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**Executive Editor** Kyle Molyneux

**Art Director** David 'Spike' McCormack

**Nesigners** Sarah-Jane Mortimer and Claire Trent

Retoucher Linda Duong

**European Editor** lan Kuah

**Publishing Director** Paul Cosgrove +44 (0) 20 8639 4401

**Advertisement Sales Executive** Jacob Haves +44 (0) 20 8639 4416

Sales & Marketing Manager Richard Cosgrove +44 (0) 20 8639 4403

**Contributing writers and photographers** Guy Baker, Neil Briscoe, Jason Dodd, Barry Hayden, Ian Kuah, Paddy McGrath, Peet Mocke, Jordan Molyneux, Terry Oborne, Shane O' Donoghue, Robb Pritchard, Craig Pusey, David Sutherland, William Terrington and Matt Zollo

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TEL +44 (0)20 8639 4400 FAX 020 8639 4411 EMAIL info@mercedesenthusiast.co.uk WEB www.mercedesenthusiast.co.uk

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS/BACK ISSUES

Mercedes Enthusiast Subscriptions, Trinity House, Sculpins Lane, Wethersfield, Essex, CM7 4AY, UK.

TEL +44 (0) 1371 853633 FAX +44 (0) 1371 851808

EMAIL mercedesenthusiast@escosubs.co.uk

Newstrade Seymour Distribution, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT, UK. TEL +44 (0) 20 7429 4000

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#### Editorial comment and the latest from the *Mercedes Enthusiast* team



One final question: would you pay £800 for a W201 190E? I bet many of our readers would be tempted



arely do engineers make themselves available for discussions about **their past creations.** But Hartmut Feyhl of tuner RennTech in the US is not your average engineer, and the car he helped to develop and build – the illustrious AMG Hammer – is certainly not your average saloon. If you've ever wondered how this 180mph plus monster came to be, then head to page 20 now! Elsewhere in this issue, you can read about the first AMG sold in M-B showrooms – the C36 – and discover how Mercedes' designo range of extras has allowed owners to personalise their cars over the years. Not forgetting the story of a wonderfully restored 230GE Cabriolet in Ireland with equally compelling pictures to match.



One final question: would you pay £800 for a W201 190E with 160,000 miles? I bet many of our readers would be tempted. A recent eBay listing offered just that. The sticking point was that the car had been repossessed by local authorities, presumably due to the owner's bad debts, and so came with no service history. The UK's MOT database confirmed that the mileage was genuine, although for every MOT test pass there was a failure the following year, and constant mention of rust. It was this car that inspired this month's Buyer's Guide...

**Kyle Molyneux Executive Editor** 

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



lan Kuah ME columnist and tuner expert lan Kuah explores the history of AMC's mighty Hammer by speaking to the man who literally built US market cars - Hartmut Feyhl.

"The Hammer required a lot of sheet metal alterations to make the V8 fit into an engine bay designed for a straight-six," lan confirms. Complemented by spectacular images from Craig Pusey, this issue's cover story will bolster your knowledge of what is arguably the most iconic AMC of all time. The story begins on page 20.



Wilhelm Lutjeharms Bulletproof (or armoured) cars have been with us almost as long as the automobile itself. This issue, we drive a W222 S-Class

built by South African-based SVI Engineering. Contributor Wilhelm Lutjeharms investigates what it takes to make the S-Class one of the safest cars in the world. "What appears to be regular automotive glass is actually a polycarbonate and glass sandwich," Wilhelm explains. Find out more on page 46.

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### **Contents**

### April/May 2022

#### **UPFRONT**

- News The latest Mercedes news, launches and motorsport
- Star Shot The early days of vehicle telemetry
- Past Master Remembering the second-generation SLK
- Star Talk How AMG went from strength to strength
- Merc Man The best way to buy a Mercedes-Benz
- Letters Readers have their say on a range of topics
- Social Club A modified GT. Adenauer barn find and more!

#### **FEATURES**



- If I had a Hammer... A first-hand account of how AMG developed its 1980s supercar killer, the six-litre Hammer
- 28 The start of something big Long-time C36 fan Sam Parmer lets us pour over his rare Lapis Blue AMG
- 34 Coing the extra mile The history of designo options and how they made Mercedes cars even more special
- 40 Signal of intent Restored by Cardock Classics in Ireland, this 230GE Cabriolet must be one of the best in the world
- 46 Bulletproof Benz South African company SVI Engineering reveals how it turns Mercs from luxurious to bulletproof
- 50 The 1,000km promise The EQXX is Mercedes' most efficient car ever - we explain what it means for the future
- 56 The secrets we keep This 230SL Pagoda was once owned by an employee of the US Central Intelligence Agency
- 62 Electric avenue We put a top-spec EQA350 against a EQC400 in a battle between two battery-powered SUVs
- 68 Pedal to the metal Slide into the world of rallying and find out which M-Bs we think would make great dirt chuckers
- 72 Big Moment 1996: AAVision The sports utility vehicle concept that inspired a whole new type of Mercedes-Benz

#### THE BACK END

- Mercedes Buyer Deals, tips, top three steals and more
- Buyer's Guide Two-litre W201 190E models
- 86 Running Reports Latest updates on the Merc fleet
- Merc Trader Find your next three-pointed star here
- From the archives 116-series 300SD from the USA



> The option

The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

# News MGEQE

AMG reaffirms its commitment to EVs with the launch of two new performance four-doors

ercedes-AMG has revealed two new electric saloons the EQE43 4Matic and the EQE53 4Matic+. The EQE43's twin-motor drive system produces the equivalent of 469bhp and 633lb ft of torque for a 4.2-second 0-62mph time and 130mph top speed.

The EQE53 uses special AMG and 137mph vmax. An optional speed to 149mph. The DPP also adds Race Start launch control

performance battery with a

system and 90.6kWh of usable capacity, range on a single charge is EQE43, and 276 to 322 miles for the EQE53 – all the while

these new AMGs have a similar improving the turning circle at low when travelling at a faster rate of AMG Ride Control+ air suspension and AMG brake



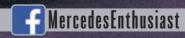
#### Big power, big range

system's hyperscreen, which optional. On the move, occupants are also treated to a three-mode

were not confirmed at the time of writing, but expect the EQE53 4Matic+ to cost in excess of this year. Sadly, the EQE43 4Matic won't be coming to the UK,



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## o's 300

Presented as a retirement gift from Mercedes-Benz to legendary racer Juan Manuel Fangio, this 1958 300SL Roadster is being offered by RM Sotheby's in a sealed-bid auction event, held from March 21 to 25.

A matching numbers example, the SL has striking bodywork finished in Metallic Light Blue, and the cabin retains its original Cream leather upholstery. The seats, steering wheel and gearlever all show signs of use by the great Argentine, who travelled over 70,000km (43,000 miles) in the car during tours of Europe and South America.

Fangio used the Roadster for ambassadorial duties until 1986 when the supercar was placed on permanent display at the Juan Manuel Fangio Museum located in his home city of Balcarce, Argentina, where it has remained until now.

Some may not know Fangio was the official Mercedes-Benz dealer in Buenos Aires from 1951, and became President of Mercedes-Benz South America in 1974. He passed away in July 1995 at the age of 84.



 $\triangle$  The highly original cream leather interior displays a fabulous patina.



# News n brief



△ E-PERFORMANCE ON SALE AMG's most powerful road car yet, the 831bhp GT63 S E-Performance, is now available in the UK from £173.655 OTR with deliveries starting in April. Sadly, the UK market won't get a special edition model finished in green

**□** SPOTTED: CLE CABRIOLET

hell magno paintwork.

A new performance convertible has been spotted testing in the Arctic Circle. The rumoured CLE Cabriolet is thought to be based on the 206-series C-Class and could replace two-door C-Class and E-Class models. It could also feature AMC's new four-cylinder hybrid engine, among others.



#### △ AUTHOR PASSES AWAY

Nik S Greene, the highly knowledgeable and prolific author of many informative books on Mercedes cars and other marques, has passed away at the age of 58. His publications are worthy additions to any Mercedes collection and can be found at www.w126book.com.

#### $\nabla$ NEW FORMULA 1 SEASON

The Mercedes-AMC F1 Team has presented its new racer for the 2022 season. The W13 will be driven by Brits Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, and displays a whole raft of aero modifications to meet the sport's new rules. which are designed to improve overtaking. The season kicks off on March 20 in Bahrain.



## Rebranding

Daimler AC underwent a rebranding on February 1 and is now known as Mercedes-Benz Group AG. As part of a substantial reorganisation, operations had already started being simplified by transferring commercial vehicles to Daimler Truck Holding AG, now an independent company. Daimler Mobility AG, the department for insurance, leasing, finance and charging subscriptions has been renamed Mercedes-Benz Mobility AG.



Now the most valuable luxury car brand worldwide, the aim of Mercedes-Benz Group AG is to create further value for its shareholders, develop electrification, autonomy and connectivity, as well as focus on the passenger car brands. CEO Ola Källenius proclaimed this move is the way to "continue the legacy of our founders by taking the lead in electric mobility and vehicle software."



## Fit for a king

A 1931 770K four-door cabriolet previously owned by King Faisal I of Iraq and Syria recently sold for \$2,555,555 (around £1.92m) on the US website, Bring A Trailer. Delivered in 1931 and used for official business purposes, the car was subsequently owned by King

Faisal I's son King Ghazi and grandson King Faisal II. Following a refurbishment in Beirut in 1958, just before King Faisal II was overthrown and assassinated, the 200bhp convertible was laid up in Baghdad until it was purchased by the Indianapolis Motor Speedway foundation in 1967 and rolled out on special occasions.

Finished in black with a red leather interior, and powered by a 7.7-litre, supercharged straight-eight engine, the grand open-topped limousine is believed to be one of just 117 W07-series produced between 1930 and 1938.





In the background of this picture is a one-off Mercedes-Benz 300 (W189) built for vehicle development purposes. This unique vehicle was connected to the development vehicle via a cable, enabling it to record data from sensors providing dynamic measurements. The photograph was taken on Mercedes' test track in Untertürkheim and shows a W111 Saloon in the foreground. Today, the 300 can be seen in the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart, in Legend Room 5: Visionaries - Safety and the Environment.

IMAGE MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear



# **R171 SI K**

With SLR-inspired looks, sporty handling and a tasty selection of powerplants, the R171 SLK was a big hit for Mercedes-Benz - and these roadsters now make great second hand buys

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG & TERRY OBORNE

ow do you follow a spectacular success? That was the challenge facing Mercedes-Benz once the pretty and popular R170 SLK came to the end of its eight-year life cycle in 2004. Over 311,200 of the 'mini SL' had been sold, in the process the Mazda MX-5-inspired roadster opening up a profitable new niche for the car maker, and the temptation would have been to apply a subtle update that avoided fixing anything that wasn't broken.

But this approach can spoil the purity and magic of the original, and it was decided that the second generation, R171 model would redefine as well as refine the SLK. Clearly, Mercedes-Benz's top priority was to make it more of a sports car than the R170 had been; that model was perceived as a small but perfectly formed cruiser, even though there had been the supercharged SLK32 AMG with 349bhp, particularly when compared to its compatriot rival, the Porsche Boxster.

Hence the successor that

appeared in March 2004 was not only clad in a far sharper suit, including a pointy, SLR McLareninspired front end that could hardly have been more aggressive. After the softly styled R170 SLK, that front end verged on the preposterous, but after the initial shock it looked completely right.

ngine output was stepped up **significantly.** The base SLK200 Kompressor used the then recently introduced Twinpulse engine, which carried over the forced induction from the preceding 2.0- and 2.3-litre engines, but which was 1.8 litres and produced 161bhp, about the same as the old 2.0-litre.

A new-generation 3.5-litre V6, for the SLK350, replaced the old 3.2-litre, and with 268bhp was 25 per cent more powerful (it rose to 301bhp later on). The SLK55 AMG introduced V8 power to the SLK, its normally aspirated 5.4-litre M113 V8 having a

muscular 376lb ft torque to back up its 355bhp. A sportier chassis, including rack and pinion steering, complemented the more potent engines.

Slightly longer in wheelbase and length, and wider than the original, the R171 afforded a little extra cabin room over the quite tight-fitting predecessor, and the interior was redesigned in line with the model's more ambitious profile. The optional Airscarf, which directs a flow of temperature-controlled air to the neck and shoulders when the roof is down, was a major innovation for the model.

What hadn't changed in essence was the amazing metal vario-roof system that had arrived with the R170. But it was refined to open and close in an even briefer time -22 seconds, three less than before - and with a now pivoting rear screen took up less boot space when lowered.

Had Mercedes-Benz stuck to its traditional marketing method, in







▼ Early AMG with side vents and twin spoke 18-inch alloys.

 $\nabla \nabla$  Diffuser-style rear end of 2008-on facelifted roadster.





2004 the £30,000 to £50,000 R171 (the equivalent of about £50,000 to £70,000 now) would have remained an expensive indulgence for the lucky few. But by then Stuttgart was bent on global sales expansion, and using its financial division to offer hard-to-resist incentives and low-cost purchase schemes made it a roadster for the people. The legacy of all these sales is a vast choice of used examples, many still in great shape and eminently affordable from around £4,000 upwards.

The R171 isn't old enough to be



called a classic, but already its potential in that respect is obvious: a distinct, slim and compact mid-2000s look that predates the automotive bulkiness to come, combined with engineering to make it a roadster that is near faultless to drive and own. It even managed to side-step Mercedes' quality problems of that time, feeling well built and long-lasting.

The wide choice of engines allows the R171 to be what you want it to be. For those whose priority is simply the joy of a practical roadster, the SLK200 with its powerful enough 1.8 motor does the job perfectly well. But if you take the view that a Mercedes-Benz should offer the silkiness of six cylinders, the SLK350 - or the 228bhp SLK280 with a 3.0-litre version of the same super sweet (M272) V6 engine – will put a smile of your face. Both are notably economical for their capacity, and you can chose between seven-speed automatic and six-speed manual transmissions, the latter a surprisingly good match for the car.

#### hat smile will turn into the broadest of grins on settling into the

SLK55 AMG, a model now available from around £15,000. But doesn't the mighty M113 that powered heavyweights like the E55 and SL55 overwhelm the dainty SLK chassis that's devoid of all electronic suspension aids? No - you might inadvertently smoke the rear wheels sometimes, but the suspension and braking are well up to the task. If original owners had any doubts, they could order the AMG Performance Package, which saw further brake and suspension upgrades.

After evolving into the R172 in 2011, and adopting the revived 'SLC' title in 2016, the bloodline ended in 2020 after nearly a quarter century. We'll remember the SLK as a fun, uncomplicated roadster from an era when it was possible not just to offer such cars, but power them with V8 engines and trumpet their high performance. For the time being, though, SLK Roadsters are still around and comfortably priced ownership is just a click away on a used car sales platform.

Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

# Hot starters





#### lan Kuah recalls drives in new 1990s AMGs, including a 124-series E-Class and 140-series S-Class, which were built at a time when their developer's relationship with Mercedes-Benz was blossoming

The M104 motor

had received a

new crank,

pistons, heads

and intake

ercedes-AMG is the performance sub-brand of Mercedes-Benz AG, the latest name for the oldest car maker in the world that recently re-branded itself vet again. So time for me to rewind the clock 30 years for AMG fans curious about the era when the transition to ownership by Mercedes had just begun.

The 1990s were indeed strange times for the Mercedes-Benz dealer network in Europe and the USA. In 1990, Daimler-Benz AG entered a co-operative agreement with AMG, whose products became officially available in Mercedes-Benz dealerships starting with the C36 AMG in 1993 (read more about this car from page 28).

Introducing a high performance model that could be seen in showrooms and test driven was one thing, but AMG body styling kits, alloy wheels, suspension and other parts started to find their way into the network well before the first complete cars arrived. In essence, the dealers woke up one day and found a directive from head office on their desks instructing them to market and sell the very AMG parts they had been discouraging customers from fitting just the day before!

A total shock to the system for both the sales and parts departments, it took them a while to realise that this was actually a great opportunity to increase the profitability of their dealerships. Painting and fitting body styling parts contributed to the workshop billable hours, while alloy wheels have always been a really easy sell with a healthy built-in profit margin.

t was against this background in 1992 that Mercedes' PR in Stuttgart invited me to come over and drive some of its newly-minted AMG test cars. This was a small event with only a handful of guests, but as we rolled through the gates of Schloss Ludwigsburg it was clear that the pomp and ceremony had not been spared.

I was particularly thankful for the good weather as I was handed the keys to an Almandine Red 300CE-24 Cabriolet with colour-coded AMG body styling, sports suspension and 17-inch AMG alloys. Best of all, it had the 3.4-litre engine conversion – the step before the 3.6-litre that was to power the production C36 AMG the following year.

Mated to a 722.3 four-speed automatic gearbox modified for faster shifting, the M104 in-line six-cylinder motor had received a new steel crank, high compression pistons, polished

heads and a modified intake and exhaust for 268bhp at 6,700rpm and 243lb ft of torque at 5,000rpm. We were told that the list price of this car was north of DM160,000 at the time (around £55,000). I had attended the launch of two significant 124-series

models the year before - the 300CE Cabriolet and the 500E, so the experience of the base model of this test car was still relatively fresh in my mind.

The AMG 3.4 was a whole different ball game, taking off with a crispness, punch and a free-revving character that totally eclipsed the already fine standard car. While the lowered suspension, big wheels and low-profile rubber looked fantastic they did not do the ride any favours over the short-sharp cobble stones of the castle driveway. The Cabriolet's bodyshell, which normally feels quite rigid with the comfort-oriented suspension of the standard car, certainly did not appreciate it.

On the autobahn and smooth German country roads no such problem existed and I revelled in the power and response of the tuned 3.4-litre motor, whose crisp straight-six

soundtrack came through loud and clear during my spirited al fresco drive.

After lunch, I was introduced to the heavyweight of the test car group. As AMG did not begin selling its 376bhp six-litre conversion for the M119 DOHC V8 until 1993. and the seven-litre V12 was

still in development, this 140-series S-Class test car had a standard 322bhp five-litre V8. However, the aim here was to show off the body styling, alloy wheels and exhaust.

have to say I was not enamoured by the multi-piece alloys on this car, which looked fussy and visually smaller than a wheel of monoblock **construction.** In comparison, the five-spoke design worn by the 300CE Cabriolet 3.4 and its slightly convex variation are my favourite AMG wheels from this era. They look elegant yet tough and are also easy to clean - all positive attributes in my book.

And so this was my first contact with AMG as it underwent the slow merger with Mercedes that would not be completed for almost another eight years. My next encounter with AMG would be the C36 launch in 1993.

 $\operatorname{\triangleleft}$  AMG styling set off by the Almandine paint.

**▽ 300CE-24** Cabrio with AMC's 3.4-litre upgrade































Please quote Number when making enquiries

The expert on all things Mercedes gives us his latest views...

# New or used?



This issue, David Sutherland reasons why, when it comes to buying modern Mercedes-Benz cars, choosing brand new and signing a financing agreement is his preferred approach...

here are many different strategies when it comes to acquiring a car, including paying cash for brand new, unsullied by human hands, or near terminal, unlikely to survive beyond the next MOT without an unrealistic cash infusion.

Since buying my first excuse for a car as a student in 1974, I have tried it all ways and concluded that, given my needs and mileage, the preferred way is financing a new car using the manufacturer's PCP scheme with its low interest rates, and then after the three/four-year contract converting into a loan for outright purchase. I did that with a W169 A-Class which I kept for eight years (it cost £20,000 and was sold for four grand), and I'm repeating it with our GLC after the PCP ended in 2021.

To me, it's by far the best route, but when I try to explain this to others, I'm often greeted with at best shaking heads and at worst hostility and ridicule that I've wasted all this money. Trying to tell someone they're buying a car the wrong way seems to be as insulting as accusing them of being a bad driver. Of course, different approaches have their pros and cons, so I thought it might be useful to sum up what these are.

**▼** tarting at the top end of the price scale, one common objection to brand new is that if a car depreciates at least 25 per cent as soon as it's registered, why not buy at a year old? There are two problems. First, that 25 per cent off is the basic 'trade' price, the amount a dealer would pay to take the car off your hands, before reselling with a margin. As people rarely attempt to sell a one-year old car privately, you'll be lucky to see one for sale

outside franchised dealers - whose one-year olds are all 'ex-demonstrators'.

Covid added a major complication by, for various reasons, boosting used car values. Now while franchised dealers typically discount new car prices, used car pricing appears to be based on the original list price, and vou'll see that on the official Mercedes-Benz used car website.



For example, a brand new C220d Coupe AMG Line Edition was being offered at a discounted £42,560, or £558 per month on Agility PCP with a £7,500 deposit/trade-in. However, the same model six months old and with 6,500 miles was £44,999 or, with a similar deposit, nearly £700 per month - the steeper price made higher still due to 9.9 per cent APR compared to PCP's 6.1 per cent.

Retail prices are significantly lower after the three-year stage, after the factory warranty has expired and an MOT is due, and many cars are unloaded post-contract by finance companies. Thus the equivalent of the above C220d could be purchased for around £25,000, a more attractive proposition for many given that monthly finance repayments are much lower for a car that could still look pretty new with 35,000 miles on the clock. But unless you buy from a Mercedes dealer (who'll ask closer to £30,000) you'll be on your own if anything breaks, and modern Mercs are never cheap to fix.

The next interesting price point is once a car hits 10 years old, by which time depreciation is almost, or actually zero, and sticking with the C-Class Coupe, which at that point was the C204 model, cars are available for £6,500 to £7,000 (unless you fancy a C63 with the extraordinary 6.2-litre M156 V8 motor, at £25,000). That's about 15 per cent of the cost of a six-month old ex-demo, but your expectations have to be a lot different. The prospect a major mechanical renewal such as a timing chain, gearbox electronic shifter plate, air conditioning condenser or broken suspension springs is ever present.

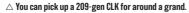
Finally, what can motoring scrooges find for three figures? Predecessors to the C204 are available: early 2000s Sports Coupes and 208and 209-series CLKs, some clean looking, others less so. The hazard at this price is that money spent beyond fuel, oil and road tax is wasted because it can never be recouped should

you sell the car, although it's more likely that ownership will end with a one-way trip to the breaker's, setting you back to square one. Plus, would you feel confident that such a car will complete a long journey without problems?

I guess there's no 'best' way to buy your Mercedes-Benz. But after reviewing options I'm in no doubt which is the one for me!

I'm often greeted with at best shaking heads and at worst hostility and ridicule







∧ 204-series C-Class Coune - £6.500 at 10 years old.

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

# Letters

#### Power to the future!

■ Mercedes and AMG are entering a whole new phase with the release of the first ever electric AMG, the EQS53. Gone are the days of naturally aspirated engines, with inductors and inverters replacing cylinders and valves. The electric drive system of the EQS53 is a capable performer – maximum power and torque over a wider range than a combustion engine, which only gives its

maximum performance within a relatively narrow rev band.

Hopefully AMG continues manufacturing combustion engines with its unique touch, but perhaps environmental concerns will mean very few combustion engined AMG offerings will be produced in the not too distant future. Surely AMG could produce the fastest EV?

