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Editorial comment and the latest from the Mercedes Enthusiast team



**Road car powerplants have undergone the same process as F1 engines to improve their overall efficiency**



**W**hy does Mercedes-Benz bother with Formula 1? Until very recently, the manufacturer asserted brutal dominance in the sport's turbo hybrid era, but so what? Beyond boosting the brand, is there any other reason Mercedes – including AMG – is involved in F1? In essence, Formula 1 is the most intensive automotive development laboratory in the world. It allows manufacturers such as Mercedes to test radical solutions to the 'problems' posed by the latest F1 engines, which have been downsized, turbocharged and hybridised to increase their overall efficiency. Road car powerplants have undergone the same process, and that's where the importance of F1 lies. Merc has migrated tech developed by AMG's High Performance Powertrains division in Brixworth, UK to its road-going products, meaning more powerful cars that also use less energy. Clever

inventions include electrically-driven turbos that spool in an instant, and high density lithium-ion batteries linked to super efficient energy recovery systems.

With its F1-derived V6 hybrid system, the new AMG One (pictured left) takes this process to hitherto unreachable heights. We should celebrate its existence, and also remember the bigger picture – technology developed for racing has the potential to benefit road users, eventually.



**Kyle Molyneux**  
Executive Editor

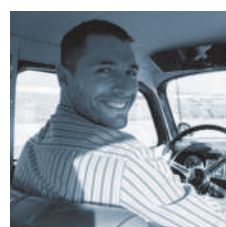
Who's been doing what in this month's Mercedes Enthusiast...



### Richard Mason

"Have we discovered the only Opal Braun CLK55 AMG Cabriolet design in the world?" asks Richard Mason. "I'd be over the moon if I met someone with an identical car."

says its owner. This month's cover story (pages 26 to 32) recalls the first-generation CLK Coupe and Cabriolet which arrived in the late 1990s. With help from a delicious looking CLK55 and similarly stunning CLK320 Coupe in Quartz Blue, we submit the case that these 208-series Mercedes can be highly rewarding ownership prospects.



### Wilhelm Lutjeharms

"The combination of a grand touring convertible on a perfect piece of coastal tarmac is one of motoring's ultimate nirvanas," says

contributor Wilhelm Lutjeharms, who had the pleasure of taking a 124-series 300CE-24 Cabriolet along one of South Africa's most picturesque roads to rediscover the allure of this modern classic Mercedes-Benz. Read the full story and drink in Peet Mocke's fantastic images from page 34.

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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

# News

# New GLC

**Second-generation SUV goes all-in on hybrid technology to boost performance and efficiency**

**T**he all new GLC has arrived! The SUV shares its platform with the W206 C-Class and will come with four-cylinder hybrid and plug-in hybrid power.

Two of the petrol variants available at launch are the GLC200 4Matic and the GLC300 4Matic, both featuring the same mild hybrid four-cylinder engine tuned to 201 and 254bhp respectively. The diesel fuelled GLC220d 4Matic returns up to 54.3mpg (WLTP combined) despite having 194bhp. All three models mentioned above feature a 48V integrated starter-generator providing a 23bhp boost, too.

However, it's the plug-in hybrids that offer maximum efficiency. Petrol variants are the GLC300e 4Matic and GLC400e 4Matic, which feature the same four-cylinder engine linked to a battery and electric motor for system outputs of 309bhp and 376bhp respectively. Equipped with a 31.2kW battery, both models have an electric range of 75 miles with fuel economy rated at 471mpg and CO2 emissions as low as 14g/km. The GLC300de



Petrol-electric and diesel-electric models revealed at launch.

4Matic is even more impressive, however, its 330bhp diesel-electric system delivering 565mpg with 13g/km CO2 emissions, plus an electric range of 73 miles.

## Added refinement

The new GLC's even smoother styling helps achieve a drag coefficient of just 0.29Cd, which is 0.02 lower than its predecessor and boosts overall efficiency. Slightly longer, lower and wider than before, the new

GLC has a 600-litre boot (up 50 litres on the old one) and boasts upgraded sound insulation for improved refinement.

Revised four-link front and multi-link rear suspension should deliver more capability off-road while boosting on-road prowess. Airmatic air suspension,

meanwhile, sits on the options list (full UK specifications including trim lines were not confirmed at the time of writing), as does rear axle steering promising to deliver even greater agility and stability.

As you'd expect, there are a host of driver assistance systems, the most interesting of which is a new 'transparent bonnet' feature, which entails the central dashboard display of the MBUX infotainment system showing a virtual view under the front of the vehicle when it's in off-road mode and fitted with 360-degree cameras.

Available to order shortly, prices of the new GLC are expected to start at around £50,000. AMG versions are also in the works, including a replacement for the GLC63 with a two-litre, four-pot turbocharged hybrid engine shared with the upcoming C63.



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# World record!

RM Sotheby's has sold one of two existing W196 300SLR Uhlenhaut Coupes on behalf of Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart.

Chassis number 0008/55 - the second Uhlenhaut Coupe - sold for €135m (around £116m) and is now the most expensive car in the world, dwarfing the £52m record set by a 1963 Ferrari 250 GTO in 2018. The 300SLR also enters the top 10 most valuable items ever sold at auction.

Less than 10 bidders with the means to care for the car to the same standard as Mercedes-Benz



itself were invited to take part in the auction. Conditions of sale are that the car will remain available for public display on special occasions, and that it will not be sold to a third party.

The proceeds of the sale will establish the Mercedes Benz Fund, which will support university and school scholarships containing Environmental Science and decarbonisation projects. Exact details are yet to be confirmed.

The other Uhlenhaut Coupe remains at the M-B Museum.

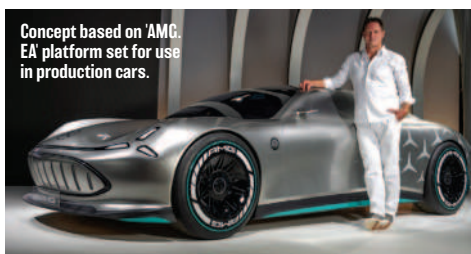
## AMG Vision

Mercedes star-inspired headlight signatures, short overhangs, glowing red exhaust-like outlets at the rear, and a new, illuminated Panamericana grille. These are just some of the striking features on the AMG Vision concept.

Inspired by monolithic sculptures, Alubeam silver paint extends to the side windows, with joint and shut lines minimised, while Petronas markings and aerodynamically optimised 22-inch wheels are a nod to Mercedes' strong F1 presence. Based on a dedicated 'AMG.EA' platform, this concept houses high performance batteries linked to axial flux motors from Yasa, now a wholly owned subsidiary of Mercedes-Benz. These motors are lighter, while offering substantially more power.

"With this study, we are now offering a first glimpse of how we are transferring the AMG DNA into the all-electric future, starting in 2025," said Philipp Schiemer, CEO of Mercedes-AMG GmbH.

Concept based on 'AMG.EA' platform set for use in production cars.



## The plan

Mercedes-Benz has shared its plans for the future of its range, including a host of advanced new platforms designed with battery power in mind. With a renewed focus on luxury and exclusivity, 'Entry Luxury' will be the starting point for the line-up, consisting of four model variants positioned higher than current entry level models. Next year's brand new E-Class will lead the way for the 'Core Luxury' segment alongside the C-Class, new electric models using the EQE's 'EVA2' platform and then 'MB.EA' architecture also joining the segment.

However, it's the 'Top-End Luxury' segment where the manufacturer expects the most growth: a 60 per cent increase in sales by 2026, in fact. This covers all AMG and Maybach vehicles, the higher tier EQ cars such as the EQS saloon and SUV, plus S-Class, SL-Class, G-Class and GLS models, and also limited edition and 'exclusive collaboration vehicles'.

During the reveal of this range reshaping, Mercedes also confirmed a new programme of ultra-exclusive Maybach cars under a 'Mythos Series' banner.



## News in brief



### △ CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW

Tickets are now available for the Classic Motor Show at Birmingham's NEC arena. Running from November 11 to 13, event organisers promise a vast array of classic cars, plus a well-stocked auto jumble, trade stands and motoring clubs.



### △ RENNTECH BLACK SERIES

RennTech has created a 1,051bhp/831lb ft torque GT Black Series. Equipped with the tuner's R3 performance package, the car's M178 V8 biturbo packs stage 2 turbos, stainless steel downpipes, 200-cell catalysts, upgraded air filters, and fettled ECUs and TCUs. The R3 package's price is \$41,440 (£33,700).



### △ THE FINAL FLING

AMG's new E63 S Final Edition serves as the last hurrah for the V8-powered 213-series E-Class before production ends. Available in Saloon and Estate forms, the 999 units will boast matte graphite grey paint, 20-inch wheels in gloss black, pearl grey/black leather, and yellow detailing.

### ▽ MERCEDES RECALL

Nearly a million Mercedes cars are being recalled worldwide. Affecting ML, GL and R-Class models produced from 2004 to 2015, an excessively corroded brake booster is to blame. Hard braking could advance deterioration, with complete failure of the service brake an extreme scenario.





**300SL Gullwings entered by Mercedes-Benz and a pack of competitors head from Milano Marittima to Rome during the second leg of Mille Miglia 2022. Taking place in mid-June, this was the 40th edition of the re-enactment of the historic race.**

IMAGE: CRAIG PUSEY/MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG









## Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear

“Even the two rearmost seats could have a third A/C system”



# R-Class

**Debuting in 2005 and refreshed in 2010, the 251-series R-Class is an often misunderstood Mercedes-Benz, which truly excelled when it came to comfort and practicality**

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

**T**he R-Class, one of Mercedes' niche-filling models launched in the mid-2000s, lacked identity, was impossible to categorise and by Stuttgart standards was not a big seller. But given its broad skill set, downright usefulness and perhaps even Mercedes' nerve in building it in the first place, we have no hesitation in inducting it into our Past Master hall of fame.

It was unveiled in March 2005, a mix of estate, SUV and people

carrier. In Europe, it didn't look set to spark a new craze, not least because it was a big car, about the same length as an S-Class. But Mercedes-Benz knew exactly who would buy it: Americans, hence its assembly at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama alongside the M-Class and GL-Class. To emphasise its stateside ambitions, the R-Class Grand Sport Tourer, to use its full original title, went on sale in the US in September 2005, but European deliveries did not commence until early 2006.

There had been plenty warning of its arrival, firstly in the form of the Vision GST concept car Mercedes-Benz brought along to the North American International Auto Show in Detroit in 2002. Two more prototypes followed: The Vision GST 2 was on display at the same event two years later, and the Vision R followed in September 2004 at the International Motor Show in Paris.

We don't know how many of the 251-series R-Class Mercedes hoped to sell in Europe, but the extensive initial line-up suggested it might have been a lot: two wheelbases, three engines and three trim levels. The R350 used the M272 3.5-litre V6, the R500 the M113 five-litre V8 and the R320 CDI the OM642 three-litre V6 turbodiesel, all units mated to the 7G-Tronic seven-speed automatic gearbox and 4Matic four-wheel drive transmission.

The V6s used conventional, steel-sprung suspension, while the R500 had the Airmatic package

comprising air suspension and an adaptive damping system. UK models were six- or seven-seaters, but five-seat models and also rear-wheel drive were offered elsewhere. Despite the wide model range, most customers opted for the longer 'V251' chassis and the V6 diesel, its torquey delivery the best bet to haul the near 2.2-tonne vehicle. The petrol 251s were little more than a token gesture in Britain – but of course not so in the US where gasoline still ruled.

### Quirks of the range

Behind the wheel, the R-Class most commonly purchased pleases, but does have limitations. The V6 diesel is refined and economical out of town, and with easy controls, such as the neat, column-mounted Direct Select gear selector, the R-Class offers the relaxing, light-touch driving common to all premium Mercedes model families. But buyers couldn't expect lively performance, or any kind of driver



◁ R63 AMG with 503bhp V8 built from 2006 to 2007.



No rear seat passengers in any other car at the time could have been so comprehensively pampered. In the highest

spec models they had their own music and video system, plus air conditioning independent of the front cabin which, due to over a dozen sensors and an auxiliary fan, was guaranteed to hold the temperature selected. Even the two rearmost seats – which of course had armrests and cupholders – could have a third A/C system.

Need space, not seats, for all that leisure equipment? No problem, both rows of rear seats folded flat to become a 2.2-metre bay, access to it made all the easier by the Easy Pack tailgate that could be opened and closed with an optional remote.



Switchgear shared with the M-Class and CL-Class SUVs.



◁ Children of the Alabama factory in North America.

▽ Seating for up to seven made the R very practical.

▽▽ Boot of LWB model swallowed over 2,400 litres!



## End of the road

By the facelift of 2010, the UK range had been reduced to two seven-seat diesels, the R300 CDI BlueEfficiency (2WD) and R350 CDI L 4Matic with lightly updated bodies including restyled headlamps. Mercedes-Benz had invented a number of new market niches the years prior to the R-Class, but this super estate idea didn't catch on – in a big way, anyway – so in 2013 it was canned with no successor lined up, perhaps one exercise in lateral thinking too many.

Asking someone to visualise an R-Class might provoke a blank expression. But for those who have found themselves interested in what nearly a decade after discontinuation is a pretty obscure Mercedes, the used car market holds a more than adequate choice, and mostly at low prices too. If you're feeling brave, you'll pick up a leggy example for under £3,000 (but be wary if "air suspension may need attention" appears in the description), and prices range up to £18,000 for a late, 2013 car with a mileage that doesn't scare. The euro and dollar equivalents in mainland Europe and the US get you much the same.

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involvement – unless they signed up for the 6.2-litre, M156-engined R63 AMG 4Matic with 503bhp that joined the range after a year.

But without doubt the outstanding virtue of the R-Class is its magnificent interior, which made it the roomiest passenger car Mercedes had ever built. Over 60 per cent of the vehicle's overall length was available for occupants, the car maker said.



Reshaped headlamps mark out the facelifted R-Classes of 2010.



Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

# Nothing else like it



**Powering everything from luxury limousines to racing cars and modern supercars, Ian Kuah hails Mercedes-Benz's M120 V12 as one of the greatest naturally-aspirated engines ever created**

**M**y first experience of the Mercedes-Benz M120 V12 came during the W140 S-Class launch in the South of France in early 1991. The first iteration of this 5,987cc, DOHC, 48-valve V12 boasted the full-fat 402bhp and 428lb ft of twist. Silent and silky smooth when you were just cantering along, the 600SE/L exuded a 'waftability' factor hitherto the province of Rolls-Royce, but turned into a veritable torque monster when you dropped the hammer.

