch for Western Europe is planned for August following the new AMG's exciting world premiere in the Big Apple and the immediate gasps of adoration from pretty much everyone in attendance.

Packing all-wheel drive as standard, the CLA 35 is the latest entry point to AMG ownership and shares progressive technology with the existing A-Class

produced in Affalterbach. The four-door coupe (which sounds like a contradiction in terms), however, is bolder, offering performance and practicality with 306hp delivered from a new development of the AMG two-litre turbocharged powerplant.

"With its iconic design and agile driving dynamics, the new CLA 35 is an attractive offer for a young, active and lifestyle-conscious target group. These Mercedes customers expect exciting design and superior performance from their new cars. They also demand inspiring handling characteristics. The new CLA 35 ticks every box and enables owners entering the world of AMG for the first time to step into the fascinating sphere of *Driving Performance* in a completely emotional



way", says Tobias Moers, CEO of Mercedes-AMG GmbH and a man acutely aware of the high percentage of young drivers now looking to the three-pointed star as their first choice of performance ride following the manufacturer's widespread adoption of turbocharging technology across its range of high-powered production cars.

The AMG Speedshift 7G dual-clutch transmission also contributes to the agile and dynamic character of the new CLA 35. The gear ratios have been configured so that the driver experiences super-responsive acceleration in all speed ranges, with the added bonus of ultra-fast shifting and launch control. As a new feature in the AMG drive programmes, the new CLA 35 comes with what Mercedes calls AMG Dynamics. This integrated dynamic handling control system extends the functions of electronic stability programs (ESP) with agile interventions



according to the driver's wishes. For example, during hard cornering, imperceptible braking intervention on the rear inside wheel creates a defined yawing movement across the vertical axis, thereby delivering more precise steering.

The different manifestations of AMG Dynamics are listed as Basic and Advanced, both selectable through the new model's super-wide multimedia touchscreen. Basic is essentially an everyday driving program promoting a leisurely ride through high damping rates. Advanced is, as you might expect, the sportier of the two options, ensuring the CLA remains neutrally balanced, but rides on more focused (firmer) suspension settings suited to an enjoyable blast

around the twisties. A separate Individual mode allows the driver to configure preferences to suit his or her requirements.

The CLA 35's two-litre turbo engine is a new development based on the M260 four-cylinder unit powering the current A-Class. The crankcase is made of high-strength, lightweight die-cast aluminium, reducing the sexy saloon's overall weight, a quality already aided by the adoption of frameless doors. As ever, an AMG Aerodynamics Pack offers external decoration, including a front apron, a larger front splitter, a more pronounced lip spoiler and gloss black detailing. We'll reveal pricing on the *Mercedes Driver* Facebook page when the figures are released by Mercedes.



Auto Finesse launches detailing academy

Leading car care specialist, Auto Finesse, has revealed details of its new training programme designed to serve professional detailers and enthusiastic DIYers alike. The dedicated detailing space is at the firm's Hertfordshire headquarters and is set to host a range of courses covering a wide range of topics and car cleaning disciplines, from the foundations of detailing to specifics relating to every aspect of keeping a car in tip-top cosmetic order. Facilitating the learning process is a brace of state-of-the-art and fully equipped detailing bays, each with colour-balanced lighting, purified water filtration systems, low-level ramps and demonstration vehicles to enable participants to practice technique. Four different courses are being pitched, including Detail What You Bring (£395), Enthusiast (£295), Advanced (£395) and lastly, Professional (£2,495). Booking a place is a simple case of registering your interest at www.autofinesse.co.uk/academy



Benzes do battle in the BTCC

As reported in our last issue, three Mercedes-Benz A-Classes are competing in the 2019 British Touring Car Championship, which is delivering the thrills, spills and hard-fought bumper-to-bumper action we've come to expect from this amazingly tight competition. Unfortunately, Mercedes fans will have to wait a while longer for the results they crave. At the time of writing, Adam Morgan (Mac Tools) sits in thirteenth position, Aiden Moffat (Laser Tool Racing) sits in eighteenth and Daniel Rowbottom (Catadean Racing) is playing catch-up in twenty-ninth place. The good news is that we're at the start of an incredibly long season, with three races and a reverse grid promising to change the pecking order every time the BTCC rolls into town. For a calendar of fixtures, driver standings and team information, point your browser at www.btcc.net

EQC 4MATIC pricing and spec announced

Special editions and a range of less exotic trim options for the first all-electric Mercedes road car

The first fully electric Mercedes is now available to order with prices starting at £65,640 on the road. The EQC 4MATIC is the first production vehicle from the manufacturer's EQ brand and is powered by an 80kwh lithium-ion battery with a range of 259 miles and an output of 408hp. Mercedes claims its new offering can reach 62mph from rest in 5.1 seconds and boasts a top speed of 111mph.

EQC Sport models come as standard with Active Parking Assist, a package comprising a reversing camera, Blind Spot Assist, mirror package, Keyless-Go Comfort package, LED headlights, Seat Comfort package with electro-pneumatic four-way lumbar support for heated front seats, nineteen-inch multi-spoke alloy wheels, a 10.25-inch touchscreen multimedia display and ambient lighting with a choice of sixty-four colours. We're reliably informed that changing dash dials to glow red doesn't add 20bhp.

AMG Line trim adds a black front grille, leather sport seats, carbon fibre trim, running boards, twenty-inch alloys, a jet-wing front apron and lots of gloss black detailing. AMG Line Premium models feature all

of the above equipment, plus an electric sliding roof, Burmester surround sound, MBUX augmented navigation, smartphone integration and wireless charging for compatible smartphones. As if that wasn't enough, EQC AMG Line Premium Plus trim adds MBUX Interior Assistant, heads-up display, a 360° parking camera and memory seat functionality.

EQ, which Mercedes says represents Electric Intelligence (ooh, clever!), is the sub-brand to be used for all of the manufacturer's forthcoming battery electric vehicles. The EQ concept car previewed at the Paris Motor Show in 2016, with the promise of ten EQ models by 2022, three of them earmarked for Smart. A single bespoke platform developed specifically for electric drivetrains forms the core of what EQ offers, including the entry-level EQC 400 seen here.

Special edition EQCs are already being readied. The Edition 1 and the Edition 1886 feature much of the AMG Line Premium Plus trim with a few model-specific toys thrown in to justify extra cost. Talking of which, the 1886 tops the EQC charts with a price of £79,260 on the road. Visit your local Mercedes dealer and be one of the first to enjoy the benefits of Benz-badged electric dreams.





Countdown begins to Dakar Rally Saudi

The world's most challenging and exciting race is set to mark a new chapter in motorsport history following news the Dakar Rally is switching to Saudi Arabia from 2020. Rally drivers from across the world, and especially those in the Gulf, can enter the inaugural epic Asia debut of the thirty-year-old race, which has swapped South America for the spectacular and uncharted terrain of western Asia. The gruelling route is set to pass through a diverse range of colours and surfaces, racing along and through canyons, dunes, mountains, deserts and wadis. The action starts on January 5th in the coastal city of Jeddah, continues to the Red Sea Project (which covers an area of 28,000 km²), NEOM, the city of Hail, Riyadh, then the eastern region through Rub' al Khali (Empty Quarter) desert, finishing January 17th in the historic Qiddiya district near Riyadh.



Mercedes opens pop-up shop in Norwich

Alan Partridge must be beyond excited. No sooner has the legendary broadcaster come down from the high of seeing the pedestrianisation of his beloved Norwich city centre, he's now got a Mercedes pop-up shop to visit between pulling shifts at North Norfolk Digital. Located in Chapelfield Shopping Centre, the modern motoring mecca allows customers to experience a selection of most recent models to wear the three-pointed star, including the new B-Class. Motorsport fans get the opportunity to compete against friends and family for the fastest lap in the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 zone simulator, while a dedicated 'EQ' zone gives store visitors the opportunity to explore the C-Class Coupe Hybrid and learn about the variety of electric and hybrid Mercedes vehicles in production. Free drinks are available to anyone presenting a Mercedes car key. A-haaaa!

See you there...

BTCC WEEKENDERS

Between the publication of this issue of *Mercedes Driver* and the launch of our September-October issue (in stores August 2nd), two more action-packed weekends of BTCC action take place. Watch the terrific trio of A-Classes do battle at Croft 15th-16th June and Oulton Park 29th-30th June. Tickets can be bought through btcc.net and each race will be televised live on ITV4.

BROMLEY PAGEANT OF MOTORING

Some say he thinks the selfie is the standard human greeting. Others say his dream car is the Austin Maxi. All we know is he's called The Stig and he's coming to the Peter James Bromley Pageant of Motoring when the event returns to Norman Park on Sunday 23rd June! Grab your tickets at bromleypageant.co.uk

GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED

More than 200,000 visitors will descend upon Goodwood for the venue's four-day Festival of Speed, beginning 4th July. A wealth of motoring excellence and superstar drivers will be waiting to greet you at the famous Chichester site. Watch super-fast hill climbs, marvel at the recently introduced rally stages and enjoy the latest and greatest cars doing the rounds. Visit goodwood.com for tickets and full itinerary of what's on, which for 2019, includes a new arena hosting a dazzling display of drifting.

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2000 Mercedes SLK320, Brilliant Silver, Black hide, 63000 miles, FSH..... £5,795



2007 Ford Mustang Shelby GT500, Torch Red, 9,500 miles, as new..... £45,000



1999 Mercedes E55 AMG, Brilliant Silver, every extra, 65000 miles, FSH..... £8,795



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2018 Skoda Karoq 1.5 TSI SE L, Candy White, 1 owner, 5200 miles £20,495



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2001(Y) VW Bora 2.8 V6 4Motion 6-speed, Bright Green, 44500 miles, FSH..... £5,795



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The warm weather is finally upon us, meaning many of you in charge of Mercedes cabriolets will be dropping the roof of your pride and joy in order to enjoy a summer of *al fresco* motoring. Keeping the canvas or vinyl drop-top of your car in good condition, however, can prove challenging, especially when it comes to older vehicles, where exposure to the elements over a long period of time can fade black fabric to grey. Fortunately, Renovo International is on hand with its world-renowned portfolio of fabric and vinyl roof care kits.

The British company's range of soft-top restoration and maintenance products includes a three-stage cleaning, colouring and ultra-proofing package. The first part of the process involves cleaning the affected fabric with a specially formulated

shampoo designed to remove any loose contaminants, mould, mildew and previously applied waterproofing agents. A soft brush works brilliantly at helping to get rid of dirt before a rinse with clean water reveals a perfectly prepared surface ready for a fresh coat of colour.

As soon as the hood has dried, a plentiful supply of the kit's recolouring agent (available in Pantone-matched black, dark blue, dark red, dark green and dark brown) can be brushed onto the prepared fabric. The product ensures discoloured canvas is quickly afforded a new lease of life before the final stage of the restoration process, which involves the application of a durable waterproofing solution providing a protective barrier against adverse weather, mould, mildew and harmful ultraviolet light.

Hold your horses! That's not all! Many convertible roofs are fitted with a flexible plastic rear screen. These windows are known to crease, producing an unsightly milky stain where folding of the roof causes stress across the plastic. Renovo has developed a drop-top window polish kit to help eliminate these white marks. Additionally, the company has produced a kit designed specifically to take care of convertible roofs made from vinyl.

Rest assured, we've tested these water-based Renovo products and they're every bit as good as we've made them sound. For further information or to place an order, visit the company's website.

Price: From £13.25 per product
renovointernational.com
 or call 01444 443277

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The Matador brand may be new to those outside Germany, but readers interested in buying one of the company's well-priced reversible ratchets can rest assured the firm has been producing first-rate chrome vanadium tools since the early 1900s. 'The Boss' is a ninety-tooth ratchet able to exert fifty percent more torque than DIN standards and is available in 1/4 and 1/2-inch socket sizes.

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pioneer-car.eu



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Despite the AMG-four's high boost levels, A45s aren't equipped with a bypass valve from factory. This is largely because the plastic valves in OEM setups aren't capable of handling the AMG's standard 26psi boost without failing prematurely. Enter Turbosmart's Kompact Shortie blow-off valve. This high-performance billet aluminium valve bolts directly onto the compressor cover of the AMG's turbo. With Dual Port and Plumb Back variants available, owners can choose between the classic blow-off valve sound or quieter, OEM-style operation. The Shortie's billet construction and advanced piston design eliminates the need for an O-ring seal thanks to fine machining tolerances, ensuring no leaks and extreme durability, even with boost cranked higher than standard pressure. Visit GCAP Performance's online store and place your order today.

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MEGUIAR'S QUIK SCRATCH BODYWORK BLEMISH ERASER KIT

Working by hand to remove swirls, scuffs and scratches takes time and energy, but this comprehensive kit from Meguiar's supplies you with everything you need to eliminate light paint defects with minimum effort. With the assistance of a standard household drill, you'll be saying *sayonara* to the annoying marks preventing your Merc's paintwork from looking its best. The kit includes a four-inch scratch eraser, a ScratchX 2.0 blemish remover (a compound featuring

microscopic abrasives to enhance depth of shine without harming paintwork) and a premium microfibre towel. This unique combination of products allows you to safely remove imperfections in paint, leaving a brilliant shine where once all you could see was unsightly disfigurement.

Price: £23
meguiars.co.uk or
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MOMO MOD.08

This three-spoke stunner from Italian automotive accessories brand, MOMO, features a deep dish design for maximum control and a yellow leather marker at the top of the rim to provide quick reference to where you're pointing your modified Mercedes. Choose between a suede or leather finish to accompany the anodised blue spokes.

Price: £215.99
momo-uk.co.uk



GLASER ENGINE REBUILD PARTS

When it comes to building or rebuilding a Mercedes engine, the challenge most enthusiasts face is clear: maximum availability of parts and the shortest possible delivery time. Thankfully, gaskets, seals, bolts, stem seals, crankshaft seals, cam seals and full cylinder head rebuild kits manufactured by respected Spanish engine specialist, Glaser, are available for immediate despatch in the UK.

Price Varies
enginepartsk.uk



GROM AUDIO BT3 BLUETOOTH SMARTPHONE INTEGRATION KIT

Owners of older cars may be frustrated by the way the factory head unit in their vehicle doesn't allow for smartphone connectivity. Thankfully, GROM Audio's BT3 Bluetooth integration kit permits streaming and hands-free mobile device operation through your car's original stereo by using a direct connection through the CD multi-changer port on the back of the head unit.

The system features built-in Bluetooth and

a separate microphone, along with two expansion ports which can be used for optional accessories, such as aux-in or iPod integration (cable sold separately). CD-quality sound is guaranteed, as is the ability to operate the kit via steering wheel controls. Invisible installation means no cluttering your car's cabin, plus you'll be able to take advantage of free firmware updates for the life of the product. Visit the website of GROM's sole UK distributor, Carputer-Shop, for further information and to place an order.

Price: £119.99
carputer-shop.co.uk or call 01530 888533

FOXWELL NT520 PRO DIAGNOSTIC SCANNER

This slimline handheld scanning tool for Mercedes, Smart and Maybach vehicles loaded with an OBD-II diagnostic port allows the user to read and clear ECU fault codes, reset oil and service lights, plus many more advanced features, including bidirectional component actuations and module coding, abilities usually reserved for high-end professional diagnostic tools. The NT520 is more than just a code reader, though, as proved by its ability to show live engine data on any EOBD compliant cars (petrol 2001+, diesel 2004+). Quick and easy to use and housed in a rugged case, the NT520 is shipped with a 4GB Micro SDHC memory card, a user manual, a robust carry case, instructions, a lifetime of free software updates and a twelve-month warranty.

