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Editorial comment and the latest from the Mercedes Enthusiast team



**The Mercedes-Benz  
User Experience  
multimedia system is  
one of the best devices -  
of any type - that I've used**



**L**ike many things, the slicker and more capable a car's infotainment system is, the more likely it will be taken for granted. The latest system in new Mercedes is called the 'Mercedes-Benz User Experience' (or MBUX for short) and it debuted at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in 2018. Entering production in the 177-series A-Class, you'll now find it in everything from C-Classes and AMG SLs, to the all-electric EQE tested on pages 46 to 51. After five days seamlessly swiping through its well-designed menus, interacting with the 'Hey Mercedes' voice assistant, exploring the ambient lighting colour palette, and playing with pre-entry climate control that'll have the cabin temperature just as you want it before entering, I reckon it's one of the best devices - of any type - that I've ever used. The ultra-crisp resolution and eye-popping colours only add to the draw

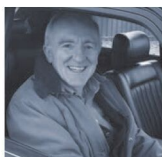
of what is undoubtedly Mercedes' best multimedia setup yet.

Elsewhere in this issue, it's a return to the old guard as we celebrate 30 years of the C-Class badge, compare a 123 Estate with its spiritual predecessor, blast through the Black Forest in two S-Classes, absorb a 280SL Pagoda in all its purple splendour, and speak to the owner of a 280CE Coupe with high hopes for the UK's Mercedes-Benz Club. I hope you enjoy the ride.



**Kyle Molyneux**  
Executive Editor

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



**Richard Mason**

"Is the 202-series C-Class a classic case of a classic in waiting? With a wide choice of engine sizes and trim levels, plus the halo

AMCs to choose from, is this when the smart money spots a bargain? One student thought so when she was 21 years old, grabbing the keys to a V8. Meanwhile, another owner swapped his Audi for a C230 Kompressor," explains Richard Mason. What do they know that we don't? Find out in our cover feature, which begins on page 20.



**Kyle Fortune**

One of Mercedes-Benz's earliest demonstrations of aerodynamics in motorsport was with a hastily re-bodied SSKL in 1932. Its win underlined its effectiveness, and its streamlined body also gave birth to the 'Silver Arrow' name. Kyle Fortune experiences an exact replica on track and in the wind tunnel for the first time, too - see page 40. You can also read Kyle's story on Mercedes-Benz Heritage boss, Marcus Breitschwerdt, interviewed from page 34.

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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

## News

## New GLE

Light refreshes inside and out while all engines receive electric assistance



**M**ercedes-Benz has revealed facelifted versions of the GLE SUV and GLE Coupe. The big news is that all engines are now electrified, the petrols and diesels now classed as mild hybrids or plug-in hybrids, which is good news for performance and efficiency.

The GLE SUV starts at £77,890 in the UK, while the GLE Coupe is priced from £92,675 with Airmatic air suspension as standard. These facelifted cars feature new-style daytime running lights, revised bumpers and a front grille with two horizontal louvres. In the UK, Multibeam LED headlamps are standard, and the rear lights have been updated too. AMG Line spec brings a diamond grille with Mercedes-Benz pattern in chrome, plus an AMG front apron, side sills, wheelarches and mock rear diffuser. Two new paint colours are sodalite blue metallic and Manufaktur alpine grey solid. Wheels size 20- to 22-inch are available.

Inside you'll find the latest version of Mercedes' MBUX

infotainment system, plus two 12.3-inch displays – one in front of the driver (customisable with classic, sporty and discreet themes) and one forming part of the dashboard. Elsewhere, there are new-style chrome air vents, ambient lighting shared with the S-Class, and a Burmester surround sound system with Dolby Atmos as standard.

In the UK, mild hybrids comprise the 376bhp GLE450 4Matic with three-litre petrol straight-six, the 265bhp GLE300d 4Matic with two-litre four-cylinder diesel, and the 362bhp GLE450d 4Matic with a three-litre, six-cylinder diesel engine. All can deploy an extra 20bhp

boost courtesy of their 48V system and integrated starter generator (ISG).

The sole plug-in hybrid is the 249bhp GLE400e 4Matic with two-litre four-cylinder petrol engine and 134bhp (100kW) electric motor linked to a 31.2kWh battery. As the most efficient model in the range, the GLE400e achieves 282.5mpg (WLTP) with 23g/km CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and claims an electric range of 60 miles.

### The AMGs

The Mercedes-AMG GLE53 4Matic+ and GLE63 4Matic+ petrols (prices and availability TBC) also receive the mild

hybrid treatment. The GLE53 runs a three-litre, 429bhp straight-six turbo, while the GLE63 has a four-litre, 604bhp V8 biturbo, with both receiving a 22bhp boost plus lots more torque from their ISGs. These AMGs are equipped with a nine-speed AMG Speedshift TCT 9G gearbox and will accelerate from 0-62mph in 5.0 seconds and 3.9 seconds respectively. Top speeds are 155mph and 174mph.

Like their predecessors, the new GLE and GLE Coupe will roll off the line at Mercedes' Tuscaloosa factory in the USA and arrive at European dealerships from July 2023.



Facelifted GLEs arrive in dealers this summer; alpine grey car shown.

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## CLA updated

The CLA Coupe and Shooting Brake have also undergone midlife tweaking, with big emphasis on improved standard kit lists. There is a new front apron and revised radiator grille with star pattern, as well as a new rear diffuser design. LED high performance headlamps are standard for the first time, and new paint colours such as hyper blue and spectral blue, plus wheel sizes up to 19 inches should keep customers coming through the door.

In the cabin there is the choice of two screen setups: a seven-inch and 10.25-inch combo, or two 10.25-inch displays. The steering

wheel is finished in nappa leather as standard, seats are available in 100 per cent recycled material, and new trims include dark carbon,



Two screen arrangements will be available.

brown lime and brown Microcut microfibre (AMG Line only; UK specs TBC). MBUX infotainment again features in the updated CLA.

The non-AMG petrol engines come in mild hybrid and plug-in hybrid forms, while the diesels are all mild hybrids. Improved 15.6kWh batteries and more powerful electric motors for the PHEVs means electric driving ranges of up to 51 miles.

The 416bhp CLA45 S 4Matic+ continues as before, but the 302bhp CLA35 4Matics get a 48V electrical system and belt-driven starter-generator providing a temporary 14bhp boost to output.

### △ EOE SUV

The electric EOE SUV is now on sale in UK. The EOE350 4Matic starts at £90,560 while the EOE500 4Matic is £108,760. Electric ranges are 334 miles and 324 miles (WLTP) respectively. Air suspension and massive cabin displays are standard.



### △ BENZ ON THE GREEN

This year's Benz on the Green event, hosted by independent Mercedes specialist Prestige Car Service in Hampshire, will take place at 12pm on May 13 at The George Inn, Finchdean. See [benzonthegreen.co.uk](http://benzonthegreen.co.uk) for more information on the occasion.



### △ W201s AND S-CLASSES

The 40th anniversary of the W201 190's UK launch will be marked by a special event held at Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey on October 1. Organised by The Mercedes-Benz Club, a '126 Day' celebrating 126-series S-Class will run alongside the meeting.

### ▽ MARADONA'S MERC

A 1980 Mercedes-Benz 450SLC 5.0 formerly owned by late footballing legend Diego Maradona failed to sell in Bonham's Paris auction in February. The 38,000-mile coupe had an estimate of £150,000 to £250,000 (£133,000 to £222,000).



## Record SL sale

An unregistered R129 SL500 was recently sold for over £55,000 - a new record according to its seller, SLSHOP in Warwickshire. The Mercedes SL specialist claimed the car was "unique due to its absence of previous ownership". Previously a TÜV test vehicle for Mercedes-Benz Stuttgart, the 1993 Brilliant Silver roadster was imported to the UK in the mid-2000s but was never road registered.

SLSHOP's Sales Director, Bruce Greetham said, "We have been talking about the significance of the R129 for several years now, and now it appears our hard work has paid off. Values of the R129 SL are beginning to reflect its luxurious motoring capabilities, and when low mileage, correctly cared for examples like this come along, enthusiasts and collectors act quickly."

# News in brief



## △ VINTAGE TYRES MEET

An eclectic array of metal including 124- and 212-series E-Class AMGs attended Vintage Tyres' first breakfast meet of 2023. The next event is on March 18 at the National Motor Museum in Hampshire. See [www.vintagetyres.com](http://www.vintagetyres.com) for more info.



## △ DRIVE PILOT

Mercedes-Benz is the world's first auto company to bring SAE Level 3 conditionally automated driving to the US, with Nevada being the first state to confirm the compliance of the Drive Pilot system with state regulations.



## △ F1 2023

Shortly before going to print, the Mercedes-AMG F1 team unveiled their race car for the 2023 season, which begins in Bahrain on March 5 and ends in Abu Dhabi on November 26. The so-called W14 E Performance racer will be driven by Lewis Hamilton and George Russell.

## ▽ PLUG-IN MAYBACH

The first Maybach plug-in hybrid (S580de) uses a three-litre straight-six petrol engine and battery/electric motor for a combined output of 503bhp/553lb ft torque. Electric range is up to 62 miles, with CO2 emissions quoted as 18-23g/km. Combined fuel economy is 282mpg (WLTP). Price TBC.



# New E-Class interior

Mercedes-Benz reveals first details of its new E-Class, set for launch later this year

**T**ake your first look at the interior of the new-generation (W214) E-Class, launching later this summer. A new optional Superscreen spanning the dashboard pushes the boundaries of the MBUX multimedia system, which thanks to revised computing functions will operate faster than ever before, reckons Mercedes-Benz.

Third-party apps such as TikTok, Angry Birds, Zoom and browser Vivaldi will be compatible, while artificial intelligence will also play a part, personalising the user experience by learning your daily habits and routines. Video streaming will also be possible

thanks to the optional Zync entertainment portal, the new 5G connectivity a useful addition here. The optional Superscreen can even be combined with a selfie and video camera, allowing occupants to take part in video conferences when the vehicle is stationary.

The new E-Class will also feature Active Ambient Lighting with Sound Visualisation, enabling occupants to experience music with three senses, including sound resonating transducers and visualisation on the light strip of the Active Ambient Lighting. The optional front passenger screen features a 'visual shield function', which makes it unwatchable from the driver's seat.

Mercedes-Benz is working on

using artificial intelligence (AI) so that the car learns which comfort systems vehicle occupants use repeatedly. The aim is for AI to automate such functions, resulting in personalised automation. On the launch of the new E-Class, customers will be able to use templates for standard routines or create routines themselves, linking several functions and conditions. The new E-Class will also offer various wellness programmes, including a motion sickness prevention programme to help alleviate symptoms.

The interior design looks to be sporty, high quality, and of course digital. The new E-Class will arrive at European dealers this summer and in the USA in autumn.





# TALKING POINT



## This month's Talking Point...

Do you think the first CLS has aged well?

"In my opinion, yes. It's one of the few ranges where I like the very first series and pre-facelift models." **Hanjo Stier**

"Yes! My dad has a 2006 CLS and it turns just as many heads as my 1983 SEC!" **Joel Archer**

"The contemporaneous W211 E-Class, especially the facelift, was more conventionally handsome." **Sam Wong**

"I ran a 2007 CLS320 CDI for five years and it's the best car I have owned." **David Schofield**

Take part in **Talking Point** every month on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. See the bottom of page 3 for our respective websites!

## Merc Spotter



This 124-series 230TE was spotted by Bradley Jacobs cruising along the M56 motorway south of Liverpool. Bradley reports paintwork in surprisingly good condition despite the shade's increased likelihood of fading. Records for this car show a mileage north of 270,000, which is very impressive indeed. And judging by that towbar, it's no stranger to towing, so must be earning its keep even at 32 years old!

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



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On February 17, Mercedes-Benz gathered several notable classics at The International Concours of Elegance St Moritz in Switzerland. With a frozen lake for selected drivers to play on, the event provided opportunities for memorable photographs. Among our favourites was this one featuring a 1958 300SLS touring sports car and 1963 W100 600 G-Classer.

IMAGE MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG





Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear

Inside was driver's heaven: lightweight race seats nestling among a carbon trim package



# SLK Black Series

The first Mercedes to wear the Black Series badge has the Far East to thank for its existence

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES IAN KUAH & AMG ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE ASIA; MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

Arriving in 1996, the original R107-series SLK opened up a new market niche for Mercedes-Benz and no doubt a healthy added income stream too. It was Stuttgart's answer to the Porsche Boxster, but in terms of respect from sports car enthusiasts, it was round one to the Boxster, which was quicker and much more tactile. With its engine capped at four cylinders and 2.3 litres, albeit supercharged, the SLK had no hope of matching the Zuffenhausen driving experience. However, in steps, Mercedes-Benz engineers worked on the compact roadster to close the gap.

At the facelift in April 2000, the 3.2-litre SLK320 was added and made available with a manual gearbox. Just under a year later the first Affalterbach reworking, the SLK32 AMG, with a supercharged V6 based on the 320 engine joined the range. Then in 2004 the second-generation, R171 SLK arrived, featuring more aggressive bodywork and headed by the SLK55 AMG with its 5.4 litres of normally aspirated M113 V8 good for 355bhp and 376lb ft torque. With this motor in the line-up, it was no longer fair to call the SLK a wimp.

Meantime, Mercedes-Benz had signed up to be the sole supplier of Formula 1 Safety Cars, the R170 performing that role in 2001/2002

and the R171 in 2004/2005. That laid the ground for AMG, keen to penetrate Far East markets, to team up with an Asian investor to stage a series of lifestyle/motorsport events, the AMG Ultimate Experience Asia, and supplied 35 heavily tweaked SLK55 AMGs for it, none of which were road registered.

Engine output remained standard, but a racier sounding exhaust was fitted, and additional engine and transmission oil coolers were fitted, as was an uprated cooler for the steering, and a cooler for the rear axle. A quicker shift mode was added to the gearshift paddles, too.

AMG did much to reduce

weight. A carbon hardtop, left unpainted, replaced the vario-roof and some interior trim was stripped out, while for improved weight distribution the battery and enlarged fuel tank were shifted to the boot. Suspension was stiffened and bigger brake discs (composite up front) sat behind 19-inch wheels.

The first event was scheduled for the Malaysian Grand Prix at Sepang International Circuit in March 2006, and beforehand AMG announced what enthusiasts wanted to hear: there would be a limited run of road cars available to buy. The Black Series was born, a bloodline that continues today.

The man behind the SLK55 AMG Black Series was Olaf





<1 Sweat-absorbing material covered the wheel in the Asia car.

AMG Ultimate Experience Asia SLK inspired the Black Series road car.



new front valance. The same style of 19-inch alloy was fitted, and the beefed-up braking came from the Performance Package available on the normal SLK55 AMG.

Suspension was lowered, and fully adjustable for bounce and rebound.

AMG could probably have got away with leaving the standard folding metal roof in place, but opted to remain true to the original and swap it and its mechanisms for a carbon item in black with a rear screen. Inside was driver's heaven: lightweight race seats nestling among a more minimal, carbon trim package, and an Alcantara/leather steering wheel with the latest paddleshift system.

### Limited edition

"Lay into the throttle and things happen very quickly," enthused our own Ian Kuah back in 2006, on driving the Black Series around the roads near Affalterbach. "The extra power and torque deliver bombastic acceleration."

On stopping power, he declared, "The big brakes are capable of eyeball-popping retardation. Strong and full of feel, they are amongst the best anchors on a road car this side of a Porsche GT3."

And of course the fully de-selectable ESP did not escape his attention: "When you hit that button it really is off and the Black Series will make a drift challenge car!" Ian's sum-up was, unsurprisingly, that "Sports cars are all about evoking petrol-fuelled memories and stirring the blood, and in this respect the SLK55 AMG Black Series hits the spot."

It was indicated at the time that about 100 would be built, at the rate of 10 a month, but this being an AMG, Mercedes-Benz's normally carefully logged figures aren't available. All we know for sure is that they were delivered to their owners at a £73,500 price (£23,000 more than the regular SLK55 AMG) and we assume that as with subsequent Black Series models – the CLK63 AMG followed in 2007, the SL65 AMG the year after – they are kept safely and securely as investments and not let out much. That will sadden many because this is one Mercedes-Benz that was born to be driven, and hard.



△ Olaf Herholz was driving force behind the SLK Black Series.

△ 5.4-litre M113 V8 tuned to give 395bhp/383lb ft.



<1 Four exhausts provide a rowdy V8 soundtrack.

▽ Production interior with bucket style seating.

Herholz, then with AMG for 10 years and responsible for developing Mercedes' first F1 Safety Car, the 1996 C36 AMG. Inevitably, the road car wasn't as hard core as the Asia version, but it fully defined the Affalterbach way, and one detail among many perhaps summed up its spirit: the 'ESP off' switch did, unlike on regular AMGs, actually deactivate the traction control.

Power and torque were raised to 395bhp and 383lb ft, and extra coolers were placed behind the



Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

# Black magic



**Ian Kuah looks back at the early days of AMG's post-merger era, recalling the SL65 AMG Black Series, as well as technological advancements from car makers that turned out to be anything but**

**B**y the time Mercedes-Benz had fully acquired AMG, cash flow was a lot better at the tuner, but it was the injection of serious post-merger funding that helped Hans Werner Aufrecht's baby really take off and reach the highs it has attained today.

However, there were middling days when the money was flowing but the strategy was muddled, resulting in some compromised models whose full potential was never quite realised. One of these was the incredible SL65 AMG Black Series that appeared in late 2008. The original launch plan was for the R231 to debut in 2009. However, the financial crisis of 2007/2008 and the general malaise in the roadster market caused sales figures of the R230 to slide. This saw Daimler boss Dr Dieter Zetsche ask his team to delay the R231-series debut and facelift the existing model as a stopgap instead.

The divisive new look of March 2008 certainly suited the SL65 AMG Black Series, whose wide arches and purposeful stance finally made sense of the aggressive nose. Setting aside the fact that the fixed, carbon fibre roof turned the car into a two-seater coupe, paring away 250kg and adding the six-litre V12 biturbo engine tuned to 661bhp turned this SL into a genuine 200mph rocket ship. However, there were issues. The engineers determined that the ABC suspension was not up to the task and fitted a KW coil-over system in its place. Using race-style adjustable suspension is actually a great idea, but as I later learned from a senior AMG engineer, the car was developed by mainstream and not AMG.

Lacking the experience of AMG's race-trained chassis experts, the team struggled, finally

approaching AMG literally weeks before the car's launch. It was a case of too little, too late, and the ride and handling were never fully resolved. Also, the fixed-ratio Drexler limited-slip differential did not gel with the suspension setup. Having tested an SL65 AMG Black Series tuned by RennTech, it was very clear that the OS Giken LSD with its variable locking action is far better suited to this car.

**E**very now and again industry engineers and marketing people come up with something shiny and new that ultimately bombs, leaving considerable fallout behind.

Mercedes is not infallible in this respect, and the manufacturer's dalliance with new technologies that seemed like a good idea at the time occasionally leaves customers and their own warranty department with a sour taste in

the mouth. Prominent examples of this are the prematurely disintegrating wiring insulation from the mid-90s, the water-based paint undercoat and soft lacquer top coat from 1995 to 2003, and the soft touch plastic paint used on some interior surface components in the early 2000s.

Within the auto industry, Mercedes wholly owned the first two problems, but the soft-touch plastic paint that is one of my all-time pet hates managed to journey across several industries as manufacturers thought they had found the Holy Grail for making cheap and nasty hard plastic mouldings look and feel reasonably upmarket. The result is that common objects like ballpoint pens, hairdryer handles, audio-visual remote controllers and car air vents and centre console panels coated with soft-touch plastic paint all become sticky and unpleasant as the polymers degrade over time.



The SL65 Black Series could be a handful.

Fixed rear spoiler needed to keep the 661bhp V12 biturbo in check.



**Y**ou would think that the long-term hot and cold weather testing that car manufacturers carry out during development would have flagged this issue. I have seen the centre console of a first-generation VW Touareg suffering from this phenomenon along with high-end Mercedes models from the early 2000s. Thankfully, car makers have learned their

lesson, while domestic appliance makers have also stopped using this nasty coating.

No doubt hundreds of thousands of otherwise serviceable items have been binned over the years simply because they became unpleasantly sticky to the touch. This is yet another massive waste of the Earth's resources caused by incompetence in the laboratory and marketing hype.

**The engineers determined that the ABC suspension was not up to the task and fitted a KW coil-over system in its place**





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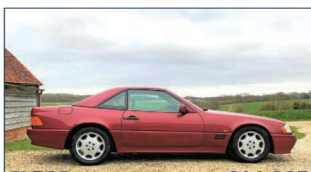
C107, 1979. 73k miles. Comprehensive restoration in 2017

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W126, 1990. 68k miles. Cosmetic restoration 2021. Comprehensive S/history.



**SL500** **£14,995**

Just Arrived. R129. 1994. 89k miles.. Comprehensive S/history. Superb condition.



**C55 AMG** **£14,485**

W205, 2005. 46k miles. High specification. Immaculate throughout.

## Wanted!

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

# Size matters



**Recent experience with a courtesy car from Mercedes-Benz left David Sutherland pining for smaller diameter wheels of yesteryear and the more compliant ride quality they offered**

**B**ack in the days, let's say prior to the mid-1990s, when engineers were said to still hold sway over accountants and salesmen at Mercedes-Benz, road cars rolling out of the Sindelfingen factory had what today would be seen as minuscule wheels. In the 1950s and for the first half of the 1960s, they rode on 13-inch steel rims, no doubt because engineers concluded that this diameter optimised the handling, ride and noise balance. The exceptions were the 300SL Gullwing and Roadster, and the big 300 'Adenauer', which had 15-inch rims.

In 1965, the new 108-series that replaced the six-cylinder Fintail introduced 14-inch wheels, quite likely that going up that extra inch was signed off with trepidation by the ultra-cautious Daimler-Benz board of management.