Faisal Rafigue, via email





△ Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and Red Bull driver Max Verstappen went head-to-head in 2021.

#### **Turning the page**

■ A new F1 season brings fresh hope that Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton can finally win his record-breaking eighth world title after what was a highly controversial ending to 2021. I must admit the Abu Dhabi debacle left a bitter taste in my mouth. In a way, I feel sorry for Red Bull driver Max Verstappen who deserved the championship every bit as much as Hamilton, but whose maiden title win is now forever connected to a incorrect decision by a race steward who has since been removed from his position.

I do think we are witnessing something special with the

Mercedes-Hamilton partnership, and should savour every moment of it. That up-and-coming British driver George Russell is now sitting in the other Merc should be celebrated, too. I expect fireworks this season, that's for sure!

#### **Gavin Harlow, Leicestershire**

#### Wheels matter

■Bob Cosford's letter in the February/March 2022 issue ('Changing wheels') was of great interest. My E400 4Matic has 20-inch wheels and run-flat tyres. The ride was poor even with the air suspension. Changing the tyres while retaining the same wheels made a huge difference and tyre



 $\triangle$  Tony Stephenson is aiming for a C300e.

sensors were unaffected. The 20-inch wheels fitted to the CLS are off-putting, so I've settled on the new C300e PHEV with 18-inch items.

Your article on the new C-Class in the same issue was great as it was much more detailed than new car features in previous issues. A great step forward for the magazine!

#### **Tony Stephenson, Essex**

#### Parts delay

■ Six months ago, my 2013 E220d Cabriolet had a rear impact which activated the headrest's neck protection. The local Mercedes dealership claims that they are



 $\triangle$  Gordon Starkie's cabrio needs seat parts.

unable to acquire a replacement headrest. It has been placed on back order with no delivery date. Resetting the passenger side headrest is apparently not an option, so the car cannot be driven

Mercedes's customer care informed me that they have no influence in the procurement process and cannot provide any details as to who the manufacturer is and country of origin. Your help would be much appreciated!

#### Gordon Starkie, via email

We do know main dealers are struggling to get hold of some new parts at the moment. Let us speak to the UK press department and see if we can help.

#### **Cosworth project**

■ I am slowly working on my 1989 190E 2.5-16, but I'm short of many pieces. Right now, I'm trying to remove the air conditioning pump – I've got all the bolts free but dare not completely remove the unit due to its weight. I'm disabled, which is one of the reasons why it is taking so long to complete the front suspension and brakes.

I do not know where to buy parts for my 190E – a few suggestions would be very helpful.

#### Jim Stephenson, via Facebook

It sounds like you've got a great project on your hands, Jim. Parts for all Mercedes are difficult to source right now due to effects of the pandemic. However, we would recommend trying pfsparts.com, classicmercedesparts.co.uk, german-spob.de and niemoeller.de.



#### WRITETO

The Editor, Mercedes Enthusiast, Sundial Magazines, Sundial House, 17 Wickham Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 5IS FAX 020 8639 4411

info@mercedesenthusiast.co.uk

FACEBOOK MercedesEnthusiast **INSTAGRAM** Mercedesenthusiastmag TWITTER MercEnthusiast











#### This month's Talking Point...

You have a grand to spend on a Mercedes-Benz - what do you buy?

"W163 ML270 CDI - they are underrated and good value workhorses." Donovan Croucamp

"Just purchased a 2001 CL55 AMC for £1,000. I was going to break it for the engine but I think I'll keep it. What a machine." Bobby Heer

> "An S210 E320 CDI Estate, or an S202 C-Class Estate." **Kingdom Specialist Cars Ltd**

"A 1983 W201 waiting to be rescued," Bens Fill

"The silver, 2006 E280 CDI Estate with full history and 163,000 on the clock, which I let go for £1,000 to avoid hassle with tyre kickers." Simon Brown

"C-Class Sports Coupe Kompressor." Jeremy Witmeur Mimimc

Take part in Talking Point every month on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. See the bottom of page 16 for our respective websites!

### Merc Spotter



As our designo feature explains across pages 34 to 38, Mercedes-Benz has offered some striking and unusual colour combinations over the years. However, we don't believe the manufacturer has ever offered such brightly painted alloy wheels as the ones seen by reader Lucy Adams recently. Clearly, the owner of this Sunburst Yellow R170 SLK spotted in Merseyside felt there was a gap in the market and has stamped their own mark on the roadster. What do you think of the result? Could the owner be onto something?

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,



The Finest Examples of Mercedes-Benz Cars from the 1960s to the 1990s

#### **300CE Coupe 1988F**

Pajett Red met, Palomino leather, aircon, cruise, electric tilt/slide sunroof, illuminated vanity mirrors, heated seats electrically adjustable seats and original 15 hole alloy wheels, FSH, only 27,000m . . £19,950





#### E220 Cabriolet 1996N

Tourmaline Green metallic, black soft top, Mushroom leather, walnut wood, leather steering wheel and gearknob, 4 speed auto, airbags, heated seats, original alloy wheels FSH, 95,000m . . . . £12,950

#### 230CE Coupe 1992J

Almandine Red metallic Mushroom leather, Walnut wood, 4 speed auto, 4x electric windows, elec sunroof, central locking, front & rear armrests. original alloy wheels, FSH, 96.000m. .





#### 280SL Roadster LHD 1975P

Topaz Brown, brown soft top, Mushroom MB Tex interior. manual gearbox, manual windows, rear seats, orig Becker Monza, orig alloys, all tools and manuals, FSH, two owners from one family, 71,000m . . . £34,950

<< Free UK Road Tax >>

#### 230CE Coupe 1983Y

Champagne metallic, Date cloth, Zebrano wood, 4 speed auto, 4x elec windows, electric sunroof, central locking, f & r armrests, luggage nets, original alloy wheels, one owner from new, FSH, 65,000m . . £19,950





#### 300SL Roadster 1987F

Diamond Blue metallic. matching hardtop, blue soft top, blue sport check interior, 4 speed auto, ABS, electric windows, rear seats, original 15 hole alloy wheels, FSH, £28.950

#### E320 Coupe 1994M

Azurite Blue met, blue leather, walnut, 5-Sp auto, elec windows, aircon, elec seats, airbags, elec steering col. wood/lthr steering wheel, headrests, armrests, cruise, orig Sportline alloys, c/l remote, FSH, 88,000m . £13,950



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# Social Club

Mercedes-Benz related highlights from the world of social media



**Wallner Classic** 

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**Doug's Cars** 

@dougs\_cars

Some friends in VA (Vancouver, Canada) just picked up this Adenauer.



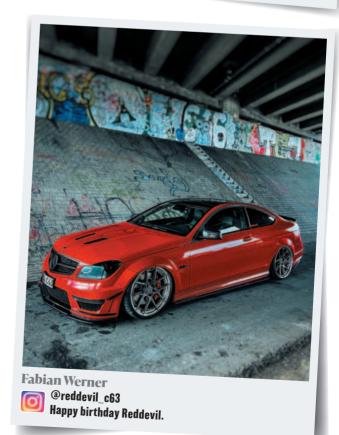
**Andreas Heinze** 

@andreas280ge W463 meets W123: G500 (1999) and 250 (1978). Legends come and stay. Andreas' 250 Saloon has covered just 46,000km since new.



@collectingcars

This W108 300SEL 6.3 Crayford Estate is an iconic piece of the marque's history, and is thought to be the only example left in existence. Finished in Moss Green and with 71,000 miles on the clock, this masterful V8 wagon sold in Collecting Cars' auction for £35,350. It was originally owned by ex-Connaught Engineering Formula 1 driver, Kenneth McAlpine.



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My R107 Love

@myr107love Manufactured in 1981, this UK-spec 380SL V8 is finished in Silver Blue and, according to its owner, is "no garage queen" but gets "pampered on a daily basis".



**JPMohan** 

@johnpmohanclassiccars

This Mercedes-Benz W111 Cabriolet has one of the nicest dashboards and makes keeping eyes on the road that little bit harder.



**Bodo Wuensch** 

@ponton\_ponton We all need sun!

This 1957 190 Ponton has been restored from top to bottom, and features a lightly modified M121 engine with 105bhp, linked to a transmission with 3.7 final drive ratio rather than the standard 4.1. The classic saloon also has a discreetly integrated IBeam sound transducer to improve the radio's audio quality.



**SPRAutos** 

@mercedes specialist\_manchester M156 63 AMG motor having its injectors replaced to avoid them failing and causing the dreaded engine lock-up.



**Mark Cosovich** 

@W123World Still packing them in for restoration/ service in 2022. This is W123 World.



**Les Rolling Forks** 

@lesrollingforks The adventure awaits us. With our travel companion Vlad, our Mercedes-Benz 911 truck from 1974.



**Ricardo Rüting** 

@ricardo\_rdesign Life is a journey - enjoy the ride. Image by @asiebendrei

Many will recognise the AMC Hammer as a performance icon of the 1980s, but few know exactly how these high-speed V8s came into being. Hartmut Feyhl was there from the beginning of development and built all cars for the US market. He reveals all about these road weapons...

WORDS IAN KUAH IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY & IAN KUAH

MG's 'Hammer' is a legend in the world of high performance saloons. Not only was it the first production saloon capable of 300km/h (or 303km/h, 188mph to be exact), it was also the conceptual trailblazer that led to Mercedes creating the 500E with Porsche. The Hammer was the brainchild of Hans Werner Aufrecht, who founded AMG in 1967, and remained its frontman and driving force until January 1 2005 when DaimlerChrysler acquired the balance of his shares.

The ideal person to tell the inside story of the Hammer is Hartmut Feyhl, founder and owner of RennTech. A native of Affalterbach, former AMG

When Mercedes began negotiations to buy a stake in AMG, one of its requests was that AMG would cease official operations in the US. Hartmut had the choice of returning to Germany or staying on. He chose to stay and soon founded RennTech to look after existing AMG clients. Today, RennTech is the most prominent home-grown Mercedes tuner in North America.

AMG's arsenal to stuff into the newest and most aerodynamic Mercedes model – the newly launched W124 sedan," Hartmut

5.2- and 5.4-litre versions of the M117 5.0-litre V8, but after the factory launched the 5.6-litre version in 1986 we were able to go to 6.0 litres with our own DOHC heads."

In those days, AMG was a tuner and race car preparation company without very deep pockets, and Aufrecht counted every penny when it came to R&D and prototype work. "This is why the donor car for the Hammer

prototype was the cheapest W124 we could buy – a 200D in blue-black metallic [code 199] with cloth trim," Hartmut explained.

"However, this turned out to be a false

economy in terms of man hours and sheer aggravation because the entire diesel fuel system including the tank and components like the fuel pumps and lines had to be removed before we could even begin the modification work," he said.

The Hammer required a lot of sheet metal alterations to make the V8 fit an



"After the factory launched the **5.6-litre** V8 in 1986, we were able to go to **6.0 litres** with our own DOHC heads"



#### Icon of performance - AMG 300E 6.0 Hammer

▷ engine bay designed for a straight-six. "The frame rails towards the rear of the engine bay had to be modified to take the larger V8," Hartmut explained. "We welded in stiffeners and made up a new firewall that was also removable. Clearance was particularly tight at the rear left side where the exhaust manifold had to miss the steering box.

"Weight distribution was not too badly affected, as the six had an iron block and the V8 was all-alloy," he continued. "The rear subframe, propshaft and driveshafts were upgraded to take the much more potent engine, and we also added a US-made Gleason-Torsen differential.

"The stock gearbox was borderline with this kind of power, and it was only later when I founded RennTech and some of the Hammer owners started coming to me for rebuilds that I did some modifications to strengthen it," he said. "The gearbox is fine when you run fast on the autobahn, but some of the US owners were running hard from stoplight to stoplight and heat soak became a problem. So I added more clutches to a modified drum and installed an oil cooler, which did the trick."

The German-built Hammers were based on four- (W124.020) and six-cylinder (W124.030) donor cars, but because the W124 was only sold in the US in six-cylinder form all the cars converted by AMG North America used 300E donor cars.

AMG North America was based in Westmont, IL near Chicago and run by Richard Buxbaum, a successful grey market dealer who imported high-end German marques like Alpina, AMG and Ruf to satisfy wealthy car enthusiasts looking for something truly exotic. AMG NA had been established in 1983, but after two years things were flat and Richard had not managed to sell many cars or parts. Then the US Government closed the grey market loophole that allowed non-US models to be imported, and everything changed overnight.

In discussions with Aufrecht on how to get around this and improve sales, Richard explained that he needed someone from Germany to come over and build Hammers in the US using US-market donor cars. The upshot was that Hartmut needed to go to Chicago. "The whole process consumed a year, and in the summer of 1986 I flew over to the US planning to stay the three weeks it would take to update the first Hammer that had been sent over from Germany some months before," Hartmut recalled.

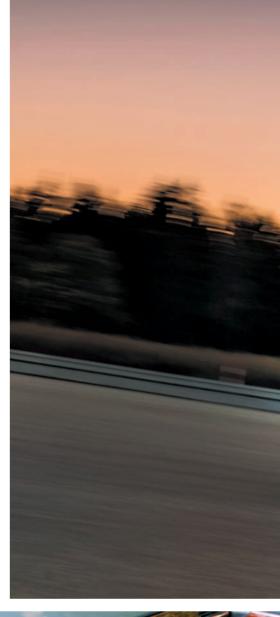
This Hammer had started life as Aufrecht's company car with an experimental 5.0-litre DOHC motor. Richard subsequently bought it and exported it to the US. By 1986, AMG had finalised the 6.0-litre for production along with detail improvements to the suspension and other components. With a 100x95.8mm bore and stroke, the US version of the 6.0-litre (5,953cc) version had a 9.2:1 compression

ratio and was good for 370bhp at 5,500rpm and 406lb ft at 4,000rpm. The European version had a 9.8:1 compression ratio and made 380bhp and 417lb ft. Every AMG engine built at the time was put onto an engine dynamometer and run-in and tested in the car before being signed off. That is why there were minimal engine problems when these cars were new.

Richard had promised Car & Driver magazine that they could borrow the 6.0-litre Hammer in the US for a test, so the first two of the three weeks of Hartmut's stay in Chicago led up to a serious deadline. The 6.0-litre V8 that he had built in Affalterbach was dispatched to America in a crate and was waiting for Hartmut when he arrived. Still suffering from jet lag, he set about removing the engine and gearbox from the blue-black W124. Over the next two weeks he installed the updated firewall and slotted in the new 6.0-litre V8, along with the upgraded electronics and suspension.

#### artmut had disassembled the whole car by himself, and at this point Richard and his crew were looking very nervous.

"Hey, are you sure it will be ready in time?" an anxious Richard asked as the deadline approached. Come the event and the car was ready to go, which suitably impressed the team. Up to this point, Aufrecht had been really pushing for Hartmut to be the man to build Hammers in the US, while Richard was not so sure. However, after that show of efficiency







and skill under pressure, Richard had only one thing to say to Aufrecht: "We want this guy!"

"A journalist from *Car & Driver* flew into Chicago and we drove the Hammer back to their base in Ann Arbour, Michigan for the test," Hartmut explained. "After they were done, I drove it back to Chicago."

In October 1986, Hartmut returned to the US, this time to stay. AMG North America had three partners - Richard Buxbaum was the founder and CEO, Aufrecht represented AMG, and the third partner was an investor group from Chicago, who financed the operation and inventory. Next, they acquired a silver Hammer 6.0 that had also been run by Aufrecht in Germany. This was sold to Bill Acquavella, the New York art dealer and owner of Acquavella Galleries, who kept it for a few years. "Years later, I built him a new car with our 6.0-litre M119 V8 conversion, and then he sold the original Hammer," Hartmut said. "A friend of Bill's son had been given a ride when he was young and was blown away. Recently he found this car in not very good shape and we restored it for him."

The first US-built car was red, which was the third or fourth Hammer in existence at the time and ended up being tested by just about every significant US car magazine and newspaper, and a few high-profile lifestyle

publications like *Playboy*. Significantly, this car also graced the cover of Andy Cohen's famous *Beverly Hills Motoring Accessories* (BHMA) mail order catalogue. This was a really big deal as BHMA was internationally famous and its catalogue had a print run of around 1m copies. BHMA was AMG NA's West Coast distributor and ended up selling about half of all the US-built Hammers.

"Before the car was even finished, it was shipped to LA for the grand opening of BHMA's new premises, and I flew over to LA to finish it in their shop," Hartmut remembered. "When it was finally finished, the test drive took place around midnight or later. I drove down to Pacific Coast Highway, or Highway 1 with one of the guys from the shop and let it rip all the way back to LA. Once I was satisfied that everything was fine, we arrived back in LA at about 6am.

"Formula 1, Le Mans and Sebring ace,
Phil Hill drove the car for Road
& Track magazine and was
really wowed by its
performance," said
Hartmut. "After
that, I did not see
it again for a
year as it did
the rounds

> One of AMG's rare US-market Hammers from RT. with the press. When it came back, it would not drive straight and was actually dangerous. I replaced all the suspension components and aligned it, but it was never right. I suspected that one of the journalists must have somehow twisted the shell."

### In 1988, Aufrecht flew over for a really great customer event at the Skip Barber Racing School at Road America in

Wisconsin. After that, the red car was sold and popped up in NY or NJ many years later in some small auto shop. "The owner did not want to sell it at the time, but eventually did after playing with it for two or three years," Hartmut explained. "I heard it is still out there, but I'm not keen to acquire it as I know it has big problems.

"I built somewhere between seven and 10 M119-powered cars in the early 1990s using the





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# "The first US-built car was red and was the third or fourth Hammer in existence at the time"

⊳ owner in early 2021," Hartmut said. "I did not recognise it at first because a few silver Hammers were built, then I saw all the car magazines in the trunk and the penny dropped." The owner later sent me a video made by his car audio installer in New York who built new mobile tech into the original car phone.

"While the W124 was very slippery with the base 200D registering just 0.29Cd in the wind tunnel, we had to do further work to improve the aerodynamics so that the car could reach our 300km/h target," Hartmut explained. "The prototype Hammer went like a rocket up to around 280km/h [174mph] plus, but it was really hard to get it beyond 290km/h [180mph]. We tried lowering the car, fitting narrower tyres, and experimented with final drive ratios, all without success.

/// /e then blueprinted an engine and installed special cams, which boosted output by 20bhp, but even that was not enough to break the magic 300km/h [186mph] barrier. We also hand-selected the transmission," said Hartmut. "Erhard Melcher developed a little more aggressive set of cams with eight degrees more duration. Worth another 5hp, this took the output up to around 390hp [385bhp]. This was the only car built with those cams although a couple of power-hungry US customers asked me to install them in their cars.

"We created a flat bottom under the car using thin aluminium panels, but we still ran into a brick wall at 298km/h [185mph]," he recalled. The crux of the matter was that drag increases with the square of speed, and a disproportionate amount of power is

⊳ RennTechrestored 6.0 used by AMC's Aufrecht



miles covered.

**⊳ AMC 6.0 V8** of veritable thrust

needed to achieve small increments in speed. This was clearly an aerodynamics issue...

"We knew that the Porsche 928S would comfortably reach 255km/h [158mph] with 310hp, which was much less power than the Hammer, so we examined its aerodynamics in detail," said Hartmut. "We saw that the Porsche had shutters for the radiator that closed at speed, and the reduction in drag from this mod alone was worth 4 to 5km/h in top speed. We rigged a similar system for the Hammer, and this enabled it to comfortably slip past the 300km/h benchmark. The fact that this was the only car we built with those underpanels and shutter system makes it very distinctive, but as it was just a jury-rigged prototype built for the top speed record, the shutter system

> was removed before the car went to the US," Hartmut explained. "When I looked under the silver car

> > after it arrived

here last year, I saw that it had aluminium underpanels, although some were missing. The final clincher that confirmed its identity was the black soot below the exhaust headers on the heat insulation that we stuck onto the steering box of every Hammer. This was revealed as soon as we pulled out the motor.

#### The story behind this modification is actually quite funny in hindsight, although it created panic at the time,"

Hartmut mused. "Both Aufrecht and Kurt Pflugfelder – AMG's workshop manager – always drove like maniacs all the way up the hill to the factory." The latter had earned the nickname 'Pflugi', which is phonetically similar to the word 'flug', the German word for 'fly'. The staff could hear the V8 in full cry coming up the hill, and would say, 'Pflugi is coming!'.

"I remembered the incident when Aufrecht was coming in hot, full throttle up the hill, then hard on the brakes left and left into the car park to his office on the corner of where the customer centre is today," Hartmut continued. "I was at the counter in the office speaking to > be the secretary, when Aufrecht strode past into his office. A minute later someone suddenly shouted that the silver Hammer was smoking! I looked over my shoulder and at first I thought the smoke was coming off the brakes, which was not unusual. Then I realised that the smoke was coming from under the bonnet and screamed that the car was on fire. Aufrecht ran out and opened the bonnet while I grabbed a fire extinguisher. It was just beginning to burn so we caught it just in time, but the extinguisher powder made a mess."

The heat shield protecting the steering box from the exhaust headers on that side of the motor was made from fibre-glass with aluminium foil on top. This had become soaked with oil, and the extreme heat soak after Aufrecht's spirited drive caused the oil to ignite. "We cleaned up the engine bay, but as we did not take the engine out the black soot left over from the fire remained on the areas we could not reach," said Hartmut. "Last year was the first time the motor was removed since the car was built, and the remaining evidence of that fire jogged my memories of the early days of this car in Germany."

RennTech currently has a dark grey Hammer in for restoration. This example has the integrated duck tail bootlid spoiler handfabricated from sheet metal in the US. A Richard Buxbaum idea, this was aerodynamically identical to the AMG rear spoiler, which was made from GRP and bonded to the bootlid. but Aufrecht did



not like it only because it meant he could not sell his spoiler in that market.

So, what is a real AMG Hammer? If you are a purist, arguably only the four-door with the 6.0-litre, M117 AMG DOHC V8 motor counts as a true Hammer. According to AMG in Germany, the total number of Hammers produced, including Saloons, Coupes and the single TE stands at 54. While a few Hammers ended up in Japan, most have returned to the US or Europe. It is important to note that every single one of the 10 US-built cars was hand-crafted by Hartmut in Chicago.

Only one Hammer TE wagon was ever made, and this blue estate was built for the late Paul Fingold. In a twist of fate.

Andy Cohen sold BHMA to Paul Fingold's Canadian investment group in 1998. This car was then acquired by Aaron Hochman from Connecticut in the early 2000s, along with a dark grey coupe and a black Hammer saloon built for Stuart Hayim. With a price tag of US\$175,000 at the time, the Hammer saloon was seriously expensive, so it is no surprise that they were sold to high-net-worth individuals such as a director of Mellon Bank, who bought a grey car from Kicherer in Germany before the grey market was closed down.

Owning a Hammer is one thing. Having it run perfectly is quite another, as AMG's DOHC motor requires specialist knowledge to work on and set up correctly. "Back in the day, it was part of my job to teach people to work on these cars," explained Hartmut. "The main thing is the camshaft timing, which takes both practice and talent to get right."

