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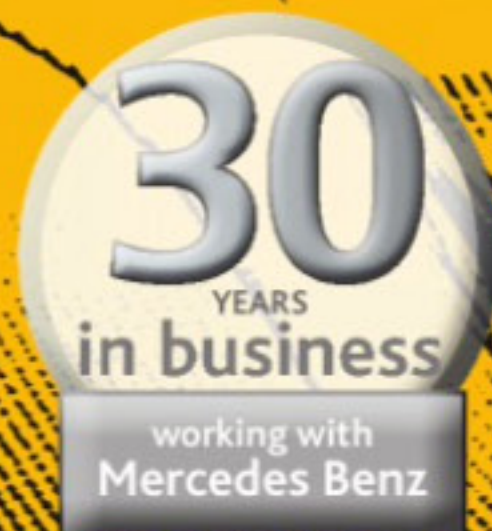
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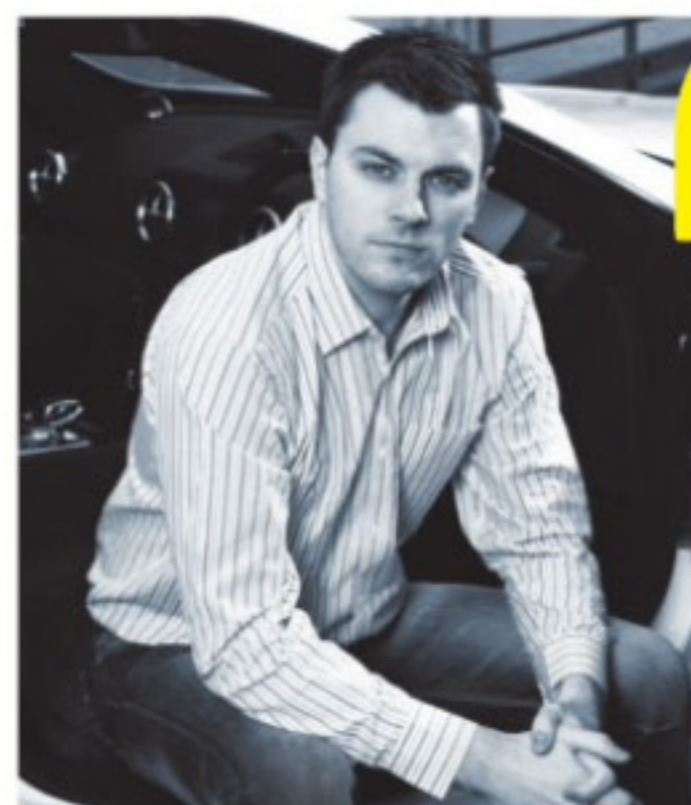
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You can't blame car makers for leaning back towards inherently less 'dirty' petrol powerplants

THE EDITORIAL DEADLINE FOR THIS MAGAZINE WAS BOTH A BLESSING AND A curse. Coming during the first week of March (is it that time of year already?), our date with destiny meant that Mercedes Enthusiast would be one of the first monthly motoring titles to publish its verdict on the brand new Mercedes-AMG C63, which you can read from page 28. However, the downside was that our report from the Geneva motor show would have to wait until the May 2015 issue. Thankfully, we had time to cram all the highlights into this month's News (beginning on page 8), so I hope these - and our first drive of AMG's new wonder machine - offer some form of consolation.

In complete contrast to this month's hot Mercedes, we take a look back at the most important fuel savers since the dawn of the diesel powered car in 1936. It will come as no surprise to read that oil burners have played a significant role in saving Mercedes-Benz owners money at the fuel pumps, while ramping up performance and efficiency as time went on. But petrol engines have also had a big part to play, and given the far higher cost of manufacturing turbodiesel engines that meet EU6 and upcoming EU7 emissions legislation, you can't blame car makers for leaning back towards inherently less 'dirty' (and thus cheaper to make) petrol powerplants. Good news all round, as far as I'm concerned.



In Geneva, Mercedes' Dr Thomas Weber (left) revealed that the company will bring 10 new plug-in hybrid models to market by 2017. Before we know it, the likes of the C350e, with its four-cylinder petrol engine and powerful electric motor, will be a common sight on the road.

Kyle Molyneux
Editor

Who's been doing what in this month's Mercedes Enthusiast...



Guy Baker

"The opportunity to drive not one, but two generations of V8 AMG C-Classes was an offer not to be turned down. But I couldn't help shedding a metaphorical

tear too - the passing of the 204-series C63 marks the end of an era," says Guy Baker, who wastes no time looking at the brighter side for buyers of these machines. "The march of technology all but guarantees the normally aspirated C55 AMG and succeeding C63 of future classic status." Turn to page 38 to begin this intriguing head-to-head!



David Sutherland

Once he had assembled all the material for his feature on Mercedes' most significant 'economy cars' over the decades, it struck David

Sutherland just how diverse the German car manufacturer has been in this area. "Not only did Mercedes-Benz build the first diesel car, in 1936, but it was even making a fuel sipping S-Class in the late 1970s," he observes. "Mercedes-Benz is a true innovator." Witness the evolution of star badged fuel savers from page 76.



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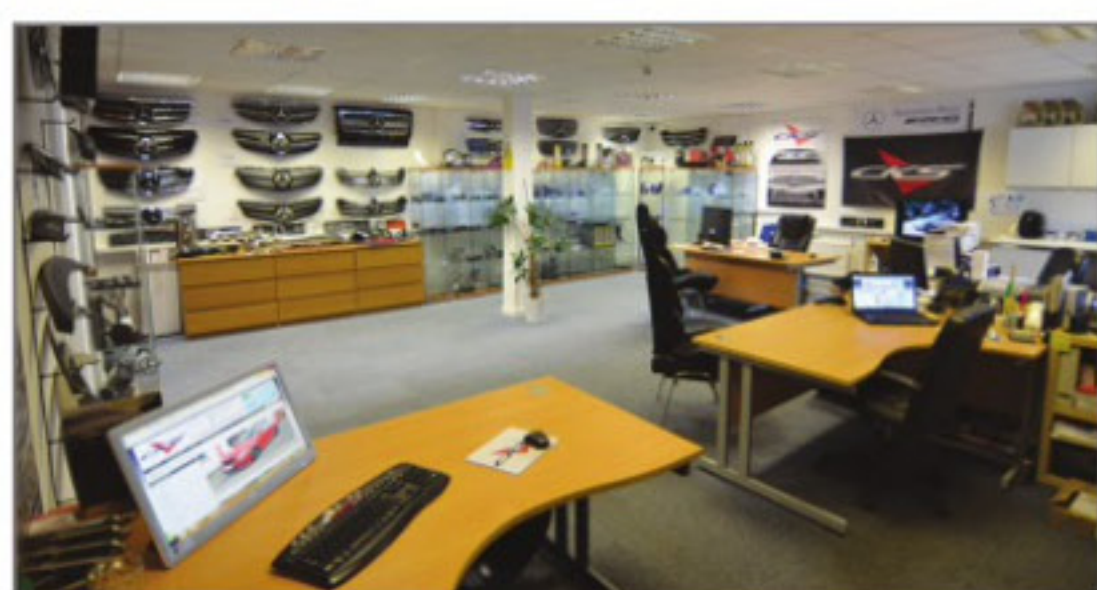
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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

NEWS



NEW G-WAGEN!

Standing almost 2.25 metres tall, the G500 4x4² brings advanced engineering to the great outdoors



◀◀ The interior is a world away from the G's utilitarian beginnings.

◀ This near production G-Wagen is based on the G63 AMG 6x6.

MERCEDES-BENZ CHOSE THE run up to March's Geneva motor show (come back next month for our full report) to unveil its astounding G500 4x4², a near production vehicle that uses the all-wheel drive powertrain of the G63 AMG 6x6 – minus one axle – and blends it with newly developed suspension packing dual-spring/damper struts and adjustable damping.

Riding on 22-inch wheels with special mud/terrain tyres in size 325/55, the G500 4x4² boasts a ground clearance figure of 450mm, thanks to versatile portal axles which position the wheels much lower than the axle's centre line, increasing

the ride height and allowing the vehicle to wade through water one-metre deep. The G500 4x4² can also tackle breakover angles of 47 degrees, and resists tipping angles of up to 30 degrees – both notable improvements on a regular, long-wheelbase G-Wagen, which manages 21 and 28 degrees respectively.

Under the bonnet is a new, four-litre V8 that develops 416bhp and fires twin-turbocharged expletives through AMG inspired, side mounted exhaust pipes. Basically a detuned and reworked version of the engine found in the Mercedes-AMG GT, *Mercedes Enthusiast* understands that this powerplant will eventually replace the

current 4.7-litre V8 biturbo in other '500' badged Mercedes-Benz models, in a bid to improve fuel economy and lower emissions.

The final touches on this incredible off-roader are LED light strips above the windscreen, partially painted wheelarch flares made of carbon fibre, stainless steel underguards, and the front bumper of the G63/G65 AMG. The interior features a designo Exclusive package, bringing soft designo leather with contrasting stitching.

Mercedes-Benz invited us to drive its mountain-moving G500 4x4² at the end of February, so come back next month for the full story – it promises to be epic!

THE PULLMAN RETURNS

Another highlight of the Geneva motor show in early March was the debut of the Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman, which wowed the crowds 50 years after the original W100 600 Pullman did the same in 1965.

Using a six-litre, 523bhp V12 biturbo engine, the new car measures 6,499mm from nose to tail,

which is 1,053mm longer than the regular Maybach. And at 1,598mm tall, it is also 100mm higher than its shorter sibling. All of which enables seating for six, with four occupants able to sit facing each other in the rear – the VIP seats face the direction of travel, while two luxurious flip down seats point rearward.

Prices start at around €500,000 (£360,000) before the incredible customisation options are taken into account. The first customers will take delivery of their cars in early 2016.



Class leading levels of legroom in the rear; high tech luxury throughout.

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MONSTER MERCEDES

The biggest names in the business reveal their latest creations



Lorinser The Waiblingen based tuner is now offering styling kits for the 205-series C-Class, as well as upgrades for the C220 Bluetec (201bhp), C250 (242bhp) and C400 (384bhp).



Brabus Using the S65 AMG V12 biturbo as a starting point, Brabus' Rocket 900 develops an incredible 900ps (888bhp), as well as 1,016lb ft torque, and features full Brabus styling.



Mansory Based on the S63 AMG Coupe, Mansory's Diamond Edition boasts 973bhp, plus typically bold Mansory styling, a new exhaust system and a bespoke, two-tone interior.



Carlsson The Final Edition of the C25 Super-GT (based on the Mercedes SL) features carbon fibre bodywork, saving 160kg, and is available with a 444bhp V8 or a 743bhp Carlsson V12.

SPECIAL EDITION SL

Mercedes-Benz is celebrating the 60th anniversary of its famous victory in the 1955 Mille Miglia, with a special edition SL.

Available in SL400 V6 (328bhp) and SL500 V8 (449bhp) forms, the 'Mille Miglia 417' pack features Magnetite Black metallic paint as standard, (designo Night Black Magno and designo Cashmere White Magno paint are optional), plus red styling highlights on the front spoiler, AMG wheels (19s up front, 20s at the rear) and carbon bootlid spoiler.

ESP Curve Dynamic Assist, and adaptive and adjustable damping are also part of the

standard specification, while Active Body Control is an optional extra.

The red theme continues inside, gracing the AMG Line seats, doors and steering wheel, the latter with a matte carbon fibre finish that can also be found on the centre console and the 'SL Mille Miglia' embossed headrests.

Available to order from April 7, the Mille Miglia 417 package for the SL400 costs €14,800 (£10,700), and €12,800 (£9,200) for the SL500. UK details were yet to be confirmed at the time of writing.



◀ V6 and V8 versions offered.

▷ Matte carbon fibre trim within.

▷ Red accents for AMG seats.



NEWS IN BRIEF



△ AWARD WINNER

The Mercedes-Benz C-Class saloon has been announced as 'Executive Car of the Year' at the UK Car of the Year Awards 2015.



△ MERCEDES MEET

This year, the popular 'Benz on the Green' charity event will take place on May 16, beginning at Prestige Car Services' workshop in Horndean, Hampshire before moving on to The George Inn located in Finchdean village. All models and ages of Mercedes are welcome, and there will be a free bouncy castle, face painting and candy floss. For more information visit www.benzonthegreen.co.uk.



△ SLK DAY IN 2015

Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey is set to host an 'SLK Day' on June 28 in association with the Mercedes-Benz Club. All Mercedes enthusiasts and cars are welcome, but to take part in the event you need to join the Mercedes-Benz Club and register in advance - see www.mercedes-benz-club.co.uk or call 01780 482111.

□ IN GOOD COMPANY

Mercedes-Benz Cars UK has been voted 'Franchise of the Year' at the AM Awards. Mercedes UK enjoyed its best ever year in 2014, seeing sales increase by 14 per cent on 2013.

▽ NEW FACTORY

A new Mercedes-Benz plant in Iracemápolis, São Paulo will start production of the C-Class in the first quarter of 2016. Assembly of the GLA compact SUV will follow in the middle of the year.



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MOTORSPORT NEWS

A successor to the SLS AMG GT3 is announced, as the new V8 Supercars season kicks off in Australia

MERCEDES-AMG GT3

Make no mistake – the SLS AMG GT3 was a huge success. So the weight of expectation hanging over its successor, the AMG GT3, is immense. Despite being based on the four-litre V8 biturbo powered AMG GT road car, this new racer features an enhanced version of the 6.2-litre, naturally aspirated AMG V8 that took pride of place in the SLS, and links it to a six-speed sequential gearbox mounted on the rear axle to optimise weight distribution.

Like the road car, the AMG GT3 features an extremely rigid and strong, yet lightweight aluminium space frame. The engine cover, doors, front wings, aprons, sidewalls, side skirts, diffuser, bootlid and rear spoiler are all made from carbon fibre, and conceal a double-wishbone suspension arrangement made almost entirely from aluminium. AMG's customer teams will take delivery of their new machines from the end of 2015.



FORMULA 1



Shortly before going to press, Mercedes unveiled its latest Formula 1 Safety Car for the 2015 season. Based on AMG's 503bhp GT S, the new machine will be driven by Bernd Mayländer and boasts a modified performance exhaust system. It also has the optional Dynamic Plus package to further improve handling and response. The GT S Formula 1 Safety Car will be joined by a new C63 S Estate Medical Car.

V8 SUPERCARS



The 2015 V8 Supercars championship began at Adelaide in late February with the Clipsal 500. Erebus Motorsport V8 is the only team running an AMG E-Class this year, so it was up to drivers Ash Walsh and Will Davison to deliver the goods. The best result for the team came in race two of three, with Aussie driver Walsh bringing his E63 AMG home in eighth position – seven places higher than where he started and only 18 seconds behind the race winner after one hour.

Mercedes-Benz is at the forefront of driverless car development - here's how the future could shape up...

The F 015 Luxury in Motion is 5.2 metres long, 2.0 metres wide and 1.5 metres tall.



HANDLING OVER THE REINS

With its S500 Intelligent Drive prototype and F 015 concept car, Mercedes-Benz is making autonomous driving cars a reality

WORDS IAN KUAH IMAGES DAIMLER AG/IAN KUAH

IN LUC BESSON'S SPECTACULAR sci-fi film, *The Fifth Element*, set in 2263, Bruce Willis' character, Korben Dallas, is a New York City cab driver living in a world where autonomous flying cars are used as everyday transport. *The Fifth Element* was released in 1997, and 18 years on, we are still a very long way from that scenario. But be in no doubt that the motor industry has already taken its first tentative steps towards autonomous driving cars.

The idea of a self driving vehicle is not a new one, but most people are surprised when they learn that the concept was originally mooted in the early days of the motorcar by Nikola Tesla (1856 to 1843), the Serbian American inventor who was the father of the AC electrical supply system.

However, as with many advanced systems, autonomous driving required several enabling

technologies to be invented and developed to a certain level before it could even reach the relatively early stage it's at now. This is all a matter of processor power and programming, and at this early stage of the game the system performs pretty rudimentary tasks without the higher level of cognitive self awareness and adaptation that will come in time as the

technology matures.

Underlining this sequence of events, the autonomous driving technology we experienced on the S500 Intelligent Drive test did not just come out of nowhere. Rather, it is the next logical step based on the building blocks of systems that already exist, today's radar sensors and

cameras being just the latest additions in an additive process that began with the basic cruise control function that Mercedes-Benz offered to customers from 1975.

The systems progressed in stages through Distronic, Distronic Plus, and Distronic Plus with Steering Assist, all the time becoming more intelligent, interactive and semi autonomous. Tracing this technological timeline, you can see that autonomous driving was the logical end game all along.

ONE STEP AT A TIME

However, as with all such inventions, autonomous driving had to wait for the right enabling technologies. In this case, the computer processing power to handle the inputs from various sensors and cameras and control the vehicle autonomously. It is a fact that even 20 years ago, the ECUs in cars already had more computing power than the roomful of computers that sent men to the moon in the 1960s. But a true autonomous driving car will require a huge amount of computing power and vehicle intelligence.

According to Rob Csongor, Vice President and General Manager of Nvidia's automotive division (Nvidia is an American technology company that manufactures graphics and

The car is rapidly going to go from the most 'stupid' electronic device a consumer owns, to the most powerful supercomputer a consumer will ever own

Rob Csongor, Nvidia



◀ Curvaceous chairs for rear seat occupants.



◀ Front seats swivel to face backwards.

processing units), “The car is rapidly going to go from the most ‘stupid’ electronic device a consumer owns, to the most powerful supercomputer a consumer will ever own.

“The ability for a car to detect, understand and react in the blink of an eye will require a staggering amount of processing power as automotive manufacturers add ever more sensors for driving assistance, infotainment and navigation,” he explained.

However, the biggest obstacle to adoption of autonomous driving technology is worldwide legislation. While California in the USA has already passed laws that allow such technology on its roads, there is still a long way to go elsewhere. The issue of liability alone in case of an accident is a veritable minefield.

As we glided away from the Mercedes-Benz research and development centre in Silicon Valley, the promise of the S500 Intelligent Drive’s technology rapidly became clear. The car accelerated smoothly up to the legal speed limit and took us on its pre programmed route with no fuss or drama whilst we chatted away, freed from the responsibilities of



◁ Roads in towns and cities are a challenge.

◁◁ This self driving S is a true office on wheels.

◁◁◁ Tests in the real world are well under way.

▽◁ Make calls on move while car does driving.

▽ Gestures for controls will declutter cabins.

▷ concentrating on the road and other traffic. Of course, there are shortcomings of the system at this early stage of the game. For instance, as we approached a set of traffic lights that were on red, we pulled up behind a car that was already stopped. In this situation, a human driver might have moved across to the unoccupied lane next to the stationary vehicle.

The SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) has established a set of internationally accepted standards for autonomous driving cars. The S-Class prototype represents Level 2, while a completely autonomous driven Level 4 car will be able to receive destination instructions from its occupants and take them there all by itself. A Level 4 car retains a manual override capability so a human driver can take over. Level 5 uses exactly the same technology, but is totally autonomous with no manual override function available to those on board.

OBVIOUS BENEFITS

The reality is that we will not achieve Level 4/5 for perhaps another 20 years or more. While the rapidly advancing speed and capability of computers will allow the technology to mature quickly, there are many issues that make practical implementation a steep uphill battle.

Mercedes-Benz is using the term 'Modern Luxury' to describe the broad palette of ways in which it is redefining the age old concept of material and mental well being. There are

mundane tasks like driving in traffic jams in the city or on the motorway, which can be given to an autonomous driving car so that the driver can get on with more productive tasks such as making phone calls, doing work on a laptop or tablet, or even watching a movie.

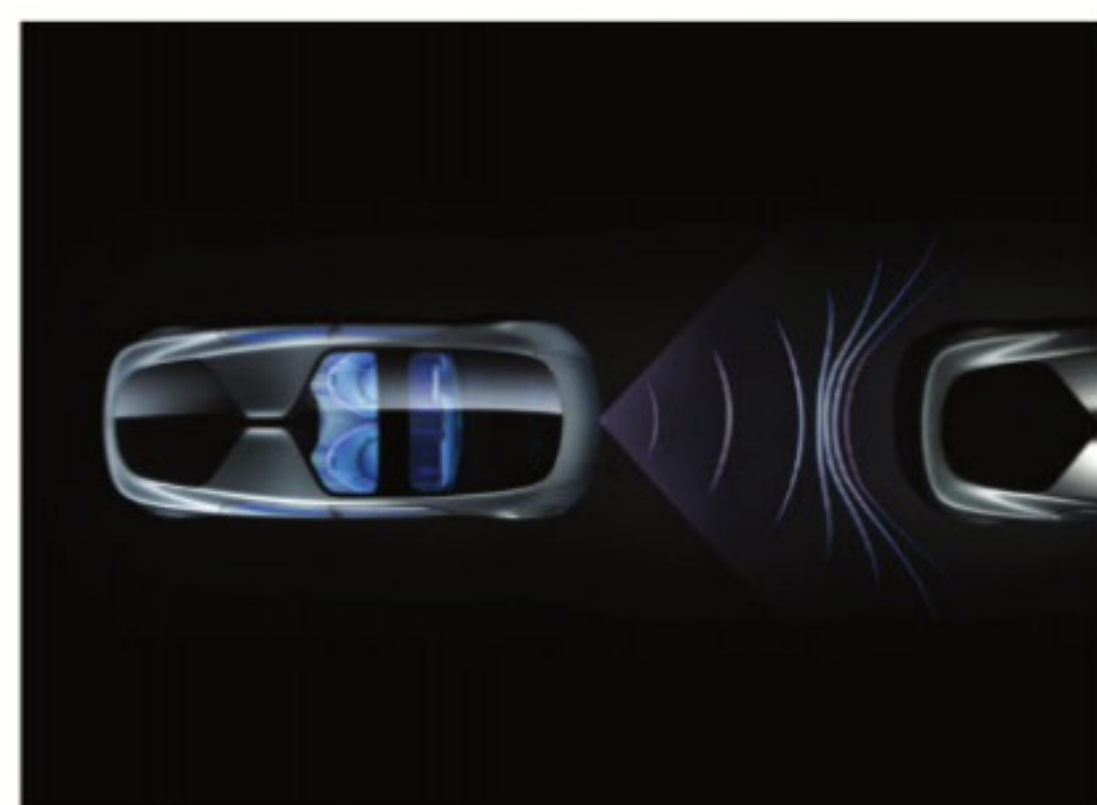


Some aspects of driving are a chore no matter how much you like cars. Driving along a motorway with a low speed limit for miles on end is one of these uninspiring tasks that can be handed over to a machine that will not lose concentration and crash due to boredom, frustration or inattention.

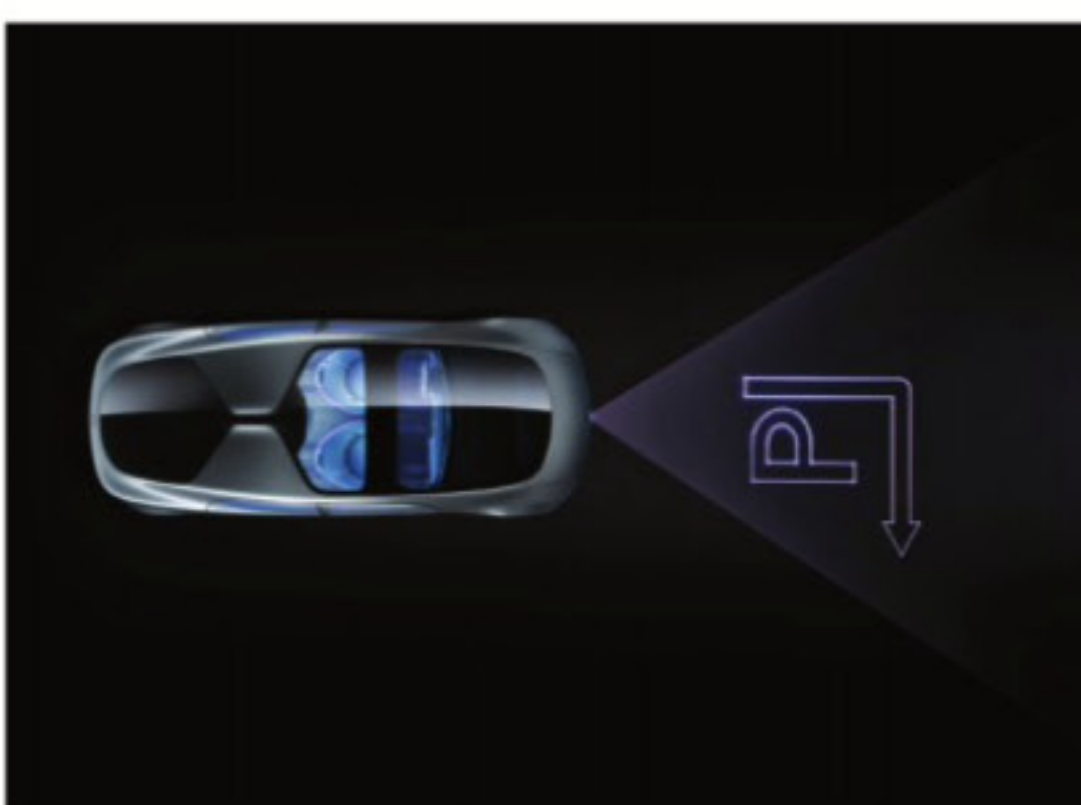
When you consider how much of people's lives are wasted in traffic jams, both in terms of lost work productivity and leisure time, the case for autonomous driving makes itself. Time is the greatest luxury, and one that money cannot buy. An autonomous driving car gives back a lot of time to its occupants.



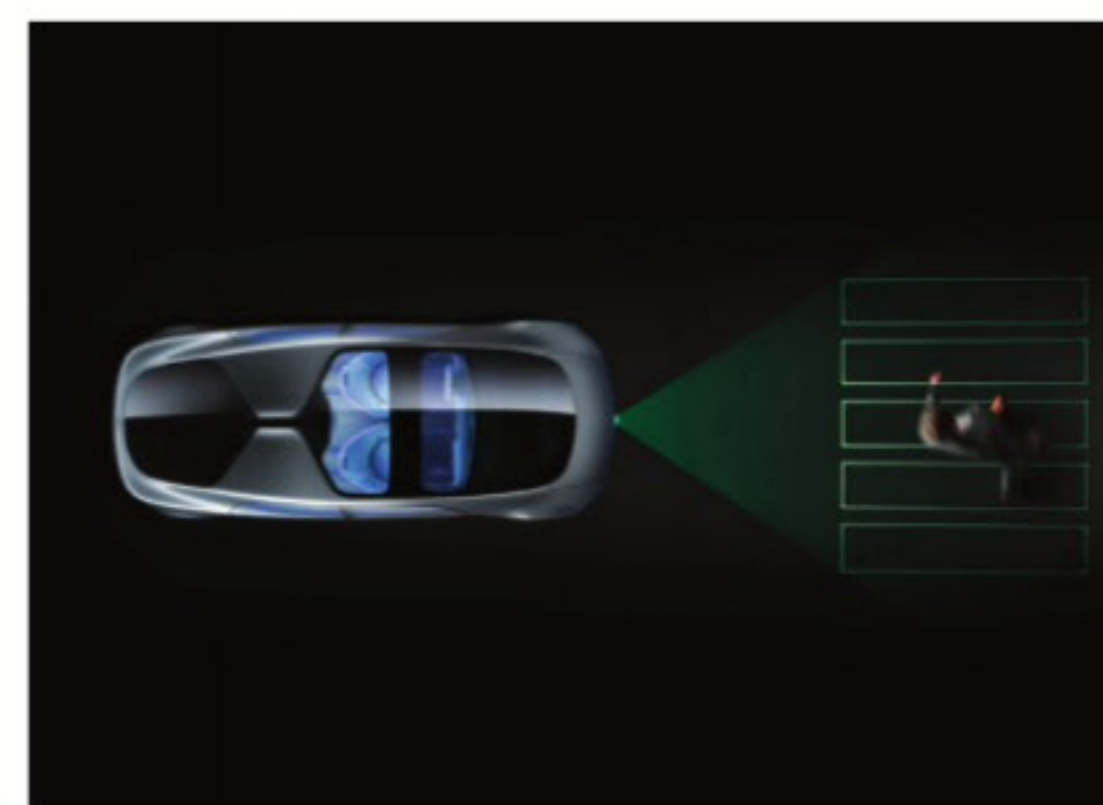
Space is another luxury, and the F 015 concept car shows that Mercedes-Benz is not just thinking about the technologies that can be fitted into a vehicle, but also the ways in which cars can be made more space efficient. With a future electric car removing the need for an internal combustion engine and fuel tank, the whole space utilisation equation changes dramatically, with much more space given to passengers to relax. Its construction is also revolutionary. Thanks to a structure made from composite materials along with lightweight, high strength steel and



△ On board cameras, radar and sensors interpret the road.



△ Cars of the future will locate their own parking space.



△ Laser projections communicate with pedestrians, too.

“Time is the greatest luxury, and one that money cannot buy - an autonomous driving car gives back a lot of time to its occupants”



◀ Minimalist dash with full length screen.



◀ F 015 made its debut at CES in Vegas.

alloys, the F 015 Luxury in Motion concept weighs up to 40 per cent less than a current vehicle of the same size.

While Mercedes was keen to demonstrate its progress in autonomous driving with the S500 Intelligent Drive prototype, as well as allowing us to experience a mock up of the ‘third space’ interior arrangement of the F 015 concept car in Silicon Valley last year, it really pushed out the boat at the recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. Here, the F 015 made a dramatic entrance for the waiting press on the evening before the main show. Later that night, we were treated to a demonstration of this futuristic Mercedes mixing it with the traffic on Las Vegas Boulevard.

THE BIG REVEAL

In a town that never sleeps, this car was a real showstopper. However, the onlookers who whipped out their smartphones to record this futuristic machine had no inkling that the Mercedes engineer sitting in the driver’s seat was only there for safety reasons, and the car was actually driving itself! As business tycoon and engineer Howard Hughes famously said, it’s “the way of the future!”

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Our man in the know tackles everything Mercedes-Benz – this month...

WHEN ALL IS REVEALED



Changing wheels yourself takes some effort, but Mercedes-Benz does provide some help which, until now, had gone unnoticed by **David Sutherland**

Just occasionally, someone points out something that, once alerted to it, you feel awfully stupid for not being aware of it previously. It happened to me recently with regard to changing road wheels – and now I have seen the light, this irksome task has become so much easier.

There are two Mercedes diesels in our household, an A180 CDI and ML320 CDI. Both have a set of cold weather tyres, and so twice per year a fair amount of wheel swapping occurs (see page 97). Changing one wheel is not so onerous, but when you lack the facilities – and fitness – of a professional tyre fitter, doing all four can be exhausting. I wouldn't dream of doing two cars in a day.

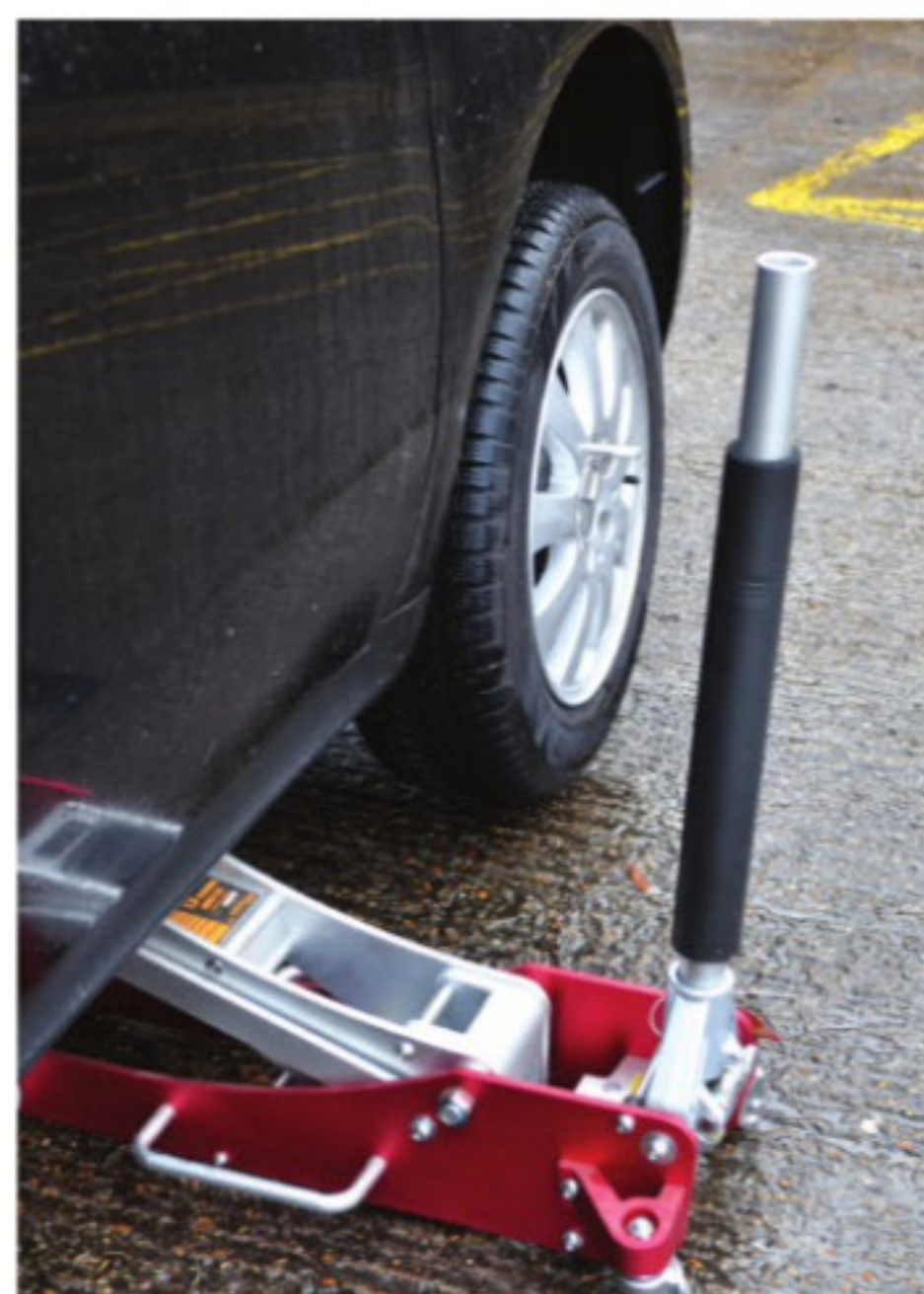
Part of the problem is that the wheels on modern cars are much harder to change than on older ones. Or so I thought. Years ago, wheel hubs had studs protruding from them, allowing the wheel to locate only in one position, the wheel nuts then easily popping on to these studs for tightening – but modern cars have bolts instead of nuts, therefore you must hold the wheel in place on the hub while rotating it until the bolt holes in the wheel and the hub line up.