Fourteens ruled for the next two decades, even the mighty 1975 116-series flagship 450SEL 6.9 with its then enormous 400lb ft-plus torque and hydro-pneumatic suspension retaining them albeit with 10mm wider tyres.

The next 'revolution' occurred in the mid-1980s when Mercedes plucked up the nerve to allow 15 inches: the 124-series was born so equipped and the W201 190, 126 S-Class and R107 SL received them in 1985. Not only that, but the tyre aspect ratio was, radically, reduced from 70-series to 65-series, the first time Benzes ran with 'low-profile' rubber.

**B**y the middle of the following decade, priorities within Mercedes-Benz had profoundly changed, the car maker seeking higher production, lower costs – and not least 'younger' buyers. And chasing youth kicked off a progressive abandonment of the discreet, reserved character that had long satisfied the now ageing customer base, but which might not appeal so strongly to their offspring. The 1993

'official' AMG cars used 17-inch rims, and by the mid 2000s you could order a basic 203-series C-Class with 18-inches and also lowered and stiffened suspension; by the time the 204 was fully into its swing, the Sport model with its 18s was the trim Mercedes-Benz pushed hardest.

There's no other aspect of a car that alters its looks as much as a set of larger wheels. They shout performance and virility, so no surprise the marketing people latched onto them so enthusiastically. But being beyond the

AMG alloy wheels, which in true modern performance car fashion has fatter tyres at the front than on the rear (a trend started by Porsche back in the 1970s on the 911 Turbo). These were 225/40 at the front and 255/35 at the rear.

Of course, appearance is a matter of opinion, but to me this car looks over-wheeled. A base C-Class Estate is going to spend more time on the school run and in the supermarket car park than at trackdays, so if it was my car I'd have gone for something less aggressive looking. But

wait a minute, poverty spec Cs don't exist any longer, the entry model is now the AMG Line which has 18-inches.

**M**any buyers love big wheels, and these and the harder suspension packs that often accompany them are a marketer's dream. It'll be inferred that they make the car feel sportier and provide better road grip, and there's no need to offer any proof for this in the way there would be if, say, promoting a lower emissions version of the car.

I did not particularly like the road behaviour of this C-Class. Granted, it didn't crash over bumps and the steering didn't tramline shockingly as on earlier

generations of cars with tuned suspension and wide wheels, but 16 or 17s with a less extreme aspect ratio would have suited me, and would have had more chance of reminding me of the marvellously compliant, yet not soft, setup on a 126-series S-Class, for example.

Perhaps using the word 'extreme' in this context is out of date, because another courtesy car I borrowed last year, a basic 1.2-litre Vauxhall Corsa, had 17-inch wheels with skinny profile tyres that looked huge on a small hatchback, and out of place. Not to mention their vulnerability to kerbing.

For a long time now, Mercedes-Benz has pandered to younger customers, but I, perhaps in vain, hope that one day it'll make more effort with the oldies. A good start would be to bring back the 15-inch wheel.



△ David recently called on the services of this 205-series C200d Estate riding on 19-inch alloy wheels.



△ Early 300SE Fintail from the 1960s riding on 13s.



△ 209-series CLK diesel with 18-inch AMG alloys.

demographic that the modern Mercedes-Benz seems to target, I sometimes wonder if things have gone too far.

A few months back, I was loaned a courtesy car from Mercedes-Benz of Hindhead for a day, the spotlessly prepared C200d pictured here. Its AMG Line Premium trim included 19-inch

**“The next ‘revolution’ occurred in the mid-1980s when Mercedes plucked up the nerve to allow 15 inches”**





1988 LHD 560 SL 1988 Left hand drive Finished in Paget Red with Parchment hide interior, centre arm rest, overmats, headrests, hard and soft tops, light up interior vanity mirrors, first aid kit, complete with all tools, expensive stereo system, power mirrors, cruise control, airbag, air-con, ABS, power windows, tinted glass, power steering, automatic, only 49,000 with service book and history, always garaged, drives like new superb.



**Mercedes 560SL Sports 1988 LHD**

**£39,500**



1988, LHD, finished in Smoke Silver with Brazil hide interior, auto, headrests, hard and soft tops, centre armrest, over mats, first aid kit, CD stereo system, air-bag, air-con, power mirror, cruise control, ABS, power windows, SRS, outside temperature gauge, tinted glass, expensive Mercedes wheels, only 38,000 miles, service history, drives like new.



**Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports**

**£39,750**



Finished in gleaming unmarked classic white, with black hide interior, rear seats, hard and soft tops, automatic, power steering, power windows, ABS brakes, alloys, stereo system, 69,000 miles, service history, complete with all tools, new Mot supplied on purchase, only three previous owners, always garaged, drives superb, excellent example.



**Mercedes Sports 1985 280SL**

**£27,750**



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



**Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports**

**£38,750**



finished in unmarked diamond blue, with contrasting hide interior, hard and soft tops, rear seats, over mats, power windows, central locking, stereo system, ABS, alloys, cruise control, automatic, power steering, complete with all tools, only 76,000 miles from new with complete service history from new, only two previous owners, just serviced, drives like new, and in superb condition.



**Mercedes 380SL sports 1985/6**

**£29,750**

# Social Club

Mercedes-Benz related highlights from the world of social media



Avantgarde Classics

@avantgardeclassics

Pristine W108 Mercedes in original condition don't come up for sale very often, which is why this 1972 280SE 3.5 offered by Avantgarde Classics in Staffordshire caught our eye. Carrying a sticker price of £49,950 and with 81,400 miles under its wheels, the big V8 saloon is finished in Silver Grey metallic over Blue metallic with cream MB-TeX and navy carpets. Lovely!



RennTech

@renntech / @renntechclassics

Happy Valentine's Day!

1982 Mercedes-Benz 500SL AMG 5.0 powered by an AMG-tuned M117 V8 rated at 276hp. It doesn't get much cooler than this!



Mrs Gullwing & HK-Engineering

@petrovskaya and @hkengineering

My favourite colour of Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster. And what is your favourite one? 1962 example one of just 15 finished in Light Green metallic, according to seller HK-Engineering.



Weistec Engineering

f Weistec Engineering

M178 AMG GT S with the W.4 Turbo upgrade.

This \$12,000 kit is a replacement for both factory turbos and Weistec reckons it unleashes up to an extra 444bhp and 307lb ft of torque. On the GT S, that means a total of 900bhp and 750lb ft of twisting force!

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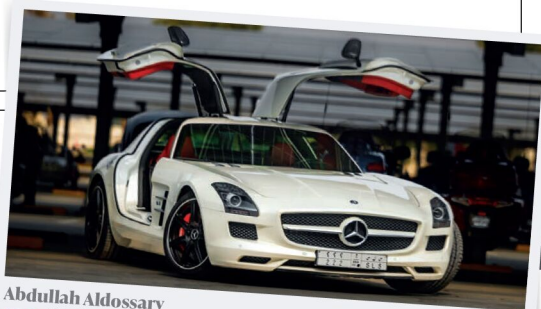
MercEnthusiast





Deniz Yilmaz

@classicpriority  
One man, one engine!



Abdullah Aldossary

@abdullahaldossary

The beauty that is the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG during a Cars & Coffee Bahrain gathering.



Rock n Roll classics

@rock\_n\_roll\_classics

OMG, they're AMG! It's fair to say a lot of cubic centimetres and pistons are displayed in this image.

Pictured are a 500SL 6.0 AMG, SL600 AMG, 500SL 6.0 AMG and SL600.



Nutley Sports and Prestige Centre

@nutleysportsprestige

1992 Mercedes-Benz 300SL-24, one owner and just 18,000 miles from new. Signal Red with mushroom leather. Desirable three-litre, 24-valve engine with five-speed automatic gearbox. Before this 300SL-24 was sold, the asking price was £19,995.



Abir Mirza

@bespokeautomotivedynamics

Our Mercedes E320 Sportline with original AMG Sport Pack from the factory. With the AMG kit, it's a stunning masterpiece.



Myron Vernis

@MyronVernis

My daughter has ditched her dreams of a G-Wagen for this. Gas, stick shift and immaculate.

Offered by Saga Classic of France/Belgium, this 1979 280TE had covered 150,000 miles and was finished in spectacular Mimosa Yellow over a Moss Green interior (codes 618 and 106 respectively). Still for sale before we went to press, the asking price was €37,900 (£33,400).



The MB Market

The MB Market

This 1986 Mercedes-Benz 560SEL Carat Duchatelet was originally ordered for the Denmark market and modified by Duchatelet for the Japanese market. Notable features include heated front and rear seats, reclining rear seats, a power sunroof, Cartier crystal clock, Carat branded TV/AV system in the dashboard, two integrated car phones, automatic climate control, and a Carat branded steering wheel and gauge cluster. This Carat shows 28,000km (17,000 miles) on the odometer.



# A classic in waiting

Cover  
story

As the 202-series celebrates its 30th birthday in 2023, we look back on Mercedes' first C-Class with help from owners of a C230 Kompressor and C43 AMG Estate

WORDS **RICHARD MASON**  
IMAGES **CRAIG PUSEY**





“People recognise  
them as Mercedes  
even if they don’t  
know the specific  
model”







C230 K has done just over 83,000 miles since new in 1998.



**T**he W201 Mercedes-Benz 190E was potentially a hard act to follow, the baby saloon a phenomenal success selling 1.8m in a new-to-Mercedes market segment. But then again, was it really a hard act to follow for the W202? The W202 was first to wear the 'C-Class' badge, thereby cementing its future beside the established S- and E-Class ranges. Its DNA is visible in its profile, with the C-pillars reminiscent of the W124's, including the V-shaped boot entry. Other styling cues, mainly the front, echo the 140-series S-Class. Switchgear is mainly W124-style changing later to more rounded W210 style. The mono front wiper is carried over from the 190E. The early range topper was the C36 AMG, premiering later in 1993 and making it to the UK in 1994. It's distinguished as being the first AMG after the Mercedes tuner was purchased by Daimler-Benz. In 1996, the C36 did a stint as the F1 Safety Car.

With the passage of time, it became clear the W202 inherited some of its cousins' flaws, such as biodegradable wiring loom failure and leaking head gaskets. Gareth Newton, Mercedes-Benz Club Model Register Captain, explains how the 202-series C-Class grew and flourished. "One thing's certain – if the 190E hadn't been a success there wouldn't have been a C-Class. From the 1970s, it was clear there was a market for smaller executive cars – think Triumph Dolomite. BMW was already doing well in the smaller segment and Mercedes wanted a piece of the action."

"Succeeding with the 190E, now Mercedes-Benz needed to keep pace with the competition," Gareth confirms. "One standout feature is the similarity of styling across the W202, W124 facelift and W140 range. If you line them up diagonally and squint a little, from the front they all look much the same. People recognise them as Mercedes even if they don't know the specific model. With the cheaper W202, more people could buy into the brand."

**G**areth explains that a breadth of trim options – Classic, Esprit, Elegance and Sport plus a multitude of factory and dealer fit extras – meant the potential for a bespoke car. "This was a master stroke at upselling, appealing to people's aspirations and attracting a broader age range. The C-Class's target market

was wider than that for the E- or S-Class. From an entry level C180 Classic to a C43 AMG [the C36's replacement], there wasn't going to be a demographic that Mercedes was missing. Remember too that this was 30 years ago.

"At launch, there were the four-cylinder 180 and 220 petrol engines plus two diesels," Gareth continues. "Months later, the four-pot 200 and six-cylinder 280 models were added, but it was some years before an Estate version appeared – mid 1996. Meanwhile, there were a series of what Mercedes called 'specification alignments', making certain things like passenger airbags, rear headrests and clear front indicators standard across the range."

"The big change was in

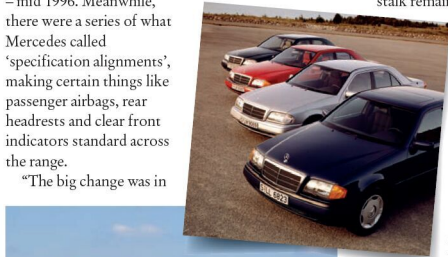


Microelectronics of new-style key and ignition barrel.

1997 when a new engine range arrived – V6s replaced the in-line six, and new gearboxes with more ratios were offered. The update also brought more electronics including a drive-by-wire throttle.

"Subtle exterior and interior trim changes distinguish the new versions," Gareth explains. "The engines and transmissions were shared with other Mercedes as part of a wider company development. The multifunction indicator/wiper stalk remained as a reminder of the C-Class's heritage."

**A**nd what about the AMG? "To begin with, it was the C36 AMG – the first AMG you could order in a Mercedes showroom with full manufacturer warranty. Partially built C280 Sport models were sent from Mercedes to AMG for conversion to C36. Incidentally, the hand-built, 3.6-litre AMG engine was also used in the E36 AMG and RHD-only W210 E36 AMG. The C43 replaced the C36 in 1998. It was entirely manufactured at Mercedes ➤



△ Plenty of choice in the 202 C-Class range.

< Styling evolution not revolution.





◁ Tapering trim leads the eye to the manual 'box.

◁◁ We can't be the only ones who miss fabric seats.

◁◁◁ M111 four-cyl is a punchy engine.

▽ Brian Clarke couldn't say no to this W202 C230 K.



△ Elegance spec prioritises luxury and comfort.

△△ M-B made 63,595 of the C230 Kompressor.



“Right now, they're great value - £2,000 to £3,000 will get you a good one”

▷ and powered by a mildly tuned version of the 4.3-litre V8 shared with other models. It pains me that the C36 doesn't get more recognition given its significance in the history of AMG. If it hadn't been a success, one can speculate as to what might have happened next. It was a limited run of 5,221, which is small compared to that of the BMW M3. There were fewer C43 Saloons and Estates – 3,857 – because production ended just three years after their launch in 1997.”

Coming to the present, Gareth's view is optimistic. “If properly looked after, engines are pretty bulletproof. With 190E values rising, I think this will also lift 202s. Right now, they're great value – £2,000 to £3,000 will get you a good one excluding the AMGs, whereas a 190E at similar money is likely to need restoration. The drawback is these cars aren't well known, especially the AMGs compared to say a BMW M3. I was at Oulton Park last year and my C36, which has the registration 'C36 AMG', was parked in the paddock. Someone took a photo of it and posted it on a Facebook group saying they thought it was a made up model number to match the registration. They genuinely didn't

**“My C230 is supremely comfortable yet it can spin its wheels – the perfect combination”**

know the model existed. I think that applies to the C43 too. Of course, these halo cars didn't get the motorsports profile that the 190E did because the regulations had changed so much.”

The elephant in the room is rust. “Yes, but let's look at that in terms of models sold,” Gareth counters. “The C-Class was the top volume seller so there will be more examples of rusty ones than say the SLK of the same period, which also has rust issues. The C-Class isn't any worse than other models. Sills and wheelarches are typical corrosion hotspots, but early models seem to suffer less. When buying one today, you have to do your homework. Check them thoroughly, preferably with someone who knows them.”

**Now to discover why these youngtimers are finding a new generation of buyers.** First up is Brian Clarke with his 1996 C230 Kompressor Elegance. Brian got into Mercedes ownership with a 190E 2.6 manual. “I thoroughly enjoyed the W201 but then sold it and was running around in an Audi A2 for convenience. A while back I was helping a

friend look for a W202 Kompressor manual. Gradually it made we want to own something with character that is more engaging to drive. I think the W202 has been overlooked, historically. In some ways, it's a 190E with modern touches. I've always liked more mechanical cars with the potential of doing the maintenance myself.

“The one I saw with my friend had been for sale for a little while. My friend wasn't interested because it lacked air conditioning. I thought it was immaculate and the more I looked the more I convinced myself I needed it. So, I advertised the Audi on a Monday, sold it on Tuesday and collected this car on Wednesday. I paid about £2,000. My wife didn't want me to buy a classic car that would eat into my time and our finances – a W202 is on the cusp of being a classic yet is reliable and easy to maintain. There's less to go wrong with a manual gearbox and no air conditioning. Mine also has a cable-operated throttle whereas later versions are electronic.

“However, spare parts are more readily and cheaply available for the facelifted version; for

◀ Seat lumbar support controls of the C43 AMG.

▽ AMG added leather and faux carbon trim.



◀ Automatic climate control; ESP off button.

▷ Hannah has owned her V8 for a decade now.



example, a new mass air flow sensor was nearly £500 yet for a 1997 car it's £150.”

Brian's ownership only spans a few months, but his family have already grown to like the C-Class. “For a recent 500-mile family journey to Durham, we took the C-Class instead of our SUV. We all agree it's a nice place to be. I also like the safety features like airbags.”

Brian looked at the 230's history and was even more convinced it was a wise purchase. “It came from a deceased's estate with a mileage of 81,000. Lately, it looked as if it was only doing 200 miles a year. It had always been garaged and was rust free. The last owner was an engineer and the records show he was fastidious about maintenance.

“Although built in autumn 1995, it was registered in January 1996 to get the latest numberplate,” Brian confirms. “The build sheet shows that the horns were substituted with those from the first owner's 190E. Lowering springs are also specified but I think they've been replaced with standard judging by the very smooth ride. I feel like I'm driving a sea cruiser – the nose rises when I accelerate. With the





<<< 184,000 miles done; AMG specific dials.

<< The 202's bodywork takes some caring for.

< You can't go wrong with Merc's M113 eight-pot.

manual gearbox and supercharged engine, it's got some go, yet it has that Mercedes hallmark of being quiet and refined. You can hear the supercharger whine when you're pressing on, though.

"Prior to my purchase, the C230 wasn't used for quite a long time so various little issues are coming to light. I had a ball joint replaced last week because it was squeaking, for example. Using the car is going to improve it. I find the manual gearbox nice to use – it has a long throw but is well sprung and smooth. There's enough engine torque to pull away in third gear at 1,500rpm. Hill starts using the foot-operated handbrake take some getting used to, however. I've obtained an original sales brochure and an auto gearbox is not listed as one of the options. However, in August 1996 automatics were available."

What's not available are replacement keys for this model, as Brain explains. "I've only got one key, the flick-out type with one button. But Mercedes is without a supplier at present. It's the circuit board and transponder that are the issue. I really need to get one of those Apple

AirTag keyrings with built-in tracker to make sure I don't lose the key I have.

"I really enjoy the car though and I can never see myself selling it. This C-Class has got that feeling of solidity that's lost on modern cars. My C230 K is supremely comfortable yet it can spin its wheels – the perfect combination. Future modifications are slightly lower springs and replacing the clear front indicators with orange ones – 'ginger-cators', as I call them."

**A**nother W202 convert is Hannah Burgess who swapped her Porsche for a C43 AMG Estate. "I've owned it 10 years come Valentine's Day, from age 21. I come from a car mad family: I'd bought a Porsche 997 which then suffered an IMS bearing failure within 12 weeks of purchase. Luckily Porsche gave me my money back, although much of it was on finance. Nevertheless, it left money in the bank.

"At that time, I was doing a lot of trackdays and on one of the forums I saw the C43 for sale for £5,000 with 136,000 miles on the clock," Hannah continues. "I'd never had a V8 before

but decided I needed this one, even though I knew nothing about 202 C-Classes. Now I do. Back then, I couldn't get insurance for the test drive due to my age so someone else had a demo run in it for me. I thought it was such a cool wagon and it was great for taking all my stuff to university – much better than the Porsche.

"Now, after 50,000 miles, she's earned an early retirement in a dehumidified underground garage in London on a trickle charger. I've got such a bond with that car, she's got me through thick and thin. I'll never part with her. I love her. That's why I pay £260 a month for parking even though she's probably worth 10 grand."

So, what's next for Hannah's car? "Well at 186,000 miles I think a bottom end rebuild at some point. But aside from topping up gearbox and diff oils nothing much mechanically has needed doing, touch wood. I've made sure the C43 has been with specialists throughout and they've looked after me on the journey. Rust has been an issue, though. I've had the sills repaired twice, inner and outer. Twice because they weren't done properly the first time. ▶

## "I've got such a bond with that car, she's got me through thick and thin"

▷ The only original paint is on the roof and all of what's on the car now is protected by a ceramic treatment.

"Both back arches have been repaired because they're integral to the body. Also, the jacking points needed repairing. Although the front arches have been done, I've bought front wings, replacement doors and a tailgate because one day they'll need replacing. I've also bought used xenon headlights from another C43 even though they weren't fitted as original. Springs,

shocks, and bushes have all been renewed. Oh, there was a small oil leak where the block was porous. The oil dripped onto the exhaust manifold and it smelt disgusting. That's been repaired but I'm under no illusion that it might need more work one day. There's rust on the bottom of the doors which I think can be repaired – that'll be done in the summer."

**H**annah's C43 has seen some action. "I'd booked a trackday at Silverstone in my Mini Cooper S but it broke. I wasn't going to let the £500 for the event go to waste so I took the Mercedes instead. It was wet and the car was majestically bad because this was before I'd had the suspension and steering fixed. After that I took her to the Nordschleife in Germany and did a few laps. It was horrendous. The steering is vague at the best of times, but when you're trying to navigate your way round people, I just became a rolling roadblock. I wouldn't advise it. The C43 is built for autobahns not race tracks.

"If you want one then check the bodywork,

and if it's had lots of owners that could mean there's a problem. Find a specialist that you love and they'll love you back," Hannah continues. "The C43 had a radiator leak in Scotland and Colin and Elaine Nicol of Klasse Series Automotive in Edinburgh were so good to me that I've used them ever since, even though I live in London.

"Maybe it's better to treat the car like it's a little older than it is as a way of preserving it? But don't go into ownership thinking you're going to make money. I actually got mine for £3,000 and I must've spent at least £20,000 on repairs in 10 years," Hannah concludes.

We began by asking if the C-Class had a hard act to follow. If the only measure is sales, then the C-Class sold as many cars in seven years as the 190E did in 11 years. However, there's more to a car than sales figures. The C-Class will never have an Evolution II version breaking auction records, but as a way into Mercedes-Benz ownership to experience the engineering excellence at a budget price there's probably no better car out there.



### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz C43 AMG Estate (S202)

ENGINE **M113 4,266cc V8**  
**POWER 302bhp@5,850rpm TORQUE 302lb ft@3,250-5,000rpm**  
**TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,610kg**  
**0-62MPH 6.7sec TOP SPEED 155mph**  
**FUEL CONSUMPTION 21.6mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1997-2000**

#### Mercedes-Benz C230 Kompressor (W202)

ENGINE **M111 2,295cc 4-cyl supercharged**  
**POWER 190bhp@5,300rpm TORQUE 206lb ft@2,500-4,800rpm**  
**TRANSMISSION 5-speed manual, RWD WEIGHT 1,420kg**  
**0-62MPH 8.4sec TOP SPEED 143mph**  
**FUEL CONSUMPTION 26.1mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1995-1997**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a pre-facilit, 1995-built C230 Kompressor and a 1998 C43 AMG Estate as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; top speed of C43 electronically limited





**W123 280CE - £49,990 no VAT.** Auto, in Metallic Blue with blue cloth interior. Restored by W123 World - 10 years ago and featured in Mark Cosovic's W123 book. Mercedes Benz assessed the car at that time, and described it as "good as new". It was the first ever W123 to be displayed at Brooklands Museum and was photographed with Concord. The latest owner kept it extremely well, and eventually part-exchanged it with us for another W123 which also featured in Classic Mercedes. W123 World has now restored the car again and it is now of concours standard. Engine rebuilt and carries a 5000-mile warranty. Photo at Retreat at Elcot Park, to whom we say thank you.



**W126 500SE - £19,990 no VAT.** This fantastic old Mercedes Benz is the W126 chassis, 500 SE Automatic model, finished in Metallic Silver with Full Grey Leather interior. This car is a fresh import from South Africa and is now UK registered with all taxes paid. The car is in rust-free condition and is in excellent order inside and out. She drives so well, and has lost nothing of the Mercedes Limo feel, even as a standard wheelbase. She boasts Power Steering, Sunroof, Leather, Electric Windows, Becker Radio and so much more. If you are after one of these, I would say this is certainly amongst the best available.



**560SEL - £24,990 no VAT.** This Mercedes Benz is the W126 chassis, 560SEL model, finished in lovely metallic Blue with full Beige Leather interior. This car is freshly imported from South Africa and is in virtually rust-free condition and right-hand drive. At 30 years old, I have to say that she is in remarkably good condition and drives very well with the 5.5 litre V8 Petrol engine at the heart of her. This Limousine has acres of room in the rear and is so comfortable to drive and ride in.



**W115 - £21,000 + VAT.** This beautiful Mercedes Benz is the W115 2.2 220 model, finished in solid Cream White with Full Red Leather or MB Tex interior. This is a 1970 car, just imported into the UK and now registered and legal. She is Historic class, so MOT and Tax exempt. The car is in stunning condition inside and out and drives well, she will happily keep up with modern traffic. There are no electrical gizmos to go wrong, even the windows are manual, and she really does give great pleasure to drive.



**W123 280CE - £50,000 + VAT.** This stunning 1982 280CE is a fresh import from South Africa and is in simply outstanding condition inside and out. The car drives without fault and still looks and feels of such high quality. This car was a 1 Owner car in SA, and is in totally original, rust-free condition. The car has been kept in amazing condition and looked after by the owner. The paint is original, the Velour interior is lovely, and she drives without fault. You may have seen this car at our Goodwood Festival of Speed display earlier this season. If you are looking for a genuine, unrestored, and original car, you will not find one like this again. Call for more info.



**W123 - £25,000 + VAT.** This Mercedes Benz W123 is the 230 E Automatic model, freshly imported from South Africa in a rust free and right-hand drive condition. This car has factory fitted Air Conditioning. This car has lots of originality, but we have had it painted to refresh her appearance, and the interior, engine bay and wheels are literally as per from 1985. The car has been so well looked after it is amazing. W123 World, Mark Cosovic have recommissioned the car and said it is one of the best they have ever seen.



**Y**ou may remember the August/September 2021 issue in which Dutch serial Benz collector Reinier Groenveld introduced his grand set of over 60 post-war Mercedes highlights. Since then, there have been a few additions, and one of them is this Fintail Kombi by Binz. Here we pair this patinated, 1964 W110 190Dc with its sibling – a 1984 300TD.

Let's put the cars in chronological order and focus on the majestic 1960s Binz first. The early E-Class-type cars were the W136/W191 170 models of 1946 to 1955. These were gradually usurped by W120/121 Pontons from 1953 onwards, with the four-cylinder W110 'Fintail'

cars arriving from 1961 and produced until 1968. Our star of the show is a humble, first-series 190Dc equipped with the two-litre OM621 diesel engine, which produces a smoky 54bhp.

A Binz Benz was not a factory-spec car, but a special build by Binz Karosserie in Lorch-Württemberg, Germany, located about 55 miles west of Frankfurt. These versions had no connection to the 'official' estate versions of the 230S W110, known as the Universal. In 1964, Belgian carrossier Jos Vermeersch designed an estate version based on a W110 at the request of IMA in Mechelen, the Belgian importer of Mercedes-Benz. These experts knew their craft.

Between 1958 and 1961, some 125 180 and 180D Ponton to Universal conversions were built.

The presentation of the 230S W110 Universal on January 20 1965 at the Brussels Car Expo was well-received, and production started in 1966. A total of 2,754 W110 Universals were built until 1968. A Binz is far rarer by comparison.

### Background

In 1936, Michael Binz founded Lorcher Karosseriefabrik Binz & Co as a manufacturer of special vehicles, including small trucks, taxi cabs, convertibles, LWB limos, special roadsters, and estate cars. Binz produced a pickup version based on the W110, as well as a LWB seven-seater (Haifa taxi) and ambulance, adding 650mm and 140kg. Both the Universal and Binz wagons had larger 15-inch wheels. "But not our USA-imported star of this feature," Reinier explains. "It's not easy to ▶

◀ Coachbuilder based 30 minutes east of Stuttgart.



In 1936, Michael Binz founded Lorcher Karosseriefabrik Binz & Co as a manufacturer of special vehicles



WORDS ALBERT MENSINGA IMAGES NOORTJE BLOKLAND

Mercedes-Benz superfan Reinier Groenveld allows us time with his 'fifty shades of gray' Fintail Kombi by Binz, which we pair with a gorgeous 300TD from Mercedes' first in-house estate car series

# ORIGIN OF THE *spacious*



▷ find the right wheels, but we found four in Germany. New Michelin tyres were fitted to match, and the spare remained untouched, as if we'd ever use it."

**Few Binz vehicles have survived, and those that have often show signs of wear and tear.** A hearse, small lorry, military or recovery van are not often passed down from owner to owner and rarely end up in a cared-for collection. It's believed that only about 10 similar W110 Kombis by Binz have survived. This is one of those rare few. The unofficial count of versatile Fintails by Binz is 188.

The Binz company still exists after a rough ride. You can check out [binz-automotive.com](http://binz-automotive.com) to see that the business is still 'leading in special vehicle construction' and offering top-notch VW and Mercedes builds.

### Classic load-all

Chassis 11010110123506 / Binz Karosserie Nr. 2154 is in pretty good shape and mostly unrestored, which makes it an even rarer event to experience one. When Reinier called me, I remembered seeing the promotional photos posted on Instagram by the specialist classic car dealer Alphons Ruyl. I am a fan of 1950s and 60s trucks, and this early silver metallic Binz (USA stamped, September 1964, odometer in miles) made me schedule a meet-up for a photoshoot as soon as possible. And I must say, Noortje has done a fantastic job with the pictures, capturing these cars in all their practical glory.

The Binz drives like a dream. There is a pre-glow diesel procedure before we can move. Actually, every time we needed to move the car. The four-speed column shifter on this

▷ 190's vertical speedo bar climbs at a leisurely rate.

▽▷ Clear and conventional dials of the 123-series.



△ Two-valve unit in 190Dc with indirect fuelling.

△▷ Thin pillars contribute to an airy feeling.



▽△ 36,874 300TDs rolled off the Bremen line.

▽ Hup caps matched to the bodywork.

▽▷ M-B made 199,517 S 123s in eight years.





# Modern vans are a pain on long trips, but not this dinosaur



△ Sounding wheels for this car was not easy.

57,327-mile beauty is thoroughly checked and sorted, as are the brakes, shocks, and a few other minor issues present when Reinier took on ownership. It shifts incredibly smoothly, and I attribute that to the overall weight! I expected cold diesel engine noises attacking me from all sides because the space inside is enormous. Modern vans are a pain on long trips, but not this dinosaur. The mind boggles: how did they do it back in 1964? We travel in Adenauer quietness.

The big size inside and outside makes me feel small. The artificial leather seats offer



Maserati-like comfort. The open window, operated by a winder, lets in fresh air without diesel fumes. After a few miles,

Reinier shares his story. "It's not a perfect car, but the patina has been preserved with a spray of transparent ceramic ice paint.

Considering the registered miles, I wonder if this car was used commercially. If it was, it's a small miracle that the interior is in such good condition after almost 60 years! A

Heckflosse can accumulate a lot of miles, but they tend to rot. This one is pretty solid, which adds to its rarity. I loved looking at the car's underside when it was completely jacked up – it looks as good as new.

**“I recently found an almost perfect petrol car similar to this, not too far away, but the owner didn't want to sell.”**

Reinier continues. "I bought my first Fintail from Alphons Ruyl. A lovely dark grey petrol. To my surprise, his Fintails had no rust. He only keeps close-to-pristine cars in stock, mostly Mercedes. I bought four – a lovely 280SLC, a W114 Coupe, and two Heckflossen. When this Binz became available, I jumped in my S400d and rushed down south to see it in person. After all, I wasn't travelling 250km to just look at cars.

"It's very special to drive timewarp cars like this Binz, especially in its diesel form," Reinier affirms. "The smokey 54bhp Heckflosse relaxes me to the maximum. The interior scent adds to the experience, with hints of yesterday – the original books and notes are relics from the past, and the way you sit, with the



△ Boot features a double floor; rear seats fold flat.





It's hard to imagine a better looking estate car than a 123

#### Just the facts

##### Mercedes-Benz 190Dc Estate by Binz (W110)

ENGINE OM621 1.988cc 4-cyl POWER 54bhp@4,200rpm TORQUE 87lb ft@2,400rpm

TRANSMISSION 4-speed manual, RWD WEIGHT 2,130kg 0-62mph Na

TOP SPEED Na FUEL CONSUMPTION Na YEARS PRODUCED 1961-1965

##### Mercedes-Benz 300TD (S123)

ENGINE OM617 2.998cc 5-cyl POWER 87bhp@4,400rpm TORQUE 127lb ft@2,400rpm

TRANSMISSION 4-speed manual, RWD WEIGHT 1,570kg 0-62mph 18.9sec

TOP SPEED 96mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 29.1mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1978-1986

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1964 190Dc chassis with Estate body and a 1984 300TD as pictured; fuel consumption for S123 according to EEC urban

▷ panoramic view, is just so special. I might say yes to another Binz or Fintail if Alphons finds a sound one."

#### The next step


As mentioned earlier, IMA and Binz built estate cars for Mercedes-Benz. In the early 70s, firms like Crayford and Binz experimented with the W114/115 luxury five-door station wagon concept, and their results were pretty good. Finally, the first factory-built estate by Mercedes was available in spring 1978. The renowned 123 Estate – officially designated the 'S123' – was an instant success. Of the 2.7 million 123-series cars produced, about 200,000 'T-models' (Tourismus und Transport) were built in the old Borgward factories in Bremen-Sebeltsbrück.

**This 300TD is powered by a 87bhp, non-turbo OM617 five-cylinder diesel engine.** The 300TD boasts an additional 38 horsepower and extra torque. On paper, the power may seem like only a small improvement over the Binz's four-cylinder, but it actually feels much larger and more capable of propelling this large car. There's a subtle sense of luxury in the practical and purposeful four-speed automatic cabin that sets it apart from period Volvos or Peugeots. Agricultural in comparison to the sheer smoothness of this classic Mercedes-Benz, it's no wonder this author wants one...

"It's hard to imagine a better looking estate car than a 123," says Reinier. "I loved them back in their time, which is why I

own one now. With just one previous owner, this car was brought to me by Mr De Rooij from Rotterdam, along with a trunk full of extra parts and special fluids. He is a member of the Dutch W123 Club and gave me the car, which has every option in the book.

"Unfortunately, the reason for this is a bit sad: in 2007, Rotterdam introduced a low-emissions zone," Reinier continues. "In 2017, the rules changed back and classic cars and youngtimers, which are of course few in number, are welcome once again. I can imagine that De Rooij wants his car back, but I'm reluctant to let it go. There's no car in my garage that I would let go, but I do need a pre-war 260d."

Perhaps someone can help out Reinier with that particular car hunt? 

▽ A great sense of 'togetherness' inside the S123.

▽▷ 123's diesel far more refined, as you'd expect.

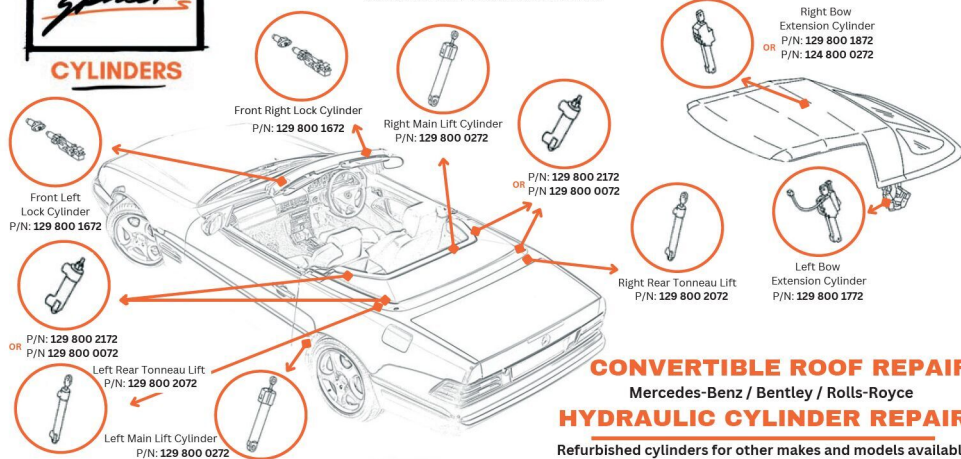






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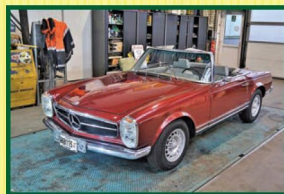
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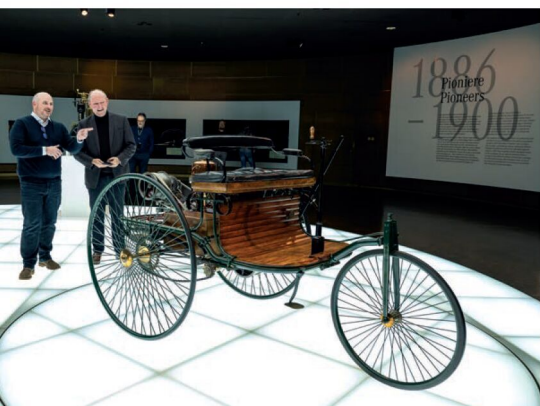
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“We’re more than just a museum”



< Where it all started for Mercedes-Benz.

△ Marcus driving a 1904 Simplex in Brighton last year.

▷ Uhlenhaut Coupe and more stole attention.





# Past & present

Talking exclusively to *Mercedes Enthusiast*, Marcus Breitschwerdt, Head of Mercedes-Benz Heritage, explains the importance of the company's classic collection in the modern world

WORDS **KYLE FORTUNE** IMAGES **MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG**

**S**itting in Marcus Breitschwerdt's office in the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart, he admits, "This is the first job I've not done to earn money. Usually in our corporation, you retire at 60, and I thought I'd do a little bit of farming in Canada and spend time in London, but Ola Källenius, Chairman of the Management Board of Mercedes-Benz, said that was not a good idea and that I should reconsider."

Breitschwerdt did, and his position as Head of Mercedes-Benz Heritage sees him report directly to Källenius, which means Mercedes-Benz Heritage now has direct representation and responsibility at board level in the company.

△ Marcus (left) has built a terrific CV at Mercedes.

"We're more than just a museum. This all has a function for the organisation, that's why in 2022 we have cut it [Heritage] out from the marketing and sales department and transferred it to the CEO's own direct area of responsibilities, putting an executive vice president on top of it. That is unusual and remarkable, but it's also clear testimony to how important it is for us," says Breitschwerdt.

He's perfectly suited for his role, which sees him responsible for all aspects of brand and corporate heritage, including business activity in the classic area, as well as heading up the museum. Having worked at Mercedes-Benz since 1991, Breitschwerdt started as a controller, and his numerous positions have included everything from leading marketing and environmental strategies, President and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Canada, President and CEO of Mercedes-Benz United Kingdom, the creation and leadership of Mercedes-Benz Cars Europe, and Head of Mercedes-Benz Vans.

That broad experience, as well as his infectious enthusiasm for the company history and cars and commercial vehicles, sees Breitschwerdt admitting, "It's a pleasure coming to work every day." He owns a Pagoda, is a keen motorcyclist, and says that one of the five best days in his life was the day he got his driving licence. His office reflects his varied career in the company, with plenty of evidence of his life with Mercedes-Benz.

There are some beautiful native artwork prints incorporating Mercedes-Benz logos from his time in Canada, as well as a plaque with the slogan "Beating the competition. Together", which he placed in every meeting room during the three years he turned around Mercedes-Benz UK's fortunes. In the UK, he took it from a position where it was trailing premium rivals BMW and Audi, to significantly increasing profitability and becoming the market leader. Breitschwerdt retains ties to both Canada and the UK, saying he particularly appreciates the enthusiasm, knowledge, >





△ Mock-up of Germany from years gone by.

△△ Plenty to look at it Marcus' office space.

▷ dedication, and strong sense of competition the British have, tapping into that competitive streak during his transformational time at Mercedes-Benz UK.

His role today is no less important. Crucial, he admits, as Mercedes-Benz, like all automotive companies, is in transition. "We see major changes in our work, we are repositioning our brand to pure luxury. It used to be luxury, then since the early 90s it was premium luxury, which was the right thing to do to take on the challenge from Japan. Now we're going back to pure luxury.

"We are also in a transformation to pure battery electric vehicles and connectivity," he continues. "Our new EQS is a wonderful thing, but what you touch is plastic. The battery cries luxury every single moment [in relation to refinement and performance], but to make clear how you reposition to luxury, and how to explain that battery electric and connected is a way to incorporate ultimate luxury in our cars. We must do this using our strategic corporate position, having the history, having the collection and having the experience.

"In other areas of luxury goods, you have similar examples. In a time when you had the suitcases and boxes outside the vehicles, you needed robust, water repellent luggage. One person realised that wood, leather, and textiles were not very good materials to produce resistant, reliable luggage. They invented a revolutionary, early, new material. The corporation still exists – it's called Louis Vuitton. And that revolutionary, expensive material is still around – it's called plastic. It's a special plastic, but it is plastic. It is still understood as pure luxury because it's produced for good reason, not to betray or rip-off the customer, but rather to deliver the best possible solution to the challenge."

That's why the company's heritage is so important to its future, Breitschwerdt says. "We use our heritage of pioneering, of invention, of problem solving and positive attitudes to push development. This is why we are very happy and confident that we can show, over the 136 years, how

invention and reinvention, and change and change again, have helped us to find viable solutions to create satisfaction and fulfilment for our customers. We also have a lot of fun, but we don't talk about that," Breitschwerdt laughs.

### People person

Marcus Breitschwerdt loves vehicles, that much is clear. But it's more than that. He says, "You have to like cars, you have to like numbers, but first and foremost you have to like people. If you don't like people, then you don't like cars. If you don't like people, you won't understand the business."

▽ The other 300SLR sold for £115 million.







He is passionate about freedom of mobility, of choice, and how the car has been instrumental in enabling that. He says. "The machine itself is so thought through. We believe we are trendsetters, the avant-garde. We are breakthrough researchers and developers. But still, we have to clearly say it's a great thing that there is no such thing nowadays as a bad car being brought to the market. That is a good thing. It has created a culture, a whole new dimension for our generation. It makes a difference if you are able to leave your hamlet or village, or not. You can drive. If you have a choice, that's good. If you don't, that's not."

There have been many challenges, such as safety, emissions, and economy, among others. But Mercedes-Benz has been expert at identifying and ultimately transcending these problems, and that's what makes this current transitional time so interesting."

### Portal to another time

Wandering around the museum with Breitschwerdt as an expert guide, his enthusiasm for the company is obvious. "Since 1910, we have been collecting systematically. What we have today was

conceived and produced by a generation that was collecting machines to be used by the next generation. We are collecting cars now to be used by the generation after us. It's like a relay – you hand over the baton," he explains. From the very first patent Benz applied for on the world's first car, and all the vehicles that have followed, Breitschwerdt highlights how important it is to listen to the needs of the customer.

"The value chain starts in the market. You have to do what the customer requests," explains ▶

◀ Emil Jellinek (L) on a test drive back in 1898.

△ Mercedes builds trucks to this day.

“You have to like cars, you have to like numbers, but first and foremost you have to like people”



▷ Breitschwerdt, highlighting Austrian diplomat and racer Emil Jellinek's request for a car with a stronger engine, brakes, lower centre of gravity, wider track, and lighter weight. The resulting, very successful, 1900/1901 car was radically different from the carriage-like designs of the vehicles that preceded it. Jellinek named the car (engineered by Maybach) 'Mercedes' after his daughter, Mercédès.

There are other instances where Mercedes-Benz listened to its customers. The 300SL Gullwing was, says Breitschwerdt, "the next great chapter of listening to customers", citing US importer Max Hoffman's request for the car, as well as the later Roadster and 190SL. These cars were key to the company's success. So much so, Breitschwerdt says, "they reignited the luxury brand worldwide. Had that not happened, the company would likely look very different today."