With that in mind, RennTech offers full support to Hammer owners all over the world, and there is no-one better qualified to work on these cars than Hartmut Feyhl, the man who built most of them in the first place.

"Every single one of the 10 US-built cars was hand-crafted by Hartmut in Chicago" LB.MA 6040

Just the facts AMC 300E 6.0 Hammer (w124)

ENGINE M117 5,953cc V8 POWER 380bhp@5,500rpm Torque 417lb ft@4,000rpm Transmission 4-speed auto, RWD Weicht 1,725kg 0-62mph 5.2sec Top speed 188mph Years produced 1988 to 1996

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; weight is approximate

300E 6.0 Hammer











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he C36 AMG is one of the most elusive models of the 1990s. Despite being the first AMG officially sold in Mercedes-Benz showrooms, this P566 XWS 202-series C-Class is not widely recognised - and with

good reason. Just 5,221 units were

made. Available only as a four-door saloon from 1993 to 1997, it was superseded by the more abundant C43 and the ultra-rare C55 V8 Saloons and Estates.

The 124-series E36 Saloon, Estate, Coupe and Cabriolet launched around the same time as the C36 are equipped with the same straight-six engine and suffered a similar fate: produced in very limited numbers, they never quite received the same level of attention (or affection) that eight-cylinder cars from both Stuttgart and Affalterbach enjoy to this day.

The W202 C-Class picked up where the W201 190 left off, offering more interior space and comfort, increased refinement from the driveline, improved safety and more choice in the form of a much broader range that included an Estate version. Despite these advancements, though, it's the W201 that is the more sought-after generation today. Although the C36 proves there is hope yet for the first Mercedes designated 'C-Class'.

This Lapis Blue metallic example belongs to Sam Parmar, who lives in Surrey. Inspiration to own a C36 AMG came from seeing the F1 Safety Car version in 1996. After that first sighting, Sam promised himself that someday he would have his own. That day

arrived in 2011, although it wasn't a straightforward journey. A number of examples that Sam spotted for sale online did not make the grade, and an example he travelled many miles north to see turned out to be so rusty and scruffy that he didn't even bother getting out of his car to check it up closely.

fter that episode, Sam found this 1996 example with 105,000 miles on the clock. It is believed to be just one of two C36

AMGs in this colour in the UK. When brand new, the car was used occasionally by its first keeper, however after just three months on the road a roof tile fell onto the bonnet in a storm, smashing a headlamp in the process. The car was then stored for 10 years, during which time it was occasionally exercised, until April 2021 when the part-restoration could finally take place.

That work has taken much time and effort. Thanks to Lee and Ron at Vanleigh Coachworks in Surrey, this W202 C-Class's wheelarches, bootlid and bootlid lock are now completely rust-free, and you can't spot where the roof tile landed, so good is the repair work. To make the C36 drive and handle as good as it looks, Sam's local mechanic Nathan carried out a full renewal of the AMG suspension down to the subframe, fitting Powerflex bushes and even rebuilding the differential. As well as servicing the C36 Saloon, Nathan fixed a tricky crankshaft sensor oil leak, and will change the fluids every year going forwards, regardless of mileage.

△ Sam Parmar and family with the 1996 AMG.



**Market values** 

Sold before AMG officially became part of Mercedes-Benz. C36 AMGs hail from the tuner's bygone era - but what are they worth now?

At the time of writing, a handful of C36 AMGs were offered for sale in the UK. Manufactured in 1995 and now with 67.000 miles on the clock, the first example we found was advertised online by its private seller in London for £49.999 due to its 'one-off' nature and stack of options including three-piece AMG alloys, Azurite Blue paint and two-tone black/blue interior. The second C36, a 1994 car with 169,000 miles and living in Manchester with its private owner, was priced at £5,750 to reflect its condition. It did have a fresh MOT and service history.

The final two cars could be found on eBay. A silver, left-hand drive, ex Japan car built in 1997 had a sticker price of £11,991. While a one-owner, 80,000-miler from 1996 available at Branson Cars in Essex and also finished in silver, had a price of £19,950.



Germany's Mobile.de website provided far more choice, as you might expect, although all 19 cars advertised for sale when we looked were LHD. The cheapest C36 - a 1994 car in Almandine Red with 328,000km (204,000 miles) at dealer LX Motors - was €10.600 (£8.800). The most expensive car was offered by Autohaus Weippert for €39.950 (£33.300) owing to its low 52,000km (32,000 miles) and stunning condition.

As for C36s at auction, last year the website Collecting Cars sold a red, 1995 C36 with 300,000km (186,000 miles) in Australia for A\$19,000 (roughly £10,500). And during the June 2020 event of Classic Car Auctions in the UK, a silver, 1996 car imported from Japan with 49,000 miles (pictured) found a new home for £9.020.

#### **Bark and bite**

So, this performance saloon has been given a new lease of life and is surely among the finest W202s in the country. Its low stance on AMG monoblocks suggests real purpose and contributes to an undeniably sporty, powerful demeanour. The C36 has a lot of presence and looks far more purposeful than a six-cylinder R129 SL with small alloys, for example. And so it should, given that AMG-tuned, 3.6-litre straight-six engine under the bonnet, which is linked to an original, stainless steel AMG exhaust.

According to Sam, the C36 is a proper driver's car. "It can get a little wayward, which always puts a smile on my face. With new cars, you just get in and they basically drive you, whereas the C36 demands to be driven." Hardly a soft alternative to the V8, then. The C36's brake discs measure 288mm up front and 278mm at the rear, and Sam finds that they "bite very hard, and on demand." The four-speed automatic transmission (a 722.4 unit) is bulletproof – even more so than the five-speed auto installed on cars built from August 1996. After a gearbox service, Sam says that it was transformed from being simply a decent ▷

had 18-inch allovs



# C-Class sit up and take note ??

Description Search Sea

here is much else to the C36's styling that appeals too, including the chrome accents along the flanks, the rear AMG spoiler and the twin-pipe exhaust system whose square-cut tips stand proud of the bumper and let loose a

wonderful six-cylinder yowl under acceleration. Next up in terms of work on the car is the headlining, which has suffered from some years of being in storage. The overmats are factory original ribbed texture and need to be protected, so an extra set is on the way. After a few more minor bodywork blemishes are tidied, the paintwork will be flawless.

This car has a very early example of Mercedes' infrared key and that will soon be refurbished rather than replaced, as new ones are no longer available from Mercedes-Benz. Finding AMG parts from this period can be difficult too, although Sam is lucky because his C36 wanted for very little when he bought it; that rear spoiler isn't available to buy new from Mercedes either, and when they do come up for sale second hand, they're not exactly cheap.

The (non-standard) 18-inch AMG alloys have been nicely refurbished by Sam himself – another example of his raw enthusiasm for the car. When he purchased this C36, the wheels were painted and in need of restoration. After working his way through various grades of sandpaper and finishing off the wheels with aluminium polish, they were returned to their former glory

and complemented new, low-profile tyres perfectly.

All of this work has resulted in a great looking and solid feeling car which, although perhaps not quite matching the robustness of a 124 E-Class, 140 S-Class or 129 SL, delivers an exciting and rewarding drive nonetheless. The plush, grey leather seat upholstery and two-tone AMG steering wheel certainly contribute to the C36's overall sense of sophistication and take the last edge off what is otherwise a raw and engaging 1990s saloon.

Not just one of the nicest C36 AMGs around, this example should make those who have previously written off the 202-series C-Class sit up and take note. There's real classic potential here and the C36 offers affordable entry to early AMG experiences. How often can we say that?

This C36 takes pride of place in Sam's household at the head of the fleet and is rolled out only on special occasions. It shares space with a BMW now retired into storage, plus a W202 C180 project car bought for just £680 and now fitted with familiar AMG monoblock alloys. With

this AMG saloon all but complete, Sam is considering adding a W201 190 to his collection. As a predecessor of his 202-series C-Classes, we think it would make a great choice.

△ The C43 had more oval shaped exhaust tips.

> AMC developed four-valve tech for the M104 unit.



#### - Just the facts -

Mercedes-Benz C36 AMG (W202)

Engine M104 3,606cc 6-cyl Power 276bhp@5,750rpm Torque 284lb ft@4,000-4,750rpm Transmission 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,560kg O-62MPH 6.7sec Top speed 155mph Fuel consumption 20.8mpg Years produced 1993-1997

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for an early 1996 car as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban



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#### The history of designo



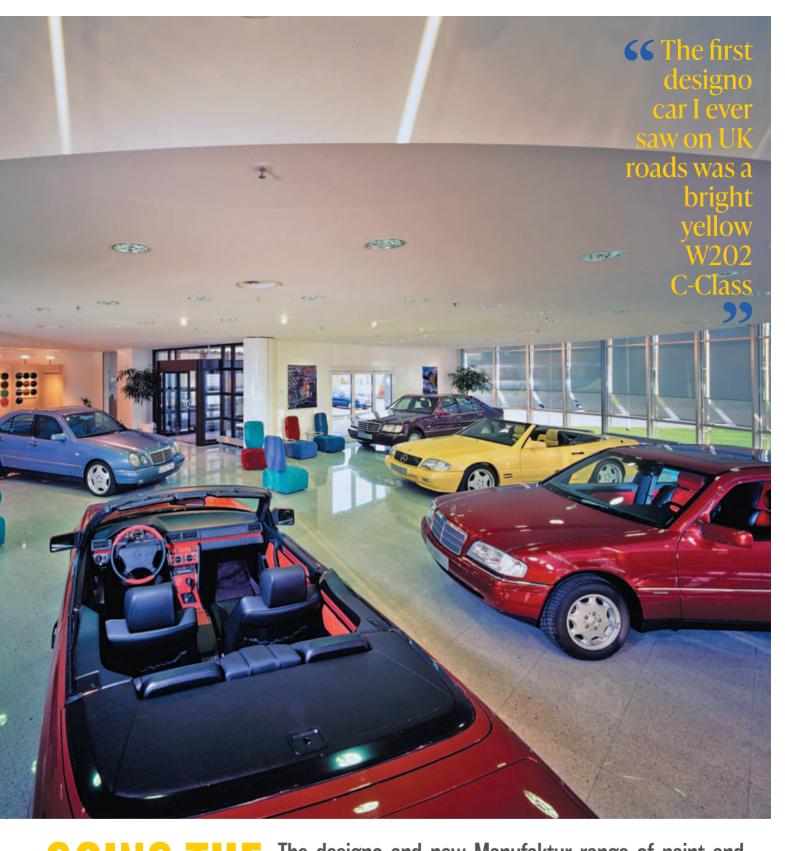
> There are some fantastic 1990s colours here...



△ How a designo advice centre looked in the 90s.

Personalising
 a brand new W210
 E-Class Saloon.

WORDS **IMAGES** MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG



## The designo and new Manufaktur range of paint and trim options allows Mercedes' customers to personalise their pride and joy with some eye-catching results EXTRA





△ Two-tone finish for this 140-series S-Class limousine.

1998 Special Edition SL with designo leather.

aint. If you are a car enthusiast who enjoys cleaning their pride and joy then you most likely love it. However, if a car is just a means of getting you from A to B then you probably don't care about paint so much. Either way, the coloured coating that protects your car's bodywork from the environment plays a role in the ownership experience.

As even non-enthusiasts take some interest in choosing the colour of their car, we will start with a short journey through the world of colour and end up at Manufaktur – the exclusive and newly-named Mercedes department catering to owners seeking bespoke colour and trim options for their cars.

Light is required for us to physically see a colour and perceive the shape and detail of any object. Light can be direct or reflected, or even both at the same time. Then there is colour temperature, another factor influenced by your physical position in the world in terms of latitude, the relative position of the sun at a given time of year, and of course the time of day. All else being equal, the appearance to the naked eye of the hue and shine of car paint, whether a metallic or non-metallic finish, will be altered by the incidence angle and colour temperature of the light.

Thus, even basic colours like red, white and black take on a very different look under blue Southern Californian skies ▽< Materials on show at '09 Berlin Fashion Week.

→ 300,000th C in mauritius blue by designo.

compared to the flat light of a dull day in Northern Europe. And thanks to the effect of latitude the exact shade we see will look different again under the harsh sunlight in the Middle East, or the more overhead sun at the equator.

This dependence of colour on the quality of light is the reason why certain hues are popular in certain markets. For example, white paint looks crisp under Mediterranean skies, but flat under dull northern skies. Grey looks sharp on a clean, shiny car under bright sunlight, but sombre on a foggy winter's day. Under harsh sunlight, dark colours hide the numerous air intakes and carbon fibre parts that are prominent design features of modern cars, thus detracting from their design. Red is one of the few colours that looks good under any light, while soft, warm sunset light is where the lines of a car and any paintwork imperfections like orange peel are most apparent.

Other factors that affect how we perceive a painted surface are its finish; whether it is mirror smooth, or suffers from orange peel caused by gravity taking its toll as the coating dries on a vertical surface. 'Depth' of shine is scientifically quantified by the diamond reflectivity index, and a perfect paint finish looks 'deep' and 'wet'.

#### Tricks of the light

To some extent, it is harder to achieve a uniformly mirror-like finish on a production line with eco-friendly water-based paints than it is with the solvent-based paints used until the early 1990s. As time is money, major manufacturers like Mercedes are unable to indulge in the seven coats with hand rubbing in between the painting process that is the province of Aston Martin and Rolls-Royce. However, a superior finish is on the cards if you pay the premium for a special colour from Mercedes' Manufaktur programme. This is because the extra money you pay for exclusive hues means that your car is taken off the main production line and individually painted.

Mercedes designo (pronounced dee-zin-eeo) was originally launched in late 1995 as a special paintwork and trim programme, with the first consulting centre based in the customer centre of the Sindelfingen factory. It was then rolled out to Mercedes dealers around the world. The first designo car I ever saw on UK roads was a bright yellow W202 C-Class going the other way in a London traffic jam in 1997, and the second was a bright green C-Class. Should you wonder why those owners happily dropped a large sum of money for special paint on an entry-level model, this simply illustrates the power of emotion at work.

In 2015, Mercedes re-launched the programme under the designo Manufaktur label, allowing clients to order even more bespoke levels of paint, upholstery and trim detailing for truly one-off individuality. Up to that point, the Manufaktur label had only been used in the 'G-Manufaktur' programme for the G-Class, where AMG G63 owners in particular were keen to indulge their individuality. The whole programme was renamed Manufaktur in 2021, and now represents an even more exclusive small-scale paint and trim personalisation label. The special paint









and trim feature on new Maybachs. hues on offer include satin finishes as well as high gloss metallics and non-metallics.

Complementing these are bespoke cabin appointments in nappa leather with the possibility of special stitching patterns, embroidery, a unique roof liner and other personal touches to make your new car

truly yours. The icing on the already rich cake is special wood, carbon fibre or aluminium trim and matching floor mats, all hand-crafted to give your car maximum individuality.

Extra special

While ordering colour and trim using the Manufaktur process can be carried out at your local dealer, some choose to go right to the heart of Mercedes-Benz and make their selection at the Centre of Excellence at the Sindelfingen factory. Originally opened in 2003 to allow Maybach and SLR clients to choose the specification of their cars in a befittingly exclusive environment, the Centre of Excellence is now dedicated to Manufaktur customers. The Bremen factory has a smaller Manufaktur centre, too.

**66** The whole

programme

Manufaktur

in 2021

was renamed

While popular basic paint colours stay fairly constant over the years, a new model range as well as mid-life facelifts that involve changes to the bumpers, lights, wheels and trim are usually accompanied by some fresh hues. Most people are not aware that the car manufacturer teams in charge of paint and interior trim palettes pay very close attention to colour and fabric



Sporty black and blue combo for this R171 SLK.





△ Eye-searing trim upgrades for the R170 SLK.

abla Cherry wood

Shooting Brake.

floor in boot of CLS

7 > 209-gen CLK

by Armani; magno sabbia paintwork.

 $\triangledown \triangledown \text{ Granite}$ 

stone trim of

215-series CL.

**66** These days you can ask for wood or carbon fibre trim to be colour-coded

> trends in the fashion industry. Thus, the rag trade has a not inconsiderable influence on car paint colours and upholstery.

However, fashion is the first thing to go out of fashion, and as with clothing, paint and trim dates a car to its era, with bright, eye-catching hues in particular sometimes an acquired taste that can limit the potential customer base down the road. Standout shades might also be a cross you have to bear at resale time should you opt to pay a lot of money for the most bespoke of all paint, known as colour-to-sample. These are special order paints that owners can ask Manufaktur to match to your favourite colour, bag or item of clothing, for example.

While a bespoke colour is of great personal significance to the original buyer, it would normally be of far less intrinsic value to a subsequent owner. Only if the original owner is a famous

person, and the vehicle is being marketed on that basis does the value of individual touches like special paintwork and upholstery hit the jackpot. For some, the car has become the 'third space' - the place they spend the most time after their home and office, so investing in the best possible cabin environment makes a lot of sense. From this point of view,

Manufaktur is haute couture tailoring for your car and gives you the opportunity to create a truly personal Mercedes to enjoy on the move and on your driveway.

The process

If you are interested in commissioning a unique Mercedes with the full Manufaktur treatment, you should visit your local Mercedes dealer. In theory, every sales person should have received training in Manufaktur, but some dealers may have a specialist on their team.

Once you have ticked the boxes for the engine and comfort options, then the fun with the exterior and interior colour palette and trim materials can begin. While stamping your individuality on your car through unique paint and trim is the whole point of the Manufaktur programme, there are a few ground rules to observe.

The first of these is to be aware of the difference between warm and cool colour palettes and avoid mixing them. Back in the 1980s and 90s, Mercedes only offered the choice of Zebrano and burr walnut wood trim, which perfectly complement black or cream leather interiors. However, brown wood does not look good in a light grey interior, since grey is from the cool scale.

Mercedes re-balanced this in the mid-90s by introducing dark grey bird's eye maple wood trim as standard on the E500 Limited and an option in the 140-series S-Class, and in 2001 a similar wood colour option was offered for the R230 SL. These



days you can ask for wood or carbon fibre trim to be colourcoded so that cabin trim inserts can be made in a darker or even

lighter shade of the leather upholstery for maximum colour co-ordination.

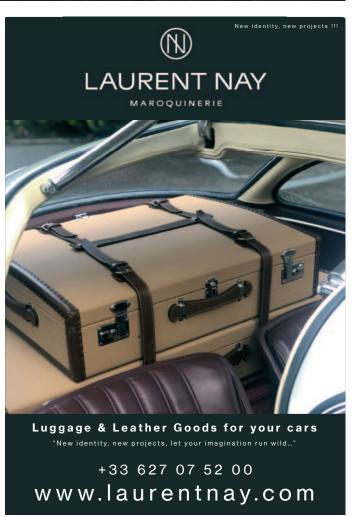
Mercedes usually delivers light coloured interiors such as beige and grey with high quality floor mats to match. However, light coloured mats soil very quickly under foot, making the interior look grubby. So apart from visually grounding the interior, black mats are the most practical choice across the board no matter the hue of the upholstery.













▽▷ Very straight panels and tank-like door hinges.

▽ Original set of Recaros with fresh upholstery.





What started out as a paint polish turned into a detailed restoration of a rare open-topped G-Wagen in Ireland, and now it could be coming up for sale

WORDS SHANE O'DONOGHUE IMAGES PADDY McGRATH





chim Gottstein likens the process of restoring a car to that of his day job. As the co-director of **Gottstein Architects** in Ireland, he's used to a painstaking process of sourcing a seemingly infinite number of individual components to make a project whole.

Despite that, Achim - with a softly spoken Irish accent that doesn't at first make any sense of his German surname – admits that he never bought the 460-series G-Wagen you see here with the intention of restoring it. This isn't his first rodeo, as they say. Indeed, Achim inherited a W126 S-Class from his German father (hence the surname) and it was restored several years ago. Unsurprisingly, he's holding onto that

one, unlike a series of 124 Estates and a 123 Coupe he owned for various periods.

The story of Achim's G-Class Cabriolet starts with that 123, or rather, the sale of it. The buyer enquired as to why he was selling the car and the answer was that Achim had developed a desire to own a G-Wagen. It turned out that the same person was a bit of a G-Wagen expert, and he agreed to help track down a suitable car.

He soon discovered the red 230GE shown here, a left-hand drive model that was unrestored but rust-free from a life spent mostly in Monaco. Achim didn't move quickly enough, and it was sold to a buyer that intended to export it to Florida to make the most of the combination of the open roof and the (rare) factory-fit air conditioning.

That never happened. Achim tells us that the owner strongly considered replacing the 2.3-litre, four-cylinder petrol engine with a

diesel alternative so it wouldn't cost a fortune to drive regularly. However, it seems that everyone the owner approached with the idea was reticent to take on the project, suggesting that it would ruin an otherwise pristine and original example of the car, especially as there were only some 27,000 or so examples of the 460-series Cabriolet manufactured. In 2017, he decided to sell it on instead.

Achim didn't hesitate this time. Before taking delivery of the Mercedes from London, he sent it to be checked over by a specialist in Northern Ireland. No engine rebuild was required, but the four-cylinder powerplant was fully overhauled, and the four-wheel drive system checked and serviced. A few months and nearly £8,000 later, Achim received the car and took it straight to Cardock Classics in County Kildare,

Ireland. As we've reported before, Cardock has established itself as a high-end restoration business that focuses on high quality and authentic renovations of mostly Mercedes.

he initial intention was to buff the sun-bleached paint, but it just flaked away as it was so thin. However, that revealed metal in exceptional condition underneath, so Achim gave the go ahead for a back-to-metal restoration of the body. "The project grew arms and legs from there, and next thing you know I'm commissioning bespoke material for the new interior," he wryly adds.

Indicating how good the bodywork was, Cardock spent less than 20 hours on it, as opposed to some 280 hours expended on Achim's dad's W126. Achim himself spent a lot more time and energy on the rest of the G-Wagen, however. He realised that the wrong seats and seat covers were fitted, so he sourced an original set of G-Wagen Recaro seats.

Nevertheless, the upholstery, also used on the contemporary R107 SL, is no longer available, so Achim travelled to the Techno Classica Essen show in Germany and found a woman that could weave it from scratch. Achim mentions a minimum order, but glosses over the cost and details. He then couldn't find anyone in Ireland to upholster the seats in a useful timeframe so had them done in Germany, too.

# e took this opportunity to add electric heating to the front seats.

Technically, this option was not available in 1983 – the year of manufacture of this car – as it was introduced in 1986, but the implementation and components are as fitted to the 460 G-Wagen, so he doesn't mind this small deviation from standard in the name of everyday comfort in the winter.

We don't need to avail of the heated seats



▷ in our warm day driving the car. Indeed, any kind of chilling effect is notably absent from the air conditioning... and it's warm work grappling with the recalcitrant

four-speed manual gearbox and heavy clutch in busy traffic, though the 2.3-litre engine is tractable enough. Officially it made 123bhp, but at 5,000rpm, which we're not about to subject it to. Thankfully, there was over 140lb ft of torque a little lower down and that's plenty of go to push the G-Wagen along at modern traffic pace – up to a point.