Without three hands, this can be exasperating, especially when daylight and your energy are running out. Holding up a 15-inch A-Class wheel from a crouched position is just about manageable, but doing the same with an 18-inch ML wheel with a 255/55R18 tyre wrapped around it is back-breaking. I really don't know why they're referred to as 'light' alloys.

I related, with relish, the tribulations of my winter preparations on both cars to Steve Shali, proprietor of a local Mercedes independent, Klasse of Fulham, and who looks after our cars. His simple but revelatory reply was, "Why didn't you use the wheel centring pin?" I had never heard of a wheel centring pin, which with hindsight was surprising seeing as there is one in the ML's toolkit. In my defence, the A-Class, which we've owned longer, doesn't have one.



A centring pin makes the positioning and fastening of an alloy wheel much easier.



It is the simplest of devices that transforms wheel changing

◀ Loosen nuts before raising car.

▼ A new centring pin costs just £3.



It is the simplest of devices that transforms wheel changing. A four-inch long shaft threaded at one end to match the bolt hole, it takes the place of the top bolt on removal of the wheel, so when a wheel is attached again the pin automatically positions it correctly and also partially secures the wheel, making it easier to insert the other bolts.

I tried the ML's pin on the A-Class and it fitted, so I wanted one for the A-Class's toolkit, too. But would Mercedes-Benz, never knowingly underpricing parts, charge the earth for this small length of alloy? No, £3.24 and in stock the next day – no need to look online for something cheaper.

I learned another lesson from the wheel changing exercise, which was that while over tightening a normal wheel bolt can be inconvenient when you next need to change that wheel – doing the same to the locking bolt can be a disaster. Having changed three of the A's tyres from summers to winters, I set about loosening the fourth, but found the locking key, which attaches to the wrench, would not engage the locking bolt. I'd applied too much

tightening torque on the previous wheel and stripped the locking bolt of its anti theft pattern, the remains of this metal now immovably embedded in the locking key's grooves, rendering it useless.

So I now had a car with three cold weather tyres and one summer tyre, a combination which might have been illegal but which certainly had a permanence I and my limited toolkit had no hope of reversing. There was nothing for it but to throw myself at the mercy of Klasse of Fulham, where technician Jake Haynes,

a maestro of the windy gun, managed to persuade the locking nuts to come off without mangling the

surrounding metal of the alloy wheel.

It was during this visit that the worth of the wheel centring pin was passed on to me,

so every cloud has a silver lining. However, the main thing I learned was that a wheel nut may be very small, but it demands respect. Thus, a torque wrench, bought specifically for wheel nut tightening, has now joined my toolkit.

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The spotlight on Mercedes from within the motoring industry - this month...

THE ONE STOP SHOP



The latest cars to wear the three-pointed star demonstrate the scope of the brand, but Mercedes-Benz could go even further with its new naming structure...

There really is no other car manufacturer like it. Mercedes-Benz's ability to stretch, literally in the case of the new Mercedes-Maybach Pullman, into every market segment possible simply extraordinary.

With the introduction of that range topping luxury saloon, with its four rear seats, 6.5-metre length and long history, Mercedes has created a situation where busy rich buyers don't need to go anywhere else for all their vehicular requirements. Indeed, with the introduction of the Pullman, the manufacturer has created pretty much my perfect three-car garage. Assuming, that is, I had both the means and the space to park the three vehicles.

The others would be the new G500 4x4² and a Mercedes-AMG GT S. The perfect three-car garage? I think so, though you could, of course, add a few others from the vast Mercedes-Benz line up to give some more breadth, or ease the parking predicament that at least two machines in my hallowed garage create.

Interestingly, two also come under Mercedes' new diversified naming, the super luxury Mercedes-Maybach and the sporting division that's bundled under Mercedes-AMG. Given the spread of models on offer, there's arguably scope for more brand diversification, with the hard core off-road offerings like the G500 4x4² and its six-wheel drive AMG monster relation arguably so specialised

► G500 4x4² based on the 6x6 version.

No firm can manage a revival like Mercedes-Benz

that they'd suit something like Puch, or Steyr – and have some historical significance, too.

At the other end of the scale there's smart, Mercedes' perennial underperformer, the small car brand never managing to make the sort of impact it perhaps should. While smart has languished with tiny global sales with its fortwo city car, BMW's Mini brand has flourished, its retro styled but conventionally engineered cars a huge success. Those Minis can be had as

The new smart fortwo and forfour are on sale now.



SUVs, cabriolets, estates and numerous other iterations, but smart's attempts at offering different models like the forfour have yet to really grab prospective buyers' imaginations.

Time for a rethink, possibly, as the new fortwo and forfour add little to smart's portfolio, I feel, retaining some fairly unconventional engineering – both being rear engined – in a busy, inexpensive marketplace. If Mercedes-Benz has learned anything with the success of its current A-Class over the old one, it is that great styling sells, unconventional engineering doing little for sales volume, and costing when it comes to the bottom line.

So there wouldn't be a smart in my garage for now, but give it time. No firm can manage a revival like Mercedes-Benz. The new Maybach

underlines this, the brand going from something that while distinct was listless, to one that's more obviously under Mercedes' wing, that alone certain to promote success. That and the fact that, because it's now aligned with the S-Class, it can share its technology.

Smart could be rebadged Mercedes-smart and do the same. Why not use existing small car platforms, a shortened A-Class perhaps, rather than relying on manufacturing tie ups – the new smart platform and production currently shared with Renault, the previous forfour a Mitsubishi Colt under a smart body.

Smart offers a volume opportunity, one that's still to be truly realised, though that shouldn't be at the expense of Mercedes' other models. No, cars like the GT S, Pullman and that crazy G-Wagen exist because of Mercedes' ability to achieve significant volume sales and huge profits elsewhere in its business operation.

Other opportunities exist, too. I find the tie up with Aston Martin a hugely intriguing one; the British car manufacturer has long traded on its style, often without the real substance to back it up. With some input from Affalterbach that's certain to improve, though quite how close the relationship will be remains to be seen. Mercedes-Aston Martin anyone? I think that could make for a nice four-car garage...

► Our mystery insider is a globe-trotting road tester driving the very latest cars from Mercedes-Benz and its biggest rivals



Got something to say about motoring, your Mercedes or *Mercedes Enthusiast* magazine? Here's your chance...



LETTERS

STAR LETTER

SEARCHING FOR A STAR

■ I wonder what happened to my 1949 Mercedes-Benz 170S?

Perhaps one of your readers will recognise the numberplate 'WLR 10'?

The picture enclosed shows me using the air traffic controller's parking space at RAF Valley in 1961 to whitewall the tyres. I paid £40 for the car and fitted a new head gasket bought from the Mercedes dealer in Greenford. I sold the car for £40 when I was posted to Cranwell in Lincolnshire, but I still have the original German logbook.

Derek Such, Walsall



MERCEDES DNA

■ Firstly, let me congratulate you and your colleagues on a great magazine – the enthusiasm and devotion shown by your contributors is fantastic. I was particularly impressed with the Karl-Heinz Baumann interview (see below) in the December 2014 issue – what a great man he is!

The great thing about owning a Mercedes-Benz is that after reading an article like that, you realise how much DNA there is in every Mercedes vehicle. My wife read the article and even though she is not a car freak, she was very impressed with Baumann and

understands why I love Mercedes.

The article was particularly relevant for me as I own a 1998 SLK230 Kompressor, a 2005 C200 Kompressor Coupe Evolution and recently purchased a 2011 SLK200 with just 17,000km (10,500 miles) on the clock. Mercedes ownership is pure indulgence but what the heck, as a retiree I am not going to die wondering!

Kenneth McLeod, Australia

IT'S THE SMALL DETAILS

■ I am the proud owner of a 1971 W114 250C, a 1995 S124 E320 Estate, a 2002 C320 Estate and a 1972 W114 250C donor car. As you might have guessed, I am something of a Mercedes-Benz enthusiast. In addition, Mercedes is part of my heritage – my family was the Mercedes dealer here in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

In fact, the business was established in 1871 as a livery stable by my great grandfather. One of his sons – my grandfather – took over the business and he brought the first motorcars for sale into Halifax.



In *Mercedes Enthusiast* January 2015, Martin Buckley discusses his 1967 W108 300SEb. The picture was of particular interest to me, as the star on each hub cap is perfectly aligned with the other, just as they are on my W114. I have followed many automobile journalists over the years and Martin continues to do a great job.

Ken Giffin, Canada

R129 SL HITS THE SPOT

■ I've just read your December 2014 issue covering 25 years of the R129 SL, for which I've been visiting newsagents here in Australia multiple times to locate

a copy! As an R129 addict/owner and technician (I have worked on and driven many R129s over in Little Silver, New Jersey), I love the luxurious feel, ride and fragrance, the growl of that quad-cam V8 at full throttle, and the silence when ensconced with roof on and windows up. I had to add your magazine to my R129 SL collection!

I believe only 150 a year entered Australia at a frightfully high price of AUD \$287,000, some 20 years ago (as a Mercedes technician at that time, we're talking nine years of my pre tax income).

Five years ago, however, they had depreciated enough for me to purchase my 1995 SL500 (see below) with just 73,000km (45,000 miles) on the clock. I am still in awe of these vehicles.

Every time I drive my car, I know I have an automotive legend, although the R129 SL Roadster is not a particularly well recognised or desirable vehicle anymore – not that I care about that!

Your R129 SL articles in the December 2014 issue made good reading, however I would probably have raved on with even more passion and detail, and for longer!

Craig Pattison, Australia



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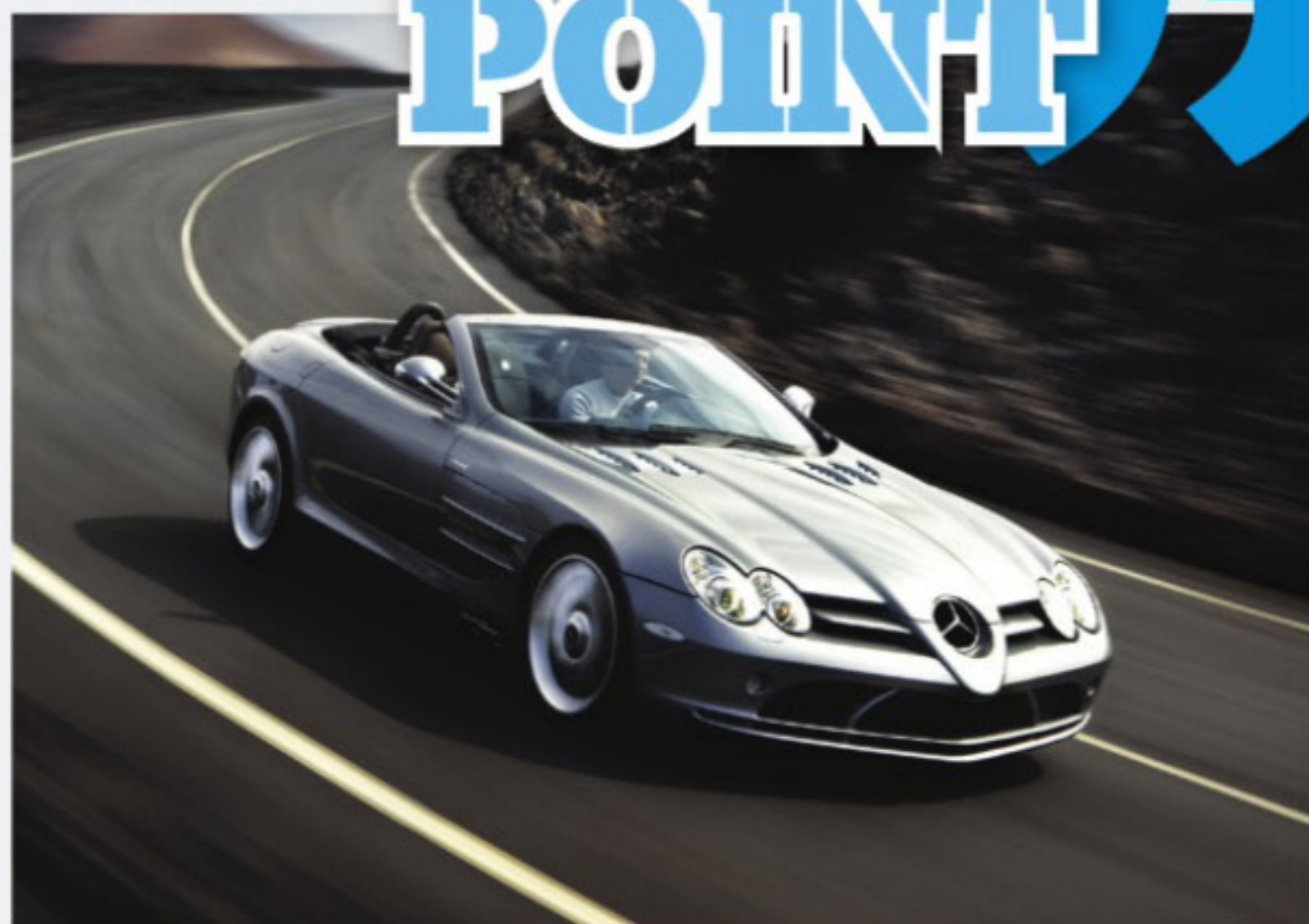
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f "The original Pullman is still the ultimate in style and beauty."
Edward Fiore
- Five decades after the launch of the first Pullman, Merc has made another

f "I hope Brabus makes a coupe version." **Carlos El Chacal**
- The Bottrop based tuner has outdone itself with its latest Rocket 900, based on the S65 saloon and making 888bhp

TALKING POINT



This month's Talking Point... What is your favourite Mercedes droptop of all time?

"An R129 300SL with an M103 engine - it doesn't have to be fast to be fun. And make it Astral Silver with black leather." **Steve Holder**

"My own CLK63 AMG - extremely fast and cool." **Mike Tullett**

"A 1966, W113 230SL with a four-speed manual." **Billy Coulson**

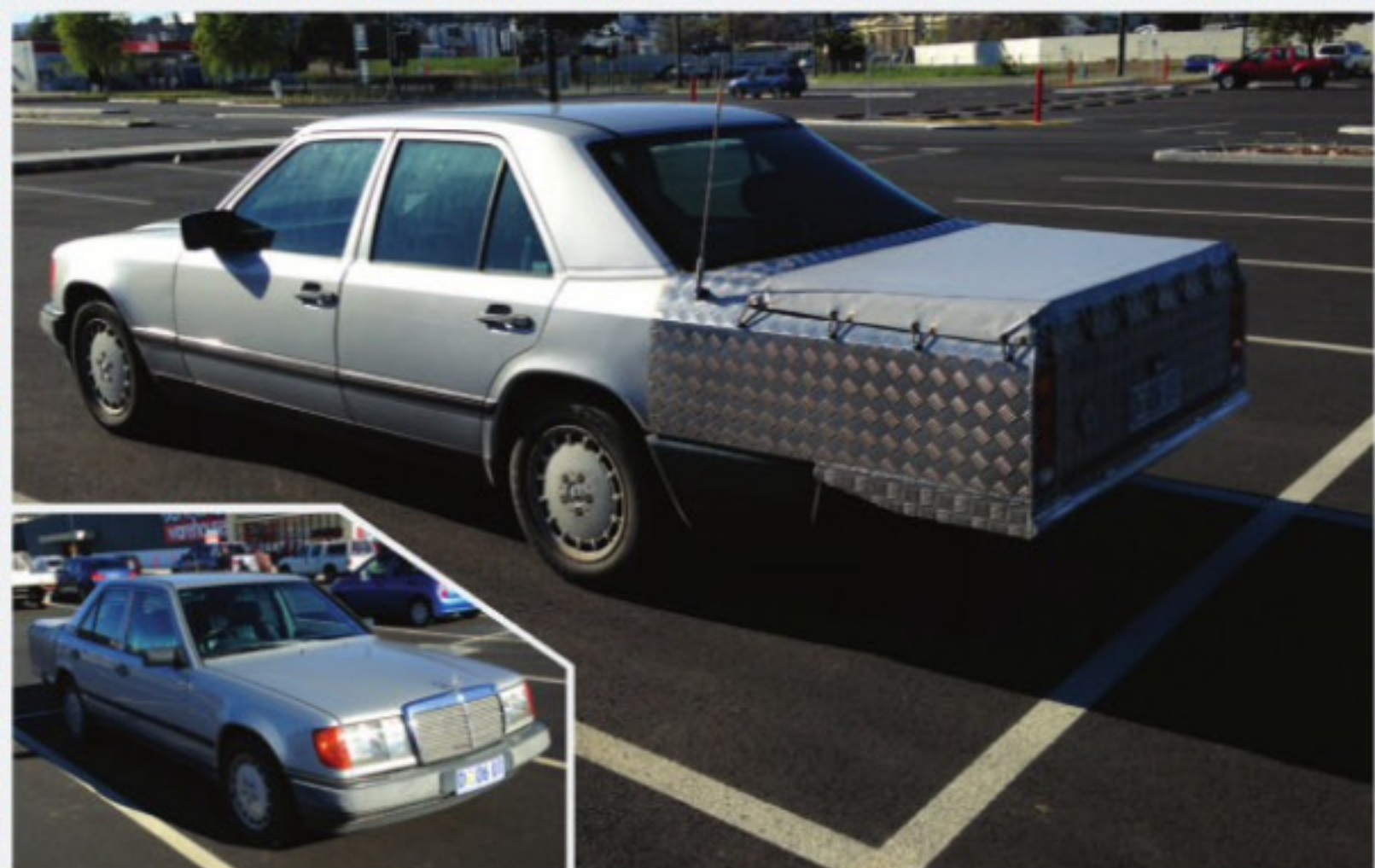
"It has to be my SLK230 Kompressor - I've owned it two years and it still puts a big smile on my face." **Clare Woodhouse**

"My 1997 E220 Cabriolet with every extra and tonic purple/green factory paint. It took me a long time to find her." **Colin Marvelly**

"A late R107 500SL or a 1971 280SL Pagoda." **Ron Yu**

Take part in **Talking Point** every month on Facebook and Twitter.
See the bottom of page 20 for our respective websites!

MERCSPOTTER



"You see some funny things in Tasmania, but I've never seen anything as strange as this Merc, spotted in the car park of a hardware chain in Launceston," says reader Rick Ashworth. "The owner obviously cares for the car, as they had carefully placed a Mercedes-Benz star and 300D badge on the steel boot hatch!"

Seen an interesting Mercedes or caught one in an unusual situation? Send a picture to info@mercedesenthusiast.co.uk (subject 'Merc Spotter') or by post to Mercedes Enthusiast, 17 Wickham Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 5JS.

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SL320 'Mille Miglia' 1996P

Brilliant Silver, black soft top, hardtop, red/black leather, carbon fibre effect trim, 5 speed auto, cruise, climate, htd elec seats, rear seats, orig Evo II 17" alloys, FSH, **only 9,800m . . . £25,950**



SL320 Roadster 1997R

Brilliant Silver, black soft top, hardtop, black leather, 5 speed auto, high spec inc ESP, cruise, climate, electric seats, rear seats, original 16" 8 hole alloys, FSH, 38,000m **£14,950**



300SL Roadster 1985C

Rare Moss Green, matching hardtop, black soft top, cream sport check interior, automatic gearbox, ABS, electric windows, fire ext, original alloy wheels, FSH, 57,000m **£26,950**



300SL Roadster 1988F

Signal Red, matching hardtop, black soft top, black sport check interior, automatic gearbox, ABS, cruise, electric windows, rear seat, original alloy wheels, FSH, 117,000m . **£17,950**



E220 Coupe 1994M - LHD

Brilliant Silver, Anthracite cloth, 5 speed manual, aircon, front & rear headrests/armrests, electric windows, electric sunroof, original alloys, one owner, FSH, 46,000m **£12,450**



E320 Cabriolet 1993L

Pearl Blue metallic, blue leather, new blue soft top, 4-Sp auto, aircon, leather steering wheel, airbag, armrests, illuminated vanity mirrors, orig alloys, FSH, 125,000m **£12,950**



E280 Estate 1995N

Azurite Blue metallic, grey cloth, 4-Sp auto, aircon, cruise, headrests/armrest, electric windows, electric sunroof, airbags, leather steering wheel, FSH, 69,000m **£9,950**



190E 2.0 LE Saloon 1993L

Brilliant Silver, Anthracite cloth, auto, airbag, walnut, elec windows/sunroof, headrests, armrests, Carat Duchatelet body styling, suspension & wheels, FSH, 2 owners, 103,000m . . . **£5,950**



E200 Estate 1996N

Onyx Grey metallic, grey cloth, 4 speed auto, airbags, elec front windows, roof rails, cargo net & luggage cover, orig polished 8 hole alloy wheels, orig Blaupunkt, FSH, 45,000m . . . **£9,950**



E280 Saloon 1995N

Azurite Blue metallic, grey cloth, 4-Sp auto, aircon, cruise, front & rear headrests/armrests, electric windows, electric sunroof, OTG, airbags, leather steering wheel, FSH, 53,000m . **£6,950**

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A look back at Mercedes that deserved more recognition for their sometimes hidden qualities - this month...

WHY I LOVE THE...

190SL

Driving two very different versions of the 190SL left a lasting impression on one unsuspecting motoring journalist

WORDS IAN KUAH IMAGES IAN KUAH/ERIC RICHARDSON

HISTORY HAS recorded many instances of fine cars being overshadowed by their close relatives. Two good examples are the 1972 Porsche 911S that was the jumping off point for the legendary 1973 Porsche Carrera RS 2.7, and the Ferrari 365 GTC/4, which shares its basic V12 motor with the mighty 365 GTB/4 Daytona.

The sad thing about this situation is that until 'poor relatives' are 'discovered', and thus rise in value, the cost of restoring them often far outweighs their market value. Hence, unless they are restored for sentimental reasons, such as when a car is handed down within a family, their

numbers tend to slowly dwindle as they go from to rack and ruin.

In the Mercedes-Benz family, this was almost the case with the 190SL (W121), which was viewed by some as a poor man's 300SL Roadster. Built from 1955 to 1963, the 190SL was not exactly a duffer in the marketplace. In fact, with 25,881 cars sold, compared to 48,912 copies of the superb six-cylinder Pagoda SL (W113) that succeeded it, the first mass market SL actually did pretty well.

Although the 190SL arrived almost at the same time as the legendary 300SL Gullwing, it predated the far more exclusive and expensive 300SL Roadster (W198) by nearly two years. While this pair had many styling features in

common, even sharing the outer sections of their very expensive chrome bumpers, they were quite different under the skin. Like its Gullwing sister, the 300SL Roadster used a purpose built tubular space frame with double-wishbone suspension up front and a swing-axle rear. The more affordable 190SL used similar suspension elements hung off a monocoque body shell married to a shortened W121 Ponton floorpan.

To keep costs down and clearly separate the 190SL from its more exclusive 300SL sister, a six-cylinder engine was not on the cards. Therefore, the smaller and much lighter roadster ended up with a 104bhp, 1.9-litre, SOHC,

Mercedes-Benz 190SL (W121)

ENGINE M121 1,897cc 4-cyl

POWER 104bhp@5,700rpm

TORQUE 105lb ft@3,200rpm

TRANSMISSION 4-speed manual, RWD

WEIGHT 1,140kg

0-62MPH 14.5sec

TOP SPEED 106-112mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 32.8mpg

YEARS PRODUCED 1955-1963

Figures for a 1959 car as pictured right; fuel consumption determined at 3/4 of top speed (not more than 110km/h, 68mph) plus 10 per cent

four-cylinder powerplant, fed by twin-choke Solex carbs, and mated to a four-speed manual gearbox.

A HUMBLE HERO

With acceleration better measured with an egg timer than a stopwatch, the 190SL was never on my radar until, one day back in the late 1990s, a friend asked me if I would photograph a car his brother had restored, and which he now wanted to sell.

That friend was Hans Duemke, a German national who had lived in England since the 1950s. Hans was Managing Director of Thomas & Taylor, part of the William Jacks Group that held Audi, VW, BMW and Mercedes main dealerships in Surrey, and was about to retire.



“The star on the front grille was machined from a 290kg solid aluminium billet!”



We featured Beatles drummer Ringo Starr's 190SL in the September 2012 magazine.



△ SL600's V12 breathed on by US tuner RennTech.

▽ Underneath those familiar lines is an R230 SL600.

▽▽ Women apply the final touches to a brand new 190SL.

▽▽▽ The 190SL has always lived in the 300SL's shadow.



Retro styling in the spirit of Mercedes-Benz's baby roadster of the 1950s.



I arrived on a gorgeous sunny day and saw an immaculate, dark grey 190SL with red leather sitting on his driveway. Hans had owned the car for years and his brother, Manfred, who was Technical Director of Thomas & Taylor, had sympathetically restored it over time. Although I had known both Hans and Manfred since 1984, I

only learned that day that Manfred had worked on these cars during his apprenticeship at Sindelfingen in the 1950s!

Furthermore, the first owner of this car (with numberplate 34 YMC), was none other than Richard Starkey, MBE, better known as Beatles drummer Ringo Starr (see *Mercedes Enthusiast* September 2012). And yes, I did get to drive the car on that

sunny day. Fast it may not have been, but it was smooth and quite agreeable if you were not in a hurry. In the end, I have to confess that I really enjoyed it.

Fast forward to January 2012 and I was in La Jolla, Southern California, meeting the owner of the most outrageous Mercedes 190SL to ever roam the tarmac. Its nickname, Mercedes Bent, said it all. When Richard Mott, the owner of a bio-medical tech company, initiated this project, even he had no idea that it would work out so well. At a glance, the result looked reasonably normal, but look more closely and you spot some big differences. Featured in our June 2012 issue, surprise and delight are the two things that run through this car on many levels.

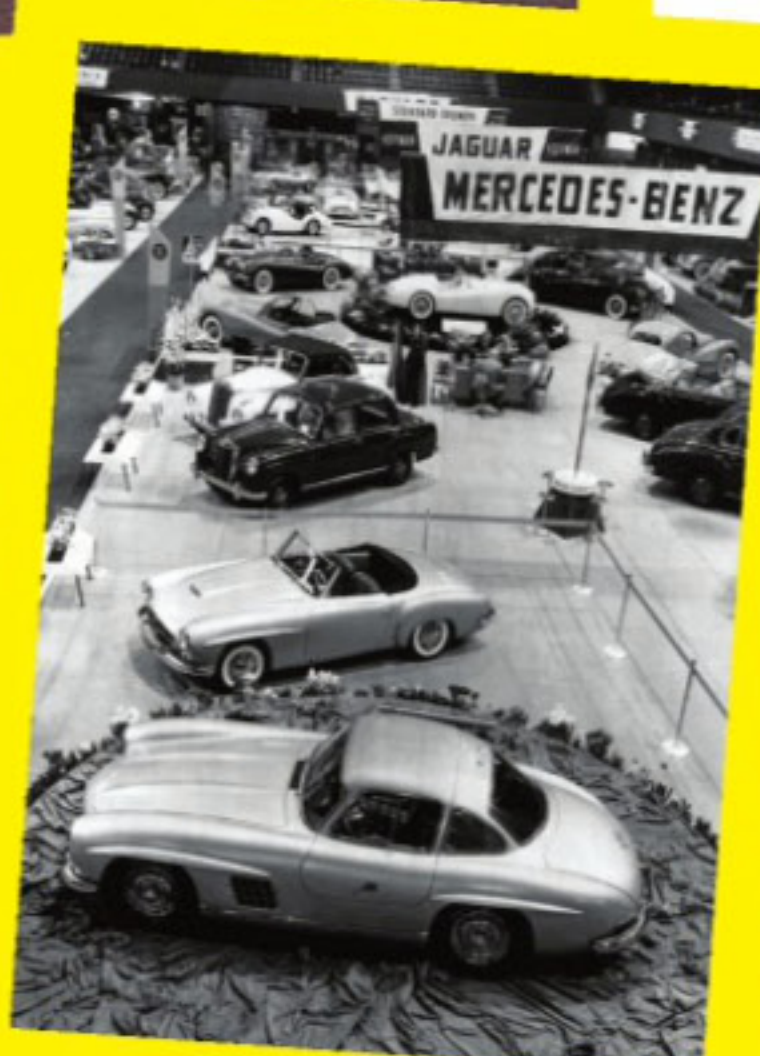
V12 BITURBO

In league with famous US hot rod maker, Hot Rods and Custom Stuff in Escondido, California, and with help from RennTech in Florida, Richard created a Frankenstein 190SL, longitudinally cut and shut to fit over the floorpan and mechanicals of an R230 SL600. The car continues to impress as you look closely at the details, like the red leather interior, a custom cross between original 190SL and R230 SL. The star on the front grille was machined from a 290kg solid aluminium billet!

Also machined from solid billets of alloy, the bespoke alloy wheels mimic the look of period Mercedes chrome hub caps, but in 20-inch diameter, and with three-pointed stars that stay upright when the car is moving, Rolls-Royce Phantom style. Evod Industries in California crafted these unique parts.

My gripe about the stock 190SL's lack of performance was put to rest by the RennTech modified V12 biturbo in this car. Pumping out 641bhp and 737lb ft torque, it turns this innocuous looking classic roadster into a supercar killer par excellence.

Underrated classic it may still be, but my acquaintance with these two unique cars affirmed that the Mercedes 190SL Roadster will always have a special place in my classic car memories.



More power and refinement than the entry level diesel make this petrol model a worthy alternative

RITE OF PASSAGE

About as basic as you could want, this C200 SE, complete with a manual gearbox, has a lot to live up to – so can it deliver?

WORDS AND IMAGES **KYLE MOLYNEUX**

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz C200 (W205)

ENGINE M270 1,991cc 4-cyl turbocharged

POWER 181bhp@5,500rpm

TORQUE 221lb ft@1,200-4,000rpm

TRANSMISSION 6-speed manual, RWD

WEIGHT 1,445kg

0-62MPH 7.5sec

TOP SPEED 147mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 53.3mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 123g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2014-on

Figures for car as pictured; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined





I don't remember the last four-cylinder petrol engine being quite so effortlessly efficient

◁ Garmin satellite navigation part of the £995 Executive Pack.

△ Two-litre turbo shows a lot of guts in the mid range.

FIRST, SOME clarification. In my first road test of the W205 C-Class, I stated that rear headroom was more restricted than in the previous generation saloon. However, this was due to my test car's optional panoramic glass sunroof. Slot yourself into the back of a W205 without this £900 extra and almost all people will find clear air between the top of their head and the roof lining – even more than that found in the previous C-Class, in fact.

Speaking of optional extras, there aren't many fitted to this Palladium Silver C200, which was the reason we wanted to drive it. In basic SE spec and riding on chunky 205/60 tyres and 16-inch alloy wheels, it could be yours for just over £27,000. Add the £995 Executive Package (comprising Garmin Map Pilot navigation, heated front seats, split-folding rear seats, and roof rails for estates), plus that metallic paint (£645), and you are still looking at a brand new, prestige saloon that costs under £29,000.

It doesn't even have the £1,500 7G-Tronic Plus automatic, instead using a six-speed manual that feels very much like the flighty, short throw gearbox installed in the A-Class et al. Nor does it have Airmatic air suspension, which

isn't available with SE spec, but costs £895 with other trim lines.

I wouldn't go as far as calling the two-litre turbo 'basic' though – even if it is the entry level petrol engine. With 181bhp, and 221lb ft of torque available from practically tickover to 4,000rpm, it feels punchy like a middling turbodiesel yet speaks in a far quieter voice, with barely a finger quivering vibration felt through the gearstick.

If I wasn't doing big miles every week, I'd think very hard about whether the £1,715 more expensive C200 Bluetec diesel, despite its greater efficiency, is a better all-round proposition, particularly as it has far less power (134bhp) with the same amount of torque.

Mercedes-Benz states that the C200 manual, with 16-inch alloys, achieves 53.3mpg on the combined cycle (with 123g/km CO2 emissions), and I would agree with that. Driving almost 600 miles with not a thought given to fuel efficiency, I managed 47.8mpg, and most of that distance was covered with two other people on board and a boot full of luggage. I don't remember the last four-cylinder petrol engine being quite so effortlessly efficient.

THE FULL PACKAGE

As for the steel sprung ride, with selective damping as standard on the 205-series C-Class, only when driving over the sharpest road

imperfections would Airmatic make a difference. The standard set up really is that good, although little difference was felt between the Economy, Comfort, Sport and Sport+ modes, rather a steady increase in fuel consumption.

To conclude then, the C200 SE is the most complete entry level C-Class petrol I've ever driven. The seats may not be quite as figure hugging as those in Sport and AMG Line models, and the multi spoke alloy wheel design is a little hard to love, but the cabin oozes upper class sophistication and the car is far from slow, hitting 62mph in 7.5 seconds and running out of steam just shy of 150mph. Basic? Don't you believe it. 