Bury the throttle into the pile carpet and the big S-Class picks up its skirts and thrusts itself towards the horizon in a most un-limousine like manner, accompanied by a subdued but palpably visceral V12 growl from up front.

Over the years, I have driven S600s, SL600s and a couple of E-Class models powered by tuned versions of the M120 from AMG, Brabus and RennTech. All featured displacements of between 7.0 to 7.3 litres, and all boasted output levels around 550bhp, which was ballpark for the most powerful major league Ferraris and Lamborghinis of the era.

**T**he M120 was also the engine that helped Brabus clinch its various Guinness World Records top speed numbers for Fastest Production Saloon (E V12), Fastest Production Estate (E V12 Estate) and so on. However, there was a limit to what could be done for output as long as the engine had to fit under the bonnet of a road-going, front-engined Mercedes production car. This essentially meant that the factory intake plenums had to stay, which restricted the amount of air the engine could inhale.

None of that applies to a mid-engined race car or supercar, however, and in 1997 the CLK-GTR broke cover as the Mercedes entrant

in the FIA GT Championship. The 25 road cars built as homologation specials featured a 6.9-litre, 604bhp M297 motor (a derivative of the M120) and were delivered in 1999, the same year Horacio Pagani unveiled his Zonda C12 at the Geneva motor show; the GTR racers ran a

**In the late 1990s, AMG and Brabus agreed that 7.3 litres was the M120's maximum – but times have moved on**

the M120 was off to the races.

With much more room to spare around the engine, AMG set about turning the big Mercedes V12 into a road-legal race motor. It bored and stroked the V12 to 7,291cc using a steel billet crankshaft, forged pistons and longer rods, then fitted a bespoke long intake crossover single-throttle-per-cylinder system and a long tube header exhaust system. With much bigger lungs, gas-flowed cylinder heads, high-left cams and reduced exhaust back-pressure, the result was as much as 661bhp for the Zonda Tricolore of 2010.

The engineers did not stop there and further development netted 750bhp for the Zonda 760 of 2012, and an astonishing 789bhp for the 2017 limited edition Zonda HP Barchetta. Bear in mind these are naturally-aspirated motors that meet all the EU emissions regulations of the time!

**B**ack in the late 1990s, AMG and Brabus agreed that 7.3 litres was the absolute maximum stretch for the M120. But times have moved on and Hartmut Feyhl at RennTech has now managed to extend swept capacity to 7.6 litres for a client's 140-series S600 L project car. Early dyno runs indicate 615hp (607bhp) and a staggering 955Nm (704lb ft) of torque, the latter an unprecedented amount of twist for a naturally-aspirated road-going motor. Taking driveline losses into account, this puts 500hp down at the driven wheels, or 100hp more than the factory six-litre engine makes at the flywheel!

This is why I consider Mercedes' M120 V12 one of the greatest and most tuneable naturally-aspirated engines ever made. What other V12 engine can boast powering one of the best flagship luxury saloons ever, a successful FIA GT Championship racer, and one of the world's most charismatic supercars?



Ian's first taste of M120 V12 power occurred during the W140 launch.



△ AMG and Pagani created a version with 789bhp.



△ 60-degree V12 in the 1997 CLK racer had 592bhp.

six-litre 'GT112' V12 with 592bhp. Mercedes-Benz offered Horacio the M120 V12 in a deal set up by his fellow Argentinian friend and mentor, the late Juan Manuel Fangio, five-time Formula 1 World Champion and former Mercedes works driver. The gloves were off and

the greatest and most tuneable naturally-aspirated engines ever made. What other V12 engine can boast powering one of the best flagship luxury saloons ever, a successful FIA GT Championship racer, and one of the world's most charismatic supercars?



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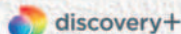
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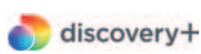
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The expert on all things Mercedes gives us his latest views...

# My first Benz



**Following a series of inspiring drives in 124-series Coupes, it was only a matter of time before David Sutherland purchased his own example, which just so happened to be his first Mercedes-Benz**

**E**verybody remembers their first car, no matter how long ago that was. In my case, it was in the summer of 1974 when I spotted a wine-coloured Triumph Vitesse in a large field of neglected looking cars at the back of a dealer, which in time I would come to realise had left them there because they were unwanted, unshiftable trade-ins. But I had left school a few months before and had saved up enough at a job on a building site to hand over the £150 asked for it. Car mad and with a full UK licence acquired a year earlier, it was my dream car. The dream didn't last and it's still too painful to talk about.

If no car can leave quite as deep an impression – good, or bad – as the first one, I've discovered another that came close: my first Mercedes-Benz, a 124-series E320 Coupe. I bought it quite recently... no wait a minute, it was 16 years ago. How the time flies!

**I've got lots of photos of it because it was featured in this magazine's Running Reports.** I purchased it as an everyday car, then 18 months later got an A-Class and retired the C124 to 'weekend modern classic status' before selling after three years to pay a larger than anticipated tax bill.

By late summer 2006 I'd hit 50 years of age and, although by then had owned a fair and varied selection of cars, scratching a good few itches in the process, I'd never had a Merc. I'd admired them, driving loads of new, press fleet Benzes, and also classics for *Mercedes Enthusiast* features, but never actually written the cheque to make one mine.

Writing for the magazine meant I was driving 124s quite regularly, but that wasn't enough. I longed to own one, to know that I could slip

behind the wheel, touch and feel everything about that magnificently solid 1980s Stuttgart cabin, and see that discreet but oh so symbolic Mercedes-Benz star at the end of the bonnet – whenever I wanted. I needed to go on journeys during which I'd savour every relaxed, well damped and quiet mile, rather than trying to get to the destination as quickly as possible.

Looking around at what was available was encouraging, as at that point C124s, whether four- or six-cylinder, were cheap. The best ones were at the established Mercedes specialists I knew from writing about their cars, and these were priced up to £10,000, and occasionally

with lots of extras including heated, orthopaedic seats and climate control. It was local, at a now long-gone Mercedes specialist in Kew, West London and priced at £7,000. That was over budget, but a week later it was £6,000.

Sometimes with cars, I see one and decide it has my name on it well before my name actually goes on the V5C ownership document, and so it was with this one. After a week or so, I decided to go and look at it and found myself test driving it. It seemed much smoother than others I'd tried. More time passed before I decided to show up and offer £5,000. To my surprise, the trader not only accepted but agreed to fix a few

things and throw in a genuinely good, one-year used car warranty.



This 1994 E320 Coupe in Malachite Green was David's first Mercedes.



△ Sutherland looking happy with his bargain Benz.



△ Leather and wood trim – not bad for five grand!

**C**ollecting and driving off in my E320 Coupe was as memorable as picking up my Triumph Vitesse 32 years before that.

A teenager owning a six-cylinder car in the 1970s was quite flash even if it was well past its best and, aged 50, I felt an equivalent sense of pride with the E320. I own a Mercedes-Benz – I've arrived!

Unlike the Triumph, my first Mercedes did not turn out a disappointment. I remember driving it home from the garage the long way, loving the super sweet M104 quietly humming under the bonnet, continually looking around the interior at the gorgeous seat leather and

wood trim and, whenever I could, catching our reflection in shop windows.

Three years later I was still doing this, and following the reluctant sale missed it for a long time. I recently tracked it on the government MOT history website and saw its last MOT was seven years ago – I really do hope my first Mercedes is in someone's garage getting first class treatment.

**“To my surprise, the trader not only accepted my offer but agreed to fix a few things and throw in a one-year warranty”**



# Longstone CLASSIC TYRES

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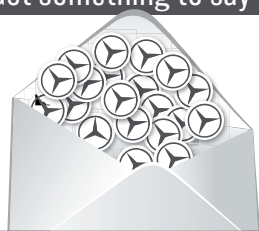
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Got something to say about motoring, your Mercedes or *Mercedes Enthusiast* magazine? Here's your chance...



# Letters

## Star letter

### Keeping the promise

■ I must admit a certain level of scepticism when faced with photographs of the sleek but slightly awkward looking EQXX concept car. However, having read the April/May 2022 issue's excellent feature on all the technology behind the car, I have a firmer grasp on why Mercedes made such a big fuss about its reveal. I understand that some of its battery technology is still in development and not yet ready for the mass market, but you can't argue with the fact the EQXX made good on its promise to travel over 620 miles on a single charge once Mercedes-Benz got it onto European roads. Although I am still yet to be convinced by fully electric cars and jump ship from my 50mpg-plus, 2014 E-Class diesel (blame the UK's inadequate recharging infrastructure for that), electric ranges like the XX's become ever more appealing.



**Russ Murray, Exeter**

*We have some good news – in late June, the EQXX broke its own range record, travelling 1,202km (746.9 miles) from Stuttgart to Silverstone in the UK without needing to plug into the mains! The car visited the Mercedes F1 team and AMG's HPP division in Brixworth, both of which helped to develop it.*



△ John Appleby is keen on lower car prices.

well as the classics, compared with today's values is stark.

With people re-prioritising their expenditure in the face of uncertainty, this may affect car values if it hasn't started already. But perhaps it would be a good thing to see classic car prices return to more sensible levels? And who knows, a whole new group of buyers like myself will come to the fore?

**John Appleby, Greater London**

### Tipping point

■ I think it was Mercedes *Enthusiast* contributor David Sutherland who wrote that the cheapest car you can own is usually the one on your driveway. Broadly speaking, I think that's true and was reminded of this statement recently whilst considering purchasing a new Mercedes to replace my S320 CDI from the 221-series (I think that's the correct terminology?).

I have now owned the car for eight years and have now spent so much in general maintenance – nothing out of the ordinary apart from a new suspension pump; I have always followed your advice of changing the gearbox oil come service time and I do think my car's 7G transmission does shift particularly smoothly given its age – that I'm not sure I can justify parting with it. Maybe I'll hand it to my daughter when I'm gone and she can enjoy it. Or sell it, more likely!

**Charlie Walker, Northamptonshire**



△ Charlie Walker's S320 CDI could be a keeper.



△ A yellow R170 SLK appealed to John Nelson.

### A tempting proposition

■ Just down the road from me is an independent car dealer selling all types of makes. On the forecourt is a bright yellow, first-generation SLK – not unlike the Merc Spotter car in your April/May 2022 issue, although it does present in slightly better condition. The Kompressor badges on the wings suggest it's a supercharged model and, although I don't know anything else about the car, the fact it's being offered for under £4,000 makes it pretty tempting. I'm just worried that once I go down there and have a



△ Some W204 Cs are having rear axle issues.

closer look and maybe a test drive, I'll end up buying it!

**John Nelson, Derbyshire**

### Here to serve

■ Thank you for bringing the rear axle corrosion issue on 204-series C-Classes to my attention. I have my car booked in with my nearest Mercedes-Benz dealer for a check over. If something is found, I will keep you updated with progress.

**Bill Moore, Cheshire**

### Seeing is believing

■ I've just returned from the Goodwood Festival of Speed and

had to write to you immediately. That AMG One with the F1 V6 engine is so impressive! We watched it go up the Goodwood Hill and were stood right by it as it went into Track mode, which lowered its ride height, opened slats on the wheelarches and made the rear spoiler pop up. I have never seen anything like it. After that, it sounded twice as loud and seemed to go even faster.

**Chai Dowden, via email**

### Market demand

■ We are living in uncertain times and this magazine often provides welcome relief from the news. But I do have a point to make about classic car values that may offend some owners, although it will probably match what others are thinking or, rather, hoping for!

The way in which classic car values rocketed during the last 15 years or so kept people like myself (who have dreamed of owning something special from times gone by) at arm's length from achieving that ambition. Look through magazines from even 10 years ago and the difference in prices for what you call 'modern classics', as

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# TALKING POINT



**This month's Talking Point...**  
**The Mercedes-AMG One – a sensational feat of engineering, or just another pointless hypercar?**

**"In order to give an insightful opinion, I would have to drive it first. Any chance of this happening?" Steve Mundy**

**"Love the design." Christian Wimmer**

**"In part, it's a test bed. Lots of the stuff on everyday cars was once only available on expensive, top of the range cars." David Price**

**"The first four letters say it all: 'hype'." Mike Robey**

**"It sounds great with everything dialled up to 11." Denise Williams**

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

## Merc Spotter

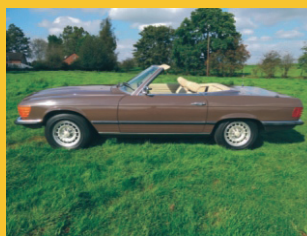
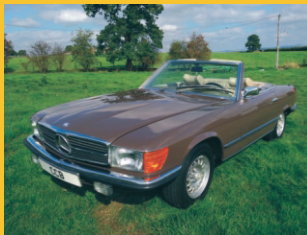


**"Recently, I was browsing a selection of old images on my computer and found this picture of a heavily modified R107 SL," begins Martin Johnson. "I took this photo at Techno Classica in Essen, Germany around five years ago and know very little about the radical bodykit. I'm not sure about the bonnet scoop, but quite like the arches! Maybe readers of Mercedes Enthusiast can shed some light on this car?"**

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.

## Cheshire Classic Benz

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



### 280SL Roadster 1975P - LHD - £29,950

Topaz Brown, brown soft top, Mushroom MB Tex interior, rare manual gearbox, manual windows, rear seats, original Becker Monza radio/cassette player, original 14" alloy wheels, all tools and manuals, FSH, only two owners from the same family, 71,000 miles.

This totally original early R107 SL in the incredibly rare colour of Topaz Brown with Mushroom MB Tex interior looks almost as good now as when it emerged from the Mercedes factory in 1975. It is in fabulous condition throughout, and looks delightfully 'retro' in this colour scheme. It is a true timewarp vehicle and it drives superbly. Being LHD and built 'as designed' it does drive that bit better than any RHD example. It has spent most of its life in Germany, but is now UK registered, however the original speedometer and LHD lights are still with the car, so it can easily be put back to European specification.



### 280SE 3.5 Coupe 1970H - LHD - £94,950

Silver Grey metallic, blue leather interior, walnut wood, black steering wheel, 4-speed column change auto, manual windows, electric sunroof, original Becker Europa radio, original 14" steel wheels.