On one section of dual carriageway, we meekly stick to the inside lane, as there's nothing sonorous about the four-cylinder engine's machinations at higher speeds. Still, the upright windows afford great visibility in all directions, while it's easy to judge the extremities thanks to the straight-cut proportions and the iconic indicators atop the front wings. It also helps that the G-Wagen is a slender car by modern standards.

We're not brave enough to remove the roof, and Achim admits that he has only done so a handful of times. It takes just six bolts and an electrical connector and the roof itself isn't heavy, so two people can easily manage it. He chuckles telling us that he did once drive around Dublin with the roof off "feeling like an eejit," though like us all he can well imagine it cruising around the sunsoaked streets of Monte Carlo.

The upright chim managed to A track down the windows original owner of the car, afford great now living in the US, and visibility in all directions

have a conversation about his time with it. He was an airline executive with bases in Monaco and Belgravia in London, and he regrets passing the car on as he has fond memories of driving it about with his kids in the back

seats. In about 2008, he gifted

the G-Wagen to his French driver, who it seems never officially changed its ownership before selling it to a Londoner. That owner kept it only two months before selling it to the person Achim bought it from.

Despite the great back story, and the work Achim put into the G-Wagen, he never found the time to use it very often, putting less than 500 miles on the clock. It's now showing 25,840km (just over 16,000 miles) and Achim is looking to sell it on. Why? We got a sense that he wants another project as he realises that the process of restoring the G-Wagen was perhaps more exciting than the end result. As he puts it, if he saw this car up for sale now at the price it is now expected to reach, he wouldn't buy it to drive it as it's too valuable. It has become an investment piece, which is not what he is interested in. So, it's likely that he's going to cash in and buy something else.

But what? It's likely to be a W113 SL Pagoda or a W111 Coupe. He has already visited HK-Engineering in Germany to test drive a few cars and loved the rawness of the in-line six-cylinder engine, though is also considering a V8-powered 280SE 3.5 if he can find one at the right price and, this time around, very much with his eye on restoration. A fixer-upper, as they might say in his business.

### Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 230GE Cabriolet short-wheelbase (460)

Engine M102 2,299cc 4-cyl Power 123bhp@5,000rpm Torque 142lb ft@4,000rpm Transmission 4-speed manual, 4WD

WEIGHT 1,830kg Top speed 94mph Fuel consumption 16.5mpg Years produced 1982-1991

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1983 car as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban

Thank you to Cardock Classics for the loan of the 230GE Tel +353 (0)45 982620 Web www.cardockclassics.com



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# Bulletproof Benz

Based outside Johannesburg in South Africa, SVI Engineering strips Mercedes-Benzes and armours them for customers -we go behind the scenes at the company to find out more about the process



his W222 S-Class might be a few years old now, but I'm feeling perfectly cocooned and relaxed in this super luxury saloon.

The gently curving dashboard, highly luxurious chairs and soft ambient lighting only add to the cabin's laid-back atmosphere. Instead of acquiring the S500 V8, which is the preferred model in several markets, the owner chose the S350 only for its frugality, but for its abundance of turbodiesel-powered

Bluetec model not only for its frugality, but for its abundance of turbodiesel-powered torque, which makes progress down any road you can imagine truly effortless.

What really makes this Mercedes-Benz special though, is that it has been armoured by SVI Engineering located outside Pretoria, South Africa. There are several industries, countries and VIPs that require armoured cars, even more so in South Africa, where criminals are particularly daring and creative, with gun violence and car hijackings commonplace.

Established in 2004, SVI Engineering's proprietor Jaco de

Kock explains how he founded his company. "I've had an interest in cars all my life, but as I'm based in South Africa opportunities to study car design or have a career in the field are limited to non-existent. Starting SVI was the only logical way to be involved in designing vehicles. The company started out by designing larger military vehicles. We then sold some of our intellectual property which led to some restraints of trade. So, we had to

branch out and this move is subsequently how we ended up building civilian armoured vehicles."

Back to the S-Class. I know it weighs a couple of hundred kilograms more than standard (250kg to be exact), but I'm struggling to sense the additional weight, the torquey nature of the turbodiesel making short work of the extra kilograms. After a few relaxing kilometres, I realise that it is only under severe braking or going at speed through a succession of corners that



Engineering refers to it as being one of its 'discreet' packages. That is quite an achievement!

### **Building on the best**

I scroll through the pictures supplied to me while the big Mercedes was being built and it looks like it may as well be halfway through the S-Class production facility in Stuttgart – the cabin is stripped to bare metal with all the wires neatly tied up. It is hard to believe everything is put back together without causing a single issue. SVI's commitment to perfection and its attention to detail is astounding.

Two types of glass are used on these cars, measuring 18 and

Depending on the weight and size of the armoured glass, the electric motors driving the windows are left standard or may be upgraded. These windows are not the usual

thicker glass windows, though. What appears as regular automotive glass is actually a polycarbonate and glass sandwich consisting of several layers bonded together.

The result is that this sandwich absorbs the energy of a bullet(s) and stops it dead. I'm led to the company's own shooting range, given a 9mm pistol and encouraged to pop  $\triangleright$  a few caps into what would be the window of an armoured car. The bullets barely dent the inside of the window.

For level B4, the entry-level option, Kevlar is glued and pasted on the inside of the doors. On other parts of the car, stainless steel is used. The dashboard is not removed on level B4, but it is on level B6, with a layer of metal added onto the firewall. However, as Kevlar is easy to work with and can be pushed into corners and pasted at all angles, on level B4 it is also used in the footwells and behind the engine bay to add to the safety of the passenger cell.

This S-Class is armoured to level B4, thus the cabin is neatly armoured, but not so you'd notice, with all the doors, pillars and windows protected. The only part that has not been armoured is the floorplan and the sunroof. If you armour a car with a sunroof, you can either leave it as is, have the sunroof removed or have an armoured sunroof installed – the latter is a fairly

expensive option though. Inside the engine bay, the ECU and battery are also covered to make sure that these parts won't be damaged during a shooting incident.

### **Manufacturer support**

The windscreen is imported from South America. I take a closer look at it and wonder how SVI Engineering gets all those sensors fitted into the front windscreen to work again. Nicol Louw, the company's business development manager explains, "That is a real challenge. We fit all of them back onto the windscreen and then the car goes to Mercedes-Benz. The manufacturer has a very precise machine which is used to recalibrate all the sensors."

Outside the factory there is a type of wash bay. However, it is not your average wash bay. Fitted with high-pressure sprayers, cars are subjected to intense water spray to test for any possible



∨ S-Class cabin stripped before armour is fitted.







water infiltration. "To build an S-Class, or similar type of luxury car, takes around eight weeks. Before the car is signed off, it is put through a series of tests. These include an OBD test to make sure there are no errors and that all the electronics are working, plus water tests, test drives and several more," Nicol explains.

Once a specific car has been completed and armoured, it is notably easier to armour the same, or similar, car afterwards.





However, every time a new generation of a luxury car is released, it is a new challenge that starts from scratch. "Our official test for whether armoured glass can withstand the impact of .44 Magnum round is three shots in the form of a triangle, 120mm apart. If it passes, the glass is signed off as B4 specification. Obviously, we want to make doubly sure it is safe, so the glass can actually handle a higher calibre gun, however we will sign it

off only as B4."

These luxury cars are significantly trickier to armour than more basic cars such as Toyota Hilux pickups, for example. Compared to the Hilux, these S-Classes have wires and sensors in and around every corner, crease or hole, really challenging the engineers to design and develop the building process in such a way that the car can be rebuilt with every single function and part refitted and working correctly.

Although SVI Engineering has relationships with several vehicle manufacturers, some are more helpful than others when it comes to stripping and rebuilding their motorcars.

Nevertheless, SVI is going from strength to strength and is gaining valuable knowledge and experience with each project.

# How much?

They say you can't put a price on safety, or can you? Here's what armour costs...

The full package to have this W222 S-Class armoured to SVI's level B4 amounted to around £35,000 at the time of writing. Taking the car to a higher level will cost significantly more though, as this will involve adding specially designed steel plates and composite materials to several areas of the car.

Each quote is model specific. Recently, SVI Engineering completed a level B6 on a Mercedes-AMG C63 which cost around £75,000.

... SVI-spec glass. Nothing gets through. ∇ A very normal looking S-Class with a big secret.





The 1,000KM



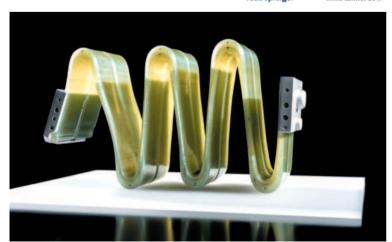
# **PROMISE**

Designed and developed in just over a single year, the hyper-efficient Vision EQXX concept paves the way for production Mercedes of the future - we take a closer look

WORDS IAN KUAH
IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

∇ Glass-fibre reinforced plastic road springs.

> Augmented reality tools aided wind tunnel dev.





ost people assume that electrically-powered cars are a new invention, but in fact a small number of battery-electric taxis operated in London in 1897, and the Lohner-Porsche Mixte hybrid went on sale in 1901.

Sales of electric cars first peaked around 1910, and by 1942 there were 300 companies in America manufacturing electric cars powered by heavy and inefficient lead-acid batteries. Almost all these firms went to the wall when the internal combustion engine finally became reliable because petrol-powered cars were cheaper and offered vastly superior range and convenience.

With EVs the up-and-coming powertrain solution, the ways in which we assess the good, the bad and the ugly have had to be recalibrated. Fitness for purpose is undoubtedly top of the list, with range anxiety the biggest killer of EV dreams for would-be owners in the real world. Addressing the range issue head-on, the Mercedes-Benz Vision EQXX concept – unveiled at the 2022 CES in Las Vegas earlier this year – delivers a raft of cutting-edge technologies all tightly focused on attaining the holy grail of greater efficiency.

"Electric range is a very complex technical challenge. On the face of it, the easiest way to extend range is to install a bigger battery, but size and weight leads to diminishing returns," explained Joerg Bartels, Vice President for Vehicle Engineering and Overall Vehicle Functions. "This is neither the smartest route nor the best use of scarce resources. The Vision



EQXX is the result of our exploring new ways to increase the range of an electric car through raising all-round efficiency to a whole new level."

"The XX suffix augments the Mercedes-Benz EQ brand with the X-factor of electric mobility that thinks beyond limitations, and the X-division collaborative development approach," added Markus Schäfer, a member of M-B's board of management and Chief Technology Officer for Development & Procurement.

#### **Going digital**

In a revolutionary reversal of the automotive model the industry has used until now where electronics and software play the role of supporting actors to the hardware, the EQXX is effectively a software driven vehicle. What this means is that computer digital simulation played a greater and more holistic role in

the design and confirmation of its systems than ever before, while the performance and behaviour of the actual vehicle are almost totally software governed.

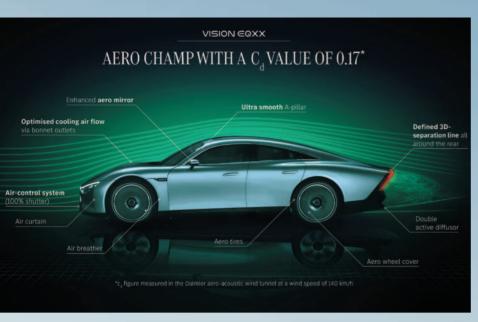
The Vision EQXX project went from white paper to completed vehicle in just 18 months. The crossfunctional, multi-disciplinary design and development team was drawn from the talent of Mercedes R&D in Stuttgart, the Mercedes-AMG Formula 1 team, as well as a diverse array of start-ups, partners and institutions from around the world.

Mercedes claims that the sustainable manufacturing processes utilising recycled and plant-based materials for lower waste and a lower carbon footprint result in its most efficient car ever. Importantly, the technologies it showcases can be rapidly introduced into production EQ models, so its CES debut is both proof of concept and a vanguard of things to come. ▷

"The EQXX delivers a raft of cuttingedge technologies focused on attaining the holy grail of greater efficiency"









To achieve optimal performance and range, the design team had to seamlessly integrate the best possible aerodynamics, the lowest possible weight, a battery with the best possible energy density, and the most efficient powertrain into a package uncompromised in space, comfort and Mercedes' modern luxury. All-in-all, a pretty tall order.

Over the years, Mercedes has proven time and again that significant gains in performance and economy can be made through aerodynamic efficiency. The W124 of 1984 stood out in this respect, its upright, square-rigged profile recording a sensational 0.29Cd in basic 200/200D form. Nearly 30 years later, the CLA180 of 2013 posted a 0.22Cd, the lowest drag coefficient ever recorded by a volume production car.

Nine years on, the EQXX knocks these achievements into a cocked hat with an astounding 0.17Cd. Unlike liquid or gaseous fuels, electricity does not weight anything, so the gross weight of 1,750kg will only depend on the options fitted. The smoothly honed body is built on a 2,800mm wheelbase, which is 40mm less than the current C-Class. This is significant because the lessons learned here are aimed at the next generation of MMA (Mercedes-Benz Modular Architecture) for compact and medium cars.

The short nose and long, tapered tail that incorporates a rear track 50mm narrower than the front, contributes to its aerodynamic efficiency. The flat bottom is home to an innovative and aerodynamically neutral integrated battery cooling plate, while various other active and passive aerodynamic elements are incorporated into the bodywork.

Taking structural lessons from Mother Nature, a plethora of lightweight materials in the 'bionic'

△△ Clean lines have yielded amazing results.

△ Radical new electric drive system of EQXX.



structure aid the weight reduction cause. The bodyshell is formed from MS1500 ultra-high strength steel, which combines low weight with high strength, while the strong and light bespoke rear floor panel is the largest structural aluminium single casting in the current Mercedes inventory.

OE manufacturers have used glass-fibre suspension springs before, so it is no surprise to find glass-fibrereinforced plastic springs developed together with Rheinmetall Automotive helping to reduce weight. Thanks to aluminium brake discs and 20-inch diameter forged magnesium wheels, unsprung weight is also low.

# Formula 1 technology

Whether the discussion is electric motors and batteries or internal combustion engines, efficiency and range are inexorably linked. The dedicated electric drive unit in the EQXX consists of an electric motor, transmission and power electronics. Addressing the critical battery weight and energy density issues to develop a powerful battery with an energy density of 400Wh/L, yet compact enough for installation in a compact car required a new approach to efficiency.

Since power, packaging and low weight are most critical in motorsport, it is no surprise to learn that the route to this solution also involved technology transfer from the Mercedes F1 race team. This new battery technology, jointly developed by Mercedes and its High Performance Powertrains division in Brixworth, UK for the EQXX, results in a package half the volume and 30 per cent lighter than a conventional lithium-ion battery for a given energy capacity.

Featuring a new generation of silicon carbides, the in-house developed power electronics unit is based on the one in the Mercedes-AMG Project One





△△ Map sim based on Open Street Map data.

△ Cabin materials are lightweight and eco-friendly.



# **Vision EQXX**

▷ hypercar, whose 1.6-litre combustion engine hails from Formula 1. Featuring a super-efficient thermalmanagement system, it has a hitherto unachievable 95 per cent energy transfer efficiency from battery to driven wheels.

With a maximum power output of 150kW (201bhp), the EQXX consumes just 10kW/h per 100km/62 miles (over six miles per kWh), a dramatic improvement over the 15kW/h or more that is typical of existing EV powertrains. In conventional ICE car terms, this is equivalent to one litre per 100km/ 62 miles; 282mpg (UK), or 235mpg (US).

"One of the best ways to improve efficiency is to reduce losses," explained Eva Greiner, chief engineer of the electric drive system at Mercedes-Benz. "We worked on every part of the system to reduce energy consumption and losses through system design, material selection, lubrication and heat management. And our fantastic simulation tools quickly helped us find out what works and what doesn't."

The headline number is a potential range over 1,000km (620 miles), which equates to the distance from Berlin to Paris on one charge.

#### From London to Geneva

Currently, Mercedes uses ZF powertrain modules and Valeo Siemens electric motors. But just as it commissioned its own in-house gearbox plant in Stuttgart-Untertürkheim nearly 20 years ago, near future plans include moving the design and production of e-motors, battery and associated power electronics in-house. Whether the component list will also include the inverter that transfers energy from the battery to the e-motors is yet to be decided.

The oldest car manufacturer in the world, Mercedes-Benz has a very long list of inventions and patents to its name. A consistent leader in design, aerodynamics, powertrain technology and safety, it is frequently first to market with features that enhance the ownership experience.

Embodying a mighty big promise, the Vision EQXX is a statement that Mercedes intends to take the lead once again. This concept car has yet to turn a wheel, but when it does, the road trip to validate the 1,000km claim will make the headlines.



"This new battery is half the volume and 30 per cent lighter than a conventional lithium-ion battery"

INCREASING ENERGY DENSITY INSTEAD OF BATTERY SIZE





△△△ Battery developed with

△△ Energy of EQS squeezed into a compact car.

∧ 300.000km of test drives took place virtually.





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# secrets we keep

This glorious 230SL Pagoda would be a desirable car all by itself, but this one has topsecret history linked to the US Central Intelligence Agency

WORDS NEIL BRISCOE IMAGES JASON DODD

pies are driving cars that blend in. So, if you are infiltrating a high-society ball where everyone is a multi-millionaire, you are going to be driving a nice car. If you are just driving through the streets of Moscow, you are going to be driving a clunker. The idea of espionage writ large is to be nondescript. Don't stand out." Those are the words of Dr Vince Houghton, the historian and curator at the International Spy Museum, when asked by Vanity Fair to assess the on-screen accuracy of our favourite spy films.

You can, of course, blame Ian Fleming for creating the link between spies and flash cars. This isn't actually a criticism of the Aston Martin DB5 used in the Goldfinger film — that car was itself inspired by Fleming's description in the original book of Bond driving an Aston DB2/4, which was entirely appropriate because he was supposed to be under cover as a well-to-do golfing enthusiast. Bond, of course, drove a massive, battleshipgrey 1931 Bentley 4.5-litre 'Blower', which was possibly slightly less flash in the 1950s than it would be now, but

still hardly a shrinking violet of a car.

Either way, Bond was not going to blend in anywhere with the Bentley nor the Aston, so Fleming's fiction was clearly just that. You'd not assume that the car on these pages would blend in anywhere either. This 1964 Mercedes-Benz 230SL is hardly a car for those trying to be discreet. Although Paul Bracq's ageless lines are possibly not quite as eye-catching as a DB5's or

a pre-war Bentley's with a supercharger the size of a small house, the deep red paintwork of this particular car would make it stand out anywhere. If you're trying to subtly and discreetly follow someone in this Benz, you'd better hope that your quarry is travelling to a Ferrari rally, or you'll be spotted a mile off.

Then again, according to Dr Houghton, spies don't drive cars like this. Or do they? Let's turn this over to the SL's owner

⊳ Four- and fivealso offered

 $\triangleright \triangleright$  You could just about fit a child on this seat.

 $\triangleright$  $\triangleright$  This is not your average car parking pass...











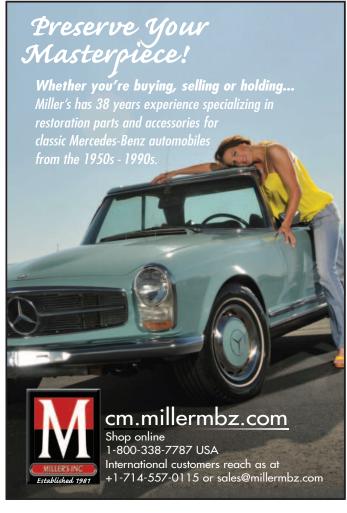
# "Look closer and you'll find a nondescript sticker with what appears to be a fairly random collection of numbers on it"

(although he has sold it on since) Titus Johnson. Mr Johnson himself is something of a globe-trotter, as he's an airline executive and an international travel expert.

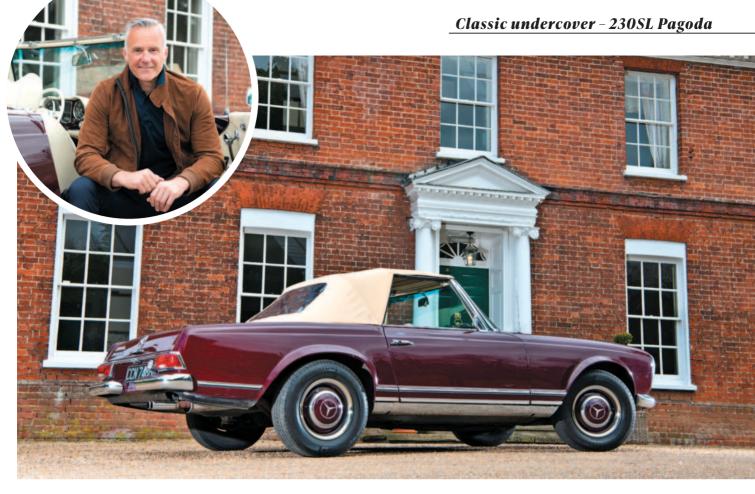
he car rolled off the Daimler-Benz Sindelfingen production line in 1964, the same year the Beatles set America alight, the Rolling Stones released their first album and

Cassius Clay defeated Sonny Liston to become world heavy weight champion," Mr Johnson told Mercedes Enthusiast. "It has the chassis number 11301212008981 and when I bought it, it was very original, coming with a low 121,000km [75,000 miles]. Originally delivered in Germany, it was exported to Texas in the 1970s. It had a new engine installed a few years ago, which has only been driven around 4,000 miles since fitment." ▷









So far, so normal. A beautiful 'Pagoda' SL, arguably one of the best-looking cars ever built, that's been well-kept and looked after. This particular example is finished in an alluring shade of red, officially Mercedes-Benz DB573 Dark Bordeaux Red, which is set off rather nicely by the cream leather seats and trim, and the beige soft-top. The hardtop - the gently sloped shape of which gives the car its 'Pagoda' nickname - is finished in the same striking Bordeaux Red.

gain – a normal car. Not a common car, A certainly not a car that's going to pass by unnoticed, but a regular car, one that you'd certainly see a few more of during an average month in the 60s. Look a little closer, though, especially at the rear-view mirror, on the back of which you'll find a nondescript sticker with what appears to be a fairly random collection of numbers on it, and a year - 2013. Despite appearances, this is no ordinary sticker. It's a car park pass, and a car park pass for a car park that you'll need more than just the money for an hour's stay to access.

"I procured the car from a Mr Miller, a Virginian and career employee of the Central Intelligence Agency, or CIA," Mr Johnson told us. "Mr Miller acquired the car from a friend in Arlington, Texas in April 1998 with 104,000km [64,000 miles] on the clock. The car had been kept in a garage in Virginia since Mr Miller's ownership. When I asked Mr Miller why he drove so few miles in his 33 years of ownership, he said he was away a lot 'on assignment'. I did not ask him what and where the assignment was..."