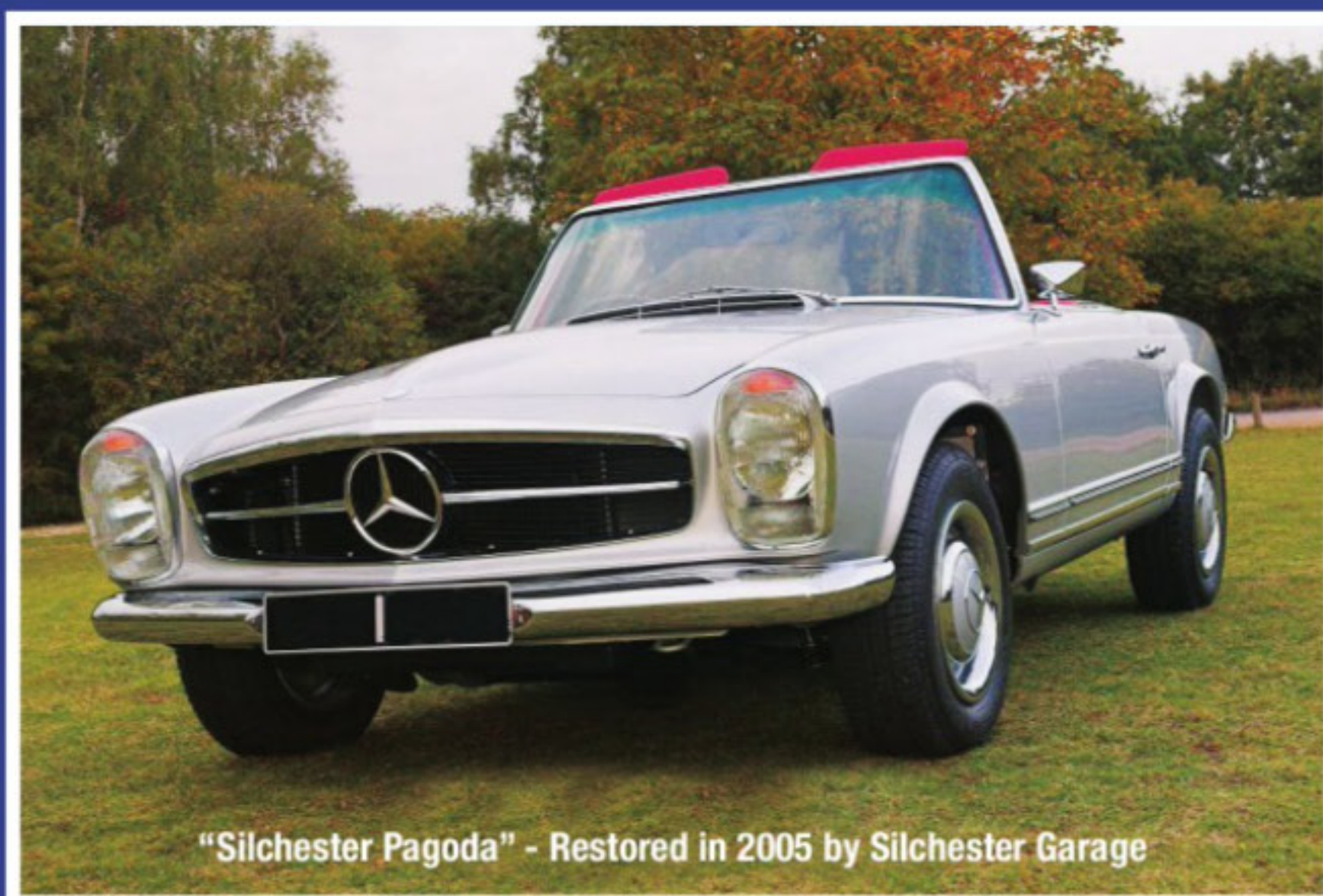
Agility Control comfort suspension and 16-inch alloys with this car's SE trim line.

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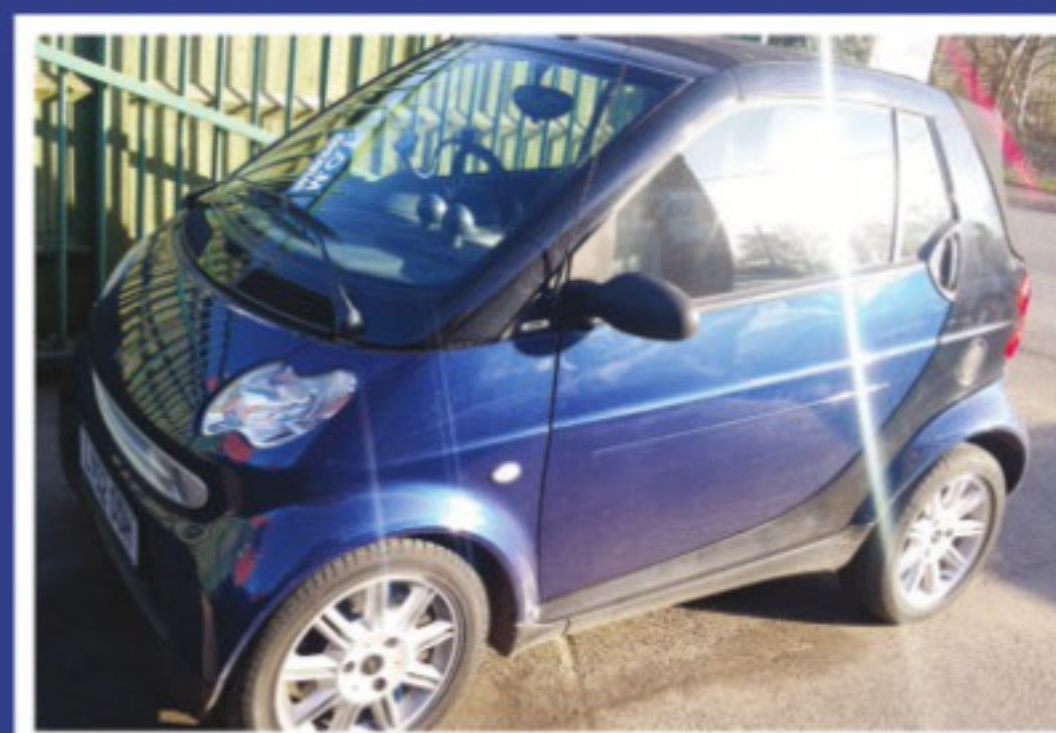
£10,750 Mercedes 300SL R129

Absolutely amazing condition, full service history,
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excellent all round.



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Auto, 95,000 miles, excellent condition all round,
great service history.



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COVER
STORY



BELOW THAT
IMMACULATELY
TAILORED EXTERIOR
LURKS AN EVEN
STRONGER
HEARTBEAT



STAR CARS
Mercedes-AMG C63
& C450 AMG Sport 4Matic

THE SECOND ASSAULT

MERCEDES-AMG'S NEW C63
PROMISES TO DELIVER AN EQUALLY
THRILLING YET MORE ROUNDED
DRIVE THAN ITS PREDECESSOR,
THANKS TO A NEW ENGINE AND
MORE SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSION

WORDS & IMAGES IAN KUAH

INTERNATIONAL
LAUNCH
DRIVE!



BORN FROM the age old formula of stuffing the biggest possible motor in your arsenal into your most compact saloon, the 204-series C63 AMG is a living legend, its 6.2-litre M156 V8 engine just what the doctor ordered. However, things have moved on, and ever tightening emissions laws required a more efficient power unit to make the C63 AMG's successor relevant in a new world.

The engine that replaces the venerable M156 is the four-litre V8 biturbo (M177). And just as the M156 spawned the M159 variant used in the SLS AMG, the M177 is closely related to the M178 that debuted in the AMG GT.

The measuring tape says that the new C63's front wings are 14mm wider on each side to house its wider front track, and its buff nose is 54mm longer. However, the car's proportions are so good, the effect is like that of an

immaculately tailored sports jacket. To some, this subtler, less overt appearance might be an advantage if stealth is your thing. But make no mistake, below that immaculately tailored exterior lurks an even stronger heartbeat.

APPEARANCES ARE DECEIVING

To avoid the cost of building similar engines with different internals, as happened with the M156 and its M159 variant in the SLS, the M177 and M178 differ only in the latter having a dry sump, which allows lower placement in the chassis, as well as better lubrication under sustained lateral g-forces.

The basic M177 in the 1,715kg C63 saloon has a 10.5:1 compression ratio and 1.2bar of boost for 469bhp from 5,500 to 6,250rpm, and 479lb ft of torque between 1,750 and 4,500rpm. The 0-62mph sprint is covered in 4.1 seconds (estate 4.2), and while the top speed is electronically limited to 155mph, the AMG Driver's Package will allow 180mph.

The 15kg heavier C63 S saloon makes 503bhp at 6,250rpm with the same boost pressure as the C63, along with 516lb ft of torque from 1,750 to 4,500rpm. Its 0-62mph time is 4.0 seconds (estate 4.1), with top speed arrangements the same as the C63.

“

IF YOU WANT THE FULL AMG SOUNDTRACK, JUST HIT THE CENTRE CONSOLE MOUNTED BUTTON TO OPEN THE EXHAUST VALVES

”

The numbers alone, however, do not adequately describe the smooth, lag free punch of the twin-turbo motor, which delivers a much broader spread of torque than the naturally aspirated M156 engine. Where the M156 motor assaults both tarmac and driver with its larger than life personality, the new M177 V8 speaks a little quieter but carries an even bigger stick. If you want the full fat version of the AMG soundtrack, just hit the (optional) centre console mounted button to open the exhaust valves and let loose a more vicious V8 bellow.



Practically zero turbo lag gives the latest V8 incredible response.



◁△ C63 from £60K in UK, S model £66.5K.

◁ Red calipers, 19-inch rims with C63 S.

◁ Fabulous AMG helm with paddles.

◁▽ Superb seats comfy, supportive.

◁▽▽ Spacey rear and 435-litre boot.

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-AMG C63/S (W205)

ENGINE M177 3,982cc V8 biturbo

POWER 469bhp@5,500-6,250rpm/
503bhp@6,250rpm

TORQUE 479lb ft@1,750-4,500rpm/
516lb ft@1,750-4,500rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,715/1,730kg

0-62MPH 4.1/4.0sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 34.5/33.6-34.5mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 192/192-195g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2015-on

Figures for C63 and C63 S saloons respectively; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited

The counterpoint is quiet and relaxed high speed cruising, or even cantering along at suburban speeds with a level of refinement that was simply not written into the old car's script. AMG claims average fuel consumption of up to 34.5mpg for the C63 S saloon (estate 33.6mpg). That would be possible in normal driving, but I was not hanging about during my enthusiastic road drive, which encompassed town, cross-country and motorway work.

Overall, I returned a figure of 19.1mpg, and some others in our group were into the 18s. That said, the new engine's potential for significantly better fuel economy and lower CO2 emissions are both a great improvement, and impressive for a car with over 500bhp.

TRACK TESTED

On the fast and flowing Portimão circuit near the south coast of Portugal, the new C63 S is a clear improvement on its predecessor in every way. Not only is it much faster in a straight line thanks to more power and torque, and slicker aerodynamics, it also goes round corners better. The way the ECU mapping has been set up, the C63 S actually has 37lb ft more torque than the GT S, the same being true for the respective base models. It is an interesting comparison as

the C63 S is 85kg heavier, but has a better drag coefficient than AMG's GT S.

However, as I quickly found out on track, while the C63 S has great steering, turn-in and handling, its similar straight line speed on track as the GT S is not matched by grip, poise and braking ability. While the GT S feels perfectly balanced in all respects, the C63 S is dominated by its bombastic V8 biturbo engine.

Step out of a GT S and into the C63 S, and you will notice the more exaggerated weight transfer under hard braking, which means you have to brake earlier. You also have to be more careful with your approach speed into slow bends, as the C63 S doesn't have the low centre of gravity or grip of the GT S, which resists understeer that bit better.

On the road, the new C63 S brings a new level of comfort to the party. AMG decided that while the normal C-Class has an Airmatic option, the C63 would have steel springs all round with the Adaptive Damping System (ADS) looking after the various ride and handling modes of the AMG Ride Control.

The latest ADS system is another step forward, as the first generation C63 was stiff riding. With the Comfort setting selected, the new car feels taut yet totally stable on normal roads. Sport is a good all rounder, with Sport+ too intense except on track. Race mode does what it says on the tin, and there is now an Individual mode for full customisation.

As development engineer, Björn Steigüßer explained, "The front track is wider than the normal C-Class's, and we have a lot of bespoke components such as stiffer bushes, steering knuckles, suspension arms and uprights, which allow more negative camber." At the rear, the suspension also has stiffer bushes and AMG parts, including the diff casing, but the arms and driveshafts are the same length as stock.

With the wider rear wheels and tyres, this results in a narrower rear track when measured at the wheel centres, although in absolute width, the outer edges of the wider tyres sit nice and close to the arches.



STAR CARS

Mercedes-AMG C63 & C450 AMG Sport 4Matic

▷ “We decided to install a limited-slip differential as standard on both models as we have done on the AMG GT,” said Steigüßer. “As with the GT, the C63 uses a mechanical LSD, and a more sophisticated electronic LSD is fitted to the S models. Another standard fit handling aid is dynamic engine mounts, which stiffen up in Sport, Sport+ and Race modes.”

As usual, AMG worked with a tyre manufacturer, Michelin in this case, to create a tyre specific to the C63. This Pilot Super Sport variant is identified by the MO (Mercedes Original) lettering on its sidewalls. The base wheel sizes are 18x8.5J at the front and 18x9.5J at the rear, with 245/40ZR18 and 265/40ZR18 tyres respectively. The S model wears 19x8.5J front and 19x9.5J rear wheels shod with 245/35ZR19 and 265/35ZR19 rubber, which are available as an option on the vanilla C63.

FROM £60,000 IN THE UK

If you are wondering why the latest C63/S has a multi clutch automatic gearbox rather than AMG’s dual-clutch unit, this is down to the philosophy of the drivetrain. “The AMG Speedshift MCT seven-speed sports transmission is the AMG version of the 7G-Tronic Plus automatic gearbox in the standard C-Class, and the same is true of the adapted gearbox in the C450 AMG 4Matic, which is based on the transmission in the C400 4Matic,” Steigüßer explained.

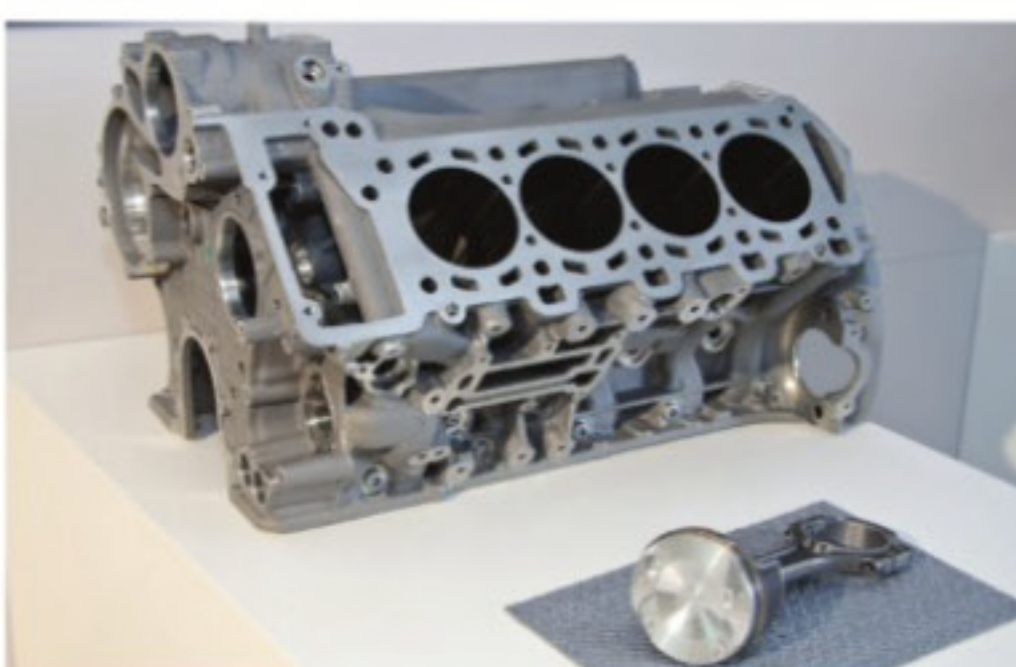
Standing in the pits, the sound of multiple V8s reverberating off the walls of the grandstand and pit wall as a pack of C63s thundered down the main straight, was intoxicating. While turbochargers naturally muffle the intake sound, AMG is a master of tuning its exhausts to release the inherent soundtrack of a bent crank V8. Ultimately, the M177 motor does not have as hard an edge as its naturally aspirated M156 predecessor, but instead adds its own sophisticated twist to the classic AMG interpretation of V8 thunder.

AMG sold a grand total of 40,000 204-series C63s, making the saloon, coupe and estate the most successful creations from Affalterbach yet. But the way AMG sales are rocketing, it will not take long for the even more capable 205-series versions to top this figure.



From top: Red theme for the dials; settings for the multi clutch gearbox and damping on the centre console; switchable AMG exhaust costs £1,000.

From left to right: M177 V8 with bore and stroke of 83x92mm; M156 V8 of the old C63 with much larger bores and pistons; limited-slip diff as standard on the new C63/S; four-link front axle; multi link rear axle.



ON THE ROAD, THE NEW C63 BRINGS A NEW LEVEL OF COMFORT TO THE PARTY



Evolution of the AMG C-Class saloon

W202 C36 AMG (1993-1997)

3.6-litre M104 6-cyl
276bhp/284lb ft
Number built 5,221



W202 C43 AMG (1997-2000)

4.3-litre M113 V8
302bhp/302lb ft
Number built 3,085



W202 C55 AMG (1998-2000)

5.4-litre M113 V8
342bhp/376lb ft
Number built Unknown



W203 C32 AMG (2001-2004)

3.2-litre M112 V6, supercharged
349bhp/332lb ft
Number built 6,695





W203 C55 AMG (2004-2007)

5.4-litre M113 V8
362bhp/376lb ft
Number built 4,021



W204 C63 AMG (2007-2014)

6.2-litre M156 V8
451bhp/442lb ft
Number built TBC



W205 AMG C63 (2015-on)

4.0-litre M177 V8, biturbo
469bhp/479lb ft
Number built NA



*Not forgetting
the turbodiesel...*

W203 C30 CDI AMG (2003-2004)

3.0-litre OM612 5-cyl,
turbocharged
228bhp/398lb ft
Number built 774

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz C450 AMG Sport 4Matic/Estate (W/S205)

ENGINE M276 2,996cc V6 biturbo

POWER 362bhp@5,500-6,000rpm

TORQUE 383lb ft@2,000-4,200rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, 4WD

WEIGHT 1,690/1,735kg

0-62MPH 4.9/5.0sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 37.2/36.7mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 178/180g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2015-on

Figures for a standard saloon and estate; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited

INTERNATIONAL
LAUNCH
DRIVE!



THE INBETWEENER

THE C450 AMG SPORT 4MATIC BRIDGES THE GAP
BETWEEN NORMAL C-CLASSES AND THE FULL FAT C63

WORDS AND IMAGES IAN KUAH



UDI HAS THE S models between the standard and RS lines, BMW has BMW Performance between mainstream and M cars, and Porsche has GTS models between the Carrera and RS ranges.

If you follow this trend of thought, there was an obvious gap in the Mercedes range between the existing AMG Line specification – aero kit, bigger alloy wheels and lowered suspension – and the full blown AMG models. Enter the C450 AMG Sport 4Matic to take up the slack,

and the mainstream Mercedes on which it is based is the C400 4Matic, which I drove on the Mercedes Winter Event in December (see *Mercedes Enthusiast* March 2015).

While the C450 may not have a V8 under its bonnet, the shorter and lighter 2,996cc V6 biturbo motor has its own charms. Based on the 328bhp, three-litre V6 biturbo (M276) in the C400 4Matic, AMG has boosted power to 362bhp from 5,500 to 6,000rpm, and torque to 383lb ft from 2,000 to 4,200rpm.

TWIN-TURBOCHARGED

The 1,690kg saloon (estate 1,735kg) will reach 62mph in 4.9 seconds (estate 5.0), and carry on to a limited 155mph. Needless to say, 4WD traction makes the most of the available power. AMG and tuned V6 motors certainly have a precedent in the SLK32 and of course the C32,

“THE SHORTER AND LIGHTER, THREE-LITRE V6 BITURBO MOTOR IN THE C450 HAS ITS OWN CHARMS”

which was made in saloon and estate forms. Except that, without a 4Matic drivetrain to help them deploy all the power all of the time, those RWD cars were wild on a slippery road.

A good V6 soundtrack can be a mellifluous thing of beauty. Roll down a window in a tunnel, and the spine-tingling V6 howl under ▷



◀ AMG badges on the flanks for this tuned 205-series C-Class.

▽ V6 biturbo's power boosted from 328bhp to an impressive 362bhp.

▷ A chequered flag pattern for the speedo and rev counter.



AMG Ride Control sports suspension and 18-inch rims as standard - 19s optional.



STAR CARS

Mercedes-AMG C63 & C450 AMG Sport 4Matic

▷ full throttle is something to be savoured. The C450 chassis uses a combination of mainstream C-Class and C63 components. But being 4WD, it requires bespoke front suspension parts such as the uprights, driveshafts, and model specific steering gear with a ratio of 14.2 compared to 14.1:1 for the C63. And as with the C63, Airmatic suspension is off the menu.

SLIP ANGLE

I noted on Mercedes' Winter Event that the C400 4Matic's ESP was highly resistant to power oversteer at low speeds. "As well as creating the more rear biased 33/67 per cent torque split, this was one of the first things we addressed," explained development engineer, Björn Steigüßer. "The ESP will now allow some drift angle, and as with all AMG cars, you can also turn it off completely."

For the UK and other RHD markets, the good news is that this car will come to our shores in unadulterated form. The bad news is that this will not happen until summer 2016, as Mercedes is still figuring out how to enable the front transfer case and the steering box to co-exist on the same side of the car.

The chassis is a perfect blend between the supreme comfort of the standard C-Class and the weapons grade Mercedes-AMG C63. It is sharp and communicative enough to engage the keen driver, yet not so hard core that it becomes a trial on a dark, wet night when you are tired and just want to get home.

The C450 AMG Sport 4Matic is a great all-rounder with a distinct personality.



◀ Sports seats with an Affalterbach specific upholstery pattern.

◀◀ All AMG Sport cars will come with 4Matic four-wheel drive.

▽ Boot space should be the same as a normal estate: 490 to 1,510L.



“THE C450 CHASSIS USES A COMBINATION OF MAINSTREAM C-CLASS AND C63 COMPONENTS”



We're coming for YOU

The brand new C63 may have arrived, but its immediate predecessors – packing even higher capacity V8s – will not go quietly into the night

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY



“With its last two C-Classes, AMG has shoehorned the biggest capacity, normally aspirated V8 engine it could into Mercedes’ smallest saloon”

ALMOST SINCE THE
DAWN OF THE
MOTORCAR,

engineers with a twinkle in their eyes have sought to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. And those with a saloon or estate car to hand – rather than a coupe or a roadster – have found it that much harder. A number of strategies have been employed by manufacturers: some have delved deep into the internal workings of the combustion engine to produce ultra high revving machinery, whilst others have looked to carve away every piece of superfluous trim in a bid to reduce weight, and many have turned to superchargers or turbochargers to maximise engine output. But with its last two C-Classes, AMG has shoehorned the biggest capacity, normally aspirated V8 engine it could into Mercedes' smallest saloon and estate.

LEST WE FORGET

The first of these two dragsters – the 203-series C55 AMG – heralded a return to normally aspirated power after Mercedes' three-year experiment with the supercharged V6 motor in the C32 AMG. Buyers wanted a more modern incarnation of the original 202-series C43 AMG, and in the 2004 C55 AMG they got it. The compact executive's V8 engine configuration was even embossed on the rev counter.

Launched as both a saloon and estate, to coincide with the C-Class's 2004 facelift, the C55 AMG boasted a 5.4-litre, naturally aspirated V8 engine which was an evolution of the M113 units found in the previous C43 AMG and E55 AMG. ▷



JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG Estate (S203)

ENGINE M113 5,439cc V8

POWER

362bhp@5,750rpm

TORQUE

376lb ft@4,000rpm

TRANSMISSION

5-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,695kg

0-62MPH 5.4sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION

23.0mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 293g/km

YEARS PRODUCED

2004-2007

Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Edition 507 (W204)

ENGINE M156 6,208cc V8

POWER

500bhp@6,800rpm

TORQUE

450lb ft@5,200rpm

TRANSMISSION

7-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,730kg

0-62MPH 4.2sec

TOP SPEED 174mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION

23.5mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 280g/km

YEARS PRODUCED

2013-2014

Figures for car as pictured; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited

▷ With an aluminum block, silicon/aluminium lined bores, and three valves per cylinder, the C55's 5,439cc motor also came with two spark plugs per cylinder. Other features included stratified fuel injection, forged steel con rods, a one-piece cast camshaft, and a magnesium intake manifold.

A serious bit of kit then, which was tuned to produce 362bhp at 5,750rpm and 376lb ft of torque at 4,000rpm. Most of this torque was available from just 2,000rpm, enabling even the marginally heavier 1,695kg C55 AMG Estate to hit 62mph in just 5.4 seconds (saloon 5.2 seconds) on its way to a 155mph limited top speed. The tried and tested, five-speed AMG Speedshift automatic transmission suits the car's drag strip leanings, whilst Mercedes had to extend the front end by 80mm to enable AMG to fit the V8 under the bonnet. And the C55 was the first AMG C-Class to feature quad exhaust pipes and an external rear differential oil cooler.

THE BEAUTY OF THE BREED

Needless to say, maximising fuel consumption wasn't a top priority on the designer's hit list, although the official combined figure of 23.7mpg for the saloon doesn't sound that bad. In reality, however, spirited drivers will do well to get anywhere near this. But most buyers are only interested in the car's performance – and that borders on epic. Production ended in early 2007 to make way for the 204-series C63 AMG, but not before 108 lucky UK buyers had acquired the saloon version and just 55 savvy souls had opted for an estate version – like our Brilliant Silver example you see here.

Our second AMG C-Class was announced in 2007, with the first UK buyers getting their hands on a saloon or estate in 2008. Its 6,208cc 32-valve V8 delivered 451bhp at 6,800rpm

and a maximum of 442lb ft of torque at 5,000rpm, through an AMG version of Mercedes' then well established, seven-speed automatic transmission. Performance was a notch up on the C55 saloon, with a 4.5-second 0-62mph time (estate 4.6 seconds). But for those seeking that bit extra, Mercedes offered a Performance Package Plus option from 2009, which elevated power to 480bhp and included uprated brake discs with red painted brake calipers, a carbon fibre rear spoiler on the saloon and a leather/Alcantara AMG performance steering wheel.

Things got even hotter with a limited edition, 513bhp/479lb ft torque DR520 C63 AMG which followed in 2010, with just 20 cars offered for sale in the UK. Goodies included uprated pistons, rods and crank, titanium alloys, larger front discs, red calipers, stiffer springs and dampers, and a limited-slip differential, plus an Alcantara dashboard and steering wheel. The saloon took just 4.1 seconds to hit 62mph from a standing start, and boasted a 187mph limited top speed.

By 2011, the C63 AMG was due a facelift which coincided with the introduction of a snappier, multi clutch AMG gearbox and improved fuel economy. The optional AMG Performance Package Plus still offered 480bhp, whilst suspension tweaks enhanced agility, grip and ride comfort. The 451bhp C63 AMG Coupe was also released in 2011, followed by the motorsport honed, 510bhp/457lb ft torque C63 AMG Coupe Black Series, which claimed a 4.2-second 0-62mph time, and a £120,000 price tag to match its pedigree.

With the 204-series C63 AMG fast approaching its finale, Mercedes-Benz chose to release one final version – the Edition 507 model you see here – in 2013. Power output increased to 507ps (500bhp) at 6,800rpm, with maximum torque of 450lb ft at 5,200rpm, the engine featuring forged pistons and con rods,

Most buyers are only interested in the performance – and that borders on epic



and a lightweight crankshaft from the SLS. Available in saloon, coupe and estate forms, an AMG high performance composite braking system with red brake calipers was fitted as standard. The top speed was 'limited' to 174mph, and 62mph can be reached in just 4.2 seconds in the saloon. The massive spec included 19-inch AMG alloys, Black Series style bonnet nostrils, those 'AMG sport stripes' on the flanks, and Edition 507 badges.

All 2014-on C63 AMG models also benefit from continuously variable camshafts, a revised intake system to improve responsiveness, automatic throttle blipping and a Controlled Efficiency mode to help save fuel.

The 204-series C63 AMG outsold the C55 by a massive margin, with 2,233 saloons, 2,224 coupes and 544 estates sold in the UK. And the Edition 507 found plenty of buyers too, with UK buyers snapping up 38 saloons, 194 coupes and 26 estates.

THE DEMAND FOR MORE

Following in the footsteps of the 202-series C36 AMG, C43 AMG and C55 AMG, and the 203-series C32 AMG, the C55 and C63 pictured here retain the same identifiable DNA. But the C63 has departed from

▽▽ More subtle styling for the earlier AMG.

▽ It's all about the noise with these AMG V8s.

previous generations by shifting upwards that bold horizontal sideline, while losing the slated front grille and 'gunsight' bonnet star, but gaining a large, grille mounted star and bonnet strakes instead, as part of a more aggressive looking makeover.

With its twin-headlamp clusters, the C55 is now starting to look a little dated, although its simple lines may be a benefit in years to come. At a distance, the C55 could almost be a C180 with AMG alloys, but up close the car's potential is revealed, albeit subtly: meaty, drilled brake discs lurking behind twin-spoke alloy wheels, quad tailpipes, a tiny boot spoiler and rear AMG badge. The plush leather cabin is tight and luxurious, but still feels tuned C-Class first, luxury super saloon second. Extra helpings of aluminium, eye-catching AMG dials and AMG kickplates are the key differences between this AMG model and a top spec, six-cylinder C-Class – unless you delve into the engine bay, which is of course crammed full of V8 magic.

At idle, the C55 merely whirls and gurgles, until that is you start to exercise the loud pedal – at which point a gorgeous, metallic, V8 ▷



If beauty is only skin deep...



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△ Just 55 estates and 108 saloons sold in the UK.

◁ 18-inch rims hide AMG's beefy braking system.

▷ Facelifted 203 C-Class cabin has much to admire.

▷▽ M113 V8 does not scream like the M156 V8.



▷ snarl rapidly gives way to a feline growl. Given the welter of torque on tap, the automatic transmission really suits the C55's character, and overtaking is of the warp speed variety. Just take care though – too much throttle with the traction control off will see you slewing out of junctions with the tail out.

TURF WAR

That is more the kind behaviour you would expect from the more powerful C63 – very much the C55's more extrovert brother. The genes may be similar, but the younger C63 makes an altogether more mouth-watering impression, especially in Edition 507 form. Gone are the 203-series C-Class's understated touches, and in comes that snarling face with a big Mercedes-Benz star. The angular C63 interior is equally dramatic, with deep set dials that wouldn't look out of place on a space shuttle, and an uncluttered appearance that is much more contemporary than the C55's effort. Sure the C63 is still a C-Class saloon, but only just.

Blip the throttle at rest and it's like you've stood on a tiger's tail – the deep aggressive growl is instant, loud and scary. And as you launch yourself towards the horizon that angry tiger seems

**The C55 AMG
heralded a return
to normally
aspirated power**

to follow you everywhere. In Sport+ mode, almost every gear change produces a smile inducing concerto of snorts and pops, whilst the paddleshift gearbox makes the C63 a more engaging drive than the C55, which makes do with half-hearted buttons behind the steering wheel. The C63 has three other transmission settings to suit alternative moods: Comfort, Sport and

Manual, with the latter possessing an endearing, mechanical feel to the changes – far more so than that which the C55 offers with its torque converter automatic and Manual mode.

This Edition 507 model revs even quicker than a 'standard' C63, and feels noticeably more urgent. The performance is simply breathtaking. And even at the highest speeds, the Edition 507 still feels remarkably stable. As you'd expect, performance is a noticeable step up from the C55, with AMG's newer suspension and aerodynamic wizardry appearing to suck the C63 down onto the road, whilst wringing every last ounce of ability from the chassis.

Despite all these technological advances, the C63 saloon still possesses a jump-in-and-go simplicity that other hot saloons have lost altogether. Everything is where you expect it to be, with no need to adjust numerous settings before you pull away. ▷

TAKE TWO C55 AMG vs C63 AMG



△ The C63 is the biggest selling AMG to date.

◁ A fabulous feel to AMG's thick rimmed helm.

▷ Performance brakes and 19-inch wheels.

▷ Edition 507 C63 is limited to 174mph not 155.



Sure it's still a C-Class saloon, but only just

▷ AFTER EIGHTS

With so few C55 AMGs sold in the UK, finding one will take some time. Of 163 originally bought new, less than 126 remain, so they don't come up for sale very often and when one does you'll need to move quickly. Prices are currently in the £10,000 to £15,000 bracket, but could rise over the next few years. Our 76,000-mile, 2004 example comes with black leather upholstery, Comand with satellite navigation, cruise control, heated front seats, two-zone climate control, xenon headlights, a trip computer and electrically adjustable front seats with memory.

Examples of the C63 AMG, however, are more numerous, with plenty of well kept cars to choose from. Prices start at £21,995 for 70,000 milers from 2008, whilst a 2010, 30,000-mile example is £29,000. A used Edition 507 costs from £53,000.

Aside from brakes and tyres (rears will do well to last 7,000 miles!), maintenance costs on either model aren't as high as you might think, with an experienced AMG specialist probably the best place to service a C55 or an older C63.

Downsides? Well, you'll do well to see more than 200 miles from a tank of super unleaded, and road tax can be very high, but if you can live with these handicaps there's nothing else to touch either car. And with AMG phasing out its naturally aspirated V8, both the C55 and C63 AMG are set to become classics. 📌

HEAD TO HEAD

Model	Performance	Driving experience	Style	Economy	Price
C55 AMG	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
C63 AMG	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★



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Peter Jarvis Specialising in Mercedes-Benz & Classic Cars



230SL Sports Pagoda, 1966 finished in striking original brilliant Brunswick Green with complimented new deep red carpets and seats, rear seat, new soft top/hard top, radio cassette, rare four spd, only used on high days and holidays, only 42,000 miles, two owners, garaged from new, lots of history, handbook, all tools, thousands spent over the years to keep this car in superb condition, personal registration number to go with car, Just stunning. £87,750



280SL Sports Pagoda, 1968/9, finished in unmarked gleaming silver with as new soft black hide interior, hard and soft tops, automatic, p/steering, stereo system, Mercedes overmats, only 73,000 miles £1000s spent to keep this garaged kept sports car in magnificent condition. Folder of invoices/old MOTs/ original handbook, all tools. A breathtaking example. More pictures available on our website. £129,500



250SL Sports Pagoda, 1968, finished in the breath taking colour scheme of light silver blue with darker blue hard & soft tops, light beige hide interior and carpets, with overmats. Auto, p/steering, CD stereo system, full tool kit, lots of old MOTs/ history & invoices, handbook, looks like new. Drives superb, garaged. Remarkable car. Please view our website for more detailed pictures you will be amazed. Fantastic investment and fast appreciating in value don't miss this one. £139,500.