Price: £195
gendan.co.uk or
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Leading fuel injection, ignition and carburettor specialist, Webcon, has announced the successor to its immensely popular Jet Drill tuning drill set. The imaginatively named Tuner Drill Set features twenty-two precision drills, each increasing in size by 0.1mm from 0.6mm to 3.2mm. Five of each drill is supplied, as is a double-ended pin vice. Supplied in a handy, double-latched carry case, this low-price product is a fantastic addition to the toolbox of any DIY enthusiast or professional Mercedes tuner and is available for immediate despatch.

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POWERHOUSE OF PERFORMANCE

From humble origins to global superstardom, AMG has served up beastly Benzes for more than fifty years

WORDS **Richard Gooding** PHOTOGRAPHY **Various**



AMG. Three little letters, but to Mercedes enthusiasts, they mean just one thing: performance, and lots of it! An independent outsider now fully enveloped in the manufacturer's stable, AMG's success with racing machines forms an important part of the firm's fruitful history building breathed-on Benzes, a pursuit that's lasted more than five decades and has produced some of the world's most impressive road cars.

Unlike fellow modifying outfit, Brabus, AMG can trace its roots back to motorsport. Mercedes employees, Hans-Werner Aufrecht

and Erhard Melcher, started building performance engines for their private customer base from within the confines of a small garage in an old mill (so far, so Porsche!) in Burgstall. In 1965, the duo struck gold with a racing engine they'd developed for Manfred Schiek, a former motorcycle racer who'd gained employment in the sports department at Daimler-Benz in Stuttgart. Mercedes had officially withdrawn from motor racing in 1955 following the horrific and widely publicised crash at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, an accident killing eighty-three spectators and injuring almost 180 more. Almost a decade later, factory bigwigs suggested new works touring cars would prove too costly to

Above The famous 300 SEL 6.8 AMG 'Red Pig' racer alongside the SLS AMG GT3

1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 **1967**



develop, resulting in Aufrecht and Melcher's preparation of a race-ready W112 300 SE for Schiek, who was determined to participate in the 1965 German Circuit Championship. His 238bhp six-cylinder 'Fintail' was readied in time for start of the competition, which he went on to win.


NAME OF THE GAME

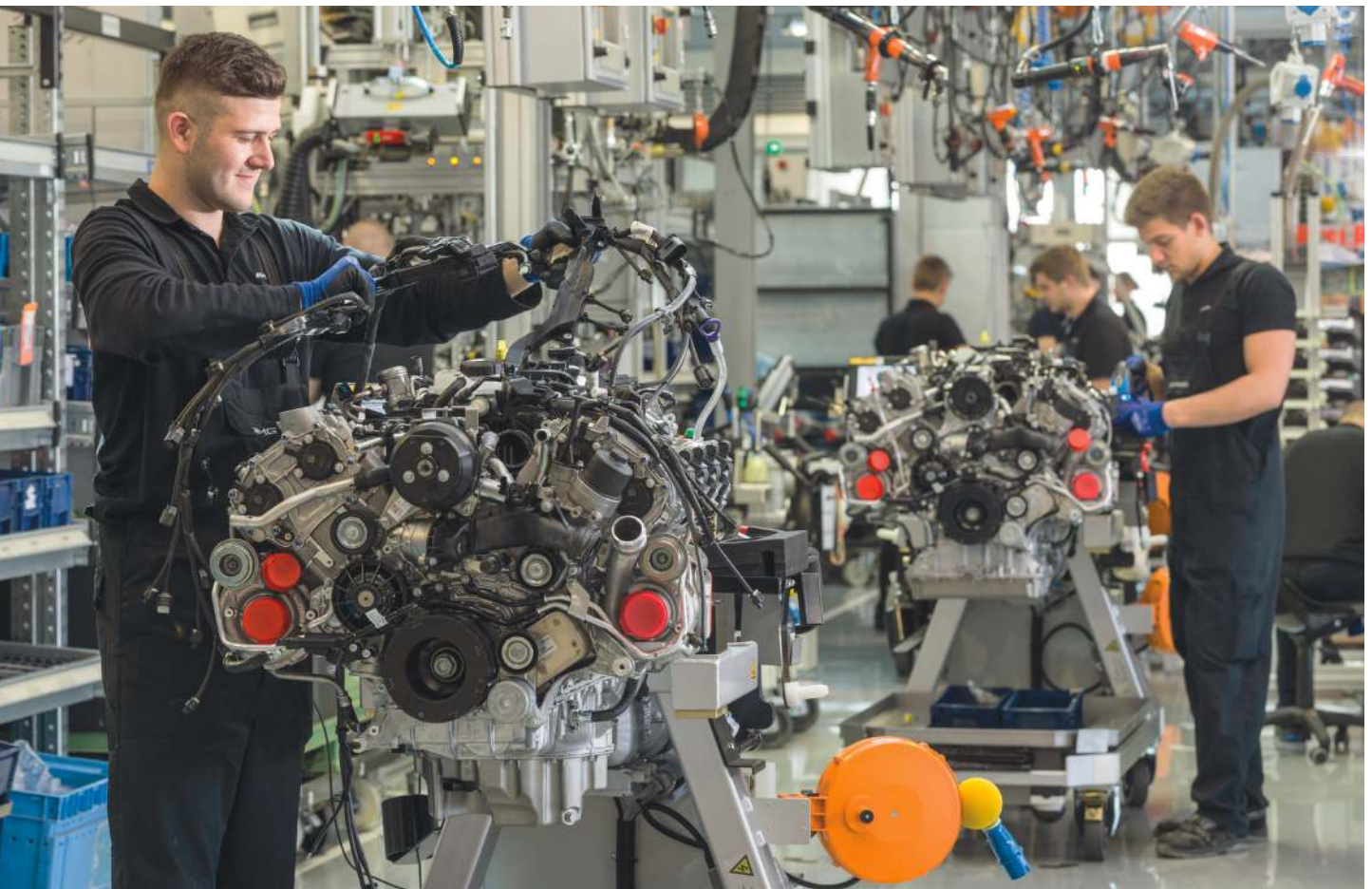
It didn't take long for other drivers to come knocking at Aufrecht and Melcher's door in the quest for high horsepower. Consequently, in 1967, the friends founded a new company, taking the initials from their surnames and adding the first letter from Grossapach, Aufrecht's birth town. AMG Motorenbau und Entwicklungsgesellschaft

Top Red Pig racing to class victory and second overall at the 1971 24 Hours of Spa

Above The twin-turbocharged 5.5-litre S63 AMG 'Thirty-Five' V8 meets the retro race car

mbH (AMG Engine Production and Development Ltd) was born! Motorsport was still the pair's shop window, but unexpected demand soon saw attention shift to the tuning of road cars. Unsurprisingly, engine development was the primary concern, but braking systems, suspension and transmission upgrades were also key to producing fast, well-balanced, AMG-branded Mercedes sports machines.

Cylinder head and exhaust system tweaks resulted in 200bhp from the W114 of 1968, a sign that AMG's three-pointed star was rising. Little did Aufrecht and Melcher realise it was about to go stratospheric; at the 1971 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, the now-iconic 300 SEL 



Touring stars

Following the 300 SEL 6.8 AMG's surprising success at the 24 Hours of Spa in 1971, the 450 SLC AMG's victory at the 1980 Touring Car Grand Prix drew even more attention to the company's output. Arguably the best-loved AMG racers, however, were the DTM machines built by the firm in the 1980s and 1990s. An AMG-fettled 190E started the ball rolling in 1986, with the Affalterbach tuner going on to become the most successful brand in DTM history, securing fifty wins between 1988 and 1993. Nice!

6.8 AMG *Rote Sau* (Red Pig) rocketed to not only a class victory, but second overall at the Belgian circuit, soaring AMG to superstardom in the process. The company offered a W114 280 CE road car producing 210bhp bolstered by serious suspension upgrades, and further emphasising AMG as more than just an engineering outfit focused on powertrain performance, sports seats and a front spoiler were added to a rapidly expanding product catalogue. Aufrecht described his and Melcher's creations as "the vehicle equivalent of a tailormade suit", and as demand for AMG's ballistic Benzes continued to grow, the company – by now employing forty staff – moved into new premises at Affalterbach in 1976. The municipality remains the home of AMG today.

Another big breakthrough came in 1983, when AMG dropped the 500 SE's five-litre V8 into the 280 CE, a year before Brabus created the 190E V8. Pandering to lovers of the 'small car, big engine' formula, the resulting 280 CE 5.0 AMG became the blueprint for all monstrous eight-cylinder saloons thereafter. So far, so fast, but

the boys and girls at Affalterbach weren't done surprising the world just yet...

Regarded in the present as a legend, the 360bhp W124 300 E 5.6 AMG of 1987 was the first four-door to break the 300km/h (186mph) barrier. The model made use of the W126 S-Class V8. Nicknamed *The Hammer* due to its ferocious pace and available in a 385bhp, six-litre flavour with an astonishing 417lb-ft torque, not to mention the ability to romp to 60mph in just five seconds, the Mercedes mutant could keep up with contemporary Lamborghinis. At over fifty grand, the black beast was priced like a supercar, too! Room for four surly Swabians, a large boot, traditional Mercedes comfort and premium sports car performance, AMG's creation captivated the motoring world and instantly became an automotive icon.

STATES OF PLAY

The chaps in Stuttgart liked what they saw. In 1990, Daimler-Benz AG signed its first cooperation agreement with AMG, allowing the tuner's output to be sold directly through

1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967




Facing page AMG engine assembly continues to be carried out by hand

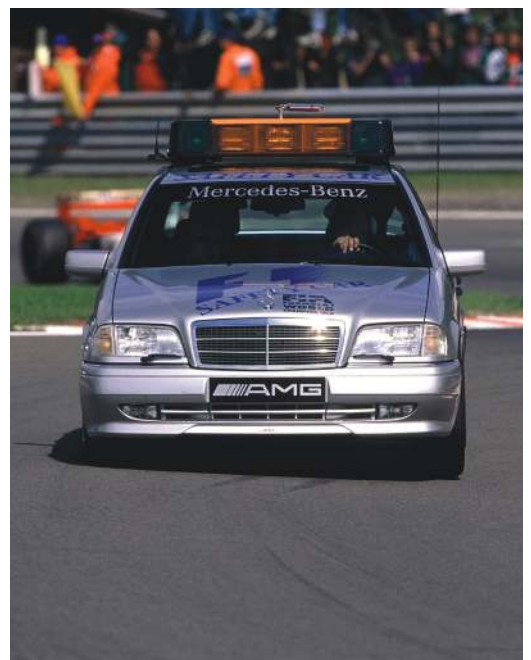
Top 1987's 190E 3.2 AMG was a game changer in the world of fast four-door saloons

Above Also in 1987, AMG released the legendary 300 CE known as *The Hammer*

Right In June 1996, the C63 AMG was used as an F1 safety car, with the performance brand from Affalterbach providing all official safety cars for the sport to this day

Mercedes dealerships and in the manufacturer's overseas markets. First to catapult itself away from the official Mercedes starting blocks was the limited edition 190E 3.2 AMG, a DM155,780, motorsport-inspired 'baby Benz' packing a 231bhp 3.2-litre straight-six punch. A wider client base meant further expansion at Affalterbach and the first fruits of cooperative labours in the form of the W202 C36 AMG, a turnkey car powered by a 280bhp 3.6-litre M104 inline-six and offered with full manufacturer warranty. From small tuner to global powerhouse in little more than twenty-five years, AMG's brand performance was as fast as its cars!

The first V8-powered C-Class was the 310bhp W202 C43 AMG. Whereas the C36 was a production C280 stripped down for reassembly at AMG, the 4.3-litre C43 was wholly-built on the Mercedes production line. Both cars were offered Stateside following DaimlerChrysler's successful majority ownership acquisition negotiations with Aufrecht, deal breaking which stretched into late 1998. The icing on the collegial cake was when Mercedes-AMG was formed on 1st January 1999, 



a short while after Aufrecht agreed to part with his dominating stake in the famous tuning company he co-founded. Subsequent AMGs went on to represent an even closer working relationship between Mercedes and its new performance division, which soon spilled into a far-reaching, full fat range of cars wearing the emotive three-letter badge and its accompanying performance and styling upgrades. Wind the clock forward to 2005, and DaimlerChrysler had acquired 100% of AMG shares with production climbing from 500 to 20,000 cars per year.

EVOLUTION OF THE SPECIES

Despite its move away from independence, AMG's spirit remained thanks to its new parent company's insistence that overall responsibility for the development of aerodynamics, brakes, chassis, design, interior, transmission and the marketing of AMG products should remain with its freshly acquired subsidiary. In 2006, the first fully AMG-designed engine landed in the form of the 6,208cc M156. The company has gone from strength to strength since, now occupying

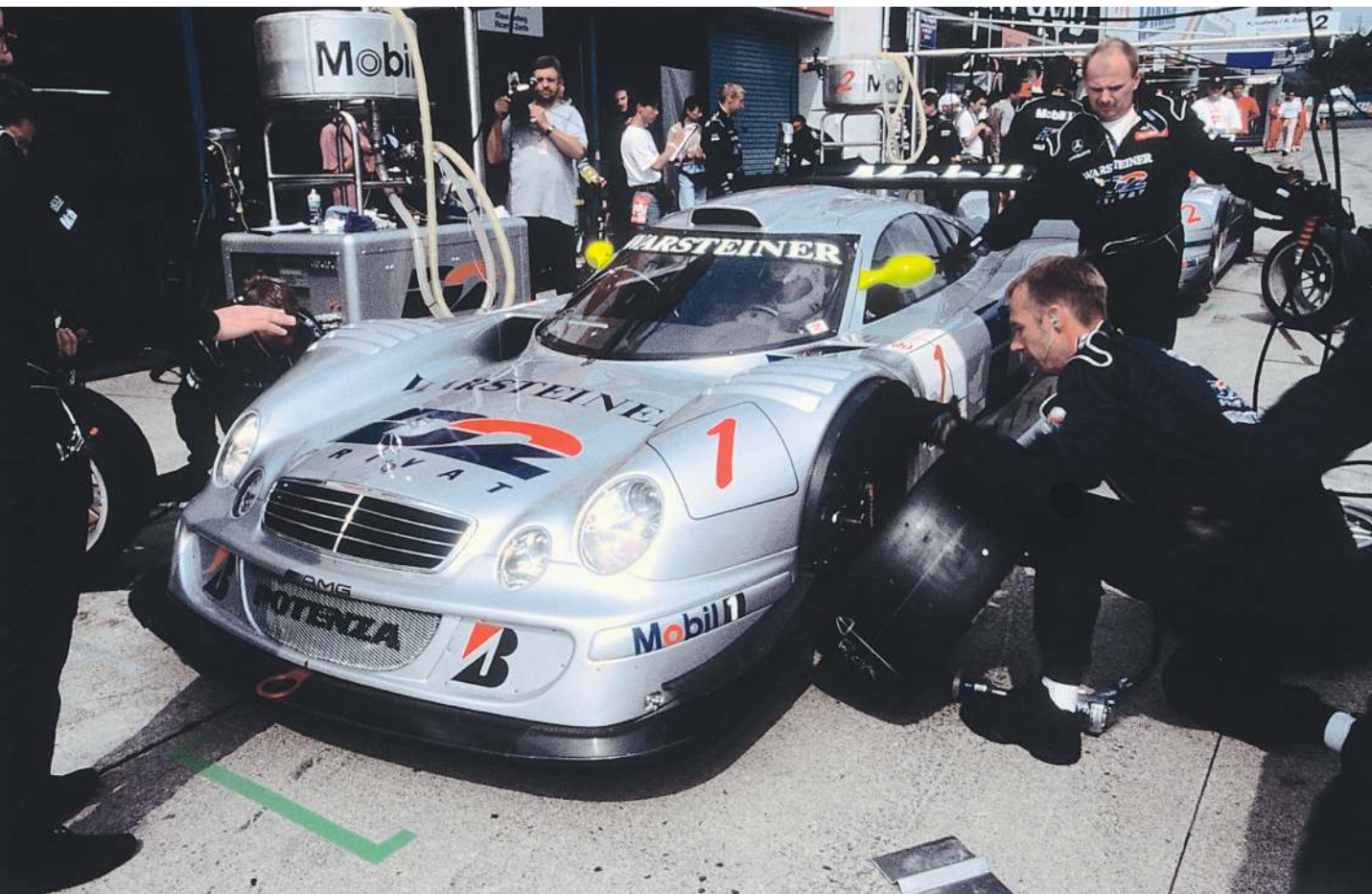
Big spender

In 1997, the CLK GTR was introduced to the world in anticipation of the same year's FIA GT Championship following the collapse of the DTM touring car series in 1996. The GTR was modified to satisfy rules for entry to the 1998 24 Hours of Le Mans, the first time Mercedes had taken part since 1991. The resulting CLK LM made use of the M119 HL V8 in place of the GTR's LS600 V12. Twenty-six GTR road cars were built between 1997 and 1999. Costing \$1.5m+, they were the costliest production cars that had ever been built.