Delivered new to France and having lived all its life there with three owners until we brought it to the UK in 2018, this gorgeous coupe was latterly part of the collection of a wealthy Parisian businessman. It has been our own car since then, and we have enjoyed it hugely, but it now has to make way for other arrivals. Unlike most Mercedes of this era it is a very well preserved original car, except for a repaint around ten years ago. It has been well maintained throughout its life and shows just a light patina as befits its age. It was the subject of a six page feature in the Autumn 2018 issue of Classic Mercedes Magazine.

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**We also offer secure covered car storage at our premises near Manchester Airport. Call or email to enquire.**



# Social Club

Mercedes-Benz related highlights from the world of social media



Rajinder Bharath

 @rajinder\_bharath

When even the artwork has to remove its glasses for a better look.  
Pictured is a 2001 R129 SL320 Edition finished in designo Mystic Blue.



Gerwyn Davies

 @gez13vw

Had a nice few hours out with @jamescantswimx and his B-Class.  
This Canyon Beige, 1.8 diesel is equipped with Air Lift 3P suspension with Air Lift struts, and 20-inch alloy wheels from the GLK-Class range.



Jason Cheung

 @jason\_cheung13

@estebangtz serving out some donuts at @fosgoodwood  
Mercedes F1 test driver Esteban Gutiérrez burns rubber in his W10 Mercedes-AMG racer at this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed.



HK-Engineering

 @engineeringhk

We had the pleasure to welcome the MB SLS AMG meeting on our company grounds. This extraordinary and futuristic looking Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG (internal designation C197) is a gran turismo coupe with hinged doors. With the GT Final Edition presented in November 2013, production of the Mercedes SLS AMG ended in June 2014.

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### John P Mohan Classic Cars

 @johnpmohanclassiccars

The W100 600 making its first and rather wet Irish appearance at the @herbertparkcarshow.




### The SL SHOP

 @TheSLShop

How's your lawn looking? @homewoodbath guests loving the view from their rooms. Guttled you missed our Cotswolds Tour? Fear not, you can join us for our tour of the Borders this September.



### Gooding & Company

 @GoodingandCompany

We're honoured to present the William M. Wonder Collection at our world-renowned Pebble Beach Auctions this August. The late Mr Wonder, who was a legendary and well-respected name in the world of American privateer racing, collected a number of significant competition


cars that are sure to quickly turn heads.

*Cars in this special auction include a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing, 1972 AAR Gurney Eagle Indy Car and 1999 Ferrari 333 SP.*

Image credit: Copyright and Courtesy of Gooding & Company. Images by Josh Hway



### Prestige Car Service

 @mercedes\_workshop\_horndean

This M104 engine suffered an oil leak from the front cover seal, and I've lost count of the amount I've done. To get it leak-free is certainly tricky and fiddly. While I was there, I fitted a new oil seal on the end of the cam, distributor cap and rotor arm.




### Edward Hall Classic Mercedes

 @edwardjshall

1996 CL600 with just 39,000 miles from new. Lots of recent maintenance. Three owners. Not many of these monster V12 coupes around. Available now.



### Jakub Brzycki

 @benzers\_CLK

Evening rides, brilliant vibes.

Jakub Brzycki's CLK55 AMG Cabriolet pictured in Quiraing on the Isle of Skye, some 30m from where the long-time Mercedes-Benz fan married his wife, no less.



# Racer at heart

The mouth-watering technical details of the production-ready Mercedes-AMG One have been released. Just how close is it to Hamilton's ride?

WORDS **SHANE O' DONOGHUE**  
IMAGES **MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG**





“ The engine started life  
in the back of the 2016  
Mercedes F1 W07  
Hybrid racer ”





▷ Minimalist two-seat cabin, F1-style wheel.

**T**he phrase “F1 car for the road” has been overused through the years and often refers to a stripped-back and spindly looking vehicle that is palpably barely road-legal. Mercedes-AMG went a different route for the One, adopting a hypercar appearance, while asking its development team and engineers “how much of our F1 car can we bring to the road?” Five years after the car was first unveiled, we now have the definitive answer to that question, and it’s an astounding creation.

Central to the One’s link with Formula 1 is its engine. Or rather, its hybrid powertrain, as the 1.6-litre V6 is only one part of the equation and responsible for only just over half of the maximum power output. AMG quotes a peak of 1,048bhp when the engine and all four (yes, four) electric motors are working together flat out. And it won’t quote a maximum torque figure, as it’s apparently too complicated.

That engine started life in the back of the 2016 Mercedes F1 W07 Hybrid racer, one of the most successful Formula 1 cars ever. Its stats include 19 wins from 21 races at the hands of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, so to say the engine has heritage is an understatement. But surely the new One’s powertrain isn’t actually very similar and the link is a marketing one?

It would seem not. The F1 hybrid system was developed by Mercedes-AMG High Performance Powertrains in Northamptonshire and a separate group was established to redevelop the engine for road car use. The intention from the start was to bring as much of the racer’s engine to production as possible. Emissions and sound regulations were some of the biggest challenges the team faced, not to mention building in a little more longevity. And, though the road car is hardly inexpensive, there were elements of the racer’s engine that were deemed prohibitively costly.

One such example is the sophisticated, finger follower valve gear. In fact, in the process of redesigning and simplifying this system, the AMG One team came up with a lighter design that was then adopted by the race team.

The F1 car’s 15,000rpm limit was never going to make it through to a road car, sadly. We’re told that it’s actually rarely used by the drivers as the engine’s output tails off above about 12,000rpm anyway, but it’s there to allow an over-rev margin. The road car’s engine still manages 11,000rpm, despite using commercially available fuel, while keeping within emissions and noise limits.

To that end, the AMG One features four preheated metal catalytic converters, two ceramic catalytic converters and two petrol particulate filters, along with a titanium silencer. Despite all that, early tests revealed that the car was way too loud for the public road. A good deal of the noise came from the spur gears that drive the four camshafts from the crankshaft, so the geartrain was redeveloped, and much work was carried out on an acoustic enclosure for the engine, too.

### A mountain to climb

A little-known factoid is that Formula 1 engines use lead in their big-end bearings, but it’s a toxic material that is banned from road car use, so the Mercedes engineers had to rethink this part of the engine for the One. Another potential challenge arose when it came to the possibility of high revs with low load. In other words, someone revving the engine high when the gearbox was in neutral. In F1, the drivers are coached not to do this, as it quickly leads to connecting rod failure. The sport’s rules on giving the driver as much control as possible means it’s not allowed to use the engine management software to prevent such



▷ Michelin Pilot Sport Cup2 R tyres unique to the One.



“The AMG One team came up with a lighter design that was then adopted by the F1 race team”



a situation, but that was easy to overcome for the AMG One, as there are no such roadblocks.

One of the few other changes to the engine comes in the form of the fuel injection system and strategy. Where the F1 car is optimised for wide open throttle driving, the road car must be docile enough to drive at low speeds, tickling along in traffic if needs be without any issue. That prompted a change in the hardware. F1 rules allow for a single injector per cylinder and that injector must spray into the combustion chamber (it's called direct injection). The AMG One has that, but it also has an inlet port injector for each cylinder. This, in conjunction with unique injection strategies for the direct injector, allows for a wider range of operating conditions.

So where do the four electric motors come in? The first two are easy, as they each turn a front wheel, making the One all-wheel drive, or front-wheel drive in electric mode. There's even a modest battery pack to allow just over 11 miles of silent, emissions-free driving. Which seems laughable when you look at the thing. The final two motors are closely integrated with the engine itself and are almost identical to what was used in the F1 car. The first is called the MGU-H (Motor Generator Unit Heat) and it sits on the shaft of the turbocharger between the compressor and exhaust-driven turbine.

Not that you'd recognise the turbocharger as one at a glance, as the compressor and turbine wheels are much further apart than usual. When acting as a motor, the MGU-H can turn the turbocharger to create boost, even when the exhaust gas flow

△ Project One prototype testing at Millbrook, UK.

through the turbine is relatively weak. Conversely, in generator mode, it can use excess exhaust gas flow to feed energy back into the car's 8.4kWh lithium-ion battery pack. That's no ordinary battery, either, as it uses the same fast energy draw, high-power density concept pioneered in the racer – something also found in the Mercedes-AMG GT63 S E Performance.

The last of the four electric motors is referred to as the MGU-K (Motor Generator Unit Kinetic). It's a 120kW (161bhp) unit that spins to 50,000rpm. It directly drives the engine's crankshaft via spur gears. In fact, this same unit is used for the front wheel motors. Hopefully you agree that the details of this engine are more fascinating than the headline figures. But they do enable straight-line numbers that include 0-62mph in 2.9 seconds, 0-124mph in 7 seconds, and 0-186mph in just 15.6 seconds.

### Carbon dream

As in Formula 1, however, a winning car is not made by a powerful engine alone, and the rest of the Mercedes-AMG One package promises to be up to F1 engine billing, too. The body and monocoque chassis are made from carbon fibre, for example, while the engine and its special seven-speed gearbox are load-bearing parts of the structure as well. The suspension is straight out of the motorsport playbook too, with transverse, adjustable push-rod spring struts, though as it's a road car, it gets adaptive damping. Nonetheless, the ride height can be dropped dramatically – 37mm at the front and 30mm at the rear – ▷

▽ 1,695kg kerb weight, 2,720mm wheelbase.

▽▷ Track mode lowers ride and raises spoiler.



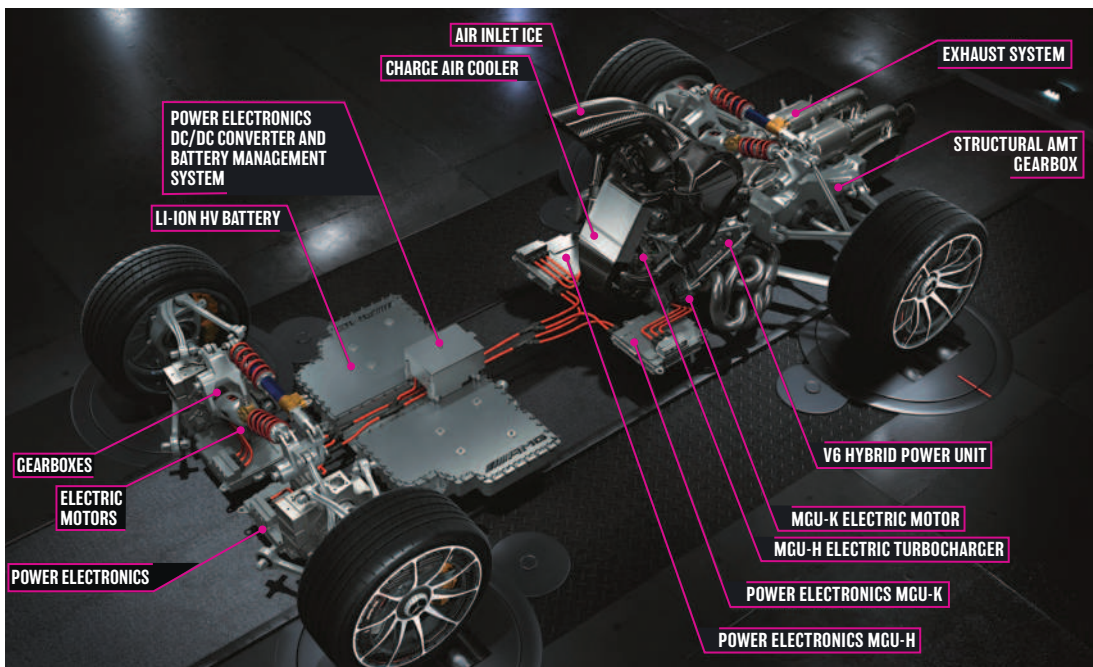


▷ depending on the driving mode.

Remarkably, the exterior design of the One hasn't been radically altered from the 2017 concept vehicle, characterised perhaps by the vertical fin that runs down its spine, alluding to the shape of the airbox in an F1 car. Apparently, it is functional, aiding high-speed stability and helping to clean up the air flow to the rear. Look closer and you'll see that the design is very much led by the aerodynamic requirements of the car, but Mercedes has also managed to integrate the active aerodynamics in such a way as to create an astoundingly technical and impactful shape.

## Active aerodynamics

The louvres over the front wheels open or close, for example, while the front diffuser shape can be altered on the fly and the intricate rear wing's profile and size also adapts to requirements. The operation of the various elements works under three modes – Highway, Track and Race DRS (Drag Reduction System), the latter designed for maximum speed. Mercedes claims that there is downforce produced from as little as 30mph in some cases – presumably when the driver chooses the track-only 'Strat 2' setting, inspired by an F1 car's qualifying mode. In the AMG One, this firms up the suspension, lowers the car and provides maximum



power from the engine and motors. That should keep things interesting for the driver, no matter what their level of experience.

Like in a single-seater, the driver sits with their feet higher than their hips, and there's even a bespoke F1-like steering wheel – though some of its labelling will be familiar to drivers of regular Mercedes cars. The main seat bases are integrated with the chassis, but there's a small amount of adjustment in the backrest, supplemented by a movable steering wheel and pedal box. Though the cabin design is quite minimal, there's all the expected equipment and technology on board as standard.

We can only hope that some of the 275 buyers of this £2.5 million hypercar intend to use it to its fullest capability, as nobody else will have the chance to experience F1 technology on the road to the same degree.

△ The One has an electric range of just over 11 miles.

▽ 0 to 124mph in 7sec; 0 to 186mph in 15.6sec - wow!



“The body and monocoque chassis are made from carbon fibre”

## Technical data - Powertrain

BORE X STROKE 80.0x53.03mm DISPLACEMENT 1,599cc MAX SYSTEM OUTPUT 1,048bhp ENGINE REV LIMIT 11,000rpm MAX ENGINE OUTPUT 566bhp@9,000rpm  
SPECIFIC OUTPUT, ENGINE 354bhp per litre MGU-K (ELECTRIC MOTOR ON CRANKSHAFT) 161bhp MGU-FL/MGU-FR (FRONT AXLE ELECTRIC MOTORS) 2x161bhp = 322bhp  
MGU-H (ELECTRIC MOTOR OF TURBOCHARGER) 120bhp MAX TURBO BOOST PRESSURE 3.5bar





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Cover  
story

# Four-eyed surprise

The first-generation CLK was a more mainstream take on the two-door coupe and cabriolet theme than its 124-series predecessor, and found great success among younger buyers. We look back on these cars 25 years after the 208-series burst onto the scene at the North American International Auto Show in 1997

WORDS **RICHARD MASON** IMAGES **CRAIG PUSEY & MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG**



—

*“The **first CLK** joined  
a new generation of  
Mercedes hunting for  
**greater market  
share**”*



**L**aunched to the world in January 1997, the first CLK joined a new generation of Mercedes hunting for greater market share. The new A-Class had shown that Stuttgart was willing to move way out of its comfort zone to stifle BMW's efforts, with Munich's push for success spearheaded by the 3-Series, which appealed to a younger, image-conscious buyer.