280SL Sports Pagoda, 1968, brilliant Artic White, superb contrasting interior, hard and soft tops, auto, PAS, CD stereo system. One of the finest having had thousands spent through its life, and only used on summer days, only 58,000 miles, supplied with original hand book, etc. It would be very difficult to find another even come close to this. £135,750



560SL Sport, 1988, left hand drive, gleaming Signal Red with Tan hide interior, hard and Tan soft tops, over-mats, light up mirrors, power windows, tinted glass, power mirrors, central locking, air-con, cruise control, stereo system, ABS, alloys, SRS, air-bags, expensive MB car cover, auto, power steering, only 19,000 miles from new, FSH. £49,750



230SL Sport, 1966, Porcelain White with as new Black hide interior, auto, PAS, CD stereo system, hard and soft tops, known to us for many years, original service books etc. Entered in many events in UK and Europe. Fitted stainless exhaust system, recent overhaul. Over £10,000 spent in the last few years making this car one of the finest. £89,750



280SL Sport, 1969, left hand drive, finished in Ivory White with Dark Brown hide interior, auto, power, only 68,000 miles, hard and soft tops, air-con, stereo system, two owners from new. This car is just magnificent in every way, fast appreciating in value. £67,750



560SL Sport, 1989, left hand drive, finished in Nautic Blue with Mushroom hide interior, headrests, hard top and Dark Blue soft top, over-mats, power windows, cruise control, original stereo system, air-bag, air-con, alloys, tinted glass, complete with all tools. Auto and power steering, history, 42,000 miles, garaged from new. £39,750



560SL Sport, 1988, left hand drive, finished in Impala, metallic colour-coded bumpers, contrasting interior headrests, over-mats, hard and soft tops, auto, power, cruise control, ABS, air-con, air-bags, stereo and CD system, SRS, alloys, complete with all tools, 43,000 miles, two owners, garaged from new, service history. £38,500



560SL Sport, 1986, left hand drive, Astral Silver with Maroon hide interior, hard and soft tops, rear seats, air-con, cruise control, air-bags, headrests, power mirrors, light up vanity mirrors, stereo system, SRS, power windows, alloys, tinted glass, centre armrest. Only two owners, 39,000 miles, FSH. Probably the finest Mercedes sports ever. £39,750



280SL Sport, 1985, finished in Arctic White with superb interior, hard and soft tops, auto, power, Clifford alarm and immobilizer, alloys, cruise control, stereo system, CD player, power windows, service history, excellent example. £12,750



560SL Sport, 1987, left hand drive, gleaming Signal Red with Beige hide interior, headrests, centre arm rest, hard and soft tops, this flag ship SL has power windows, tinted glass, stereo system, light up vanity mirrors, cruise control, air-con, power mirrors, ABS, air-bags, alloys, over-mats, only 27,000 miles from new, with FSH, 1 owner, garaged and pampered. £46,750

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“

My eyes are initially drawn to the 300S Roadster, but it is the minor details on the later and rarer 300Sc Coupe that hold my attention longest

”



The art of exclusivity

Representing early and later versions of Mercedes' glorious 300 range, this 300S Roadster and 300Sc Coupe have undergone a five-year restoration at Mechatronik

WORDS WILHELM LUTJEHARMS IMAGES SYBRAND CILLIÉ



CLASSIC CHOICE

300S Roadster & 300Sc Coupe

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz 300S Roadster (W188)

ENGINE

M188 2,996cc 6-cyl

POWER

148bhp@5,000rpm

TORQUE

170lb ft@3,800rpm

TRANSMISSION

4-spd manual, RWD

WEIGHT 1,760kg

0-62MPH 15.0sec

TOP SPEED 109mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION

20.5mpg

YEARS PRODUCED

1952-1955

Mercedes-Benz 300Sc Coupe (W188)

ENGINE

M199 2,996cc 6-cyl

POWER

173bhp@5,400rpm

TORQUE

188lb ft@4,300rpm

TRANSMISSION

4-spd manual, RWD

WEIGHT 1,780kg

0-62MPH 14.0sec

TOP SPEED 112mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION

22.6mpg

YEARS PRODUCED

1955-1958

Figures for cars as pictured; fuel consumption determined at 3/4 of top speed (not more than 110km/h, 68mph) plus 10 per cent



A S I WATCH THE BODY of the 1954 300S Roadster bobbing and weaving in front of me, I realise it is possibly one of the most visual reminders of the development of automobile technology during the past 60 years. As the road turns to the right, I watch from the driver's seat of a 1956 300Sc Coupe as the roadster's left-hand rear wheel pushes up into the arch, the sheer amount of suspension movement unlike anything seen on a modern car.

As the road straightens again, I notice the left rear tyre isn't recovering from the pressure

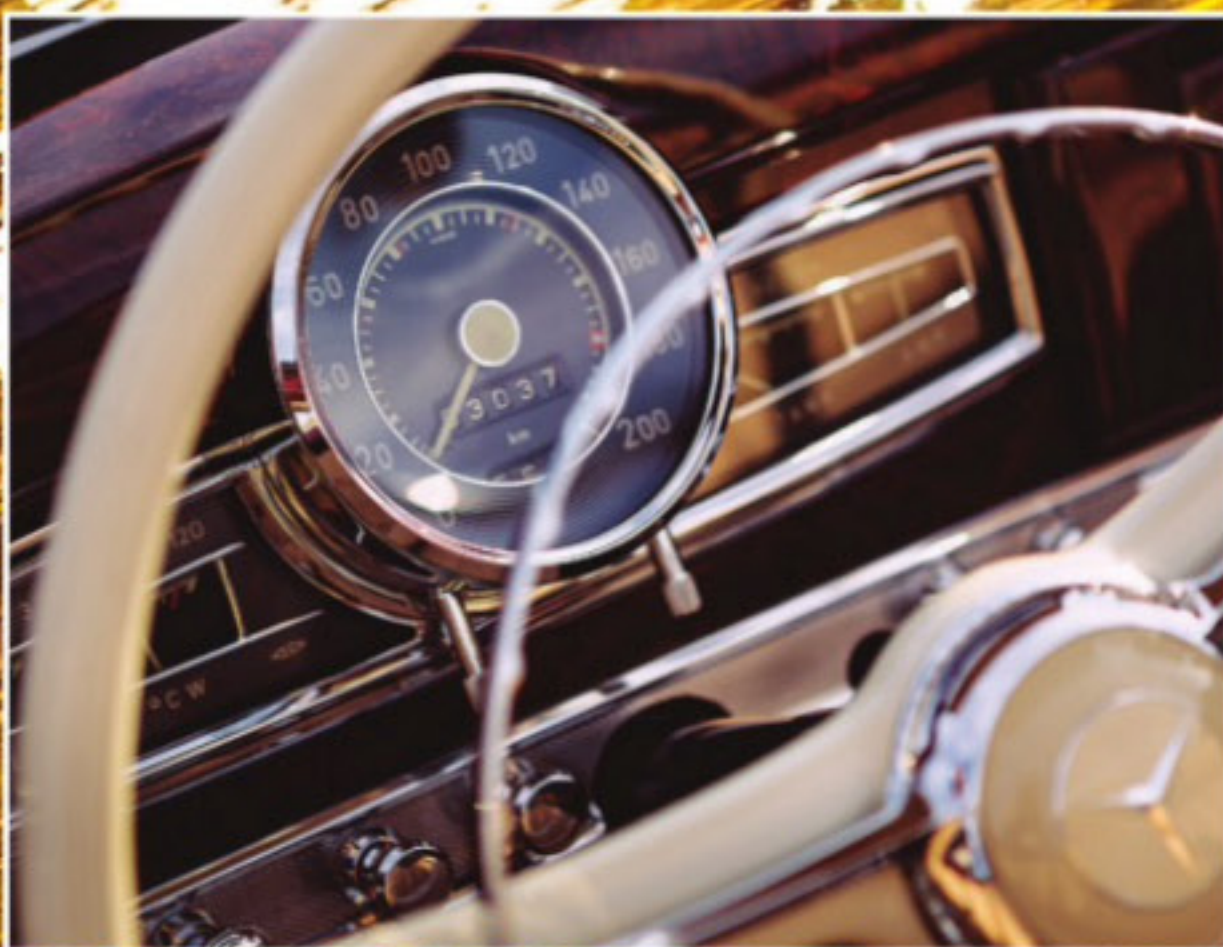
created by the cornering forces. Half a minute later we identify that it's flat. Fortunately, both these cars had only returned to South Africa one month ago, after undergoing five years of restoration work at Mechatronik in Germany, meaning the jack, spanner and full size spare wheel are all accounted for. Some 15 minutes later we are back on the road and heading to our photoshoot location.

It is when both cars are parked next to one another that the slight differences begin to emerge. My eyes are initially drawn to the 300S Roadster, but it is the minor details on the later and rarer 300Sc Coupe that hold my attention longest. Its wheelarches offer

chrome beading while the bonnet also features two chrome stripes on the sides. For some this might seem excessive, but I find it adds to the classic look of the car.

GRAND DESIGNS

The 300S Roadster is basically identical to the 300S Cabriolet, except for the lighter, fully retractable hood, without coach joints. Eagle-eyed readers will notice 'Einspritzmotor' situated on the rear bumper of the coupe, indicating the mechanical fuel injection of the engine, and an increase in power from the 148bhp of the carburettored 300S Roadster, to 173bhp in this 300Sc Coupe.



“
It is only when you spend
more time in the cabin that
you fully appreciate
Mechatronik's work
”

△ The 300S Roadster is 4,730mm long, 1,910mm wide and 1,510mm tall.

△◁ Modest sized, 15-inch wheels wrapped in suitably detailed tyres.

△△ The drive is physical yet rewarding, the view of the star ahead priceless.

△△◁ These cars were built for speed, capable of well over 100mph.

Cars such as these are usually trailer queens, or works of art taking up garage space in collectors' residences, but that is not the case with these two examples. After their owner had waited five years for the cars to be restored by Mechatronik, he flew to Germany to drive them before they were shipped back to South Africa at the end of 2014. I could sense that one trip in Europe with the roadster was particularly special to him. "When that car had been fully restored, I drove it in a rally to Lake Como in Italy. It was a truly spectacular trip, but what made it so special was that I travelled back from Italy to Stuttgart and arrived quite refreshed,

despite the six-hour drive. Although my 300SL is sexy, stylish and flamboyant, you won't arrive at your destination feeling as refreshed as you would in the 300S Roadster."

TOURING CARS

I share his opinion, to an extent. The interiors of both these cars are truly relaxing environments. Although the steering wheel fills your lap, you have enough leverage on the wheel to feel in charge of the car. Each interior colour combination was chosen by the owner, and suits each Mercedes perfectly. The 300S Roadster is draped in a combination of chocolate brown and light beige, while the

300Sc Coupe offers a combination of Anthracite and Cognac brown.

Even the steering wheel colours have been taken into account – white in the case of the roadster, and black for the coupe. The result is that I suddenly feel too young to be piloting this car; my head feels naked without a hat, my wrist similarly exposed without a watch, and where is my cigar? The addition of air conditioning is a must, especially during hot seasons in South Africa. However, looking at all the chromed organ stops and levers, you would never guess that there is such a system hiding behind its elegant appearance – more of Mechatronik's work. ▷



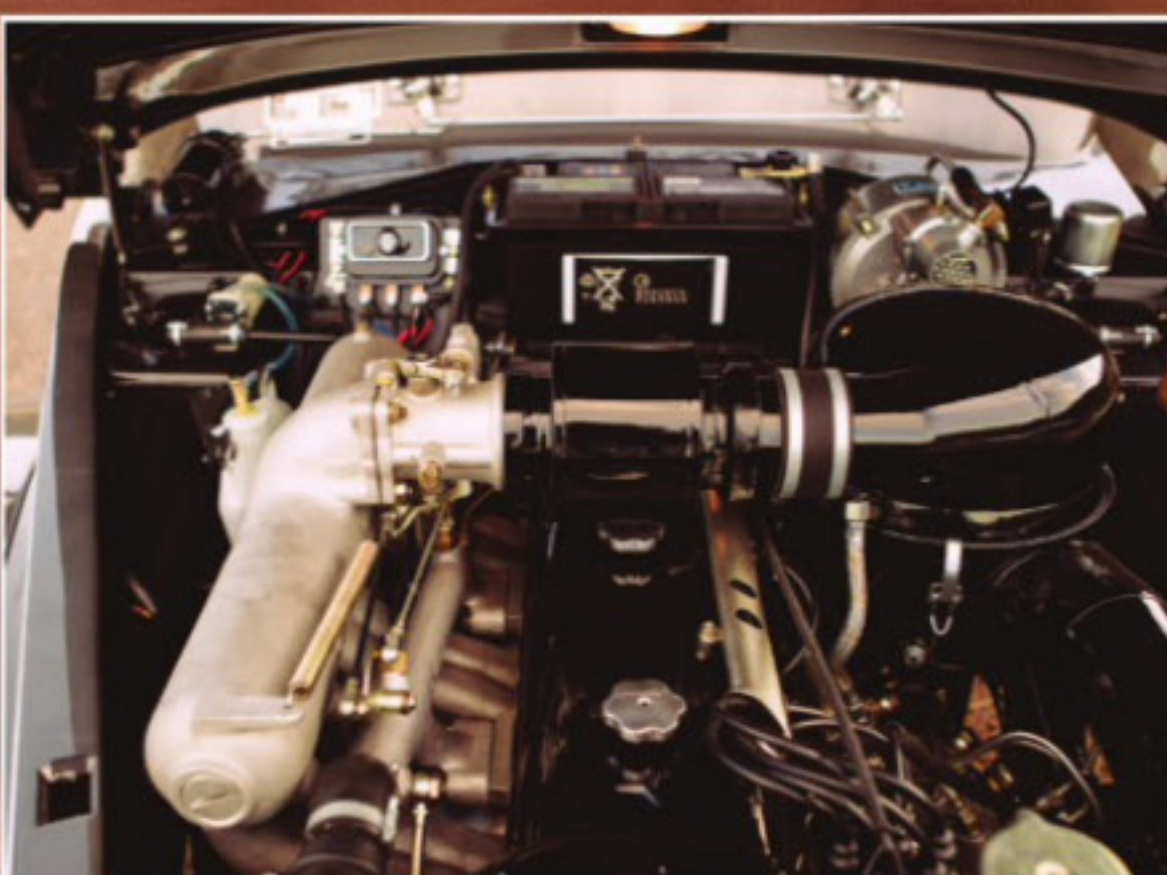
“
The interiors
have a fresh
smell, but
not the sort
you'll find in
a modern car
”



△ Two chrome louvres on side of bonnet give away this later 'Sc' coupe.

△△ Every surface oozes natural quality, the cabin just as stunning as the body.

△▷ Subtle Mechatronik text on the coupe's five-speed gearknob.



△△ Expertly crafted controls like these put most modern equivalents to shame.

△ Later M199 engine with direct injection and higher 8.5:1 compression ratio.

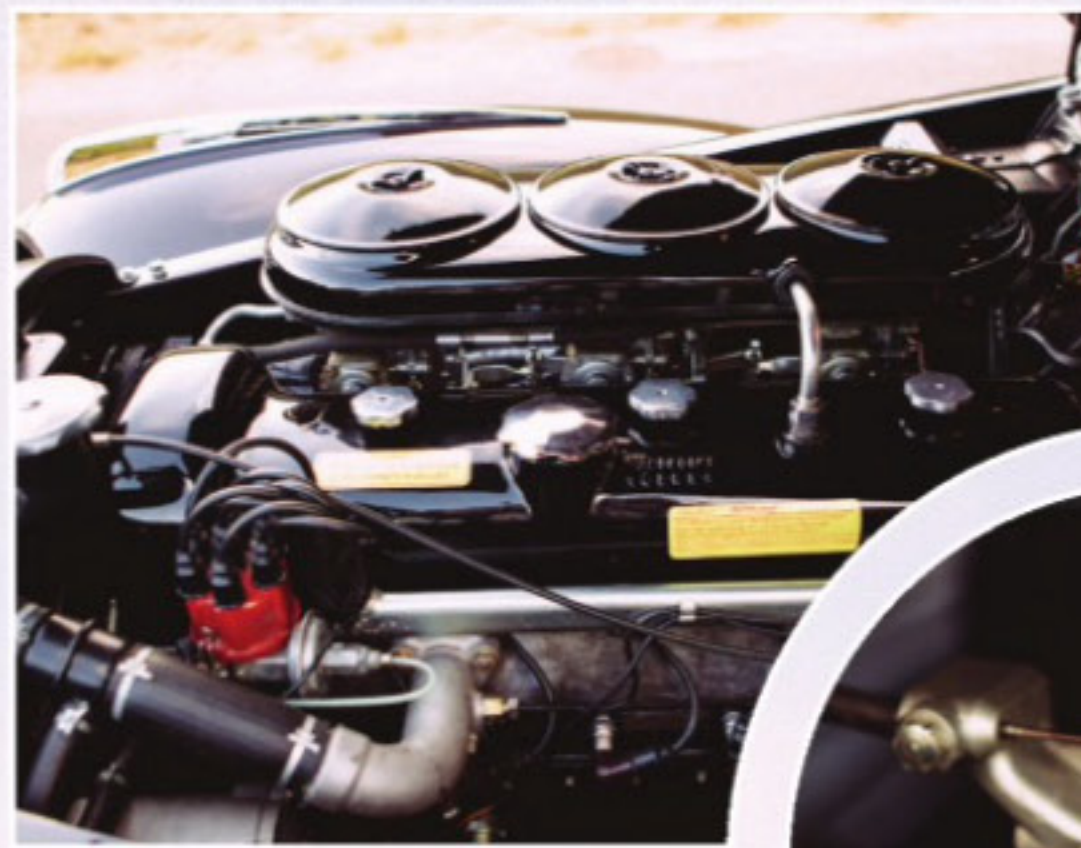


▷ The steering in both cars is heavy at parking speeds, but once you get going, it is quite easy to point the car. Both Mercedes have floor mounted gearshift levers, and what a joy they are to use – as long as you don't rush things.

When the owner purchased these cars nearly 15 years ago, they already had floor mounted gearlevers, as opposed to the column change system fitted as standard. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the column shift mechanism was converted to the floor shift system by the factory, or whether it was done by Mercedes-Benz in South Africa. Nevertheless, it looks perfectly suited and only contributes to the sporty intent of both two-doors.

CLASSIC COLOURS

The light coloured cloth roof of the 300S Roadster complements the dark brown exterior hue. Both interiors have been meticulously restored (and slightly improved) to the same condition as the exterior. But it is only when you spend more time in the cabin that you fully appreciate Mechatronik's effort. Sourcing parts for these two



△ Compression ratio of 7.8:1 for 300S's M188.

▷ Three carbs gave the 300S Roadster 148bhp.



panel that opens with a gentle push to reveal an Alpine radio/CD player, no less.

Bend down to look at the left-hand side of the steering column and you will find switches for modern functions such as the hazard lights, fuel pump (needed when the engine is warm and you want to restart it), and a switch for adjusting the level of power steering assistance.

As the sun's last rays disappear behind the mountains, we begin our return to Cape Town. It is never ideal to drive such old cars in the dark, but tonight that is not a problem. Both Mercedes are fitted with xenon headlights, which means we can see way into the distance. Never before have I passed slower moving traffic in such an old car so effortlessly. Both cars keep to 75mph with ease, leaving little doubt that, on the right road, they would match the top speeds stated by Mercedes-Benz (109mph for the roadster, 112mph for the coupe).

restoration projects was difficult – some parts had to be remade and some sourced from Mercedes-Benz.

The interiors have a fresh smell, but not the sort you'll find in a modern car. I quickly peek at the rear seat, where I found a neatly folded picnic blanket – how appropriate! In the middle of the dashboard there is a sleek, veneered



▷ The 300Sc Coupe is definitely the more refined of the two cars. Featuring fuel injection, it not only offers more power, but the cabin is also slightly quieter than that of the carburettor fed 300S Roadster. Obviously, one has a hardtop and the other a fabric roof, but when holding a gear, it is the carburettor engine that sounds like it is working harder, albeit with a sound to savour.

The large pews are soft, but sturdy at the same time. They are comfortable, but don't engulf you in such a way that you will feel uncomfortable on a warm day. Your passenger also has a significant amount of space on their side of the cabin. Ahead of you, the long bonnet points the way forward with the three-pointed star proudly fixed at the end.

As is still the case today with modern Mercedes, you need to pay attention to the details. For example, the rear view mirror of the roadster has two small joints that allow it to pivot and provide a view over the fabric roof when it's folded at the rear.

SYMBOLS OF WEALTH

As our day comes to an end, I have one final look at the cars. Whatever your views are about personalised numberplates, these two cars are equipped with registrations that hopefully teach admirers a thing or two about the Mercedes they are looking at. For me, the 300SL Gullwing represents the pinnacle of engineering at Mercedes-Benz in the 1950s, but I certainly have more respect for the earlier 300 range after driving these two examples.

They were the most expensive cars on Mercedes-Benz's price list at the time, topping even the 300SL Gullwing. The 300Sc Coupe retailed for DM36,500 in 1955 and the 300S Roadster cost DM34,500 in 1952, whereas the 300SL Gullwing boasted a price tag of *only* DM29,000 in 1954.

“They were the most expensive cars on Mercedes' price list at the time, topping even the 300SL Gullwing

At the time of the photoshoot, the combined mileage of these cars since the nuts and bolts restoration at Mechatronik was 2,500 miles. Since our day with them, this number has already climbed and it was so refreshing to hear the owner's plans regarding these cars and the trips he wants to do in them. They might be rare and they might be worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, but this duo, which were described by the press at the time as “cars for the world elites”, are still used in the way their designers intended.

From S to Sc

September 1955 brought updates to Mercedes' grand coupe, cabriolet and roadster - here is what changed...

- ⚙ Single-joint, cross shaft rear axle with low pivot replaces conventional swing-axle
- ⚙ Direct fuel injection takes over from carbs, 'Einspritzmotor' badge fitted to the rear
- ⚙ Swivel side windows added
- ⚙ Larger indicators at the front and rear of the car than before
- ⚙ Two horizontal chrome louvres on each side of the bonnet
- ⚙ Chrome trims extending from the front to the rear wheelarches



Just 98 300Sc Coupes and 141 300S Roadsters were built by Mercedes.



Mercedes Insurance

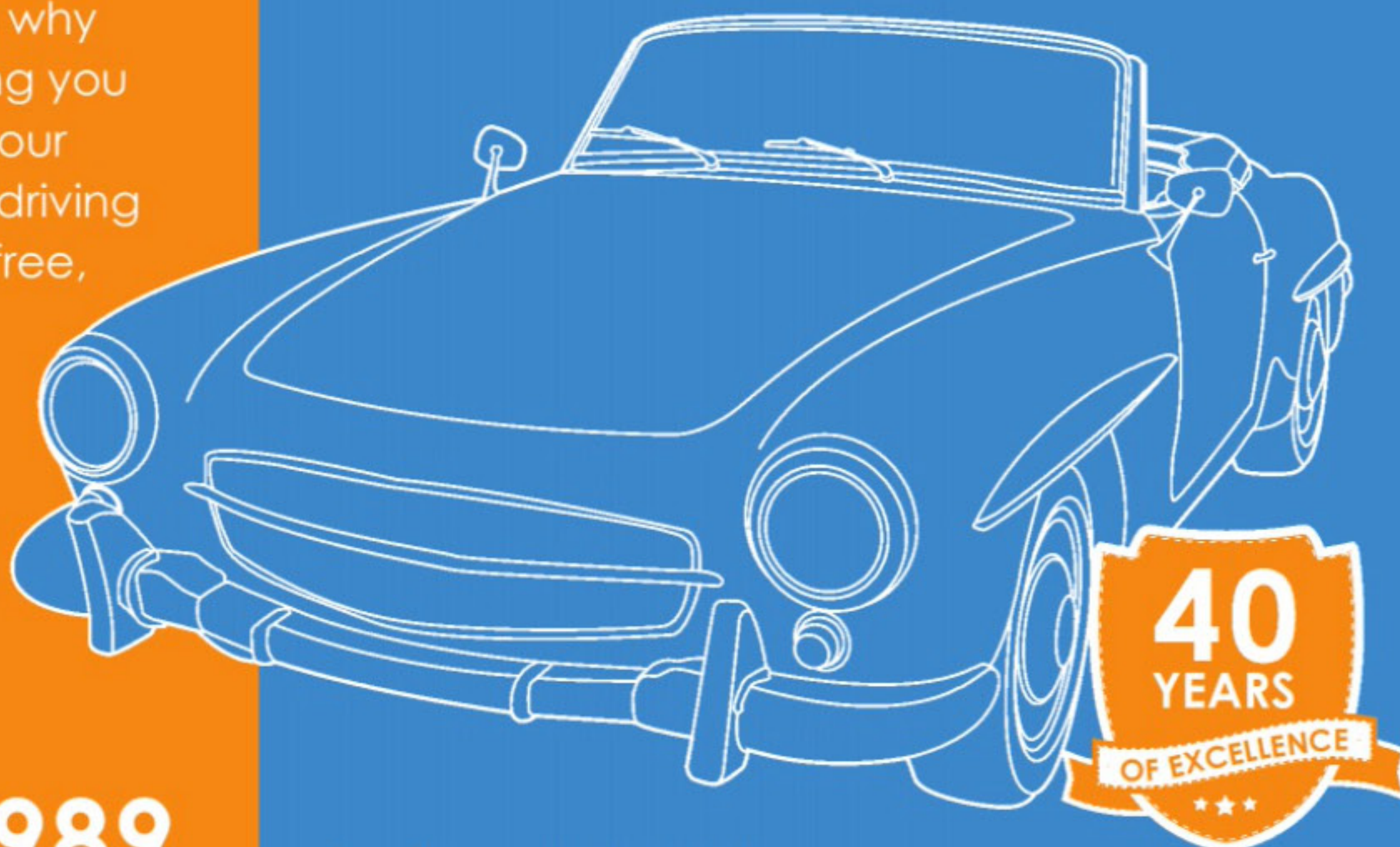
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FLIGHT OF FANTASY

Dripping with 1980s excess, this SEC Gullwing widebody was dreamed up by Styling Garage – a prolific Mercedes modifier once based in Germany – for a wealthy Middle Eastern client

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY

TUNER CAR
SEC Gullwing by Styling Garage



MERCEDES' IMPOSING FLAGSHIP COUPES have always claimed serious enthusiast appeal, and the long running 126-series coupe (C126), built from 1981 to 1991, has proved perhaps the most popular, standing the test of time better than most. Simple and clean lines, a tactfully lowered and shortened S-Class chassis, and rock solid build quality have ensured that many still lust after them today.

Topping the range until the model's 1985 facelift was the 500SEC, first unveiled in 1981. And although it may not have been the most engaging sports coupe to drive (the Porsche 911 claimed that title), in terms of kudos, build quality, and groundbreaking technology and equipment, the SEC was almost impossible to better. But add some gullwing doors and it was truly in a league of its own.

And that's exactly what legendary, Pinneberg based tuner Styling Garage (sometimes abbreviated to SGS) did to a number of 1980s SECs, including this 1984 example, built for a member of the Saudi royal family. Dressed to impress, this particular car was intended as a desert hunting vehicle – the doors opening to allow a falconer to release his hawk into the desert sky on the move, and have it return to him the same way. A sports car in more sense than one, and a truly stunning sight on the road today.

BIRD OF PREY

With its low stance, shiny black paintwork, 19-inch Work Rezax alloys and grille mounted star, this widebodied SEC Gullwing looks menacing from every angle. And that's almost certainly what was originally intended, with white leather upholstery providing the perfect contrast. But according to our research, this car didn't leave the factory looking like this. Far from it, in fact. Its original paintwork was Astral Silver metallic, and the factory leather upholstery was blue. The original alloys would also have been a good deal less striking – 14-inch items were standard fit at the time.

But this is no ordinary 500SEC, and its transformation began after completing its journey from the Mercedes factory to Styling Garage near Hamburg. Apparently one of six such cars purchased by Prince Salman bin Abdullah bin Abdulrahman Saud, this SEC was completely overhauled with the express purpose of providing regal transport for Saudi princes hunting with falcons.

In total, 57 SEC Gullwings were produced by Styling Garage, but just seven were the widebody version like the car you see here. At the peak of its powers, the company even contracted out some of the work to keep up with demand. Those jaw-dropping doors required special steel frames to be welded into the roof and body, and over time the method of manufacture understandably evolved. Over the course of production, Styling Garage changed the hinges in the roof, as well as the position of the gas springs required to hold the doors, and the position of the door opener.

The fit and finish on this example are excellent and, given the extensive work involved, it's remarkable how unassuming these doors look when closed. Passers by would assume that this was a relatively standard SEC – until you open those doors in a car park and cause jaws to drop. Styling Garage always claimed that its cars contained at least 90 per cent genuine

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz 500SEC (C126)

ENGINE
M117 4,973cc V8

POWER
228bhp@4,750rpm

TORQUE
299lb ft@3,000rpm

TRANSMISSION
4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,610kg

0-62MPH 8.1sec

TOP SPEED 140mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION
18.6mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1981-1991

Figures for a standard, 1984 500SEC on which this car is based; fuel consumption according to EEC urban

Mercedes components, but the list of options and services offered by the German company was pretty extensive, with almost every completed car boasting a unique specification.

Instead of a DM65,000 Gullwing conversion like this car's (in January 1984, a 500SEC cost DM85,386), you could have had a convertible conversion for DM68,000, and both variants were available with a variety of different hoods and grilles (some costing as much as DM16,000).

There were also various front and rear spoilers, and side panels, a lowered suspension option, Centra, BBS or Remotec alloy wheels, revised light clusters for the front and rear of the car, a complete DM12,000 respray (the 22-layer, candy apple lustre effect paint surely the most outrageous choice), as well as coloured wheels, and most opulent of all, gold plated metalwork – a snip at DM28,000.



▷ The meaty exhaust system adds to the drama of the drive.

▽ The V8 is thought to be totally standard.

▽▷ SGS build plate confirms production back in April 1984.



STYLING GARAGE SPECIAL

A few examples may also have had a Mosselman supercharger conversion carried out after leaving Styling Garage, but the M117 V8 engine here

is stock. Aside from the gullwing doors, this car's list of modifications includes no less than seven layers of glossy black paint, a DM38,000 widebody chassis and panels, plush white leather upholstery, a Raid steering wheel (subsequently changed to the Momo item pictured), that falcon's head gearknob, front and rear spoilers (the former with foglights), a reprofiled bonnet, those 19-inch alloys shod with unbelievably low profile rubber (the original magnesium Remotec wheels disintegrated over time), sports suspension with Koni shocks, a twin exhaust system and some tasteful Styling Garage dials with gold script. ▷

“In total,
57 SEC
Gullwings
were made
by Styling
Garage, but
just seven
were the
widebody
version”





▷ Once this car had delivered a few years of loyal service in the Middle East, it was shipped to the UK in July 1988 at the behest of the Saudi Arabian Embassy, and subsequently found its way from Belgrave Square to its current owner.

TAKE FLIGHT

Every single journey in this car is a memorable event, and if you're not smiling when you set off, you soon will be. Even with those doors firmly shut, driving a 500SEC is as much about being seen, as it is about enjoying the drive. Despite the extra weight, this Merc still feels very much *alive*, but it is above all an easy, effortless coupe to pilot – demanding little and delivering a lot.

If you're expecting precision steering and instantly rewarding handling, you're missing the point. With doors closed the cabin is surprisingly well insulated – it feels like there's still plenty of sound deadening. But if you decide to drive with the doors open (who could resist it?), remember that one small misjudgement could prove disastrous for the car's provenance and your wallet.

Start her up and there's a momentary deep bark, after which things settle down. As with a standard SEC, the controls are simple and robust, and the gearlever has a feather light action. Cruising on the road, the car is totally unruffled, emitting an enticing V8 purr that changes to a more urgent growl as you press on. Styling Garage's lowered and stiffened suspension, combined with those super low profile tyres, means you do



△ The 19-inch Work rims a recent addition.

△△ This car came to these shores in 1988.

▷ Styling Garage was formed back in 1979.



feel almost every bump, but the ride – somewhat surprisingly – is comfortable at all times.

Stamp on the throttle pedal and there is a momentary delay, as the old school autobox gets its head into gear, before you are pushed back gently but firmly into your seat. Acceleration is impressive despite the big coupe's dimensions – this SEC can certainly still fly if you ask it to. And when you do finally arrive at your destination, it's time for your party piece: those gullwing doors open in just a few seconds.

BACK DOWN TO EARTH

A bespoke 500SEC like this requires a certain degree of fettling, as you might expect. But the fundamentals require little out of the ordinary, with service intervals every 6,000 to 9,000 miles, or yearly. Aside from an oil and filter change, lubrication of all moving parts is a wise move, including the front bulkhead drain holes, and you would be wise to keep

Styling Garage (SGS)

Founded in 1979 by Christian Hahn (pictured below) and Ralph Engel, and based in Pinneberg, Germany, Styling Garage was the pioneer in producing SEC Gullwings, along with many other coachbuilt, 126-series saloon and coupe based vehicles. Purveyor of the finest bespoke Mercedes to the rich and famous, SGS modified around 1,500 cars between 1979 and 1986, when the company sadly folded.

Many of its modified SECs were built for wealthy Middle Eastern customers, including the 'Rainbow Sheikh' Hamad bin Hamdan Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates, the owner of the world's biggest car collection. In the 1980s, he famously ordered over 30 Styling Garage cars, including many white Mercedes with 24-carat gold chromework and rainbow coloured seats, two widebodied SECs with rainbow stripes, and seven different coloured 126-series limousines - each sporting a colour of the rainbow.

Aside from its 57 SEC Gullwings, Styling Garage also produced around 300 SEC convertibles, as many as 400 1000SEL/1000SGS limousines with four or six doors, one W126 station wagon, and even a C126 based pickup truck.



IMAGE IAN KUAH



△△ Contrasting white leather interior; Momo helm a modern touch.

△ The first owner used this grand coupe for hunting with falcons.

the air conditioning properly gassed, otherwise the compressor will fail. This car's hydraulically operated doors merely require an occasional check of the boot tank oil level, but you will need to keep a closer eye out for rust developing on SECs, with the lower front wings, wheelarches, underbody and under the back window prime areas for the tin worm.

As for the engine, the M117 V8 is dependable. Checking for worn hydraulic tappets is essential though, whilst timing chains can stretch over time and cracked guide rails can cause premature timing chain failure (the chain should last 100,000 miles). Other potential issues include camshaft oil blockages, induction air leaks, worn injectors and metering heads, plus failed window motors.

If you fancy owning an SEC like this one, you might have a bit of a wait. With so few SEC Gullwings made, finding a genuine SGS car requires the tenacity of a detective and the patience of a saint. Every example seems to have a unique story and some may even claim AMG engine or suspension tweaks. Styling Garage was not the only tuning house to apply the gullwing treatment to an SEC, but it was undoubtedly the pioneer, hence why the company's SECs are most sought after today.

It is very hard to put a price on a Mercedes-Benz like this one, but if you would like to see this 500SEC Gullwing widebody in your collection and have deep pockets, email info@mercedesenthusiast.co.uk - the current owner is prepared to listen to serious offers.

▽ Styling Garage dials show under 30,000 miles covered since 1984.