426,000ft² in Affalterbach, with a quarter of that space reserved for engine building. The long-standing 'one man, one engine' tradition at remains, with a single technician responsible for creating an AMG powerplant from start to finish. His or her signature is proudly displayed on a commemorative plaque atop the completed unit.

The 2009 SLS was the first ground-up design to emerge from Affalterbach. Gullwing doors, an aluminium body and a 563bhp 6.2-litre V8 ensured the new arrival was as mighty as Mercedes could ever hope for. Indeed, AMG promotional literature announced the new sports machine as having "the world's most powerful naturally aspirated production series engine", a claim encouraging enthusiastic motorsport use; the SLS enjoyed a GT3 racing career before the more curvaceous AMG GT arrived in 2014.

Production of the biturbo V12 – it's worth noting AMG's first twelve-cylinder unit was revealed back in 1995 – for the S65, G65 and SL65 moved to Daimler's Mannheim plain in 2016, with rumours suggesting the 2019 S65 Final Edition will be the last twelve-banger



1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 **1967**



Facing page W297 CLK GTR was designed as a race car for the 1997 GT Championship, although a limited run of road cars were built to satisfy homologation requirements

Above From 1997 to 2001, Mercedes offered the SL 73 AMG, an amazingly powerful R129 limited to just 85 units



Right (Top to bottom) 2007 CLK 63 AMG Black Series, 2009's SLS AMG GT and the 2013 SLS AMG Electric Drive



Far right Each completed AMG engine is decorated with a plaque highlighting the name and signature of the technician responsible for assembly



FROM THE
VAULTS1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 **1967**

Above The Mercedes-AMG R50 ONE is a plug-in hybrid sports car concept unveiled in 2017 and featuring technology inherited from the world of F1



Right (Top to bottom) 2014 AMG GT, 2018 AMG G63 SUV and the 2019 AMG F1 E10 EQ Power+, seen here carrying Valtteri Bottas to victory at the 2019 Azerbaijan Grand Prix

produced by Mercedes-AMG. Turbocharged V8s allied to an electric motor and battery pack are expected to be favoured. Sacrilege? Not when power for the new motor is already being quoted as close to 805bhp!

Today, AMG employs 1,700 staff and offers a rich and varied range of performance-oriented Mercedes passenger vehicles. Be it the A35 hot hatch, the G63 SUV or the near-£200k S65 Cabriolet, there's an AMG to suit all tastes in style and pace. Each four-wheeler is built with the brand's *Driving Performance* mantra firmly in mind.

NEXT CHAPTER

With a PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) version of every model expected to hit showrooms from 2020, the days of big-displacement AMG petrol engines may soon be over. That said, as Mercedes demonstrated with the 740bhp, 737lb-ft SLS Electric Drive of 2013, zero-emission drivetrains can still sock a monster punch. If the R50 ONE (formerly known as Project One) concept of 2017 is an indication of what's to come, more exciting adventures in Mercedes motoring are on their way; marking AMG's fiftieth anniversary, the hybrid hypercar was loaded with F1 tech and rocketed all the way to 1,000bhp. Whatever the future holds, AMG is determined to approach it in style!



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TORQUE *Enthusiast*

Simon Inglis

Stay safe on the road and even the duller of Mercedes passenger cars can bring bags of enjoyment, no matter how experienced you are behind the wheel

My trusty W203 C180 – it's the base model without a Kompressor – keeps on going. Admittedly, the car isn't being asked to take care of any long-haul duties at the moment, but that's not to say mileage isn't ramping up. There's the weekly shop, school runs, the taxi of mum and dad. You know the story!

The stop-start journeys the car currently undertakes have brought forward a number of wear and tear concerns I need to address without delay. Firstly, the brake pad warning light has illuminated. Here in southwest Australia, the madness of autumn has descended. While UK readers are gearing up for summer sun, those of us living on the other side of the world are preparing for our winter season. A few recent nights have seen temperatures drop to below freezing. Even without this weather to address, there's no excuse for keeping a car in anything close to an unroadworthy state, which is why I'll be buying new discs and pads before you've finished reading this *Mercedes Driver* guest column.

Spending money on my W203 always causes me to wince. It's not what you'd refer to as a 'desirable' Mercedes. Financially speaking, I'm unlikely to see the money I spend on the silver machine returned to me when it comes to sale day. Put simply, this isn't a car people are desperate to buy. It's certainly functional, and it would probably make a brilliant hackney carriage, but drab plastic hub caps just about sum up my C180's uninspiring specification. I've got a set of sixteen-inch alloys waiting in the wings, but the tyres on the factory fifteens are in great condition. Again, with one eye on the changing seasons Down Under, the more grip and stopping power the car has, the better. The standard steelies are staying... for now!

I was recently asked by a young member of my local Mercedes club if a C180 is a good choice for a new driver. Aware of the sky high insurance premiums applied to performance models for inexperienced motorists, plus Australian government restrictions disallowing youngsters from driving powerful cars during their probationary period on the road (yes, that's a thing here) the lad was adamant



he wanted to enjoy Mercedes ownership, even if it meant buying what many consider to be a boring ride. I confirmed my opinion the C180 isn't the world's most exciting vehicle, a statement that seemed at odds with my admission I've bought two in the recent past! Regular readers will recall the 2005 C180K I bought my mother a couple of months ago. With only 80k miles and immaculate cosmetic order, it really is a beautiful Benz. I realise it's unusual to find a low-price C-Class with a heavy wallet of recent bills, but I felt it was a story worth telling my young friend.

My advice to him was to care less about specification and more about overall condition, with particular focus on the state of safety features. After all, a C180 can be bought cheap, but this also means many examples are suffering a life of neglect with owners who don't want to observe a sensible servicing schedule for fear of spending money on a car that, in the grand scheme of things, isn't worth much money. I tried to impress the notion of 'safety first' upon the Mercedes fan asking for my advice. Much to my delight, the lad nodded in agreement.

The entry level W203 might be an underpowered and uninspiring Mercedes, but it's a bargain buy right now. And, as long as the youngster quizzing me stays safe, I'm sure he'll get loads of enjoyment out of being in charge of a car wearing the three-pointed star, regardless of specification.

Above Simon has a love-hate relationship with his boggy C180: he loves its reliability and low running costs, he hates how uninspiring the car is!

My opinion the C180 isn't the world's most exciting vehicle seemed at odds with my admission I've bought two in the recent past!

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TORQUE *Specialist*

David Jarmane

You don't need to own a Mercedes in order to appreciate the brand's rich heritage, its products and its contribution to automotive innovation

I've always had a passion for photography and cars. As a child, if I didn't have a toy car in my hand, I had one in my pocket. With my cheap 35mm camera (one of those weird disc-film Kodak things), I used to take snaps of every four-wheeler that interested me. Little has changed!

My lifelong interest and experience in automotive photography has culminated in my occupation as a professional commercial photographer. I love what I do for a living, and outside of static, motion and light-painting commissions for my clients, I've combined my two passions by embarking on an ambitious project to photograph every variant of every road and race-spec AMG from the earliest to the newest. At the time of writing, that's fifty-two years of sports cars covered.

My hope is to publish the collection at some point in the not too distant future, although I'll be the first to admit that the manufacturer's constant stream of new cars has forced me to play catch-up every time I think I'm making progress with the project. Thankfully, friends who are members of Mercedes-Benz Club UK have been a huge help when it comes to unearthing rare AMGs for me to point my lens at. Groups of owners have even gathered together in a single location in order for their Affalterbach-badged machines to be included as part of my pet project.

Despite my name not yet appearing on the logbook of an AMG (don't shoot me, but I have a history of air-cooled Volkswagen ownership), I've never been made to feel like an outsider by the Mercedes owners I've encountered. In contrast to the cliquey nature of many enthusiast scenes, a love of Mercedes cars and respect for the company's rich history is enough for anyone with a passion for the brand to be accepted into the fold. When you think about it, being a fan of AMG without owning one of the marque's cars makes perfect sense. After all, how many vintage railway enthusiasts own a steam train?!

I'm not denying that it'd be great to open my garage door and see an Affalterbach export waiting to greet me, but not having the keys to the object of my desire is no barrier to participating in events or road trips with those lucky enough to be in charge of their own Mercedes, be it an AMG or a



less performance oriented model. Besides, many of the AMG owners I've met have been keen for me to drive their cars, enabling me to experience the quirks and characteristics of each model first-hand. Similarly, Mercedes main dealer principals have regularly handed me the keys to the latest offerings in their showrooms. As you can imagine, this warm generosity has been massively helpful when it comes to my need to photograph newer AMGs, although I'll be the first to admit some of the older, rarer models are proving trickier to spend time with, let alone take for a spirited road test!

Anybody who has visited a major car show and has witnessed the amount of effort Mercedes-Benz Club UK puts into its display stands, not to mention how warm and welcoming its staff are to anyone who takes time to express an interest in the club, its activities and the cars it caters for, will know what I mean when I say it's enough to make you search the classifieds for a Mercedes to call your own. Unless you've already got one, of course. Is it an AMG? A rare one? Do you like the idea of seeing it as part of a published collection of my work? We need to talk! 📷

Above The new Mercedes-AMG GLC 63 4MATIC+, coming to a coffee table near you soon

Mercedes main dealer principals have regularly handed me the keys to the latest offerings in their showrooms

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d:class automotive specialise in full interior management and restoration of all Mercedes-Benz models. We are able to offer original colours and finishes, including correct perforations, in cloth, velour, tex and leather. We also offer period interior/boot carpet linings and produce overmats for certain models. The fundamental part of any restoration is being able to sympathetically complete the job to as true to when the car left the factory. We have a large knowledge and have completed many 111, 113 and 107 interiors. All of our work is carried out in-house by trained trimmers with vast experience and comes complete with full workmanship guarantee. d:class have completed work for customers as far afield as France and Holland, a testament to d:class' craftsmanship and attention to detail. Our quality of work speaks for itself.



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We are able to repair single damaged areas only without having to go to the expense of replacing a whole cover. The common problem of worn bolsters can be solved within a couple of hours work, replacing the worn cloth, velour, tex or leather panel. Another common fault is split stitching, often seen on the CLK models. This again can be repaired as a while-you-wait service. Connolising and small burn repairs are also a speciality and can, within the Surrey area, be offered as a mobile service.



Cloth to leather and full custom interiors

d:class can offer for all models, a full upgrade from cloth to leather. This will be done to O.E.M. spec ensuring that it is finished using original patterns, perforations, styles and colours. We use only high grade leather with exact grains and all work is done in-house, not a kit made over in China! Our cloth to leather service carries a full 3 year guarantee.

Or if you prefer you can overhaul your interior with a completely new and unique finish. We can trim your car in non-Mercedes colours, again in a high grade leather. Many unique and award winning interiors have been produced and restored by d:class and once they have rolled out of our workshops can be seen, not only nationwide, but featured widely on the continent.



Hood fitting and rear screen repairs

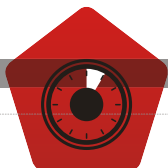
A full hood fitting service is available in-house. The 111, 113, 107, 129, 124, 208 and 209 are all catered for. Our hoods come with a 1 year guarantee and are available in a range of colours to suit. We can supply and fit original Mercedes-Benz or aftermarket hoods. Many convertible owners experience the common issue of the deterioration, discolouration and eventual cracking of the perspex rear screens in the 113, 107 and 129 models. This is simply remedied by the inexpensive replacement of the perspex screen with the exact thickness and avoiding any extra cost resulting in the replacement of the entire hood.

When calling, please mention Mercedes Driver

Unit 6, Studley Court, Guildford Road, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8EB

Located 15 mins from Junction 10 or 11 of the M25 and from the A3.

Collection can be arranged depending on distance



FIVE MINUTES WITH...

David Price



Who are you and what do you do?

I'm David Price, Managing Director at Chobham-based automotive upholstery specialist, d:class.

Pleased to meet you, David. What's the story behind your company's unusual name?

The reasoning behind it is two-fold. Firstly, I wanted people to think the custom car interiors I was producing were 'class'. Secondly, the name is easy for Mercedes owners to remember thanks to it following the same format as most of the manufacturer's modern model designations. Oh, and the D is simply the first letter of my name!

How important is the Mercedes scene to d:class?

Mercedes interior repair, restoration and retrimming work is a huge part of what d:class is concerned with each day. We've trimmed almost every Mercedes model from the Ponton onwards. We've made and fitted canvas roofs to every generation of SL. Last year, we retrimmed more Pagoda interiors than ever before. Since opening d:class in 2005, we've forged a name for ourselves as the go-to guys for Mercedes interior work. It's a reputation I'm extremely proud of.

How many people work with you at d:class?

Thirteen, including myself, a general manager, a parts manager, a fabricator and a team of trimmers.

What are you working on right now?

In recent years, our client list has expanded to include a much wider customer base. We're

working on a good number of McLarens alongside the Mercedes jobs we're known for carrying out. We're also trimming an ever increasing number of Ferraris and Porsches. At all times, we have at least two complete interior jobs in our workshop. We've just finished the nine-month retrim and restoration of an ultra-luxury W100 600 Landaulet, one of only fifty-nine examples built.

That sounds like a challenging job!

It was! The car was originally supplied with beige hide. We were asked to change the leather and carpets to the 'oldtimer' red offered as an option when the luxury limo was new. We also restored all chrome and woodwork inside the car. A lot of research was required for what was a massive job.

What's your favourite Mercedes?

I'd very much like to see a W111 280 SE 3.5 Cabriolet in my garage.

What's in there at the moment?

I own an R107 420 SL I'm in the process of restoring. I also own a W203 estate I'm turning into a pick-up as a promotional vehicle for the business. Fancy featuring the build when it's finished?!

That sounds like a good idea! In the meantime, can Mercedes Driver readers follow your adventures online?

Mercedes Driver readers are invited to visit the d:class Facebook page, Instagram feed and our newly launched website, which can be found at dclass.co.uk. You can also reach us on Twitter by following @dclassauto. We've just published a promotional film highlighting the recent work we've completed. The short video features the finished Landaulet interior. Check it out.

We're off to do exactly that. Thanks for your time, David. It's appreciated!