### Investing in the future

Sitting alongside the Gullwing is the Uhlenhaut Coupe, engineer Rudolf Uhlenhaut's original prototype car, and sister to the second one, which was recently sold by Mercedes-Benz for £115m. Breitschwerdt was instrumental in its sale, explaining, "Since such cars have existed, we have always had offers from people to buy them at any price, and we have always declined. But then, last year, we were reorganising what we call ESG [Environmental Social Governance], and we asked the question: What should we do? Heritage is not just cars – it is remembering where you are coming from. Daimler himself had not been able to get a higher education, so he got it through a scholarship based on his capacity as an apprentice. Daimler provided the same for Maybach, so support, scholarships for talented but not privileged people is very important. Therefore, we decided to set up the Mercedes-Benz Fund to allow talented people without privilege to follow their interests and talent."

The subsequent £115m sale of the 300SLR Coupe will help the next generation of engineers innovate like Uhlenhaut and all the other pioneering engineers in the company's history. Mercedes-Benz's transition in the new automotive landscape is inextricably linked with its past, proudly so. This is no better demonstrated by the company's stance on its heritage, the value it places on it, creating context for the future direction of the brand by recognising the significance of its past.

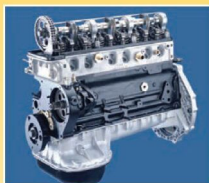
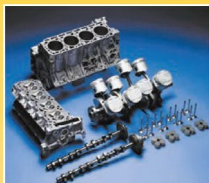


△ It was a privilege for Kyle to spend time with Breitschwerdt at the Mercedes-Benz Museum.

“The sale of the 300SLR Coupe will help the next generation of engineers innovate like Uhlenhaut”







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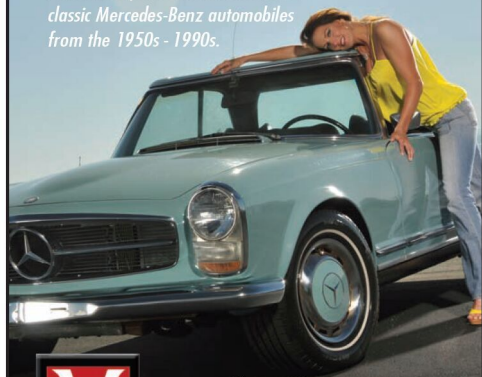
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# Gone with the wind

The original SSKL streamliner harnessed the power of aerodynamics for racing, and was the first Mercedes known as a Silver Arrow. We drive an official recreation and send it to the wind tunnel for assessment

WORDS KYLE FORTUNE  
IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

**I** push the centrally located accelerator pedal to the floor and there's a banshee scream from ahead as the roots supercharger comes into play. With an extra 59bhp over the normally-aspirated motor, the SSKL's seven-litre powerplant pulls with resolute authority while treating its driver to a maniacal soundtrack. The SSKL is fast, noisy and it's over 90 years old...

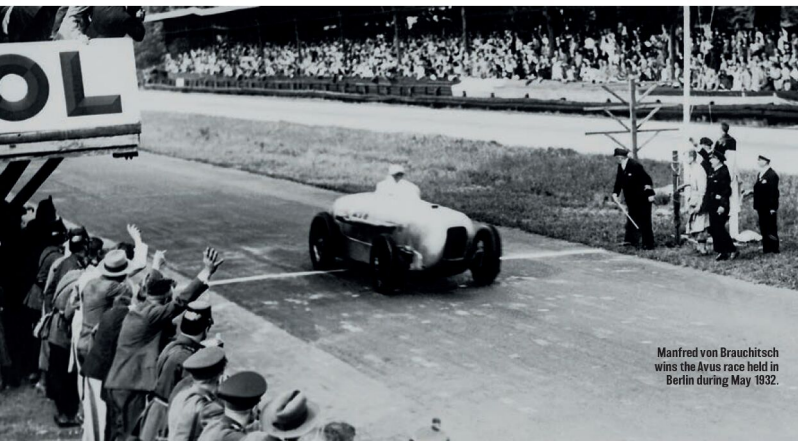
The Mercedes-Benz SSKL was already a formidable racing car in the early 1930s, but against lighter, more agile competition from the likes of Alfa Romeo and Bugatti, the powerful, heavy car was beginning to be outclassed. For the 1932 Avus race, a near 190-mile event at a circuit outside Berlin, which boasted two six-mile straights with a bend at either end, Reinhard Baron von Koenig-Fachsenfeld brewed an idea to give privateer racer Manfred von Brauchitsch's SSKL an advantage.

He proposed stripping the SSKL of its standard panels and replacing it with a light, streamlined body. Koenig-Fachsenfeld

had calculated that the benefits of a drag-reducing body were the equivalent of adding around 80bhp to the engine's output and would increase the top speed from 130mph (210km/h) to approximately 143mph (230km/h). Around the high speed Avus track, that gain would be hugely beneficial.

It nearly didn't happen, privateer racer Brauchitsch was short of funds, his mechanic, Willi Zimmer, actually lending him the money after Mercedes-Benz racing manager Alfred Neubauer gave some unofficial support to the plan; Mercedes-Benz was not officially racing in 1932. Koenig-Fachsenfeld tasked the body shop, Vetter, in Cannstatt, to build the body; Vetter also contributing to the cost of it and, impressively, completing it in under two weeks. It's that car which arrived at the Avus race in Germany in 1932, driven directly to the track. Time was so tight, the bodywork went without the usual paint.

The lightweight, hand-formed aluminium body panels



Manfred von Brauchitsch wins the Avus race held in Berlin during May 1932.







“The SSKL is fast, noisy and  
it's over 90 years old.”



▷ almost completely enclosed the SSKL, with only the wheels and exhaust in the wind. It looked radically different to its competition. Neubauer was shocked by the SSKL's appearance but when he started noting its lap times and recorded its higher top speed, some 12mph faster than any rival, suddenly the car's aesthetics weren't a problem.

It's difficult to imagine what the 250,000 people lining the track in Avus in 1932 must have thought when this SSKL lined up to race, Mercedes-Benz's huge car already a proven and formidable racing machine, but this one looked so radically different from the regular SSKL, this wind-cheating shape quickly earning it the nickname, the 'Gherkin'.

### Food for thought

While a regular bodied SSKL had won the year previously, newer rival race cars were expected to win the 1932 event. They didn't. The SSKL streamliner and Brauchitsch underlined the advantage that an aerodynamically designed body could bring. Even so, it was a closer battle than it ought to have been as Neubauer had suggested an overnight change to the SSKL's rear axle ratio. The thinking was that it would allow the engine to run at lower revs on those long straights, which could benefit reliability, but it would also hamper its acceleration out of the slow bends at either end of the straights.

The chasing Alfa Romeo P3 (the favourite for the win) was driven by Rudolf Caracciola – a previous Mercedes-Benz works driver who'd notably won the Mille Miglia in an SSKL only a year before. Caracciola had a point to prove against Mercedes-Benz and led the race for many laps, with the two cars swapping position many times over the 15-lap, near 200-mile event. The Italian car's better acceleration proved advantageous in the bends and in the close battle it looked good for the overall win, all until the last lap when Brauchitsch managed to overtake in the southern corner and defend his lead down the long final straight.

Over the 182.9-mile (294.4km) and 1hr 32min 52sec of racing, the SSKL streamliner managed an average speed of 120.8mph (194.4km/h), beating Caracciola's Alfa Romeo into second and Hans Stuber's Bugatti T 51 into third. Notably, the SSKL streamliner beat the standard-bodied SSKL of Hans Stuck, which managed an average speed of 116.1mph (186.9km/h), underlining the effectiveness of its sleek bodywork.

During a live commentary of the race, Paul Laven, presenting for Südwestdeutsche Rundfunkdienst AG, would describe Brauchitsch's SSKL as a 'silver arrow' as it sped down the long straights. This is reportedly the first time a Mercedes-Benz racer was described as such, with the SSKL's eschewing of the usual German white racing colour, as a result of there being no time to paint it, opposed to any considerations in relation to weight.

### A force to be reckoned with

The SSKL streamliner's impact is immeasurable. No race car since has been built without some consideration given to aerodynamics, while Mercedes-Benz's racers are still commonly referred to as the Silver Arrows and have raced with silver paint. While aerodynamics in relation to vehicles wasn't an entirely new idea – Mercedes-Benz had experimented with cars like the Benz-Tropfenwagen and even the Blitzen Benz as far back in

▷ Streamliner chased around the Untertürkheim test track by its regular-bodied counterpart.

◁ MGBRS 6-cyl with 100x150mm bore and stroke.

◁ Ignition adjustments can be made on helm.







“The hand-formed aluminium body panels almost completely enclosed the SSKL”

#### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz SSKL streamlined racing sports car

ENGINE M08RS 7.065cc 6-cyl | POWER 296bhp @ 3,400rpm | TORQUE 508lb ft @ 2,000rpm | TRANSMISSION 4-speed manual, RWD  
WEIGHT 1,352kg | TOP SPEED 146mph | YEARS PRODUCED 1932-1933

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for the original racer

1909 – the streamliner’s win very publicly highlighted the effectiveness of aerodynamics in the automotive world, and made Brauchitsch a well-known name throughout Europe.

Racing regulations, in relation to weight would quickly see cars like the SSKL consigned to history, though Brauchitsch’s car is instrumental in shaping racers to this very day, though the car itself would be lost in the following war years. Mercedes-Benz Classic, and in particular Michael Plag, a project leader within Classic, understood its importance and after many, many years of lobbying to do so, convinced management to provide a budget to build a faithful recreation of it. Painstaking research using period photographs, technical drawings and experience from some of those involved in the original car allowed them to recreate this exact replica.

It’s that car I’m driving on Mercedes-Benz’s test track in Stuttgart. Plag’s in the passenger seat, politely ignoring my amateurish shift as I wrestle the non-synchromesh gearbox up through its four ratios around the track. The car was finished in 2019, taking over seven months to build using an SSKL chassis, engine and parts, with the bodywork taking months as opposed to the weeks of the original.

There’s not only the opportunity to drive it today, but to take it to the wind tunnel, too. That’s somewhere that it’s never actually been

previously, the original car’s shape largely fashioned from Koenig-Fachsenfeld’s educated ‘guesstimation’ rather than measured fact.

Around Mercedes-Benz’s test track, when that kompressor kicks in it’s difficult to comprehend just how hard Brauchitsch was working to race this car’s twin in 1932. It feels huge though tight in the cabin, the suspension’s movements seeing the car bounce around the track in a means that’s alarming at 60mph, so doubling that and some must have proved very interesting indeed. In modern racers it’s the brakes that impress so much, but not so here, the rod actuated drums feeling barely adequate ▸

▽ Wind tunnel demos the SSKL’s aero efficiency.

▽▷ M-B’s fan is bigger than yours, and then some.



“It’s difficult to comprehend just how hard Brauchitsch was working to race this car’s twin in 1932,”



△ Brauchitsch (left) with Rudolf Karciss.

▽ Rigid axles with semi-elliptic springs & shocks.



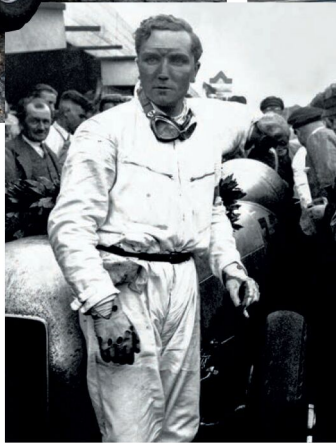
▷ at stopping the car from the sedate pace I’m travelling at today. They must have been a nightmare to manage when hauling this 1.4-tonne racer from 140mph-plus top speed to tackle the two corners on the Avus track.

The reward in the corners though is steering that’s surprisingly quick and accurate, turning the large steering wheel seeing the SSKL streamliner turn in with brisk enthusiasm that’s genuinely surprising. The rest of the car feels very physical, very much of its time, but certainly quick even by modern standards. Brauchitsch and his contemporaries were warriors, heroes, dicing in these incredible machines, in a time so different to today.

## Wind cheetah

As enjoyable as experiencing it is, the real fascination lies in the wind tunnel. Koenig-Fachsenfeld’s idea, proven on the track, is going to be tested scientifically. We’re at Mercedes-Benz’s own wind tunnel and, fittingly, it’s the oldest automotive-specific wind tunnel in the world, constructed in 1939. It’s still used today by Mercedes-Benz and can generate wind speeds of over 150mph inside its 8.5m-wide structure.

Post-war, when it ran at full speed it drew so much power it killed the floodlights in Stuttgart’s football stadium. The technician running it today jokes, “The way our club currently



△ MvB enjoys a cigarette break after victory.

plays, I wish we could still turn them off.”

Watching the SSKL streamliner in the wind, as a corduroy of smoke runs over it, it’s immediately obvious the advantage its shape brings. In comparison to the standard SSK, those telling lines of smoke travel relatively smoothly, the standard car creating many wasteful, swirling vortices, holding it back and creating drag.

Aerodynamicist Martin Konermann explains that the streamliner presents a far smaller shape to the wind and this, along with the removal of the fenders, the upright windscreen and headlights, allows it to cut through the air more efficiently. It seems obvious today, but beyond the rudimentary understanding of aero in the

aviation industry of the 1930s, its application in the car world was very much in its infancy. Konermann says that in terms of drag Koenig-Fachsenfeld’s bodywork is impressively low, its coefficient being 0.616 compared to 0.914 for the standard car.

It’s that which gave the streamliner its advantage, though Konermann does highlight that at speed the car must have been a bit of a handful because there’s a fair bit of lift at the rear axle at higher velocities. This underlines that both Koenig-Fachsenfeld’s idea was correct, and that Brauchitsch deserved the adulation that the race win brought. The influence of this fascinating – and until recently largely forgotten – SSKL resonates to this day, both in the racing and road car worlds.



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# Bolt from the blue

We get behind the wheel of Merc's EQE350 Saloon, a mid-sized electric four-door with a quoted range of 350 miles on a single charge

WORDS **KYLE MOLYNEUX** IMAGES **MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG & LEO MOLYNEUX**







A few millimetres longer than an E-Class Saloon, the four-door EQE is also slightly taller than an E-Class





**E**lectric vehicles capable of 300 miles or more from a single charge were considered the tipping point from a buyer's perspective. With battery technology at such a level, suddenly EVs would make far more sense to drivers not keen on experiencing range anxiety on something as mundane as the daily commute to work. At least that was the theory.

We are now at that point with fully electric cars like this Mercedes-Benz EQE350, but much of society remains hooked on fossil fuels and there are still plenty of barriers to EV ownership beyond miles per charge, including high purchase prices and the slow growth of recharging infrastructure. But that doesn't mean these silent-running, zero-emissions cars aren't making in-roads.

In 2022, Mercedes-Benz sold 2,043,900 passenger cars, 15 per cent of which (equating to 319,200 units) were battery electric vehicles like the EQE and plug-in hybrids such as the A250e. That achievement was 19 per cent up on 2021's figure.

In the UK market, total BEV sales for all manufacturers were 40 per cent higher than those of 2021 (267,203 units), giving 17 per cent market share. For comparison, petrol-fuelled cars made up 42 per cent of sales (682,473 units), while diesels accounted for just 5 per cent (82,981) – a situation that was impossible to imagine 20 years ago. Interestingly, sales of plug-in hybrids slumped 12 per cent in the UK from 2021 to 2022 (101,414 units) with 6 per cent market share.

**S**o that's the environment into which the EQE launches, but what exactly is the EQE? A few millimetres longer than an E-Class Saloon, the four-door EQE is also slightly taller than an E-Class, and features a teardrop body shape with wide nose and tapered tail complete with impressively short overhangs at either end. With a drag coefficient as low as 0.22Cd, this blue bar of soap is certainly a slippery customer.

Looking at the EQE range, the 242bhp EQE300 and 288bhp EQE350 are both rear-wheel drive, while the range-topping AMG EQE53 4Matic+ (616bhp) is four-wheel drive. The 300 and 350 models house an electric motor at the rear axle that pulls its power from an 89kWh lithium-ion battery integrated into the floor, while the AMG boasts an electric motor on both axes and a 90.6kWh battery. As all EQEs are based on a dedicated 'EVA2' platform, the electrified drivetrain is neatly packaged within the car's footprint. The non-AMG models have 430- to 895-litre boots, while the EQE53 has a 570-litre luggage capacity – both



△ There's lots of legroom but less for your head.

▽ Turbine style air vents with ambient lighting.

▽▽ Aero design robs car of some character, we feel.







Our test car went without the £6,996 Hyperscreen dash.

of which compare well with the E-Class saloon's 540-litre cavity.

Approach the EQE and door handles sprout from the bodywork. They don't feel as chunky as they look but pull one and you're greeted by a cabin whose attractive, sweeping lines are trimmed in foreign materials and accented by licks of LEDs. This light show is customary of all Mercedes these days but really plays up the 'EV' drama in the EQE, as does the quaint ambient melody that can be heard outside and within the car before take-off.

Rear headroom can be a problem for those occupants over six feet tall, but kneeroom back there beats what the E-Class offers. The same cannot be said for the front quarters, however. The EQE's ultra-thick centre console eats into personal space and although its floating design provides plenty of storage capacity, I'd happily swap some of that for extra room for my left knee. Perhaps the standard, 12.8-inch MBUX infotainment screen forced Mercedes to integrate such a hefty console shape?

The driver is treated to an additional 12.3-inch display operated by touch-sensitive buttons on the steering wheel. I've found these controls infuriating in the past, but they work OK in the EQE. The instrument display is impressively customisable and shows everything from a miniature sat nav screen to your eco driving credentials. I'm disappointed though, that Mercedes couldn't figure out a way to make the whole screen visible through the steering wheel. With speedometer and power usage dials on display, for example, I can't quite see the top left and top right quarters of the dials respectively. This is something I've not experienced in any other Merc. The wheel is offset right, too.

**F**rom the eerily silent start, the EQE is refreshingly easy to drive. It is exactly like driving an automatic, only quieter.

Power delivery is beyond buttery smooth and yet razor sharp when required. All those tiny hesitations you get from even the best internal combustion engines when deploying power or lifting off the throttle are vanquished by a battery and electric motor. Were it not for the manufactured propulsion sounds emanating from the EQE's speaker system, you would >



From the eerily silent start, the EQE is refreshingly easy to drive





## Charging experience

Without a charger at home, I was forced to rely on the public charging network. My nearest fast DC charger is operated by evpoint and is located six miles away adjacent to a Shell garage. I thought it wise to register on the ChargePoint smartphone app before heading out to use it. This was simple to do but required a £10 deposit to authenticate payment credentials.

According to evpoint, this station offers up to 150kW of rapid charging (perfect for the EQE which can take up to 170kW) at a rate of 65p per kWh on the day. Arriving in the EQE, after several failed attempts to connect my phone with the charging station, I finally got things working and popped over the road to Starbucks for an expensive coffee, watching through the window as the EQE's battery was replenished.

Charging peaked at 121kW, which was slightly disappointing, although at that rate the EQE gained 23 per cent of charge in just 12 minutes. Then for some unknown reason the charger stopped working (confirmed by the app), so back across the road

I went to diagnose the problem. Long story short, I had to swap recharging stations to continue the process and after that didn't see anything above 65kW.

In the end, the EQE received 58kWh in 38 minutes (total battery capacity is 89kWh) at a cost of £38. With battery charge level at 88 per cent, the on-board computer reckoned I now had a range of 248 miles - this figure based on a driving style that had given little regard to efficiency.

Overall, I didn't appreciate having to wait 15 minutes before a recharging bay became available and found the connection

process itself a faff, but I was pleasantly surprised by the speed at which the EQE's battery recharged once it was hooked up, even if the advertised rate was never achieved. And I certainly didn't miss greasy diesel pumps.

## Charging time

**Public rapid charger (170kW DC) 10-80% 31mins**

**Wallbox (11kW AC) 10-100% 8hrs 30mins**

The EQE has an 11AC/170DC on-board charger as standard

*Manufacturer: If you are planning to charge your Mercedes-Benz plug-in electric vehicle using a 3-pin domestic plug socket you must get a qualified electrician to inspect and sign off the socket to confirm it is safe and suitable to charge your vehicle. Do not use an electric vehicle 3-pin charge cable with an extension cord.*

▷ feel even more detached from the act of travelling. That said, few petrol or diesel cars would stay with the EQE350 from zero to 40mph, while its 6.4-second 0-62mph time would challenge most hot hatchbacks.

**T**his being an AMG Line Premium Plus example, Airmatic air suspension with adaptive damping is standard (top Exclusive Luxury spec also gets air springs, while AMG Line and AMG Line Premium do without), so the ride is particularly cosseting - to a point. On smooth roads, this EQE350 feels almost S-Class-like in its ride quality, the silent drive system and stepless acceleration only adding to the magic carpet feeling. However, should those 21-inch rims hit a pothole, the ensuing thump shatters the sense of calm and penetrates further into the cabin than expected.

For those wondering about handling, Eco, Comfort and Sport modes are available via the Dynamic Select system, the latter stiffening the suspension (it still feels pretty soft), adding extra weight to the steering, and ridding the already superb throttle response of its final bit of slop. Rear axle steering is standard with AMG Line Premium Plus and Exclusive Luxury trim lines, and it does add something to the driving experience.

The EQE exhibits agility beyond what should be possible with 2.4 tonnes, shrugging off roundabouts without a whisper and demanding nothing more from the driver than a flick of the wrists. The EQE never feels as large as it really is until you hit the anchors...

The EQE's braking system deserves its own paragraph because it's more complex than your average setup. Paddles behind the steering

wheel can be used to increase or decrease the amount of kinetic energy captured during deceleration, which is turned into electricity to recharge the battery. This has the effect of increasing or decreasing the amount of retardation felt when lifting off the throttle. The energy recuperation system takes some getting used to, but with good anticipation you'll use the brakes less and be rewarded for your excellent perception of traffic and the scenery with additional battery charge. A win-win!