▽△ This conversion cost almost as much as a brand new 500SEC.



“Styling Garage was not the only tuning house to apply the gullwing door treatment to an SEC, but it was undoubtedly the pioneer”



**“There’s something
decidedly raw
about the turbo’s
dominating presence
in the engine bay”**

Where the wild things are

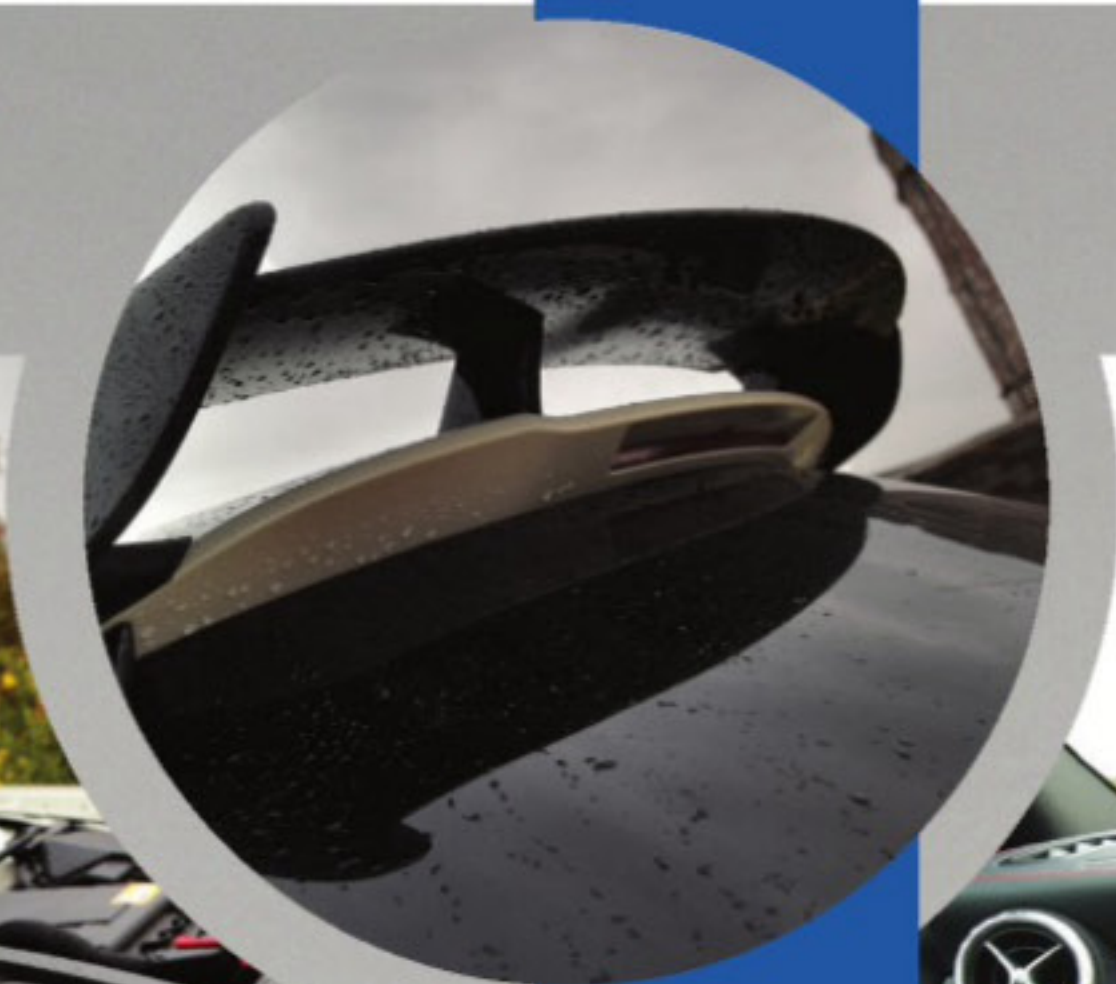
With bad boy looks and an extraordinarily powerful four-cylinder engine, the GLA45 AMG is one of the more unusual cars to emerge from Affalterbach – but is it any good? We head to the New Forest to find out...

WORDS **KYLE MOLYNEUX**
IMAGES **TERRY OBORNE**

TODAY'S MASS PRODUCED CARS have a problem. They may be more efficient, safer and generally more refined than four-wheeled machines of three decades ago, and styled by a team of designers who take inspiration from the wind, fish and Italian furniture, but these themes only go so far.

While a door panel receives the kind of attention Vincent van Gogh gave to his many one-eared self portraits, an engine bay's appearance is seemingly of little concern, the recycled plastic covering the entire motor the only feature with the slightest hint of *design*. Everything else is simply an inevitable consequence of engineering and packaging.

The GLA45 AMG is different, however. Yes, its AMG branded engine cover, complete with build plate, hides many of the good bits and suggests Mercedes doesn't want you to do anything other than change the oil. But its twin-scroll turbocharger is far too large to be covered by the same blanket, instead only partly obscured by a metal shroud labelled 'Hot' and positioned well in front of the M133 motor like a metallic lung. Granted, an M120 V12 beats it for sheer trouser fizzing potential, but there's something decidedly raw about the turbo's dominating presence in the engine bay. Boosting at up to 1.8bar, that should come as no surprise. ▷



◁ Basically half the motor that's in the AMG GT.

△ Huge rear spoiler part of aero package.

▷ Carbon fibre trim costs an extra £695.



JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG 4Matic (X156)

ENGINE M133 1,991cc 4-cyl turbocharged

POWER 355bhp@6,000rpm

TORQUE 332lb ft@2,250-5,000rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, 4WD

WEIGHT 1,585kg

0-62MPH 4.8sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 37.7mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 175g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2014-on

Figures for car as pictured; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited



▷ Thus endowed, the 1,991cc, four-cylinder engine produces 355bhp, which in this 1,585kg GLA45 means just over 220bhp per tonne, or 178bhp per litre (remember when 100bhp per litre was a big deal?). Essentially half of the engine found in the new AMG GT V8, the M133 develops 332lb ft of torque from 2,250rpm all the way to 5,000rpm. With peak power providing an extra and genuinely tangible kick at 6,000rpm, the GLA45's performance looks near bulletproof: 62mph comes in 4.8 seconds and the top speed is electronically pegged at 155mph.

When the A45 was launched in 2013, AMG's engineers had already grown to love the new direction it represented for the company, and agreed on a suitable nickname for their new super hatchback, simply 'The Beast'. As the GLA45 is 62mm taller, 24mm wider and 86mm longer, you would expect some very small yet significant changes to its demeanour, despite

having the A45's engine, seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox, four-wheel drive system and suspension (including a four-link rear axle).

There is a certainly a more rounded feel to the way it traverses roads in and around the New Forest in southern England. Strangely (or perhaps not, given the £38,195 price), the A45 is better damped than its less potent 'Sport' siblings, yet the £44,595 GLA45 feels even happier mooching about town than its AMG counterpart, bounding over obstacles like a Jack Russell at Crufts and providing its driver with a better view of the road ahead.

A45 OR GLA45?

Of course, it is stiffer than an English upper lip, but the generally supple shock absorption means you won't be muttering so-and-sos under your breath after encountering a rogue pothole. No, despite the quite extraordinary power at your disposal, the GLA45 AMG feels

fit for family use, its decent headroom, rear Isofix points and 481-litre boot putting to bed the idea that it's overly compromised.

Like its brothers, there are three modes intrinsic to the GLA45's character. Comfort is a short shifting and throttle response softening setting that quiets your progress and makes the quoted 37.7mpg (NEDC combined) a possible dream. Sport mode is everything you expect it to be, instilling far sharper throttle response, while hanging onto gears and cranking up the sound of the exhaust system (the downright naughty AMG Performance item fitted to this test car costs £470, and is most necessary in my opinion).

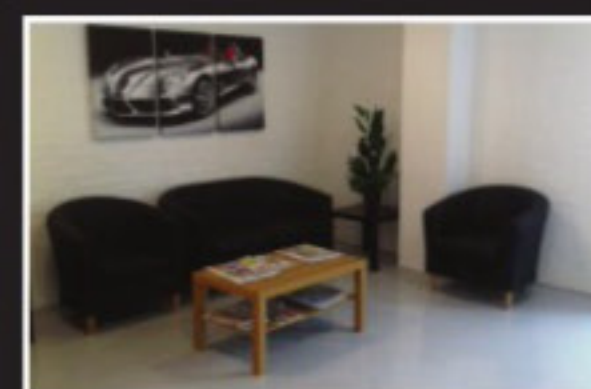
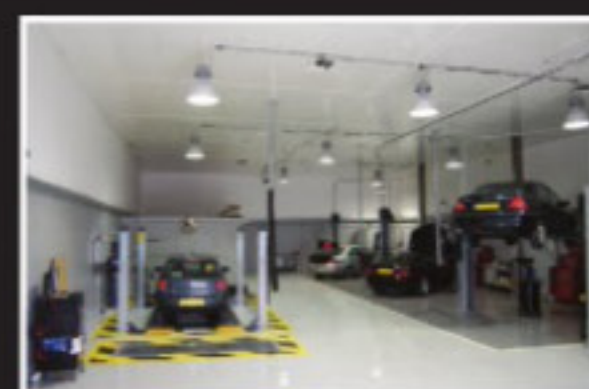
At full chat in Comfort mode, an upshift causes a full bodied pop from the exhaust, but in Sport mode the same action creates your very own firework soundtrack, producing an almighty crack that sounds even more crisp – and heart-stopping – outside the car. There ▷



“For sheer ferocious drama, the GLA45’s two-litre motor pops and gargles its way to stardom”



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▷ are also delicious little drum rolls on the overrun with the more sporting setting activated, which probably sounds ridiculous to everybody else on the road, but positively addictive to the person making it happen.

The final mode is Manual and it gives you full control of the seven-speed dual-clutch system; if you don't time an upshift correctly, the engine will simply head butt its rev limiter and die. And given the way it spins with extra vivacity right at the top of the rev range, mistiming a manual gear change is far easier than you might imagine.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL

Although turbo lag is present below 2,250rpm, when peak torque comes into play, from there on the GLA45's breathing becomes hard edged and raspy as it digs into the tarmac and fires itself forward. If traditional AMG cars are defined by the sound of their engines, then this M133 motor fits right in with the family way, despite half the cylinders. Admittedly, my ears have heard far sweeter sounds from four-cylinder engines, but for sheer ferocious drama, the GLA45's two-litre motor pops and gargles its way to stardom, pound for pound as raw as AMG's larger displacement engines, and in some ways even more unhinged.

Today, a four-wheel drive AMG is an accepted and popular formula. But it was still a rare phenomenon when the compact range was being developed, so we must not forget its importance here, where the GLA absolutely benefits from this set up and would literally be half the car without it.

conditions, certain situations can result in a 50/50 split, or all the power going to the rear axle when front grip is non-existent.

Thus configured, traction dwarfs that of a front-wheel drive GLA, particularly in the wet, although the contrived Race Start launch control sequence (ESP to 'Sport handling mode', gearbox to Manual, pull both paddles, pull right paddle, hold brake, hold accelerator, release brake) counts for nothing if the going is slippery, the lightweight 4Matic system deactivating itself once it detects a little too much scrabbling, presumably to protect itself.

When it does hook up, though, you don't doubt the quoted 4.8-second 0-62mph time. And thankfully, you've got the chair to keep you in place. The gorgeous looking Recaro front seats have the potential to embarrass those who like their food portions full and deserts extra creamy, but their lust for hip pinching can be a blessing when you're hustling the car with its speed dependent, AMG steering system, which boasts a pleasingly predictable and quick, constant ratio of 14.5:1.

READY FOR LAUNCH

Get into this car through duty rather than a desire to *drive*, and it is the shape of the pilot's pew, above all else, that forces your mind to focus, pushing your shoulders and upper arms towards the Alcantara wrapped helm

ahead. You may sit high in the GLA – higher than in the A-Class – but the scuttle remains at chest level, so you still feel plugged into the car rather than dangling off some part of it.

All of which makes it very hard to sit back and relax in the GLA45, even though the car is capable of covering big distances with barely a crease added to your trousers. The maximum-attack driver's seat is definitely part of the 'problem', and that rally-car-raw four-pot hardly helps either, but I also blame the way this GLA45 looks for my complete inability to act like a grown up behind the wheel. I would be very interested to find out how many people tick the option box for the AMG Aerodynamic Package (£1,530), because although it delivers little in the way of downforce, it most

definitely plays to this AMG's sense of humour. For a car that doesn't take itself too seriously, and simply aims to deliver a fun factor off the chart without sacrificing refinement completely, the glossy black aero additions are the perfect

▽ It's easy to hit the rev limiter in Manual mode.

▽▽ There are 356 horses in this picture.



"The GLA absolutely benefits from four-wheel drive and would literally be half the car without it"

▷ complement, and are all the more visible thanks to this example's Cirrus White paint.

On the rare occasions that I did meter my throttle input, fuel economy in the mid 30s was easily attainable on a long, sedate run. But with a little more time and freer flowing traffic, a return of 40-something may have been achievable. Mercedes-Benz quotes 28.5mpg around town, and I saw anything from 17 to 24mpg in admittedly quite cold conditions that wouldn't allow the Eco Start/Stop system to activate until well into my urban commute to and from Sundial Towers.

SELF CONTROL

But as I said, gentle drives were few and far between. The GLA's darty demeanour gradually eats away at your resolve, and before long you're calling up a manual downshift, bringing the turbocharged motor alive and driving by the seat of your pants, the snaking back roads of the New Forest wonderfully suited to this high rise hot hatch.

My first experience of the GLA45 AMG 4Matic came at the Goodwood Motor

Circuit, and it was this very same car that left me a touch underwhelmed. With just 440 miles on the clock it was barely run in, which meant staying well away from peak power. I knew how good AMG's two-litre turbo could be, but in the low mile GLA on track it felt frustrated, as did I due to the higher seating position. Fast forward a few months, drop the car into an everyday setting, and suddenly everything makes far more sense.

It may be expensive, and too overt for some with that pram handle rear wing, but the GLA offers itself as a less selfish indulgence than its A-Class counterpart, genuinely capable of carrying a family and their belongings while retaining that ability to blow their socks off on a wet motorway slip road.

I took delivery of this curious car and hoped my first impressions formed at Goodwood wouldn't last. Some 500 miles later, Mercedes-Benz had to prise open my hand to take back the key. Against the odds, the GLA45 AMG is quite remarkable.



◁ Recaro front seats have a superb finish.

▽ More room back here than in the A.



"Before long you're calling up a manual downshift and driving by the seat of your pants"





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The long ride home

Built in 1972, this rare, right-hand drive 220D long-wheelbase is earning its keep as capacious transport for a family in New Zealand

WORDS AND IMAGES ANDY KERR





“The abdominal stretch is huge but results in a fairly elegant transformation of the ‘Stroke 8’ saloon”



◁ A column shifter for the four-speed auto; manual offered too.

◁▽ The middle seat bench offers seating for three, or can be folded.

◁◁▽ Note the door and window arrangement in this photograph.



IF YOUR DEFINITION OF LUXURY demands acres of space, then you'll covet this car's cavernous interior. There is enough rear legroom to satisfy any basketballer, and the 3,400mm wheelbase and hydro-pneumatic suspension results in business class comfort with a premium ride quality.

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes 220D long-wheelbase (V115)

ENGINE OM615
2,197cc 4-cyl

POWER
59bhp@4,200rpm

TORQUE
93lb ft@2,400rpm

TRANSMISSION
4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,545kg

0-62MPH 30.0sec

TOP SPEED 82mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION
33.2mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1968-1973

Figures for car as pictured; fuel consumption determined at ¾ of top speed (not more than 110km/h, 68mph) plus 10 per cent

On first acquaintance, the V115's Maybach like length makes it look rather sleek in profile yet narrow from a three-quarter angle. The abdominal stretch is huge but results in a fairly elegant transformation of the 'Stroke 8' saloon. There is something very right about the proportions of the revised glass treatment, for example. Seating three abreast is no problem and the middle row is a folding bench that unfurls as required, making this an easy eight seater, provided the high sided tyres are generously inflated.

A BIG SENSE OF OCCASION

It's unusual for a special occasion car to double as a workhorse, content to run all day, every day. In the heart of New Zealand's pinot noir country, the dusky champagne 'Langversion' stands out from other traffic pacing the wide, well maintained roads.

It's immediately apparent that the bald performance figures don't do this 220D long-wheelbase justice. Under the bonnet, the modest, four-cylinder diesel engine almost looks lost among pumps for air conditioning, self levelling suspension and power steering. But its 59 horses summon the ability to surprise, the hardy unit proving reasonably flexible when linked to Mercedes' trusty four-speed automatic.

As you may know, diesel engine technology was moving at a circumspect pace in the late 1960s and 70s. It's worth noting

that the 2.4-litre in the subsequent 123-series 240D barely moved the game forward, with 64bhp and 101lb ft, and another 40kg on board. But the addition of the five-cylinder 300D in 1976 did have an impact, lifting power to 79bhp and torque to 127lb ft – enough to push the top speed beyond 90mph and slash the 0-62mph time to a more respectable 19.2 seconds with the four-speed automatic.

In between the chattery start-up and shaky shutdown of its engine, the 220D impresses as an honest toiler that never shirks its work. It might take a full half-minute to reach the national speed limit of 100km/h (62mph), and run out of puff on steep hills, but it's perfectly happy cruising at pace, and capable of tackling the many inclines around central Otago, all the while returning 33mpg.

Just as well it's up to the task, because owner John Beckley is making a solid five-hour round trip with young family in tow to meet us in Clyde, an historic former gold mining settlement nestled in a steep sided valley on a stretch of the Clutha River. Its blue-grey waters contrast with brown ridges of craggy schist and tussock grass as the highway weaves and wafts inland towards picturesque Queenstown.

With world class scenery to savour through the expansive, darkened glasshouse, John has no need to flog the horses. He has owned about 20 Mercedes over the years, and often several at a time, refreshing the fleet as cars of interest come up for sale. Of those currently in his stable, most are from the 220D's era, including a 1969 W114 250, a 1971 350SL and a 1975 280CE. This long-wheelbase version pretty much completes the set in terms of 114/115 ownership.

"After owning all sorts of cars, my first Mercedes-Benz was a W114 230," he explained. "I have always had a soft spot for the W114/115 range, owning several 230s, a 250, several 250CEs and my current 280CE for about 12 years." He sold a 1963

“Unsurprisingly, the long-wheelbase versions were the most expensive variants in the 114/115 model range”



Fintail and a 250CE to make this (online) purchase about seven years ago, considering the rare long-wheelbase to be a one-off ownership opportunity in New Zealand and using practical reasons (the useful extra seating, for example) to convince his wife Shona of the sense of another three-pointed purchase.

John was confident in the car's long term durability and unfazed by any problems the then 35-year old might present. He mentions previously purchasing a 124-series at 240,000 miles and running it through to 290,000 without any dramas. By contrast, this V115 was showing a (genuinely) low 80,000 miles when he picked it up. It proved to be mostly sound.

“The rear suspension is fed by a hydraulic pump that runs off the motor and it was rock solid when I bought the car because the spheres had collapsed. I remember driving down the road and watching the kids bouncing around in the back. But it was a fairly easy fix, as I figured the car was a similar weight to a seven-seat, 123-series wagon with self levelling suspension. So I took a punt and bought the spheres for that model and they were virtually identical. With a twist and a tweak here and there I managed to fit them myself.”

RARE IN RHD

Unsurprisingly, the long-wheelbase versions were the most expensive variants in the 114/115 model range, for which production totalled nearly two million. Mercedes-Benz made about 11,000 long-wheelbase models, with precisely 4,027 powered by the 220D engine. A good proportion were manufactured as semi built up, so as to be finished off at various coachbuilders as special purpose vehicles.

It seems that Stuttgart can't provide the number of right-hand drive *Lang* variants produced, unless each data card is analysed. But assuming 30 per cent were RHD, then this car is likely to be one of only 1,200 220Ds, making it a rare find in Mercedes' most distant export market.

Soon after purchase, John tracked down an earlier owner for some insight into the car's history. It appears to have originally been registered in Australia before a Wellington jeweller imported the car in the mid 1970s. An early photograph of the V115 glued to the inside cover of the owner's handbook shows the car in its original colour, bathed in sunlight on a freshly concreted driveway that could be in either country.

The story gets a little hazy as a link is established with a talented but troubled Kiwi soprano, Mina Foley. Drawn to the car at a local dealership, she apparently convinced close family friends to buy it in the late 70s. Foley had received similar training to the renowned Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and was considered by some to possess the voice of the century. She shot to international prominence in the 1950s before suffering

a major breakdown that caused her to be hospitalised for 18 years.

The thinking was that the Benz could be used as Mina Foley's transport to comeback concerts throughout the North Island. After a bright start, poor health again intervened and the soprano's talent went largely unrealised. There is talk of the Mercedes-Benz subsequently being used for the wedding of a prime minister's daughter, but John Beckley is still searching for pictures of the 'big day'.

◀ Self levelling at the rear of the LWB 115-series. ▶





▷ At some point, the car had been given a popular facelift with fluted tail lights, the later steering wheel and factory alloy wheels. And the colour had notably been changed to a bronzy brown metallic to reflect the palette of the later models. Once John had sorted the suspension and a few minor issues to get the car roadworthy, he used the car for a while before deciding to return it to the original specification. Luckily the original wheels and caps remained with the car, as they are 15 inches in diameter rather than the standard wheelbase's 14s. Original, flat tail lights were sourced, as was an ivory coloured steering wheel that complements the original light caramel paintwork and warm brown interior, which shows remarkably little wear.

LARGER THAN LIFE

"I didn't want to restore the car and end up not using it because it was too tidy. But one slight regret is not spending a little more money on panel work before repainting the car," John concedes, hinting at a little remedial work on the horizon. In the meantime, the car is earning its keep. In recent times it has knocked off a brisk 1,200-mile trip to the North Island, transported nine on a girls' night out, and made it up to the ski fields where the ensuing scene had the air of an early James Bond set. No wonder the car dismisses today's 300 miles as a stroll in the park.

△◁ The OM615 diesel unit does not have a turbo.

△△◁ LWB car has 15-inch wheels, the SWB version 14s.

*In recent times,
the car has knocked off
a brisk 1,200-mile trip
to the North Island*

▽ John Beckley with wife Shona and their two sons.



Triple treat for fans of rare SLR

On any South Island road trip, you'll see well preserved Mercedes enjoying the dry climate and brilliant roads. And you might even be overtaken by the odd SLR...

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Moss/Jenkinson Mille Miglia triumph at the wheel of '722', the much celebrated 300SLR racer of 1955. Honouring both car and driver, the 2009 SLR Stirling Moss was the last of a supercar series built under a partnership between Mercedes and McLaren. Production was limited to 75 vehicles built between June and December 2009, and Korean designer Yoon Il-hun's dramatic speedster styling includes neither a roof nor windscreen, just two subtle wind deflectors that stand less than an inch tall.

Seeing one SLR Stirling Moss is rare, but three is remarkable, especially when they're camped in a trackside museum at the new Highlands Motorsport Park facility in Cromwell, central Otago. The wealthy Australian owner is a trucking magnate who owns two more of the Moss special editions, and at one point owned eight!

The SLR's supercharged V8 is rated at 641bhp, resulting in a 217mph top speed and 0-62mph in less than 3.5 seconds.





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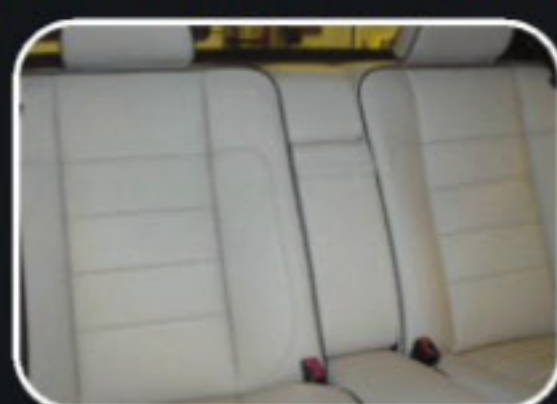


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Despite less grippy eco tyres, the A-Class still handles keenly, with just a hint of roll.

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz A180 CDI Eco (W176)

ENGINE OM607 1,461cc
4-cyl turbocharged

POWER
108bhp@4,000rpm

TORQUE
192lb ft@1,750-2,500rpm

TRANSMISSION
6-speed manual, FWD

WEIGHT 1,385kg

0-62MPH 11.3sec

TOP SPEED 118mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION
78.5mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 92g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2014-on

Figures for car as pictured; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined

▷ Two-tone trim standard with SE spec, and very nice it is, too.

▷▷ Engine is gruff under load but shows good manners on part throttle.

▷▷▷ A lower ride height and underbody panels for this eco minded A.

Hold your horses

AS WE WELCOME A NEW DAWN OF ELECTRIC HYBRIDS, MERCEDES LIKE THE SUPER EFFICIENT A180 CDI ECO REMIND US THAT THE TRADITIONAL INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE CONCEPT IS FAR FROM DEAD

WORDS KYLE MOLYNEUX IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY

AS ONE OF THE MOST efficient Mercedes currently on sale in the UK, there are few models more worthy of sky blue paintwork than this A180 CDI Eco SE. With a more aerodynamic grille, additional underbody panelling, lower suspension (-10mm at the front, -15mm at the rear), longer gear ratios, improved energy recuperation and a lightweight, 46-litre fuel tank, it emits six per cent less CO2 and consumes almost that amount less fuel than the normal 1.5-litre A180 CDI turbodiesel.

Priced at £21,965 and only available with a six-speed manual gearbox, this highly efficient baby Benz is officially capable of 67.3mpg around town and 88.3mpg on more open roads, meaning an average of 78.5mpg (NEDC combined), with road tax dodging CO2 emissions of just 92g/km.

Plug-in variants of the C-Class and S-Class, and a fully electric B-Class suggest how motoring will develop in the next few decades, but this A-Class certainly carries the torch for conventional powertrains. Indeed, talk to any one of Mercedes' engineering bosses and they will tell you that the internal combustion engine still has so much left to give.

Under the bonnet of this A-Class is a 1,461cc, four-cylinder engine built by Renault

and refined by Mercedes-Benz, earning it the internal designation OM607. With 108bhp at a high 4,000rpm, you are correct to assume this hatchback is no wolf in sheep's clothing. On 16-inch low rolling resistance tyres and comfort suspension, this A-Class is more likely to nurse you to sleep than inject you with a shot of adrenaline.

BLUE SKY THINKING

Hope is offered in the form of 192lb ft of torque, coming in from 1,750 to 2,500rpm, but those six long gear ratios (three of which serve as overdrive gears) mean the engine constantly dips out of its sweet spot with each upshift.

And such is the high and narrow spread of this twisting force, it takes a healthy dose of revs to avoid getting bogged down as you release the clutch when pulling away from rest. But rather than consider this a flaw, I like to think of it as part of the character of the car – something to adapt to and take small reward from once you master it.

So, let's cut to the chase (is that word appropriate here?) – just how frugal is the A180 CDI Eco SE? First, the good news. If you manage to achieve under 45mpg on any journey in this car, then consider yourself part of the lead foot brigade – I couldn't get any lower than that, even when I was pressing on. The magic 50mpg mark can be achieved with

ease, and you will see 60 plus with a modicum of respect for the environment (the engine sits at 1,800rpm in sixth gear at 70mph). But 70mpg? I can't say I saw it, yet that doesn't mean it's impossible to achieve. Perhaps I'm the one with the heavy right foot.

Of course, hitting 66mpg on winding country lanes in deepest Lancashire is not to be sniffed at. Nor is the fact the A180 CDI Eco SE still made this journey entertaining, with quick, darty steering that weights up the faster you go, plus an easy gearlever action, and arguably a better balance between comfort and handling than AMG Sport A-Classes – although those cars do look far more purposeful than this little blue beauty, which is more cute than killer.

But watch out for speed bumps, high kerbs and steep ramps, as the Eco's reduced ride height brings them all into play. Thankfully, that's the only downside of achieving a drag coefficient of 0.26Cd, the cabin wonderfully whistle free, while the Michelin rubber does its best to reduce tyre roar.

The A180 CDI Eco SE is just one of many Mercedes designed to deliver better than average fuel consumption at a time when their owners need it most. Turn to page 76 and discover which other three-pointed stars made efficiency a high priority, beginning with the first diesel powered car of 1936.



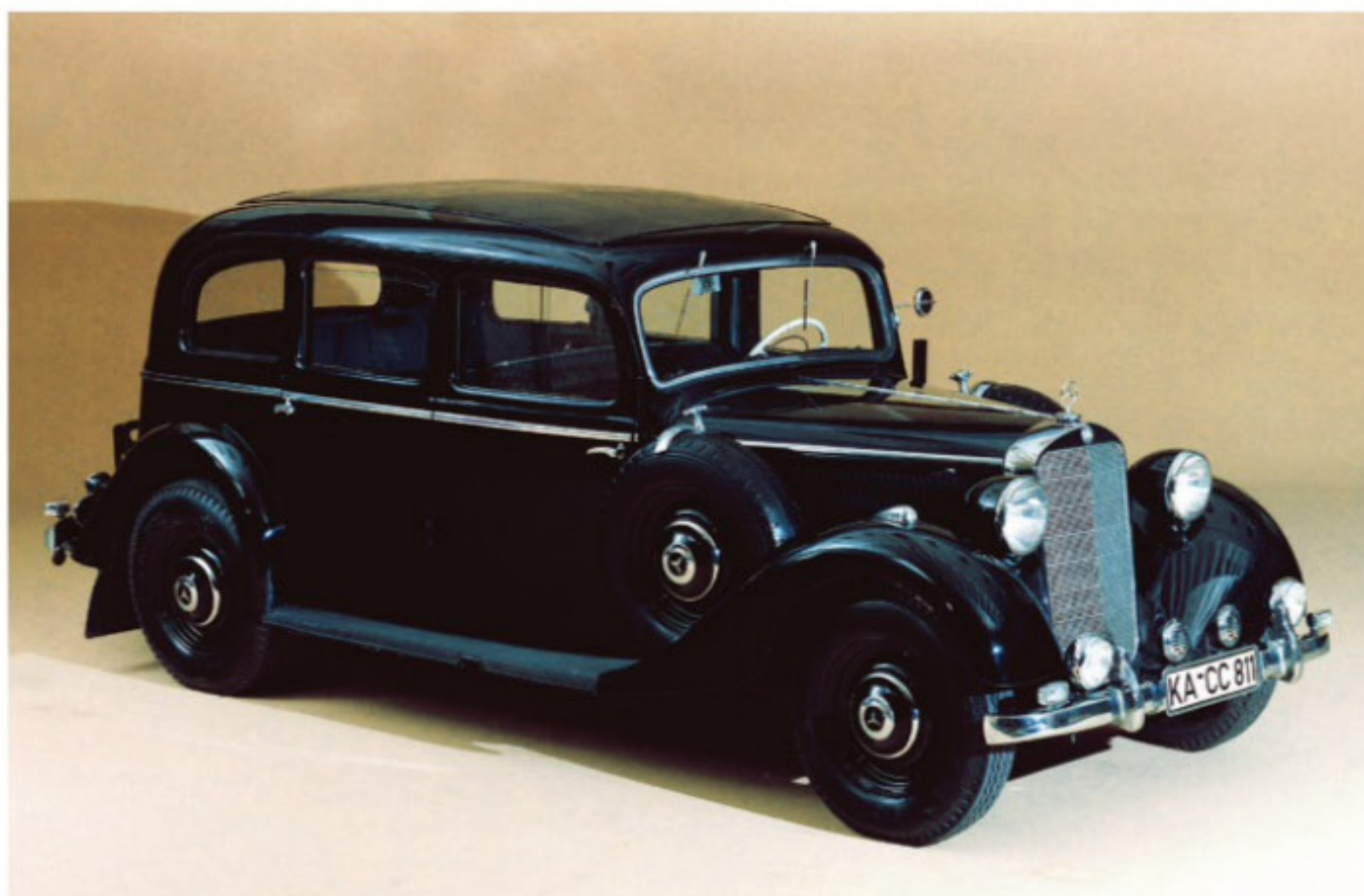
Burning *bright*

AS MERCEDES-BENZ ROLLS OUT ITS NEXT GENERATION OF ECO CARS, INCLUDING THE NEW C350E PLUG-IN HYBRID, WE TAKE A LOOK BACK AT STARS THAT REDEFINED THE PRACTICE OF SAVING FUEL

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES DAIMLER AG/IAN KUAH

MERCEDES-BENZ CARS HAVE ALWAYS been aimed at affluent customers, and have also long been the industry standard for luxury cars. But the Stuttgart firm also has a reputation for tirelessly pursuing an engineering aspect at the opposite end of the scale – fuel economy. As early as 1936, Mercedes introduced the first diesel passenger car (see right), with impressive fuel consumption and engine durability for the day, and refined the concept soon after World War Two ended.

Since then it has pushed the boundaries of fuel saving, always aware that if the world's most prestigious nameplate has a long term future it must meet ever more stringent environmental demands. Indeed its cars do not simply conform with legislation, but help set the green agenda for the motor industry as a whole; witness the latest S-Class limousine, which achieves 100mpg. Here, we look at 10 key economy trendsetters across several decades.