Above Since David started d:class fourteen years ago, the Mercedes enthusiast network has embraced his in-depth knowledge of the manufacturer's interior styles, materials and cabin furniture assembly techniques





Split seconds

Hot on the heels of last issue's guide to engine airflow, we take a look at aerodynamics, including the design and effect of splitters, wings and diffusers...

We've all seen race cars and seriously quick road cars decorated with fancy carbon-fibre aerodynamic aids, but far from simply giving the vehicle in question an enhanced appearance, these weird and wonderful add-ons are intended to act as function over form.

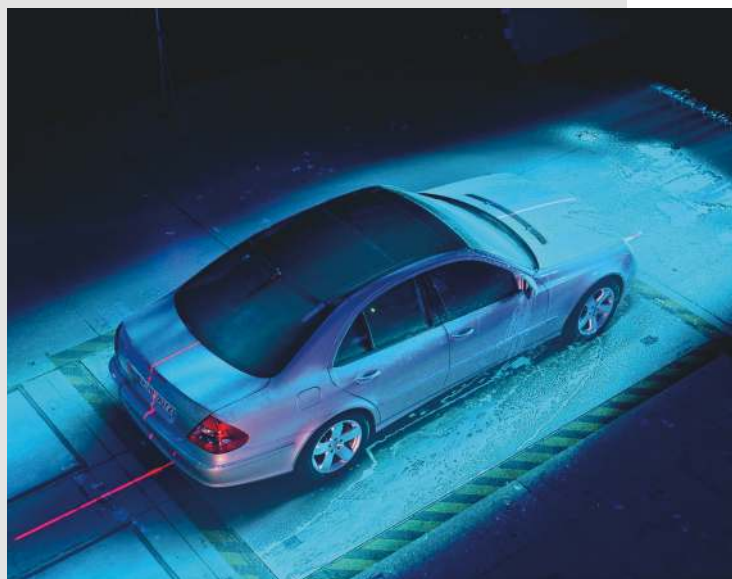
Their job is to control the direction of air, ensuring it is channelled in such a way that increases the host vehicle's aerodynamic performance. Get it wrong, however, and all you'll do is increase your car's drag coefficient, resulting in your treasured Mercedes not fulfilling its potential to cover ground quickly.

In the world of motorsport, improving the design of aerodynamic aids has been a challenge taken on by racing teams for almost as long as cars have been driven in anger. Shaving a fraction of a second off a lap time through aerodynamic development can mean the difference between going a season without silverware and taking top honours. It's work that's constantly developing. That said, you don't need to be Adrian Newey or have a team of aerodynamicists at your disposal if you want to influence airflow in a way that enables your Benz to corner more effectively and travel distances quicker. In this article, we examine the benefits of equipping your car with readily available devices designed to increase aerodynamic performance.



THE LOWDOWN

Aerodynamics refers to the study of moving air, with particular focus on when air comes into contact with an object. The movement and behaviour of air over the object (in this case, a Mercedes!) inspires highly technical studies, but in essence, how your car moves through air is a critical combination of events that have a direct impact on performance, stability and safety at speed. At the simplest level, the air at the nose of your travelling Mercedes is forced over or under the body; the point on your car's front bumper at which airflow is divided to go over or under the car is called its 'stagnation point'. From here, the air underneath the car has to deal with objects creating drag (items in the way of uninhibited airflow). Wheels, exhaust pipework, driveshafts, suspension components. They're all lumpy, drag inducing objects.



WHAT IS DRAG?

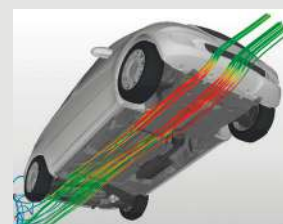
Aerodynamic drag is the force which directly opposes the motion of a car. About a third of your car's overall drag comes from its underside, while another third is generated as air travels over the car (its whole exterior). The remaining third is recognised as being airflow obstruction through your car's grille, radiator, intercooler (if present) and in the engine bay itself.

Every production car goes through extensive aerodynamic testing, ultimately resulting in the awarding of a drag coefficient number, also referred to as Cd. The lower the number, the lower the registered drag. When you consider the fact that close to half your car's power is required to overcome drag and maintain speed when travelling along a motorway, it's easy to see how important it is to keep the number low, and that's before you consider the effects of drag on fuel economy.

Typical figures for Cd are in the region of 0.3-0.4 for production road cars. Models like the

Vauxhall-Opel Calibra (the planet's most aerodynamic production car for more than ten years) or Nissan R35 GT-R score low numbers, although the legendary Vauxhall still beats the Japanese joy toy's higher Cd of 0.27! At the other end of the scale, open-wheeled race cars have a much higher Cd thanks to the rotation exposed of wheels causing significant drag. A Formula One car, for instance, has an average Cd of 1.0.

Amazingly, the Mercedes C111-III experimental race car achieved Cd of just 0.183 thanks to a long wheelbase, streamlined chassis, fully enclosed wheels and a precision tailfin. The car achieved an average speed of almost 196mph when running at the Nardo test track more than twelve hours, a feat which saw Mercedes smash numerous world records.







REAR WINGS

Just as splitters are intended to increase downforce at the front of a car, a rear wing produces downforce at the rear. These parts are often referred to as spoilers, which is technically incorrect. A spoiler is there to 'spoil' any undesirable flow of air over the rear of the car in a bid to reduce lift or in an attempt to increase fuel efficiency. A wing is a device which proactively creates downforce at the rear to increase stability through improved rear wheel grip.

The attack angle of the wing blade is crucial. It has a large impact on aerodynamic drag and affects the way downforce is distributed. For example, a four-wheel drive Porsche's rear wing has a different angle of attack to that fixed to the butt of a rear-wheel drive Porsche.

Many aftermarket wings allow user adjustment. If you're serious about travelling fast at the track, then buy a wing which comes with Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) data. This information can link the amount of downforce, drag and power consumption generated at speed. In other words, you'll know that at 100mph, you have the equivalent of three Lewis Hamiltons sitting on the back of your car. Or something.

In the ideal world, you'd be able to invest in a session at a wind tunnel. Sadly, you'll need big bucks! Simply buying a decent, well manufactured, lightweight adjustable rear wing is your best bet if working to a budget.

A device known as a Gurney Flap (named after its inventor, legendary American racing driver, Dan Gurney) is sometimes fitted to a rear wing and is a common sight in competition environments. A Gurney Flap is little more than a small tab projecting from the trailing edge of a wing. Typically, it's set at a right angle to the pressure surface of the wing, helping to achieve clean separation of air, thereby maximising downforce. This simple, trailing edge component can improve the performance of a simple wing to nearly the same level as a complex, high-performance design.

FAN CARS

While reducing the air pressure beneath your car is desirable, a technique used in Formula One during the mid-1970s advanced the idea by introducing large fans into flat undertrays. The effect was to 'suck' the car downwards as it flew along the track. Combined with the appointment of Lexan side skirts, this intriguing experiment ensured a super-low pressure area between the car and the track surface. The weird-looking Chaparral 2J was one of the first F1 cars to make use of the development, utilising twin seventeen-inch fans powered by a small engine robbed from a snowmobile. Later, Brabham used a much larger suction fan on the BT46B, the car which won the 1979 Swedish Grand Prix with Niki Lauda at the controls. A short while later, F1 fan cars were outlawed in response to concerns over safety, chiefly the risk of losing all traction through loss of the effect during cornering at high speed.



UNDERTRAYS

Big gains can be had by optimising the airflow underneath your Mercedes. Various techniques have been exercised over the years, often at the track, where race teams have experienced massively quicker lap times by 'smoothing' the underside of their cars. The goal is to create an area of low pressure so that no opposing upward force fights the downforce being created by the splitter and wing you've just fixed into place.

The main way to create an area of low pressure is to accelerate the flow of air beneath your car. This is linked to Bernoulli's Principle, a law in fluid dynamics which states that an increase in air speed results in a reduction in pressure. With this in mind, an entirely flat floor completely bypassing the drag-creating underfloor of your Mercedes would be the best solution. This technique is usually only adopted in the motorsport environment, but you can fit a splitter or undertray that extends further back than one might ordinarily expect it to. This would help to minimise drag created by engine components. Indeed, many manufacturers are starting to introduce extended front lips to their vehicles in order to help meet ever-stricter fuel efficiency laws. Your main concern here will be to ensure the engine bay is subjected to enough airflow to avoid overheating issues.



CANARDS

Bumper canards – also described as dive planes – are a common sight on the modified motor scene. Like a front splitter, they increase downforce at the front of a car. Usually constructed from carbon-fibre, they're bolted into the sides of the bumper, ordinarily in sets of four. These small fin-like parts direct airflow away from underneath the car, which is highly desirable when working to reduce lift. They do, however, increase drag, albeit a complaint only noticeable at high speed. Canards are best used to fine tune the aerodynamic characteristics of a track car. Canards on a road car are questionable as anything other than cosmetic styling.



EFFECT ON TYRES

The condition of your car's tyres can have a negative impact on overall aerodynamic performance. Research has proved airflow is considerably affected by tyre deformation, where the separation point of the flow at the base of the tyre sidewall changes direction. In other words, airflow which moves around the body of your car is redirected to flow beneath the vehicle, thereby reducing the effect of underbody aerodynamics.

Whether your Mercedes is being used on the road or at the circuit, quality tyres are essential. Take a look at performance and all-weather offerings from Nankang, Toyo, Continental, Michelin, Yokohama, Vredestein and Falken. From standard compounds to street-legal, semi-slick track tyres, these companies have you and your Mercedes covered.



ACTIVE AERODYNAMICS

Luxury European sports cars often feature 'active' aerodynamics. In other words, the car's ECU controls aerodynamics on the fly, moving components such as grille vanes, which can be motorised to limit or enhance the amount of air travelling through the part being manipulated. This technology has two major benefits. Firstly, it helps the engine to warm quicker, reducing harmful exhaust gas emissions. Secondly, it reduces drag. Improved fuel economy and performance benefits? Where do we sign up?!

DIFFUSERS

A diffuser is a rear-mounted component designed to aid high-speed airflow by encouraging fast-paced air beneath the car to join slower moving air in the car's wake. Unfortunately, this mixing of different air speeds often gives rise to unwanted drag, which is why a diffuser's job is to expand and slow the air at the rear before it is expelled.

The use of longitudinal fins is common practice in the design of diffusers. It promotes rear end high-speed stability, ensuring airflow pace and direction is kept under control at all times.

Diffusers are often fitted to track cars, but not always at the correct angle. There's a window of effectiveness for a diffuser, which although a subjective calculation, is said to be between seven and ten degrees. Our advice? Head outside and experiment!



DUCTING

Ducting is vital in any car, but especially turbocharged performance vehicles where positive heat management is a key concern. Be it an intercooler, radiator, oil cooler or brakes, having efficient ducting is the only way to ensure enough air is being directed towards the parts you're trying to keep cool. For example, if you've got a front-mounted intercooler fitted with large gaps between its end tanks and your car's front bumper aperture, incoming air will always take the path of least resistance (as opposed to flowing through the intercooler core). If you offer the air no choice but to travel to the item you want cooled via carefully considered ducting, however, then you can rest assured airflow is being directed efficiently.

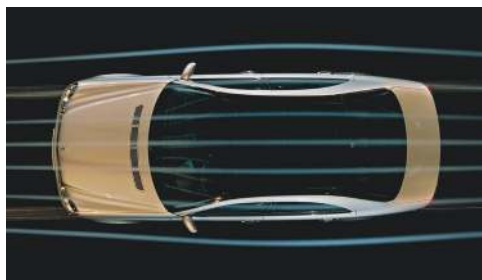
Carefully positioned ducting is also crucial to cars trying to achieve seriously high speeds, such as big-power drag machines or those attempting flat-out runs across America's



Bonneville Salt Flats. It's also common to see duct tape covering panel gaps and bonnet shuts, ensuring air doesn't travel anywhere but over or under the car. This treatment might not look pretty, but it does the job, although careful attention needs to be paid to ensure the engine bay isn't being starved of cold air. Of course, we wouldn't expect you to start wrapping your Mercedes in duct tape, but the effectiveness of the method is good to know.

SPOILERS

Many Mercedes cars roll off the production line with a spoiler as standard equipment. Contrary to popular belief, these parts aren't simply bonded or bolted into place for aesthetic purposes. Of course, we'd be lying if we said manufacturers weren't adding spoilers without considering the positive impact on the appearance of whichever model was being decorated, but safety is a key consideration when it comes to integrating spoilers into the overall design of a performance vehicle. For example, consider the Audi TT. When launched, there were numerous reports of high-speed crashes due to the cool coupe's lack of stability at speed. Investigators concluded the likely cause of most of the accidents was Audi's decision not to fit the TT with a rear spoiler.



Inevitably, the car was the subject of a major factory recall. Likewise, Top Gear presenters famously experienced a 'brown trouser moment' with the Koenigsegg CCX, a car with blistering pace, but no rear spoiler, resulting in lack of stability at speed. Yikes!

As we can see, spoilers are used to reduce turbulence at the rear of a car by creating clean separation of airflow, thereby reducing unwanted lift. This might be worth considering before you go unbolting your car's stock-spec spoiler! Active rear spoilers – those which automatically react to speed and braking conditions – double up as air brakes, offering stability when on the move, but also by introducing huge amounts of halt-encouraging drag when you stomp on the anchors.



AERO FAIL!

If you want to see how aerodynamics can go badly wrong, have a butcher's at the following videos uploaded to YouTube:



This Time Attack Subaru Impreza had a major mishap when its rear wing broke free. Thankfully, the driver walked away unscathed. Search for *Element Tuning STi crash*.



This video dramatically demonstrates what can happen when the air pressure beneath a car overcomes the opposing downforce above it. Search for *Le Mans 1999 Mercedes Flying Crash*, and watch DTM hero, Peter Dumbreck, get the fright of his life!



Have you ever wondered happens when you remove the rear wing from a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution in the hope of achieving a higher top speed? You lose all stability, that's what. Look for *183mph spin at RAF Marham*.

CONTACTS

ABS Motorsport absmotorsport.co.uk

Demon Speed demonspeedmotorsports.com

Plastics4Performance plastics4performance.com

CM Composites cmcomposites.co.uk

Carbonwurks carbonwurks.com

Reverie reverie.ltd.uk

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REACH FOR THE STARS

Two Gullwings, four eye-catching doors and a fifty-six year story.
This pristine 300 SL and SLS AMG pair could steal any show.

WORDS **Emma Woodcock** PHOTOGRAPHY **Dan Sherwood**

The doors. You can't help but love the doors. Lifted high above their rooflines, they kink and strut like proud wings. Down below, they're bolted to a pair of Mercedes' most magnificent road cars. One's a voluptuous classic beauty, the other hums with new age menace. They're very different beasts, but the 300 SL and SLS AMG share more in common with one another than you might imagine. It starts with those magnificent gullwings.

A world first for a production car, the distinctive skyscrapers set auto shows ablaze upon the 300's debut in 1954, yet the origin of the design drips with practicality. Two years earlier, Mercedes had created the W194 sports racer when it mated the three-litre straight-six from its 300 road car with an aluminium spaceframe. There simply wasn't enough room for traditional doors. Instead, the new car's lofty chassis rails encouraged the innovative gullwing solution.

The finished SL competition car had style, but that didn't matter to Benz. Victories in the 24 Hours of Le Mans and Mexico's brutal Carrera Panamericana road race gave the manufacturer everything it needed from the 300 project and, without a little outside influence, the story may have ended there. Enter Max Hoffman.