It turns out that this mysterious Mr Miller was an expert in photographic reconnaissance, especially high-altitude photography. Let's not forget that the CIA was a pioneer of such technology, and it was the Agency, and not the US Air Force, that was primarily behind the development of Lockheed's incredible U2 surveillance aeroplane. That was the one that was shot down, out from under Francis Gary Powers, triggering a major crisis in Cold War relations between the US and the USSR. If you want to learn more about that, watch the excellent Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg film, Bridge of Spies.

These days, most high-altitude photographs come from orbiting satellites, but this makes Mr Miller's CIA career hardly any less intriguing. Who knows what folders full of secrets were carried in this gorgeous SL as it wound its way on the short journey between Mr Miller's home and the CIA's famous headquarters building in Langley, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington DC?

"Originally delivered in Germany, it was exported to Texas in the 1970s"

 $\triangle \triangle$  Titus made contact with the ex-CIA owner

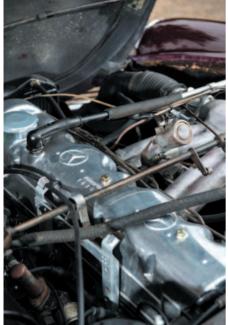
> A delicious blend of leather chrome and carnet.

In fact, look at a Google Maps image of CIA HQ and just next to the memorial gardens you can see a round, white building. It was traditionally the headquarters of the National Reconnaissance Office, or NRO, and was the bit of the CIA that dealt with reconnaissance photos and information, and presumably therefore where Mr Miller actually worked on those days when he was in the office. Of course, this is the CIA, and they might just be telling us that the round building is the home to the NRO. Maybe it's really just a glorified stationery cupboard, and the real NRO is, secretly, elsewhere...

t can't be far away, though, as the SL really didn't rack up much mileage at all. In fact, so little was it driven while under Mr Miller's ownership, that the original seals and rubber parts dried out and hence the recent engine replacement.



Classic undercover - 230SL Pagoda









 $\triangle\triangle$  A new engine means it feels as lively as ever.

∧ 1964 car finished

# "Since he sold the ex-CIA SL, Mr Johnson has acquired another Mercedes with an unusual history"

"In 2020, Mr Miller was advised by his doctor not to drive, and the car was reluctantly and softly marketed to a closed user group of US Mercedes enthusiasts, and not on the mainstream market," said Mr Johnson, hence how it came into his ownership. Clearly, Mr Miller was sad to see his little-used SL go, as he emailed Mr Johnson after the sale, saying, "Yesterday was an emotional day. After 33 years, I feel like a loving family member was leaving home."

hile it's true that a 230SL hardly conforms to the expert view that spies (or intelligence officers, to give them their proper title) drive dull cars, maybe there's a little more to this than we think. After all, if you saw this 230SL rolling down the street, the last person you'd expect to be driving it would be a spy, so maybe it's a case of double bluff.

Indeed, maybe that's what the Central Intelligence Agency does with its official vehicles anyway - back in 2005, when US Government agencies were ordered to comply with a ruling that they had to buy lots of alternative fuel vehicles, the CIA told a District Court judge that it couldn't be sure if it was complying with the ruling because it didn't keep records of what cars it actually had. Bureaucratic incompetence? Or a shadowy spy agency finding ways not to reveal in public which cars its people are driving? There's nothing quite like hiding in plain sight, after all.

Since he sold the ex-CIA SL, Mr Johnson has acquired another Mercedes with an unusual history. His 1972 280SE 4.5 V8 is a far more discreet set of wheels than the SL, but still one with a handy turn of speed if you need to make a quick getaway from the KGB. The car holds

the Antique Automobile Club of America Preservation Award and the Mercedes-Benz Club of America Silver Star for Originality, and was previously the property of a Mr Sherman of Butler, Pennsylvania who owned the car for over 30 years. Some years he only drove it 100 miles or so, but always treated it to an annual Mercedes-Benz service.

owever, it seems Mr Johnson just can't L keep away from cars with a potentially secret history. "The car was ordered for a Venezuelan diplomat," he told Mercedes Enthusiast. "It has some unique factory options..." We bet it does. Revolving numberplates, perhaps?

#### Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 230SL (W113)

Engine M127 2,306cc 6-cyl Power 148bhp@5,500rpm Torque 145lb ft@4,200rpm Transmission 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,295kg 0-62mph 10.7sec Top speed 121mph Fuel consumption 27.7mpg Years produced 1963-1967

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption determined at 3/4 of top speed (not more than 110km/h, 68mph) plus 10 per cent



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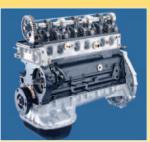
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he compact EQA is the entry point to Mercedes' electric SUV range, while the 4.7m-long EQC sits at the top of the tree, at least until the Maybach EQS arrives later in 2022. Slotting between those current models is the seven-seat EQB. With a starting price of £45,645 OTR, the battery-powered EQA comes in at similar money to the larger, conventionally powered GLC. The EQC, meanwhile, will set you back at least £67,320, which is a bit more than a base GLE-Class. For reference, the EQB starts at £52,145.

Normally, the higher up the range that a model sits, the more desirable it is. However, the EQA launched after the EQC so benefits from a few notable upgrades to its cabin, among other things. Throw a 260-mile plus range and swift 0-62mph time

into the mix, and on paper the EQA has lots going for it. The stats made us wonder - could a new, top-spec EQA350 4Matic be a better purchase than an also-new EQC400 4Matic?

In AMG Line Premium Plus spec, the EQA350 4Matic tested here comes in at £59,285. This particular EQC400 – also an AMG Line Premium Plus – tops £77,000. If nothing else, the smaller SUV has a distinct price advantage, even when it's kitted out with a host of luxury extras.



No great surprise there, you'll agree. But the fact that a highly equipped EQA costs a not insignificant seven grand less than a base EQC is interesting. So, let's take a closer look at this EQA and see if there are any chinks in its designo mountain grey-painted armour.

ather than having bespoke electric architecture, the EQA is based on  $\square \square$  a GLA and the EQC is based on a GLC. Does that matter? We'll soon find out. Like many of the compact GLAs, the EQA is



built at Mercedes-Benz's Rastatt factory in Germany and its 66.5kWh lithium-ion battery (located underneath the passenger compartment) is supplied by Accumotive, a subsidiary of Mercedes-Benz.

The EQA launched after the EQC so benefits from a few notable upgrades

The EQA's exterior styling is smart, smooth and possibly a little bland, although the front and rear LED light bands distinguish this battery'd Benz from the rest of the ensemble. Both entry level Sport and AMG Line (an extra £1,500) cars run on 'aerodynamically optimised' 18-inch wheels; Premium spec





(another £3,000) adds 19-inch alloys among other things, and Premium Plus (as featured and £3,000 on top of Premium) brings 20-inchers to the table, plus a 360-degree camera, suspension with electrically adjustable damping and speedsensitive steering, a Burmester surround sound system, memory front seats, a head-up display and gesture control for the MBUX infotainment system.

Speaking of the Mercedes-Benz User Experience (MBUX),

# Recharging times

EQA350 (Max range: 264 miles)

AC outlet (230V) 10-100% 30hrs Wallbox (7.4kW/400V) 10-100% 5hrs 45mins Public rapid charging (100kW) 10-80% 30mins

EQC400 (Max range: 255 miles) AC outlet (230V) 10-100% 40hrs 45mins Wallbox (7.4kW/400V) 10-100% 11hrs Public rapid charging (110kW) 10-80% 40mins

all EQAs are equipped with this fantastically responsive and downright beautiful set-up, including its crisp 10-inch display which perches above three stylish air vents. Drivers are also treated to a 10-inch instrument screen that can be customised to show the sat nav map, for example. Ambient cabin lighting is standard too and turns your immediate environment into something resembling the night forest in the film Avatar.

verall, the EQA's interior is satisfyingly pleasant and really benefits from the red stitching of AMG Line spec. The driving position is nicely central and accommodates low and high seating positions. I love those illuminated air vents, the

great chunks of aluminium trim on the dashboard and doors, and the Artico artificial leather topping for the dash, this material (and Dinamica microfibre) also covering the seats.

Where the EQA really differs from its GLA brother, however, is in the rear quarters where occupants will find less headroom and also a high floor (that battery had to go somewhere in the GLA chassis, after all), which makes the seat less comfortable. Boot space is also reduced from the GLA's maximum of 1,430



litres to 1,320 litres with the rear seats folded down. With all the pews in place, the EQA's boot will hold 435 litres – 105 litres less than the GLA's.

Equipped with 4Matic four-wheel drive, this

range-topping EQA350 not only has an electric motor at the front axle, there is a motor at the rear too, and power distribution between these two motors is regulated with measurements that

are taken 100 times per second. As ornithologists will point out, that's 10 times faster than a hummingbird can flap its wings. To maximise efficiency, the EQA only uses its front-mounted motor when necessary.

A quick look at the EQA350's acceleration time will confirm the 288bhp SUV is pretty brisk in the old 0-62 department, although simply reading its six-second achievement for the benchmark sprint won't prepare you for how rapidly the EQA gets off the marks. Think Usain Bolt, but with his shoelaces tied. As with all electric cars, maximum power is available from take-off and, when it comes to a standing start, I reckon this baby Merc haunts the dreams of some full-fat AMGs. Ironically, it will deliver this eye-widening thrust while emitting little more than a futuristic humming sound, and without changing a single gear thanks to the one-speed transmission.

The 350 is the fastest model in the EQA range, with the 300 4Matic posting a 7.7-second 0-62mph time and the 250 notching up an 8.9-second sprint. Note, all EQAs have the same 66.5kWh battery, take the same amount of time to recharge (see sidebar) and have pretty much identical range of between 250 and 264 miles (WLTP). Every EQA is supplied with a 5m-long Mode 2 charging cable compatible with a domestic plug socket, plus a



When it comes to a standing start,

I reckon this baby Merc haunts the

dreams of some full-fat AMGs

5m-long Mode 3 cable for recharging via wallboxes or public charging stations at up to 11kW.

Where this EQA begins to stumble is in the ride comfort department and I suspect this is due to this test

car's 20-inch alloy wheels. Even with the more sophisticated damping system, occupants will be more familiar with road surface quality than they would expect in a Mercedes-Benz. It's true

the EQA equips itself pretty well in the bends despite its 2.1-tonne kerb weight, so there is some pay off to having larger tyres, however the EQA never quite nails the 'relaxed cruiser' brief no matter whether the car is in Eco, Comfort or Sport mode, which kind of misses the point of it.

What is fantastic though – and arguably class-leading – are the five levels of braking recuperation on offer. These can be selected via the paddleshifters behind the steering wheel (in Eco mode) and allow the driver to increase or decrease the amount of energy recaptured during deceleration phases to recharge the battery. Figuring out how to get the most from this system is video game-addictive. In the strongest setting ('D - -'), you'll barely need to use the brakes on the move and thus will finally understand what automotive hacks mean when they discuss 'one-pedal driving'. There's also a 'D Auto' setting which lets the car figure out how much braking recuperation to deploy depending on traffic ahead and battery charge level.

# Does bigger mean better?

All these systems are available on the four-wheel drive EQC400 4Matic, but there are some key differences between it and the





> smaller EQA. The twin-motor EQC is based on the GLC and more successfully integrates its 80kWh lithium-ion battery underneath passengers than the EQA, with minimal impact on rear legroom and the preservation of a useful 500- to 1,400-litre boot. This is a suitable place for storing the standard-issue 5m wallbox charging cable and Mode 3 (11kW) charging cable.

Main exterior styling features include a wind-cheating front grille, sci-fi-style LEDs and alloy wheels that look achingly difficult to clean; base Sport spec gets you 19s, AMG Line 20s, and AMG Line Premium/Premium Plus 21-inchers (as pictured). Despite the large rims, however, the EQC looks every bit as heavy as its near 2.5-tonne kerb weight suggests, in part due to its relatively low ground clearance.

hat larger footprint translates into a generally more spacious interior. although the difference between the EQA and EQC in this regard is, surprisingly, not night and day. The EQC's MBUX

dashboard screens are 0.25 inches larger than the EQA's, but it's the smaller SUV's centre console design that gets my vote. The EQC was launched in early 2019 and contains fixtures from the now-replaced 205-series C-Class. Mercedes has attempted to inject some additional flair with unique, bronze-coloured air vents but they look somewhat out of place to my eyes.

Both the EQA and EQC make non-events of their switch-on procedures, with only the displays giving any clue that these battery-powered cars are ready to go. The EQC's steering column stalks, including the one for selecting Drive, are made of heftier stuff than the EQA's and are more pleasing to use. This is a sign of things to come, as the EQC instantly feels

△ Rear LED light bands are an EQ model signature

more settled on the move than its sibling. The steering is less twitchy, the ride far more absorbent and the cabin insulation way more effective at separating occupants from the outside world.

This sense of extra refinement goes some way to explaining why this EQC400 4Matic doesn't feel as fast as the 5.1-second 0-62mph time suggests. Thanks to the front and rear electric motors, plus larger battery, there is the equivalent of 402bhp and 560lb ft of torque to play with, but I somehow found the technically slower EQA350 4Matic more exciting to send forth with gusto. Possibly because I felt closer to the action in that car. The EQC's brake pedal is easier to moderate though, and the steering is way lighter in feel, which won't suit everyone.



# Faced with a choice between the EQA350 and EQC400, the smaller SUV just sneaks it



alloy wheels are an acquired taste.

abla Of the two models here, the EQA gets our vote

# **Conclusion**

The EOC kicked off Mercedes' fresh assault on the electric car sector and, thanks to a small update in 2021, features a more capable 11AC/110DC on-board charger that basically speeds up recharging times

(the previous OBC was rated at 7.4kW). But such is the particularly speedy march of progress in the EV world, the EQC is already feeling dated in some areas, particularly in the cabin where the EQA's design trumps it. And that's before you consider the likes of the EQS and EQE saloons with their astonishing Hyperscreen dashboard arrangements.

Faced with a choice between the EQA350 4Matic and EQC400 4Matic, the smaller SUV just sneaks it. If you need more space and regularly carry adults in the rear of your Mercedes then the EQC would be the better bet, but otherwise it's the EQA with its longer range, more wieldy handling and fancier cabin that gets the nod. Just try to avoid the 20-inch alloys, if you can.





### Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz EQA350 4Matic (H243)

Drive system Asynchronous electric motors + 66.5kWh lithium-ion battery

Power 288bhp Torque 383lb ft On-Board Charger 11AC/100DC

Transmission 1-speed auto, 4WD Weight 2,105kg

O-62MPH 6.0sec Top speed 99mph Electric range 255-264 miles

CO2 EMISSIONS Og/km YEARS PRODUCED 2021-on

Mercedes-Benz EQC400 4Matic (N293) Drive System Asynchronous electric motors + 80kWh lithium-ion battery

Power 402bhp Torque 560lb ft On-board charger 11AC/110DC

Transmission 1-speed auto, 4WD Weight 2,495kg

O-62MPH 5.1sec Top speed 112mph Electric range 242-255 miles

CO2 EMISSIONS Og/km YEARS PRODUCED 2019-on

All figures from Mercedes-Renz: electric range according to WLTF

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45 JT£21,000
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LOT 22	£35,000				
550 LP	£6,000				
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X33 MCO	£450				
60 MG	£25,000				
MGL 644	£1,700				
X7 MHB	£950				
R00 MJA	£650				
29 MK	£23,500				
R900 MJA	£700				
MJR 3	£36,000				
MNW 16	£5,500				
MWD 5	£10,500				
MXI 52					
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S330 NCK	£700				
NDL 222	£1,950				
NED 5N					
5 NKS					
4 NN	£88,000				
NRK 9	£6,500				
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In the latest of our motorsport-inspired series, we focus on rallying and highlight three Mercedes you could buy - and tune - for this thrilling form of motorsport

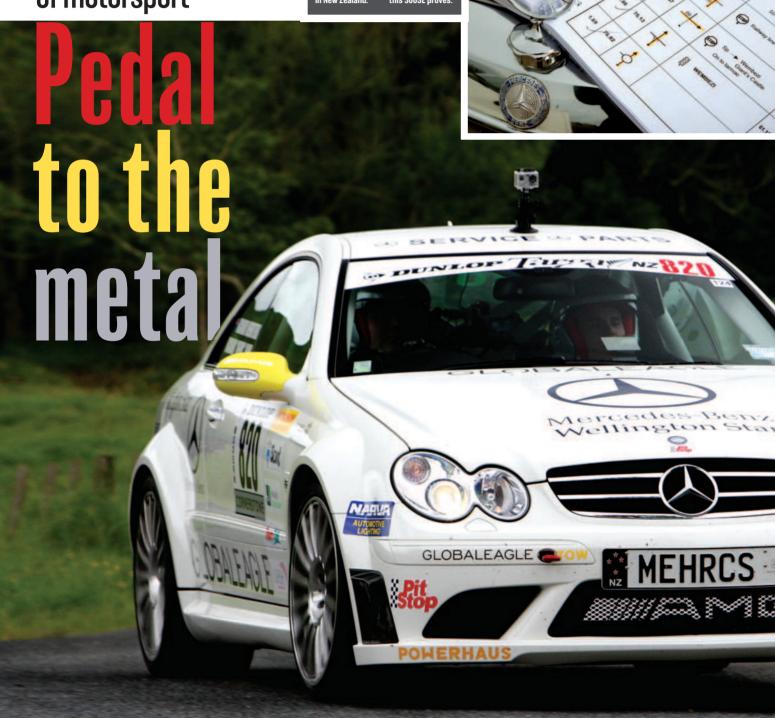
68 April/May 2022 www.mercedesenthusiast.co.uk

WORDS
GUY BAKER
IMAGES
SEAN CRAIG,
ERIC RICHARDSON,
ROBB PRITCHARD &
MERCEDES-BENZ
GROUP AG



▽ CLK63 Black Series competing in New 7ealand

⊳∆ Even classics can take part, as this 300SF proves





he days when British legends Colin McRae and Richard Burns dominated the World Rally Championship may be long gone, but rallying is still enjoyed in the UK by thousands of competitors. A test for both driver and navigator, rallying is accessible to anyone with a road car and a driving licence.

Held on public and private roads, and off-road tracks, drivers and their navigators attempt to cover predefined stages as quickly as possible. Direction notes help the navigator (or co-driver) ensure the car is heading the right way, with competitors leaving at regular intervals – and the car that completes the course in the quickest time is the classed as the winner.

Special stage rallying is the most exciting branch of the discipline but navigational events on the public highway, known as road rallies, also have a long history and are a great way to start. In this type of rallying, navigation is just as important as driving talent. Most classic historic rallies follow this format, and you don't need special equipment to take part.

#### **Get involved**

Many drivers start out in road rallies where the emphasis is as much on navigation as driving skill. The navigator uses Ordnance Survey maps to direct the driver while keeping an eye on timing. Note, it's just as bad to check in too early as too late at a time control.

Road-rallying can take many forms, such as Touring Assemblies, Economy Runs, Historic Rallies for classic cars and even competitive night events. Many local motorsport clubs run '12-Car' events – an ideal starting point limited to 12

cars - with almost any car able to take part. You don't need special equipment - just the right maps, a magnifying glass and a map light. You'll also need to apply for your free RS Clubman Licence. Find out more at www. motorsportuk.org.

Stage Rallying requires a Go Rallying starter pack, plus passing a BARS test (this takes about half a day and costs around £200) and then applying for a RS Inter Club - Stage Rally Competition Licence. If you're only intending to be a co-driver then you can

66 A test for both driver and navigator, rallying is accessible to anyone with a road car and a driving licence >>

apply for a Navigator's licence without having to pass the BARS course.

#### **Car modifications**

For most road rallies, all you need is a taxed and insured road-legal car with a valid MOT certificate. Historic rallies for classic cars usually have specific eligibility criteria with categories based on the age of your car, any modifications and homologation papers. At all events you will encounter scrutineering at the start, where your car is checked by an official to ensure it conforms to the rules.

For stage rallies, however, your car will need to comply with more strict regulations, requiring serious preparation in advance. This generally entails modifying the car with important safety components such as a roll cage, special seats and harnesses and fire extinguishers. More confident drivers may buy an appropriate used car and then prepare it for rallying themselves, but you can also get a bespoke rally preparation/tuning company to modify your chosen road car for you, although this is naturally a more expensive route.

Stage Rally cars must use the public highway to get between the different rally stages, so your car will also need to be taxed and insured with an MOT certificate, as in road rallying. And both driver and co-driver require a helmet and flameresistant clothing that hasn't passed their 'use by' dates.



# Rally potential: Super hatchback

# **AMG A45 S (2020-on)**

One of Mercedes' most extreme models, the AMG A45 S has bags of rallying potential. With a £45,000 starting price, it's not exactly cheap but with well over 400bhp produced by a high-revving, two-litre powerplant, plus a small footprint and four-wheel drive, the A45 S follows a tried-and-tested rally car formula. One of the quickest ways of getting from A to B, it's also readily tuneable for even more power should you need it.

A lot more engaging and fun to drive than the previous W176 generation A45, the W177's M139 1,991cc turbocharged four-pot is good for 416bhp and 369lb ft of torque, translating to a 3.9-second 0-62mph time. The top speed is 168mph and power is transferred to all four wheels as required via AMG's sophisticated, eight-speed dual-clutch gearbox.

#### **Tuning**

Gary Conway at GCAP Performance, Gareth Jones at Avon Tuning and Andrew Middleton at MSL Performance are all experienced in A45 tuning and recommend an ECU remap. Stage 1 tuning should take output to around 460bhp and 460lb ft, with a further 50bhp possible if you fit an induction kit (starting at £200), a turbo blow-off valve (around £200), an uprated intercooler (from £415) and a freer-flowing exhaust system (£500 to £1,500).

The factory brakes are very strong, so you may just need upgraded pads. Fitting braided brake hoses and DOT 5.1 brake fluid is also recommended. Suspension-wise, lowering springs from Eibach and H&R offer a quick solution, but adjustable coil-over kits from KW and Bilstein are recommended for rallying. For stage rallies, an approved roll-cage, seats with a rally-spec harness and fire extinguishers are required.





<u>Just the facts</u> Mercedes-AMC A45 S 4Matic+ (W177)

ENGINE M139 1,991cc 4-cyl turbocharged Power 416bhp@6,750rpm Torque 369lb ft@5,000-5,250rpm Transmission 8-speed auto, 4WD

WEIGHT 1,660kg 0-62mph 3.9sec Top speed 168mph Years produced 2020-on





### Rally potential: Cool coupe

# CLA250 4Matic Coupe (2014-2018)

After the A45 S, this Mercedes might seem like something of left-field choice, but with a two-litre turbocharged motor, four-wheel drive and a similar kerb weight, the CLA250 is not as far-fetched as it might as first seem. Its price tag is around a third of the A45's, leaving more cash for modification work.

The early Coupe's 1,991cc M270 four-cylinder turbocharged engine produces a relatively modest 208bhp at 5500rpm, with 258lb ft of torque from just 1,200rpm but the seven-speed automatic transmission is capable of dealing with even more. A simple remap can transform the car's performance and cut acceleration times substantially. Prices range from £16,000 to £19,000, but don't pay over the odds for a car with loads of optional extras like a sunroof and heated seats if you're planning to rally it.