The 208-series CLK was a smash hit and becoming the Formula 1 Safety Car may be its crowning achievement. Providing insight into the CLK's development is Red Mackinnon, CLK Model Register Captain of the UK's Mercedes-Benz Club.

"Mercedes wanted to liven up some of its more conservative models in the range. By producing a more modern-looking coupe of slightly smaller dimensions than the 'C124' Coupe, the manufacturer hoped to attract buyers in their late 20s and early 30s who hadn't considered a Mercedes before." Of course, a Cabriolet version of the CLK was also in the pipeline.

"The 'C208' CLK was based on the 202-series C-Class chassis with some E-Class fittings, although the seats, lights, body panels and interior are unique to the CLK," Red continues. "It's hard to believe, but a group of young designers were challenged to come up with a replacement for the Jaguar E-Type, obviously ignoring the XJS. From the designs put forward, including one from Brit Steve Mattin, it was a concept from the youngest designer there – American-born Michael Fink – that was selected.

"Having met Michael, he told me that he was heavily influenced by the side-on aspect of the Porsche 911 and the Ford Capri. When looking at the profile of the C208 CLK, especially the rear window shape, the similarity is clear," Red confirms.



△ Over 340,000 208-series CLKs were manufactured by M-B.

"The concept car – designed by Michael Fink – kept the seat belt butlers and pillarless C124 features, although a line of lights was also planned to run along the door sills. Very odd," Red comments. "Intriguingly, the roof was to be an all-glass affair, at least in the early sketches. The 1993 Geneva motor show saw the concept coupe, based on Fink's design, take pride of place on the Mercedes-Benz stand.

"What's really interesting is that it borrowed the five-litre M119 V8 engine from the E500," Red reveals. "This was because the M112 V6, which was eventually married up with this car, was still in development. The then Sultan of Brunei saw the show car and bought it on the spot, causing Mercedes to hurriedly send the concept back to the factory to be completed as a useable car.

**"Meanwhile, always with a convertible in mind, Fink took an early CLK Coupe to Karmann down the road from Bremen, which chopped off the roof and strengthened the body,"** Red continues.

"Together, they came up with a hood design that was in harmony with the car's lines. This 'A208' Cabriolet version launched in March 1998 in Geneva.

"Although the CLK was officially released in 1997, a few cars rolled off the line in late 1996. By this time, the CLK had gained B-pillars for added strength and lost the seat belt butlers," Red confirms. "Engine sizes were 200, 230 Kompressor, and the flagship 320 with





***“There was a waiting list as long as your arm”***



▷ Mercedes’ first V6 engine. Customers could choose from two trim levels – Elegance or Sport,” Red continues. “The Sport featured blue glass and faux carbon fibre interior trim, and some really different colours that had never been seen before on a Mercedes-Benz vehicle. Sport-specification cars also came with stiffer suspension.

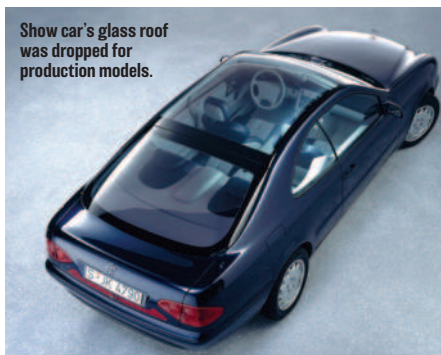
“At the facelift in 1999, the Sport trim name was changed to Avantgarde and the colours toned down a little. Bird’s eye maple wood trim also became available. In 2000, exclusive designo options were offered, giving customers a choice of special liveries and interior trim options which, if you bought the lot, cost another £10,000,” Red suggests. “These rare cars are now sought-after by serious collectors.

“The 230 Kompressor is no slouch and achieved slightly better fuel economy than the 320, although the four-cylinder could not compete with the silky smoothness of the V6,” Red says. “Remember, at this time there was no

diesel option for the CLK – that came later with the 209-series. Mercedes-Benz obviously got it right with its first CLK because from launch date there was a waiting list as long as your arm, and the Cabriolet only added to the queue. At the time, I believe they were the fastest selling coupe and convertible on the market.

“The 1999 facelift saw a trip computer

Show car’s glass roof was dropped for production models.



Concept sketch of the CLK Coupe, drawn by Michael Fink in 1993.



joining the gadgets, and indicators moving to the door mirrors, amongst other things,” Red adds. The UK also got a new range topper in the form of the CLK430 V8, which was swiftly knocked off its perch by the 342bhp CLK55 AMG in 1999/2000. Unsurprisingly, the CLK55 AMG became the Formula 1 Safety Car. Red continues, “If you couldn’t afford a CLK55, it was possible to buy an AMG bodykit for your CLK, adding about £3,000, which was still a lot of money then.”

**C208 Coupe production ceased in May 2002 with 233,367 cars built – that figure 65 per cent higher what the C124 achieved.**

The A208 Cabriolet was made until March 2003, its production total of 115,161 some three and a half times greater than that of the 124-series Cabriolet.

“Interestingly, the very first CLK55 AMG Cabriolets in the UK were only available through special dealer order,” Red recalls. “They would be manufactured as a 430 and then shipped from Bremen to Affalterbach to be turned into a CLK55 AMG. This is evidenced by the VIN number starting with the prefix ‘430’. Towards the end of production, the car was made entirely in Affalterbach.

“For mere mortals who couldn’t afford the £70,000 for a CLK55 there were Final Edition models of the 230 Kompressor and 320,” Red continues. “These had Alcantara roof lining, leather and Alcantara seats, different trim, Final Edition badges and special wheels. In Europe, these were badged ‘Master Edition’.” The CLK nameplate also graced motorsport with cars winning many races in DTM, and even FIA GT





Championships thanks to the CLK-GTR and CLK-LM.

So, 25 years after launch, how does Red view the 208-series CLK's prospects as a classic? It is prone to corrosion, after all. "Rust may be apparent, as with any car, but some have lasted well. Obviously, maintenance, use and storage play a big part in keeping corrosion at bay. Typically, the rear wheelarches are vulnerable, and around the bootlid lock. The front wheelarches are normally OK, but they suffer from stone chips as does the bonnet which if left untreated will lead to corrosion. It really winds me up when I see the 208 CLK singled out as a rust bucket when the W210 E-Class, the W220 S-Class and R170 SLK were all suffering the same issues," Red affirms.

"Oddly enough, the very early CLKs have stood up better to the elements than later ones, but they're hard to find now. There was no galvanizing of the body panels on the 208-series CLKs – this didn't happen until mid/late 2004 on the 209-series CLKs. 208s in good condition are fetching stronger prices, especially the Cabriolets and the AMGs. People see them as a fun, practical and distinctive four-seat coupe or cabriolet, which will not cost the earth to buy or run. With

most major parts still available, they should be easy to maintain. Choose your CLK wisely and you will be rewarded with many miles of fun driving," Red concludes.

### Ownership

Two Mercedes-Benz Club members who have followed Red's advice are Kerry Dickson, owner of a striking CLK320 Coupe, and LP who has treated himself to a rare CLK55 AMG Cabriolet with designo extras.

Kerry was lucky to buy his car from fellow Mercedes-Benz Club member Ray Oliver, who had a Coupe and a Cabriolet for sale – both 320s. "This was 2018 and Ray came highly recommended,"

Kerry remembers. "I was looking to replace my SLK with something bigger. A C208 seemed ideal and had the advantage of being cheaper than a C209. I was hoping it would also have the potential to be a classic.

**"On driving Ray's CLK320 Coupe, I thought, 'What a lovely car'. Ray had fitted a lot of new suspension parts, so the ride and feel was like new, plus the A/C was repaired. If Ray hadn't done the repairs, the car would probably have been scrapped. My Quartz Blue CLK is a comfortable cruiser with the power to nip by people. It's had five or six owners, which isn't surprising as it's an early model from 1998."**



△ Kerry Dickson owns this very clean CLK320.

▷ Pre-facelift interior with perforated hide.





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***“My CLK is a comfortable cruiser with the power to nip by people”***



◁ 320's M112 V6 displaces 3.2L and makes 215bhp.

◁◁ 16-inch alloy wheels of luxury Elegance spec.

▷ Within a month of ownership, Kerry made a bold decision. “Whilst parked at Shoreham Airport someone accidentally scratched it. I tried polishing out the damage and did a fair job, but then I decided the car deserved better. After receiving quotes from several body shops, I commissioned new front wings, minor rust repairs and a respray. I also had the wheels refurbished. The £2,987 it cost has been rewarded with lots of compliments. Now, with 112,000 miles on the clock, only the interior requires some work.”

Kerry has been lucky with the mechanicals. “The only issue I’ve experienced was a loose electrical connection causing a misfire. A cheap fix at £10. I’ve had the differential oils seals replaced and that was £374. Otherwise, a service and new MAF sensor plus engine coolant temperature sensor cost £580. Then another £400 to repair some underbody rust plus Waxoyl to protect the whole of the underside.”

## Finders keepers

Whilst Kerry’s coupe may be rare, another Club member called LP has possibly a unique

CLK55 AMG Cabriolet with designo options. “I have never seen another car exactly the same as mine,” LP begins. “When I was looking for a new car, this model wasn’t on my radar. Yet when I spotted it, there was a curiosity factor and it stuck in my mind. Weeks later, the car was still for sale and eventually I bought it.

“I was mystified though by its 2003 registration since documents showed it was built in December 2001,” LP continues. “Taking the CLK to Mercedes-Benz Beaconsfield for a service, one member of staff recognised it by its unusual colour. Apparently, the car had been ordered in 2001 by a country and western singer, or singer of some sort. On delivery, he never paid the balance, no doubt losing his hefty deposit.

“Subsequently, four Mercedes dealers took turns trying to sell it. It was bad timing because the new 209-series CLK had been launched and nobody wanted a 208,” LP recalls. “Eventually, 16 months later in March 2003, Mercedes-Benz of Reading sold it to a lady who kept it for six years. The next owner kept it three years and then I bought it in 2012. The seller needed room for child seats for his grandchildren, so it looked a genuine sale. The car had around 70,000 miles on the clock.” ▷



△ LP’s CLK55 was ordered new by a mystery singer.

▷ Magnificent M113 V8 in the AMG with 342bhp.





**“People often ask me what colour it is, guessing that it’s copper or burnt orange”**

▷ During his 10 years of ownership, LP has had many conversations about the paintwork. “Stopping for petrol, people often ask me what colour it is, guessing that it’s copper or burnt orange. In fact, it’s Opal Braun, paint code is 486. Other designo extras include curled maple wood trim, leather upholstery and a half wood steering wheel, but no decals unlike later cars. I visited the seller twice before buying it, as I knew it was special. I carried out a lot of research on the car, but really it’s invisible. It’s a custom-built CLK.

“**I love the combination of the appearance with the lazy, smooth, burbling V8 power – but not the fuel consumption,”** LP laughs. “Due to its exclusivity, I don’t drive it much – about 8,000 miles in 10 years. Every time I drive it though, I simply bask in that visual and audio appeal. I love the dramatic contrasts of the interior, black carpets, dark wood and pale leather.”

▷ CLK55 also boasts leather upholstery.

▽ Curled maple wood trim and five-speed auto.



Common rust issues have not blighted LP’s love affair with the CLK. “Apart from a few stone chips, I’ve not had any problems. The car is serviced by a main dealer and technicians have said what a good car it is.” LP reports that the light beige leather is easy to keep clean, given its light use. “Really, I clean the CLK more than I drive it,” he says. “I’d be over the moon if I met someone with an identical car.”

► Thank you to CLK owners Kerry Dickson and LP, and to Red Mackinnon for his model insight

## Just the facts

### Mercedes-Benz CLK320 Coupe (C208)

ENGINE **M112 3,199cc V6** POWER **215bhp@5,700rpm**

TORQUE **227lb ft@3,000-4,800rpm** TRANSMISSION **5-speed auto, RWD**

WEIGHT **1,495kg** 0-62MPH **7.4sec**

TOP SPEED **149mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **28.0mpg**

CO2 EMISSIONS **N/a** YEARS PRODUCED **1997-1999**

### Mercedes-Benz CLK55 AMG Cabriolet (A208)

ENGINE **M113 5,439cc V8** POWER **342bhp@5,500rpm**

TORQUE **376lb ft@3,000-4,300rpm** TRANSMISSION **5-speed auto, RWD**

WEIGHT **1,755kg** 0-62MPH **6.2sec**

TOP SPEED **155mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **24.1mpg**

CO2 EMISSIONS **297g/km** YEARS PRODUCED **1999-2002**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to NEDC Combined; figures for a 1998 CLK320 Coupe and 2001-built CLK55 AMG Cabriolet as pictured; top speed of CLK55 electronically limited







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“

This car was imported to South Africa for the German ambassador who resided in the country's capital

”



# Coastal CRUISER

**The pre-facelift 124-series Cabriolet is a relatively rare model. In South Africa, a local collector offered us the keys to his top-condition 300CE-24 for a sunset drive on one of the most picturesque roads on the continent**

WORDS WILHELM LUTJEHARMS IMAGES PEET MOCKE







**I**t is hard to believe there was a time when a four-seater Mercedes-Benz cabriolet was not available. But that was the case throughout the 1970s and 80s. At the Frankfurt show in 1991 things changed for the better when the 124-series 300CE-24 Cabriolet debuted.

However, buyers had to be patient, as the car only went into series production six months after it was unveiled. This is understandable as Mercedes-Benz had to put it through its usual rigorous development test procedures to be sure of its dynamism and safety.

Based in the Winelands town of Stellenbosch in South Africa, the owner of this 300CE-24 Cabriolet has a number of Mercedes in his

▷ Eight-hole, 15-inch alloys and Continental tyres.

▷▷ Wilhelm was in his element driving the cabrio.