A New York-based importer of anything European and fast, the automotive-obsessed Austrian was convinced a roadgoing SL would meet riotous success in America. In fact, he was so sure of the new sports machine's potential to become a Stateside smash hit, he place an

order for a thousand 300 SLs in readiness for the model's launch at 1954's New York Auto Show. An icon was born and, even today, the 300 SL has the specification to match its outlandish looks. Standard Bosch mechanical fuel injection lifts the three-litre straight-six to 215bhp, an aluminium boot and bonnet keep weight down, the tilting steering wheel makes it easier to jump straight in and it's all underpinned by a development of the W194's light, strong tubular chassis.

Five decades on, Mercedes still uses spaceframe construction, but it comes with a space-age twist. The SLS AMG chassis is all aluminium and the structure uses casting in high-stress areas, complete with directional ribbing further increasing strength. Building on its predecessor's partial alloy body, the AMG also employs aluminium bodywork throughout. Another continuation sits out of sight: the 300 SL in our pictures was ordered new with belly pans, an optional aerodynamic device that smooths out airflow, while the SLS features a covered underfloor with a lift-cancelling rear diffuser.

DIFFERENT APPROACH

That might sound racy, but the twenty-first century Gullwing didn't tread the 300's path from road to track. Instead, Mercedes developed a competition version of the SLS following the standard car's release. Competing in the cut-throat GT3 category, the AMG took its first race win in 2011 and soon backed that up with top honours in the 2012 FIA GT3 European Championship. Long distance racing proved

Facing page Despite this 300 SL boasting an upper auction estimate of a million quid, the car's owner hasn't been afraid to pile on the miles, using the cool coupe for various overseas road trips and jaunts around the rural roads of Scotland

Below Interior is every bit as fantastic as you'd expect it to be and benefits from an electric power steering system





Support act

The 300 SL may have stolen the 1954 New York Motor Show, but it wasn't the only sporty two-seater to debut at the event. Spurred on by another thousand orders from the bold Max Hoffman, Mercedes unveiled a second prototype. Sharing its front grille treatment and wheel arches with the 300, the 190 SL was toned down under its stylish skin. A 1.9-litre inline-four with a four-speed manual gearbox was the only driveline option, while much of the running gear and chassis were borrowed from the contemporary Ponton saloon. Limited options didn't keep the car from shifting, as proved by more than 25k units sold between 1955 and 1963.



an even happier hunting ground: Belgium's Spa 24 Hours, Australia's Bathurst 12 Hours and the iconic 24 Hours of Nürburgring all fell to the SLS. A starring role in Formula One also kept the grand tourer in the public eye thanks to the V8 acting as thunderous safety car between 2010 and 2014.

DRIVING FORCE

We're getting ahead of ourselves. Back on the road, the SLS wows drivers with its mechanical sophistication. Echoing the 300 SL and its inline-six, the AMG produces class-leading power – think 563bhp and 479lb-ft – from an ambitious development of a pre-existing Mercedes engine. Classified as the M159, the SLS motor takes its fundamentals from the M156, as used in contemporary AMG saloons, adding a unique intake, bespoke tubular exhaust manifolds, a dry sump system a reworked valvetrain, and a revised camshaft profile.

Mercedes' hard work doesn't stop there. A solid torque tube forms a robust connection between the engine and the seven-speed dual-clutch transmission, itself mounted in a rear transaxle arrangement to ensure balanced weight distribution from front to rear. Light yet exceptionally strong, a carbon fibre driveshaft

completes the construction. Forged alloy wheels, advanced launch control and double wishbone suspension add to the appeal.

It's all wrapped in an undeniably retro style. Sketched by British designer, Mark Fetherston, the SLS first hit sketchpads in the mid 2000s and repurposes the 300's design language for the modern age. Gone are the slow curves, shimmering chrome and heavy, shallow wheel arches of the 1950s. In are cool and crisp angles coupled with LED lighting. The 1954 SL still provides plenty of inspiration, however. Take a look at the wide front grille, the pronounced side vents and the bonnet's subtle flow. Most importantly, the gullwing doors are present. They're not a necessity – Mercedes even had to pack the hinges with explosives to meet modern crash safety concerns – but they do create a stylish motif that carries through the ages.

Our SL pair crackle with this visual synergy. Built in 1954 and 2010 respectively, both represent the first and purest interpretations of their aesthetic concepts. The 300 would later morph into the SL Roadster, complete with conventional doors and full-height headlamps, and the SLS story would culminate in the harsh-edged, carbon-flecked Black Series, yet the red pair »

Facing page This two-owner, UK-supplied, right-hand drive Le Mans Red SLS AMG is expected to hit its upper estimate of £180k when it makes its star appearance at the Silverstone Classic Sale

Below Completely unmarked, this amazing 6.2-litre AMG is in virtually 'as new' condition despite being manufactured almost a decade ago

THE SLS, JUST ONE YEAR FROM ITS TENTH BIRTHDAY, WEARS ONLY 689 MILES AND HAS BEEN APPRECIATED LIKE FINE ARTWORK





Winging it

The 300 SL wasn't the only 1954 Mercedes to gain gullwing doors. Over in the competition department, the firm was hard at work reclothing two 300 SLR sports racer chassis with enclosed bodywork. Fitted with the same three-litre, 300bhp straight-eight which motivated the SLR and the dominant W196 Formula One racer, designers of the new coupé set their sights on the world's fastest road races. Sadly, it wasn't to be. Mercedes lost its appetite for racing after the infamous 1955 Le Mans disaster, which claimed the lives of eighty-three spectators. The tragedy prompted Mercedes to retire from factory-sponsored motorsport until 1989.







pictured here offer something simpler. They may be fifty-six years apart, but they both struck their owners with simple, intoxicating style.

These gorgeous Gullwings have seen wildly divergent lives. The SLS, just one year from its tenth birthday, wears only 689 miles and has been appreciated like fine artwork. The 300 SL is almost 80,000 clicks into its automotive adventure. When the cars are on the block at the Silverstone Classic Sale at the end of July, both will offer tantalising opportunity for the right buyers.

"Low mileage modern classics are a curiosity," says Joe Watts, Classic Car Specialist at Silverstone Auctions and the chap who consigned the SLS for its upcoming sale. "These cars were built with an expectation of use. Any example that stands outside of that is perennially interesting to enthusiasts." Look around the awesome AMG and you soon understand why. The Designo twin-tone leather doesn't show a single crease, let alone a nick or scratch, while the paintwork pops with a complex sheen uninterrupted by stone chips or swirl marks. As a Le Mans Red example, this SLS also boasts the same hue used for the model's press and advertising debuts.

The combination is pure 2010: this car is all but a brand new SLS AMG. "It has a smell and feel even the best regularly used SLS can't replicate," Joe continues. Bolstered by an exacting service history and a lifetime of indoor storage, this ultra-low mileage minter could hardly be more pristine. "I've been in the engine bay, the boot and the cabin and this car really is perfect from top to bottom," he says. "Add the red and black interior and it's the absolute pick of the SLS breed."

STATES OF PLAY

Covering more than a hundred times the distance experienced by its grandson, the 300 SL strikes a very different note, yet it's every bit as meticulously maintained. Leaf through the service history and receipts from HK Engineering and Omega Motorsport stand out, and that's before we get to the car's current presentation. Smouldering in a warm orange-red (a legacy of an early life in the United States of America), the left-hooker wears its age and regular use with grace.

"It's got a charming patina," comments Silverstone Auctions consignor, Harry Whale. "I've never come across an SL like this before. It's a Gullwing to use and enjoy. The paintwork, the interior, the whole car tells you that it's been used, but it shows in a very positive way. This is a classic Mercedes driven regularly and it's all the better for it." Envisioning a future where the sensational SL continues to enjoy regular use, the current keeper hopes to stay in touch with the new owner after the sale, which is currently pitched with an upper estimate of - wait for it - one million pounds.

"The seller really cares about the car," confirms Harry. "We've known him and his cherished SL for many years. Joe and I have always been excited to see it in the paddock at Silverstone." The self-appointed home of British motorsport is far from the only venue to have basked in this 300's sultry presence. A lifelong British Racing Drivers' Club



(BRDC) member and previous owner of a 300 SL Roadster, the seller values the Gullwing's usability and hasn't ever been reluctant to point its twin bonnet humps at the horizon. Visits to Le Mans and wider European jaunts are a key part of the car's recent history, as is The Ecurie Ecosse Tour, a multi-day Scottish road trip both car and driver have participated in no fewer than a dozen times.

FUN FACTOR

While the SL wears huge collector value, its mechanical condition further rewards an enthusiastic driver. An electric power steering conversion, stainless steel exhaust and uprated camshaft all stray from standard specification, while both the gearbox and braking system have been recently rebuilt. "I refer to the upgrades as 'sympathetic'," Harry smiles. "They enhance the driving experience without taking anything away from the character of the car. Ultimately, they make this superb Mercedes more useable and more fun to be in charge of."


Despite its newcomer status, the SLS is just as seductive from behind the wheel. Joe has driven the car mere metres, not miles, yet the experience has stuck with him. "There's a novelty and drama about it," he says, grinning from ear to ear. "You're

Benz buying

Formed in 2011, Silverstone Auctions is a world-class specialist auction house for the sale of classic cars, modern supercars, all types of competition cars, modern and historic motorcycles and automotive memorabilia. The company holds exclusive auctions rights for Silverstone Circuit, which is where you'll be able to see the 300 SL and SLS AMG on these pages offered for sale on the occasion of the Silverstone Classic at the end of July. For further information about each car, and to find out how you can place a bid, visit the website silverstoneauctions.com

struck by the deep, snarly bark and, even at low speed, the car delivers instant throttle response. It has a great big engine ready to launch you like a bullet from a gun, but with the style and comfort of the super-luxury interior, it's obvious this red road racer can ably perform as a lazy grand tourer." Displacing 6208 cubic centimetres and hollering at anyone who cares to hear, it's the engine which sets an SLS apart; forced induction and hybrid assistance have swept the Mercedes product line since the model's introduction, further ensuring the brutish, naturally-aspirated V8 secures the AMG's future as a modern classic.

Both the 300 SL and SLS AMG are very special machines. We can't help but wonder where these great Gullwings might go next. "I can see the SLS selling to a collector who wants the very best example available," Joe suggests. "If I was in the market, it's the SLS AMG I'd go for." Harry imagines a different path for the older SL. "I think this particular 300 carries wide appeal, but to my mind, it's a retro ride ready to be bought and driven away straight from the auction hall!"

Whoever the lucky new owners of these cars might be at auction end, one thing's certain: they'll be opening the door to a remarkable ownership experience. And that door hinges skyward. 

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BUYING *Your next Mercedes*

Buying W176 A-Class

The compact hatchback which filled Mercedes dealerships with young buyers can now be acquired in high specification at low cost...

WORDS **Monroe Weekes** PHOTOGRAPHY **John Colley**

As highlighted in this issue of *Mercedes Driver's* news section, a fresh breed of turbocharged, small-displacement AMG is bringing a new youth audience to Mercedes dealerships. Gone are the days when the only Benz in the family belonged to your grandad. Now, young drivers who formerly favoured the Vauxhall Astra VXR, the RS-badged Ford Focus, Audi A3s and sporty iterations of the BMW 1 Series are flocking to the three-pointed star in huge numbers.

The W176 kick-started the sudden and massive interest in Mercedes from

a demographic keen on hot hatches. The A45 AMG was low-slung, turbocharged, built like a tank and offered 376bhp as standard. Add a bigger downpipe, an aftermarket air filter and a revised map and you had a Mercedes that not only looked awesome, but could produce the kind of power your mate's VXR would force bankruptcy trying to achieve. In the AMG, however, punchy performance was expected off the bat, and not at the expense of the model's road manners or mechanical integrity.

High profile participation in motorsport (chiefly, the British Touring Car Championship) also helped galvanise the W176's credentials as an attractive

sports car, but even non-AMG versions of the third-generation A-Class have the dynamic styling to impress. Drawn from the pen of British automotive designer, Mark Fetherston (the man also responsible for the design of the SLS AMG), the model's distinctive front end, sharp panel creases, large light clusters and choice of bright colours are enough to make even the tamest of W176s look as though they're ready to bite.

After six years in production, the last W176s rolled off assembly lines in 2018. It's too soon to consider the model a modern classic, but the brilliance of this awesome A-Class makes it an attractive buy. Here's what you need to know.



ENGINE & GEARBOX

Petrol-powered W176s were offered with 1.6-litre or two-litre engines, with power ranging from 101bhp for the entry level A160, all the way up to 376bhp for the bonkers A45 AMG. Diesels were also offered, with a choice of 1.5-litre, 1.8-litre and 2.2-litre units spanning a range of power outputs from the 89bhp delivered by the A160 CDI through to 168bhp of the A220 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY. All W176 engines are turbocharged, with the AMG making use of a twin-scroll bhp booster.

Generally speaking, Mercedes engines are bulletproof, meaning all you need to worry about is which W176 lump suits your needs. That said, seek proof of properly observed service intervals.

Choose between either six-speed manual or seven-speed automatic transmissions, although keep in mind most of the higher output W176s were exclusively automatics.



HISTORY & IDENTITY

Make sure you paw through all documentation supporting claims of servicing and maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended schedule. Demand to see receipts or invoices proving the seller's suggestion of repair work and replacement parts. Be wary of any unexplained periods of the W176 you're looking at being off the road. If in doubt, have a full inspection carried out by a marque specialist. If you're in an owner's club, check to see if this is a service you can take advantage of as a benefit of membership.

Enter the A-Class in question's details into the DVLA's online vehicle enquiry service (hop on t'internet and visit bit.ly/dvlaenquiry). It's free to use and will give you key information about the Mercedes you're looking at. Additionally, take a few minutes to view information held on the DVLA's MoT history database (point your browser at bit.ly/dvlamot). Another free service, it'll provide you with details of all

passes, fails, advisories and mileage at the point of each test. Just remember that in the UK, cars aren't required to be tested for the first three years of their service life, which coincides with the expiration of standard manufacturer warranties.

Invest a couple of quid in an online history check from the excellent mycarcheck.com. You'll get instant confirmation of any registered accident history (insurance claims), as well as details relating to changes of registration, any outstanding finance and the car's number of previous keepers. You'll also be able to tell if the W176 you're eyeballing was ever stolen or subjected to a change of colour. Use the service's preformatted sales receipt and you're covered if what you buy and what the search results suggest you're buying end up being two different things.

Despite this vote of confidence, check to make sure the results match what's listed on the car's paperwork. Don't be afraid to ask questions. The seller should have nothing to hide.



BUYING *Your next Mercedes*



Modern Mercedes passenger cars offer the reliability the brand has built its reputation on

WHEELS & TYRES

Even in its tamest trim, the W176 is an aggressive animal when compared to previous generations of A-Class. We don't mean you'll be driving a car straight from the AMG Formula One stable, but be aware of the fact the W176's chassis is far more focused than earlier incarnations of the A-Class. This makes for a more precise, more engaging drive, but it also encourages harder cornering, which can result in deteriorated geometry leading to irregular tyre wear, especially on high output variants.

Remember, tyres are the only part of a car in contact with the road. If you spot evidence of uneven wear, assume alignment is out and factor the cost of new tyres into the price you're prepared to pay for the car you're looking at. Kerbed wheels can be easily repaired (or straightened) at reasonable cost.



ELECTRICS

Modern Mercedes passenger cars offer the kind of mechanical reliability the brand has built its reputation on, but where once all you needed to worry about was nuts and bolts is now advanced electrical systems, including infotainment systems. A set of spanners from Halfords might have taken care of your grandad's W126, but you've got no chance troubleshooting electrical gremlins in a W176!