**S**peaking of the battery, what can EQE350 owners expect from their Mercedes in terms of efficiency and range in the real world? Officially, this EQE350 AMG Line

Premium Plus will cover 349 miles on a charge and, after five days at the wheel in 10C average conditions, I reckon that figure is just about achievable. With little effort from me and the car in Eco mode, it was averaging 300Wh per mile on typical A-road journeys, which would give a theoretical range of 300 miles. At 60mph, consumption rose to roughly 350Wh per mile, and in town dropped to around 270Wh per mile. The air conditioning, ambient lighting and other comfort features were activated

## Just the facts

**Mercedes-Benz EQE350  
AMG Line Premium Plus (V295)**

**DRIVE SYSTEM Asynchronous electric motor and 89kWh lithium-ion battery**

**POWER 288bhp TORQUE 417lb ft**

**TRANSMISSION Single-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 2,355kg**

**0-62MPH 6.4sec TOP SPEED 130mph ELECTRIC RANGE 349 miles  
CO2 EMISSIONS 0g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2022-on PRICE from £89,345**

*All figures from Mercedes-Benz for an EQE350 AMG Line Premium Plus as pictured, electric range according to WLTP*





throughout. Read the panel opposite to find out more about the adventures of recharging via the public charging network.

In conclusion, when it comes to these EQ-branded EVs, the cynical might claim Mercedes has simply deployed pretty lights and strange, otherworldly sounds to build excitement in what are otherwise smooth but soulless ways to travel from A to B. And yet there is some genius in the EQE. The battery range and delivery of performance are very good and outstanding respectively, the MBUX infotainment system is world class even without the £6,995 Hyperscreen package, and the depth of the driving modes is immense without being overwhelming, such is the user-friendly way in which they are presented. And I haven't

△ Rear axle steering with Premium Plus.

△▷ 21-inch rims and 255/35 Pirelli P Zero tyres.



even discussed the EQE's class-leading safety and assistance functions that remove further strain from driving it.

The asking price of £77,345 OTR in base spec (£89,345 as tested) puts the EQE350 in S-Class territory, which is a big deal, but the EQE Saloon is around 30 grand cheaper than the EQS Saloon that sits above it in the EV hierarchy. If you don't need the additional space, I'd suggest trying an EQE before signing up for an S. One more thing – optional heat pumps should become available on the EQE and other Merc EVs later this year, which should give their ranges a welcome boost.

► Thank you to Mercedes-Benz UK Web [www.mercedes-benz.co.uk](http://www.mercedes-benz.co.uk)



A

stifflingly hot July morning in Fellbach, on the outskirts of Stuttgart, back in 2006. I arrive in a sparkling new 221-series S600 L, but a 126-series S-Class also has my name on it. This pristine example, kindly provided by Mercedes-Benz Classic, is

a 1991 dark blue 560SEL with velour upholstery, self-levelling suspension and 3.020km (1.876 miles) on the odo. It even smells new. I can hardly wait. The 126 was reportedly used to benchmark driver fatigue by the 221's development team...

Behind the wheel of the V126 ('V' denoting long-wheelbase; 'W' means standard wheelbase), I feel instantly at home. No, wrong cliché. Better than at home. The steering wheel is of the traditional Mercedes post-Stroke 8 shape, the instrument dials look like those of the W123 – the most legible dials ever

created in the automotive world, with the trademark yellow speed limit markings. This particular car is incredibly well equipped and, coming as it does from the Mercedes Classic warehouse, ▷

“The 126 S-Class was reportedly used to benchmark driver fatigue by the 221's development team”



# Limo





# life

With two generations of S-Class to enjoy on roads around Germany's Black Forest region back in 2006, Piotr R Frankowski had certainly had worse days...

WORDS **PIOTR R FRANKOWSKI** IMAGES **DIETER REBMANN**

▷ everything works. Including the pneumatic lumbar support for the front seats and the Blaupunkt analogue radio, which receives modern FM radio stations without difficulty. I succeed in finding an FM station which broadcasts vintage German pop, sung by stern men with falsetto voices and, probably, handlebar moustaches.

**T**he engine runs smoothly and unobtrusively in urban traffic, and wakes with a characterful snarl when the loud pedal is prodded. The sound is not that of a churlish American pushrod V8, it is a distinctly Germanic, 'technical' V8 sound, but alluring all the same. The 126-series has exquisite chassis balance, meaty weighting to all controls, and the gas and brake pedals just feel right. I can brake perfectly with my left foot, which I always do in automatic cars, but which in some vehicles is so difficult due to pedal placement that it requires the skills of an experienced contortionist. A minor gripe: the PAS pump can't cope with very quick lock-to-lock direction changes, so you actually need upper body muscles



△ Both cars retain superb road presence.

▷ Under 2,000km on the clock of this 1991 SEL.

▷ 3600's V12 can overwhelm the rear rubber...

▷▷ Big range of seat adjustment in the 221-series.



when it temporarily freezes up. The V8-powered, smooth-as-silk German saloon has an analogue, oily smoothness to all its responses, unmatched in any later Mercedes. I feel. It reminds me that I have always valued progressiveness and linearity much higher than brutal speed or power.

As I enter the forested hills of the Black Forest, and the dark canopy of leaves begins to filter the harsh sunlight, the world around me starts to look like a chiaroscuro sequence in an old film, where valuable 70mm stock is wasted to give an impression of the protagonist embarking on a significant journey.

The 560SEL can hardly keep up with the more modern S600 on uphill stretches. But going downhill, or on flat sections, and certainly in the twisties, I can stay on the tail of the younger S-Class with ease. Yes, the SEL does roll a lot in corners, but the roll is progressive and the chassis communicates precisely how much grip is left. The 560SEL maintains perfect poise and balance while at a huge angle of roll, keeping all four wheels effortlessly on the ground. I can carry more speed through sequences of fast corners than the young Mercedes intern in the V221 S-Class.

Another factor is that the young man is a product of a different era: ramrod straight, with tinv soectacles and unlimited



5,160mm long with a 3,070mm wheelbase.







5,206mm long  
and a 3,165mm  
wheelbase.



◁ Airmatic ride  
certainly helps  
in the corners.

◁◁ Fingertips in  
for a treat with  
the S600's helm.

self-confidence stemming from a religious belief in German engineering, including that ESP makes everyone a better driver.

### Working in harmony

The S600 has almost too much torque (612lb ft!) for its own good: in the dry, with the ESP anaesthetised, it can rip the rear tyres off their rims, and it will perform donuts in a cloud of smoke at the first hint of a steering input. The ESP can no longer be completely defeated, but the engine can defeat the ESP. The S600 has supercar performance with nearly-Maybach levels of refinement. First-class brakes, a pretty taut chassis, and low weight – a limousine that can be both a relaxing conveyance, or a Porsche-chaser. Not on Alpine passes, perhaps, but almost everywhere else.

The S600 has steering that's almost too light at low speeds, but it contributes to the feeling of lightness and agility of this 221 S-Class. It is, admittedly, a heavy car, but one which disguises its girth well. The handling only becomes ragged when

the driver tries to jerk the big beast around too much, with no smoothness and no gentle transitions. It rewards a skilled driver and could punish a ham-fisted one with a wild dance whilst the ESP system tried to rein in a heavy vehicle teetering on the brink of adhesion.

**A**fter a short break on the shore of a mosquito-infested lake, we switch the lead and my young colleague, driving the S600, relying on the skill of the aforementioned ESP system to keep him out of trouble, has a hard time keeping up. In fact, in very twisty sections I, with the older car's superior communication skills, can build up a comfortable lead. The same happens in a faster section through the forest where the 560SEL can really stretch its legs. I push a little more through the next section and the new car

**“ The 126-series has exquisite chassis balance, meaty weighting to all controls, and the pedals just feel right ”**

“The older car has one more thing in abundance: what older Germans used to call *Überholprestige*”

▷ completely disappears from my rear-view mirror. Later, the young German can't understand why the newer car could not keep up despite its superior power and technology. I just love the 126 with its double-wishbone front end and its huge suspension travel. I can drive one all day in the grey area beyond the grip limit and always feel in complete control.

**I**n the 560SEL, with its rudimentary ASR traction control system, you easily estimate the grip available and act accordingly. The old-style, recirculating-ball steering is no hindrance (one gets used to its slackness around the straight-ahead) and in the long sweeping bends of the derestricted Autobahnen it inspires confidence. One can cough or sneeze at three-figure speeds and still stay between the white lines. So much for the old M-B belief that rack and pinion steering is too dangerous at Autobahn speeds: it was used for the first time, reluctantly, on the W210 E-Class. In fact, I have never had problems driving the older cars with absolute precision: perhaps I am simply old enough?

The older car has one more thing in abundance: what older Germans used to call “*Überholprestige*” (overtaking prestige) – the effect a car has on other Autobahn users when it suddenly fills their rear-view mirrors. Even today, when ultra-bright xenon, laser and LED lights rule, and impatient young people tailgate others on the highway, this 560SEL is the daddy of them all. The exquisitely sprung seats and intuitive controls make long journeys shorter, and to me, the 126-series is the pinnacle of Mercedes overengineering.

In a long, sweeping downhill section with a dark forest to starboard, and a gentle downward slope to port, I suddenly feel the 560SEL engine shudder and cough. Then it does it again. And again. The fuel supply is failing! The narrow road has no shoulder where I can safely park, and you just can't risk some

▷ Piotr couldn't get enough of this big old V8 S-Class.

▽ The V8 held its own during our road trip.



inattentive soul sideswiping it while reading a text message. I spot a small layby ahead, slam the gear selector lever into N, and just manage to coast to safety before the engine dies completely. I try to restart it once, then decide that it needs a recovery truck. Some gunk from the fuel system must have become unstuck thanks to fresh gasoline; a museum car which has not been driven for decades sometimes needs more attention than just a fuel tank flush. I had to switch to the newer, more powerful car, but only out of necessity.

Given a choice, would I buy a 221 S-Class with its electronic gadgetry, or a 126? If you are unsure of my answer, you probably have not read the above article carefully enough! **PS**

## Just the facts

### Mercedes-Benz 560SEL (v126)

ENGINE M117 5,547cc V8 POWER 296bhp @ 5,000rpm TORQUE 336lb ft @ 3,750rpm

TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,830kg 0-62mph 6.8sec

TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 16.8mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1985-1992

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption for this 1991 560SEL according to EEC urban, and for this 2006 pre-facelift S600 L according to NEDC combined; top speed of S600 L electronically limited

### Mercedes-Benz S600 L (v221)

ENGINE M275 5,513cc V12 biturbo POWER 510bhp @ 5,000rpm TORQUE 612lb ft @ 1,800-3,500rpm

TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 2,210kg 0-62mph 4.8sec TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 19.8mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 340g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2005-2009





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# Purple haze

This 280SL represents the spirit of the Sixties, reimagined with a Wildberry twist

WORDS & IMAGES **DAN BEVIS**



**T**he basics of hopscotch are a universal constant – something that can unite children the world over, regardless of a common tongue. A numbered grid, chalked onto the pavement, upon which a stone is tossed to designate the number to be missed out as the scotch-hopper in question makes their way up the ladder to the home base. Timeless stuff.

There's also a rich symbolism tied up in this apparently simple act; more than just a process of juvenile bouncing – hopscotch acts as a metaphor for the journey of building a project car; you've got your base point, your aspirational end goal, and between the two points you find a linear process studded with jeopardy and potential peril. What's more, as the numbers increase, so does the snowballing effect; the 'I've done this, so now I may as well do that too' thought process that imbues a whole load of mission creep. You know the score. This must be sounding familiar.

With this magnificently purple 280SL, however, there was no such sense of jitterbugging creep. This was mapped out from the off to be something sensational – a Pagoda the likes of which the world had never seen before. And here, shimmering in the crisp South London sunshine, the evidence presents itself for your perusal in dazzling style.

Mercedes-Benz's SL model line has been perennially popular for decades. The R107 generation (sold from 1971 to 1989) is a hot ticket on the classic and collector market right now, the R129 that followed it is rapidly ➤



*“The Mercedes was fully stripped down, mounted on a rotisserie, and treated to a fastidious and painstaking restoration”*



▷ gaining traction, and we're seeing a marked uptick in the 21st century R230 cars as well. But the W113, that was the genesis of it all – the starting point of an iconic legacy.

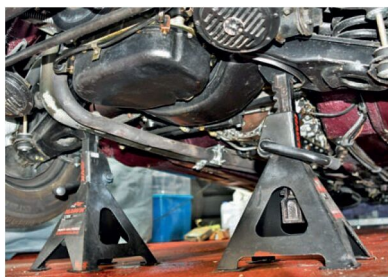
The W113 wasn't actually the first Mercedes-Benz model to wear the SL badge, of course. Classic car aficionados find their dreams populated by the wishlist 300SL Gullwings of the 1950s, along with the sylph-like droptop sibling, the 190SL. But in 1963, the covers came off this sleek little roadster – a new model to replace them both at once, offering a heady mixture of style, performance, luxury, comfort, and robust engineering. Conceived as a two-seater roadster, it's the removable hardtop which gives the W113 SL its 'Pagoda' nickname, the slightly concave nature of it calling to mind the distinctive curves of ancient Chinese architecture.

**N****aturally, there was nothing ancient about the engineering – the underpinnings of this car were cutting-edge for the early 1960s, with the range of straight-six engines featuring multi-port fuel injection, along with boasting double-wishbone front suspension, dual-circuit brakes, and optional power steering.** The door skins, bonnet, bootlid and tonneau cover were made from aluminium to keep weight down, and the car was designed with a rigid passenger cell and crumple zones – the first sports car to be conceived specifically with occupant safety in mind. All of this adds up to

an alluring formula today: the charm and character that a classic SL should have, along with more advanced mechanicals than its peers, and an unparalleled drive. But most of all, there's the way it looks. Just drink in Friedrich Geiger's glorious design – it's the stuff of dreams, isn't it?

There were three model variants offered over the Pagoda's lifespan: the launch-spec 230SL sold from 1963 to 1967, the 250SL from '66 to '68, and the 2.8-litre 280SL from 1968 to the end of the line in '71. And to mangle an Orwell quote, all Pagodas are equal – but this purple example is more equal than most. A 1968 car, this 280SL was originally white, and lived in the UK until 1989 when it was exported to Hong Kong. There it remained until 2007, and while in Hong Kong it enjoyed various restoration works including an engine-out respray, assorted new panels, an interior retrim and a new hood.

Upon being repatriated, the SL was dry-stored until 2011, having a number of mechanical works carried out before passing to a new owner. And it was toward the end of that decade when the really seismic changes began to happen in this Pagoda's life, as it was acquired by somebody with impressive ambitions. Having owned various Pagodas before in the usual factory-issue colours, they wanted to do something different, something extraordinary – and that's precisely what they've achieved. The Mercedes was fully stripped down, mounted on a rotisserie, and treated to a fastidious and painstaking



*“Believe me when I say  
this paintwork is astounding”*





◀ Underbody ready to face Britain's roads.

◀ Toolkit and first aid kit remain with the Pagoda.

◀ No expense was spared on the SL's restoration.

▼ Safety was at the heart of this interior design.

▲ Matching hardtop with iconic shape.

restoration. Absolutely everything throughout the car has been renewed or refurbished, all to OE specs, down to every last nut, bolt and bush.

With the bodywork perfected, it was then treated to a lustrous new shade of paint, Wildberry Metallic, laid down by artisans who had originally apprenticed at Rolls-Royce. Believe me when I say this paintwork is astounding. The engine and transmission were fully rebuilt, as were the brakes, steering and suspension, while the interior received a full retrim and a new hood was fitted. This is, without a hint of hyperbole, as good as – possibly even better than – a new Pagoda. The presentation is magnificent inside and out, the

mechanicals are tip-top, it's smooth and joyful to drive. We've seen a lot of Pagodas in recent years, and this is absolutely among the very best.

Cars of this level of intrigue and panache are best backed up by substantial history files, as so many stories can go astray across the decades, and it's pleasing that the documentation accompanying this Pagoda is astoundingly robust. Meticulously organised into ring binders, I find all the original books, paint and trim samples from the rebuild, painstaking photographic records of all the work carried out and, most impressively of all, some seriously eye-watering invoices for all of the artisanal graft. Some big numbers have

been thrown at this car. It all adds up to a six-figure sum. But then, of course, this was never about the money – this was about making a Pagoda the very best that it can be. And with the minute attention to detail in evidence here, it's fair to say that this has been achieved with gusto.

**Slipping into the cabin, I'm enveloped by an overwhelming impression of sheer unfettered fabulousness.**

The comprehensive retrim has been done to a gorgeous standard, the seats trimmed in soft leather and sumptuously stuffed. There are new carpets throughout, and the choice of colours and textures has been made with impeccable taste; the wood trim upgraded to Rolls-Royce walnut burr, and you'll note that the dash has been colour-coded in the new Wildberry Metallic to match the exterior. The instruments were overhauled and the heater controls renovated, and it's all era-appropriate in here, with the car fitted with an attractive Motorola push-button radio.

The details keep caressing your eyeballs with a gentle insistence – the impeccably retrimmed hardtop, the original tool roll filled with the correct Mercedes-Benz-branded tools in the boot, the rare-as-hen's-teeth Motometer tyre pressure gauge tucked away in its own special pouch – it's part time-warped, part fresh ultra-lux.

An equally diligent level of time and effort was spent making the body look utterly sublime too, and it shows in every inch. Each panel is as



## *“There’s a fire in the 280’s belly and it’s all been combed through toward a state of tip-topness here”*

▷ straight as a 1968 showroom model, the vivid paint shade an exceptional choice that suits the body lines so well, and it’s evidently been applied by true artisans – the finish is outstanding, and it really does sparkle in the sun. Quite simply, there isn’t a bad angle on it – everywhere you look, it’s extremely easy on the eye.

And naturally the car’s as much about the ‘go’ as the ‘show’; Pagodas have always been cruisers rather than sports cars, although there’s a fire in the 280’s belly and it’s all been combed through toward a state of tip-topness here. The 2.8-litre straight-six was fully rebuilt and it runs beautifully, firing on the first turn of the key and pulling strongly through the revs with that unmistakable 280 exhaust thrum.

You can see from the engine bay that this has all been done correctly with no half-measures – just look at the new canvas bonnet strap, the correct Mercedes-Benz battery, the proper washer bag – it’s just as it should be. The automatic transmission is similarly pleasing, shifting smoothly as it ought, and the work that’s gone into the chassis is evident in the ride

– smooth and cossetting, thanks to its new bushes, new springs, new everything. There are no squeaks, knocks or rattles to be heard. It truly is a marvel.

**With so much care and thoughtful attention put into the restoration, the mechanical package is outstanding – this is a car that loves to cruise, and drives just as these things did back in the 1960s.** But the attention to detail throughout the rest of the car means that it would be equally at home on the showground or the concours lawn, with the bonnet up and mirrors laid underneath, so everyone can see that this beauty is way more than skin-deep. Whether it’s a jaunt to Monte Carlo, a cruise down the Kings Road, or just popping out for a pint of milk, this stunningly purple Mercedes-Benz is ready to infuse glamour and drama into every yard. Because this was never a hopscootch restoration, not really – this was mapped out to be exquisite from the start. Whoever paid £153,000 for it at auction last year clearly believed it met the brief.

▽ Six-cylinder M130 unit also used in the W108.

▽▽ Wind deflector a neat cabin addition.

▽▽▽ It’s never short of attention, that’s for sure.



### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz 280SL (W113)

ENGINE M130 2.78cc 6-cyl POWER 168bhp @ 5,750rpm TORQUE 177lb ft @ 4,500rpm TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD  
WEIGHT 1,360kg 0-62mph 9.0sec TOP SPEED 121mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 24.8mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1968-1971

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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“Exciting times lie ahead  
for The Mercedes-Benz  
Club UK”

△△ Clive has always been a fan of the W111 cars.

△ A fuel injected straight-six for this old Merc.

△▷ Exquisite pillarless design of the 114 Coupé.





We discuss all things Mercedes  
with Clive Ricketts, W114 Coupe  
owner and director of social  
media for The Mercedes-Benz  
Club in the UK

WORDS & IMAGES **STEVE HALL**

# Straight from the heart



**I** swear they must put something addictive in them. Or maybe it's just the uniquely satisfying melange of beefy goodness, hearty egg and melted cheese slice in a crunchy muffin that hits the spot. Whatever it is, I just can't drive past the Golden Arches en route to a photoshoot, the carb and calorie load providing energy to get me through the most arduous of photoshoots. Happily, today's shoot should prove anything but arduous as my schedule is to spend the day with Clive Ricketts, newly elected to the board of The Mercedes-Benz Club UK as director of social media.

We'd had one of those calls the week prior that started as a quick chat to confirm our planned shoot time and location but it quickly evolved into a longform discussion between fellow petrolheads; soon we were off on a tangent about all things motoring – safe to say Clive is a very enthusiastic, personable chap so our shoot was bound to be a fun day out.

You may be wondering just why we're chatting to Clive today; the answer to which lies in that refreshed board at the M-B Club. Exciting times lie ahead for The Mercedes-Benz Club UK; extraordinary you might say after the January 15th AGM. This saw an entirely new board voted in by existing club members, the first time a board has been appointed this way in its 71-year history and with it a fresh, vibrant, inclusive and forward-looking board installed at the helm.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves here. I could tell you Clive brought his gorgeous, 1972 280CE Coupe to the shoot as a demonstration of his passion and enthusiasm for the marque – and that would be perfectly true – but the simple fact of the matter is that this car is just so damn cool, so classily handsome that we simply had to get some photos of it as a visual treat for our readers. Clive has owned this car for five years now, bought as a runner in need of a little TLC – duly applied – it's now resplendent, standard apart from a subtly installed air ride system and a modern sound system hidden in the glovebox to retain its classic visage.