“There is no better way to end a weekend than with a sunset drive on a pristine piece of tarmac”

collection. However, I quickly sense that this 'A124' (the 'A' denoting a 124-series convertible) is one of his favourites – for various reasons.

**Back in the 90s, this particular car was imported to South Africa for the German ambassador who resided in the country's capital, then named Pretoria.**

That also explains why it is a left-hand drive car in a right-hand drive market. When the ambassador moved back to Germany, the car was sold and the new owner gave it to his son who lived outside Cape Town.

It was stored in a garage under blankets for years and was rarely driven. It then found its way into the possession of a Mercedes-Benz specialist. He took it upon himself to recommission the car as it needed some work following so little use. The current owner saw the car when the specialist attended club meetings and he always reminded the specialist that if he ever wanted to sell the car to please keep him in mind. The rest is history.

The W124 Saloon is one of the earliest Mercedes-Benz models with the square design theme we associate with earlier models. Even so, the relatively angled lines of this blue-black exterior colour make it stand out. It is unmistakably a Mercedes-Benz.

There is no better way to end a weekend than with a sunset drive on a pristine piece of tarmac. The R44 runs through the Winelands to and then along the coast. The road is perfectly tarred and that undoubtedly helps with the smooth nature that the A124 portrays.

Initially in the passenger seat and then behind the wheel, I'm first and foremost



△ Blue-black paint for the upper bodywork.

reminded of how solidly these cars were made. There are no squeaks or rattles in the cabin, and overall the car feels remarkably fresh. Even over speed bumps the suspension works perfectly and the car feels sturdy. The fact that this Benz is fitted with plump 205/60 tyres on 15-inch wheels helps with bump absorption.

**This road is one of the best and prettiest driving roads on the continent, snaking along the rugged coastline of South Africa's False Bay.** On the opposite side of the bay you have the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town. Incidentally, this road also formed part of the route that was used during the international launch of the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren back in 2004.

Behind the wheel there are a few elements that immediately remind you of the fact that this is a 124-based Mercedes. This includes the view over the bonnet, the near-square, compact side mirrors, and then several aspects of the cabin itself.

Luxury items include heated seats and to the left of the gearlever there is the familiar shift button offering Economy and Standard ▷





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There are no squeaks or rattles in the cabin, and overall the car feels remarkably fresh



◁ The plush rear seats look completely new.



▷ modes. I don't see the point of driving this car in any setting other than Standard, though.

**A**s I settle behind the wheel and close the door, the quaint little arm behind my left shoulder hands me the seat belt so it falls easily to hand. With the roof and windows permanently down for the entire afternoon (except for a single shot

before the sun sets) we experience the best the A124 has to offer. There is the option to raise the windows and put the wind deflector in place, but on a perfect afternoon like this one, some wind entering the cabin is welcomed. And anyway, to my eye the deflector does the 124's handsome lines no favours.

There are long stretches of open road where the 300CE-24 is only too happy to stretch its

legs. Here I notice how the car will easily cruise at an indicated 100mph. Press the throttle pedal past its stop and you activate the kickdown function. From a relaxed 2,500 or 3,000rpm, the engine jumps around 1,000rpm and the car accelerates in a relatively linear fashion, accommodated by a throaty roar from the double exhaust pipes. Better still, I'm treated to a more intense six-cylinder symphony when the engine's sound rebounds off the jagged rock faces lining our route.

With revs rising to 5,000rpm, the engine still has another 2,000rpm left, but as maximum power is delivered at 6,400rpm there is little need to push the engine way beyond six grand. It is in the middle of the rev range, however, that I find the straight-six most rewarding, with a good level of torque and plenty of shove left in reserve should you want to accelerate.

Through the corners, the Mercedes largely keeps body roll in check, although it will begin to wallow if you get rough with it. Certainly, this 124 performs best when the driver is relaxed behind the wheel and in no great rush to reach their destination, the cabrio far happier sweeping through beautiful scenery than scorching the edges of its Continental tyres.

**E**ven at higher speeds, I can still have a decent conversation with my passenger without shouting as we make our way past Pringle Bay and Hangklip, and through Betty's Bay. These towns are mostly populated during the holiday periods and they are wonderfully quiet out of season.

The next stop before we turn around is Kleinmond where we head to the small launch pad in the harbour. A number of people pay attention to the 124 convertible, as it is not a car you see often. If it was the saloon, it's likely no one would have noticed it.

As we make our way back, the owner and I discuss this 300CE-24 in detail, which he's owned since November 2015. "I've done ▷

## Development

### What it took to turn the 124-series Coupe into a stunning convertible

Based on the 300CE Coupe, several reinforcements were made to the chassis of the 124-series Cabriolet. These included support structures in the A-pillars, windscreen frame, footwells, B-pillar bases and rear transmission tunnel area, as well as behind the instrument panel. The latter was also fixed to the transmission tunnel. Below the car there are diagonal braces on the frame floor that limit body flex. For rollover safety, there are two pop-up bars that will instantly rise behind the rear seats in an accident.

These measures may not sound too extensive, but in total around 1,000 new parts had to be designed and developed for the 124 Cabriolet. Some 130kg of sheet metal was used to make up for the lack of the 28kg metal roof. Furthermore, four vibration absorbers were fitted to bring vibration levels more in line with those of the Coupe. These added an additional 26kg.

With total production of this pre-facelift 300CE-24 Cabriolet touching 6,343 units, by all accounts cars like the one featured here are delightfully rare: 1992 saw 4,469 units built, followed in 1993 by 1,856. The first 18 pre-production cars were made in 1990/1991.



“Of the few cars I own, this will be the absolute last car I’ll sell”

▷ regular trips with the car, usually around 150- to 200-mile return journeys to towns in the Boland or Overberg. Of the few cars I own, this will be the absolute last car I’ll sell. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it is a really affordable car to maintain. You don’t necessarily need a specialist to work on the car. There are hundreds of thousands of 124s made, so parts are easy to source. Secondly, it drives like a modern car without all the modern technology. Moreover, it’s also fairly practical.


“It is also a solid and safe car,” he continues. “On the open road, it really is an exceptionally comfortable grand tourer. Finally, if you want to drive fast you can, although that is not the most important feature of the car for me.”

The owner points out a couple of aspects of the interior that are not standard, as well as the grille and bumper which need to

△▷ Straight-six does its best work at the top end.

▷ That’s a model badge you don’t see every day.

receive a correcting layer of paint. Other than that, the car is near perfect. As the owner says, the car has thankfully never been mistreated but it has been used, with minor stone chips visible if you look closer. That matters little as the car has been maintained properly, and the 100,000 miles on the odo shows that it has also been used regularly throughout its life. Meanwhile, still present with this 300CE-24 is the service book, owner’s manual and the original warranty.

As the sun begins dipping behind the horizon, we raise the fabric roof of the A124, complete with its glass rear window. We’ve been having so much fun driving al fresco, it suddenly dawns on me that this is the first time I’ve seen the roof locked in position. It is pleasing enough to the eye and certainly of high quality, but only in bad weather would I consider deploying it were I this car’s owner. For the rest of the time, it would be roof down all the way! 

#### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz 300CE-24 Cabriolet (A124)

ENGINE M104 2,960cc 6-cyl POWER 217bhp@6,400rpm TORQUE 195lb ft@4,600rpm TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,710kg 0-62MPH 8.8sec TOP SPEED 143mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 19.2mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1992-1993

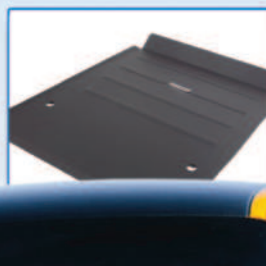
All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to EEC urban







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*Mercedes Enthusiast* is invited to test the latest machines from tuner Brabus, including the Crawler, a near-900bhp dune buggy dripping with intent and attitude, and the S-Class-based 600 limousine

WORDS **IAN KUAH**  
IMAGES **IAN KUAH & BRABUS**





**T**he Crawler is a limited edition, no-holds-barred off-roader showcasing Brabus' design and engineering ability. "There was no clear 'Eureka!' moment that gave birth to the Crawler," Brabus' Technical Director, Jörn Gander explained. "The idea came out of an exercise that my team had embarked upon to expand their knowledge of chassis development. As the best way to do this is to design and build a working prototype, a discussion took place that set out the initial parameters."

It was decided from day one that, as this exercise was about the chassis and frame, the team would keep complex stuff like active systems, electronics and NVH out of the equation.

"As for the type of vehicle we would be developing, it

was also clear that while we are a 'manufacturer' according to the German transport authorities, it was important that we build a uniquely Brabus vehicle," Jörn explained. A one-off or very low volume car does not have to be street legal. Many wealthy customers are willing to accept this, with the Ferrari FXX and Porsche 935 prime examples of super exclusive track-only cars offered to 'VIP clients.'

"A segment where you can charge a lot of money and not have to worry about the expense of all the road legal niceties makes for a very interesting business case," said Jörn.

"But there are too many supercars out there already, and as we are a sporting luxury specialist rather than a motorsport company, the idea of a track day car is as far from our core business as you can get."

**"The Crawler  
is a significant  
495kg lighter  
than a G63"**





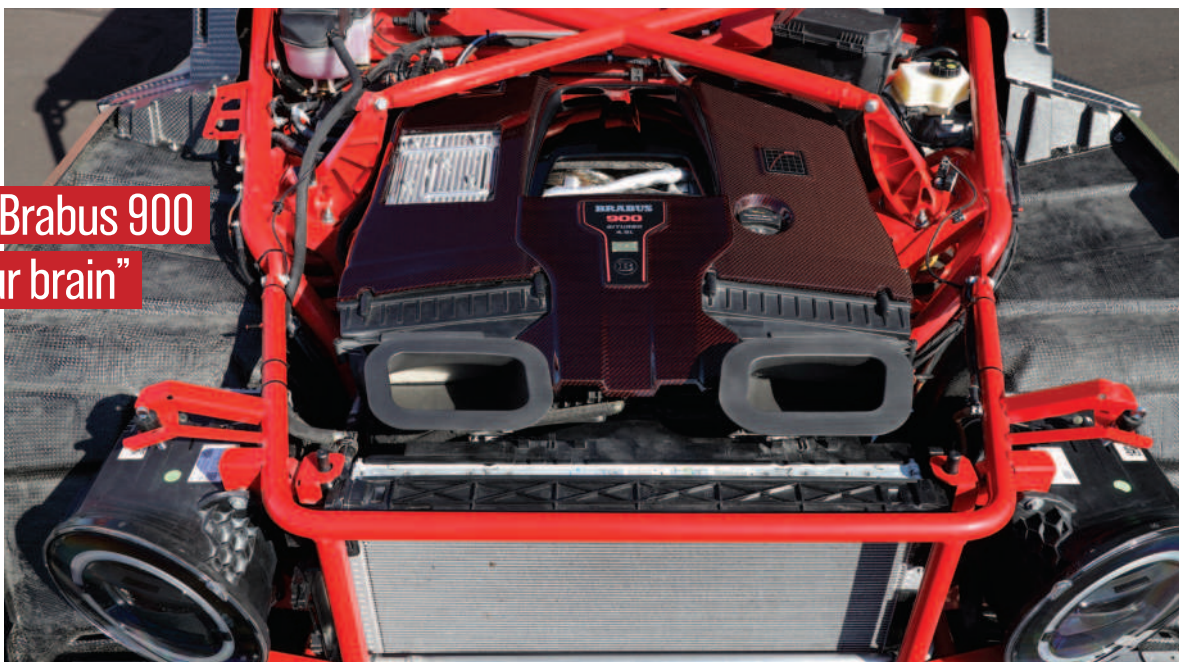


△ Monoblock HD rims, 40x13.5R20 off-road tyres.

△▷ Special set up with 530mm of ground clearance.

**“The thrust from the Brabus 900 motor scrambles your brain”**

▷ V8 with new turbochargers and enlarged capacity.





▷ On the other hand, Brabus is the world's number one tuner of the Mercedes G-Class, so it made perfect sense to take the concept of an ultimate off-road vehicle and develop this to the Nth degree. Further bolstering this is the fact that many of the company's good customers for extreme G63 conversions are based in countries with deserts, and the pieces of the puzzle started to drop into place. Brabus is not just the world's largest Mercedes tuner, the company is also the world's largest tuner per se, and has state-of-the-art facilities including 3D printing and carbon fibre manufacturing departments.

The Crawler is built around a bespoke tubular steel chassis optimised for strength and weight using CAD and FEM modelling, and carried out in conjunction with a specialist partner in Germany. While it shares its wheelbase dimensions, engine, drivetrain, gearbox and differentials with the 2,560kg G63 AMG, the completely different chassis and body make a very significant difference to the weight equation. With a full tank of fuel and all liquids, the Crawler is a significant 495kg lighter despite the portal axle conversion adding 20kg per wheel.

The moulding for the Crawler's prepreg carbon fibre body is the largest Brabus has ever made in-house. In aesthetic terms, it is a classic example of form following function, and the 'G-Class' look of the nose cone and bonnet was an integral part of the design, linking the Crawler to other exclusive Brabus G-Class-based vehicles.

## Pushing the envelope

The solid front and rear axles come from the Brabus XLP conversion for the G-Class, which means they are substantially modified for extra load and strength along with the addition of portal gearing and new wheel hubs. The gearbox ratios are stock and the portal gearing is used to compensate for the massive wheels and tyres that give the vehicle its superior ground clearance. This also means that the signal received by the factory ESP system is correct.

Power comes from the proven Brabus Rocket motor as used in the company's GT Rocket 900. The only physical changes are to the oil sump and differential casing, the former being further forwards to suit the chassis. The standard AMG biturbo V8 motor family displaces 3,982cc from a bore and stroke of 83x92mm. Brabus increases this to 83.75x100mm for a swept displacement of 4,407cc. The turbochargers are modified with larger compressor wheels in modified housings. The turbine wheel geometry is altered for greater efficiency, but as they are not any larger, their housings and the intake manifolds remain untouched.

With remapped engine and gearbox ECUs, the bigger capacity motor makes a headline 888bhp (900ps) at 6,200rpm, with the 992lb ft of torque electronically limited to 774lb ft to preserve the gearbox. The Brabus engineers reduced complication as much as possible so while the gearbox ECU is standard AMG, many



△ Seats finished in Silvertex fabric; GPS off-road nav.

▽ No doors or windows on this extreme Brabus.


ECUs were omitted since comfort features like electric seats, electric windows and so on are redundant here.