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
OM138 2,545cc 4-cyl

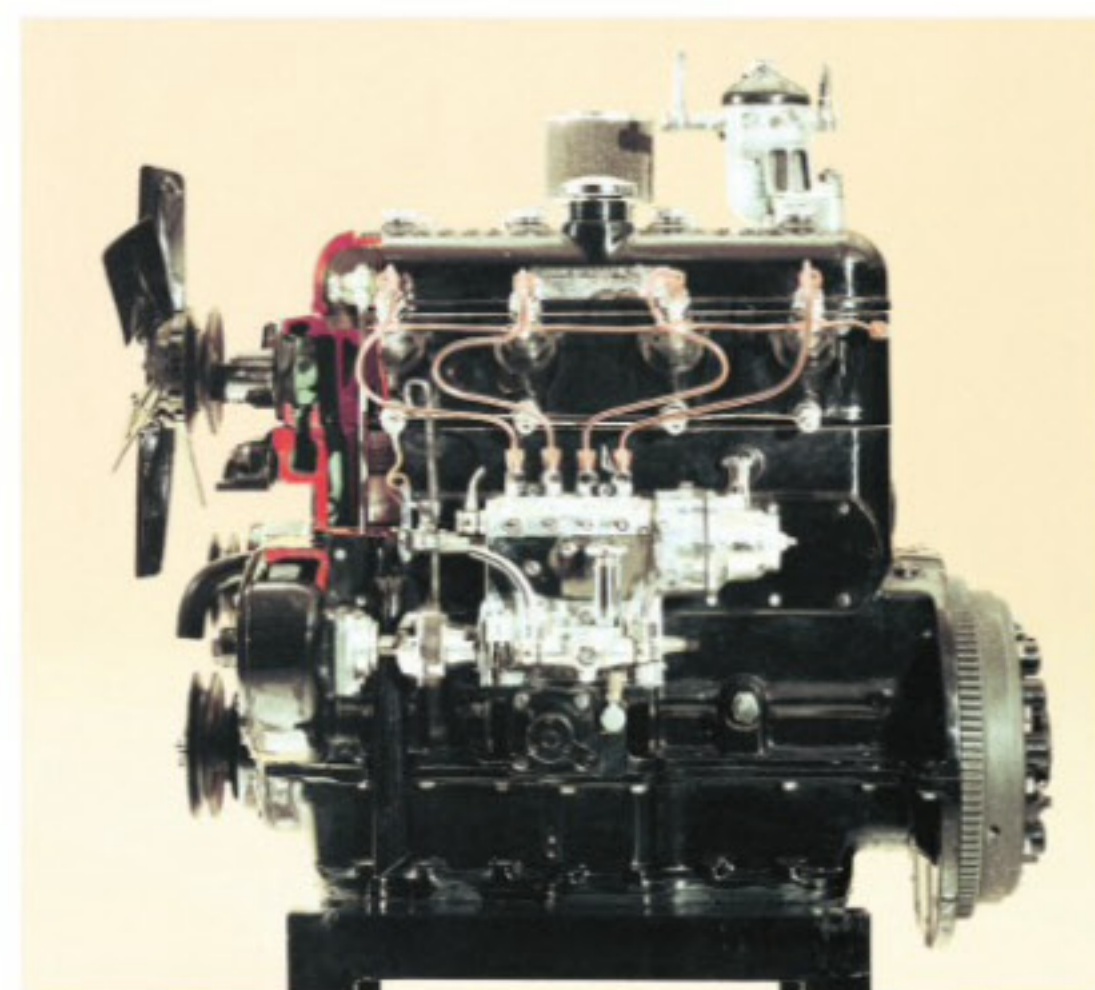
POWER/TORQUE
44bhp/na

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
56-58mph/25.7mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1936-1940

SIGNIFICANCE

The world's first diesel passenger car, which created the default taxi template across Europe and beyond



W138 260D (1936)

The diesel car, as we know it, was born in 1936 when Mercedes-Benz unveiled the 260D at that year's Berlin motor show. It was offered in different body styles, including even a soft backed landaulet and a cabriolet.

Mercedes originally planned to fit a six-cylinder, 3.8-litre engine producing around 80bhp, but after tests showed this to vibrate excessively, two cylinders were chopped off and the resultant indirect injection, 2.6-litre four gave 44bhp. The 260D returned 25.7mpg, which might not seem impressive today, but it was significantly more economical than the equivalent petrol model, the 230, and the OM138 engine gained a reputation for durability. Initially, it was bought almost exclusively in six seater form by taxi drivers, defining the role of diesel cars the world over for decades to come.

After just one year on sale, the 260D was facelifted – the fuel tank repositioned from the engine compartment to the vehicle's rear and the grille and headlamps redesigned. And in 1937, electric glow plugs were installed to help start the engine from cold. Production ceased in 1940 with 1,971 built, as World War Two took hold of Europe.

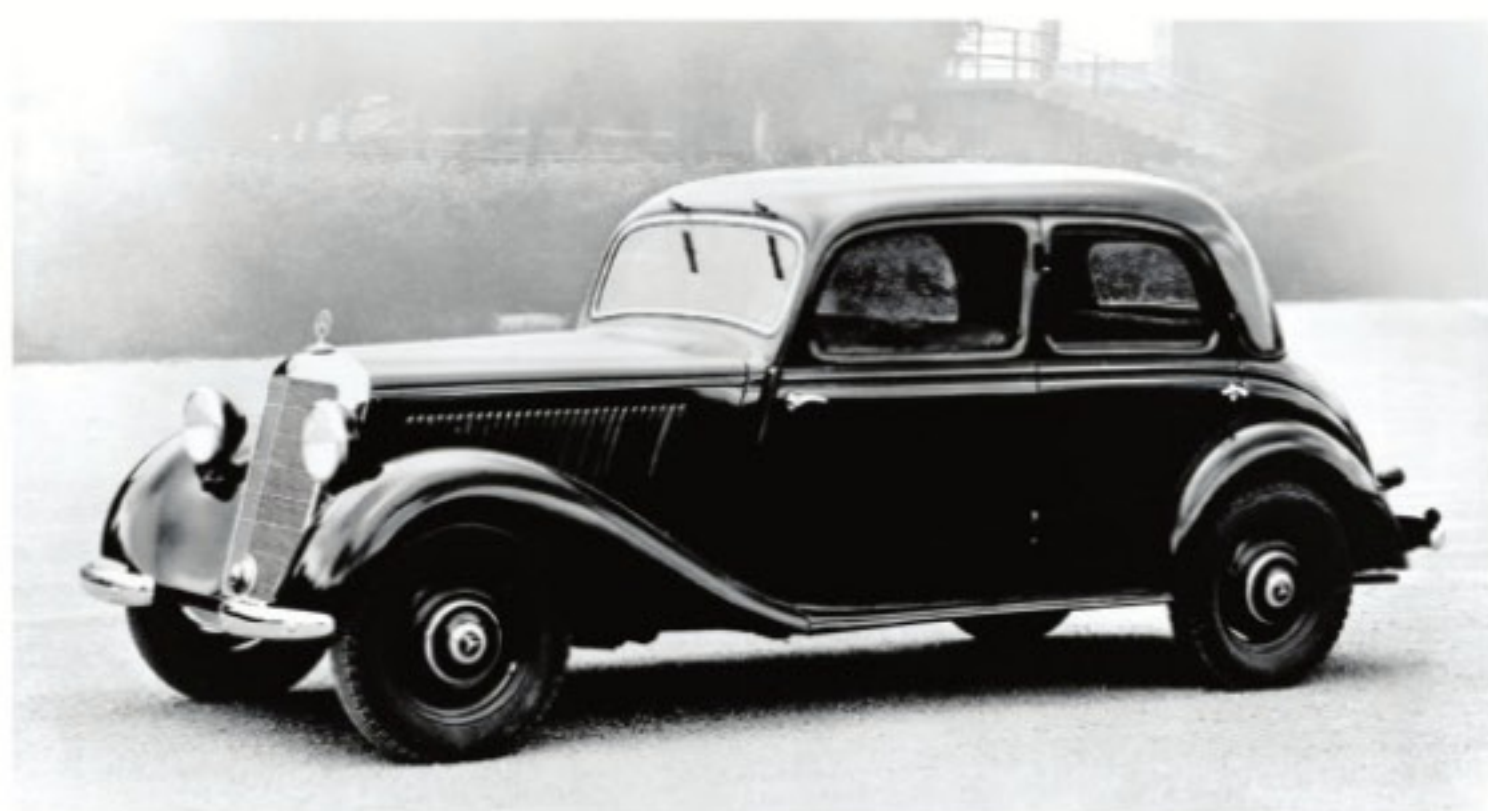
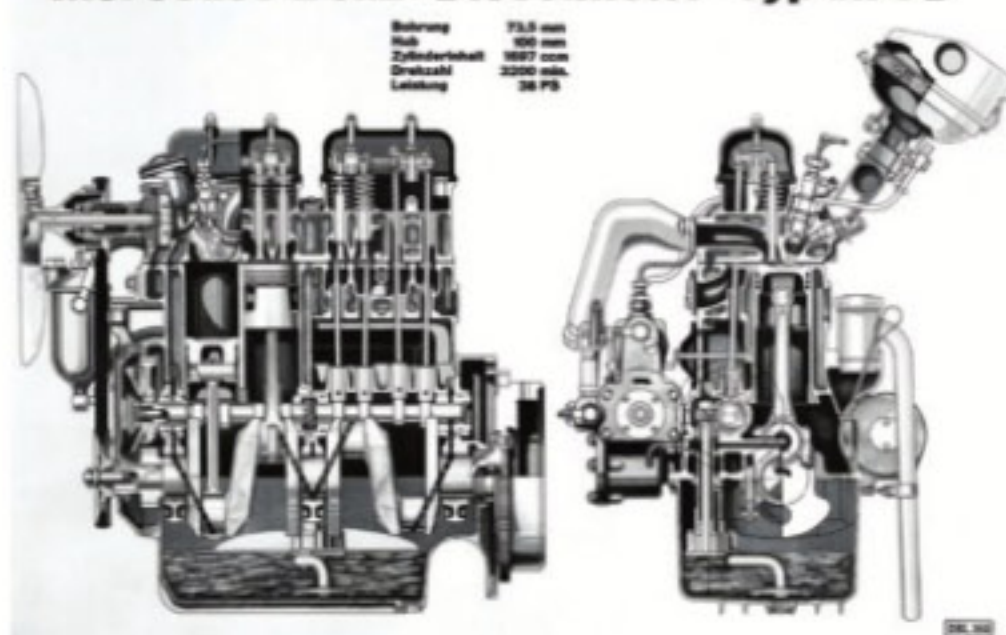
W136 170D (1949)

When Mercedes-Benz resumed production after World War Two, it revived the pre-war 170V saloon, using a 1.7-litre, four-cylinder engine. But from an early stage the car maker, whose factories mostly lay in ruin, had planned a diesel version. The 170D duly appeared in 1949, using the same engine but with a new cylinder head. It produced the same 38bhp, but gave 46.3mpg as opposed to 29mpg.

A further attraction for customers was that in those early post-war years, petrol was not only in short supply in Germany, but often of poor quality, whereas diesel was more freely available. And as with its 260D predecessor, the 170D's engine proved remarkably durable.

In 1950, the 170D evolved into the 170Da, gaining 100cc extra engine capacity and a little more horsepower, as well as better brakes and improved seats, while the boot was now accessible from the outside. For the last year of production, in 1952, it became the 170Db and received a larger windscreen, one-piece bumpers, while the bonnet louvres were now positioned horizontally instead of diagonally. From now on, private buyers saw diesels in a new light.

Mercedes-Benz- Dieselmotor Typ „170D“



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
OM636 1,697cc 4-cyl

POWER/TORQUE
38bhp/71lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
62mph/46.3mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1949-1950

SIGNIFICANCE

A volume produced model that made diesel powered cars relevant to the mass market



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
OM617 3,005cc 5-cyl

POWER/TORQUE
109bhp/168lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
103mph/26.7mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1978-1980

SIGNIFICANCE

Massaged Mercedes' US fuel consumption average - but also advanced the luxury diesel car, and its acceptance

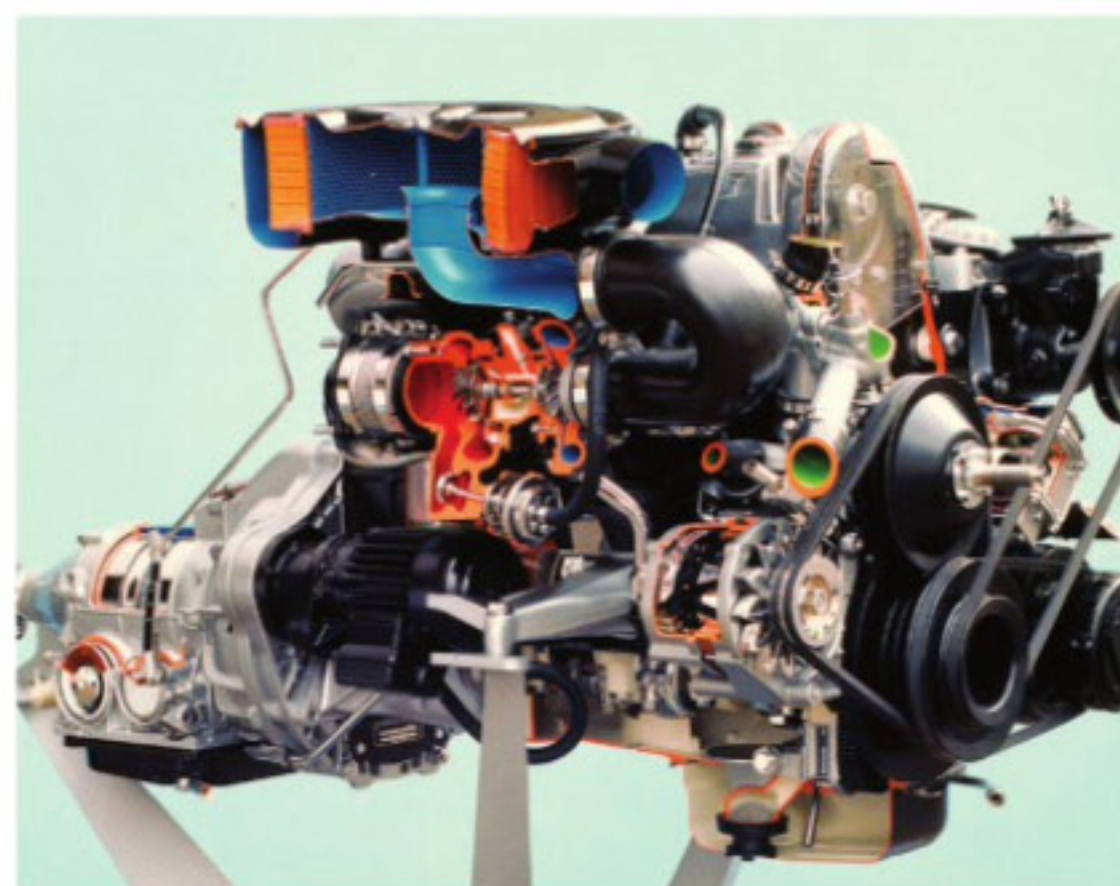
W116 300SD (1978)

Why would a car manufacturer launch an expensive diesel powered car in a conservative market where the only oil burning vehicles were large commercial trucks? Mercedes' motivation for introducing a diesel version of the 116-series S-Class to North America in 1978 was clear and simple - to improve the average fuel consumption across its range, and hence avoid, or at least reduce heavy fines levied under President Jimmy Carter's Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) initiative.

But perhaps what was more amazing was that Americans bought this three-litre diesel - available only in the US and Canada, despite the European diesel market being of a significant size by then - in their droves, over 28,600 in its two-year production run.

North America only, 123-series diesels boosted this figure by thousands, and turbo variants by more still.

The 300SD's naturally aspirated, five-cylinder engine produced 109bhp, rising to



119bhp for the second year, and economy was quoted at 26.7mpg, an 18 per cent improvement over the nearest petrol equivalent, the 280SE, and impressive for a big car in the late 1970s. Rarely seen in Europe, it now has a cult following in the US.

R107 280SL (1974)

The achievement of an 'economy car' is always relative to others in the line up, so given that the existing, entry level SL ran with a 3.5-litre V8, a 2.8-litre, six-cylinder engine would look quite tree hugging. Or so Mercedes-Benz hoped when it introduced a third R107, the 280SL, in 1974 in reaction to the so-called energy crisis of the previous year, which had resulted in fuel prices rocketing.

Installing the twin-cam, 2.8-litre, M110 engine in the elegant roadster (and also in the SLC coupe) did little for fuel

economy, the smaller unit having to work harder and giving a solitary one extra mile per gallon, according to factory data. However, that wasn't the whole story, because in those years when big engined cars were regarded by many as anti social, Mercedes buyers could purchase this model and claim at least some environmental awareness.

What Mercedes-Benz did in practice was create a different kind of R107, which many liked immensely. It felt more lively than the V8s, thanks to its more revvy and responsive engine, and also the four- rather than three-speed automatic gearbox.



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
M110 2,746cc 6-cyl

POWER/TORQUE
182bhp/176lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
121mph/22.6mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1974-1985

SIGNIFICANCE

Improved the luxury roadster's eco image - if not, significantly, its fuel economy





W201 190D (1983)

When introducing a key new diesel, Mercedes typically likes to bring something new to the party. In the case of the first W201 oil burner, the 190D launched in autumn 1983, it was the all new, two-litre, four-cylinder OM601 motor which, along with the gearbox, was 'encapsulated', halving noise levels.

In an era of unrefined diesels, the 190D impressed with its smoothness, though with just

71bhp available, its performance was leisurely, 0-62mph taking over 18 seconds.

The performance deficit was partially addressed with the introduction of the five-cylinder 190D 2.5 two years later, but the basic 190D hit the spot with buyers, with 452,800 sold in a near 10-year production run, three times that of the 2.5. It was a beautifully well built, economical car with a star badge on its bonnet, and the fact that it would always be a miserable failure in the traffic lights grand prix was of absolutely no concern to anyone who bought one.



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
OM601 1,997cc 4cyl

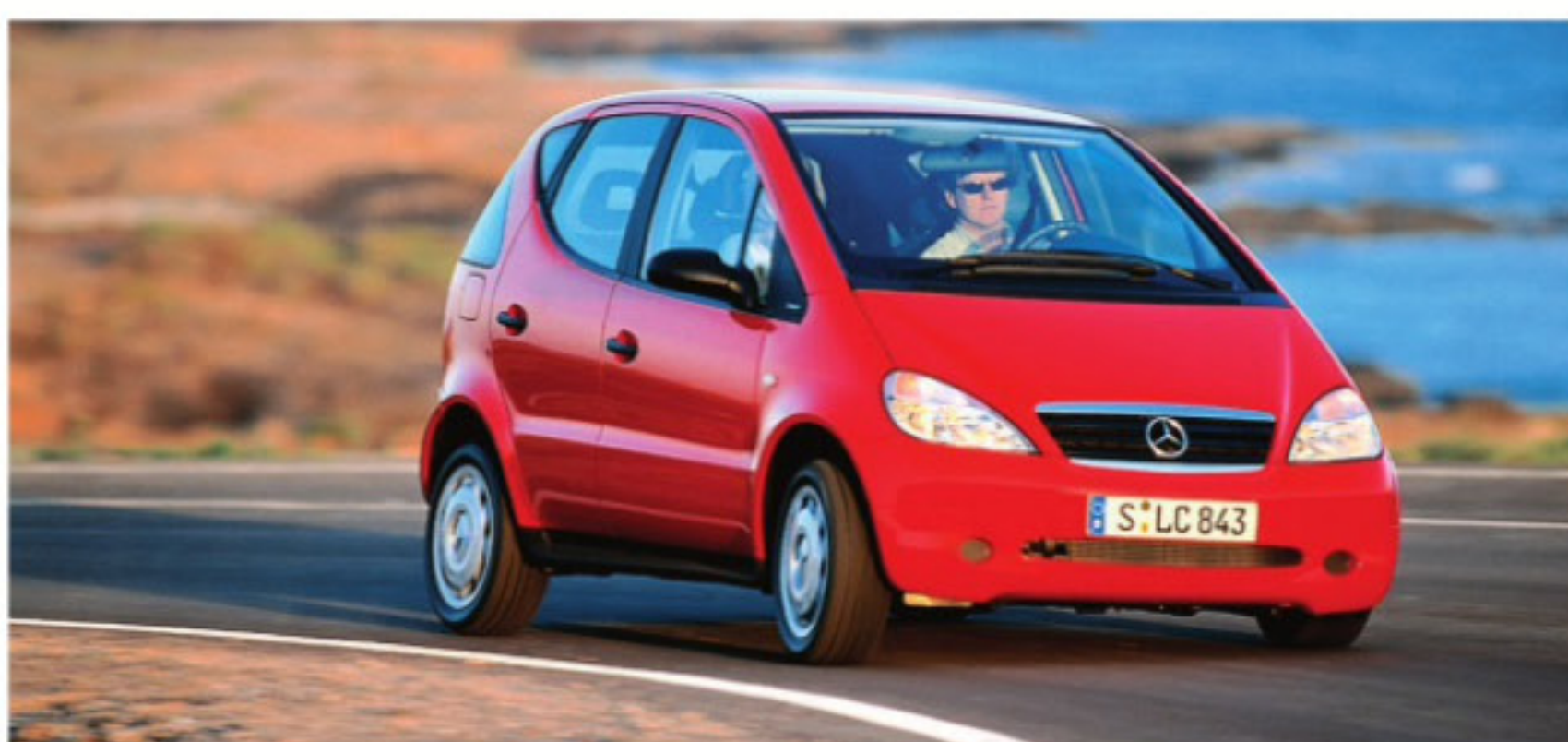
POWER/TORQUE
71bhp/91lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
100mph/37.7mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1983-1993

SIGNIFICANCE

An early move to bring greater refinement to diesel engines, which three decades ago were mostly rough and uncomfortably noisy



W168 A140 (1997)

Currently, there over 20 different model series in the Mercedes-Benz line up. Two decades ago, there were far fewer than that - and no small cars. Stuttgart was known for medium and large models, so the original A-Class's unveiling in December 1996 was a bombshell. Many observers reasoned that a hatchback to compete with the VW Golf would ruin the company's reputation - and were almost proved right when, thanks to the infamous 'elk test' in Sweden, the A-Class's cornering stability was called into question.

A full and rapid recall ensued, and an innovative, economical car this certainly was, its 'sandwich' construction - the lower compartment set to house an electric version's battery packs - and tall body providing an extraordinary amount of space within an overall length/wheelbase shorter than a Ford Ka's. The more economical A170 CDI was available, but the entry level A140 was a 40mpg Mercedes for under £15,000 which, if hardly cheap by supermini standards, was £6,000 less than the cheapest C-Class, and just as roomy inside. Initial build quality was a touch disappointing and maybe it did dilute the Benz aura, but can 1.1m customers be wrong?



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
M166 1,397cc 4-cyl

POWER/TORQUE
81bhp/96lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
106mph/39.8mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1997-2004

SIGNIFICANCE

Took Mercedes into an entirely new market sector and greatly increased its output

JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
M271 1,597cc 4-cyl supercharged

POWER/TORQUE
154bhp/170lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
143mph/44.8mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
2008-2010

SIGNIFICANCE

Its reduced CO2 emissions output lowered road tax and usefully sharpened the C-Class's appeal as a company car

W204 C180 Kompressor BlueEfficiency (2008)

The phrase 'economy car' evokes memories of 1970s and 80s when, to impress at the pumps, manufacturers would strip back an existing model, raise the gearing and stick an 'E' on the bootlid. Now, such cars tend to be conceived on a more ambitious scale, usually embracing hybrid or other systems, but as recently as 2008 Mercedes-Benz did it the old fashioned way.

The C180 Kompressor BlueEfficiency dropped from the usual 1.8-litre capacity to 1.6 (though retained the supercharger), thus making do with 154bhp. It also adopted 195/60 low rolling resistance tyres, smaller

door mirrors to cut aero drag, and an energy saving power steering pump that only operated when required.

In manual form, fuel consumption improved 11 per cent over the previous C180 K to

44.8mpg on the NEDC combined test. But the real advantage was the 19 per cent reduced CO2 emissions, down to 149g/km, which at the time knocked back the benefit in kind tax on company car drivers from the 21 per cent tax band to the 17 per cent band, saving up £31 tax per month. Annual road tax was reduced by £50, too.



R172 SLK250 CDI BlueEfficiency (2012)

It involved persistence on the part of car manufacturers to get diesel engines accepted in mainstream cars - and it will take more time yet to overcome resistance among the sports car fraternity. However, Mercedes bit the bullet three years ago when it dropped the most powerful, 201bhp version of its 2.1-litre biturbo diesel into the SLK roadster, thus creating its first post-war, road going diesel sports car.

There was a certain irony here in that in the early years of the SLK, the highest selling model - the SLK230 Kompressor - used a supercharged engine that was barely more refined than any Mercedes diesel of the time.

You might not like the SLK250 CDI's exhaust note, or the low, 4,200rpm power peak, but you can't argue with the figures. It returns 56.5mpg on the combined test, while its 369lb ft torque slaughters even the 3.5-litre petrol SLK350 on pulling power, and is not that far short of the 5.5-litre SLK55 AMG V8's.

And if challenged by the eco police, reveal that it emits just 132g/km, a figure more typical of a 1.4-litre hatchback. You'll get used to this Mercedes - probably quite quickly.



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE/POWER
OM651 2,143cc 4-cyl
biturbo

POWER/TORQUE
201bhp/369lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
151mph/56.5mpg

YEARS PRODUCED 2012-on

SIGNIFICANCE

Showed that the only remaining barrier to the success of a diesel sport car is prejudice



JUST THE FACTS

ENGINE
M276 2,996cc V6
biturbo +
electric motor

POWER/TORQUE
328bhp+114bhp/
479lb ft

MAX SPEED/ECONOMY
155mph/100.9mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
2014-on

SIGNIFICANCE

Amazing economy ensures Mercedes' flagship luxury car remains relevant in an energy conscious 21st century

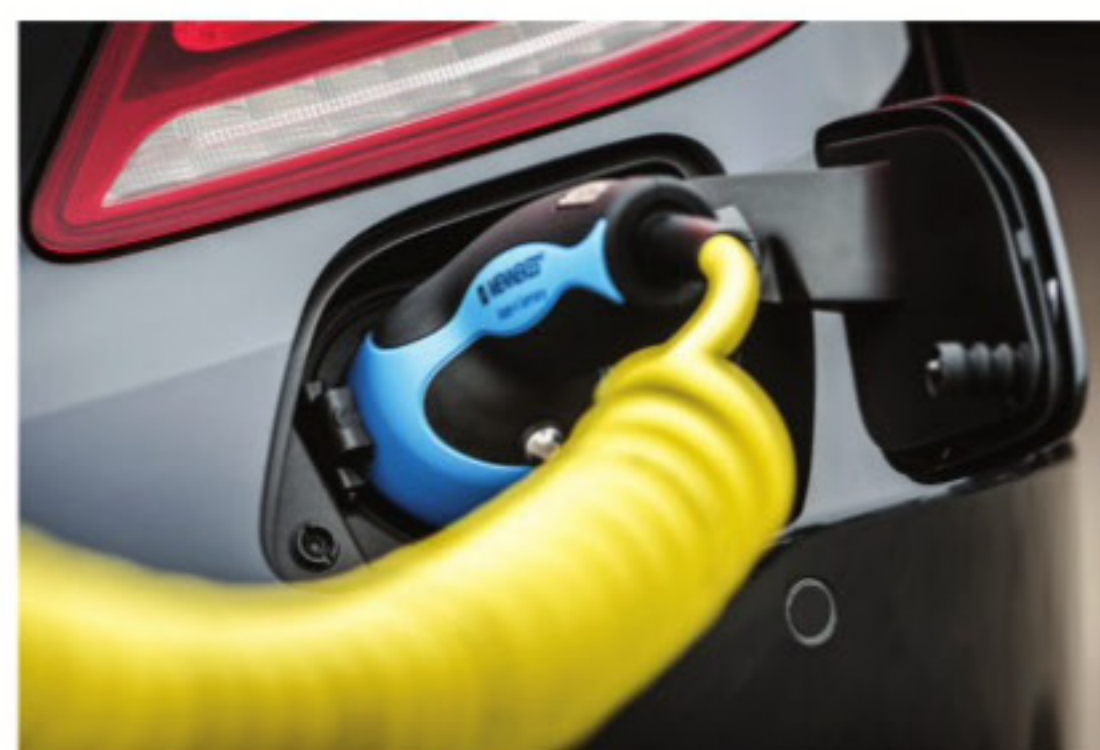
V222 S500 Plug-in Hybrid (2014)

For decades, the Mercedes-Benz S-Class stood out as a beacon of consumption, a profligate enemy of the environment. Rather inconveniently for its detractors, it can now be purchased in a form that can top 100mpg and emits so little CO2 (65g/km), it is exempt from London's Congestion Charge.

While the previously introduced S300 Bluetech Hybrid and S400 Hybrid models run on a combination of petrol and electric power, the S500 Plug-In Hybrid has, as its name suggests, a battery chargeable from an external source and can thus run for 20 miles solely on electric power. But no compromises in performance are required,

the three-litre V6 biturbo engine (328bhp) and electric motor (114bhp) combining to give truly outstanding thrust.

With a list price of £87,965, you still have



to be extremely well heeled to buy the long-wheelbase saloon, complete with AMG exterior trimmings and luxury interior appointments, but you don't have to pay Vehicle Excise Duty due to the CO2 rating, and the company car tax rate is just five per cent. A battery charge takes two hours, which is a far cry from the eight hours of plug-in cars of just a few years ago.



W246 B-Class Electric Drive (2015)

The enemy of the electric car has been limited range, highlighted by the ever extending distances that combustion engined - and of course hybrid - cars cover on one tank. The forthcoming Mercedes-Benz B-Class Electric Drive, expected in the UK in the first quarter of 2015, does 124 miles between

charges. A battery charge takes three hours, and loads the electric only power system with a healthy 178bhp/251lb ft torque, making the medium sized hatchback a lively accelerator when the current is there, capable of 0-62mph in just under eight seconds. The top speed is electronically limited to 100mph.

Its unveiling coinciding with the B-Class's facelift, the Electric Drive was designed to overcome the space loss that hybrid engines and large batteries often necessitate, the lithium-ion battery stowed under the cabin floor, thus the sandwich idea of the original A-Class wasn't a complete cul-de-sac. Clever tech includes the recuperative braking system. Will it be a practical proposition? Priced at £26,950 (including the £5,000 government grant), at least it won't cost more than a mid range petrol B-Class.



JUST THE FACTS

DRIVE SYSTEM
Electric motor +
lithium-ion battery

POWER/TORQUE
178bhp/251lb ft

MAX SPEED/RANGE
100mph/124 miles

YEARS PRODUCED 2015-on

SIGNIFICANCE

Takes Mercedes' electric programme into the mainstream marketplace, in a well priced and handsome, compact package



△ Still going strong after almost 200K.

▷ The M111 unit was also given a supercharger.

▽ Andrew has found a very solid W202.



△ Five-speed manual for this 1.8-litre petrol.

◁ A hint of Gullwing in the fabric's pattern.



BLACK MAGIC

Following in his father's footsteps, one driver new to the road soon bought into the Mercedes-Benz way with this reliable and (almost) rust free W202 C180 Sport

WORDS **ERIC RICHARDSON** IMAGES **MARK RICHARDSON**

“THE ONLY trouble I’ve had with the car was getting used to driving it,” laughs Andrew Spencer, referring to his C180 Sport. “Before I bought it, I was aware of Mercedes’ reputation for its manual gearboxes, and I did struggle with that at first – I felt like I couldn’t find the biting point,” he explains. “I’ve only ever driven manual cars in the past, so it should have been easy, but for some reason I struggled at first.”

“I also found it difficult to get used to the W202’s parking brake [a fourth pedal to the left of the clutch]. Going from the usual central handbrake, which comes as second nature, you have to think again with this set up – and don’t even get me started on trying to master a hill start! I’m sure it all works great with an automatic gearbox, but with a manual transmission it is an odd set up.”

NEW TO THE FOLD

Ergonomic issues aside, Andrew’s time with this W202, which he bought in May 2007, has been an enjoyable experience. “I chose the car for its reliability,” he explains, this C-Class his first three-pointed star. “I previously owned two Volkswagens, one being a Corrado

that gave me terrible problems. My father had owned a W124 E-Class for about 12 years and never had a spot of bother with it, so when I saw this car, which appealed to me being the Sport edition, I decided to buy it.”

With £3,000 handed over, Andrew took ownership of the car with a little shy of 80,000 miles on the clock, and as you can see is just about to trip over the 197,000 miles mark, which is pretty impressive. “Hand on heart, I can say that during that time I’ve had no problems with it at all. It is serviced twice a year with good products, such as Castrol GTX engine oil, and it gets Slick 50

preservation products put into the engine, too. I also make sure that anything that needs doing on the car is done straight away, so over the years I’ve replaced a couple of track rod ends, tyres, brakes and that’s it. I’ve also just put a bottle of Cataclean into the car. It’s a relatively new product from the States and it really works. It goes beyond cleaning the fuel injectors and has made a massive difference to the C-Class’s economy and performance.”

“I haven’t found that level of quality in any other car that I’ve considered buying”

Clearly Andrew is on top of the C180’s mechanicals, but what of the W202’s weak spot? “I’ve had the front wings tended to once due to corrosion, but it is just starting to come back again. So I must decide whether to replace the front wings with factory parts, or just see how things progress. It’s not broken the paintwork yet, but you can see it’s starting to bubble underneath. Apart from that though, there is just a tiny patch on the bonnet and a smaller patch of corrosion around the boot lock,

but thankfully there’s no horrific corrosion like on other 202s I’ve seen in the past, where the rear arches have rotted away and the metal around the rear window has gone. I’ve been really lucky, I think.”

CONFIDENCE INSPIRING

So, with almost 120,000 miles under his belt in this C180, is Andrew going to move on any time soon? “I am going to keep this car for the foreseeable future,” he replies. “When I bought it, I was just 19 and it cost me £1,600 a year to insure, but so did every other car! Now insurance is a little

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz C180 (W202)

ENGINE M111 1,799cc 4-cyl

POWER 120bhp@5,500rpm

TORQUE 125lb ft@3,700-4,500rpm

TRANSMISSION 5-speed manual, RWD

WEIGHT 1,350kg

0-62MPH 12.0sec

TOP SPEED 120mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 26.2mpg

YEARS PRODUCED 1993-2000

Figures for an August 1996 car as pictured – cars built before August 1996 offered peak torque from 4,200rpm and were slightly less economical; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined

over £300 per year, and I’m quite happy with that. I have had a look at other cars, but I can’t find anything that I would be as happy with as this C-Class. It’s small things like the quality of the interior, including the sunroof that just slides back so effortlessly and with no noise. I haven’t found that level of quality in any other car that I’ve considered buying, and because I’ve had the C180 for such a long time now, and I know what I’ve done to it, I have total trust in the car,” he states proudly.

“My father’s family lives in northern Germany and I would not hesitate to jump in and drive to see them today without even checking the oil or the water. I think I would find it hard to trust something else quite as much.”

▽ The 17-inch AMG alloys fill the arches well.



DESIGNS THAT DELIVER

Mercedes' compact coupe, the CLA, is proving a big hit with used car buyers, but the sleek four-door is not the only smaller star proving a swift sell

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES DAIMLER AG/TERRY OBORNE



“Buyers demanding a premium product with a degree of exclusivity may shift increasingly to Mercedes”

THE YEAR 2015 has well and truly arrived, with both trade and retail buyers awoken from their winter slumber and actively looking for cars once again. And the UK's growing consumer feel-good factor is driving premium brand sales a little better than those of the volume players in the market – which is helping Mercedes-Benz.