**I**t's a rare thing, that's for sure. There were over 67,000 W114 Coupes produced between 1968 and 1976, including just 11,518 280CEs, but with the very newest model approaching 50 years old one can only speculate how many are still roadworthy and, of more relevance here, how many came to the UK. The ever useful 'howmanyleft' website suggests there were 86 280CEs licenced for the road in 2022 with slightly more SORN'd. As Clive says, most of the cars which made it here have the steering wheel on the 'wrong' side, so we settle on his car – RHD, 280CE in Moss Green – being pretty much unique on account of never having seen another in the flesh nor online. I guess it doesn't really matter, the salient point being that this car is surely one of Mercedes' finest shapes from a rich back catalogue; elegant, restrained and stylish, facets lost on the overwrought shapes of so many modern cars. It certainly proves a head-turning conversation piece during our photoshoot.

That some of that interaction was garnered from folks offering help as we became stranded, bonnet up, midway through our shoot was inadvertent but as a sanguine Clive says, "It's all part of the fun with a classic." Thankfully nothing more than an aged hose giving up under the stress of the back-and-forth trundling us photographers demand, a quick DIY fix and replenished water level is all that's needed to get the W114 back to the pub for coffee and a chat to hear about Clive's part in the future of The Mercedes-Benz Club.

But first I want to learn about Clive's back story; what is it about cars, what is it about Mercedes-Benz that's brought him to this point? As is so often the case, the seed of his passion lies in childhood, his father something of a car guy who renewed his



△ Clive has risen through the ranks of The MB Club.





◁ Whitewalls and chrome – period perfection!

◁ Cutting a dash in the Essex countryside.

▽ A modern feel to this classic Benz's interior.

steed every two years. Nothing fancy, but a new Vauxhall on the driveway is quite something to an eight-year old, this spawning the weekly Sunday drive into a central London car wash which always took the long route home via Park Lane, home then – as now – to many high end car dealers. It was peering through the windows of the Mercedes dealer that hit the spot for Clive, the W111 his favourite then and now. As Clive says, “Mercedes always made the best cars in the world, the interiors hewn from real materials like wood and leather, the legendary build quality giving the doors that unique ‘thunk’ sound.”

**I**t took a few decades but it seems fitting, perhaps inevitable, that his first sojourn into Mercedes ownership was a W111, purchased 20 years ago and still cherished by him now. With Clive's first foray into Benz ownership dovetailing with classic ownership, it made sense to look at joining a club, somewhere he could look upon not just as a source of information and help but somewhere he could enjoy ▷



**“Bought as a runner in need of a little TLC, the 280CE is now resplendent”**



▷ his new steed with like-minded enthusiasts; for Clive, The Mercedes-Benz Club UK seemed a natural fit.

Attending his first event at Syon Park with a degree of trepidation, Clive was delighted to find himself welcomed by a fellow member who introduced him to various other folks who'd assembled for the morning meet. From then his participation in events quickly grew, the enjoyment of indulging his enthusiasm for Mercedes creating a positive feedback loop that saw him recognised as a regular and in short order asked to become a 'captain' of the W111 model due to his ownership and knowledge.

Within short order, Clive was appointed regional officer (a role he retains 15 years hence) and then London regional officer – a board level decision endowing Clive with responsibility for creating and running events – “people's happy places” as he calls them, encompassing everything from pub meets to premier events like Salon Privé and Hampton Court. Were this a job, it'd be fair to characterise Clive as something of a rising star within the organisation...

**O**utside of club duties, Clive has grown a strong social media presence of his own with nearly 40,000 Instagrammers following his account (@spikecurve).

So with proven expertise, it's not hard to see why Clive was voted into the role of social media director at the AGM, the new club philosophy representing a step change in how it runs. In the past, it's fair to say the club was perceived as something of an 'old boys' network, directors running the show with members unable to influence who was at the helm, this in turn feeding a perception that the club was aimed at the 'old guard' with their classic Mercedes.

▽ Just 84,000 miles covered since 1972.

▽ Air ride suspension for a modern twist.

**T**he reality is quite different for the club has been an open, welcoming organisation for quite some time – much as the reach of the marque has grown, the club is run in a way that appreciates everything from A-Classes to the Pagoda. Even ownership isn't a criterion for membership; if you're an enthusiast of all things Mercedes-Benz then the club is for you, we are told. This is born out in the club forum where conversations as diverse as, “My 190E 2.6 Sportline” to “Your Cars in 2022 – a year in review” are to be found. And with the new board installed there's plenty more to come, Clive's passion and drive making the club ever more active in social media circles whilst new exciting events are planned through 2023 (which we can't disclose now, but keep an eye on the club's Instagram account – @themercedesbenzclub – for more details).

Naturally, part of the reason for this article is another Clive initiative to 'get the word out' and as a non-club member myself, Editor Kyle thought it a good idea to have someone with no preconceptions tell the story. What I've found – certainly if Clive himself is anything to go by – is a thoroughly modern, forward-looking car club that offers something for everyone no matter what level your interest in Mercedes is. Were I an owner myself (I really must tick that box some day!), I'm sure I'd be making the same decision Clive made 20 years ago because I cannot imagine a better invested £46 to make the best of Mercedes-Benz ownership.

▲



**“Outside of club duties, Clive has grown a strong social media presence of his own”**

#### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz 280CE Coupe (W114)

ENGINE M110 2.746cc 8-cyl POWER 182bhp@6,000rpm TORQUE 176lb ft@4,500rpm TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,455kg 0-62MPH 10.8sec TOP SPEED 121mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 22.6mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1972-1973

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a standard, 1972 pre-facelift example; fuel consumption according determined at 3/4 of top speed (100km/h, 68mph) plus 10 per cent.



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# Tigers on the prowl

WORDS & IMAGES  
**TOTO  
WIRODIHARDJO**

Indonesian fans of  
123-series Mercedes  
undertake a grand tour  
from Jakarta to Surabaya,  
in the process covering  
almost 1,000 miles

**L**ike in Europe, 123-series Mercedes are very popular in Indonesia. In these parts, this modern classic beauty is nicknamed 'Mercy tiger' due to its front fascia with big headlights and grille. The 123 was assembled in Indonesia from the late 1970s until the mid 80s before it was replaced by the 124-series E-Class model. These 'completely knocked down' (CKD) variants were badged 200 (M115 and M102 engines), 230 (M115), 280 and 280E. However, other variants were imported as 'completely built up' (CBU) units, such as the 250, 230E and 240D.

Such was the popularity of the 123 when new, enthusiasts were a natural next step. One of today's groups, known as the Tiger Lovers (TiLo for short) and based in Jakarta, claims almost 200 members with 123-series Saloons, Coupes and Estates to their name. Established in July 2020, the group was created for 123 fans to indulge their passion for driving their Mercedes.





“The 123 was assembled in Indonesia from the late 1970s until the mid 80s”



For a recent anniversary, Tiger Lovers organised a Trans-Java and Madura islands tour called Tiger Lovers Far Eastern Journey, which covered more than 1,600km (around 1,000 miles) along a route from Jakarta to Solo in Central Java, then Surabaya in East Java, followed by Bangkalan in Madura Island then back to



Surabaya, Solo and finally Jakarta. All in four days.

Along for the ride initially were 13 Mercedes (280E, 280, 230E and 200 types) from various years of production, and more than 20 enthusiasts from Jakarta and its suburbs, not forgetting myself. We gathered at 10pm at the meeting point, a rest area some 60km east of Jakarta. After a cup of coffee and short briefing, those 13 vehicles hit the road in the still of the night, convoying through the Trans-Java Toll Road, with the aim to reach Solo in the Central Java Province at breakfast time.

### The more the merrier

The toll road to Semarang in Central Java was mainly flat, but hilly between Semarang and Solo. Another W123 fan group from Bandung in West Java Province joined the convoy at around the 400km mark (near the city of Pekalongan in Central Java). The oldtimer Mercedes-Benzes were happy being driven for long hours at constant speeds with only stops for refuelling and toilet breaks. ▶



▷ Just before dawn, we arrived at a rest area in Ungaran and stayed for an hour to drink coffee and eat snacks. As the sun came out, we continued the journey to Solo. Roller coaster roads and beautiful, hilly scenery with views of Mount Merbabu and Merapi as well as Mount Sumbing and Sindoro entertained all participants. Approaching Solo, we could also see Mount Lawu in a distance.

After paying toll fees at the exit gate, we finally entered Solo and headed to a famous, traditional restaurant for breakfast, before reaching the hotel to sleep with 500km under our belts.

The next morning, after breakfast the group left for Madura Island and Surabaya, again through the Trans-Java Toll Road. This second stage covered around 300km. Another W123 with a couple onboard joined the group from Bogor, West Java. The sun shined brightly, and the sky was very clear. By noon, the outside temperature was over 33°C – and it felt higher still. One vehicle struggled with the heat but regained its composure after cooling down in a rest area.

### Turning point

Arriving at Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia after Jakarta, we were welcomed by 10 more 123s from Surabaya, which then joined our convoy. The group became stuck in traffic after leaving the toll road and entering the city, but everyone crossed the Madura Strait through the Suramadu Bridge to Madura Island, north of Surabaya coast in one piece. There, we enjoyed a legendary duck feast and visited the city of Bangkalan before heading back to Surabaya for another overnight stop. We were hosted by our fellow W123 enthusiasts and wasted no time sharing stories.

On Sunday morning, after breakfast the group headed back to Jakarta with an escort from a fellow W123 enthusiast until the toll road gate. We made a stop at Solo for lunch, which was hosted by more 123 enthusiasts from Solo and Jogjakarta. With time running away from us, we made a stop for refuelling just



△ Taking a quick cool-down before soldiering on...

after Semarang. It was beginning to get dark by the time we restarted our engines and returned to the road...

Most of the vehicles of the group managed to stop at Tegal, a city in Central Java between Semarang and Jakarta, for dinner, but others decided to continue to Jakarta and only had a quick dinner at the nearest rest area before continuing the journey back to Jakarta.

Th journey to Surabaya and back to Jakarta surely proved the reliability and durability as well as the comfort of 123-series Mercedes, cars built to last beyond all others.

▽ The passion for 123 Mercedes is clear for all to see.



“It was beginning to get dark by the time we restarted our engines and returned to the road”





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# Trendsetter

Previous incarnations of Mercedes-Benz's super stylish CLS have never been such good value for money, as our used car market expert reveals

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES DEALERS



V8 biturbo-powered CLS363 AMG with 381k miles priced at £20K.



**F**alling sales have placed something of a question mark over the future of Mercedes' sleek CLS model, but there's no doubt that earlier incarnations are some of the best-value used Mercedes you can buy. It's hard to imagine now, but back in 2003 the coupe was becoming something of a dying breed, with UK two-door sales at an all-time low as sales of SUVs, MPVs and sports estates were growing rapidly. But Mercedes' radical, first-generation C219 CLS changed the automotive landscape almost overnight.

Four-seater coupes had of course been around almost since the dawn of the motorcar but had invariably possessed two doors, with rear seat passenger convenience sacrificed on the altar of style. But Mercedes' seminal CLS four-door coupe changed all that.

Many of these unfortunately come with pretty hefty price tags, but that original C219 Mercedes CLS is now well within the financial grasp of almost every buyer. This black, 136,000-mile CLS320 CDI, for example, was advertised for a mere £3,495 at A D Motors in Peterborough ([www.ad-motors.co.uk](http://www.ad-motors.co.uk)). Complete with a full service history, an MOT and three month's warranty, this 2008 model came with 18-inch alloys, electric heated seats, Bluetooth, leather upholstery and a seven-speed auto linked to a 221bhp three-litre V6 turbodiesel. In fact, there are quite a few early 320 CDIs around at similar prices.

The second-generation C218 CLS is impressive value too, so much so that you could now buy a decent example of the range-topping



△ 136,000-mile CLS320 CDI V6 under £3,500 at A D Motors.



△ Three-year old CLS350d yours for £32,250 at Motorland.

CLS63 AMG Coupe for just 20 grand. Like this black, 2011 car we spotted at Gold Cars Ltd ([www.goldcarsltd.co.uk](http://www.goldcarsltd.co.uk)) in Worcestershire. Stickered at £20,289, this car packed full service history (including a recent major service), had

88,087 miles on the clock, and claimed a comprehensive spec that included Command sat nav, a Harman Kardon sound system, xenon headlights, and electric heated and cooled memory seats. Not forgetting a 518bhp, 5.5-litre V8 biturbo!

## Nearly new

There are literally hundreds of other decent-looking C218s advertised for sale right now at considerably less than £20,000 – the vast majority being diesel derivatives.

Waning demand for diesel cars in general might also be behind the recent fall in nearly-new, third-generation C257 values. You'll find quite a few CLS350d for sale in the £30,000 to £35,000 range, including some pristine looking, main dealer examples. But the best C257 value is to be found at independents and car supermarkets, with something like this 43,000-mile, 2019 CLS350d AMG Line Premium Plus selling for around £32,000.

This 2.9-litre, 282bhp straight-six was for sale at Motorland ([www.motorlandltd.com](http://www.motorlandltd.com)) in Kent and advertised for £32,250. The combination of style, performance (the 0-62mph dash takes just 5.7 seconds) and economy (the official combined figure is 48.7mpg) makes the CLS350d a very appealing model. The spec included leather upholstery, 19-inch alloys, AMG body styling, Agility Control suspension, Dynamic Select driving modes and a 12.3-inch multimedia display.

► **Fancy an older Mercedes instead? Then check out our top three £15,000 modern classics on page 78!**



## Forecourt find

C63 AMG  
(W204)

We're big fans of the 204-series C63 AMG (who isn't?), which is becoming better and better value. And if you come across one like this stunning, 2010 example finished in Indigolite Blue metallic at Continental Cars in Reading, then you'll find it hard to resist.

Recently reduced in price to just £21,995, this car had covered a lowly 40,000 miles and came with a full service history record plus a 12-month MOT. The spec was every bit as palatial as you would expect, whilst the cream nappa leather upholstery looked immaculate and complemented the external colour perfectly. Under the bonnet you'll find a 6.2-litre, naturally aspirated V8 churning out 451bhp and linked to a seven-speed AMG automatic with paddleshifters. Top speed is limited to 155mph, and 0-62mph is dispatched in 4.5 seconds.

**Dealer information:** Continental Cars  
Tel: 01491 680688  
Web: [www.ccsales.co.uk](http://www.ccsales.co.uk)



△ Indigolite Blue metallic paint is rarely seen on the C63 AMG.

▷ The wheels looked in good condition; AMG exhaust system.

▽ Seven-speed auto can be operated with paddleshifters.

Mercedes  
market

Knowing the Mercedes-Benz marketplace means you can make the best buying decisions. But that requires up-to-date market information, however, which is why we generate fresh Mercedes market data every month, to give you the best chance of bagging a great deal. A car's colour, spec, fuel type, mileage and drivetrain all affect its value...

The top 6 best-selling  
used Mercedes

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

- 1 A-Class (21.9%)
- 2 C-Class (21.2%)
- 3 E-Class (14.4%)
- 4 CLA-Class (6.2%)
- 5 GLA-Class (6.0%)
- 6 GLC-Class (5.7%)

## What's in a colour?

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

- 1 Black (28.2%)
- 2 Silver (18.9%)
- 3 Grey (17.5%)
- 4 White (18.0%)
- 5 Blue (9.4%)

## Miles ahead

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

**Less than 50,000 miles**  
**61.5%**

**Between 50,000 and 80,000 miles**  
**21.1%**

**More than 80,000 miles**  
**17.4%**

## Fuel watch

How are Mercedes powered?

**Diesel 54.0%**

**Petrol 39.6%**

**Hybrid 4.40%**

**Full electric 2.0%**

## Drivetrain

Four-wheel drive Mercedes offer greater traction, but can be less economical. Rear-wheel drive Mercedes can be fun to drive, but trickier at the limit than front-wheel drive models

**Four-wheel drive 21.8%**

**Front-wheel drive 32.5%**

**Rear-wheel drive 45.7%**

## Auction spotlight

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

## ● ML270 CDI Special Edition

2.7-litre, diesel, auto, 2005/05-plate, 102,000 miles, £2,700

## ● CL500

5.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2004/04-plate, 144,000 miles, £2,800

## ● CLK200 Kompressor Cabriolet

Sport 1.8-litre, petrol, auto, 2005/55-plate, 90,000 miles, £3,750

## ● SLK200 Kompressor

1.8-litre, petrol, manual, 2005/05-plate, 56,000 miles, £4,800

## ● CLS320 CDI

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/07-plate, 67,000 miles, £5,900

## ● A200d

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2016/66-plate, 37,000 miles, £14,500

## ● C200 Coupe Sport Premium

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2016/16-plate, 50,000 miles, £16,700

## ● GLA200 Sport Premium

1.6-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/68-plate, 34,000 miles, £20,500

## ● E300e

2.0-litre, petrol/electric, auto, 2019/69, 78,000 miles, £22,250

## ● CLC220d 4Matic Urban Edition

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2019/19-plate, 39,000 miles, £23,300

## ● S350d AMG Line Premium

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2017/17-plate, 69,000 miles, £25,100

## ● SL500 AMG Line

4.7-litre, petrol, auto, 2017/17-plate, 36,000 miles, £33,300

## ● E220d Coupe AMG Line Night

Edition Premium Plus 2.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2021/21-plate, 27,000 miles, £38,200

## ● GLS350d 4Matic AMG Line

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2018/68, 43,000 miles, £39,100

## ● AMG C43 4Matic Estate Premium

Plus 3.0-litre, petrol, auto,

## 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](http://www.british-car-auctions.co.uk) or [www.nama-uk.com](http://www.nama-uk.com)

TOP THREE

# £15,000 modern classics

Although the majority of Mercedes buyers are drawn to the most efficient contemporary models, boasting cutting-edge comfort, performance and equipment, it's the older classic Mercedes – packing far greater character and charm – that many of us still find appealing. And if that's your bag, then there are more options out there than ever before,

with an ever growing list of desirable modern classic Mercedes for sale on forecourts up and down the land. Below are three £15,000 contenders worthy of your consideration, including a popular 129-series roadster, deliciously elegant 124-series convertible, and a forgotten gem from AMG's back catalogue.



## SL280 (R129)

A great first step on the classic SL ownership ladder, Mercedes' R129 is not only affordable, but built to last too. Fifteen grand will buy you a decent 1994, 190bhp SL280 straight-six with around 75,000 miles and a good history. Well-equipped for the period, it came with an electro-hydraulic fabric roof, a manually detachable hardtop and leather trim. But watch out for rust – we'd stick to cars that have been kept properly dry-stored, and always get a specialist inspection before buying.



## E320 Cabriolet (A124)

Another droptop Mercedes from the same era, the 124-series E320 Cabriolet has been a popular model with classic buyers for many years. Our budget bags a recently-refurbished, 1993 example with a fairly typical 140,000 miles – but make sure yours has been maintained properly throughout its life and shows no signs whatsoever of the tin worm. Performance is actually pretty perky, with the 217bhp six-cylinder providing 229lb ft of torque, and the E320 Cabrio boasts a top speed of 146mph.



## CLK55 AMG Coupe (C208)

If you'd prefer your classic Mercedes to pack some real fire in its belly, then the rare CLK55 AMG Coupe would be just the car for you. A cherished year-2000 model with around 120,000 miles would set you back no more than £15,000, with a warbling 342bhp V8 that packs a whopping 376lb ft at 3,000rpm. The benchmark 0-62mph dash takes just 5.4 seconds and even the standard spec should leave you wanting for nothing. Yours should have full service history and a folder packed with old work receipts.

## Latest products and accessories

### M-B Collection Unisex Sweatshirt

If you're looking for a perfect present for a Mercedes-loving friend, then this grey unisex sweatshirt from the official Mercedes-Benz Collection could be just the thing. Made from 60/40 per cent cotton/polyester with a yoke in the shoulder area and front and back section, it comes with single-rib cuffs, a crew neck and hem – plus a tri-coloured neck band and a light blue crescent moon on the inside. Available from your local Mercedes-Benz dealer and priced at £88, this sweatshirt comes in sizes XS to XXL, and the product code is B66958959-8864.



### Miofive Dual Dash Cam

Miofive's latest dual dash cam system with 4K front and 2K rear cameras is now available on Amazon UK for £249. The front dash cam is an upgrade on the original Miofive with internal memory increased from 64G to 128G, and uses a super capacitor rather than its own battery for better heat resistance, whilst the new rear camera records at 2K.

Recording at 30fps, drivers can capture simultaneous and continuous front and rear-facing footage with ultra-wide viewing angles, GPS and various other features to keep safe on the road.



### Autoglym Leather Clean & Protect Complete Kit

Car care expert Autoglym has the perfect kit to help keep your car's leather upholstery clean. It's a combination product that contains everything you need to clean and protect the leather surfaces of your car called Leather Clean & Protect Kit, which includes leather cleaner (500ml), a leather balm (500ml), Hi-Tech Aqua-Dry and a polish applicator.

Priced at £34, it's designed to clean and protect without discolouring or affecting the natural matt finish, treatment is recommended at least every six months. And by following the simple two-stage process with the dedicated products in this complete kit you are guaranteeing the best possible outcome for your leather upholstery. See more at [autoglym.com](http://autoglym.com).





# Signature Tune C220D

So you've bought a W205 C220d, but how do you ramp up the driving excitement?



**M**ercedes' W205 C-Class was a big seller, with the 2.1-litre C220d turbodiesel model the most popular variant. A combination of punchy 168bhp performance (with 295lb ft of torque from just 1,400rpm) and up to an impressive 70.6mpg combined fuel economy proved a winning formula. Manufactured between 2014 and 2021, and packing Mercedes' excellent nine-speed auto transmission, all cars were well-equipped, with nine airbags and items like ESP Dynamic Cornering Assist, Collision Prevention Assist, Attention Assist, Adaptive Braking, Pre-Safe with pedestrian detection, Active bonnet, Active Lane Keeping Assist and an electric parking brake with an emergency braking function as standard. A 2018 facelift brought minor tweaks to the styling, lighting and electronics, as well as an uprated, two-litre 191bhp OM654 engine.