#### **Tuning**

The factory engine is slightly restricted by the stock hardware, but Gareth Jones at Avon Tuning recommends a Stage 1 ECU remap, which raises power to 250bhp and torque to 295lb ft. However, more power can be released if you fit some fast road camshafts, a sports exhaust with manifold, an uprated fuel pump, high-flow injectors and port the cylinder-head.

The factory brakes definitely need upgrading, with kits from Brembo and EBC popular choices. Goodridge braided brake hoses and DOT 5.1 brake fluid are also recommended. Fitting a proper road or rally coil-over suspension kit is a wise move too, and if you're looking at stage rallying you'll need a suitable roll-cage, seats and fire-fighting kit.

#### Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz CLA250 4Matic Coupe (C117)

Engine M270 1991cc 4-cyl turbocharged Power 208bhp@5,500rpm Torque 258lb ft@1,200-4000rpm Transmission 7-speed auto, 4WD WEIGHT 1,540kg 0-62MPH 6.4sec TOP SPEED 155mph

### Rally potential: Sweet six

# AMG C43 4Matic Coupe (2016-2021)

Our final contender has all the key ingredients. The turbocharged 205-series AMG C43 4Matic Coupe is not only quick in standard trim and ripe for further tuning, but it also claims a slightly stiffer chassis than its W205 Saloon sibling and comes with leech-like four-wheel drive. And it's a good deal more affordable than the C63 V8.

Early C43s pack a 362bhp, 2,996cc M276 V6 turbocharged engine capable of delivering 384lb ft from 2,200rpm upwards. Channelled through an uprated Mercedes nine-speed automatic transmission and four-wheel drive system, the 0-62mph sprint is completed in just 4.7 seconds. In fact, you can find yourself hitting the rev limiter on a regular basis, but a gearbox remap will alleviate this. A facelifted version with 385bhp was released in 2018 for the 2019 model year, however an early example will only set you back around £23,000 – just make sure it packs a full M-B service history and hasn't previously been tuned.

#### **Tuning**

According to Gary Conway at GCAP Performance, Gareth Jones at Avon Tuning and Andrew Middleton at MSL Performance a £600 Stage 1 remap achieves around 425bhp and 455lb ft of torque. Add in a sports exhaust and you're looking at 450bhp and 465lb ft. Expect to spend anywhere from £600 for a simple decat downpipe, up to £2,000 or more a full exhaust. Supersprint, iPE and Fi-Exhaust offer some great systems. An MST induction kit (£418) is also a popular choice.

With AMG brakes as standard, uprated pads from Ferodo or EBC, plus braided lines from HEL Performance and some Dot 5 fluid might do the job. Not forgetting coil-overs, a road legal roll cage, proper rally seats with motorsport-spec harnesses, and fire extinguishing equipment for stage rallying.

# Just the facts Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Coupe (C205)

ENGINE M276 2996cc V6 turbo Power 362bhp@5,500-6,200rpm

Torque 384lb ft@2,000-4,200rpm Transmission 9-speed auto, 4WD WEIGHT 1,735kg 0-62MPH 4.7sec Top speed 155mph

Many thanks to Steve Layton at the British Trial and Rally Drivers Association, Motorsport UK, Gary Conway nce, Gareth Jones at Avon Tuning and Andrew Middleton at MSL Perform









# 1996: AAVision

Debuting at the North American International Auto Show in 1996, the AAVision concept previewed Mercedes' new and groundbreaking ML-Class Sports Utility Vehicle that would become a major success story for the company and inspire other similarly capable machines

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AC

ver 40 years in production, the G-Wagen is an iconic Mercedes-Benz with a seemingly assured future. But when launched in 1979, arguably the toughest and most competent off-roader of its time turned out to be a vehicle few people wanted. Only European police and military sales prevented it being a flop, and it was soon reduced to 'special order' status.

With that in mind, when the car maker revisited the 4x4 market nearly two decades later, hoping for much higher sales, planners re-imagined the vehicle as a 'soft-roader', still an untried concept at the top end of the market, at the time dominated by heavyweights that, largely, were great off-road but agricultural on it. They reasoned that with less than 10 per cent of 4x4s ever used off-road, its driving characteristics should be road- not quagmire-biased.

At the cheaper end of the 4x4 sector, the likes of the more car-like, monocoque-bodied Land Rover Freelander and Honda CR-V were proving popular, suggesting the configuration could be pushed upmarket. However, the problem for Mercedes∧ Chassis, 4WD set-up and 3.2 V6 of forthcoming ML

abla The AAVision was pitched as a recreational car

Benz was that offering a 4x4 without the supreme off-road ability of the Range Rover and Jeep Grand Cherokee would expose its engineering as half-hearted – a totally unacceptable consequence within Stuttgart.

Mercedes had been tempted back to 4x4s by the US market, where SUV sales were rocketing, around two million per year by the mid-1990s. Hence the vehicle would be designed there (at Mercedes' Irvine, California studio), built there and, it was expected, predominantly sold there. After a careful search for a suitable site - and not one anywhere near the US car makers' traditional (and troubled) Detroit base - a factory was built at

Tuscaloosa in Alabama, with production of 70,000 per year planned.

That meant a US reveal, and the model that would be called the M-Class when launched in summer 1997 was shown in concept form in January 1996 at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, a

> follow-up appearance occurring at the Geneva motor show two



design feature made production.

sporty and with 4WD capability.

months later. The show car, named AAVision (All Activity Vehicle) was like nothing else around in the 4x4 market two and a half decades ago, its bulbous body and pronounced curves a sensational contrast to the existing legion of squarerigged trucks designed for work, not play. Mercedes' offering retained the star marque gravitas yet had 'leisure' stamped all over it.

he production model, coded W163, was understandably toned down, but there would be no disappointment at what was to be found under the skin.

Offered principally in 3.2-litre ML320 V6 and 4.3-litre ML430

V8 forms, it was constructed with a ladder frame chassis and its body was designed with crash deformability that would leave the passenger cell intact, a fundamental advance on most existing 4x4s.

Although not primarily intended for off-road use, the ML's permanent 4WD transmission hardware, with 48/52 front/rear torque split for neutral on-road handling, was sophisticated. The five-speed automatic gearbox (with Tipshift sequential change) had a low-ratio transfer operated by a switch on the facia, dropping the overall gearing right down, allowing maximum torque to be used at very low speeds, useful in extreme conditions such as deep mud, and making climbing and descending steep hills much more controllable.

There were no G-Wagen or Land Rover style mechanically locking differentials - instead electronic traction aids were used to address wheelspin. Electronic Traction Control (ETS) applied the brakes to a spinning wheel and sent increased driving torque to wheels that did have grip, meaning that even if only a single wheel grips the surface the Merc could keep moving. It was innovative



 $\triangle \triangle$  High grade trim; screens in front and rear.

 $\triangle$  The first ML, the W163, was shown in May '97

plant in USA still aVIJ2 M-M ablitud

a half decades ago" technology back then, and light years ahead of what most American SUVs could muster.

The ML was a hit from start. Tuscaloosa couldn't meet demand, so in 1999 a second production line was set up in Graz, Austria. In that year, almost 92,000 were built, rising to a peak of 107,000 in 2000 (nearly 25,000 of which were assembled in Austria). Doing absolutely

> no harm to its prospects was its memorable trashing in famous director Steven Spielberg's second, 1997 dinosaur caper, The Lost World.

"The show car

was like nothing else around in the

4x4 market two and

There was, however, teething trouble. The first MLs looked noticeably cheap inside and out, due to the low quality materials used, and later consumer surveys of these cars reported owners' complaints over mechanical reliability. Tuscaloosa just wasn't matching German standards. But Mercedes-Benz worked through the issues and by the 2001 facelift the ML was a greatly

improved car, its image boosted by the addition of the aggressive looking yet still understated ML55 AMG and widened by an economical diesel, the five-cylinder ML270 CDI; by then, Daimler-Benz had merged with Chrysler and the same OM612 was to be found in the rivalling Jeep Grand Cherokee.

To drive, the 163-series ML shared the characteristics of Benz saloons of the 1990s: quiet and comfortable, although not terribly exciting (ML55 AMG included), and the BMW X5 (also built in the US) that arrived to compete in 1999 was a better drive. But it was only the beginning of Mercedes' SUV ambitions, and in 2005 the much-improved W164 ML, succeeding the W163 after an extraordinary 647,700 sales, closed the dynamic gap, and since then has evolved into the present GLE - which rather ironically is offered alongside the G-Class which the original ML was meant to replace.



# Great all-rounders

With supply now marginally outstripping demand in the used market, now is the perfect time to bag a GLC-Class deal, as our UK market expert Guy Baker explains

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES TOP GEAR MOTORS LTD. BRISTOL STREET MOTORS & PESCARA







ercedes-Benz was decidedly late to the compact SUV party, and its first attempt - the LHD-only, 2008 to 2015 GLK

- could never command worldwide appeal. But better late than never, they say. And Mercedes' 2015-on GLC (which offered more contemporary styling than the GLK, plus better performance and came in both LHD and RHD forms) has proven far more popular.

Since launch, Mercedes-Benz has sold over 500,000 examples in the UK and mainland Europe, and 300,000 across the Atlantic. Impressive stuff indeed. And there are 2,700 GLCs advertised for sale in the UK alone at the moment, making it the fourth most popular used Mercedes model (after the long-lived A-, C- and E-Class).

With such a large supply of relatively young examples for sale there are some impressive deals to be had in the used arena, despite a relatively high demand and higher than normal used values in the UK right now. But which versions offer the best value?

The petrol-engined, 208bhp GLC250 offers lively performance and decent pulling power. And it's good value. There are quite a few one-owner examples for sale with full Mercedes service histories, like this Selenite Grey Metallic 68-plate GLC250 Urban Edition 4Matic we spotted for sale at Top Gear Motors Ltd (www. topgearmotorsltd.co.uk) in London. Stickered at £29,389, you might just glean a small discount, and with just 22,000 miles on the clock it's barely run in.

And it boasts a very impressive spec





 $\triangle$  GLC250 petrol from Top Gear Motors yours for under £30,000.



△ Bristol Street Motors' 38K-mile CLC250d priced at £25,495.

including Night Package black leather upholstery, 20-inch AMG multi-spoke alloys, Garmin map pilot satellite navigation, a 180degree view rear camera, heated front seats, Bluetooth, Dynamic Select driving modes and Speedtronic cruise control.

### **Petrol or diesel?**

Prefer a torquier diesel version instead? Then look no further than the GLC250d, which is also available in big numbers and can be bought with a small discount. We liked the look of this 2016/65-plate, silver 250d 4Matic AMG Line Premium example on sale at Bristol Street Motors in Derby (www.bristolstreet.co.uk). With similar power to the GLC250 but a whopping 369lb ft of torque on tap, overtaking is effortless even with a boot full of luggage. And the GLC250d is more appealing price-wise too, with this 38,000-mile example just £25,495.

Providing a panoramic roof with electric sunblind, sat nay, a black leather interior, heated front seats, Active Park Assist with Parktronic system, Dynamic Select, the Interior lighting pack and heated front seats it lacks for nothing and could be yours for as little as £25,000.

Whilst most GLC buyers are more interested in style and practicality, there is one model that also offers serious performance - the 362bhp AMG GLC43. Lighting quick and seriously grippy this is a proper AMG and claims 384lb ft of torque plus a 4.9-second 0-62mph time. There are quite a few around and you can pick up a great example for just £35,000 – like this 66-plate Premium example finished in Obsidian Black for sale at Pescara in Kent (www.pescara. co.uk). With a full service history record and an all-encompassing spec, it's one of the quickest and most comfortable ways to get from A to B.

► Looking for something even more practical? Then check out our top three £15,000 Mercedes Estates on page 76!

### **Forecourt find**

# 450SEL 6.9

(V116)

Good examples of Mercedes' iconic 116-series 450SEL 6.9 rarely appear for sale in the UK, so we were delighted to discover this Magnetite Blue 1978 car advertised for £49.950 at Avantgarde Classics in Staffordshire, Just 7.380 of this V8 super saloon were produced between 1975 and 1980, and this one has covered a mere 61.800 miles.

As well as parchment velour upholstery, this left-hand drive 6.9 has air conditioning, cruise control, central locking, a front centre armrest, rear headrests, 'Mexican-Hat' alloys and a refurbished Becker Europa radio. Originally a diplomatic vehicle, this 6.9 has been thoroughly recommissioned, and serviced.

topping out at 140mph.

Dealer information: Avantgarde Classics Ltd Tel 07968 694448 or 01827 288177 Web www.avantgardeclassics.co.uk



- △ Magnetite Blue paint and lots and lots of chromework
- > Velour upholstery appears in remarkable condition for its age.
- abla This example has had a high quality, glass-out respray





### resprayed in the original factory colour Equipped with a 6.834cc V8 (M100) engine, the 6.9 is still considered a fast car, hitting 62mph in 7.4 seconds and

# **Auction spotlight**

A round-up of recent prices paid for averagecondition Mercedes in auctions across the UK

### CLK220 CDI Coupe Avantgarde

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/56-plate. 123.000 miles. £2.450

### ● C320 CDI Avantgarde SE

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/06-plate, 107,000 miles, £2,700

### CLS320 CDI Coupe

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/57-plate, 103,000 miles, £5,200

#### SL500 Roadster

5.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2003/53-plate, 91,000 miles, £5,500

#### ML280 CDI Edition S

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/57-plate, 84,000 miles, £6,000

### ML320 CDI Sport

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/57-plate. 90.000 miles. £6.900

### SL500 Roadster

5.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2006/56-plate, 104,000 miles, £7,750

### **● C250 CDI Coupe AMC Sport Edition**

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2015/15-plate, 55.000 miles. £11.650

### CLS220d Shooting Brake AMC Line

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2016/66-plate, 71,000 miles, £16,600

#### A160 AMG Line Premium Plus

1.6-litre, petrol, manual, 2016/66-plate, 28,000 miles, £17,200

### ■ E350 Bluetec Estate AMG Sport Night Edition Premium Plus 3.0-litre, diesel. auto, 2015/65-plate, 62,000 miles, £18,800

### GLA180 Urban Edition

1.6-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19-plate, 27,000 miles, £20,900

### • C200 AMG Line Premium Plus 4Matic

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/18-plate, 21,000 miles, £24,450

### AMG C43 4Matic Premium

3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/68-plate, 56,000 miles, **£28,500** 

#### AMG SLC43 Roadster

3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/18-plate, 18,000 miles, £30,000

### **Top tips**

### Suspension upgrades

Improve ride quality, grip, acceleration, braking and steering feedback

- When replacing your car's ageing standard suspension parts, uprated components can prove more effective and sometimes cheaper too.
- Most M-Bs use a MacPherson strut and spring suspension set-up to provide comfortable ride and reasonable handling - but struts, dampers, and springs can all be upgraded to enhance the driving experience.
- Owner forums are a great place to research which set-up might be best for your particular Mercedes. There will be numerous options so learn from other people's mistakes before parting with your money.
- Uprated suspension springs typically cost between £300 and £1,200, and can allow your car to sit lower and corner flatter, but ride quality may suffer and the factory shock absorbers could wear out sooner.
- A wiser option (from around £600 upwards) is to fit new springs and matched dampers. You can even buy adjustable dampers which will allow you to adjust the damping yourself. These start at around £850.
- Coil-overs are the most effective suspension option on high performance Mercs. As one matched unit, they provide optimal damping whilst maintaining ride quality, but they cost £1.000 or more.
- After changing suspension parts, you should get your car's geometry (camber, caster and toe) checked and adjusted, otherwise you won't reap the full benefits of any upgrades and your car could suffer problems.

### And remember...

Always arrive early at car auctions, if in person then pick up the sale catalogue and examine the vehicles in the line-up before the bidding starts. In addition to the hammer price, you'll have to pay a small buyer's fee. You'll need to provide a deposit of at least £500 (in cash or by Maestro or Visa Delta debit card) but the balance of the purchase price and the buyer's fee can be paid by banker's draft, cash, cheque, telegraphic transfers, credit or debit card, Find your nearest auction house check out www.british-car-auctions.co.uk or www.nama-uk.com



# TOPTHREE £15,000 Estates

You may have heard rumours that Mercedes-Benz – along with other manufacturers – is considering dropping estate models from future ranges. With the continued growth in the popularity of SUVs and crossovers, this can't come as a total surprise. But there is still an undeniably strong demand for five-door versions of premium saloons - and Mercedes has produced some of the finest exponents over many decades. A guick search at the time of writing showed over 2,700 Mercedes-Benz estates advertised for sale in the UK, and we've picked three great examples that you could buy right now for £15,000, including a much-loved modern classic!



### **E220 CDI Estate (S212)**

A faithful fleet car favourite for many years, Mercedes' 212-series E220 CDI AMG Sport can make a great second-hand family car. Our budget bags a 75,000-mile, 2014 example with two or three owners and full service history. Make sure yours was fettled at a Mercedes main dealer for at least the first four years of its life and comes with a comprehensive spec that includes Comand, leather and an automatic transmission. Capable of 134mph when pressed, you should see close to 50mpg on longer journeys.



### **C350e Estate (S205)**

Petrol plug-in hybrids are in vogue at the moment, and Mercedes' 205-series C350e Estate Sport combines all the performance you would expect from a 289bhp petrol C-Class, with impressive 60mpg-plus fuel economy. You won't pay a penny in road tax either and our budget puts you behind the wheel of a 2016 example with around 100,000 miles. Capable of 19 miles in electric mode, the C350e provides 258lb ft of torque and some Sport versions also come with Airmatic, Active Park Assist and Comand sat nav.



### **E220 Estate (S124)**

If you're after something from a more relaxed era, then Mercedes' 124-series E220 Estate is a perennial favourite. A rare find these days, the 124 claims impressive build quality and an enviable reliability record, as long as you buy a rust-free example. The 148bhp, 2.2-litre four-cylinder motor delivers adequate performance and with the laid-back optional auto transmission you should see close to 29mpg. £15,000 buys an 90,000-mile seven-seater with a full service history, cloth trim and air con.

# Latest products and accessories

### Lorinser tuning for AMG C63 S Cabriolet

If you're looking for even more power from your C 63 S Cabriolet, then Lorinser's PowerModule may be the answer. It can raise power output from 510bhp right up to 598bhp and elevate torque from 516 to

612lb ft. Sportservice Lorinser's conversion only takes a short time in the workshop thanks to the plug-and-play concept, so the entire process is non-destructive and can be reversed at any time. And the hardware can be transferred into another Mercedes in the future if required. It's also available for the C63 S Coupe and Saloon!



### Gaz adjustable dampers for W201 190

Suspension specialist Caz can now supply fully adjustable CT rear dampers for the W201 190. These provide variable bump and rebound rates which can be adjusted to suit the conditions and your driving style by means of an easily accessible knob on the side of the units. And they can even be set up for serious racing use if you so wish. With a zinc plated body and protective plastic sleeve to keep them looking good and working well for long into the future, they are covered by a two-year warranty. For further details visit www.gazshocks.com.

### Yokohama Advan **Sport V107 tyres**

Yokohama's new Advan Sport ultra-highperformance V107 tyres are available in a range of sizes for 18- to 23-inch alloys and have been developed for use on premium high-performance cars, premium highperformance SUVs, and premium electric vehicles (EVs). They are actually the OE tyre choice for some Mercedes-

AMC cars, with the tyre's special asymmetric tread pattern contributing to its ability to deliver the variable performance required from the tread's inner and outer sides. providing a strong grip on dry and wet road surfaces. Prices start at around £150.



### In Focus C200 Saloon (W205)

The 2014 to 2018, pre-facelifted, 181bhp C200 is comfortable, nippy, economical and good value. There are over 120 well-maintained used examples now offered for sale from £10,000, with 42% having covered less than 50,000 miles. The most popular colours are black and silver, these making up 59% of the total

### 60-second buying guide

Follow our top tips to quickly sort the good examples from the bad

#### Walk around

Check for water leaks in the boot and any uneven panel gaps or slight differences between the colour of adjacent panels. Kerbed alloys are commonplace and look for any early signs of underbody or wheel arch rust. The C200 tends to be heavy on front tyres and both front and rear brake pads, so visually check

### **Get inside**

Ensure that all the electrics work and that there is no wear and tear in the rear. You must have the latest Comand navigation updates loaded and keep an eve on the temperature gauge - some thermostats have failed. Sunroofs and door seals can creak, and if the carbon filter in the fuel tank breathing system becomes blocked you'll smell petrol.

### Start it up

The transmission should work smoothy and there shouldn't be any suspension rattles. The engine should pull strongly in all gears and the steering lock to lock

should be seamless, with no noises - a few electric steering motors have failed. Performance should feel lively and the brakes strong. A few owners have reported failed window switches

### Check the paperwork

Your C200 must possess a full service history with no missing services, no more than two or three owners and main dealer stamps for the first four or five years. There were lots of recalls over the life of the W205 so make sure that all these issues have been attended to - you can check this at a Mercedes dealership.





### **Nexar Pro GPS**

Nexar's Pro GPS plug and play dash cam comes with two cameras, to offer the ultimate in driving security. Compact, sleek and affordable it comes with a 32GB SD card and free unlimited cloud storage included. Available on Amazon. co.uk and the Nexar website, for only £99.95, the Nexar Pro GPS has 1080p full HD image sensors, and records both the road and the interior of your car directly to the Nexar app. Equipped with a suction cup mount including built-in GPS most drivers choose to configure it with 128GB or 256GB internal memory.



### **Top Mercs**

Knowing the Mercedes marketplace means you can make the best buying decisions, but that requires up-to-date market information. This is why we generate fresh Mercedes market data every couple of months, to give you - the Mercedes enthusiast - the best information possible

### The top 10 bestselling used Mercedes

(In order of used examples advertised for sale; percentage of total used Mercedes market)

1 C-Class (23.1%)

2 A-Class (21.3%)

3 E-Class (13.3%)

4 GLC-Class (7.7%)

5 GLA-Class (5.9%)

6 CLA-Class (5.6%)

7 GLE/M-Class (4.4%)

8 SLC/SLK-Class (3.7%)

9 B-Class (2.3%)

10 S-Class (1.9%)



### What's in a colour?

The colour of your Mercedes could affect its desirability to future buvers and its residual value. So. what are the top five colours on the used Mercedes market?