## Getting inside

There is a technique to climbing inside the Crawler. Neatly placed side steps bring the prominent roll cage within reach, and you must use this as your personal 'monkey bar' to swing yourself up and into the cockpit. With controls like the ignition and start button dispersed across the unfamiliar cabin, you need to pause for a moment to take it all in. Once you light it up and the familiar instrument panel of the current G63 appears in front of you, things approach to some semblance of normality.

Pressing the starter delivers a V8 roar that shades a regular G63's. The two big side exhausts seem to have a direct line to the voice of God, and those headsets hanging off the rollbars are meant for communication with other occupants that would otherwise be impossible thanks to the engine bellow and rush of turbulent air on the move.

In a vehicle of this stature, the Brabus 900 motor's thrust scrambles your brain. With a lot less weight to pull than a standard G63 motor, the straight-line performance is totally mind-blowing, with 62mph arriving in just 3.4 seconds. Vmax is limited to 100mph, but that's enough without a windscreen. My experience of enthusiastically driving the Crawler down a runway is best described as visceral, spiritually energising and absurd, all at the same time.

Barely 12 hours after the wraps came off the Crawler at the previous evening's event, Brabus had names against all 15 production slots, the €100,000 deposits chipping away at the €749,000 (£650,000) total asking price. However, as Brabus' engineers can only put together five of these super cool, hand-made off-roaders per year, the very wealthy people at the back of this short queue will have to learn that patience is a virtue. 



## Just the facts Brabus Crawler

ENGINE **M177 4,407cc V8 biturbo** POWER **888bhp@6,200rpm** TORQUE **774lb ft@2,900rpm** TRANSMISSION **9-speed auto, 4WD** WEIGHT **2,065kg** 0-62MPH **3.4sec** TOP SPEED **100mph** YEARS PRODUCED **2022-on**  
All figures from Brabus; torque and top speed are electronically limited

S600 reviewed overleaf ▷



**“The S600’s enhanced thrust adds to its autobahn-crushing ability”**

# Brabus S600

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**And now for something a little more conventional - Brabus’ take on Mercedes’ four-litre V8 biturbo-engined S580 model**

WORDS & IMAGES **IAN KUAH**

**T**here is no denying that the larger wheels and extensive bodykit, including carbon fibre spoiler and black chrome, give the Brabus S600 L immense presence. The 22-inch Brabus Monoblock Z alloys, shod with 265/30R22 (front) and 305/25R22 (rear) Continental SportContact 6 tyres provide new-found balance to the LWB S-Class’s proportions, and don’t affect ride quality thanks to their one-piece and ultra-light, forged construction. Icing on the cake is a 30mm static ride height drop courtesy of a Brabus suspension module.

Brabus offers ‘S550’ and ‘S600’ engine upgrades for Mercedes’ S580 model, which boost the power and torque of the four-litre, twin-turbo V8. The simpler of the two conversions, the Brabus PowerXtra B40-550 uses a ‘plug and play’ additional ECU supplied with a bespoke wiring harness that fits between the engine and the factory ECU, and optimises the fuelling, ignition and boost maps.


Our long-wheelbase S600-badged test car featured the more potent PowerXtra B40S-600 upgrade for its four-litre V8 biturbo engine, yielding 592bhp (600ps) at 5,700rpm, underpinned by 590lb ft of torque from 2,500 to 4,500rpm. Seriously rapid for a 2.3-tonne limo, the 4.1-second sprint to 62mph shows the effectiveness of the 4Matic system in providing traction off the line.

△ Brabus module drops static ride height by 30mm.

△ Upswept display of the standard cabin.

As this output level is beyond the air flow headroom of the factory turbochargers, Brabus fits a pair of its own turbochargers with larger 52mm diameter turbine wheel with improved blade geometry in a modified scroll housing. The compressor wheel and bearing system that support the turbine shaft are also upgraded for higher performance. Two Brabus PowerXtra additional control units are required for this conversion, and come with bespoke plug and play wiring harnesses.

The S600’s enhanced yet still refined thrust adds to the luxury limo’s autobahn-crushing ability, and is perfectly matched to the greater poise through bends. Equally impressive, the S-Class’s secondary ride remains unsullied by the larger wheels and tyres thanks to their relatively low weight.

The Brabus S600 L proves once again that while the world’s largest Mercedes tuner might be a master of big, powerful engines in small cars that can turn rubber into noise and smoke, Brabus can just as expertly tailor a velvet glove around a mailed fist. 



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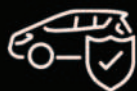


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# Second life



Jaz Duley with son Jay and his restored Cosworth.

A nut-and-bolt restoration of this 190E 2.3-16 has allowed Jaz Duley to rekindle his treasured memories of youth

WORDS **DAN BEVIS** IMAGES **ADRIAN BRANNAN**





“For my 21st birthday, I treated myself to a 2.3-16”





**M**ost of us have a car in our past that we regret selling. Sometimes it's a first car, or a lost love, or a home-grown build. It might be something that was affordable at the time, sold for buttons and has now become a valuable classic. Most true car enthusiasts worth their salt have a tale like this. But hey, you can't keep 'em all, can you?

For Jaz Duley, the car in question was a Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.3-16. "For my 21st birthday in the year 2000, I treated myself to a 2.3-16," he recalls. "At that time, it was very rare for a lad of my age to be driving around in a vehicle like this! If I remember rightly, I paid £3,000 and it had covered 100,000 miles. I went and fetched it from Derby from a trader who had taken it in as a part-ex and advertised it in the local newspaper. As soon as I saw it, I knew straight away that I would be bringing the car home, no matter what! I took it for a test drive and it just put a smile on my face. Next thing I knew I was buying it."

"The car was totally standard, and the only thing I added was a set of 17-inch alloy wheels," Jaz confirms. "I enjoyed driving it for four years until sadly I had to sell the car so I could open the next chapter of my life – getting married in 2004. I sold the 2.3-16 to a good friend of mine, and told him that I would come back for it one day."

As formative motoring experiences go, that's a real doozy. Of all the affordable used saloons on the market back at the turn of the millennium (say, the Sierra Sapphire, the Cavalier, the 405), the 190E really was something special, and in 2.3-16 form it was supremely attractive.

The model's racing aspirations stemmed from the development of the two-litre M102 engine, which was identified as being a very happy recipient of a stretching out to 2.3-litres; Cosworth was approached to develop a four-valve head, with the aim of producing a reliable 182bhp (175bhp from September 1985) from the strengthened 2.3-16 four-pot. As well as the new head, Cosworth provided the sublime exhaust manifold and Mahle pistons, although impressively this was as far as the development needed to go – the M102 was deemed strong enough for the 40 per cent power increase, with even the stock rods remaining.

**While all of this engine evolution was happening, so the base 190E was uprated to cope with the increased forces: spring rates were increased and ride height lowered, thicker anti-roll bars fitted, steering rack quickened, and an aero GRP bodykit developed to complement the saloon's already impressive drag coefficient.**

With a strong, five-speed Getrag gearbox and an LSD, it made for a beguiling package as a road car and an exciting base for

▷ Jaz's first love, the 190 he sold to a friend.

▷ Compomotive TH1882 18-inch alloy wheels.

▷▷▷ 2.3-litre screamer now back to its best.







competition. With this car rubbing shoulders with the M3 and the Sapphire Cosworth, the sporting executive market was certainly vibrant in the late 1980s and early 90s.

Of course, by the mid 2000s this was all just a wistful memory for Jaz. Having acquired a BMW 740iL for family duties, he was happy wafting around and generally getting on with life.

However, the spectre of that 190E was niggling away, just occasionally, a little prodding at the base of his brain, until by 2015 the yearning became too insistent to ignore. The path was clear: he had to exorcise that particular demon and get the 2.3-16 back in his life.

**“Cosworth was approached to develop a four-valve head, with the aim of producing a reliable 182bhp”**

“I contacted my friend, who told me he had sold the vehicle on – I was gutted,” Jaz laments. “So I took it upon myself to track down the 190E, which I successfully managed to do. It was in a very sorry state, but I offered to buy the car back – however the new owner refused my offer, so that was that. I began searching on eBay instead, and Auto Trader, papers and forums, to see if I could find myself a 2.3-16. Luckily enough, I found >







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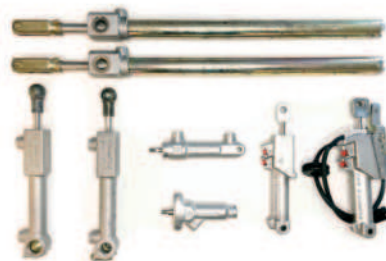
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“I realised my brother was right – it was a total scrapper”

Five-speed dog leg manual gearbox; leather-wrapped helm.



▷ one on eBay in Cambridge – it was on sale for £4,200 buy-it-now, however it was on bid. I started the process of bidding, but there were three other bidders and, unfortunately, I lost the sale.

“I was very disappointed. I emailed the seller and told him that if the winning bidder for any reason changed his mind, I would take the car,” Jaz continues. “And guess what – he contacted me and said, ‘The car’s yours if you want it’. I jumped up in joy and said yes without even viewing the car!”

**I**t was a highly emotionally charged situation, but had Jaz finally found the car to rekindle his memories of youth? Well, yes and no. “The next morning, I sent my brother to Cambridge to put down the deposit,” he explains. “When he saw the car, he called me and said, ‘Are you sure you want this? It’s in a right state, the car is scrap’. Without even thinking, I said ‘yes, put the deposit on’ so it was secured.

“The very first weekend I got off work, I arranged to collect the



△ In-car phone tech has come a long way since...

△ A little over 87,000 miles on the odometer.

190, making my way down to Cambridge. At first glance the car looked OK, but when I looked around it, I realised my brother was right – it was a total scrapper. However, having the experience and knowledge to carry out the repairs, I could see through all its problems. It had only covered 87,000 miles and had an outstanding history file – so in the end I paid £3,500 and took the car away. I couldn’t wait to start the restoration project.”

### Let the fun begin

And start Jaz did, right away, stripping the Mercedes all the way down to a bare shell with all panels and doors removed. The engine and gearbox came out, and careful inspection of

the chassis revealed that it had rather a lot of rot throughout. But Jaz wasn’t fazed by this – he was laser-focused on the end result and knew just what he had to achieve to get the car across the finish line.

Wasting no time, he cut the complete rear outer quarters along with the inner wheelarches on both sides, replacing them with fresh steel along with the jacking points. He had to do some fabrication around the rear window due to further corrosion, and the same went for the engine bay and bumper brackets; he ended up replacing all four doors as well as the wings, bonnet and bootlid. When his brother had described the shell as

▷

### LASTING MEMORIES

Jaz took over 800 photos of the work in progress and keeps them in a slick album. He’s since added pictures of moments when he and his family are enjoying the 190E together.







△ Jazz upgraded the Recaro seats to full leather.

△◁ Gauges for battery and oil temp. plus timer.


“No stone was left unturned here – you name it, Jaz perfected it”

▷ ‘scrap’, he wasn’t far wrong – but Jaz wasn’t about to be defeated by something as trivial as that.

“All the panels I used were second-hand genuine parts without any damage, apart from the inner wheelarches that were new,” he explains. “Once I was happy with all the repairs on the body, the car received a complete respray inside and out with all panels removed. The paint was done at my workplace, however the complete build and prep was done by myself in the garden – I kept photographic evidence of it all and took over 800 pictures of the build. Once the body was

prepped, I began bolting everything back on, replacing anything that was needed and refurbishing most of the original parts. I can confirm that this is a true nut-and-bolt restoration!”

No stone was left unturned here, with everything being comprehensively overhauled, from the brakes and suspension to the transmission, engine, electrics, interior, steering, exhaust system – you name it, Jaz perfected it. After five long years and countless thousands spent, the results are here before you – and it really does look remarkable, doesn’t it? The only deviations from stock specification are those sublime, 18-inch Compomotive TH1882 alloys with 225/35 tyres, and the fact that the factory half-leather interior has been upgraded to full black leather Recaro splendour.

“I am so happy with the outcome and the way the car looks,” Jaz beams, rightly proud of his stellar efforts. “When I’m in this car, it brings back memories as if I were 21 all over again. What a joy to drive!” And with that baseline of youthful memories to build on, we can be sure he’ll be making many more happy memories this time around. 

### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.3-16 (W201)

ENGINE M102 2,299cc 4-cyl POWER 175bhp@5,800rpm TORQUE 170lb ft@4,750rpm TRANSMISSION 5-speed manual, RWD WEIGHT 1,260kg 0-62mph 8.2sec

TOP SPEED 140mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 23.3mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1984-1988

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1987 car as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban

### With thanks

Jaz Duley: “Thanks to my wife for allowing me to carry out the 190’s restoration while she held the fort! Thanks also to my parents for supporting me and allowing me to use their garden as a scrapyard, The Trade Centre for letting me use its facilities including the bodyshop to carry out paintwork, Leon Evans (bodyshop group manager), Lee Gorton (head of quality and vehicle repair), Mark Arnold (bodyshop supervisor), Ian Watts (painter), Andy Paskin (paintless dent removal), and finally Jason Ward – my friend who helped me on the very last stage to rub the primer down to meet my deadline for paint.”





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# Boxing clever

V8 biturbo takes on advanced straight-six hybrid, as we put AMG's E63 S head-to-head with its practical E53 stablemate

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

**T**he '43' badged AMG models of 2016 allowed drivers who couldn't quite afford to step through the front door at Affalterbach, to sneak in through a window, perch on a ledge and take in great whiffs of performance goodness seeping from the back rooms. These turbocharged six-cylinders – the C43, GLC43, E43 and so on – allowed keen operators to experience AMG suspension, braking and exhaust theatrics without needing to feed a V8. Before the 43s arrived, UK buyers unable to muster the funds for full-fat AMGs were pegged at '350' and '400' V6, or '500' V8 petrols from Mercedes' catalogue. It's no wonder AMG moved to plug this enormous price and performance void, much to the benefit of Mercedes devotees who didn't really want to venture elsewhere for their go-faster kicks, and also those peeping over the fence from seats of Audis and BMWs.

The AMG 43 cars were not welcomed by all, however. Diehard fans of the Affalterbach-based tuner accused it of yet more brand dilution following the launch of trim lines such as 'Engineered by AMG' and 'AMG Sport'. As exciting as these cars sounded (who couldn't love the idea of reviving AMG's '43'





badge?) – I also had my reservations. But then I spent a good week with a C43 Coupe which, through its supple ride quality, saucy induction note, involving handling and sticky four-wheel drive system lowered my guard like a crisis negotiator turned club doorman, convincing me there was something to the formula after all. And it was still very, very fast.