However, both the pre- and post-facelift C220d can be remapped for even greater output, have their braking, handling and styling enhanced, and have their in-cabin tech further improved. But before you get your C220d tweaked in any way, get it serviced and carry out a diagnostic check to



ensure that everything is running as it should be. Prices start at £9K.

## Engine

A custom ECU remap adding power and torque, plus improved throttle response is the most popular C220d upgrade. A variety of well-known tuners can carry out the work, with the original model rising from 168 to 220bhp and 300 to 360lb ft, whilst later facelifted models rise from 191 to 230bhp

and 360lb ft. We'd recommend you get a decent sports exhaust and performance air filter/cold air box fitted before getting your C220d remapped.

## Transmission

Mercedes' excellent nine-speed auto transmission works well and is easily strong enough to deal with the greater power and torque from a C220d remap. But a couple of tuning houses do offer to remap the transmission. A proper remap can further smooth gear changes, but don't forget that you must report any modifications to your insurer - a transmission remap is likely to add a bit to your annual insurance premium.

## Suspension

Eibach's Pro-Kit, and H&R or Tein S-Tech lowering springs are all popular options if you want to lower your C220d's ride height and enhance handling. But if you want to keep OE levels of ride comfort, then you'll need pricier coil-overs instead. Bilstein B14, Tein Street and YSR Dynamic Pro Sport are all good choices, and on older W205s a fresh set of poly bushes makes a big difference to the ride, handling and steering.

## Brakes

The OE factory braking is fine for mildly remapped cars, but if you do want to maximise your C220d's stop-and-go potential then a new set of performance brake pads from Brembo, Ferodo or EBC is the way to go. Goodridge braided hoses will give you better brake feel too, and if you really need the ultimate in stopping power then there are W205 big brake kits available - but frankly we reckon that would be overkill on a C220d.

## Wheels and bodywork

A wide variety of 18- and 19-inch alloys look good on the W205 C220d, with Carlsson, Brabus, Lorinser and AMG all popular choices - but the latter are a clear favourite with owners. In fact, many AMG designs fit the W205, whilst partial and full bodykits are also available. But most owners seem to leave their C220d looking standard, with maybe just a few colour co-ordinated touches.

## Interior

Few owners make any major changes to their car's interior, nonetheless there are quite a few stereo, sat nav and wiki system upgrades available for the W205, which would allow you connect to Wi-Fi networks and to install apps from the Google Play Store, play DVDs and - with the correct adapter - access the ECU's diagnostic fault codes too. Handy if you want to keep on top of any issues with your Mercedes C220d as they emerge.

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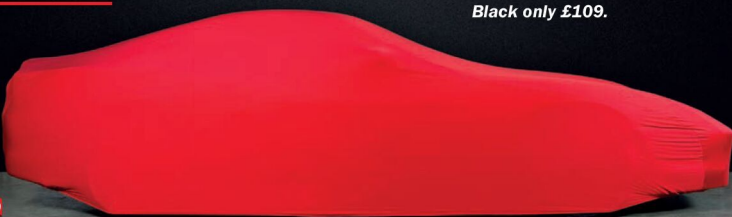
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# Fast show

Even now, few cars would stay with a well driven CLA45 AMG on a back road. We assess the Coupe and Shooting Brake versions as ownership propositions 10 years after the first arrived

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

**G**iven Mercedes' unfettered niche filling of the last two decades, you could be forgiven for not knowing what the CLA is, or for. Its four-door 'coupe' configuration makes it look like a shrunk version of its larger CLS stablemate, but it's based on the A- and B-series platforms. However, if asked to name a likely rival, you might think BMW 3-Series.

The frameless-doored Coupe arrived at the 2013 Geneva motor show, its sleek and slippery shape

boasting class-leading aerodynamics and a lovingly crafted exterior aimed at creating a premium appeal. The interior was curvy and super modern, and even the factory it was built in was new – Kecskemet in Hungary.

The CLA Coupe, factory coded C117, was on sale in the UK by the autumn of 2013, offered with the usual choice of petrol (1.6- and 2.0-litre) and turbodiesel (1.8-, 2.1-litre) engines, driving the front wheels and, as in the A-/B-Class, installed transversely. But just months later, the eye-catching if

averagely engined range was given a massive testosterone shot when Stuttgart revealed the CLA45 AMG (along with the A45 AMG hatchback), with not only Affalterbach's first four-cylinder engine but the most power of any road four-pot in the world at the time.

The CLA45 was launched in the UK with a £42,000 price tag, but the usual attractive PCP deals ensured brisk sales volume. A decade on, you can buy an early example for as little as £16,000 to £18,000, and you'll probably see 50 or more

2013/2015 cars for sale. But the letters 'AMG' can spell sharply increased running costs, so is that money well spent?

## Design and engineering

The heart of the CLA45 AMG is the twin-scroll petrol turbo engine, built by hand in AMG's 'One man, one engine' tradition, the assembler's name marked on the top. Designed to EU6 emissions standard four years before that became mandatory, it features an all-aluminium crankcase and forged pistons, and a sports exhaust



**Spotted  
for sale**  
PRIVATE SELLER  
**CLA45 Coupe**  
2015/15, black, 57,600 miles,  
panoramic roof, painted calipers,  
£21,000, Midlands



## Just the facts

### Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG 4Matic Coupe/Shooting Brake (C/X117)

ENGINE	M133 1991cc 4-cyl turbocharged
POWER	355bhp@6,000rpm
TORQUE	332lb ft@2,250-5,000rpm
TRANSMISSION	7-speed auto, 4WD
WEIGHT	1,585/1,615kg
0-62MPH	4.6/4.7sec
TOP SPEED	155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION	39.8/39.9mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS	165/161g/km
YEARS PRODUCED	2013-2019/2015-2019

All figures sourced from Mercedes-Benz for pre-facelift CLA45 AMGs: fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited

contortion. But of course the main event is the engine and mammoth performance, which the 4WD chassis controls with aplomb. But like many modern turbocharged four-cylinder engines, this unit lacks vibrancy, so the sports exhaust helps here. Much the same applies to the chassis: the car is perfectly behaved in all circumstances and yet you're made aware of the road's surface condition at all times. The sports seats offer excellent support, but some may find the racier interior trim, for example the red rings around the air vents, slightly overdone.

## What you'll pay

You will almost certainly not see any early CLA45 Coupes or Shooting Brakes at official Mercedes dealers, as they're simply too old for that now. But the classified advertisements contain a wide choice, almost all within the £18,000 to £25,000 range, offered by independent used car dealers and private sellers. You'll see them as low as £16,000, but these are likely to be revived insurance category 'S' or 'N' write-offs, and have some other issues.

Around one in five CLA45s for sale are Shooting Brakes, which may command slightly more than the Coupe. A spend of £18,000 to £20,000 typically buys a 2014 car with 60,000 to 80,000 miles; while some Mercedes models are easily found with low mileage, not so the CLA45, which as a practical performance car was usually bought for a busy life. The very most you should be paying for an early CLA45 is £25,000, and for that it needs to be in very good condition and one of the few low-milers around. ➤

system with flaps to balance noise and refinement; an optional Performance exhaust ramped up the drama further still.

It pumped out 355bhp as well as 332lb ft of torque all the way from 2,250rpm to 5,000rpm. These figures were, respectively, nearly 70 and 30 per cent more than those of the next petrol model down, the CLA250, and sufficient to make the CLA45 a sub-five second 0-62mph car. Don't, incidentally, confuse this 'full fat' AMG with the 'AMG Sport' or 'Engineered by AMG', which are effectively standard models with upgraded wheel/suspension/trim packages.

As with the A45 AMG, the hot CLA used the seven-speed AMG Speedshift DCT automatic gearbox offering three modes, along with Race Start and a double-declutch action for a nice sound effect on downshifting. While other models' drive is selected by a lever on the steering column, the CLA45 employs an old style, stubby lever – the AMG Drive Unit – on the

transmission tunnel.

All models have 4Matic four-wheel drive, with a variable front/rear torque split, and as would be expected, the suspension has the full AMG treatment: not only stiffer springing and anti-roll bars, but a wholly new four-link rear suspension setup. The 19-inch multi-spoke wheels shod with 235/35 tyres front and rear (18s with 235/40s were a no-cost option) cover a high performance braking system, though not the composite front discs seen on other AMGs.

On the outside, the CLA45 AMG is very nearly discreet, the bodykit fairly low key, while inside there are side- and shoulder-hugging sports seats trimmed in Artico 'man-made' leather, plus the expected AMG trimmings. As standard, the car was adequately if not generously equipped, hence many factory extras were available (which we'll look at on the last page), but a convenient and reasonable value addition was the

AMG Exclusive package, comprising more heavily contoured seats trimmed in black leather, plus seat heaters and a leather trimmed dashboard top.

In November 2014, the CLA45 AMG Shooting Brake (X117) was announced, with a public debut at the 2015 Geneva motor show and on sale in the UK in the summer of 2015. Mechanically identical to the Coupe, it heavily copied the CLS Shooting Brake's styling, and cost just over £1,000 more. In early summer 2016, the CLA range underwent a light facelift, but this did include the AMGs' power rising to 376bhp and torque to 350lb ft, and revisions to the gearing and front differential. The 117-series Coupe and Shooting Brake remained on sale until 2019.

## Driving the CLA45 AMG

If you like sitting very low down, the CLA45 will suit you. It is, despite the shallow roof level, an adequately spacious car and one you can get in and out of without

# CLA45AMG Inside and out



## Specialist overview

Steve Dickens of Autoclass Garage in Milton Keynes

*"You should not expect much to be going wrong, but the engine is a highly tuned unit that needs the exact correct maintenance. The transmission needs similarly precise maintenance."*

[www.autoclassgarage.co.uk](http://www.autoclassgarage.co.uk)

## Powertrain

- The warning from Steve is that engine oil level is crucial: five litres exactly must be put in, otherwise it will go into the cylinders, burning and melting the tops of the spark plugs, which then enter the engine and potentially cause serious damage. Spark plugs have to be changed every 37,500 miles or at three years.

- The transmission needs similarly precise maintenance, having two filters, and these and the oil have to be changed at 31,000 miles or at three years, compared to

62,000 miles and five years on the regular CLA models.

- Given the very specific service requirements, it's vital to check the service history so cars with skimped servicing can be avoided. As the history is online rather than in the form of a traditional paper service book, you'll have to ask a dealer or a fully equipped independent Mercedes specialist to do it for you.

- The turbo isn't known to give trouble, but is a pricey part. Look out for smoking and rough power delivery.



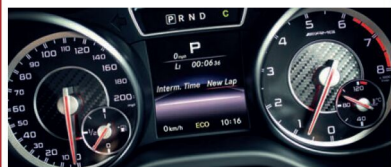
Seven-speed dual-clutch automatic 'box delivers snappy gear changes.

## Suspension, steering and braking system

- Being four-wheel drive, the CLA45 AMG has the extra driveshafts at the rear but this doesn't usually create any extra issues. Listen out for squeaks and other noises from the suspension when driving.

- The steering has electric power assistance, and should be smooth. If not, a problem is likely to be imminent.

- The brakes are big and expensive, though not as pricey as on some AMG models. A lip on the edge of the disc will give you an idea of how much life is left in them.



The CLA45 AMG feels remarkably planted and rides well enough.



Spotted  
for saleUSED CAR DEALER  
CLA45 Coupe2014/14, grey, 79,000 miles, leather,  
Harman Kardon sound, memory seats,  
£18,995, BerkshireSame basic chassis as  
A45 but less extreme in  
its suspension setup.

### Bodywork and wheels

● Even though the oldest cars are close to 10 years old, 'normal' rusting would not be expected on them yet, but as on all high performance cars the metalwork can fall victim to 'user abuse'. Look out for poorly carried out crash repairs, and check the body shut lines.

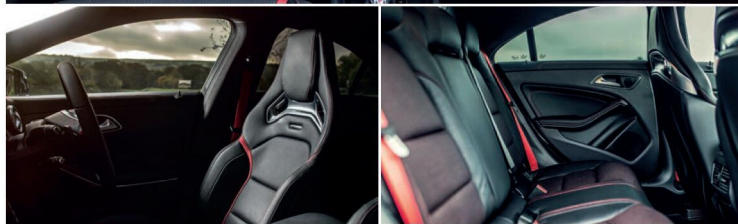
● If you wish to avoid cars rebuilt after an insurance write-off, do an HPI or other mileage/finance check to ensure the car is not a category S (structural damage) or category N (non-structural damage) repair; these cases are where insurance repairs exceed the car's value but the damage is

light enough to allow the vehicle to be professionally rebuilt and put back on the road. Some advertisements will flag this status, which usually devalues a car.

● The 19-inch diameter wheels with their super skinny 35-profile tyres are extremely vulnerable to kerbing and other damage. Mutilated wheels are a dependable indicator of how carefully or otherwise the car has been driven.

● Powerful four-wheel drive cars are often heavy on tyres, so if the rubber has been shredded, budget for about £650 for a set of four 235/35R19s.

**The turbocharger is not known to give trouble, but is a pricey part to replace**

Command Online was  
optional, as were these  
Performance front seats.

### Interior and electrics

● Have a look around for the sign of a careless owner, such as damage to the seats, and scuffs on the boot trim as a result of large and heavy loads, particularly on the Shooting Brake.

● Be aware of the telltale signs and smells of serious valeting to smarten up a previously mistreated car.

● The electrical gremlins that affected a previous generation of Mercedes are largely history now, but there can still be the odd problem, usually software related, for example the phone system.

● It's possible to have a general digital 'health check' on the car. This takes about half an hour and is something Mercedes-Benz dealers or independents might do free of charge for regular customers.

## CLA45 AMG Inside and out

**Spotted for sale**  
USED CAR DEALER  
**CLA45 Shooting Brake**  
2015/65, black, 45,000 miles,  
AMG Performance exhaust,  
£22,145, Kent



## Verdict

The CLA45 AMG was the A45 repackaged as a mini CLS, and in terms of performance, refinement and looks (although some may say it's a little too low and sharp), there is nothing to complain about bar perhaps a lack of tautility in the powertrain and chassis. It's a brilliant and practical all-rounder.

But bear in mind that while both the Coupe and Shooting Brake are now priced more within reach if you're looking at early, 2013 to 2015 cars, for reliable service they still need proper and potentially expensive maintenance, given the highly tuned engine and complex transmission. But it being a 'proper' AMG, did you expect anything else?

### Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE
CLA45 AMG Coupe/ Shooting Brake	£225	£340

*Quotes from Autoclass Garage*

### Non-routine servicing costs

- ★ Digital 'health check' **£65**
- ★ Gearbox oil and filters change **£380**
- ★ Replace front brake discs and pads **£730**
- ★ Replace rear brake discs and pads **£490**
- ★ Replace engine turbocharger **£3,100**
- ★ Set of four premium brand tyres (235/35R19) **£650**

### What you'll pay

- £16,000-£18,000** Rock bottom price, for high mileage cars at auction, possibly insurance rebuilds
- £18,000-£20,000** Typical price range for average mileage 2013 and 2014 cars
- £20,000-£22,000** Used car dealer price, including Shooting Brake model
- £22,000-£25,000** 2015 Facelifted CLA45 AMG Coupes and Shooting Brakes
- £25,000-£30,000** Low mileage AMG Coupes and Shooting Brakes from 2018 and 2019



## Equipped to please

In the last few years, Mercedes-Benz has changed its thinking on factory extras, preferring upgrade packages rather than individual options. But a decade ago the CLA45 AMG was offered with Mercedes' traditional long list – nearly 30 items, allowing a theoretical expenditure of over £20,000. The most expensive item was the AMG Exterior Carbon Fibre Trim pack comprising a front splitter, side sills and rear apron at around £2,600, with the carbon mirror housings adding over £1,200. Increasing the top speed to 168mph (still electronically limited) cost £1,900 though an AMG driving course was thrown in.

Comand Online was another hefty priced option at nearly £1,900,

while upgrading to the Harman Kardon Logic 7 sound system would be £700. At £1,040 the Memory Package was pricey but for some would be most desirable, adding electric seat and lumbar adjustment, and memory exterior mirrors. A useful item on the Shooting Brake was the Load Compartment package at £540, which included load compartment rails, a height adjustable and lockable floor with a stowage box underneath. A more talkative Performance exhaust, meanwhile, cost £460 extra.

It's likely that many CLA45s were basic cars ordered on finance, but there are Christmas tree spec cars out there that could be a good buy, as the high cost of extras is never fully reflected in the car's used value.





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# Crunch!

David Mallon's 124-series Cabriolet receives an unwelcome advance from a Range Rover, but not before undergoing a blissfully inexpensive MOT and service

WORDS & IMAGES DAVID MALLON

## FACTSHEET

CAR 1997 E220 Cabriolet

OWNER David Mallon

LOCATION Manchester, UK

PURCHASED April 2022

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Repair work carried out on the E220's body following successful MOT and service



**The damage was a small chunk taken out of the bumper and some dents to the grille**

△△ These cool dudes are ready to hit the open road in their Merc.

△▷ Off for repair work at Gratt Motor Company in east Manchester.

▽ Gratt Motor Company is also sorting the wings.



**S**lowly watching a careless driver reverse into a parked car is always upsetting. When it's a Range Rover crunching into your parked classic Mercedes while you sit helpless in the barber's chair, it's gut wrenching!

Luckily, the 124 Cabriolet got off lightly. The damage was a small chunk taken out of the bumper and some dents to the metal trims on the grille. A new front grille from Mercedes-Benz was quoted at £500 plus VAT. Time was wasted searching for a used grille with no luck. Many used 124-series parts are from cars that have done moon mileage with the associated wear and tear,

especially the front grilles!

I took the E220 to Gratt Motor Company in east Manchester to discuss the repair. The firm came recommended by a friend and the website homepage had photographs of previous expensive vintage Mercedes restorations including an E-Class Cabriolet similar to mine.

I learned that the metal decorative strips for the grille can be bought separately (still expensive at £100 to replace three bent strips!). Whilst at Gratt's I mentioned the very slight bubbling on both front wings. With the wings being original it was advised it's best to nip this corrosion in the bud rather than wait until the wings are too badly damaged to repair. As I write this,

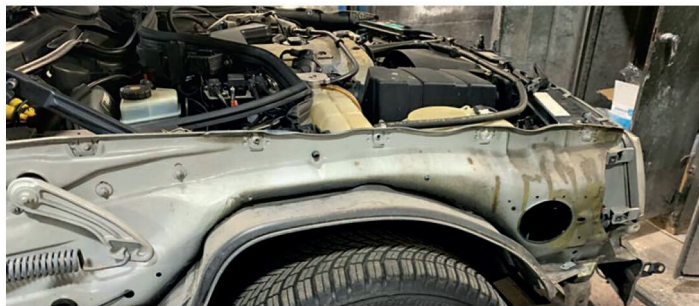
the E220 remains at Gratt's having both front wings repaired and sprayed along with the bonnet. Not forgetting the bumper scratches and repair to the front grille from the incident with the rogue Range Rover.

## Bring on spring

In more positive news, the car sailed through its MOT and service at Mercedes specialist Mastertech Assist (also in east Manchester). The bill was a very reasonable £198. It was nice to chat to the owner, who was very enthusiastic about this era of Mercedes-Benz and my convertible.

The winter has been reasonably kind so far. A mild and dry end to November meant a number of trips out with the kids. Using the headrests/rollover protection as a wind deflector allowed them to fall asleep with the hood down whilst cruising at motorway speeds. The short cold snap in early December was followed by lots of rain to wash away the salt and another mild spell, which allowed the occasional drive out enjoying a freshly serviced car.

I can't wait to get the E220 back from the body shop. My next task is to get the aerial working, fit a new stereo, then detail the bodywork and the engine bay and be ready to enjoy the car when spring finally arrives.





# Win and lose

David Sutherland finally gets to the bottom of why the GLC hates turning at low speeds, but it's less good news for the SUV's start-stop system

WORDS & IMAGES DAVID SUTHERLAND



## FACTSHEET

CAR 2017 GLC220d AMG Line

OWNER David Sutherland

LOCATION Surrey, UK

PURCHASED September 2017

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT GLC's start-stop system has completely died, and saving commences for the next service



**“In October 2022, a letter arrived from Mercedes-Benz.”**

**I** can't remember exactly when, but at some point in the first two years with our GLC220d I became aware that when moving at walking speed, either forwards or backwards, and with full steering lock applied, a grabbing sensation was felt, rather like the axle 'wind-up' on a 4x4 vehicle with its differential locks on. I sought advice, but all I got was a suggestion to raise the tyre pressure by 10psi to see if that worked. It didn't.

In late 2021, while the Mercedes was in for its annual service at independent specialist Klasse of Fulham, I was advised that two new front suspension arms (£300 each, plus fitting!) were needed, and I gave the go-ahead, hoping that this might correct some suspension geometry malady and be the cure for the restless front tyres. It wasn't.

Then in October 2022, a letter arrived from Mercedes-Benz informing us that, "We have established that on some cars it is possible that the tyres supplied from new may not match the applicable certification specification." It went on, "it is necessary for us to install replacement tyres, even if they have been changed during the life of the car."

So, a few weeks later I found myself at Mercedes-Benz of Hindhead, where the set of barely worn Yokohama

Advan Sports that had been fitted in 2021 were replaced by four Continental All Season Contacts, all at Mercedes' expense (nearly £600, I calculated).

They are the same 235/55R19 fitment as the Yokos, but my knowledge of tyre labelling doesn't extend to spotting any other differences. There must be one though – because this finally cured the problem, and the GLC glides smoothly around our driveway with not a scratch or scabble heard or felt!