But yesterday's premium can eventually become today's volume product, as rival Audi is already starting to discover. Aiming to increase its market share by a further 1.5 per cent in 2015 is a laudable aim, but would see the Ingolstadt car maker take up to eight per cent of UK sales –

putting it within spitting distance of parent company Volkswagen's own market share. And this could prove a dangerous strategy, as buyers demanding a premium product with at least a degree of exclusivity may shift increasingly to Mercedes. Watch this space.

SECOND HAND STARS

In terms of newer Mercedes models, the CLA is much in demand on the used market, as Rupert Pontin, Head of Valuations at market expert Glass's, explains. “Last month's fastest selling cars list saw the CLA become the top Mercedes model, taking an average of just 40 days to sell.” The diesels in particular are seen as highly desirable in the UK.

With spring now upon us, it's perhaps no surprise that the SLK is the second fastest selling used Mercedes, on average taking 41 days to find a new home. “This demonstrates just how good this convertible is,” Rupert emphasises.

“Whilst seasonality for soft tops has diminished in recent years, this model offers great value for money and is pleasing on the eye.” For a more cost effective convertible solution, however, we would recommend looking for a CLK (see below) – there are plenty around at sensible prices.

If you want a new Mercedes, then dealerships were offering the A-Class from £269 per month with three years free servicing, as long as you buy the car on

personal Mercedes finance at 6.3 per cent APR. At the time of writing, franchised dealers were also offering a £750 deposit contribution on Approved Used A-Classes, B-Classes, C-Classes and E-Classes until April 30, with 9.9 per cent APR finance.

Elsewhere, online discount broker 4cars.co.uk was advertising some impressive discounts on the facelifted B-Class, such as £1,904 off the list price of a B180 CDI AMG Line, or £2,040 off the list price of a B180 CDI Sport Premium auto. Meanwhile, Morgan Highfield & Land (prestige-car-leasing.co.uk) was offering a B180 CDI Sport automatic on personal contract hire from just £285 per month.

Our best used buy this month...

CLK350 Cabriolet (2005-2009)

Although demand for SLKs is increasing, a CLK offers a lot more metal for your money. Supply is plentiful right now, and if your annual mileage is going to be limited, then don't be scared to go for a larger engined version. Fuel prices are low and look set to remain so for some considerable time, so a growling V6 model – like the 268bhp

CLK350 Sport – seems a much more sensible option than it did a year ago. Expect to pay around £7,500 for a cherished, 2006, 70,000-mile example.

► Fancy a Mercedes-Benz droptop with even more power than this CLK cabriolet? Then check out our top three V8 convertibles for under £20,000 on page 84!



FORECOURT FIND

215-series
CL55 AMG

Elegant, exclusive and packing effortless performance, mint examples of the CL55 AMG are something of a rarity these days, and carry the possibility of future investment potential. But the trick is to find a truly pampered, low mile car at a sensible price. And we have! Check out this 47,000-mile, Brilliant Silver example built in 2002 and up for £11,995. It comes with plenty of equipment including 19-inch AMG alloys, Comand satellite navigation, and a Harmon Kardon stereo upgrade.

Advertised for sale by Nottinghamshire based Parkway Specialist Cars, the requisite full Mercedes-Benz main dealer service history shows services at 7,319, 16,710, 28,788, 33,340, 38,179 and 45,835 miles. With a 355bhp, naturally aspirated, 5.5-litre V8 to play with, this well kept CL55 won't hang round for long, and not just because it will hit 62mph in six seconds!

► Dealer information **Parkway Specialist Cars**
Tel 01623 622627
Web www.parkwayspecialistcars.co.uk



△ Kompressor badges but this is an earlier CL55 with a 355bhp V8.

▷ Leather upholstery, wood trim and Comand with sat nav included.

▽ Discreet AMG styling and not so discreet AMG exhaust pipes.



TOP TIPS

INSPECTING
TYRES

Thinking of buying a new car? Make sure you check its tyres, as these can reveal more about the car's life than you might think

⌚ As tyres are expensive to replace, you should always start by examining the tread wear indicators. Sitting in the treads, once they are flush with the tread tops then it's time for a new tyre.

⌚ Have all the tyres worn evenly from one sidewall to the other? If they haven't, the car could have suspension problems, or - less worryingly - the wheels need realigning.

⌚ Check the tyre pressures, as incorrect pressures are a subtle sign that the owner doesn't regularly check them, which in turn can lead to increased risk of a puncture. If the tyre pressures are incorrect, what else might the seller not check?

⌚ Thrashed motors are more likely to have badly worn sidewalls, whilst any near bald flat spots suggest the car's been parked up for a long time. Scuffs, cuts or signs of perished rubber should set alarm bells ringing.

⌚ Tyres should always be changed in pairs, and ideally all four tyres should be of the same make and tread pattern. One odd tyre, or four that don't match, suggests the car's been run on a budget. What else has the seller skimmed on?

⌚ Lastly, don't forget to have a good look at the condition of the tyre on the spare wheel. Has it ever been used? If not, the rubber could still be perished after 10 years or so.



AUCTION SPOTLIGHT

A round up of recent prices paid for average condition Mercedes in auctions across the UK

● **C200 Kompressor Avantgarde**
1.8L, petrol, auto, 2004/04 plate,
102,000 miles, **£1,950**

● **SLK320**
3.2L, petrol, auto, 2000/W plate,
82,000 miles, **£3,000**

● **CLK500 Coupe Avantgarde**
5.0L, petrol, auto, 2002/02 plate,
83,000 miles, **£3,500**

● **CLK270 CDI Coupe Avantgarde**
2.7L, diesel, auto, 2003/03 plate,
68,000 miles, **£3,850**

● **A150 Avantgarde SE**
1.5L, petrol, manual, 2008/58 plate,
49,000 miles, **£4,300**

● **SLK200 Kompressor**
1.8L, petrol, auto, 2004/54 plate,
84,000 miles, **£7,100**

● **C320 CDI Sport**
3.0L, diesel, auto, 2008/08 plate,
109,000 miles, **£8,300**

● **E320 CDI Avantgarde**
3.0L, diesel, auto, 2008/57 plate,
37,000 miles, **£8,550**

● **B200 CDI Sport**
2.0L, diesel, auto CVT, 2009/09
plate, 39,000 miles, **£9,100**

● **C200 CDI BlueEfficiency**
Edition 125 2.1L, diesel, manual,
2011/61 plate, 27,000 miles, **£14,250**

● **E350 CDI BE Coupe Sport**
3.0L, diesel, auto, 2010/60 plate,
68,000 miles, **£14,767**

● **SL55 AMG**
5.4L, petrol, auto, 2003/03 plate,
27,000 miles, **£16,500**

● **SLK200 BlueEfficiency AMG**
Sport 1.8L, petrol, auto, 2012/62
plate, 17,000 miles, **£20,200**

● **E220 CDI BE Cabriolet Sport**
2.1L, diesel, auto, 2012/62 plate,
28,000 miles, **£20,875**

● **CLS350 CDI BE Coupe AMG**
Sport 3.0L, diesel, auto, 2012/62
plate, 15,000 miles, **£26,050**

AND REMEMBER...

Always arrive early at car auctions, pick up the sales catalogue and examine the vehicles in the line up before the bidding starts. Should your bid be successful, you will have to pay a buyer's fee in addition to the hammer price, and you must pay a deposit of around £500 or 20 per cent of the vehicle's value (whichever is greater) immediately - in cash, or by Maestro or Visa Debit card. The balance of the purchase price and the buyer's fee can be paid by banker's draft, cash, cheque, telegraphic transfer, credit or debit card.

Find your nearest auction house at www.british-car-auctions.co.uk



TOP 3 V8 CONVERTIBLES

When the weather allows, cruising around in an open top Mercedes-Benz is a life pleasure not to be missed. And if there's a purring V8 ready to pounce at a moment's notice, then so much the better. Fuel cost hikes in recent years have put many buyers off cars like these

(although prices at fuel stations have dropped in recent months), but that just makes these cars even better value for money. In this edition of Mercedes Buyer, we have highlighted three of the current best choices, suitable for budgets under £20,000.



CLK500 (2003-2005)

Originally available in Elegance, Avantgarde and Sport guise, the pre facelift, A209 CLK cabriolet is sharply dressed and composed to drive. Its 302bhp, 4,966cc V8 helps the car breach 62mph in just 6.2 seconds – amazing performance considering values of between £4,000 and £9,000. The five-speed auto became a seven speeder from 2004 and most examples boast satellite navigation, leather trim and AMG alloys. Make sure it comes with a complete service history.



SL500 (2002-2006)

Sleek and purposeful, and with effortless performance, the pre facelift R230 SL500 feels like a coupe with a folding metal roof. On sale in the UK between 2002 and 2006, the 302bhp SL500 gained the 7G-Tronic automatic in 2003 and raced to 62mph in 6.2 seconds. A sumptuous spec includes climate control, cruise control, electric heated leather seats and Comand satellite navigation. There are loads for sale at the moment for between £7,000 and £16,000.



SLK55 AMG (2004-2008)

For refinement and style, few convertibles come close to an early R171 SLK55 AMG. Add thundering performance, sharp handling and a seven-speed automatic, and you have the recipe for the perfect high performance droptop. The 355bhp SLK55 fires from 0-62mph in just 4.9 seconds and comes with 18-inch AMG alloys, an AMG bodykit, a quad AMG sports exhaust system, Comand and heated leather seats. A budget of between £15,000 and £19,000 should bring success.

PRODUCTS STRUT & STUFF

ULTRA RACING FRONT STRUT BRACE FOR SL350 ROADSTER (2002-2011)

Ultra Racing has released details of its stylish and effective strut brace for all R320 SL350 models. Ideal for owners looking to increase the torsional rigidity of their car, or make the chassis more efficient for fast road or track driving, it's priced at £134 including VAT. Formed using a unique 'one-piece' steel construction, the Ultra Racing bar is far more rigid and effective than many 'flexible' or three-piece designs, reducing unwanted flex and helping to maintain the correct suspension geometry. For more information check out www.potn.co.uk.



REVOLUTION MOTORSTORE'S NEW ONLINE SUSPENSION CATALOGUE



Revolution Motorstore has just launched a dedicated online suspension and chassis catalogue, featuring over 42,000 products alongside images, full specifications and pricing information. Customers can now find suitable chassis upgrades for their Mercedes-Benz by simply entering their vehicle, or through broader categories. You can even book your Mercedes in for fitting at Revolution's workshop in Tyne & Wear. The website address is www.revolution247.com.

KARCHER K4 CAR PRESSURE WASHER

Halfords has unveiled the latest addition to its range of Karcher pressure washers – the 'K4 Car' is available from all UK stores and packs specific car cleaning accessories to tackle even the dirtiest car, in a package deal that is available for £220. In response to customer feedback, the K4 Car pack comprises six accessories – a Rotary Car Wash Brush, a Vario Lance, a Dirtblaster, a Trigger Gun, a Foam Nozzle and a Car Shampoo – all specifically designed to target the debris picked up by vehicles. Find out more about Karcher's K4 Car kit by visiting halfords.com.





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A CUT ABOVE

Mercedes' flagship saloon of just two years ago can now be bought for a third of its original value – but what should you be looking out for?

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **TERRY OBORNE**

MERCEDES-BENZ has been building the S-Class for half a century (although the title was first applied to the 1972 116-series), and in that time it has been honed to perfection, possibly beyond, some might say.

The world's favourite luxury car – indeed the world's best car, by common consent – is now an unimpeachable combination of elegant styling, fantastic road manners, supreme comfort, amazing electronic technology, faultless build quality and even excellent economy and emissions,

particularly with the three-litre V6 diesel engine under the bonnet.

It's a car for the demanding wealthy, the very cheapest new model, the S350 Bluetec diesel nearly £67,000 and the range topping S65 AMG L almost three times that. However, in the modern car market the law of depreciation is no respecter of grand marques, hence if you wait long enough this Mercedes will be available for a price you can afford.

But not as long as you might think. The 221-series S-Class, unveiled in autumn 2005, has dropped to under £20,000,

downward pressure on values no doubt increased by the appearance of the 222-series model in summer 2013, and this price point for 2009-on facelifted cars, no less. But can a flagship Mercedes for less than the new price of the most basic A-Class really be as good an idea as it sounds?

DESIGN, ENGINEERING

In this guide, we'll concentrate on the facelifted cars, but first a recap on the 221-series S-Class. Launched in the UK in March 2006, it was offered with 3.5-litre V6 (S350), 5.5-litre V8 (S500) and

six-litre V12 (S600) petrol engines, the 6.2-litre V8 (S63 AMG) and six-litre V12 biturbo (S65 AMG) following later that year. But the power unit that defined the generation was the OM642 three-litre V6 turbodiesel with 232bhp/398lb ft torque, the S320 CDI with its punchy performance and mid 30s fuel economy accounting for nearly 90 per cent of sales here (interestingly though, the top seller worldwide was, due to the US and Chinese markets, the S500). The V6 and V8 cars were seven-speed, while the V12s used a five-speed gearbox, all

SPOTTED
FOR SALE
MERCEDES
RETAILER2011/61, black, black leather,
51,600 miles, 96,000 miles,
£29,689, Mercedes-Benz
Kingston

**The 221-series S-Class,
unveiled in autumn 2005, has
dropped to under £20,000**

models equipped with the Direct Select steering column selector.

Four years on, in September 2009, and with over a quarter of a million units delivered around the world, the mid term facelift was implemented. Exterior changes were slight, limited to a revised grille and new bumper including LED lights, while at the rear the lights were redesigned and the exhaust tailpipes integrated within the rear bumper.

A raft of new 'driver assistance' electronics were introduced, such as Adaptive High Beam Assist to maximise main beam without dazzling other drivers, and enhanced Night View Assist to detect pedestrians ahead of the car, plus Lane Keeping Assist. The Direct Steer system was tweaked, and Active Body Control enhanced with a crosswind stabilisation capability.

The S320 CDI was rebadged the S350 CDI BlueEfficiency. It retained the pre facelifted car's

performance, but in 2010 became the S350 Bluetec, output boosted to 254bhp/457lb ft. Likewise, the S350 carried on as before, but also sported the BlueEfficiency tag, and had 302bhp/273lb ft.

Downsizing was to be seen on the S500, also called BlueEfficiency, this model switching to a 4.7-litre V8 biturbo which, with 429bhp/516lb ft torque, not only produced a third more twisting force, but enjoyed CO2 emissions below 225g/km, a crucial road tax threshold in the UK.

In 2010, the S63 AMG also dropped cubic capacity, losing its M156 normally aspirated V8 in favour of a blown 5.5-litre V8, output up from 518bhp/465lb ft to 537bhp/590lb ft – or 563bhp/664lb ft if the optional AMG Performance Package was specified. The S65 was uprated from 604 to 621bhp, its massive torque of 737lb ft (1,000Nm) unchanged. In February 2013, Mercedes-Benz UK announced a

special edition of the diesel, the S350 Bluetec AMG Sport Edition, wearing AMG body styling and 20-inch alloy wheels, and boasting extra interior equipment.

WHAT TO PAY

One expects Mercedes-Benz Retailer prices to be higher than those on the general used car market – but even here, value looks terrific, with a good choice of three- and four-year old 221s between £25,000 and £30,000, mainly S350s and S350 Bluetecs. That is what happens when you could run a new S-Class on a personal lease contract for under £500 per month. The S350, with its reasonable economy and emissions, is no longer a lost cause, this reflected in values more or less equal to the 2009 to 2010 S350 CDI. An S500 with average miles is around £3,000 more.

Perusing the general used market reveals lower prices still, with some 2010 cars down to

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz S350 BlueEfficiency/L (W/V221)

ENGINE M272 3,498cc V6
POWER 302bhp@6,500rpm
TORQUE 273lb ft@3,500rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 1,910/1,975kg
0-62MPH 6.9/7.1sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 37.2/36.7mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 177-184/179-186g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2009-2013

Mercedes-Benz S500 BlueEfficiency L (V221)

ENGINE M278 4,663cc V8 biturbo
POWER 429bhp@5,250rpm
TORQUE 516lb ft@1,800-3,500rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 2,075kg
0-62MPH 5.0sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 30.1mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 219-224g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2010-2013

Mercedes-Benz S600 L (V221)

ENGINE M275 5,513cc V12 biturbo
POWER 510bhp@5,000rpm
TORQUE 612lb ft@1,800-3,500rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 2,210kg
0-62MPH 4.6sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 20.0mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 329-332g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2009-2013

Mercedes-Benz S350 Bluetec/L (W/V221)

ENGINE OM642 2,987cc V6 turbocharged
POWER 254bhp@3,600rpm
TORQUE 457lb ft@1,600-2,400rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 1,955/2,060kg
0-62MPH 7.1sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 45.6mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 164-168g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2010-2013

Figures are representative of facelifted S-Class range – the S500 used a 5.5-litre, naturally aspirated V8 with 383bhp/391lb ft from 2009 to 2010, and the S350 Bluetec was known as the S350 CDI BlueEfficiency from 2009 to 2010 and had 232bhp/398lb ft; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speeds electronically limited

around £16,000. But many of these have mileages way over 100,000, having clearly been a chauffeur car in a previous life. It is definitely worth checking out the 'car supermarkets' for 221s, these operators buying in many of the ex fleet cars that come to the market after three or four years, and offering them for £20,000 to £25,000. The models you are unlikely to see offered cheaply are the AMGs, although we were tempted by the 2011, 51,000-mile S65 offered by one Mercedes-Benz Retailer for £45,000. ▷

S-CLASSES INSIDE AND OUT

POWERTRAIN

S-Class engines are built for high mileages, and that's what they do without undue trouble, reports Jeremy Hake at independent Mercedes specialist Simon Light Ltd in Hertfordshire. "I know of a private hire firm that 'hot seats' two diesel 221s with two drivers, so they are running more or less 24 hours a day, and the car manages 300,000 miles on the first set of glow plugs. They are pretty bulletproof."

That said, the OM642 turbodiesel will eventually need a new particulate filter, and is prone to an oil leak from a pipe to the turbo air intake that leaks onto the turbo's inlet shut-off motor, permeates it and eventually damages it. The result is usually a lack of performance or

an illuminated warning light, or both, but a preventative cure - changing two oil seals - is inexpensive. The petrol engines do not have this problem and therefore are even more reliable. "I think the 4.7-litre V8 in the S500 is one of the best engines in any S-Class," says Jeremy. "It has more than ample power and is good on fuel."

The seven-speed automatic gearbox used by many Mercedes has a history of problems with the conductor plate that regulates gearshifts. So far, Jeremy gives this gearbox in the 221 S-Class a clean bill of health. "We've not seen that problem - yet." The gearbox shift might seem a bit lazy when the engine is cold, but it's meant to be that way, he points out.

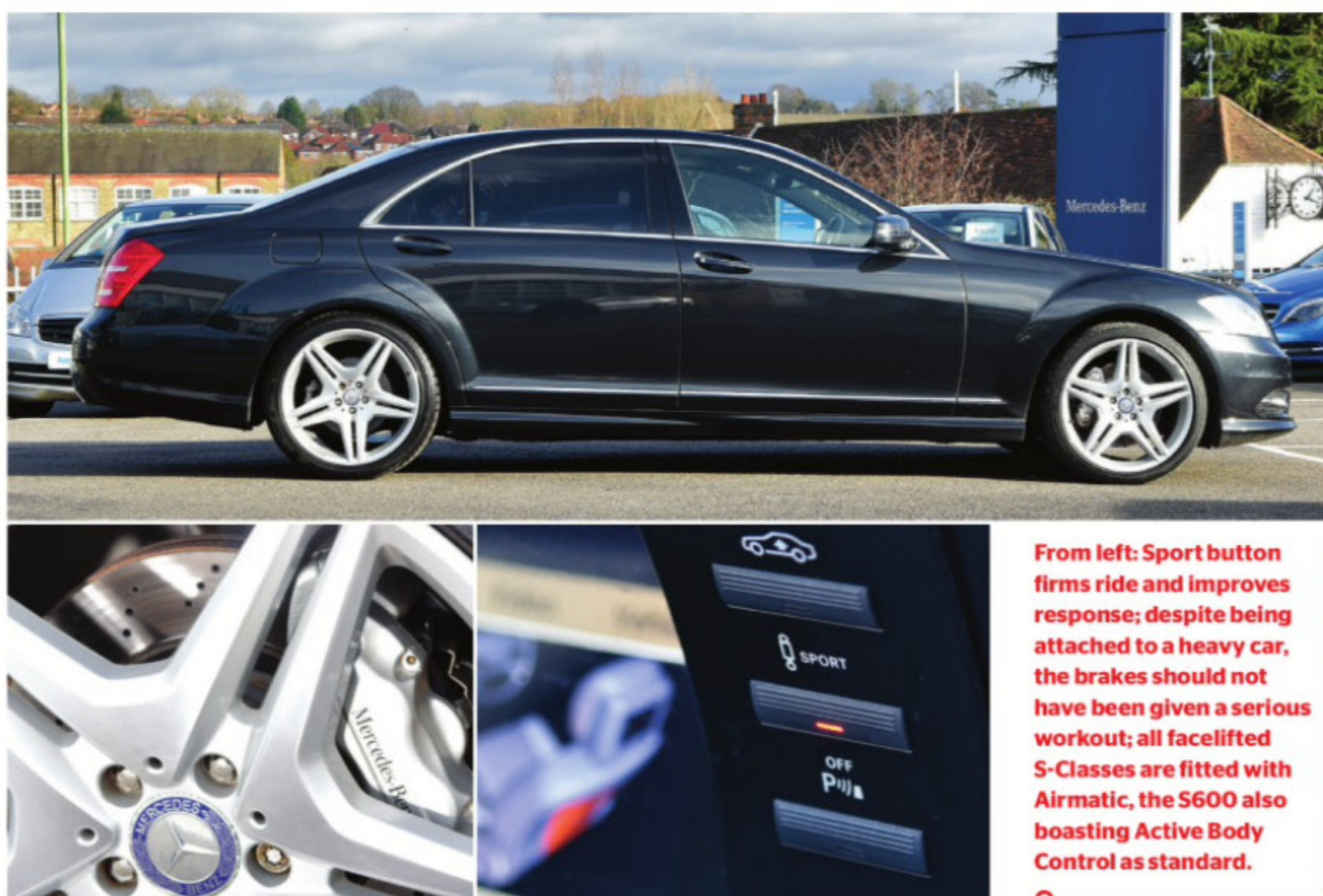
From far left: The V6 diesel motor was the UK's favourite - cars built from 2010 claim a whopping 457lb ft of torque; the smooth shifting, seven-speed automatic suits this big Benz; digital instrument cluster has a traditional look; the petrol V6 model should not be overlooked.



SUSPENSION, STEERING AND BRAKES

One might expect the 221's complex Airmatic suspension to be a worry, but it does not generally give trouble, nor do the add ons such as Active Body Control. If the car is at the correct height, the system is almost certainly fine - any problems will trigger a warning light. It is a Mercedes-Benz though, and that means the upper and lower front suspension ball joints will wear out eventually. Listen for clonks and vibrations over road bumps.

The steering, with its variable rate gearing, is also a faithful system operating quietly and smoothly, so any noises, vibrations or leaks are a sure sign of trouble. Anticipate getting 25,000 to 30,000 miles out of one set of brake discs, and a lot more than that if the S-Class is used extensively on the motorway.



From left: Sport button firms ride and improves response; despite being attached to a heavy car, the brakes should not have been given a serious workout; all facelifted S-Classes are fitted with Airmatic, the S600 also boasting Active Body Control as standard.

**SPOTTED
FOR SALE**
USED CAR DEALER
S500 L
2011/61, black, black
leather, 72,000 miles,
£25,000 miles,
Leicester



From above left: This S350 Bluetec L features the optional AMG Sports Package, adding a smart bodykit; 20-inch AMG alloys with styling package.

The 4.7-litre V8 in the S500 is one of the best engines in any S-Class

BODYWORK AND WHEELS

You do not need to look hard to find a rusty example of the 221's predecessor, the 220-series, but so far the 221 has not suffered from corrosion, even the early 2006 cars. Of course, the picture may change as time progresses, but as of now, any bodywork corrosion must be the result of a bad repair.

For some, the 20-inch AMG alloy wheels – the biggest the factory supplied for the 221 – set

the car off perfectly, but Jeremy warns that with these fitted the S-Class eats through tyres and they're £200 or more each. "The larger the wheel diameter, the quicker they get through tyres. On 20-inch wheels, the rear tyres wear in the middle of the tread, whereas the fronts tend to knock off the outer shoulder." Cars were available with an AMG Sports Package for the body, which possibly divides opinion.

Clockwise from right: A high tech yet luxurious feel within – real leather and wood are part of the S-Class's appeal; standard Comand multi media system with eight-inch screen; long-wheelbase S-Class built after the 2009 update boasted adjustable rear seats; dynamic multi contour front seats with massage function are a very appealing extra; a 560-litre boot for the LWB S-Class.



INTERIOR AND ELECTRICS

It would be natural to assume that a 221-series S-Class in long-wheelbase form will have been a chauffeur car, and therefore its rear seat will be worn out. Not necessarily, Jeremy feels. "They wear very well indeed, even if the leather gets a bit shiny." However, it is worth checking how supportive the seat remains, and also that various electrical functions the long-wheelbase 'L' has as standard still work, such as the electric seat adjustment.

Despite the 221-series S-Class's huge specification, there are no particular problems in the cabin, but check that all the electronic functions do what they should, including the air conditioning and Comand multi media system. There are some very desirable options, such as the gorgeous designo leather, and the Harman Kardon sound system upgrade, which are worth looking out for. ▶

S-Classes **INSIDE AND OUT**

VERDICT

The 221-series S-Class is an extraordinary car, outstanding in every aspect, and now it is affordably priced. The facelifted models we have considered here are also young enough to still be reliable and fault free, and often come with a warranty.

But don't expect it to be inexpensive to run, as big services, tyres and so forth will cost a lot – it is a top end Mercedes-Benz, after all. The best model? Normally the diesel makes the best case for itself, but while it's a very attractive proposition, we would say consider the S350 or S500, both of which are acceptably economical.



The long run – extra length further increases luxury



Mercedes-Benz has offered its top cars in stretched wheelbase form for generations, and the 'L' version of the 221-series has an additional 130mm in wheelbase and overall length. This turns the rear seat from a comfortable but not particularly spacious place to one of true luxury, because apart from the extra legroom, long-wheelbase cars have heated rear seats and electric adjustment for them. Plus there were various luxury options, such as twin individual rear seats and the Rear Seat Entertainment package and, for busy businessmen requiring their car to double as an office, a second telephone and fold-out tables.

For the UK, the V6 petrol and diesel could be ordered in regular or long-wheelbase form (currently adding £2,000 to £2,500 to their value), the V8s and V12s the latter only.

**SPOTTED
FOR SALE**
PRIVATE SELLER
S350 Bluetec
2011/61, black, cream
leather, 96,000 miles,
£21,950, London

Typical basic servicing costs (A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE*
S350 diesel/S350 petrol	£198	£297
S63 AMG/S65 AMG	£258	£337

*Quotes from Simon Light Ltd

Recalls and non routine servicing costs

There have been four recalls on this S-Class, relating to the front seat belt height adjuster and possibly leaking fuel filters (numbers R/2011/151, R/2011/172, R/2013/031 and R/2013/139)

- ★ **Fit new/reconditioned particulate filter on S350 Bluetec £2,390/£1,759**
- ★ **Replace the fuel, pollen and air filters on an S500 V8 model £411**
- ★ **Replace the front brake discs and pads (S350/S63 and S65 AMG) £441/£1,106**
- ★ **Replace the upper front suspension arm and ball joint £329 per side**
- ★ **Preventative renewal of the diesel motor's turbocharger inlet seals £102**
- ★ **Four premium brand, 20-inch tyres (255/35ZR20 front, 275/35ZR20 rear) £850**

Buyer's checks

- ✓ A clogged particulate filter can affect the turbodiesel engine's performance
- ✓ Check the condition of the brake discs, especially on AMGs, as these are very expensive to replace
- ✓ An oil leak from a pipe to the turbocharger inlet can ruin the turbo inlet shut-off motor
- ✓ Tyre wear rate can be high on 20-inch wheels
- ✓ Check the condition of the rear seat on ex chauffeur cars, usually long-wheelbase models

What you'll pay

£15,000-£17,500 Early facelifted S350 CDI and S350 petrol, possibly with 125,000 to 150,000 miles
£17,500-£20,000 2010/2011 S350 diesel/S350 petrol and high mileage S500 BlueEfficiency from non Merc dealer; LWB S350s worth up to £2,500 more than SWB
£20,000-£25,000 2012 S350 Bluetec/S350 BlueEfficiency and S500 BlueEfficiency at independents and car supermarkets, largely ex fleet
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► Thank you to **Mercedes-Benz Hemel Hempstead - Used Cars** for the loan of the S350 Bluetec L pictured and the location Tel 01442 239130 Web www.mercedes-benzretailgroup.co.uk, and to **Simon Light Ltd** for technical advice and workshop prices Tel 01920 423342 Web www.simonlight.co.uk



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AN OWN GOAL

Part of the E-Class estate's appeal is its looks, particularly in Sport spec – but there is a downside to Mercedes' most popular trim line

WORDS AND IMAGES **JAMES MILLS**

FACTSHEET

CAR 2010 S212 E350 CDI Estate

OWNER James Mills

LOCATION Tunbridge Wells, UK

PURCHASED December 2013

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT The Sport trim line's 18-inch AMG alloy wheels are coming in for some stick and need refurbishing soon



WHEN YOU LIVE WITH a car, you must learn to live with its quirks. But there is one on our E350 CDI Estate that I am struggling to bring myself to forgive: the design of its alloy wheels.

Yes, I know – this sounds like the sort of conversation that's about as appealing as talking with a member of Her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes. But bear with me because it's a quirk that is costing me money, and when things cost me money I need to get them off my chest.

The Sport trim level of our Mercedes included AMG alloy wheels, 18-inch items with a diamond cut finish that gives them a distinctive look. So far, so showy. The problem is that the wheel rims project out far enough to be flush with the sidewalls of the tyres, so every time Mrs Mills – who uses the car most of all – heads into the nearest big town and parks this big booted Benz anywhere near a kerb, one or quite possibly two of the AMG alloy wheels pick up war wounds.

When we bought the car just over a year ago, all four wheels had been refurbished and looked shiny enough to eat your dinner off them. Now, all four wheels display some degree of mangling. As someone who, it has been

“Whenever I spy another E-Class in Sport trim, I steal a glance at the wheels and wince in pity”

said, borders on the obsessive compulsive disorder spectrum, this plays on my mind every time I set eyes on the car. There is some cold comfort to be had, however. This is not a problem confined to our car and our family's driving standards. Whenever I spy another E-Class in Sport trim, I steal a glance at the wheels and wince in pity. Invariably, they all suffer similar damage.


IT'S CATCHING ON

Last time I investigated the cost of refurbishing one wheel, the price was £85, so taking care of all four would dent my wallet to the tune of £340, which is more than the price of a year's comprehensive insurance. And honestly, it pains me to see our

otherwise unblemished Mercedes-Benz looking quite so sorry for itself, so the temptation to tart up all four corners never fades.

It's at times like this that I wonder whether the Avantgarde trim line would have been a better choice. The 17-inch alloy wheels included with that spec look good and, importantly, don't use such a low profile tyre, or have rims that stick out so far. The suspension is also tuned to be a little more comfortable than the Sport's.

It's a lesson learned, I suppose, and the Sport spec is a popular trim level that will remain in demand – helping prop up our car's residual value.

But if you find yourself with a similar dilemma, I'd think carefully about which trim line is best for your needs. Otherwise you could end up cursing its quirks every time you park next to a kerb. 

△ Sport or Avantgarde trim line? James sees the benefits of the latter.

▽ Low profile tyres leave the stylish wheels vulnerable.



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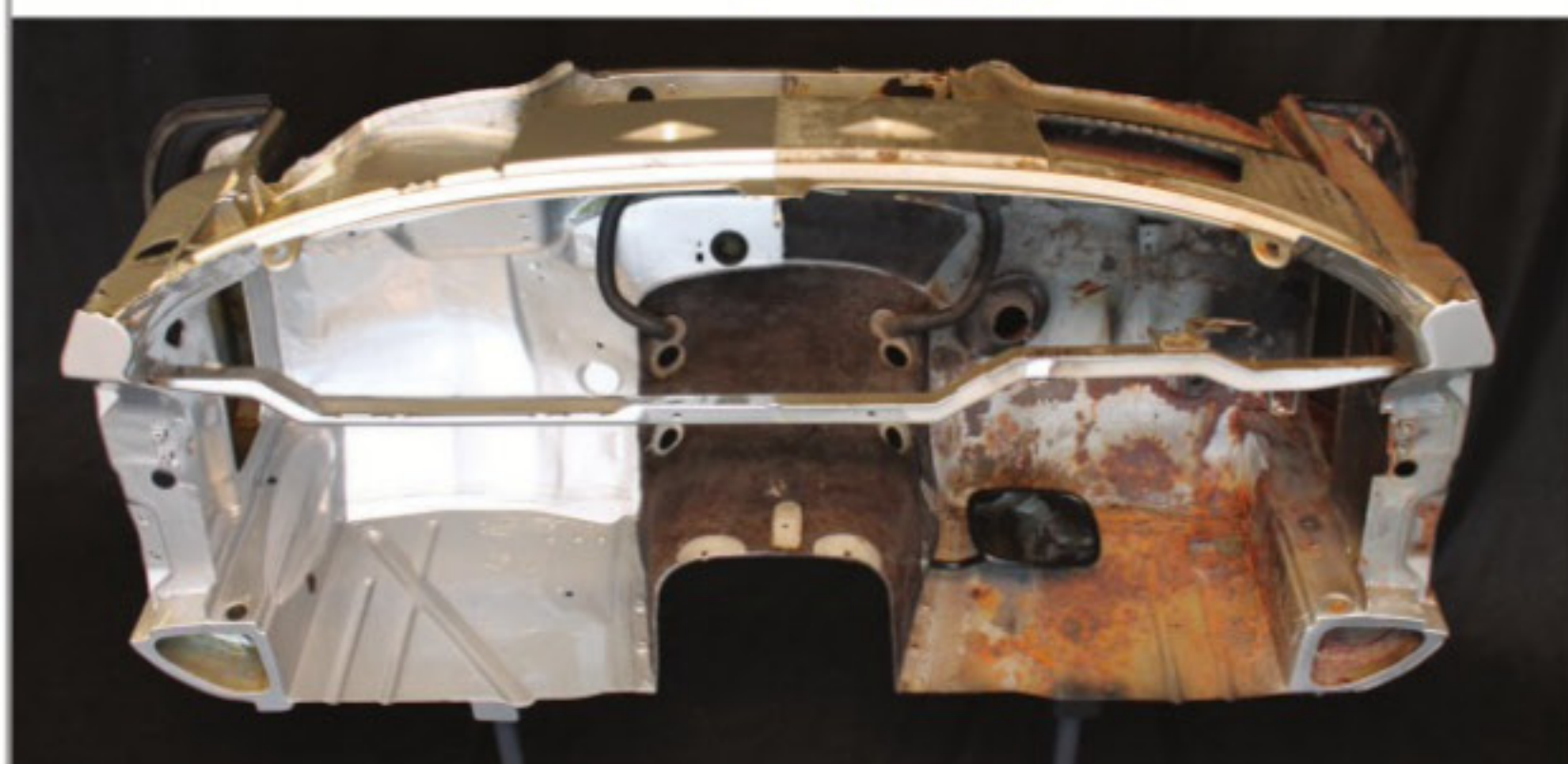


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BELT AND BRACES

While removing his classic saloon's alternator to replace failed bearings, Eric discovers another – and totally unexplained – issue

WORDS AND IMAGES **ERIC RICHARDSON**

FACTSHEET

CAR 1971 W108 280SE

OWNER Eric Richardson

LOCATION London, UK

PURCHASED September 2011

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Alternator furnished with new bearings to the tune of £60, and new engine belts bought for £21

SINCE MY LAST report in the February 2015 issue, I'm a little ashamed to say that the W108 has not moved more than 20 metres. Or to put it another way, it has simply driven out of and backed into the garage while I tried to get to the bottom of the alternator and misfire problems described last time.