In fact, I thought the C43 was better in its execution than the non-S specification C63 model, whose leash felt artificially shortened to distance it from the top banger and was less enjoyable to drive as a result. I also appreciated the C43's standard-fit 4WD, which still fired 69 per cent of grunt to the rear wheels and probably made the C43 as fast as a rear-wheel drive C63 S in the right conditions.



These cars opened a new chapter for AMG and they have continued to evolve. In mid 2020, the E53 4Matic+ replaced the E43 and became the new stepping-stone between the mainstreamers and fire breathing E63 S; interestingly, there is no longer a 'base spec' E63. We recently had the chance to compare Estate

versions of the E53 and E63 S (both in Night Edition Premium Plus specs), to see what advances have been made to the AMG-lite package and how it stacks up against the V8. Findings were interesting, to say the least...

## AMG E63 S

The E63 S may mirror the E53's dimensions to the millimetre, but its snarling face is even more pronounced. The E53's front side intakes are blanked off, but the E63's serve real purpose, ➤

It's no wonder AMG moved to plug the enormous price and performance void with cars like the E53







The E63 S may mirror the E53's dimensions to the millimetre, but its snarling face is even more pronounced



△ Carbon part of Night Edition Premium Plus.

▷ funnelling air to additional radiators and the brakes. Both cars ride on 20-inch AMG wheels, but the E53 wraps them in Yokohama Advan Sport rubber while the E63 is fitted with even higher performing Michelin Pilot Sport 4S tyres that are slightly lower profile at the rear.

Both cars have deep side sills and a rear diffuser-style bumper insert, but the E53's pair of twin-pipes are oval-shaped and the E63's are trapezoidal. There are neat rear spoilers on each car too, which tidy air flowing off the roof. There's no doubt about it, though – painted the same colour rather than designo hyacinth red and Obsidian Black, many would find it hard to tell these AMG E-Classes apart. That's a good thing for E53 owners, but what about those drivers who've paid £104,150 OTR – an extra 30 grand – for the E63 S? I'm not sure...

This feeling of similarity extends to the cabins, which both feature two 12.3-inch dashboard displays linked to MBUX infotainment, some lovely AMG sports seats, a thick-rimmed AMG steering wheel with enlarged paddleshifters, and carbon fibre trim to ramp up the sporting ambience further still (the

◁△ Which tailpipe design do you prefer?

△ E63 S gets an additional Drift mode.

▽ Even bigger brakes on the full-fat E63 S.



E53 Premium model gets aluminium trim with a carbon-effect grain). It would take a good eye and sensitive hand to notice the E53's dashboard upholstery is man-made Artico leather rather than real nappa leather, as seen on the E63. Both wagons also feature 64-colour ambient lighting, a 590W Burmester surround sound system, and 640- to 1,820-litre boots.

### Push to start

These E-Classes split like atoms when you hit the engine starters, however. Whereas the E53's straight-six awakens with a sporting and fine-tuned whoop of revs, the V8 in the E63 S whumps and crackles before settling with a deeper timbre. Prod their respective throttles with exhaust flaps open and the E53 snaps out a wicked and nasally howl, while the E63's bellow penetrates deeper into your chest and the drum beat on overrun is delivered with more venom.

But which car to drive first? Maybe it's the red paintwork, or the thought of experiencing a 604bhp/627lb ft torque V8 biturbo engine on dry roads, but I choose the E63. Settled into



▽ E53's 19-inch AMG rims and strong brakes.

▷ We're big fans of the hazelnut brown leather.

▽▽ 4WD and AMG Ride Control+ on the E53 too.



a low and fantastically central driving position, I begin processing the overwhelming number of driving modes, which adjust everything from suspension stiffness and throttle response to exhaust volume and gearbox behaviour.

I start in the Dynamic Select's overarching Comfort mode to check if the E63 can still do relaxed – and yes, it can. The multi-chamber air suspension is tight and yet compliant enough to nurse a new-born. Even the full-bore AMG exhaust system quiets to a distant and rather delicious woofle, while throttle response is soft enough for super-smooth getaways that will no doubt boost fuel economy.

That's all marvellous for an estate that will push 200mph without a speed limiter, but what if you crank up the settings? Suddenly, the steering feels meatier, the engine and its twin-scroll turbos more alive, and the suspension allows more messages to make their way from road surface to posterior while continuing to filter the harshest of communications.

Now the E63 S feels ready to cope with its own firepower. All the slack has been removed from the system and it's time to unleash the afterburners. Deploying launch control at a standing start, 62mph arrives just over three seconds later and I swear the V8 is only just getting started. Even with Merc's 4Matic+ system controlling the action, the nine-speed AMG multi-clutch transmission deals a short shift to second gear to help traction off the line, and then all hell is let loose. The E63 S has been clocked at just over seven seconds to 100mph and that's entirely believable.

To my ears, the pre-facelift model was even louder at full chat (blame the latest European noise regs for that), but this thing still sounds like dynamite. Such is the powertrain and suspension's refinement, you don't need to hang onto that chunky helm for dear life with throttle pinned, but almost every muscle in your body screams for blood anyway, as that four-litre V8 hits its stride from 2,500rpm and pummels time and space to reach its 7,000rpm redline.

The thing is though, at 2m wide and 5m long the E63 is not exactly a small car. Even with an electronically managed limited-slip differential on the rear axle distributing thrust more



effectively, sometimes it feels as though you're pushing your luck on B-roads when exercising AMG's M177 engine. The steering offers more feel than your average E-Class's, but feedback remains fleeting. I do love its well-measured directness, though. The electro-mechanical system is alert without feeling nervous or edgy – very much a positive attribute as you tackle British back roads in this 2.1-tonne cannonball.

Thank goodness for such an immense braking system, which in standard form comprises 390x36mm front discs clamped by six-piston calipers up front, and 360x26mm discs grabbed by floating single-piston calipers at the rear. If you're venturing on track, the optional AMG Carbon Ceramic brake system with even larger discs should be just the ticket. A controlled environment is also the best place to try the E63's Drift mode, which effectively locks the 4Matic+ system in rear-wheel drive.

## AMG E53

Finally, the time has come to drive the E53 mild-hybrid and I'm rather excited about it. Behind that chrome grille lies a





▷ three-litre straight-six with turbocharger and electric compressor developing 429bhp/383lb ft torque, with assistance from an EQ Boost starter-alternator (ISG) throwing in an extra 21bhp/184lb ft torque for a brief time. Linked to a 48V electrical system including battery pack, this clever powertrain is orchestrated by a nine-speed AMG 'Torque Converter Transmission' (TCT) that doesn't have the wet start-up clutch of the E63's harder core MCT unit.

The E53 is 50kg lighter than its V8 counterpart and I'd be lying if I could tell, as it feels very much like the E63: utterly composed at legal road speeds (and beyond – so I'm told, officer), goes where you point it, responds best to smooth inputs, generates a bit of tyre drone at higher speeds. The in-line six-cylinder doesn't have the V8's active engine mounts and I don't think it needs them, as overall control is so impressive anyway. The front brake discs are slightly smaller than the E63's at 370x36mm and grabbed by four- rather than six-piston calipers, but they're still very good with a nice and progressive feel through the pedal.

Pootling along and basking in the hazelnut brown cabin, a long stretch of back road begs for faster progress. Flicking the Dynamic Select setting to Sport+ mode, immediately the gearbox delivers a lower gear, the revs rise, the engine emits a constant yowl and I floor the accelerator. AMG-lite? If this is an AMG-lite experience then where do I sign?

The three-litre M256's delivery is so remarkably silken, it's very easy to underestimate how fast you're travelling. There's a real sweet spot between 5,000 and 6,000rpm when peak power arrives, before the 6,500rpm redline calls time. The E53's TCT gearbox doesn't react quite as quickly to paddleshift inputs as the E63's MCT, but it's still an enjoyable unit to use in tandem with a vocal and punchy powerplant. Pluck a paddle and the straight-six sings in whole-hearted fashion. Yes, the E53 is not supercar fast like the E63 S, but it's still what you'd call a serious car. In fact, its high-tech powertrain makes it 0.1 seconds faster

to 62mph than an early, 211-series E63 wagon. A car with AMG's legendary 6.2-litre V8, no less.

Those expecting to feel a great kick of performance when the EQ Boost system comes into play will be disappointed by the way it discreetly goes about business. Although that doesn't mean it's a pointless addition. Coupled with that electric supercharger, they reduce turbo lag to the point of non-existence, sharing all their goodness before the big turbo spools and making the E53 feel particularly lively in its response to your right foot.

The EQ Boost electric motor also brings fuel-saving and emissions-slashing hybrid functions, such as aiding the engine's start/stop function, recuperating energy during braking, and offering a gliding mode that kills the engine for short periods of time when travelling downhill, for example. The E63's V8 can shut down four cylinders to save juice – a system notably used in the SLK55's M152 engine – but it can't match the E53 for sheer technological sophistication.

## Decision time

Rolling to a stop and gathering my thoughts, I'm faced with the choice of having too much power, or just enough power to distance my pride and joy from torque-monster oil burners. There's also a 30 grand saving to consider.

So good is the AMG suspension and four-wheel drive on these E-Classes, you need to be going extremely fast to fluster them even slightly. Not exactly point-and-shoot machines, they are nonetheless most comfortable with a (relatively) slow in, fast out approach to bends.

Once I'd become accustomed to the E63's rocket-like sound and acceleration, it was actually the E53 I enjoyed driving more. It made the V8 biturbo feel slightly old hat and will still reach 100mph from standing in around 10 seconds. Of course, there are always those drivers who always want more and that's why the E63 S exists. But me? I'd take the E53 and revel in its under-bonnet complexity with extra cash in my pocket.

The six-cylinder's delivery is so remarkably silken, it's very easy to underestimate how fast you're travelling

## Just the facts

### Mercedes-AMG E53 4Matic+ Estate (S213)

ENGINE **M256 2,999cc 6-cyl turbocharged/supercharged + electric motor**

POWER **429bhp@5,500-6,100rpm** TORQUE **383lb ft@1,800-5,800rpm**

TRANSMISSION **9-speed auto, 4WD** WEIGHT **2,025kg** 0-62MPH **4.5sec** TOP SPEED **155mph**

FUEL CONSUMPTION **29.4-29.7mpg** CO2 EMISSIONS **212-218g/km** YEARS PRODUCED **2020-on**

### Mercedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+ Estate (S213)

ENGINE **M177 3,982cc V8 biturbo**

POWER **604bhp@5,750-6,500rpm** TORQUE **627lb ft@2,500-4,500rpm**

TRANSMISSION **9-speed auto, 4WD** WEIGHT **2,075kg** 0-62MPH **3.5sec** TOP SPEED **180mph**

FUEL CONSUMPTION **22.8mpg** CO2 EMISSIONS **282g/km** YEARS PRODUCED **2020-on**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to WLTP







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# B R A K I N G B A D

Mercedes' Sensotronic Brake Control was set to revolutionise braking technology in cars, but things didn't quite work out that way. Piotr R Frankowski explains what went wrong with the early 2000s system

WORDS **PIOTR R FRANKOWSKI** IMAGES **MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG**

**T**here was a time when car engineers seemed fascinated with two acronyms – 'EHB' (electro-hydraulic brake) and 'EMB' (electro-mechanical brake). Those abbreviations stood for systems set to revolutionise the automotive industry in a way more spectacular than the change brought about by mobile phones for telecommunications. But they didn't. Mercedes-Benz became the early adopter of EHB technology in the early 2000s, and suffered. Here is the story.

All braking systems on the first vehicles were mechanical – a human limb applied force to a lever or pedal, and a purely mechanical apparatus transmitted that force to an object which would be brought in contact with a wheel or a drum. Later, all car braking systems became hydraulic which improved efficiency, reliability and safety. After that came the anti-lock braking system, which made

an avoidance manoeuvre possible while braking (something many drivers still do not understand).

Once ESP was established as a foundation for brake-based intervention, which happened without any conscious action on the part of the driver, the engineers wanted more. The then-current ABS systems were unable to cope with increased demand for services, for example with automatic brake application in stop-and-go traffic, and with more sophisticated stability control algorithms.

## One step forward...

An additional bonus: the installation of an electro-hydraulic (and later an electro-mechanical) braking system simplified the architecture of a car plus it made components and assembly cheaper. In an electro-mechanical system, electric actuators press brake pads against a disc, and they are connected to a





brake-by-wire system only with, well, wires. This in theory is the simplest solution, however it lacks a fail-safe element; should it fail, all that would be left would be a prayer. This idea lives on in electric parking brakes which are touted as a beneficial innovation, but in fact are used for three reasons: production cost, maintenance cost and space saving.

An EHB system, as conceived by industry leaders, did not completely do away with hydraulics, but removed a mechanical connection between the driver's foot and the actual brake pads pressing on a disc. The proprietary SBC system at Mercedes was just like that, its 'Sensotronic Brake Control' moniker notwithstanding. The brake pedal operated a so-called 'pedal feel simulator' which was just a little cylinder, filled with brake fluid, with a piston moving inside – very much like a simplified master cylinder. This device was supposed to help drivers operate the brakes basically without knowing that they were somewhat different. It also served as a non-assisted emergency brake, acting on the front wheels; a bit puny in relation to the performance of the cars in which it was used, but a failure of the main control unit was considered impossible.

### Enhanced features

In every situation, the electro-hydraulic SBC system would decide for the driver what braking force should be applied to each wheel and when, with ABS and ESP operation much swifter and more precise. There was no longer any need for a vacuum brake booster, nor for a brake proportioning valve serving the rear axle: all their functions were taken over by the highly capable control/pump unit. Additional automatic functions were also possible, for instance the periodic cleansing of brake discs while driving in the rain by repeated slight pressure of the pads. This would dry the rotors and remove a greasy salt film in winter.