Position yourself in the driving seat and test every (and we mean every) electrical function to ensure it works correctly. Look for dead pixels on information displays, make sure smartphone connectivity is working. Don't get too bogged down with the fancy stuff; check the basics, including power windows, lights, electronic climate control and air-conditioning.

The full-colour information display inside a W126 was impressive when introduced, but its position on the dash makes it look like an afterthought. Nevertheless, play with each function to make sure everything is working as it should be.



SUSPENSION

While Mercedes cars are built to be used regularly, the brilliance of the W176 platform attracted a high number of fleet managers, meaning there are many third-generation A-Classes out there sporting exceptionally high numbers on their odometers. As you'd expect, a W176 that's covered a lot of ground can be bought for far less of an impact on your wallet than a box fresh example, but consider the fact that adding miles contributes to the wear of steering, suspension and braking components. While all are readily available from online retailers, main dealers and your local motor factors, check to make these important safety and performance parts have been renewed in accordance with recommended mileage intervals. If not, factor the cost of new parts into the purchase price or walk away and find an A-Class that hasn't been subjected to such hard work.

If you decide the car you're looking at is too good to dismiss regardless of its tired suspension, or if you're looking at an AMG that's been used for regular track

work, consider investing in a new complete suspension kit after getting the car home. You're unlikely to feel much of a different by fitting one or two new bushes, so entertain the idea of investing in fresh dampers, springs, bushes and, importantly, professional four-wheel laser alignment. This suggestion might sound like overkill, but with the earliest W176s being more than eight years old, their suspension components simply won't be performing at their best. This is especially true of high milers.

A host of respected aftermarket suppliers offer a range of performance parts ensuring you don't have to dig deep at your local main dealer. Bilstein, GAZ Shocks and Öhlins offer various damper solutions, while polyurethane bushes from Powerflex, springs from H&R or Eibach and braking equipment, including pads in a wide range of compounds to suit different driving styles, are available direct from EBC Brakes. Many of these companies are OEM suppliers, and can offer like-for-like replacement parts, as well as high performance variants.

COST OPTIONS

Over and above the wide variety of models produced during W176 production, a selection of main dealer cost options were available across most cars in the range. The Mercedes Sport package gave non-AMGs an AMG-esque appearance thanks to the appointment of a front splitter, gloss black body furniture (door mirrors, front grille, brightwork) and a rear valance with fins designed to look like a diffuser. An optional app was also offered, enabling drivers to integrate their smartphones into the W176's full-colour user interface. Ask to see the original bill of sale, which should list every one of the car's particulars, from colour code to the choice of wheel. Make sure everything listed is present and correct.

VARIETY PACK

The W176 range spawned CLA and GLA derivatives, with AMG-badged versions of each third-gen A-Class carrying the same engine. Hugely popular, these cars offer welcome choice for anyone keen to explore deviations from the core W176 body style.





BUYING *Your next Mercedes*

BODY

The metalwork on these cars was fully galvanised at the factory. Rust is virtually unheard of, but it's worth keeping an eye out for signs of accident repairs, especially on higher output models, including AMGs, which are likely to have experienced far more in the way of 'spirited' driving than the base models.

Check to make sure panel gaps are uniform. Look for differences in colour between sections of bodywork. Look inside wheel arches and under the sills for evidence of overspray indicating corrective paintwork has occurred.

Headlamps on older W176s can discolour. They can also attract surface imperfections through stone chips. Replacement lights are expensive, so consider purchasing a headlamp restoration kit as your first attempt to rectify the problem. Meguiar's and Autoglym produce kits available online or from Halfords.



Keep 'em peeled for signs of neglect, especially on a W176 which served as a fleet car



INTERIOR

W176s, along with their similarly aged Mercedes stable mates, feature cabin furniture far superior in quality to many older models. Fantastic build standards means even high mileage third-generation A-Class cockpits should be in good condition, but keep 'em peeled for signs of neglect, especially if you're considering the purchase of an older, pre-facelift W176 which once served as a company car.

Sporty seat bolsters can wear where drivers drag their butts. Thankfully, nicks, rips and tears can be repaired by premium automotive upholstery specialists, including d:classic, Awesome Interiors and Cambridge Concours.

You might find satellite navigation functionality in early cars more dated than you'd like, and the aviation-themed dash layout seems a tad gimmicky, but the overall layout is well executed.



PRICE

There's no shortage of W176s for you to choose from, although trying to pin down a specific colour, engine and trim combination may be your biggest challenge. Our suggestion is to buy the best car you can find regardless of its decoration. Low miles doesn't necessarily mean good condition, and your favourite colour doesn't automatically translate as money well spent!

Many used cars are advertised by sellers wearing rose-tinted spectacles, so be sure to buy with your head, not your heart. Here's a brief selection of what we found advertised online just before we went to print with this issue of *Mercedes Driver*:

2013 A180 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY

Silver paintwork, 74k miles, Sport package, seven-speed auto, black leather, one owner £9,999

2013 A250 Sport

Red paintwork, 60k miles, A45 AMG body styling and wheels, full main dealer history £14,000

2014 A200 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY

Black paintwork, 43k miles, A45 AMG body styling and wheels, faulty infotainment £9,900

Royal TREATMENT

Tim Hearth's Azurite Blue SL 500 has been afforded a welcome mechanical and cosmetic makeover in preparation for the summer months ahead

WORDS **Dan Furr** PHOTOGRAPHY **Dan Sherwood**





The Union Flag is flying high above Sandringham, the much-loved country house of Her Majesty, The Queen. "That means she's not at home today," says a dog walker, making his way through the dense woodland surrounding the stately retreat. Noting the number of motorists slowing to see the Azurite Blue R129 we've brought onto the smooth, snaking roads cutting through the Norfolk estate, the wanderer pauses for thought. "You'd be attracting a very different type of attention if she was in residence," he scoffs.

As if in response to what he's said, a Land Rover carrying the boys in blue arrives a short while later. "There's no problem with you being here," says one of the officers aboard the lofty fourby. "The Queen isn't on site, but we received a report of lads parking a Mercedes in the road and were duty bound to investigate." Almost immediately, the conversation turns to the amazing condition of the 500 SL causing concern among the cotton tops inhabiting nearby cottages. The intrigued law enforcer confesses he's a massive fan of the three-pointed star and a subscriber to Mercedes Driver magazine. "Carry on," he smiles, leaving us to take photographs in Her Madge's back yard.

The car's owner, Tim Hearth, a native of the nearby seaside town of Hunstanton, is used to his prized possession causing jaws to drop and chins to wag. "It's a beautiful car," he smiles proudly. "Being a V8, it's got the power to match its fantastic looks, not something I could say about the R129 SL 320 I owned prior to getting hold of my 500 at the beginning of last year."

ON THE THRONE

Tim had been desperate to get behind the wheel of an R129 ever since experiencing seat time in a family friend's rare SL 60 AMG in the mid-1990s. In 2003, his wish finally came true after he collected the 320 from the seller's residence in Bournemouth. "In truth, it was an eBay whim," he laughs. "The car didn't make the reserve the guy wanted. I put in a cheeky offer, which to my surprise, he accepted. I ended up travelling down to the south coast from Norfolk, arriving at 10pm to collect my new SL in the dark." A risky move, but a few short hours later, an inspection in daylight proved Tim's new ride was in good cosmetic shape. Unfortunately, he'd already decided he needed to upgrade. "Driving home from Bournemouth, I came unstuck every time I tried to overtake a fast-moving vehicle. The 320 simply didn't have the guts to deliver. I knew I'd made a mistake and immediately set up email alerts for new classifieds advertising 500 SLs for sale on Auto Trader, eBay and any other car sales portal I could think of."

His business, The Lighthouse Café in Hunstanton, kept him super-busy in the years that followed. Ownership of a 500 SL remained a goal, but not a priority. "I unexpectedly kept the smaller-engined R129 for six years," he recalls. In addition to a punishing workload, his preferred specification for the V8-powered SL meant he was prepared to wait for the right car. "I learned my lesson impulse buying the 320!" he grins. A late M113-equipped 500 with staggered AMG wheels and a striking colour scheme



Crown jewels

Not quite a classic in its own lifetime, the R129 was certainly regal, attracting Diana, Princess of Wales, as a fan. And while you don't currently need a King's ransom to own an R129, it won't be too long before prices of the nifty '90s *Sport Leicht* rise even more than they already have. The good news is that prior to the arrival of the fifth-gen SL (R230), more than twelve thousand R129s were sold to feverish buyers in Britain, meaning there's plenty of choice if you fancy a slice of the action. Generally speaking, outside of special editions, the 500 SL and SL 500 V8s are the priciest R129s.

was what he wanted. The compromise came when he handed over his hard-earned cash for the car you see displayed on the pages before you. "It was everything I was looking for, except for the wheels, which were standard five-spokes."

Returning to eBay, he won an auction for the AMG rims the car rolls on today. Recently refurbished and painted sparkling silver by Prestige Wheels, the Falken-wrapped, flat-faced eighteens are the perfect accompaniment to this modern classic, although the car didn't look quite so good when Tim drove it home to North Norfolk from where it had been living in Manchester. "It has covered 82k miles, meaning previous owners have enjoyed time out on the road. A large percentage of the distance driven has been with the roof down," he suggests. "The cream leather had discoloured badly due to prolonged exposure to UV light. The seats looked as though they were a different colour to the rest of the interior." Frustrated at the patchwork effect and unable to colour-match through intense use of leather cleaning and conditioning products, Tim called upon the services of automotive upholstery repair specialist, Simon Walters, the man behind car care company, Cambridge Concours.

Using a section of hide hidden from view as the reference point when mixing the correct colour, Simon prepared the leather for an application of

22

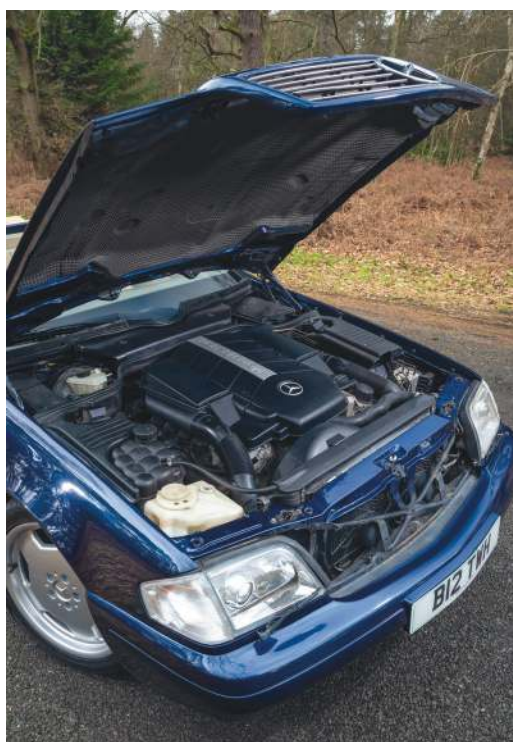
A SECTION OF HIDE HIDDEN FROM VIEW
WAS USED AS THE REFERENCE POINT
WHEN MIXING THE CORRECT COLOUR



Above Staggered AMG wheels and Azurite Blue paint are the perfect match for this spotless 1999 SL 500

Left Five-litre V8 produces the grunt Tim felt was missing from his R129 320 SL

Overleaf Simon at Cambridge Concours has transformed the car's interior from a patchwork of beige into a vast sea of consistent cream





specially prepared pigment. The seats, door cards and B-pillars were treated, resulting in a uniform look throughout. He's about to work his magic on the car's deep blue bodywork, too. "We found evidence of overspray around the nearside front wing, suggesting a possible prang in the past," Tim shrugs. "I'm so impressed with Simon's work on the leather, I've asked him to carry out full paint correction and add a ceramic coating for long-lasting protection."

Simon isn't the only service provider Tim has asked to help bring his SL up to a show-winning standard. ATM Engineering in King's Lynn fabricated a complete custom stainless exhaust system for the eight-cylinder SL, ensuring the car produces the kind of growl announcing the presence of a V8 before you've had a chance to check badges stuck to the rear. A single sports cat contributes to the extra noise without negatively impacting emissions. It's pipework Tim reckons has released a few trapped ponies and improved throttle response, too.

The gearbox was leaving its mark on his garage floor, provoking a trip to nearby classic car specialist, Kim Cairns. "I realised the problem was potentially bigger than I gave it credit for when the transmission kept dropping out of gear and slipping into neutral," says the Benz-loving coffee shop proprietor. Under

Kim's watchful eye, the automatic 'box was removed, overhauled, fitted with new seals, filled with new oil and reinstated to fault-free operation with shifting far smoother than the gear changes Tim had experienced until that point in time. An engine service completed this important round of work.

REIGN CHECK

Indulging in spend through choice rather than necessity, he's recently fitted a Bluetooth-enabled Kenwood head unit, but aside from a session with Simon's magic detailing cloths, there's no other work scheduled for the car this year. "It's finally up to the standard I always wanted from an R129. It looks great, delivers effortless performance and sounds fantastic. I fully intend to get plenty of use out of the car during the sunny months ahead, including using it to commute to work and back," he beams.

There's a rustle in the bushes. The dog walker we met earlier is exiting woodland in the direction of the majestic Mercedes we're pointing our cameras at. "You're still here!" he notes, in a tone suggesting he's asking a question. Indeed, we are. The monarch might be on her travels, but right now, on Sandringham's perfectly kept ribbons of tarmac, Tim's excellent SL is king of the road.

DRIVER

Q&A



TIM HEARTH

First Mercedes
R129 320 SL

Favourite Mercedes
R129 500 SL

Best thing about your R129 500 SL
It turns heads

Worst thing about your R129 500 SL
Fuel consumption!



SHIFTING FAR SMOOTHER THAN THE GEAR CHANGES TIM HAD EXPERIENCED UNTIL THAT POINT IN TIME





PROJECT

FINDING FAULT

Despite being on the receiving end of fresh fluids and filters, our beautiful Blue-Black 'Baby Benz' is feeling a little sorry for itself...

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY **Dan Furr**

The last issue of *Mercedes Driver* reintroduced K192 VBD, our 190E project, to these pages. I reported on the faults I'd encountered when out and about in the car and my intention to address each of them as soon as my hectic workload permitted.

Before getting stuck in to the bigger jobs on my Mercedes-themed to-do list, I amassed a stockpile of service parts, including a can of Wynn's engine flush, oil, air filter, oil filter, fuel filter, wiper blade, spark plugs, a new sump nut and an accompanying washer. The oil that dropped out of the engine was the colour of treacle, presumably long past its service life. In contrast, the lubricant now flowing around the 2.6-litre lump is super-clear, even after a long run. A win for the Wynn's!

Servicing the car gave me the perfect opportunity to investigate just how bad its blowing exhaust is. As the photograph on the following page demonstrates, it's bad! New pipework is on order, as are new tyres to replace the odd mix of profiles currently giving the car a wonky stance.

The sound of the blowing exhaust was drowning out the noise generated by an additional leak of gases discovered in the engine bay. Anyone who has ever driven a car with failed exhaust manifold

gaskets will be familiar with the *tick-tick-tick-tick* they produce while the engine works its way up to operating temperature. The rear manifold appears to be at fault, and while my hope is that a new gasket and fasteners will cure the problem, I won't know if the manifold itself is cracked until removed. I'll report back with my findings.