1 Black (28.2%)

2 Silver (18.8%)

3 White (17.7%)

4 Grey (17.4%)

5 Blue (9.9%)



### Miles ahead

Low-mileage Mercedes often possess better residuals, whilst high-mileage cars can offer better value

Less than 50.000 miles 66.8%

**Between 50,000** and 80,000 miles

18.8%

More than 80.000 miles 14.4%

### Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

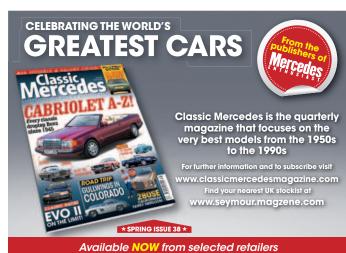
Diesel 56.3%

Petrol 40.0%

Hybrid 2.80% **Full electric** 0.90%











# **CYPRESS GREEN DREAM**

450SEL 6.9 with just 30,000 miles under its wheels



Why the SLR is better than many would have you believe





Classic ambulance on tour! ◆ Modified R107 300SL Roadster **AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!** 

Mercedes June/July 2022 issue ON SALE May 20th



# **CLASSIC IN WAITING**

The top-selling 190E/190E 2.0 perfectly represents the W201 range with its impressive quality, solid performance and nifty handling - pick one up for just a few grand while you still can!

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES TERRY OBORNE

he W201 was in a sense the Mercedes-Benz for those who wished to buy into the star marque but who were not necessarily car enthusiasts or particularly wealthy. No aspect of the 1982 to 1993 saloon (it was never built as an estate or coupe) could be described as remarkable, but it shared the same high prestige and outstanding build quality with the model at the other end of the price range, the 126-series S-Class.

On this basis, it was unsurprising that what was effectively the base model for much of the near 11 years of production was by far the most

popular. The two-litre petrol car badged 190E until January 1991 when it became the 190E 2.0 accounted for a third of all sales, with 638,180 units built. The next most ordered was the two-litre 190D at 452,806. While always more expensive than other cars in the same size class, the 190E was nonetheless relatively affordable, its price point even allowing it to qualify for significant company car tax breaks in the UK provided it wasn't loaded with spec.

Hence the 190E on steel wheels and with cloth trim was a familiar car on roads, and as the 1990s wore on it also became the 'cheap Merc', high mileage but still sound examples available for three-figure

sums. However, the stock of bargain W201s has finally been largely depleted as repair bills exceed values and, almost three decades since the last was built, the remaining clean examples are seen as collectibles if not full-blown classics, commanding at least £5,000 if they don't have galactic mileages. This 'small', traditional Mercedes has a loyal following, so what do you need to check out if you want to join the club?

### **DESIGN & EVOLUTION**

The W201, Mercedes' first small car since the four-cylinder Ponton had been discontinued 20 years earlier, was launched in a twomodel range that went on sale in

the UK in September 1983. The 190 model had a two-litre engine with carburettor producing 89bhp, while the same M102 motor, but with fuel injection, in the 190E gave 116bhp with a catalytic converter fitted (120bhp without).

If its two engines initially offered were unadventurous, the W201's innovative multi-link rear suspension, which provided generous spring travel but without camber change, was vastly superior to the 3-Series' semi-trailing arm set-up. Mercedes-Benz's preferred recirculating ball steering was used, which communicated little to the driver but with its good shock absorption complemented the slightly firm but still



comfortably sprung suspension.

In early 1985, the W201's innovative single wiper was given a wider sweep, heated door mirrors and washer jets were fitted, the central locking was modified so it worked from the front passenger door as well. Plus, the diameter of the road wheels increased an inch to 15-inch.

A key date is September 1988 when a facelift delivered worthwhile improvements, these cars recognisable by the large, full-length plastic cappings on the side of the body. Better shaped front seats were fitted, and much needed extra legroom was found for the rear seats. In 1989, Mercedes introduced the Sportline trim level, options including 21mm lower and stiffened suspension, wider wheels and tyres (7Jx15-inch with 205/55 tyres as opposed to 6Jx15-inch and 185/65s), sports seats and a smaller (390mm) steering wheel.

In 1990, with mandatory catalysts imminent, Mercedes said goodbye to carburettors as the 190

was replaced by the fuel-injected 190E 1.8. which was why the two-litre adopted the '190E 2.0' badge. The last mechanical developments were the fitting of anti-lock brakes to all W201s, and a 4bhp increase for the 190E 2.0.

For the final year on sale in the UK, 1993, a batch of cars were badged 'LE' (pictured), featuring eight-hole alloy wheels, electric windows, a sunroof, polished burr walnut on the fascia and a Blaupunkt radio/cassette unit. They came in three metallic colours: Brilliant Silver, Rosso Red or Azzuro Blue. The last W201 rolled out of the Sindelfingen plant in February 1993, although Bremen made a few more until August of that year, ahead of the first C-Class's introduction.

### **DRIVING THE 190E/190E 2.0**

In the present era of wider and bulkier cars, your first impression of a 190E may well be how small the cabin feels. You sit close to both the floor and the roof, and the rear seat is cramped, although

space was improved at the 1988 facelift. That said, you'll probably love the clear all-round view out, something rarely afforded in many modern cars.

The crucial ingredients of Mercedes models further up the hierarchy are there: the low noise, the unruffled steering, the classic looking Benz instruments, and the unfussy, but stylish and hardwearing trim. You will see a few examples with leather trim and air conditioning, options that together added over £3,500 to the 190E's £18,000 price in 1990.

Performance from the M102 motor is adequate if unstimulating, and this is a car that most will prefer in four-speed automatic form, which the majority were, rather than as a five-speed manual. But every W201 handles superbly, a mixture of safety-first predictability and a high grip level thanks to the sophisticated rear suspension. The steering lacks communication but is well weighted, with power assistance standard throughout production.

### JUST THE FACTS

### Mercedes-Benz 190E (W201)

Engine M102 1,997cc 4-cyl Power 116bhp@5,100rpm TORQUE 127lb ft@3,500rpm

Transmission 5-speed manual/ 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,100-1,140kg 0-62MPH 11.0/11.2sec

TOP SPEED 118/115mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 26.4/25.9mpg YEARS PRODUCED 10.1982-08.1988

### Mercedes-Benz 190E (W201)

ENGINE M102 1,997cc 4-cyl Power 116bhp@5.100rpm

TORQUE 127lb ft@3,500rpm

Transmission 5-speed manual/ 4-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,170kg

0-62MPH 10.9/11.5sec TOP SPEED 117/115mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 24.8/25.9mpg YEARS PRODUCED 09.1988-12.1990

### Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.0 (W201)

Engine M102 1,997cc 4-cyl

Power 120bhp@5.300rpm TORQUE 129lb ft@3,500rpm

Transmission 5-speed manual/ 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,180kg 0-62MPH 10.9/11.5sec TOP SPEED 120/118mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 24.8/25.9mpg YEARS PRODUCED 01.1991-08.1993

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for cars with a catalytic converter; fuel consumption according to EEC urban

### WHAT YOU'LL PAY

Prices start at around £1,500 for a car with an MOT, but we suggest giving them a miss and looking at those from £3,000 upwards, these being the cars with more investment potential. By now, most surviving W201s will show well over 100,000 miles, so the handful with 50,000 to 60,000 miles stand out and are typically priced at £6,000 to £9,000.

With models that aren't quite full-blown classic, you'll usually see one or two examples with optimistic prices way above the rest, and we spotted a 1992 car with 29,000 miles, albeit a 1.8, stickered at £15,000, which is more like 2.3-16/2.5-16 money.

The 1988-on facelifted cars are generally worth more, and alloy wheels, leather and any of the other numerous factory options such as electric front seats and the very expensive Sportline suspension increase desirability. But ultimately condition dictates value, whether it's a basic or high spec example.

# 190E/190E 2.0 INSIDE AND OUT



### **Specialist overview**

Stef Mazzoni of independent Mercedes specialist Merparts, Port Glasgow

"There are still some nice 190Es out there and they're still not crazy money, but vou have to find them, and now the overwhelming problem is corrosion. Parts are becoming an issue too - engine parts are no longer available. Lots of cars have now covered 200,000 or 300,000 miles, and they need a complete suspension refurbishment." www.merparts.com

### **POWERTRAIN**

- Engines made until just before the 1989 facelift had a single rather than duplex timing chain and this component can stretch over time, causing a rattling noise on engine start-up.
- On late cars with an emissions-slashing catalyst. the electronic control for the exhaust catalyst can fail, leaving the engine dead.
- Water pumps can leak. Check the water level, and for a higher than normal water temperature reading.
- The hydraulic engine mounts eventually leak and

lose their damping ability, causing the engine to drop slightly and sometimes make contact with the subframe. You will feel a general harshness and a vibration through the steering wheel when full lock

 A harshness during acceleration and deceleration is usually due to wear in the 'B2 brake band', which contains a piston that is part of the gear changing mechanism in the automatic gearbox. Should this component break, the transmission will fail completely.



### SUSPENSION, STEERING AND BRAKING SYSTEM

- The suspension can be expected to give increased trouble not because of any design fault, but because of sheer age and mileage. The front suspension ball joints may need to be replaced, the front top struts may be worn out, while the rear subframe may need new bushes.
- The braking system is simple and straightforward, but check the remaining life of the front and rear discs by feeling the extent of the lip on their outside edges. Many W201s had anti-lock brakes but this was an optional extra (the 2.6 model had

them as standard from September 1986 production, and this system was also standard on the hot 16-valve cars) until January 1991 production when ABS became standard on all models except the 190E 1.8 and 190D.



• Steering is vague and with little feel at the best of times, and when worn can be even more so. Some adjustment may be possible, but it could be that a replacement steering box is required.





Look for rust on the front of the rear subframe where it mounts to the body

### **BODYWORK AND WHEELS**

• A W201 can look rust-free on the outside, but the apparently solid body may hide serious problems. Look for rust on the front of the rear subframe where it mounts to the body, on the rear anti-roll bar where it can be severe enough to cause the bar to sheer off, and for rusty rear jacking points. The sunroof can be a particular problem, rusted drainage pipes leaking water.

- Some replacement body panels such as front wings are available but have become very expensive in the past few years.
- Corroded or lightly damaged alloy wheels are best restored, but used replacements are still quite freely available at reasonable cost. This makes upgrading from steel to alloy wheels worthwhile in our view.





### INTERIOR AND ELECTRICS

- The October 1988 facelift cars have a superior interior, with notably better seats, one good reason to look for a post-1988 car. The cloth trim wears well, but look out for rips and faded areas. Some cars have leather upholstery, and a few MB-Tex vinyl.
- One relatively inexpensive electric module, the over voltage protector relay (OVP) and which is located behind the battery tray can, if faulty,

cause poor starting and can affect the ABS. It's advisable to replace this in a car that hasn't received a new one recently, as it's not expensive.

• Check that the electric functions inside all work, such as the sunroof (some are manual), electric windows and mirrors. Air conditioning was not a widely fitted option and is desirable, but test it to see if it can supply properly cold and hot air.

### 190E/190E2.0 INSIDE AND OUT

Get one while you can. The W201 was as cheap as chips for a long time but there are signs that it is becoming increasingly popular as a modern classic, and with the scruffy examples dying off fast, the good cars will be left to appreciate in value.

It might not be particularly exciting to drive, but as one of the last traditionally engineered and built Mercedes it has charm enough to compensate. For the time being it is still affordable, but do remember that even the youngest car is nearly 30 years old, so you can't expect to skimp on maintenance. It is a Mercedes-Benz, after all.



# **W201:** Other ma

While the 190E was the biggest seller, there were 11 other variants made during the W201's lifespan. The early partner to the 190E, the single-carburettored 190, is probably best disregarded given its most leisurely pace, and in any case you won't see many. UK customers won't see any of the 190E 2.3, unless it's an import, as it wasn't sold in Britain – but it was a significant model, with 186,600 delivered worldwide.

The three mainstream diesels – 190D 2.0/2.5 and 190D 2.5 Turbo – are long lasting but rattly, and only the Turbo has any liveliness about it. A scarce model is the 190D 2.2 that was offered only in North America, finding 10,600 customers.

The most sought after of the volume models are of course the Cosworthengineered 190E 2.3-16 and 2.5-16, both of which sell for three or four times the prices of lesser models, while values of the 1989 190E 2.5-16 Evolution and Evolution II are going through the roof, the II able to command over £250,000. However, the undiscovered gem in the W201 range has to be the 190E 2.6, its refined 2.6-litre M103 six-cylinder engine making it the sweetest of all.





### Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL OIL SERVICE MAJOR SERVICE 190E/190E 2.0 **Quotes from Merparts** 

### Non routine servicing

- ★ Replace engine timing chain (duplex) £900
- ★ Replace engine timing chain (duplex) including oil pump gears £3.500
- ★ Fit new over voltage protector (OVP) relay £120
- ★ Replace worn out engine mounts £380
- ★ Fit new front brake discs and brake pads £290
- ★ Four premium brand tyres (185/65R15) £300

### 190E/190E 2.0 timeline

December 1982

Range unveiled to the public - 190 and 190E

September 1983

190 and 190E go on sale in the UK

● January 1985 Higher level of standard equipment, 15-inch wheels replace 14-inch items

September 1988

Major facelift - all models revised, with new exterior trim and improved seating two highlights

June 1989

Sportline trim pack introduced, optional on all models

**March 1992** 

'LE' trimmed W201s (as feature in this guide's main photos) are introduced, with special colours and trim

February 1993

W201 190 production comes to an end

### What you'll pay

£1,500-£2,000 Tired, four-cylinder powered cars with little or no service history to their name

£2,000-£3,000 High mileage 190E, rough around the edges but still perfectly usable

£3,000-£4,000 Expect a solid body and mechanicals, and should have at least a part service history

£4,000-£6,000 This is the entry price for potentially collectable W201 190Es - it must have sound bodywork, a smart interior and full history

£6,000-£9,000 Very presentable examples, and with under 75,000 miles showing on the odometer

£9,000-£15,000 Totally rust free and as new interior, and preferably with leather and alloys. Last-of-the-line 'LE' spec cars possibly in this price range







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### Running Report > E55 AMG, E63 AMG Estate & 300TD

# Hot property

The weather was not exactly ideal, but serial collector Blakley Leonard couldn't resist jumping into his AMC E-Classes

WORDS & IMAGES BLAKLEY LEONARD

### FACTSHEET

CARS 2001 E55 AMG/2007 E63 AMG Estate/1983 300TD

**OWNER** Blakley Leonard

**LOCATION** Virginia, USA

PURCHASED January 2021/July 2021/August 2019

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Blakley swaps his turbodiesel-powered 123 for something a little more potent: E55 and E63 AMGs!



△ E55 on H&R springs; Blakley has owned over 20 210-series E-Classes. older weather has settled into Southwest Virginia and as a result the 500SL has stayed in storage since the last report. I've also put the W140 S-Class on the back burner and it's still sitting on the stock 16-inch wheels with old tyres even though the 19s are ready to be put back on. The 123-series turbodiesel wagon has been great but doesn't exactly quench my thirst from a performance standpoint. For these reasons, I've been driving my 2001 E55 AMG and 2007 E63 AMG Estate nearly full-time.

Let's begin with the E55. As many know, the W210 is near and dear to me, and arguably my favourite all-around Mercedes. My affinity for these cars began, of course, with my dad. He previously had a 1997 E420 in Desert Silver over tan leather when I was

growing up and eventually traded it for a 2002 E430 Sport which he still owns today after 17 years.

While I'm too lazy to recall the total number of 210s I've owned, it's easily over 20. Currently, there are six still in the collection, of which two are E60s built by RennTech. The 2001 E55 AMG sees the most road time for now and has been lowered with H&R springs. The car also has a slightly louder aftermarket exhaust installed by the previous owner.

I fitted custom-built, three-piece Aero III style wheels, which really pair well with the body line of the 210. I've only put about 1,500 miles on it, most of which have been added recently, and it now shows 129,000 in total. While that may seem like a lot, it's not at all for a naturally aspirated M113 V8. I've seen examples with well over 300,000 miles, proving that they have nearly



unmatched reliability and longevity in comparison to most other petrol Benzes.

### **Surprise!**

When I don't feel like dealing with the complications of driving a lowered car, or I just want to see the look on a Corvette driver's face when he catches up to a station wagon at the next light, I grab the keys to my 2007 E63 AMG Estate. Everyone loves a fast station wagon (or at least they should) and ever since my first estate, a 2004 E320, back in 2010, I always dreamed of the E63.

I acquired the car in mid 2021 and have added a little over 1,000 miles for a total of 107,000. Only 18 total came in Flint Grey over black leather between 2007 and 2009 in the US, and for 2007 only 67 examples were offered in total, making this a fairly rare wagon.

Having 507 horsepower in a station wagon is every bit as fun as it sounds. I recently took a day trip which consisted of a five-hour round drive and the car is truly at its best on the highway. The acceleration is immediate no matter the speed and it leaves more than a few puzzled looks as I pass.

The 300TD still gets its fair share of road time but heated seats and AMG-tuned engines are a nice change of pace to break up the monotony of the daily commute.

abla 107,000 miles on the clock of Blakley's Flint Grey E63 Estate.

▽▷ Sculpted AMG steering wheel with metal paddleshifters.



# Spring is in the air

The 190E is treated to a service, special underside treatment and floor mats, while a decision is made on fuel grade for the E250 Coupe

**WORDS & IMAGES WILLIAM TERRINGTON** 

### FACTSHEET

CARS 1989 190E/2011 E250 Coune

OWNER William Terrington

**LOCATION Surrey. UK** 

PURCHASED March 2014/March 2017

**UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Service time and a spruce** up for the modern classic saloon; E250 Coupe gets new oil. brake fluid and filters



he time has come for the 190E's service: an oil and spark plug change at my usual specialist, TM Motors in Molesey, Surrey. Prior to the appointment, I changed the air filter and fitted a new oil level sensor – the latter noted to be slightly leaking at the last service. A noticeable saving of about £70 was made, thanks to purchasing Bosch spark plugs (HR8DC+) and air filter from a large seller on eBay, and sourcing the oil level sensor from Hella.

The 190 is fitted with only a handful of carefully researched parts from top German brands rather than Mercedes, where it was obvious I would have been paying a premium for nothing more than a logo. Before taking the car on holiday in the summer, I'll be having Pirelli tyres fitted. According to the build sheet, the car was equipped with Pirellis at the factory and one remains on the spare wheel!

With brand new components underneath the skin, it was a question of making sure the car remained active during winter months while avoiding the road salt. Total inactivity over the cold period isn't ideal - with an engine nicely run in at 156,000 miles and in perfect working order, the W201 needs to be driven.

What was helpful was my discovery of the company Chemical Guys, which produces a range of products that cover any gaps in Autoglym's catalogue. Applying CG's Bare Bones Undercarriage Spray after using a pressure washer and degreaser/ component cleaner left the 190's underside looking factory fresh. What's also on order are a set of Coco Mats, in blue with white – a perfect match! They're made to order in the USA and I'm sure they'll look fabulous.

### **Fuel concerns**

Now the weather is improving, I'll be purchasing materials to tackle some minor bodywork. A wheelarch is showing a little corrosion, and there are a few other repairs to make including inside the engine bay - a full respray here feels rather unnecessary as there's so much original paint in great condition. After that, a thorough detailing, and new under bonnet foam insulation and battery tray should see the baby Benz looking as good as new.

On the E250 Coupe front, it's running perfectly as usual and was a breeze to polish. It's also had an oil change, plus new air and cabin filters, and fresh brake fluid. Given it doesn't do many miles, I'm not filling the tank with new-in-the-UK E10 petrol even

 $\triangle$  New Continental tyres on the way for this AMC Sport coupe.

though the car is technically compatible, as keeping all that hydroscopic ethanol for periods longer than the average commuter/family car raises concerns.

I do question whether E10 really is eco-friendly. Synthetic or e-fuel doesn't have compatibility issues and its production is CO2 neutral, so it would be nice to see this being introduced on a large scale sooner rather than later. Due for the E-Class soon will be a set of Mercedes 'MO' Continental tyres. Not cheap, but certainly worthwhile.



> The 190 is feeling more responsive after receiving new plugs.

∇ William sources new parts direct from their manufacturer.



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**E320 CDI Elegance** 2001, 94,943 miles, 3.2-litre diesel, five-speed automatic Tiptronic, two previous owners, MOT expired October 2018, not driven since, silver, black leather interior, £2,000. Tel: 07778 405300. St Neots [CDW5]



W126 300SE 1988, immaculate, white with blue velour interior, 174,000 miles with a great history portfolio, recent mechanic overhaul including major service, brakes, seals and all works as required, long MOT, no expense spared, low owners and HPI clear, drives like a dream, only £5,450. Tel: 07870 963662. Leicester [CDW3]



**A180 Sport** 2016, automatic, 66 plate, half leather interior, three new tyres, just had new brakes and discs, been fully serviced, 51,000 on the clock, recorded in 2018 as Cat S, runs and drives really well, airbag light keeps coming on but have no time to take it in. POA. Tel: 07806 771571. Tamworth [CDW4]



**C55 AMG** 2005, saloon, 56,632 miles, only 105 of these beautiful beasts registered on the road (DVLA Q2 2021), probably one of the best of them. Recent MOT and service by Mercedes-Benz Brooklands, FMBSH, immaculate inside and outside - 5.5 litres of pure AMG muscle, normally aspirated engine, gone up in value every year I've owned it. Insured by Adrian Flux Classic Car Insurers with agreed value of £15,000. Comes with four brand new tyres, tracker, uprated Tarox discs, pads and braided hoses, new Mercedes battery, 18inch alloy wheels, climate control, electric windows (front/rear), ESP and ABS, incar entertainment (radio/CD autochanger), heated electric mirrors with memory, metallic paint metallic, electric front seats electric with memory and heating seats, leather upholstery, £14,000. Tel: 07415 936750. West Molesey [CDW6]



C280 Sport Rare, immaculate condition throughout, C280 Sport is becoming very rare and this is a great investment example, no rust whatsoever, top spec, fully loaded with black leather interior, cruise control, auto, sport mode, front and rear electric windows, etc., £2,750 OVNO. Tel: 07399 715276. London [CDW7]



C43 AMG Bought the car in 2001 at three years old with about 15,000 miles on the clock, current mileage approximately 121,000, maintained by J Haynes who will support any enquiries, please call for more details, £6,000 OVNO. Tel: 07762 776244. Worthing [CDW9]



**CLK320 Avantgarde** Auto, full service history with loads of paperwork, just had service with my local Mercedes specialist, good condition inside and out, drives absolutely beautifully, roof works perfectly and hood in good condition, just been weatherproofed, old school Mercedes which I purchased on the advice of my local Mercedes specialist, the 3.2 with the five-speed auto is a fantastic combination of reliability and simplicity. Becoming rare now, Mercedes enthusiast owned, get ready for the summer with this fantastic car, no time wasters please, POA. Tel: 07563 670417. [CDW10] Southampton

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**C280 Sport** 1997, auto, rare, fantastic condition, full service history mainly Mercedes and my local Mercedes specialist, totally up-together car, Mercedes enthusiast owned, nothing needs doing to it, new Avon tyres all round, extremely rare V6 Sport, POA. Tel: 07563 670417. Southampton [CDW11]



E220 Coupe 1995, Azurite Blue, cream leather, 116,000 miles, MOT and tax, 17-inch monoblocks, remote alarm, service book with 11 stamps, present owner five years, looks and drives very nicely, £5,000. Tel: 07752 532516. Chichester [CDW14]



S63 AMG Coupe 2014, biturbo, best colour combination of Cavansite Blue with Espresso Porcelain interior, 64 reg, comes with four-year AMG warranty transferable, high spec, 85,000 miles with full history, needs to be viewed to really appreciate, £44,500. Tel: 07788 200400. Preston [CDW19]

# **MERC TRADER**



**W111 220SEb Coupe** 1961, LHD, manual floor change, steel sliding sunroof, arrived in the UK from the States as a very solid rust free example, owned by me from 2017 having since undergone a comprehensive restoration including total bodywork and repaint (DB906 grey Blue metallic), retrimmed in leather (1088 Bright Red), new veneer, headlining in correct cloth, mechanical overhaul with many new genuine and refurbished parts, displayed at M-B World Brooklands for many months and now stored in a Carcoon, stunning and never used since completion, £48,950, Tel: 07976



[CDW18]

254804. Hampshire

**C200** 2011, saloon, 150,000 miles, good order for year but slightly tatty, all usual Merc features – air con, leather interior, electric seats etc. Everything works, four good tyres, MOT until August 2022, average 45mpg, FSH, sale due to downsizing to smaller car for a learner, £1,750 for quick sale. Tel: 07753 677974. Leiston *[CDW20]* 





**CLK270 CDI** 2005, auto, 05 reg, excellent condition internally and externally, recent service and four new tyres, 10 months MOT with previous advisories rectified, 150,000 miles, drives excellent with good MPG, photos on request, £2,995. Tel: 07904 207460. Stockport *ICDW23* 



**260E** 1991, auto, Pearl Blue, 12 months MOT, three owners, showroom condition, FSH, factory fitted sunroof, blue leather seats, loads of history and extras, 71,130 miles, £7,450 ONO. Tel: 01529 421712. Sleaford *[CDW35]* 

E320 CDI Auto, black, beige leather, light interior, electric heated seats, full electrics, sunroof etc., FSH, always garaged, two keys, registration LS56 KUV, as new, 79,000 miles, no offers, £9,995. Tel: 0208 505 4678. Woodford Green [CD] 350SL 1980, auto, owner for the last 28 years, Thistle Green, 95,000 miles, new soft top and original hardtop, well maintained both mechanically and bodywork, stainless steel exhaust, drives beautifully, £19,500. Tel: 01977 515575. Yorkshire

**GOOSEL** V12, 1992, 408bhp, silver, blue leather, excellent condition, 87,000 miles, extensive history, very rare, only 63 left in UK, enthusiast, collectors or investment car, ask for Gary, £16,000, Tel: 07815 530652.