### Problem solved

It was not until this point that a memory was jogged about a news story run in *Mercedes Enthusiast* in early summer 2017 reporting that Mercedes-Benz had acknowledged this 'tyre skipping' on GLCs and would be offering free replacement tyres to fix it. As this was months before I'd even considered GLC purchase, my mental hard drive didn't store it, but five years on we got our new tyres – better late than never, Mercedes!

While at the dealership, I tried to find out more about this 'service measure' but all I could glean was that the Yokos would be retained by Mercedes-Benz for evaluation, so four months on could still be piled up in a warehouse at M-B's headquarters in

△ Tyre skipping issue was acknowledged by Mercedes in 2017.

△▷ Correct-spec All Season Contact tyres from Continental.

▽ David has now covered just over 50K miles in the GLC.



Milton Keynes, or may have by been disposed of and now form part of a crash barrier at a local karting track.

The GLC, now approaching 51,000 miles, is giving near perfect service, the only flaw being the engine start-stop system has gone from occasionally working to never working. The most likely cause of this is the battery, but while I would be glad of the extra economy it gives in town, and also the reduced pollution I would cause, I'm not prepared to spend over £200 to get it, particularly as the battery has already been replaced once.

To my eyes, the GLC looks as good as new (if you ignore the kerbed rims) and feels equally fresh. We decided a while back to keep it long term, which means that when replacement time comes the only new cars we'll be able to buy will be electric. Quite a thought. **A**

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**W202 C36 AMG** 1996, 78,000 miles, very good condition for year, I've owned the car for 12 plus years, it's serviced every year (every 4,000 miles) by local Mercedes specialist, sold with AMG numberplate, £11,750 ONO. Tel: 01915 848135. Sunderland [CDW19]



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**500SL** 1993, 46,135 miles, originally a Jersey car with three former keepers (one of them being me), silver with tan interior, immaculate condition, I had it serviced by Mercedes in February this year and had a three-year ceramic coating professionally applied at a cost of £1,150 only a month ago, 22 stamps in service book, next MOT 10/23, £21,000. Tel: 01983 730911. Isle of Wight [CDW22]



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**280SL** 1985, Signal Red, Cream leather, excellent hardtop, 'Mexican Hat' alloys, this car is a project hence the price, £3,250. Tel: 01483 282830. Surrey [BC16]



**E220 Coupe** 1994, 114,000 miles, red, FSH, refurbished alloys, reconditioned Cream leather with red piping, new front/rear windscreens, new tyres, bought during lockdown as a project and is now immaculate and now ready to go, MOT to March 2023, £7,000 ONO. Tel: 07714 471014. Dorking [BCW1]



**SLK320** 2001, 85,000 miles, facelift model, outstanding condition, automatic, full M-B service history, electric seats, sat nav, air con, £POA. Tel: 07432 007007. Milton Keynes [BCW3]



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**A180** 2014, 63,000 miles, two owners, petrol, manual, full M-B service history, all inspections welcome, MOT November 2023, just had major M-B service including panoramic roof service, telephone for questions or to book a viewing, £POA. Tel: 07551 726640. Accrington [BCW9]



**190E 2.5-16 Cosworth** 1990, 160,000 miles, 'H' registration, MOT to May 2023, full black leather interior, AMG rear window spoiler, MOMO steering wheel, Getrag 'dog leg' gearbox, AMG 18-inch alloys, Brands Hatch 2017 'Deutschesfest' award winner, £27,500. Tel: 07771 511433. Copthorne [BCW12]



**E320 CDI** 2003, 231,000 miles, MOT January 2023, generally good condition with a few scuffs, recently had boot lid and rear bumper replaced with slam bar due to reversing into wall, full M-B retail history with repairs through M-B as well, requires front driver side wish bone and ball joint, requires new space saver tyre, heat varies not entering the blower, consistently needs heater core flushing, car is 20 years old but has potential, all sensible offers considered, £POA. Tel: 07492 441709. UK [BCW10]



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**190E 2.6** 1990, full Cosworth bodykit, automatic, air conditioning (fitted by Mercedes Benz), full Cream leather, electric tilt/slide sunroof, front central arm rest, electric windows, service history, MOT until 8th March 2023, EPOA. Tel: 01889 502630. Stafford [BCW14]



**SL350 AMG** 2014, 39,500 miles, white with ebony leather piped in white, FSH, beautiful car in as-new condition, air con, sat nav, panoramic roof, always garaged with everything working perfectly, full AMG body and wheels, the perfect car to show and enjoy this spring, £27,950. Tel: 07860 487082. London [BC15]



**C250 CDI Sport** 2010, 139,000 miles, BlueEfficiency, auto, metallic black, good clean car, drives well, 2 keys, many receipts and invoices including professional DPF clean, refurbished powder coated 17" AMG alloy wheels, viewing recommended, £3,950. Tel: 07962 061492. Nuneaton [ABW1]



**C32 AMG Estate**, 2002, 98,000 miles, private reg MY 02 AMG, full service history, two previous owners, mine for 10 years, MOT, all AMG extras and all handbooks, only selling because of a move abroad, £7,999.00 OVNO. Tel: 07595 303215. Surrey [CM41-22]



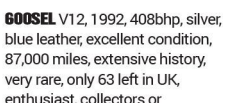
**Saab 9-3 convertible** 1998, 79,000 miles, 2.0i, two door, manual, blue, one previous owner, 11/04/1998 first registration, MOT March 2023, petrol, £2,750. Tel: 07437 100547. West Wickham, Kent [ABW3]



**S500 L AMG designo** 2004, 98,000 miles, FSH, super high spec, rare, designo beige interior, DVDs, F&R heated/cooling seats, rear recliners, cool box, Bose, Comand, AMG kit, UV reflect glass, xenons, and much more, alloys and calipers refurbished, £6,950. Tel: 07870 963662. Leicester [CM41-26]



**R170 SLK230** 2002, 53,000 mostly dry miles, brilliant condition, always garaged, good service history, long MOT, silver, everything works and no rust, complete with fitted luggage, owned by me since 2008, £3,995. Tel: 07808 829386. East Yorkshire [CM41-24]



**G60SEL** 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. £16,000. Tel: 07815 530652. Buntingford [CD]



**SL350** 78,000 miles, black metallic, full panoramic roof, usual extras, mostly motorway miles as I used this for my daily commute (120-mile round trip), drives superbly, with FSH carried out by either M-B main dealer or M-B independent specialist, very good condition, EPOA. Tel: 07903 027850. Oxfordshire [FGW1]



**W202 C200 AMG** 2000, 128,000 miles, one owner, grey leather seats and interior all in excellent condition, bodywork very good, full servicing records held, MOT until March 2023, all in good running order, viewing available at any time, £4,000. Tel: 07974 381315. Abergavenny [FGW2]



**W123 300D** 1984, 55,000 miles, automatic, immaculate interior, ex South Africa via Portugal, outstanding paintwork thanks to repair work around rear window, the engine is perfect commensurate with mileage, £16,500. Tel: 07415 129117. Surrey [FGW3]



**R107 300SL** 1987, 39,000 miles, absolutely original concours sold by the SL Shop, Nautic Blue/cream MB-Tex, original service book, extensive history, spare unused, £75,000. Tel: 07818 420620. Goodwood [FGW6]



**Unimog U1000 Turbo** 1983, ag spec, three-way tipper, CAT2 linkage, rear PTO, air brakes, pickup hitch, engine rebuilt, new turbo, rams rebuilt, brakes overhauled, cab tips, £15,000 ONO. Tel: 07545 265075. Andover [FGW4]



**SLK230 K** 1999, 108,300 miles, recent oil and filter service, new MOT until July 2023, four excellent Continental tyres, designo blue/black interior with heated leather seats, original M-B audio 10 radio/CD can be provided if required, £3,300. Tel: 07730 437219. Horsham [FGW5]



**W116 280SE** 1976, totally original, two owners from new, RHD with full leather interior, assembled and owned in South Africa, no rust, £10,990. Tel: 07808 528752. Northampton [FGW7]



**W123 300D** 2 saloon, Ascot grey, RHD, manual, all brightwork and fittings stripped for body-shop, immaculate charcoal grey interior, boxes of unopened original MB spares, probably no parts missing for straightforward re-build, EPOA. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk [AB]

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**E200 Kompressor** 2004, 51,465 miles, my sister and I have owned this car from new, reluctant sale, FSH, gearbox service, good condition, registration not with car, £5,000 ONO. Tel: 07973 399578. Manchester [FGW8]



**W203 C320** 30,000 miles, avantgarde, 3.2 V6, auto, ex Jersey car, leather trim like new, four new tyres and alloys just refreshed, parking sensors, air con with sunroof, all books, warning triangle, immaculate, future classic, EPOA. Tel: 07966 139882. Saddleworth [FGW9]



**SL500** 1996, 60,000 miles, FSH, dry stored, excellent original paint, no corrosion, major service 2,000 miles ago at M-B, new front suspension, gearbox, diff and power steering services done, new front and rear brakes, original 16-inch wheels and AMGs included, hardtop relined, £19,250 ONO. Tel: 07977 553391. Birmingham [FGW10]



**SL500** 2003, 33,000 miles, one owner and garaged from new, Graphite Napa leather interior with walnut steering wheel and internal trim, fully automatic roof, heated seats, £14,950. Tel: 01772 782362. Preston [FGW11]



**SLK230 Kompressor** 2001, 86,000 miles, one careful owner since new, automatic Tiptronic transmission, 2 keys, comprehensive service history, cruise control, black leather interior, air con, excellent tyres, remote central locking, alarm and immobiliser, £2,300. Tel: 07720 401691. Oxhill [FGW12]



**C220 CDI Sport** 2005, 87,000 miles, auto, diesel, beautiful original condition with no expense spared, owned by one careful lady owner since new, always kept in a dry garage, MOT until October 2022, service history, two keys, £3,995. Tel: 07947 690115. Northamptonshire [FGW13]



**W123 230CE** 1985, 134,000 miles, MOT, drives well, lots of history, good tyres, stainless steel exhaust, needs work, £3,900 ONO. Tel: 07836 769915. Surrey [FGW14]



**W114 MB Crayford LWB estate** Totally one-off, ex-motor show, fully rebuilt to as new in 2010, then into private collection, never worked for hire/weddings, called 'The Dachshund', three rows of seats for eight people, EPOA. Tel: 07733 111736. Oxford [FGW15]



**300SE W126** immaculate condition throughout, impeccable service history, blue velour interior, automatic, electric roof, windows, mirror, Zebrano wood trim, dual air conditioning, sound system, Mercedes FSH with 23 stamps, MOT June 2023, plate excluded, £5,850. Tel: 07958 431991. Surrey [CDW25]



**E320** 1995, 121,000 miles, saloon, Sportline chassis, with original owners pack, MOT, good condition, wonderful car, EPOA. Tel: 07733 218261. Romsey [EFW4]



**SLK350** 2005, 65,000 miles, silver, MOT, excellent condition, summer use only, garaged under cover, reliable convertible sports car with great V6 performance, £5,000. Tel: 07932 525418. Suffolk [CDW11]



**CLK Cabriolet** 2008, 140,000 miles, three-litre V6, in stunning condition, electric heated leather, full Mercedes history, looks like new, garaged and well cared for, drives smooth and quiet, upgraded Bluetooth and Apple CarPlay, new MOT and service, £3,995. Tel: 07456 163794. Kent [EFW5]



**R171 SLK200 Kompressor** 2008, 66,997 miles, long MOT, metallic dark blue with ivory leather interior, last service less than 12 months ago, part service history (last nine years), car based in mid Wales, viewing recommended, £4,900 ONO. Tel: 01686 651284. Welshpool [EFW7]



**500SEL** 1986, 62,352 miles, very good condition, runs and drives, not being used, rust on underside of bonnet, light rust to bottom of doors, small hole in rear windscreen frame, £5,000. Tel: 07979 611071. Reading [EFW6]



**W115 320.4**, 33,000 miles, absolutely original concours award winning car recently approved by SL Shop, grey blue/blue Tex, manual, Blaupunkt radio, original service book, extensive history, spare unused, £24,500. Tel: 07818 420620. 651284. Welshpool [EFW7]



**E300 TD Estate** 1999, 234,000 miles, automatic, one owner from new, silver/grey leather, seven seats, ESR, towbar, used daily, now need garage space, £1,100 ONO. Tel: 07836 232969. Worcester [EFW9]





**CLK230 Kompressor Avantgarde** 2002, Tiptronic, silver, only two owners in 20 years, FSH, Merc specialist last 10 years, MOT March 2023, no advisories, AMG alloys, two-tone leather, potential classic, sensible price, £1,490. Tel: 07710 198665. Halifax [EFW16]



**CLK320 Avantgarde** 114,000 miles, convertible, five-speed auto, FSH, MOT until April 2023, drives beautifully, roof works perfectly, great condition inside and out, £2,200. Tel: 07563 670417. Southampton [EFW10]



**A180** £26,500. Tel: 07927 809373. UK [EFW11]



**221-series S300** 2011, 40,000 miles, limousine saloon, petrol V6, auto, Tanzanite Blue metallic/brown leather, B and gearbox service at 36,000 miles, imported from Singapore last year, excellent condition, full spec on request, £9,850 ONO. Tel: 07950 825710. Tyne and Wear [EFW14]



**C180 SE** 2003, 56,000 miles, classic auto, two owners, service history, drives well, nice clean example with electric windows, cruise, alloys, electric mirror, air con, long MOT, bargain for low mile car, £2,495. Tel: 07961 808069. Wimbledon [EFW18]



**E220** 1995, 96,000 miles, auto, convertible, two owners, all original booklets and stamped service book (8 stamps), low mileage and been cared for, drives very well and great condition too, heated beige seats, centre walnut storage box, latest Bluetooth stereo, airbags, electric mirror and remote central locking alarm, great value for a future classic with low miles, £9,995. Tel: 07961 808069. Wimbledon [EFW17]



**S124 300TE** 1990, 95,000 miles, three owners, Astral Silver with blue leather and walnut trim, extensive mechanical and bodywork restoration since 2017, massive history file, stunning condition inside and out, fitted with period three-spoke Brabus monoblock 17-inch alloys, £10,495. Tel: 07970 275792. Chichester [EFW19]

**C240** 1998/V reg in original condition regularly serviced, 80,000 miles from new with MOTs and all bills, in fair condition, new tyres, alloys, starts first time every time, sensible offers accepted. Tel: 07504 729127. Croydon [DE]



**E280 CDI Estate** 2006, seven-seater, diesel, automatic, Cubanite Silver, grey leather, 108,000 miles, excellent condition, lots of service history, long MOT, £3,250. Tel: 01483 282830. Surrey [DEW26]



**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, £5,250. Email: Bazhylda1.11@outlook.com. Buckinghamshire [CM36W6]



**280SL** 1983, 138,000 miles, Forest Green bodywork, parchment interior, MOT May 2023, hard and soft tops, history, super bodywork, recovered seats, beautiful chrome, steering overhauled, new brakes/calipers as needed, beautiful looking car and drives great, ready to be used, enjoyed and loved, £19,995. Tel: 07932 666491. West Midlands [EFW25]



**W140 S280** 1998, five-speed automatic, fantastic condition, in Brilliant Silver with black leather interior and walnut trim, FSH 3x M-B main dealer, 2x M-B specialists, 2x other, three owners, kept off road in heated garage over winter, £14,950. Tel: 07887 777147. Lincoln [EFW27]



**123-series 230CE** 1985, 134,000 miles, MOT, drives well, lots of history, good tyres, stainless steel exhaust, needs work, £3,900 ONO. Tel: 07836 769915. Surrey [EFW26]



**220 CDI Elegance** 2003, 34,000 miles, MOT June 2023, FSH, in very good condition, £3,750 ONO. Tel: 07707 509448. Aberdeen [EFW28]

## INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



**Mercedes replica** Fully rebuilt, new running gear, new brakes and lines, new hood, on the button, ready to go, UK plates but located in Dublin, EPOA. Tel: 0035 3868 276666. County Meath [CDW12]

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**SL60 AMG** 1998, 24,800 miles, very rare RHD, second owner, complete history, EPOA. Tel: 0049 173 951 4613. Germany [CM41-21]



**560SL** 1989, 96,500 miles, PS, PB, electric windows and door locks, 2 USB ports, new soft top, hardtop, very good condition, all new carpeting, \$30,000. Tel: +1 1714 299 9264. California [EFW1]



**300SE** 1965, automatic, RHD, in two-tone maroon and white top with a beautiful beige interior and wooden dashboard to compliment the ride, car starts and runs, air suspension in running condition, minimal rust, car can be shipped to the UK, £85,000 ONO. Tel: +65 8118 4948. Singapore [EFW3]



**230SL** 1964, 144,000 miles, dark Bordeaux (573), Crema Tex, all necessary restoration work during my 12 years ownership (noting Build Card, £74,000. Tel: (00) 353 872 401 819. Dublin [EFW12]



**W202 C36 AMG** 1996, 310,000 km, green black/black interior, in excellent condition, completely original and unmolested, LHD, fully stamped MB service book plus loads of history from day one, this rust free car looks and performs as a C36 should, on UK plates kept at my home in the Algarve, EPOA. Tel: +351 289 489 662. Portugal [EFW13]

## PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



**17-inch Mercedes wheels** Recently powder coated and not used since, W211 fitment or similar, 1 x 245 45 17 Continental as well, £275. Tel: 07951 406205. UK [CDW8]



**Hardtop** For 1997 SL320, excellent condition, £495. Tel: 07753 739102. South Wales [CDW7]



**Five alloy wheels** As new, with decals, from 1998 E430, 215/55R16 tyres, one unused and four have 5-6mm tread depth, £550. Tel: 01483 222689. Surrey [CDW13]



**W108 280SE bumpers** Complete set, front and rear, including irons and brackets, in excellent condition, more photos available, please ask, quite happy to deliver, please call any time, £500. Tel: 07548 170829. London [CDW10]



**M-B sales literature** 1970s-80s-90s, all ranges, pricelists etc., original brochures for any M-B car, email your requirements to 300slr004722@gmail.com or Tel: 01288 361022. Cornwall [BCW2]



**Full set of Mercedes Enthusiast magazines** In binders, from day one starting from December 2001 to present, EPOA. Tel: 07949 792278. Leeds [BCW6]



**Breaking** Mercedes C43 AMG W202, any part enquiry, EPOA. Tel: 07908 624459. Manchester [BCW7]



**Genuine 18-inch AMG alloys** Fitted with Goodyear Eagle F1 tyres, staggered fit from 220-series S55 or 215-series CL55 but will fit other models, £999 ONO. Tel: 07850 187400. Ormskirk [BCW4]



**Chilton's repair manual** For Mercedes-Benz Coupes/Sedans/Wagons, unwrapped, unused, unmarked, superb condition, rare book in UK, £25. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [BCW11]

## NO. PLATES

**N33 AMG**

**N33 AMG** personal plate, currently on retention certificate, ready to transfer, £1,800. Email: philippo@live.co.uk. Wiltshire [CDW6]

**MER 5L**

**MER 5L** Personal plate, currently on Retention Certificate, ready to transfer, open to offers, EPOA. Tel: 07778 333444. London [BC]

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# S600 L

For £14,000, this wonderfully equipped S600 L from 2003 could have been your ticket to used V12 nirvana

WORDS KYLE MOLYNEUX IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY

**W**aiting. That's what you've been doing since Mercedes-Benz announced a replacement for its 140-series limousine. You've been waiting because the 220-series S-Class you want, the V12 model, is not long for this world in naturally aspirated form, or so you've heard through one of your invaluable contacts in Stuttgart.

Arriving in early 2000, the original 220-series S600 long-wheelbase launched well over a year after the V6s and V8s. Its 5,786cc V12 (M137) followed the mighty 5,987cc M120 unit in the 140-series, and consumed 20 per cent less fuel on average. There was a price to pay, however – engine output had dropped from 389bhp/420lb ft torque to 362bhp/391lb ft.

Despite this deficit, the S600 long-wheelbase could project itself to 62mph in 6.3 seconds – three tenths quicker than its 155kg heavier predecessor. But that still wasn't enough to satisfy Mercedes-Benz, which had to argue the finer points of a new car that was essentially less powerful than the model it replaced.

**Not only was the S600 far more powerful than before, it was barely any less efficient.**

It was clear that, even with new emissions legislation bearing down on Mercedes' largest engine, the company needed a new way to impress its wealthiest and most discerning clients. Through engineering expertise rather than sheer luck, Stuttgart produced a solution.

**Timed with the S-Class's facelift in autumn 2002, a new V12 emerged,** the three-valves-per-cylinder M275 with magnesium cylinder heads, forged con rods, aluminium alloy pistons, a forged steel crankshaft and camshafts, and an aluminium sump for a total weight of just 263kg.

Best of all though, the new V12 featured *zwei turbolader* linked to two water-cooled intercoolers which could reduce air temperature by up to 100C. The result of all this glittering goodness was worth your patience early on – 493bhp with 590lb ft torque available from 1,800 to 3,500rpm,

△ Designo Chromaflair paintwork and 18-inch Segin alloy wheels.

▷ Exclusive Pebble leather upholstery: those in the rear have access to a small TV!

▽ Astoundingly powerful and smooth M275 V12 displacing 5.5 litres; two turbos included.

a 0-62mph time of 4.8 seconds, and average fuel economy hovering around the 20mpg mark. So not only was the S600 far more powerful than before, it was barely any less efficient – literally just 1mpg worse than the M137 equipped version on the combined fuel consumption cycle.

Of course, you had to pay handsomely for the privilege of such muscular transportation. The S600 L photographed here, built in 2003 and loaned from Millennium Heroes in Surrey, would have set its first owner back just over £91,000 before extras. For that amount of money, you would own one of the best, if not the best saloon car in the world.

It's true that today's sticker price of £14,000 would buy a newer, lower mile S-Class, but would it satisfy in the same way as this 80,000-mile S600 L? I don't think it would. As capable as a 221-series S350 CDI is, the allure of this V12 strikes the heart of what we stand for as an enthusiast title and it gets our vote here. **▲**







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