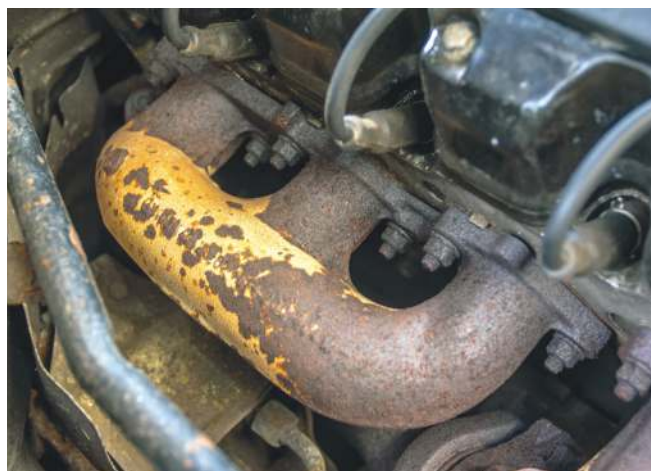
LOSE YOUR COOL

As if to add insult to injury, another leak has presented itself at the nose of the car. This time, it's water making a bid for freedom. There's clear evidence of a past leak around the water pump housing, which makes me wonder when the part was last changed. Let's not forget, we're talking about a 190E approaching 200,000 miles and one bought without any supporting service history. The coolant leak, while currently more of a slow drip than a steady stream, is certainly cause for concern, but one I'll address as part of a wider cooling system overhaul now that I've got a new heater matrix to replace the faulty cabin radiator, a part which likes to empty itself into the passenger's foot well if the heater switches are moved to anything but the coldest setting. Bah!

Then there's the lazy starting. Further scrutiny is required, but from cold, the car fails to fire »

Facing page Our 190E is in need of a fair amount of TLC

Below A rummage around the engine bay revealed leaking gases from the rear manifold



PROJECT

into life or remain on idle unless throttle is applied and held. At first, I thought a clogged fuel filter or a lazy fuel pump might be to blame. Following the fitting of the new filter, the latter is now the prime suspect. Unfortunately, the time I booked into a mate's workshop was rescheduled before we went to print, meaning I'm not able to confirm what the root of the problem is, but rest assured, I'll furnish you with the information in the next issue of *Mercedes Driver* (subscribe at bit.ly/subscribeamd).

I might be making our 'Baby Benz' sound like a basket case, but as far as I can tell, the complaints I'm talking about should be straightforward fixes for faults generated as a consequence of poor maintenance by previous owners. Dash illumination, for example, was non-existent when I got hold of the car, a condition realised when I began a journey home in the dark. While the element of surprise might appeal to some of you reading this update, not knowing what speed I was travelling at in a city heavily populated by traffic cameras made for a frustrating trip!

I'm pleased to report balance has now been restored to The Force, with the error identified as being poor contact on the dashboard dimmer switch. Toying with me, however, the bulb shining light on the multi-gauge (fuel, water temperature, oil pressure) blew after I put the dash back together after the fix!

FAST FORWARD

There's a lot of work to be done in the coming weeks, but I have no doubt K192 VBD is a brilliant Benz blighted by a series of ailments in need of urgent attention. Of course, it may be the case more serious problems are uncovered when the car is raised in the air and given a thorough inspection in the workshop, but for the time being, I'm going to give the old girl the benefit of the doubt. Considering her mileage, she's in fantastic cosmetic order, a quality flattered by Blue-Black paintwork, which takes years off any Mercedes. Let's hope this one sticks around for many more. 📸

Right All hail the Haynes workshop manual and its guidance for torque settings!

Bottom right Exhaust leak is worse than previously thought

Bottom Super-clean oil for the first time in a long time



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POWER TO THE BAUER

From farmland to taxi rank, diesel was key to ensuring Germany's post-war prosperity, and this trio of derv drinkers led the way

WORDS Martin Pithz and Dan Furr PHOTOGRAPHY Carl Bittman





The Warhorse

The W136 170 D was the world's third diesel-driven passenger car, the first to be introduced after WWII and a model largely responsible for the survival of Mercedes

The filament behind the 'salt shaker' metal cap positioned between speedometer and timepiece illuminates bright orange. It's a telltale sign that the four-cylinder diesel is ready to be fired up. A turn of the starter lever to the right triggers an earthquake. It sounds as though bricks are falling onto a tin roof. Coffee cups in nearby buildings clink together loudly. An inquisitive hound has a face full of soot. Welcome to the first German post-war diesel!

The "oil engine 636" was developed by Julius Witzky, an engineering whizz designing powerplants under the Third Reich for the benefit of the German naval fleet. He completed the 40bhp diesel unit after the war, and from May 1949, it was used to propel the Mercedes W136, a car that had started life in 1935.

Production of the W136 had resumed in 1946, but it wasn't until the arrival of its diesel variant, the 170 D, that Mercedes experienced the kind of sales boom it needed to confirm a revival of the company's fortunes. In truth, the 170 was a relic of the manufacturer's prewar period of production

and offered no significant development over what had come before. A torquey diesel engine with excellent fuel economy, however, was all the boys at Benz needed to promote themselves effectively in a country beginning to sniff economic prosperity, but remaining cautiously thrifty.

The steering requires a firm grip. The chassis (transverse leaf springs at the front, a swing axle at the back) announces its shortcomings when the road is bumpy. The zero to 62mph "sprint" is achieved after a full fifty seconds have passed, but that's not to say the car isn't handy in modern traffic – just avoid overtaking and motorways!

The second-generation 170 D (badged Db) was built in 1952. Only in production for a year, the model was treated to a wider rear track, horizontal slats on the bonnet and single-piece bumpers. Suicide doors and running boards betray the prewar design and construction, which was soon regarded as extraordinarily old-fashioned after the arrival of the all-new compact cars featured on the following pages.

W136 production ended in 1955, but the 170 D is widely regarded as a car crucial to the survival of Mercedes in the aftermath of World War II.

Above Familiar prewar design married with a game-changing diesel engine at the start of Germany's return to economic certainty resulted in the derv-powered W136

1950s DIESELS MERCEDES DRIVER



Above and left Narrow control space features centrally-placed dials with crank lever in the middle of the dash, while the continuous front bench typical of cars this age has been replaced by wide single seats

Far left Turn signals were mandatory on all cars in Germany from 1956

Model	W136 170 Db
Engine	longitudinal inline-four
Valves/camshafts	8/1
Capacity	1,767cc
Bore/stroke	75/100mm
kW (hp)	29 (40) @ 3200rpm
Nm	101 (74.49) @ 2000rpm
0-62mph	50s
Top speed	65mph
Transmission	four-speed manual
Drive	rear-wheel
Brakes front/rear	drum/drum
Fuel consumption	6.6-litres per 62 miles
Fuel tank capacity	37 litres
Range	348 miles
C02 emissions	175g per 0.62miles (1km)
Curb weight	1,302kg
Permitted total weight	1,565kg
Weight distribution front/rear	49/51%
Turning circle left/right	11.3/11.4m
Original price	8,950DM





The Parade Horse

It might not be a Benz, but the Borgward Hansa 1800 was the diesel that helped improve the Germany economy and changed the way Mercedes designed its cars

As the 1940s were drawing to a close, flowering landscapes were replacing Germany's rubble fields. Economic growth was on the up, but small businesses continued to struggle. The government responded by offering tax deductions on diesel oil and provided subsidies to help farmers and taxi operators buy new vehicles. The 170 D became instantly attractive and sold by the bucketload, but Mercedes knew the model's success was coming to an end after Bremen-based car maker, Borgward, equipped its Hansa 1800 with a diesel engine in 1953.

The Hansa was the first entirely new German production car produced after the war. Debuting at the Geneva International Motor Show in 1949, the mid-sized marvel was a masterpiece of design, taking heavy influence from American automotive styling. An all-steel body was wrapped around a central steel frame at a time Mercedes was continuing to play with prewar designs. A new car for a new age, the Hansa was released four years before the W120 Ponton, yet featured the three-box design the later Mercedes became famous for.

Available in two-door, four-door, cabriolet, estate and panel van formats, the Hansa was a hit, but it wasn't until the diesel version arrived that the model was seen to be the first word in value for money. Producing 42bhp with a top speed of 68mph, the smoker could return 46mpg. It didn't take long for the car to be offered in overseas territories. £1,493 netted you a Hansa 1800 diesel in the UK, where Vauxhall tuning hero, Bill Blydenstein, was preparing Borgward engines for motorsport use.

Our test car is an elegant machine spared a heavy work life thanks to its early import to Spain where it was used as a company car for the Bishop of Granada! The pattering four-cylinder is lively, the smooth-surface styling is full of detail. The dash to 62mph takes 41.3 seconds from rest. Build quality isn't up to the same standard as you'd expect from a Benz, but this important iteration of a vitally important German car signalled a new start for the country's automotive history.

Sadly, Borgward went into administration in 1961, but the company's legacy is a production car far ahead of its time, and one which introduced a design immediately adopted by Mercedes.

Above American styling was a huge influence when Borgward designed the Hansa, the car that inspired most European manufacturers to rethink their product lines



Above Hansa 1800 diesel engine returns fuel economy most modern cars would be hard pressed to achieve

Far left Well-designed interior features instructions to help avoid cog crunching

Left Fuel filler neck is well hidden and wears two caps

Model	Hansa 1800 D
Engine	longitudinal inline-four
Valves/camshafts	8/1
Capacity	1,758cc
Bore/stroke	78/92mm
kW (hp)	31 (42) @ 3700rpm
Nm (lb-ft)	102 (75.23) @ 2200rpm
0-62mph	41.3s
Top speed	65mph
Transmission	four-speed manual
Drive	rear-wheel
Brakes front/rear	drum/drum
Fuel consumption	4.6-litres per 62 miles
Fuel tank capacity	40 litres
Range	541 miles
CO2 emissions	122g per 0.62miles (1km)
Curb weight	1,262kg
Permitted total weight	1,640kg
Weight distribution front/rear	51/49%
Turning circle left/right	13.2/10.9m
Original price	9,550DM





The Workhorse

The W136 helped to get Mercedes back on its feet, but the roaring sales success of the W120 set the tone for the manufacturer's rise to the top of its game

Borgward had developed the template and Mercedes was ready to capitalise on its success. Stuttgart's answer to the Hansa came in the form of the W120. Launched in 1953 and marketed as the 180 through to end of production in 1962, close to half a million W120s were assembled, a large number of them put to work on farms and taxi ranks, where the low-priced 'Ponton' ensured Germany, its people and its manufacturing sector were upwardly mobile, both physically and figuratively.

The diesel engine bolted into the new Mercedes was carried over from the 170 D, thereby ensuring the bulletproof lump was finally paired with a modern production chassis. The W120 was 100kg lighter than the Hansa and a massive 170kg lighter than the 170! Add a shorter rear axle ratio and you've got a nought to 62mph time taking more than eleven seconds less than Borgward's offering.

Forty-three ponies bolt out of the stable door while the driver enjoys slicker shifting, a sleeker steering wheel and a claimed top speed of 70mph, although whether the drums are up to the task of

slowing the car rapidly from that speed is another matter altogether, and not one we were prepared to test in the W120 we were lucky enough to play with on our test.

While most Pontons ended up in the great scrapyard in the sky, this example has managed to avoid hard work and an undignified demise by covering less than 3,500 miles from new. Exported to the USA at the point of production, the car lived a low-stress life in dry storage before recently returning to Germany.

Even taking Borgward's four-wheeled, three-box stepping stone into consideration, a foot inside the 180 is all that's required to see what a massive jump there is from W136 to W120. As previously mentioned, the Benzes we're playing with make use of the same engine, but the newer Mercedes is more sprightly. It's wider, more comfortable, more spacious. The windows are forty percent wider and are much clearer. The suspension reacts sensitively.

Diesel consumption is nowhere near as impressive as the Hansa's frugal fuel economy, but make no mistake, the W120 is the first modern Mercedes, and we love it!

Above Narrow front grille and slimmer taillights exposes our test car as an example built before the W120's facelift in the summer of 1959

1950s DIESELS MERCEDES DRIVER



Top left Generous headroom was a feature designed to ensure the W120's success as a working taxi

Far left Diesel inline-four is carried over from the W136 and gains three horsepower thanks to carb tweaking

Below Borgward Hansa influence is plain to see

Model	W120 180 D
Engine	longitudinal inline-four
Valves/camshafts	8/1
Capacity	1,767cc
Bore/stroke	75/100mm
kW (hp)	32 (43) @ 3500rpm
Nm (lb-ft)	101 (74.49) @ 2000rpm
0-62mph	39.0s
Top speed	70mph
Transmission	four-speed manual
Drive	rear-wheel
Brakes front/rear	drum/drum
Fuel consumption	6.3-litres per 62 miles
Fuel tank capacity	56 litres
Range	552 miles
CO2 emissions	167g per 0.62miles (1km)
Curb weight	1,161kg
Permitted total weight	1,650kg
Weight distribution front/rear	55/45%
Turning circle left/right	11.3/11.3m
Original price	9,450DM



The Magic Number

Old diesels. They're loud, they stink and they're slow, right? Perhaps this is true, but none of these complaints take away from the enjoyment of driving any one of the three classic derv guzzlers we've enjoyed evaluating. More importantly, each of the trio needs to be respected for their respective roles in revitalising the German economy in miraculous fashion following the trauma of World War II.

Your gran's knackered Ford Fiesta can probably claim a higher power figure than the combined total of 125bhp produced by the three post-war superstars you see on the

pages before you. It can almost certainly get to 62mph in less than the fifty seconds taken by the 170 D at full chat, yet we're happy for the long four-door to take its time. Driving the car, complete with all its pomp and splendour, is a fantastic experience. Moreover, the 170 D (and the Db) is a rare example of where two different automotive ages combine to produce a new car; strapped for cash, but in possession of its manufacturing plant and tooling, Mercedes had little choice but to reintroduce the W136.


A punchy diesel engine, while exactly what was required, kept the 170 alive far longer than it should have been rolling off Stuttgart's lines, as evidenced by the other-worldly appearance



of the utterly ground-breaking Borgward Hansa. Clearly, the long-defunct manufacturer built fine cars. Its hugely influential designs went on to inform the way other manufacturers approached the construction of passenger vehicles, yet the Borgward name is hardly known outside of enthusiast circles. This is largely due to the immense success of the W120 casting a shadow over the model Mercedes 'lovingly borrowed' design cues from.

With the *naff-naff-naff* noise of the W120 180 D's four-cylinder engine idling happily, it could

be difficult for the uninformed to appreciate just how important the derv drinker was in shaping the style and success of the Mercedes brand, a legacy being enjoyed by the company in the present.

Unconditional quality, bulletproof mechanicals, dignified comfort, mass volume production. It all starts with the soot-spitting Ponton. Of course, the 170's time-travel character wins the heart and the Hansa deserves far more recognition than it gets, but all three of the cars on these pages can take a bow. After all, without them, our favourite manufacturer wouldn't be in business today. 

Below Three massively important diesels, one common goal, but which car would you like to take home with you?