Buntingford [CD]

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**S320 CDI** 2005, showroom condition, fully loaded, £9,000 of factory options, rear DVD player, Keyless-Go, wood/leather steering wheel and gearshift, M-B Bluetooth mobile phone ready, 18-inch alloys, xenon headlights, M-B floor mats, unmarked light grey leather, M-B service history, 122,000 miles, £4,995 ONO. Tel: 07879 433521. Saffron Walden



**300SL-24** 1989, convertible, 68,000 miles, current owner last 20 years, red, tan leather interior, black convertible top, red hardtop, garage stored, selling as not used for past year, POA. Tel: 07977 425546. Dawlish [BCW3]



ML500 Special Edition 2005, 104,000 miles, fully loaded, grey leather, very good condition, no rust, LHD, U.S import, 10 months MOT, UK Reg, full Mercedes service history, has spent all life in garage in Arizona, please call Steven for more information, POA. Tel: 07775 942389.



**W123 230** 14,810 miles, car in outstanding condition, any questions please call, £22,000. Tel: 07415 129117. Wallington [BCW16]



**CLK220 CDI AMG** 2007, full service history, electric black heated leather, sat nav, superb condition, new MOT and service, full set of tyres, stunning car, auto with paddle shifters, £2,995. Tel: 07456 163794. Eastbourne



**350SL** 1972, excellent condition, kept in de-humidified storage, owned for 30 years, has had any work needed over the years to keep it in tip-top condition, POA. Tel: 07768 936053. Princes Risborough



**W114 280E** 1973, 109,000 miles, red, beautifully presented 280E, MOT until August 2022, very clean interior and exterior, extensive history of work and restoration including photographs and MOTs dating back to 1983, invoices from 1986, POA. Tel: 07955 006780. Bracknell **[BCW11]** 



years ownership, comes with history, file of invoices, a lot of money spent on it, pleasure to drive, V8 sounds amazing, interior excellent, no wear and tear, slight rattle from cats, few rust spots, correct AMG 18-inch wheels, POA. Tel: 07837 327536. London

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280SL 1983, stunning Forest Green coachwork, refurbed parchment interior, hard and soft tops in excellent condition, re-veneered central column and steering wheel to a beautiful finish, recent full service with new fuel lines, plugs, fluids and so on, new fuel pump, brakes overhauled, new calipers and pads fitted as needed, steering overhauled with new damper, electrics checked and all new fuses now in situ, new heater/ blower fan, new chrome front bumper, Mexican hat alloys refurbed (including new bolts) with excellent tyres, all works carried out by professional mechanics, restorers and craftsmen, car drives beautifully and looks gorgeous, mileage is 138,000, ready to be used, enjoyed and loved, POA. Tel: 07932 666491. Stourbridge [BCW18]



**CL500** 2000, auto, coupe, X reg, only 50,000 miles, blue, grey leather trim, full service, ownership history, all manuals, MOT until October 2022, unused spare tyre, drives superbly, £3,250 OVNO. Tel: 07885 187076. Newcastle upon Tyne



**CLK320** 2002, V6, silver, black hood, MOT to March 16 2022, 127,000 miles, full spec, grey leather interior, radio/CD, full toolkit, AMG alloys, all owner's manuals, unmarked inside and out, stunning example, a joy to drive. £3,000. Tel: 07933 108280. View at Bourne, Lincs [BCP3]



**CL600** 2001, very special Lorinser V12 CL, believed only RHD version in the UK, 70,000 miles, outstanding Brilliant Silver, black leather, private plate, long MOT, £29,950. Tel: 01483 282830. Guildford *[BCP6]* 



CLK230 Kompressor 2001,
Jasper Blue, AMG wheels,
127,000 miles, two-tone leather,
two new keys, service history,
radio card, owner's manual,
thousands spent, all receipts,
MOT, immaculate car, phone
mornings up to lunch time,
£POA. Tel: 01619 454615.
Manchester [CM37P2]



**300SL-24** 1991, 65,000 miles, all 26 MOTs, FSH, new Mercedes exhaust, brakes, water pump, Dunlop tyres, excellent condition, £9,970. Tel: 01643 862322. Somerset *[CM37P1]* 



**CL500** 2000, Brilliant Silver, 99,000 miles, grey leather, automatic, long MOT, running well, too many toys hence the price, £2,200. Tel: 01483 282830. Surrey [CM37P3]



**280SE 3.5 Coupe** 1970, 81,500 miles, black, black leather interior, sound engine, electrics, body and chassis, interior needs some attention, present owner has loved and cared for this charismatic car for over 25 years, £62,500. Tel: 07971 798442. London [CM37W1]



**E280 CDI Estate Elegance** 2006, 2,987cc V6, auto, diesel, Cubanite Silver, 135,000 miles, tax (£340), MOT until May 2022, suspension Sport/Comfort, CD, large boot, dog guard, front/rear sensors, Bluetooth link from mobile to car audio, alloy wheels, Nokian all-season tyres, two owners, service history, bills from new, £3,500. Tel: 07503 354277. Scarborough *[CM37P4]* 



A124 E220 Cabriolet Fourseater, 93,331 miles, Azurite Blue, two-door, petrol, automatic, replacement mohair roof installed, mushroom leather interior, electric leather heated front seats, two owners from new, excellent condition, MOT until May 2022, additional front interior included, £11,000 ONO. Tel: 07788 196478.

Epsom [CM37W4]

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**S124 300TE 4Matic** 1989, very good condition, MOT until August 2022, serviced summer 2020, mileage states 88,179 but odometer hasn't worked for some time, relay recently replaced due to random stalling, featured in *Mercedes Enthusiast* October 2017, £5,000. Tel: 07796 626537. Kent [CM37W6]



**230\$** 1965, used daily, good condition, good paint and interior, good underneath, drives well, starts well, ring for more info, £15,250 ONO. Tel: 01754 830035. Spilsby [CM37W2]



C123 280CE 1985, only done 74,800 miles, full Mercedes history, auto, pristine condition throughout, £12,000 spent with John Haynes Mercedes, the entire bodywork and interior is stunning, rare to see such a great car in stunning beige metallic, four owners, air conditioning, alloys and good tyres, substantial documented service and MOT history, maintained regardless of cost, £19,990. Tel: 07940 296074. Northampton [CM37W7]



**190E** 1998, saloon, a really nice clean car, only 140,000 miles, five-speed, manual, all original, MOT until August 2022, only two former keepers, some history, £3,000 ONO. Tel: 07851 212816. Spalding [CM37W9]

# **MERC TRADER**



R171 SLK200 2008, Midnight Blue, ivory leather interior, 66,500 miles, MOT until March 2022, lack of use forces sale now that I am retired, owner for the last six years, brings a smile to my face every time I drive it, very good condition, offers around £4,990. Tel: 01686 651284.



**\$L320** 1999, almost like new. no dents, scratches or rust, pristine condition, regularly serviced, automatic, leather interior, walnut dash, heated seats, three owners from new, excellent condition soft top with wind deflector, Mercedes service history, old MOT certificates, electric seats, climate control, CD stacker, nice sound system, good alloys and tyres, 12 months MOT, new car is the only reason for sale, £7,990. Tel: 07940296074. ICM37W111 **Brentford** 



**SL55 AMG** 2004, 82,000 miles, black metallic, crimson full leather, massage seats, glass roof, F1 body kit factory fitted from new, spotless inside and out, voted car of the year by *Top Gear*, £18,400. Tel: 07860 611302. Exeter [ABW1]



**E55 AMC** 2004, immaculate, 29,000 miles, garaged, zero rust, new-leather smell, collector's piece, £POA. Tel: 07825 374132. Cornwall



**C270 CDI Estate Avantgarde** 2004, black, auto, 198,000 miles, MOT until Jan 2022, black cloth interior, recent tyres, new battery, good runner, good condition for year, £1,500 ONO. Tel: 07429 391584. Newmarket [ABW4]



**1989 300SE** just 62,000 miles, good condition, however it needs some light restoration, it has rust forming in the usual places but nowhere near as bad as some of this vintage, full service history, a brand new MOT and new tyres, just completed a 500-mile round trip with no issues, £POA. Tel: 07847 423616. Padstow [ABW5]



A124 E220 Cabriolet 1997, four-seater, Azurite Blue, petrol, automatic, mushroom leather interior, electric heated front seats, 99,331 miles, custom chrome twin tails exhaust, bodywork excellent condition, comprehensive service history, MOT until May 22, £8,500 ONO. Tel: 07873 662134. Epsom [ABW6]

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**\$1320** 1998, special limited edition, 91,000 miles, automatic, convertible, very good condition, new alloys, hardtop stand, original manuals, first aid kit, radio, Bose CD player, £10,000 ONO. Tel: 01364 716331. Devon



**C270 CDI Elegance SE**Saloon, automatic/Tiptronic,

showroom condition. Brilliant Silver, unmarked Pacific Blue interior, one driver from new, 52 Reg, 34,900 miles, no short runs of less than 30 miles, garaged from new, fitted with a heated/ dehumidifier, usual MB refinements: electric seats, cruise, heated mirrors etc., serviced and MOT'd exclusively by Mercedes main dealer from new, full records, original handbook/ documents, full set of keys, exceptionally well cared for, £5,500. Email: Bazhylda1.11@outlook.com. Buckinghamshire [CM36W6]



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Telford [ABW9]



**CLK230 Kompressor Coupe** 

Red top, green, cream interior, reg V945 ABD, registered November 1 1999, 54,000 miles from new, recharged air con, new battery, brand new gear selector module just fitted, garage kept, MOT, superb drive, £4,750 OVNO. Tel: 01775 680989. Spalding, Lincs. [BCP5]

# INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



**W201 190E 2.3-16** 1983, unique, unit number 10 built, driven by two grand prix drivers – John Watson (in the Race of Champions, won by Ayrton Senna) and Manfred Winkelhock (the first owner after Mercedes Germany). This is one of 20 RoC cars and only four are known to still exist (Lauda, Senna, Schurti and Watson), POA. Tel: +34699 249085. Barcelona [CDW22]



W110 190D Fintail/Heckflosse

Naturally-aspirated, in-line fourcylinder diesel engine, engine power. 40kW at 4,200rpm and a maximum torque of 118Nm (87lb ft) at 4,200rpm, rearwheel drive, four-speed manual gearbox, POA. Tel: 0021222 300041. Egypt [BCW8]

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**280SL** 1983, only 101,093 miles, Mercedes maintenance book, many photos and documents on demand, beautiful car, righthand drive, POA. Tel: 06071 42044. Lyon, France [BCW12]



**W115 240D** 1976, car in Portugal but UK supplied when new, ULEZ compliant, white, good running condition but does require attention to some blisters on bodywork and driver's seat, POA. Tel: 07415 129117. Portugal [BCW17]



**500SL** 1993, black, black leather, 8,800km, serviced by M-B, one of the best, €47.500. Tel: +49 15163 275890, Email: kaymel@web.de. Bremen. Germany [EFW15]



in Germany, arrived in Toronto in 1970, my father purchased the car in July 1965 with 58,000 miles, never been in an accident or driven in winter, motor taken apart in 1981 with a bad head gasket issue and the engine has not been reassembled, body has been sanded down to bare metal and finished with primer, been in storage since 1981, open to serious offers only. Tel: 1-778-833-2954. Canada [CM37W3]

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W222 S-Class AMG alloy wheels
Set of four, recently refurbished,
with four Continental tyres
all with 5mm tread, 19-inch
wheels with staggered fitment,
245/45R19 front and 274/40R19
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collection only, no delivery is
offered, POA. Tel: 01613 681343.
Manchester [CDW1]



W126 chrome arch kits
Original, set to clear, £129 retail price back in the 1980s, £29. Tel: 07775 210178.
Torquay [CDW28]



**Brabus hub centric wheel spacers** Original Mercedes, all boxed, both 30mm and 35mm available for immediate postage, the Brabus item numbers are ADS2-30 AND ASD2-35, advertised on line at \$300 plus postage from USA, we have them here in stock in the UK at £85 for the set of four plus delivery £9, would consider clearance of entire stock approx, 100 pieces at sensible offers, Tel: 07775 210178. Torquay **[CDW27]** 



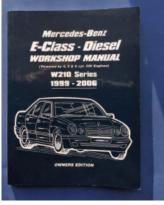
**Used door mirrors** Three available, original Mercedes, to clear for £50 the lot plus postage £12. Tel: 07775 210178. Torquay [CDW29]



Automatic gearbox service kit For an R171 SLK 350, complete, comes with new auto transmission fully synthetic PSF MVATF oil, also includes two spare ignition coils, collection only, £85. Tel: 07940 230781. Summerset [CDW12]



ML/GL AMG alloy wheels and tyres, 21-inch W164 models, genuine Mercedes, set of five with correct Continental 265/40ZR21 tyres, been sitting in the garage for the past two year gathering dust, no marks, no chips and no kerb damage to the wheels, just rather dusty, the tyres are all the correct Continental 265/40ZR21 for the ML350, all the tyres are good and hold pressure, but one is near the legal limit, wheel 1 has 3-4mm tread remaining, wheel two has 7mm tread remaining, wheel 3 has 6mm tread remaining, wheel 4 has 6mm tread remaining, wheel 5 has 5-6mm tread remaining, £1,300 ONO. Tel: 07494 486040. Reading



W210 E-Class diesel workshop manual 1999 to 2006, 200 pages, unwrapped, unused, unmarked, like new, £15.95. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [CDW8]



86 copies of *Mercedes*Enthusiast Numbers 5, 10, 14, 18, 19, 20, 24, 27, 29, 33, 35, 39, 41, 42, 44, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 60, 61, 65, 66, 68, 71, 72, 75, 77 to 84, 87 to 98, 100, 102, 104, 105, 108, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 118 to 132, 134, 135, 137, 138, 145, 148, 150, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157, £50 for the lot. Tel: 07790 436463. Romsey

[CDW21]

Wheel trims Four for 123/R107 etc., excellent condition, £90. Tel: 01883 348187. Caterham [CD] Electric mirror One nearside for W123, very good condition, £75. Tel: 01883 348187. Caterham [CD] Electric mirror motor One

new electric mirror motor for

W123, still in box, part number MB1238202542, £95. Tel: 01883 348187. Caterham [CD] RaceChip Pro 2 As new, just plugs in, £300 new, fits C220, £50. Tel: 01883 348187. Caterham [CD]

# MERC TRADER



**Momo wood steering wheel** Good condition, used, will fit any Mercedes with the right boss. £150. Tel: 07752 532516. [CDW17] Chichester



Dealer sign Genuine vintage 90s 6ft stainless steel sign, good condition, sign has been in dry garage stored for years so will need a good polish, can be used inside or outside and has hanging rungs for mounting, similar to the current Benz star sign outside Mercedes-Benz in Berlin, Stuttgart etc., £1,000. Tel: 07752 389563. Essex [CDW13]



Complete cream cloth trim

For 124-series E220 Coupe 1995, all seats, door cards and armrests with headrests in very good condition, no wear marks, driver's seat shown in picture, £300. Tel: 07835 945940. West Sussex [CDW15]



Eight-hole alloys From W124, set of four. with reasonable tyres, wheels in good condition, £200. Tel: 07752 532516. [CDW16] Chichester



**Genuine Mercedes boot liner** 

Part number A205 814 0600. fits W205 C-Class saloon models 2014 to 2021, little used, very good condition, no splits or cracks etc. Costs over £100 from Mercedes, collection preferred but happy to meet up in Tyne-Tees area, £40. Tel: 01429 [BCW14] 232291. Hartlepool



**Genuine Mercedes-Benz S-Class winter wheel package** 

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18-inch AMG alloys

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**W210 E55 AMG Front Bumper** 

Genuine Mercedes, removed from 1998 model. Tel: 07837 327536. London [BCW20]



**Mercedes six-cylinder SL** ignition leads Rotor arm, distributor cap and HT lead, used but in perfect working order, new set fitted mistakenly, all original Mercedes parts and packaging, not aftermarket parts which do not perform as well, cost to buy from Mercedes £424.35, £150 ONO. Tel: 07818 222574. [CM37W10] Milngavie.

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### 18-inch alloys with **Bridgestone Potenza tyres**

Genuine Mercedes, taken from W221 S-Class chassis, will fit other Mercedes models, bought as a spare set but never used, photos can be supplied via WhatsApp/text on request, £500 ONO. Tel: 07850 187400. Ormskirk [CM37]

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Tamworth **IBCP11** 

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### EI9 MKM

E19 MKM Registration on retention, available immediately £350. Tel: 01892 613164. East Sussex

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### W202 halogen headlamp units

Post-facelift, pair of complete UK specification, new or good used. Tel: 01344 876043. London [EF]

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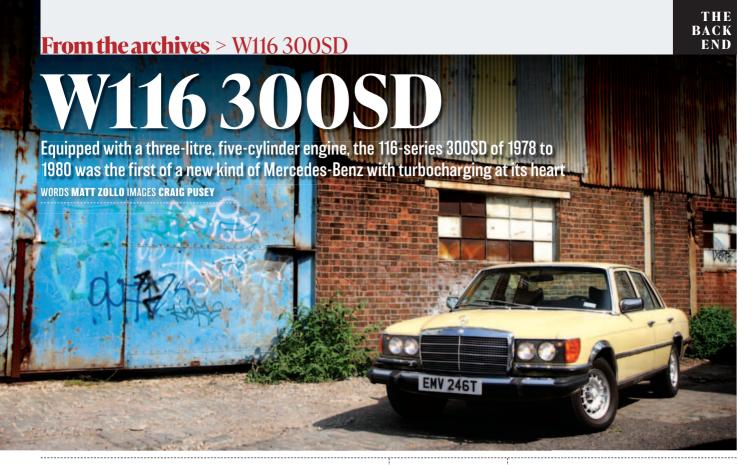
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nvone with even a basic knowledge of the car industry and its various markets would think it was an odd decision. Why on earth would you introduce your first diesel-engined limousine in V8 loving, dime-a-gallon North America and deny the same car to Europeans, who cannot get enough of the parsimonious plus points of diesel engines in any type of car, but particularly in large, executive ones?

Of course, things were different back in the 1970s when the fivecylinder, turbodiesel-powered Mercedes-Benz 300SD was introduced. Oil burners were about as widely used in passenger vehicles as electric motors are now, but North America was the place that indirectly forced Mercedes-Benz to really push the technology. This was due to the country's Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) regulations that came about in 1975 (and are still in force today in a modified form), which were put in place after the 1973 Arab oil embargo and the ensuing oil crisis of the early to mid 70s.

The North America-only 300SD was a direct response to that environmental initiative, and helped Mercedes-Benz meet North America's 1978 fleet fuel economy average target of 18mpg (which equates to around 15mpg in UK imperial speak). The turbocharged engine provided a wholesome 109bhp/168lb ft torque (119bhp/170lb ft from October 1979). But it did more than just that – it made the 300SD not only the company's first turbocharged diesel passenger car, but the world's first as well. The 300SD was built from May 1978 until September 1980 and, as an aside, the 473,035th and final 116-series S-Class

Fittingly, this particular 300SD has come from San Diego. The

produced was a 300SD.

first owner kept it from 1979 until the mid 90s and had a large collection of cars but was clearly partial to this Benz because it has now done 179,750 miles. The second owner imported it into the Spanish city of Valencia in 1996 and he owned the Mercedes until October 2011, when it was shipped to England.

∧ 1979 car originally from San Diego found its way across the Atlantic to the UK.

 There was no longwheelbase 300SD model in the 116-series range.

 $\nabla \triangleright$  With the best will in the world, the well-built cabin can't stifle the diesel's voice.

The turbocharged engine provided a wholesome 109b**h** 



The interior of any W116 never fails to impress. Almost always a splendid combination of colours that could only ever have been acceptable in the 1970s, it boasts build quality that makes it feel three years old, not 40 plus. Start the 300SD, though, and that bubble of luxury very suddenly bursts. There is no other way of putting it - the OM617 D motor sounds industrial. The engine chugs on a lumpy idle, the whole car vibrating with a gruff, rattly noise.

Pull away to a slow cruise and the unmistakable noise of a coarse diesel motor remains, though now the

vibrations are far less severe and are accompanied by a very audible whistle from the turbo under heavier loads when accelerating from rest. It wouldn't make the best town car.

As it is – a classic S-Class that is capable of fuel economy in the high 20s or even the 30s - it is not to be sniffed at. It is all very well being able to enjoy the rumble of a large capacity V8 or the silky-smooth delivery of a straight-six, but if you want to use your classic quite regularly then you are going to pay for the privilege. Are they worth it? For some, they might not be, in which case this W116 300SD provides the perfect answer.



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