With a bright, cold day dawning, I took myself off to the garage to remove the alternator that I had diagnosed as having a grumbling bearing. Thankfully, the W108's M130 engine uses an adjuster on a threaded bar to set the fan belt tension, which makes fitting and removal a doddle. A typically Germanic approach to design, unlike on my classic Austin, this 1950s car requiring me to lever the alternator with the handle from my trolley jack to set the required fan belt tension. All very hit and miss.

With the Benz's alternator removed, I soon became aware that the V-section on the fan belt had not only separated from the outer band of the belt, but had been significantly worn down, which I'm at a loss to explain. The belt itself passes over three pulleys, for the crank, water pump and alternator. For it to have worn in only one spot means, to my logic, that the belt must have been held stationary while a rotating pulley wore it down. Of the three, the pulley on the crank is key to this, as it provides the rotation. If the crank doesn't turn, the other two won't turn, so presumably the alternator or water pump came to a halt, and in doing so prevented the belt from rotating, thus it wore itself down against the crank pulley.

GETTING STUCK IN

As the water pump/fan have a viscous coupling, I can't see that being the culprit, leaving the alternator and that grumbling bearing. *However* (you can tell I've been chewing this over a lot), surely the fan belt cannot get that worn down without the belt emitting a

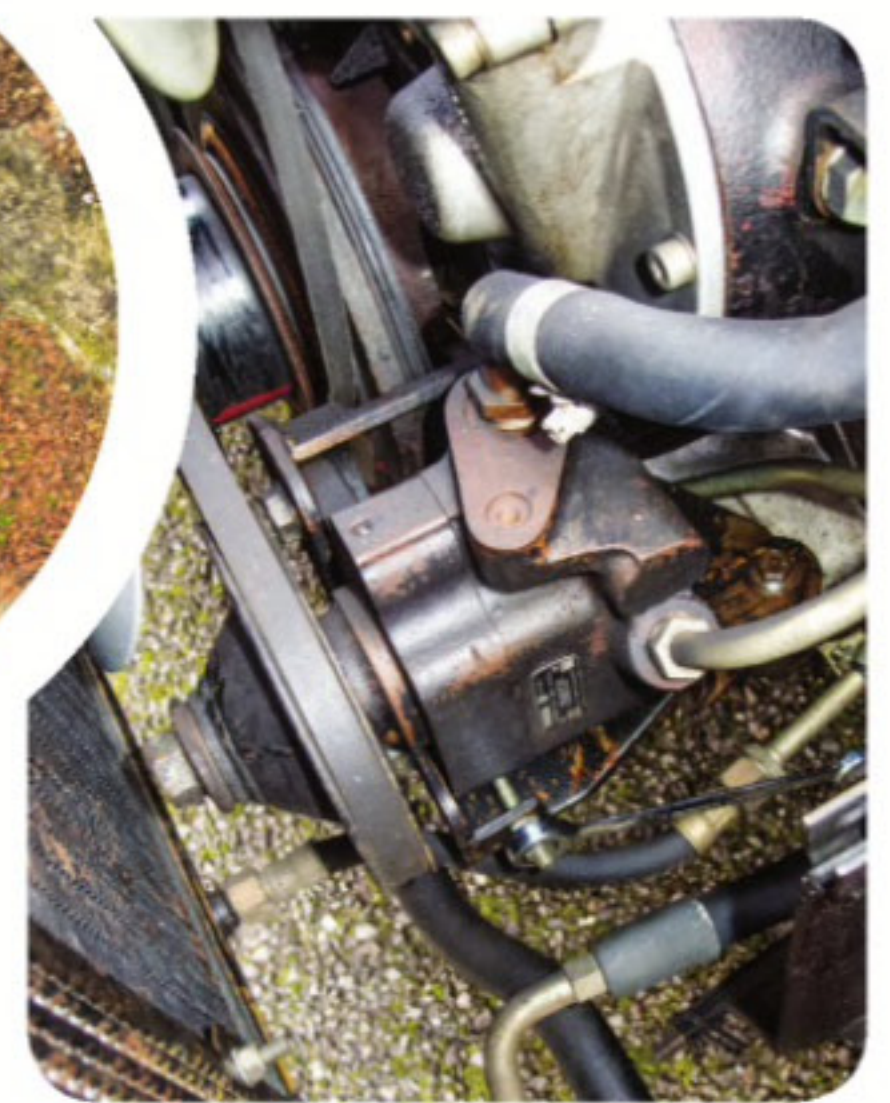
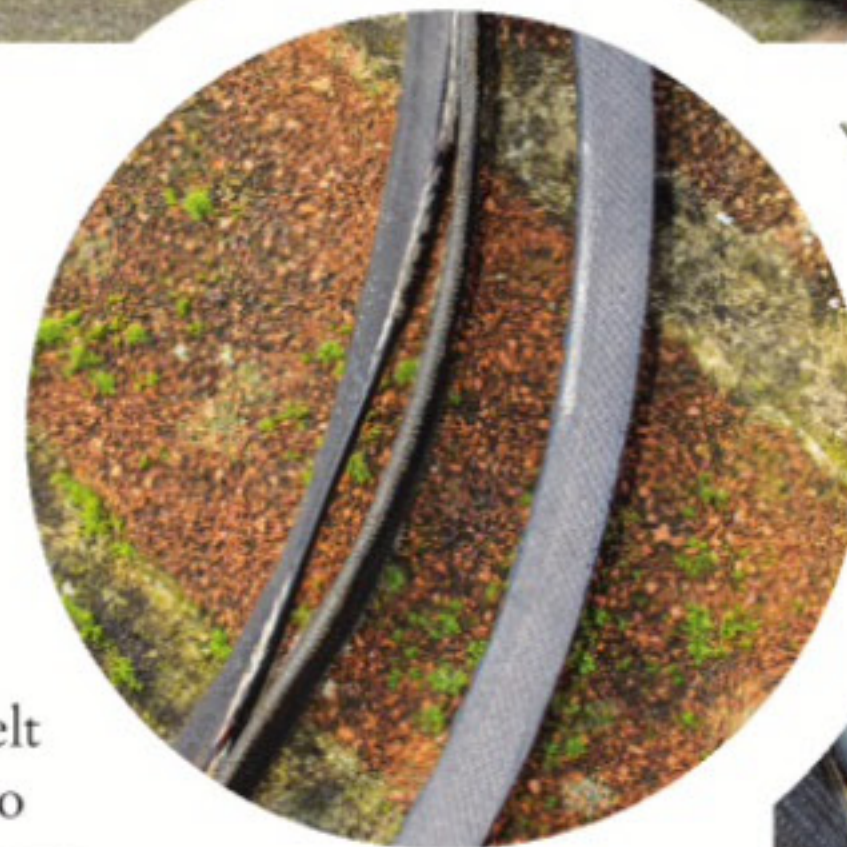


screech, as they tend to do when slipping. All very odd, and all suggestions are most welcome!

With the alternator removed and a replacement bearing fitted, I set about sourcing not only a new fan belt, but also a new power steering belt, the latter needing to be removed before the fan belt could be replaced. A call to Shaun Zealey, the classic parts guru at Mercedes-Benz of Poole, resulted in him sending me the necessary belts, with 10 per cent discount thanks to my Mercedes-Benz Club membership.

A couple of weeks later, with the refurbished alternator and new belts in my hands, I headed to the garage not relishing the thought of working in a hand numbing two degrees above zero. "Undo three bolts and slacken the adjuster," was the general consensus on various internet forums for loosening the power steering pump, to allow it to slide towards the crank, relieving the tension on the belt to allow it to be removed.

Even with all bolts loose, and at one stage one bolt and the adjuster



removed, the power steering pump still would not budge far enough towards the crank to allow the belt to be taken off. After much application of WD-40, profanities, and ironically utilising the handle from my trolley jack to gain some extra leverage, I eventually got the job done. Clearly there was some unseen obstruction hindering the power steering pump, but I'll save further investigation for warmer weather. Perhaps.

With both belts replaced and the alternator refitted, I connected it all back up and after double checking all belt tensions were correct, and all bolts were secure, I fired up the car to find all was well with the world once more. Best get out and drive it, I suppose!

The M130 engine uses an adjuster on a threaded bar to set the fan belt tension, which makes fitting and removal a doddle

△△ Testing times with the classic six-cylinder saloon this month...

△ Removing the power steering belt was quite a challenge.

△< Surprised to see the fan belt so worn; new one now fitted.

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BLACK AND WHITE

The benefits of cold weather tyres are well documented, but it's not until you experience them yourself that you truly believe in them

WORDS AND IMAGES **DAVID SUTHERLAND**

FACTSHEET

CARS 2007 W169 A180 CDI /2006 W164 ML320 CDI

OWNER David Sutherland

LOCATION London, UK

PURCHASED November 2007/May 2014

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT The ML has a set of refurbished wheels with winter tyres – the A-Class must now be feeling neglected



EVEN THOUGH I purchased it in May 2014, one of the first things I wanted to get for the ML320 CDI SE was an extra set of wheels, so that cold weather tyres could be on the vehicle by November, the recommended time for fitment.

But that turned out to be too ambitious, because I refused to pay £1,367 for four brand new, standard, 18-inch rims, and second hand examples were as rare as hen's teeth. The twin-spoke design on early W164 MLs was current only for a short time, and how many people would be selling them?

By mid November, all I had seen on the UK eBay website was a sole wheel offered by a breaker, so I was getting despondent. But then, on eBay in Germany, I spotted exactly what I wanted – four genuine Mercedes-Benz rims without tyres. With the help of Google Translate, I established that the seller would ship them to the UK. I was the only bidder, and won the auction at the euro equivalent of £112, and while carriage more than doubled the total cost to £247, I was very pleased, especially as they were largely undamaged.

The next step was leading wheel restorer Lepsons in Gillingham, Kent, whose work I knew to be of a high standard, having had my A-Class wheels treated there previously. Feeling that

wheels for winter tyres should have a more rugged appearance than those for summers, I asked proprietor Tony Leppenwell to colour code them to the ML's Obsidian Black metallic paintwork, to which he replied, "I think it's better to come away from the body colour a bit, as it always looks better."

He did so, and is absolutely right. The slightly lower key, non metallic finish provides a subtle contrast to the ML's bodywork, and while black wheels on an SUV are not everyone's cup of tea, I think they look fabulous, especially with the star on the centre caps picked out in silver.

DARK MATTER

I turned to Pirelli for cold weather tyres and, like other tyre makers, the Italian company offers various types. The obvious spec for the Mercedes was the Scorpion Ice & Snow (typically priced at around £130 each), designed for ML sized SUVs, and an on- rather than off-road compound, majoring on road grip and low noise.

We're told cold weather tyres are about more than merely traction in snow, their softer sidewall and tread compound offering a better all round performance when the temperature is below 7°C. But it can be difficult to assess how good they truly are unless the snow arrives – and in UK cities it

rarely does. But snow did fall on London just days after the Pirellis were fitted, in mid January by Merityre in Kingston-upon Thames in Surrey, and within minutes of first looking out the window at the pretty white scenery, I had driven the ML to a large, empty car park adjoining a common, where the snow was thick and untouched.

The combination of 4Matic and the Pirellis endowed the Mercedes with extraordinary traction. From a standstill, and given a welly full of throttle, it simply bounded away with no hint of wheelspin, just as if there had been dry tarmac underfoot. The ML stuck like glue when steered too, and apart from me seeing the snow, the only inkling of its presence was under braking, when winter tyres can reduce stopping times but not defy physics completely.

By lunchtime, London's snow had gone. But it had stayed long enough for me to discover that Pirelli's Scorpion Ice & Snow cold weather tyres do exactly what is said on the tin.

► Thank you to **Lepsons** for refurbishing and painting the ML's wheels **Tel** 01634 580582 **Web** www.lepsons.com, to **Pirelli** for supplying the Scorpion Ice & Snow tyres **Web** www.pirelli.com, and to **Merityre Specialists, Kingston** for fitting the cold weather rubber **Tel** 020 8974 6400 **Web** www.merityre.co.uk

△< **Ebay wheels for £247; refurbished and coloured by Lepsons.**

△ **Pirelli Scorpion Ice & Snow tyres for the ML cost around £130 each.**

△△ **Moments later, the ML could call itself a proper all weather car.**

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S124 200 Estate, low mileage (only 94,000 miles) seven seats, excellent condition in and out, slight bit of wear on driver's seat bolster, 4x new Michelin tyres on perfect, genuine, Mercedes eight-hole alloys, recently serviced, CD player and MP3 connection, factory detachable tow bar, recent new windscreen, the only thing that doesn't work in perfect order is the sunroof, MOT until May 2015. £3,500. Call Simon, Tel: 07760 557834. Cardiff. **[DEW19]**



500SEL 1991, two owners from new, current owner since 1997, leather seats, MOT until May 2015, a boardroom on wheels. £4,500. Tel: 01422 836668. Halifax. **[DEP21]**



200 Fintail, left-hand drive, manual column shift, interior original, very good condition, black MB-TeX, bodywork and chrome in excellent condition, nearly new Michelin tyres, brake hydraulics overhauled recently, the car drives very well, £9,995 (which includes transferable number). Call Brian, Tel: 07710 077605. **[DEW20]**



190E 2.6, automatic, a beautiful car. I have spent a small fortune on this car and it is now in first class condition, Pearl Grey, 4x e/windows, e/sunroof, 4x head restraints, Carat Duchatelet boot spoiler, refurbished wheels, radio/CD, aerial not good but I have new one to go with the car. £3,500. Tel: 01323 460072. Pevensey, East Sussex. **[DEW13]**



560SL, 1988, silver, full black leather, black hood, Euro spec not USA spec, 59,000km history, climate, heated seats, good spec, very original car in excellent condition, hardtop, as good as the £35K plus 560S. £25,999. Tel: 07966 265077. Essex. **[DEW16]**



500SL, 1987, 115,000 miles, MOT 12/14, tax 09/14, current owner 13 years, both soft top and hardtop complete with stand, totally original car, drives beautifully, lots of history/paperwork. £9,995. Tel: 07989 448307. Bolton. **[DEW15]**

S500, 1996, very good condition, 203,000 miles, Smoke Silver, MOT until September. Tel: 01727 840 214. St Albans. **[DE]**



E320 CDI, 2000, long MOT and tax, FSH, 170,000 miles, excellent all round condition, no rust, waxoyled, garaged, and well looked after, first to see will buy, £1,795 OVNO. Tel: 0208 660 4538 or 07584 020272. **[DEW14]**



R107 500SL Roadster, automatic, 1986/D reg, 82,000 miles, FSHH, Smoke Silver, brown sports check, ABS, electric windows, cruise control, original wheels, new tyres, factory fitted roof, headlight wipers, an excellent example, priced to sell. £12,499. Tel: 07767 886208 London. **[DEW18]**

SLK200 Kompressor, 2008 reg, silver, unmarked body work, good tyres, five-speed auto, 26,000 miles, HPI clear, Aircar. £13,000. Tel: 01579 350197. Saltash, Cornwall. **[DE]**

Mercls for sale



280SL, 1983, 141,000 miles, MOT until Feb/16, silver blue interior, bodywork and underside all in good condition, soft and hardtop well maintained, dry weather car £7,650 Tel: 01202 872127. Ferndown, Dorset. [DEW22]



190E, I am emigrating so sadly I must part with my 190E, 1.8 auto, Pearl Blue, electric front windows, sunroof, all in lovely condition and drives like new, £2,000. Tel: 01323 460072. Pevensey, East Sussex. [DEW12]



380SLC, 1981, one of only 60 left in the UK, the mileage is 139,000 and MOT until June 2015. £10,000. Tel: 07885 561610. London. [DEW10]



C43 AMG, featured in this magazine in 2005. This rare car is a great runner and a thrilling drive. 112,000 miles, reg 1998, MOT until June, carefully maintained by lady owner for 12 years. £3,000. Tel 07790 543550. West Yorkshire. [DEW6]



S124 E300D Estate, 1995, reluctant sale by elderly owner, in storage on SORN, much history, good condition, 169,000 miles. £2,000. Tel: 07759 6612999. Essex. [DEP3]



CLK230 Coupe, 2.3, auto, Quartz Blue, grey leather interior, well maintained, 12 month MOT, full service history, 85,000 miles, MBZ personal registration number, 38.8mpg, retired time served mechanic owner. AA and RAC inspection welcomed. £2,400. Scunthorpe. Tel: 01724 720146. [DEP5]



190E 2.6 Sportline, original pristine paint, low mileage, econmant, waxoyled, concours entrant, dehumidified garage, dry use only, one of the best in Europe. £6,000. Tel: 01487 814015. Huntingdon. [DEP1]



CLK63 AMG, 57 Plate, 33,000 miles from new, FMBSH, owned since August 2011 and done 13,000 miles in that time, MOT until Sept 2015, no advisories ever, full specification plus Harmon Kardon Logic 7, digital TV tuner, Bluetooth, heated and cooling seats (as new nappa), glass sunroof, electric rear blind, cornering headlamps, £24,500. Tel: 07833 418766. Camberley, Surrey. [CDW8]

W140 S280, 48,000 miles and mint condition with one previous owner, 1997, auto, Azurite Blue with mushroom leather, recent £1,000 MB service, first to see will swoon. £8,950. Tel: 07929 491901. Brighton. [DEP2]

W111 220 Coupe, 1964, four-speed manual, full new genuine leather, ivory wheel, full wood dash, show condition. £34,995. Tel: 01663 762224 or 07710 611113. Manchester [CM11]



280SLC, auto, 1981, currently on SORN, MOT to 19/06/15, 93,000 miles, factory sunroof, Alpine stereo, C/L, E/W, great car to live with but I'm told you can't keep them all! £5,750. carlines@clara.net for more info and photos. Tel: 07803 253299. Horsham. [CDW15R]



E220 Coupe, auto, dark grey with beige patterned cloth, FSH, MOT June 2015, three owners. Paperwork since 2000, alarm, sunroof, 10-stack CD player, very reliable, no work or repairs apart from service/MOT, paintwork in good condition, no rust. £3,295. Tel: 077962 85080. Wirral. [CDW13R]



E320 CDI Elegance, 2001, silver, 138,000 miles, MOT to July 2015, car performs very well, sizable financial contribution put into this car, many new parts, good condition. Tel: 07709 546748. Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim. [CDW12R]



SL55 AMG, 2003, 61,500, metallic black, leather, keyless, heated seats, air con, panoramic, Linguatronic, Comand, 19-inch AMG split rims, CD, FMBSH and specialist, new boot seals and battery, immaculate, no rust, no issues, HPI clear. £15,995. Email: powfoot@mac.com Tel: 0191 4211831. Gateshead. [CDW10R]



W204 C220 CDI Sport, 2008, Iridium silver, grey real leather seats, Halogen headlights, AMG wheels and mats, two owners, 47,000 miles, VGC, FMBSH, docs back to original purchase, MOT until Nov 15, MB Club member, Tel: 07963 157566. £11,850. See <http://goo.gl/GkRbgK> for more info. Colchester, Essex. [CDW9]



R170 SLK230, special edition, silver, 54 plate, 38,000 miles, FSH, MOT until Dec 2015, black leather, heated seats, six-CD in boot, Airscarf, two previous owners. £6,500. Tel: 07799 435947 or 0208 7775130. West Wickham, Kent. [CDW7]



C124 E320 Coupe, N reg, green with cream leather 58,000 miles, FSH, MOT until Dec 2015, car has had new windscreen, water pump and £2,000 worth of bodywork in last six months, amazing condition £11,995. Tel: 07774 245576. Slough. [CDW5]

320CE Sportline, K reg, 19-inch, AMG wheels, tyres, in silver/dark grey, e/windows, e/sunroof, e/seats, e/beats, e/headrests, full leather, truly beautiful, reluctantly selling. £1,995. Tel: 01371 830101 - 07506 205851. Dunmow. [DE]

500SL, stunning model seeks TLC, black convertible, private plate, 117,600 miles, 1992 model, great condition, needs new ECU and a couple of tyres, drives beautifully but is sadly sitting doing nothing. £2,500 or nearest sensible offer. Tel: 07734 105164. Strathaven, Lanarkshire. [DE]



W123 230E, 1985, five-speed manual, blue cloth interior, non sunroof, 168,000 miles, MOT, new tyres, new brakes, four keepers, drives well. £2,300. Tel: 07786 589885 or 0151 4492822. Merseyside. **[CDW3]**



E220 Coupe, (1995), 78,000 miles, superb condition and kept in heated garage, Polar White with beige leather (rare colour combination) MOT until April 2015 - no advisories, alloys, central locking, air con, heated seats, illuminated vanity mirrors, electric driver seat, air bags, electric seatbelt presenters, electric mirrors, only selling due to space, it's a great car, drives beautifully and has been well looked after, very reliable car and low insurance. £4,795. Tel: 07904 766629 for more information and photos. Surrey. **[CDW2]**



E240 Elegance, auto, black, four-door saloon, 1999, 277,000 miles, automatic, one owner, automatic, service history, 12 months MOT, new springs and disc pads all round, new stainless exhaust, all usual Mercedes extras, no advisories on new MOT. £695.00. Tel: 01273 831825. West Sussex. **[BCW11R]**

C180 Elegance, 1997, manual, for spares or repair, MOT until October 2015, late father in laws car, needs to go, good solid car, just tatty paintwork, lacquer peeling, first £300 no offers Tel: 07802 912514. Southport. **[CDR]**



E220 Cabriolet, 1996, Smoke Silver, 110,000 miles, long MOT and Tax, MBSH, beige leather, air con, fantastic all-round condition, grab a New Year bargain. £3,900. Tel: 01302 530665. Doncaster. **[BCP9R]**



300SL, 1991, 89,000 miles, MOT June 2015, upgraded air con, auto fluid and filter changed, good exhaust, tyres, oil filter changed yearly, clean engine, bodywork, inside and underneath exhaust, club member, always garaged. £6,500. Tel: 01395 515132. Sidmouth, Devon. **[BCP8R]**



C280 Elegance, 1994, petrol, excellent runner, 160,000 miles, genuine, walnut dash, leather interior. £2,500 ONO. Tel: 07860 419137. Leicester. **[BCW6R]**



300SL, auto 1988, silver body, hardtop and leather interior, black soft top, 105,000 miles, one family ownership throughout. £6,200. Tel: 020 87881061. Putney, London. **[BCW1R]**

C180 Kompressor, possibly the lowest mileage 2004 C180 in the UK, 12,600 miles, from new and in mint condition with history and one previous owner, silver/grey cloth interior, stunning car, £6,500 ONO or part exchange but MB only. Tel: 01282 547675. Lancashire. **[CDR]**



W124 E280, auto saloon, in Smoke Silver, FSH, MOT to Sept 2015, well maintained in excellent condition, immaculate interior, no bolster wear, last owner for 15 years, kept it garaged, £1,500 spent this year, engine wiring loom, service. £2,200 Tel: 07890 548699. Ilford. **[BCW3R]**



SL280, 1997/98 model with five-speed autobox, FSH, new MOT, lots of extras, phone for spec, excellent all round condition, Mercedes club owner, owned by myself for nine years. £5,500 Tel: 01737 557353. Surrey. **[BCW5R]**



C240 Elegance, automatic, 1998, Azurite Blue, beige interior, 95,000 miles, all extras and electric seats, immaculately kept, full Mercedes-Benz service history, MOT, taxed, same owner for 10 years, very reluctant sale, first to see will buy. £1,295. Tel: 07952 767033. Cottingham, East Yorkshire. **[ABP1R]**



E280 CDI Estate Avantgarde, seven-speed auto, excellent car, new MOT and service, Mercedes-Benz service records, full black leather upholstery, electric rear tailgate and luggage cover closing, new tyres, alloy wheels unmarked. £6,900. Tel: 07748 320454. Kettering, Northamptonshire. **[ABW14R]**



SLK200 Roadster, Nov 2005, only 39,860 miles, silver metallic with black interior, six-speed manual, one owner, full main dealer SH, MOT until Nov 2015, superb condition, extras, £9,450 ONO. Tel: 01580 830550. Kent/E. Sussex borders. **[LMW13R]**



E220 CDI Elegance, tip auto saloon, 2002, metallic blue, immaculate, only 95,000 miles, FSH, MOT'd until June 2015, recent full service, leathers, sat nav, electric mirrors, £3,995. Tel: 07766 1105980. **[LMW7R]**



300CE-24 Sportline, 1991, mine for 12 years, 169,000 miles, my specialist mechanic is available to meet, tax and MOT until Oct 2015, e/sunroof/windows/seats, e/belts, five gears, AMG wheels, black leather, £2,600. Tel: 07973 428170. West London. **[LAW23R]**

C200 Elegance, 1994, auto, two-owner car with all history, 44,000 miles, looks and drives like new, metallic grey with blue cloth interior, never had damage or paint, as clean underside as on top, tools etc. Never used, sad sale, wife wanted newer car, bought a C180 Coupe, offers around £2,000. Tel: 01282 547675. Clitheroe. **[BCR]**

C220 CDI Estate, 2001, Jasper Blue, no MOT, needs automatic gearbox module, drives in one gear only (full garage written assessment) good condition. 160,000 miles, owned since 2002, beyond economic repair, needs Mercedes mechanic enthusiast can be towed away. £400. E: Paulmkitchen@Tiscali.co.uk Tel: 01985 847885. Wiltshire. **[CDR]**

Mercls for sale



SL500, 2004, fantastic car, only two owners, 37,000 miles with records, being sold with SL private plate or separate, £18,900. Tel: 07748 320454. Kettering, Northants. **[GHW14R]**

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W111 280SE Cabriolet, 1969, 70,980 miles, second owner since 1971, becoming more rarely available, good, unmolested condition (V8 in similar condition sold for \$473,000 at Scottsdale, January, 2015). \$325,000, contact Mrs Robins. Tel: 001 905-764-6363 or email: donnarobins@rogers.com. Toronto, Canada. **[CM4P2R]**



280SL, 1970, Signal Red with Palomino two tops, fully restored, books and records, rare four-speed transmission. \$65,000. Tel: 001 201 5677224. New Jersey, USA. **[BCP10R]**



220S Coupe, splendid car delivered to its South African owner in 1958, this is a matching numbers car finished in the original combination of black over tan leather interior and Zebrano wood trim, the vehicle is located in Johannesburg, South Africa. £95,000. Tel: 0027 8399 66407, Johannesburg South-Africa. **[CDW14]**



300TE, 1992, white wagon for sale, classic family car, seats seven, six-cylinder, 224,000 miles, second owner, well maintained, garaged, alarm system, power seats, sunroof, we have loved this car for 12 years our kids are grown and now we are looking for a smaller car. 001 360 6072614. Camas, Washington. **[BCW12R]**



560SL, 78,000 miles, Signal Red with light cream leather interior, factory back seat, powerful, strong runner, newer black canvas convertible top, matching red hardtop included, transmission functions perfectly, Florida car for 23 years, garaged in winter since coming to Minnesota, never seen snow! This is a real head-turner and VERY fun to drive! Everything works as it should. Tel: 001 612 385 9617. Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. **[DEW7]**

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For sale, Mercedes-Benz Haynes workshop manual, 123-series diesel, 200, 240D, 240TD, 300D, 300TD, 1976 to 1985, clean white pages, very good condition, only £6.00. Tel: 07989 951895. Canterbury. **[DEW8]**



For sale, Mercedes-Benz C200 Elegance full leather interior, comes with all four headrests, heated front seats, door cards with wood effect trimmings, centre console, in stunning condition no wear on bolsters or no rips. Ideal for up grade £550 (NO OFFERS) buyer collects no time wasters. Tel: 07879 215057. West Midlands. **[DEW11]**



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For sale, Mercedes R230 SL front bumper complete with foglights, parking sensors, grilles and numberplate holder, bonnet complete with grilles and badge and hinges, front grille complete, rear lights all parts from a 2004 SL500. £500, will separate collection only. Tel: 07828 279875. Leeds. **[DEW9]**

For sale, tyres 2x Pirelli P Zero 255/40ZR18, almost brand new with 8mm tread and 2x ContiSport 255/40ZR18 with 7mm tread, best offer over £400 secures or split appropriately into pairs, buyer collects. Tel: 01256 469893. North Hampshire (off M3 Jnt 6). **[CDR]**



For sale, set of four alloys shod with 265x65x16 Pirelli P6000 tyres, ex E-Class. £100 for all four. Tel: 07759 661999. **[DEP4]**



For sale, four early white hub caps in good condition edges scuffed. £60 postage will be at cost or collect from Surrey, no returns. Tel: 01737 354177. Banstead, Surrey. **[CDW11R]**



For sale, new, genuine, 16-inch Mercedes alloys, including tyres, set of four, taken off 2014 C220 estate, tyres only rolled four miles home from dealership, buyer collects. £900. Tel: 07833 466843. North Wales. **[CM11W6R]**

For sale, from 2012 SL63 as new, rear under bumper diffuser original black, also front foglights with black mesh surround as new, also four centre wheel caps. £150 the lot, won't split. Tel: 07929 639395. Claygate, Surrey. **[CDR]**

For sale, as new, 4x wheels from a 2006 CLK270 CDI, have been stripped and powder coated by well known Aerocoat at St Olaves. 2x 16x8in et32. 2x 16x7in et37. £350. Collection preferred or arrange own. Tel: 01493 750183. Norwich. **[CDR]**

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For sale, two Mercedes ML alloy wheels c/w tyres for sale (W164 model) very good condition, no kerbing marks and plenty of tread left on part worn tyres, buyer to arrange collection from West Bromwich area. £150 for the pair. Tel: 0121 3539281. West Bromwich. [CDW4R]

For sale, small collection of MB diecast models, mint, boxed, for sale singularly or together please email: greenmx5@btopenworld.com [CDR]

Breaking Mercedes sports, 113 and 107s. Tel: 01322 669081 or 07836 250222. [ABC]

For Sale, W210 E220 diesel saloon, 2001, 1x front and rear o/s door, bonnet, various ECU's, f/pass airbag, exp tank, brake fluid res, washer bottle, all cheap. Tel: 0208 6604538 or 07584 020272. Whyteleafe. [DE]

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With the day slipping away but the keys to a C36 AMG in hand, one journalist put the saloon's almighty pedigree to the test

WORDS **JAMES MILLS** IMAGES **AUTO EXPRESS**

EVERY DRIVER HAS A JOURNEY THEY WILL NEVER forget. For some, it's soaring high across the Alps, the bark of a sports car's engine flooding the Flüela Pass as they charge from Davos to the Stelvio Pass. For others, it might just as well be the disaster of being stuck for hours on end on the A303 – less highway to the sun, more highway to hell.

I've enjoyed more than my fair share of epic drives – runs that send both the pulse rate and brake temperature soaring – having spent years working at various motoring magazines. But there is one, back in the dim and distant past of 1994, that has stayed with me. The scenario will be familiar to anyone weighed down by their workload. I had to be in Wales for a comparison test between a Mercedes-Benz C36 AMG and a Caterham Seven, but was stuck in the office long after daylight had faded. “Get a move on,” came the phone call from Nathan Morgan, the photographer, “or you’ll miss last orders.”


Enough was enough. In the building's car park sat the C36 AMG. Back then, there probably weren't many options that would be better for transporting a weary driver from A to B in as little time as possible. Its straight-six engine jumped into life and held the revs high, warming the oil. The AMG exhaust, with its signature twin tailpipes, was surprisingly raucous – a shock at a time when Mercedes' six- and eight-cylinder cars were synonymous with impeccably good manners. The C36 was the first AMG officially sold by Mercedes-Benz. A lot has changed in the last 20 years, but this car set a template that would prove a slow burning success and gradually earn AMG the global respect it deserved.

The A40, M25 and M4 were swiftly dispatched. The first C36 only had a four-speed automatic gearbox, so each gear took what felt like an age to rev out, but the snarl from the straight-six motor was fabulous. In its day, it was considered seriously fast. There was 276bhp at 5,750rpm and peak torque was 284lb ft at 4,000 to 4,750rpm, which translated into a 6.7-second 0-62mph time and an electronically restricted top speed of 155mph. Not all that fast in this day and age, but the figures can't capture the character of the C36, which felt solid and stable on the road as it snarled its way toward Wales at high speed.

The destination was Crickhowell, but the car's headlights weren't a match for the engine's performance, which presented a distinct challenge when

charging along back roads with the determination not to miss out on a cold pint. At one point, I failed to spot a T-junction which merged into a left-hand bend, as the warning sign was rendered invisible by an overgrown hedgerow. By the time the lights picked out the 'Give Way' lines on the road, it was too late. In the dead of night time, there was no other traffic to see the C36 arc around the left turn in a perfect four-wheel drift as the tyres teetered on the brink of letting go of the road altogether, and the driver came perilously close to a career ending accident.

The C36's steering could have been more communicative and the brakes should have been stronger – a small bonfire would regularly follow any thrash cross-country – but the engine and chassis gave the C36 real personality.

Together we made last orders. The next day's shoot went well, and the point of the test was proved: the speed of the C36 and Caterham Seven were perfectly matched, illustrating that there were different ways to drive fast and have fun. 



▷ 3.6-litre straight-six based on the 3.2-litre M104.

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