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To meet your personal taste, Mercedes-Benz cars are available in a wide choice of colours — of paintwork, upholstery and leather. You can also specify carpets, radio and wheel-trims. For men, perhaps the more important things are performance, technical details and comfort. But still it's nice to meet the small wishes of a lady: a Mercedes-Benz of her own (because it's so easy to drive). Or just a driving licence. Or let her

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300SL Roadster 1986C

Signal Red, matching hardtop, dark brown soft top, Saffron sport check interior, 4 speed auto, electric windows, rear seats, original alloy wheels, FSH, 51,000m **£35,950**

E320 Sportline Cabrio 1994L

Blue/Black metallic, grey leather, black soft top, 4 speed auto, cruise, airbag, electric seats, electrically adjustable steering column, leather steering wheel, original Sportline 15" alloys, FSH, 96,000m **£15,950**



320CE Cabriolet 1993L

Pearl Blue metallic with dark blue lower panels, blue soft top, grey leather, walnut wood, leather steering wheel and gearknob, 4 speed auto, airbags, original alloy wheels, FSH, 51,000m **£19,450**

CL420 Coupe 1998R

Violane metallic, Grey leather, huge spec inc. climate, cruise, dbl glzg, htd elec lumbar seats, wood/lthr steering wheel, f/r park sensors, orig 17in alloys, exceptional history, one owner since 2000, 86,000m . . **£9,950**



220SEb Coupe 1965C

Original colour scheme of Horizon Blue with Midnight Blue roof, column change auto, bare metal repaint, new beige leather interior, new walnut, new carpets, fully restored and immaculate throughout **£39,950**

SL320 Roadster 1996P

Green/Black met, Mushroom leather, new black soft top, panoramic hardtop, 5-Sp auto, ABS/BAS/ESP, climate, cruise, airbags, leather steering wheel/gearknob, original 16" alloys, FSH, 86,000m . **£11,950**



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CHANGING PLACES

This couture cruiser is the product of old-school cool meeting new-school rules

WORDS **Emma Woodcock** PHOTOGRAPHY **Adrian Brannan**





Glance down at this 1971 C114 250 CE and the Paul Bracq lines tell their own story. Stacked headlights talk of Mercedes' mid-century heritage, a decade-long period when the manufacturer favoured upright-yet-distinctive styling. The simple, uncurving body panels point to 1960s minimalism and the rejection of excessive ornamentation. The interior, a sumptuously stuffed drawing room in black vinyl, says everything an owner would ever need to know about long distance comfort.

But wait, we're one chapter short of a conclusion! Lift back the bonnet and you're left stumbling for words; it's a six-cylinder engine, but not the one you might expect. "I take it to shows here, there and everywhere," says Robin Thomson, the car's owner and a serial Mercedes collector. "Even car guys don't always know what it is. I'll tell them my cool coupe has a little surprise hidden away and leave them to guess, but none of them ever manage to work it out." We'll let you in on the secret: this stylish Seventies smasher is running on 1990s diesel power.

As its boot badge suggests, Robin's tidy two-door began life powered by a 2.5-litre petrol-fed six-banger, the very first Mercedes engine to wear emergent Bosch D-Jetronic fuel injection technology. The potent powerplant also made use of electronic actuators and a primitive, if sizeable, ECU. It was a perfectly adequate setup to keep the car motoring through decades of factory standard, Edinburgh-based cruising.

That all changed in the late 1990s, when a marque enthusiast secured the car as his new project. Predictably, after twenty years of regular road use, the 250 was showing its age. Moreover,

the coupe's new owner discovered an alarming fault in the engine bay. "He told me fuel was pouring out of the air intake," Robin explains. The original under-bonnet equipment had to go. With an eye on economy and durability, the car's custodian secured a tired, diesel-driven W115 with the intention of relieving the car of its derv-devouring beating heart.

FRUSTRATION STATION

The Benz fan wasted no time. The W115's slam panel was cut away to enable easy access to the donor lump in readiness for its appointment at the nose of the C114. There was just one problem: the new engine had led a full and varied life, and now it was discovered to be heavily worn. "There were a number of running problems following completion of the work," Robin continues. "The car never really operated as intended."

Keen to find pastures new, the time had come for the chap to part with his project. Robin, long-time regional officer of the Scotland Central chapter of Mercedes-Benz Club UK and currently the owner of no fewer than fifteen Mercs, was offered first refusal. "It was the first time someone had to convince me to buy a car," he laughs. "Initially, I wasn't that interested, but I couldn't bear the thought of a C114 being sent to the great scrapyard in the sky. I ended up taking the project home with me, but only to save it from the crusher!"

Deposited at its new place of residence, the car went nowhere fast. With everything from a C140 500 SEC to the dark blue 'Fintail' we featured in our last issue, Robin simply didn't have time for a new problem to fix. Consequently, the poorly 250 CE sat motionless for two long years.

The car might have been out of sight, but it certainly wasn't out of mind. In fact, as the





Above Not exactly what you were expecting to see at the front of this C114, is it?!

Left Classic Mercedes interior features lashings of black vinyl and is a supremely comfortable place to spend time

Facing page Robin is proud of his status as regional officer of Mercedes-Benz Club UK

bodywork of his W124 300 D daily hack began to deteriorate, Robin's thoughts turned to the C114. An idea formed in glorious technicolor. "I owned a presentable coupe with a knackered engine and a decaying diesel runabout with a reliable motor. The 300 engine is great, the 114-series body is great. Why wouldn't I put the two together?!"

HISTORY REPEATING

Veteran of numerous 116, 123 and 126 diesel conversions, the Scottish Benz nut certainly had the skills to carry out the conversion. "All I needed was a measuring tape and contemplation," he laughs. "Those were the most important tools to work with when establishing whether the newer engine would fit into the older car." The calculations were on his side and, once the sump had been massaged to clear the crossmember, the basic driveline (including the W124's gearbox) slid straight into place. Even the 300's engine steadies lined up with the coupe's mounting points.

Minor alterations continued the work. The battery tray was relocated to the other side of the engine bay, allowing the 300 intake manifold to be positioned unimpeded, while Robin fabricated a new rod to push the automatic transmission's

DRIVER Q&A



ROBIN THOMSON

First Mercedes
A diesel-powered W126

Favourite Mercedes
I like them all!

Best thing about your C114 restomod
The fact I was able to save it from the crusher

Worst thing about your C114 restomod
Absolutely nothing. I love driving this car!

shifter up into the cabin. Other components benefited from Mercedes' cautious mechanical evolution, allowing Robin to cross the generation gap with minimal hassle. "The propshaft is all Mercedes," he explains. "It's splined and splits in the middle. The same setup exists across many models. I had plenty of spare propshafts lying around, making it easy for me to find a front half to fit the C114's original rear section."

It wasn't all unicorns and fairy dust, mind. The radiator and its accompanying fan both required extensive refabrication to squeeze into the coupe's engine bay. The 300's electronic components also required careful handling. "They took a lot of time to get right," says Robin. "The donor engine utilises a small amount of electronics, but I was adamant they should all work correctly and be tidily installed." A full harness strip started the changeover, Robin selecting the relevant wiring to configure idle speed and to install an over-voltage protection relay. Thankfully, now those features and the relevant control units are safely in place, his 250 CE runs perfectly and is thought to be the only C114 with a modern vehicle diagnostics port.

Inside, there's almost nothing to tell this gene-splined machine from a standard C114. The seats, carpets and controls are all original, having been

Boost battler

Robin's 250 CE first hit the streets during an era of technical flux. Back in Germany, Mercedes was working hard on a diesel-powered variant of the C111. Low, mid-engined and iconic, the earliest Wankel-powered variants of the 111-series had already pushed past 180mph. Working with the basic inline-five from a 300 D and an intercooled Garrett turbocharger, could the updated machine go faster? In 1978, two cars and five drivers descended on the Nardo test track to find out. Battling blowouts and fatigue, they'd grab nine world records and register an amazing one-hour average of 199.98mph.

treated to nothing more than a thorough clean. Only the speedo gives the game away. Fitted with a factory glow plug indicator and relay, it started life in the W115 donor car and acts as a fitting tribute to the car's first switch to diesel. "The light is one of those little things that finishes the car in perfect style," says Robin. "You turn the key, wait for the light to go out and start the engine. It's as though Mercedes carried out the conversion."

NEW TRICKS

Despite its old-school looks, this practical restomod wasn't destined for an easy life. Used as a daily driver from April through to October each year, the car carries its proud pilot around Scotland in perfect comfort. Needless to say, he doesn't plan to retire his retro ride any time soon. "It remains a smooth four-seater with a huge boot. Besides, now the car boasts power from 1992, it drives far more like a modern Mercedes," he smiles. "The engine had covered 120,000 miles at the point I bolted it into place. I've added a further 10,000 miles since finishing the build. As any W124 diesel owner knows, the unit is barely run in!" Clearly, he's had no qualms about equipping his bright white two-door with the guts of a 300 D. "Ultimately, it's the reason this car has been saved," he concludes. Mission accomplished.



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Mercedes-Benz 280SL Sports Pagoda £129,500



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Mercedes-Benz 350SL Sports £35,750

Finished in glacier white with tan hide interior, headrests, hard and soft tops, tinted glass, power windows, power steering, automatic, over mats, original stereo and factory alloys. This car has only covered 45,000 original miles from new with full Mercedes history and all old MoTs and invoices. Complete with all original tools, recent full service, garaged from new. This car must be one of the finest to be on offer.



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports £39,750

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Mercedes-Benz 280SL Sports Pagoda £135,750

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Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports £46,750

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Mercedes-Benz 420SL Sports £39,750

one of the last of this model, finished in gleaming signal red with superb black hide interior, piped red, rear seats, hard and soft tops, tinted glass, power windows, auto, cd player, alloys, over mats, full service, history



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports £49,750

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UNDER THE HAMMER

HAMMER TIME!

From chump change to premium price tags, here's our look at the star cars (and cars of the stars) generating excitement in auction rooms across the land...

WORDS **Dan Furr** PHOTOGRAPHY **Walter Brown**

SOLD FOR
£60,750



**BIG
SPENDER**

1971 W108 280 SE 3.5 V8

The 3.5-litre version of the 280 SE typifies the resurgence of larger-engined Mercedes models that began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the progressive easing of fiscal constraints, which had dissuaded customers from buying cars with large capacity engines, encouraged the German manufacturer to offer bigger, more potent power units. Thus, the ultra-luxurious 280 SE and 300 SEL were the models chosen by Mercedes to launch its magnificent new 3.5-litre V8 engine in the late 1960s.

This tastefully specified 1971 280 SE is a W108 finished in Metallic Silver



with a black leather interior. The car recently benefitted from sympathetic restoration work carried out by actor and noted Mercedes enthusiast, Gary Mavericks (read all about his 1965 W100 600 in our last issue: bit.ly/issuesmd). New floors were installed, as were new brakes and suspension. Further work includes a recent outlay of £2,600 on the interior, including the fitting of a period radio, four speaker and new carpets. Showing less than 46,500 miles, this silver stunner didn't have trouble finding a new home when it was offered at the Silverstone Auctions Heythrop Classic Car Sale.

1981 R107 280 SL

Finished in Brilliant Red with a black half-leather interior, this X-reg SL has been thoroughly rejuvenated by marque expert, Steve Redfern. The bulkhead was fully rebuilt, new wings were installed, the braking system and anti-roll bars were loaded with new parts and a new canvas roof was fitted. Add new tyres, a new heater, renewed rubber seals, a new battery and extensive engine work and you can see how the previous owner managed to spend £20k in the last two years alone! Needless to say, this delicious drop-top was one of the Classic Car Auctions May Sale's best buys with a final price of less than fifteen grand.



1991 W124 500E

Another example of a Mercedes offered from the collection of a famous actor, this superb 500E was the property of Blackadder star, Rowan Atkinson, when it was being prepared for a new owner in advance of the Classic Car Auctions May Sale. Atkinson bought the 161mph five-litre V8 when it was six months old. He kept it for

four years before repurchasing the Porsche-built super saloon in 2017. One of the original twenty-nine UK-supplied 500Es, the attractively priced large barge was offered at auction with a comprehensive history file. It was also supplied with copies of the magazine features it has starred in. Here's another one to add to the folder!

2000 R170 SLK 230



The first-generation SLK was produced between 1996 and 2004 and can currently be bought for peanuts. This supercharged SLK 230 is a prime example of big smiles at low cost. Offered by Anglia Car Auctions with a full service history, four owners from new (the last keeping the car since 2008), just 87k miles since rolling out of the original dealer's showroom, a full book pack, an excellently presented leather interior and both original keys, the car commanded a smidge over £2.5k when it crossed the block in King's Lynn. And in case you were wondering what SLK stands for, it's the company's design mission to create a Sportlich (sporty), Leicht (light) and Kurz (compact) roadster. So now you know!



SOLD FOR
£2,544



UNDER THE HAMMER

1990 W201 190E 2.5-16

This UK-supplied, right-hand drive 190E 2.5-16 was offered at the Classic Car Auctions May Sale with an asking price of just £7,350, but even with this low sum requested, the car failed to attract bids. Gradually restored over the course of the past eight years, the Cosworth-fettled four-door's black coachwork has recently been detailed, as has the smart and inviting black leather interior. Gearbox, engine and suspension work ensures a fault-free ride, but high mileage of 204,400 and automatic transmission were enough to dissuade punters from digging deep. Pity.



2004 W220 S55 AMG



In a time before Mercedes embraced turbocharging for its flagship performance models, AMGs were loaded with shouty V8s. Forced induction came in the form of a supercharger, as indicated by the evocative *Kompressor* badge on the host vehicle's body. This W220 S55 AMG is a great example of a blown eight-banger from the Mercedes stable. Presented in black with cream leather, well maintained and subject to a recent refresh of its air suspension system, the long-wheelbase executive saloon is one of a breed currently making the case for its status as a modern classic offering superb value for money, a claim supported by this S55's bulging history file, just 86k miles from new and 500bhp on tap.



1964 W111 220 SEb COUPE

UK-supplied in September 1964 and passing through no more than five owners, this 220 SEb was the subject of a comprehensive restoration between 2009 and 2011. Bodywork, running gear and the engine all received attention. The tidy two-door was professionally resprayed in its original colour scheme of Burgundy with a contrasting black roof before

being furnished with a new front grille. Fourteen-inch steelies with body-coloured hubcaps replace the original thirteens, an upgrade improving ride and handling, which is ably assisted by powered steering. Purchased by the current owner in 2013, this classic Benz has covered 8,500 miles since its return to the road, but failed to sell at the Heythrop Classic Car Sale.

SOLD FOR
£9,324





1979 W123 200

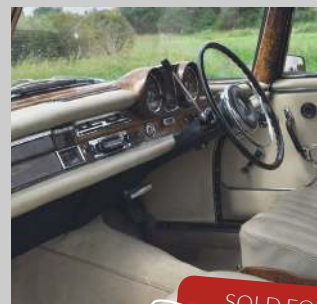
Exactly forty years old, this 93bhp China Blue 200 boasts just three owners from new, the first being a Benz dealer in Wolverhampton, the last keeping the fantastic four-door from 1989 until his death earlier this year. The accompanying service book shows five stamps up to 42,225, the last entry occurring in July 1994. Today, the odometer reads 75,300, which is believed to be correct. Finished with a beige cloth and vinyl interior, this super saloon is mechanically sound and was sold with a full MoT when it shifted for an amazingly low sum at the Leominster Classics sale hosted by Brightwells in May.



1965 W111 220 SE



Having been subjected to a recent engine rebuild, this rare 'matching numbers' right-hand drive 220 SE was offered at the Coys Spring Classics auction with a vast number of invoices, MoT certificates and main dealer service history, much of it dating back to the car's year of manufacture. A right-hand drive UK-supplied W111 and sold new through Normandy in Mayfair in January 1965, the car retains its head-turning finish of Metallic Beige over twin-tone black-and-beige interior trim. Remarkably, the car has been in the custody of just two owners from new! The meticulously kept paperwork includes a bill of sale from 1965, confirming the presence of all original mechanical components and cabin furniture today. Automatic transmission coupled with the M127 2,195cc engine promotes the two-door's qualities as a luxury cruiser ready to munch miles. It's rare to find a W111 in such good condition sell at a price point this pleasing. Congratulations to the lucky new owner!



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