A number of convenience functions were made available including anti-stall launch assist, a soft stop function (necessary because it was virtually impossible for the driver to control the



“The brake pedal operated a so-called ‘pedal feel simulator’”

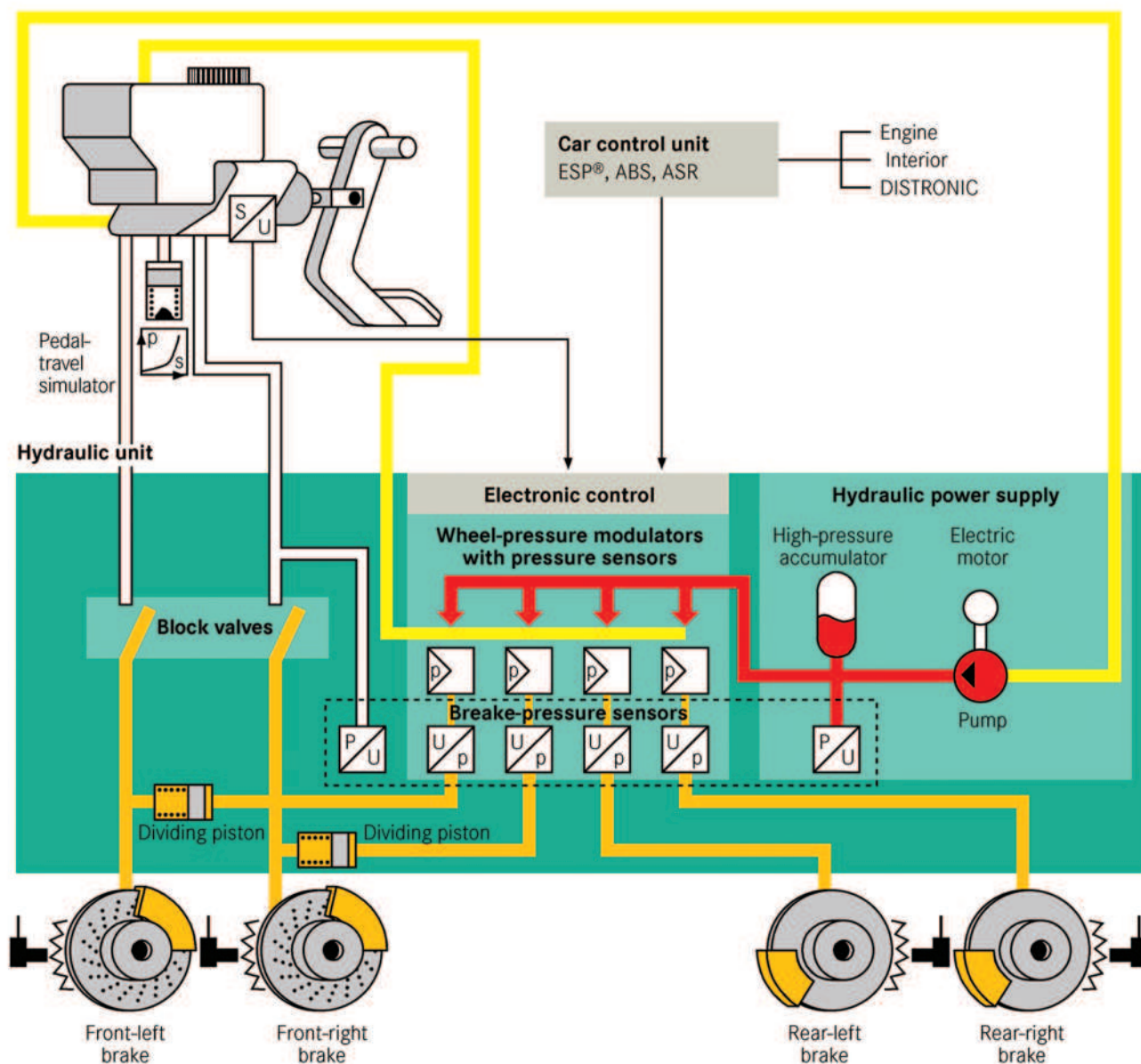


◁ Parts of the SBC system for 211-series Es.



## Sensotronic Brake Control: The high-pressure brake system of the new Mercedes-Benz SL-Class

### Actuation unit



▷ system with pedal pressure to achieve a smooth stop) and a function which would help to control the car in stop-and-go traffic.

As then current press releases gushed, there was a hugely tangible advantage which everyone could experience. "The usual vibration of the brake pedal when ABS sets in does not occur which, Mercedes engineers have found, is not only a comfort feature of the new system but also offers measurable safety benefits."

### System error

The system was installed in 211-series E-Classes, in the C219 CLS and the R230 SL, as well as in the Maybach 57/62 and the SLR McLaren. In theory, the SBC system was a showcase for engineering genius and was going to lead Mercedes-Benz to a great future with huge savings. In practice... it was not as reliable as expected.

The crisis began with reports of customers experiencing SBC

△ How SBC worked on the R230 SL Roadster.

failure and being left only with the very limited emergency hydraulic front brake actuation (using the brake pressure simulator). Braking performance under these circumstance was poor. SBC pumps which provided all hydraulic pressure in normal operation were found to fail after a certain number of 'cycles', and also electrical problems could cause the pump to cease working.

Another problem was caused by faulty pump pistons manufactured with substandard tolerances. People did not really understand how SBC operated (and many Mercedes-Benz owners still don't), but they were becoming apprehensive and this was affecting the sales of core models. The company had to act and began a massive recall, which was followed by another recall. In total, over 1.3 million cars were included. In order to avoid further expensive recalls, Stuttgart extended the warranty on the SBC pump.

▷ SBC units on Maybachs were not replaced.





“ In 2006, Mercedes quietly relaunched the E-Class and the CLS with conventional hydraulic braking systems ”

△ Mercedes issued a huge recall for SBC.

▽ Lessons were learned from the SBC launch.

## How much to fix?

“Millions!” Well, not quite. But Olly Stoner of independent Mercedes specialist, Prestige Car Service in Hampshire has a point. Using an early 211-series E-Class as an example, a new SBC unit/pump costs £2,405 (plus VAT) from Mercedes-Benz, while a refurbished system from the manufacturer is £1,923 (plus VAT). Fitting takes around 1.8 hours with a brake bleed, and Olly also suggests checking the brake pipes and hoses and changing them if corroded/perished.


“When SBC fails, it’s not necessarily the end of the world, and the system is more reliable than people think,” Olly reckons, adding that his own E-Class’s SBC passed 330,000 brake applications (this milestone the point at which SBC is known to give up the ghost) without failing.

When systems do fail, drivers will see a ‘Service brake visit workshop’ message coloured either in red (signifying SBC/pump failure) or white (system still operational but on the way out). As an aside, Prestige Car Service offers a way to reset this message.



## Putting it right

In 2006, Mercedes quietly relaunched the E-Class and CLS with conventional hydraulic braking systems, and soon after the SL. The systems installed on the SLR and on the Maybachs were left alone, as re-engineering those small-volume models was obviously cost-prohibitive. It must be noted that those particular solutions also differed from the one in the E, CLS and SL, and had much more redundancy built in. At the time of the changeover back to conventional brakes, Bosch ABS ECUs/pumps were already capable of the same additional functions which had been named as the main benefits of the SBC system, thus nullifying any advantage that electro-hydraulic brakes may have had. The cost advantage disappeared with the necessity for the massive recall and for re-engineering several models.

I distinctly remember arriving at the launch of the updated R230 SL in Mallorca and leafing through the thick press release: the abandonment of the SBC was mentioned in an oblique way in one single sentence. Mercedes-Benz learned from the fiasco and later always proceeded more cautiously when a major piece of completely new technology was introduced. 







# 1971: R107 SL

A titan of the modern classic era, the R107 SL was a new kind of Mercedes roadster that bundled incredible levels of safety and refinement with V8 power, and remains capable of carrying occupants from England to France and beyond at the drop of a hat

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG**

**R**ight from the outset, the SL was aimed primarily at the wealthy North American market. The 300SL Gullwing was unveiled in New York in 1954, as was the ‘baby’ 190SL, the bulk of both models delivered in the US while the succeeding 300SL Roadster of 1957 found the same customers, as did the W113 Pagoda seven years later.

The formula would be unchanged for the next SL, the 1971 R107, but with one fundamental difference: the cylinder count. Previous SLs had used six-cylinder engines (apart from the 190SL, which was four-pot), partly because European car taxes in some countries stifled a ‘big cube’ engine culture there, but by the second half of the 1960s the absence of a V8 in the Stuttgart armoury was beginning to look like a disadvantage. Stateside buyers loved the prestige and quality of the Mercedes-Benz marque, but where was the V8 motor that all the ‘domestics’ came with?

Mercedes did of course have the 6.3-litre M100 used in the 600 limousine and W109 300SEL 6.3, but the solution for volume production was the M116 3.5-litre V8 first seen in the W111 280SE 3.5 Coupe

△ Fabric and hardtops for the new Mercedes SL.

▽ Big bumpers of North American-spec roadsters.

and Cabriolet in late 1969, a sophisticated overhead-camshaft design featuring early digital management. It was this engine that helped the R107 assume an entirely different character to the model it replaced.

It was bigger and grander than the petite Pagoda, a boulevard cruiser instead of a sports car, and Mercedes strategists had perfectly anticipated what Americans wanted. It stayed in production for 18 years, almost three times the normal SL lifespan, Mercedes deciding to leave it be while the orders poured in and rival car makers, especially those in Detroit, failed to offer anything that could remotely pass as a credible alternative.



**A** total of 237,287 were built – the last cars all but identical on the outside to the early models – leaving it by far the most numerous SL generation to date. And this for a roadster launched at a time when, due to US safety





△ When it came to practicality, the R107 SL excelled.

◁ New cars at the Sindelfingen customer centre.

▷ R107 less supercar, more open top GT.



legislators, the very future of fully open cars looked in doubt.

Safety innovation was in fact seen throughout the R107, making the safety features on the Pagoda seem almost token gestures. For example, the fuel tank was moved from below the boot floor to a considerably less vulnerable position over the rear axle, and there were far fewer sharp switches and other protrusions on the fascia. The A-pillars had deflectors to channel away rain and aid driver visibility, and large tail light lenses with a ribbed surface enhanced lighting brightness.

Planned as a V8-only model, European-spec cars used the M117 3.5-litre producing 197bhp and 211lb ft torque and were badged 350SL, while US cars (also called the 350SL for the first year) ran with the M116 4.5-litre version of the same V8, a unit so emasculated with pollution filtering that it made just 192bhp.

A rude reminder that gasoline might not always be cheap or freely available came with the 1973 Middle East war, forcing Mercedes-Benz for the first time to be seen to be energy conscious. Its reaction was to install the recently introduced 2.7-litre M110 six-cylinder engine into the R107, badging it the 280SL and creating a nominal 'economy' model.

But the majority of R107s were V8s, and throughout the 1970s the 450SL was the clear favourite, the perfect tool for a sun-soaked highway cruise. It wasn't an American car, but was part of the American dream, especially as deft product placement fixed the R107 in the minds of TV viewers, most notably in the original series of *Dallas*, broadcast from 1978, and in *Hart to Hart* the following year.

## ***“It was bigger and grander than the petite Pagoda, a boulevard cruiser instead of a sports car”***

But those cruises would be unhurried, all the more so as the 1970s progressed, due to falling output from the US spec 4.5-litre V8 as ever tougher emissions regulations were met. By 1974, 450SLs sold in California had dropped to 178bhp, a state of tune extended to all other US states in 1975, while the very last Stateside 450s, in 1980, mustered a mere 158bhp.

For this diminished V8 model, matters were reset in spring 1980 when the 450SL became the 500SL, gaining a version of the all-alloy, five-litre V8 that had been developed for the World Rally Championship 450SLC 5.0 and subsequent 500SLC. In the SL, this produced 242bhp/289lb ft torque, and matters were also improved by the fitment of a four-speed automatic gearbox.

**B**y the end of production in August 1989, the R107 sported three great engines: the three-litre, straight-six M103 (300SL), and five- and 5.5-litre M117 (500SL, 560SL). Logically, Mercedes should have replaced the model series years earlier rather than waiting until the only other volume-made passenger cars that had been around longer were relics from a past motoring era, the Mini and Citroën 2CV, by which time its engineering was dated. But that didn't take into account the R107's unassailable spirit: as speculators hoovered up the last new cars available (some of which would remain unregistered for decades), this SL looked as elegant, fresh and charismatic as on the day it was revealed in April 1971. 📌



◁ SL withstands -25C in Mercedes' cold chamber.

◁◁ Early cabin with thin helm devoid of airbag.



# Cream of the crop

In the latest instalment of our buying-focused series, we reveal our top six used Mercedes for a budget of up to £25,000

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES DEALERS

As you've probably heard, UK used car prices are at an all-time high at the moment. But these inflated values are only temporary and will fall rapidly once current new car supply issues have been addressed, so please don't be persuaded to pay over the odds for a second-hand Mercedes this year. Fortunately, there are still plenty of sensibly priced, used Mercedes out there waiting for new owners, and we've highlighted five very different models which can all be bought for £25,000 or less.



Classic Heroes' car was built just before the last facelift.

## Convertible SL500 (R129)

**Meaty performance and plentiful supply make the R129 SL500 a popular modern classic choice. Yours should boast a high specification**

Launched in 1989, the R129 SL boasted a completely new design with a host of new features and enhanced chassis bracing to reduce scuttle shake. With styling that somehow looks more modern now that it did a few years ago, the SL500 delivers impressive V8 performance and always feels comfortable and sure-footed.

The original 500SL came with Mercedes' 326bhp M119 V8 and this motor was retained for R129's first facelift (in 1993) when the model was rebadged 'SL500'; in 1998 the M119 V8 was replaced by a more efficient M113 unit.

There are plenty of good R129 SL500s around, with our budget buying an immaculate 1997 example with a full service history record and just three owners – like this £24,000 Azurite Blue Mercedes Benz SL500 for sale at Classic Heroes in Sussex ([www.classicheroes.co.uk](http://www.classicheroes.co.uk)). A five-speed auto with cream/beige leather and a high spec, it had covered 121,000 miles and boasted the 326bhp M119 engine complete with an early form of variable valve timing.

### Just the facts

#### 500SL/SL500 (R129)

ENGINE M119 4,973cc V8

POWER/TORQUE 316-322bhp/332-347lb ft

TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD

0-62MPH 6.3sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

YEARS PRODUCED 1989-1998

**£25,000 BUYS YOU: 1997 SL500 with 110,000 miles**

**BUYING TIPS**  
Your R129 SL must possess a full service history and a plush spec with electric memory seats, a colour coded factory hardtop and a wind deflector. Scour the car for any signs of rust and only ever consider cherished examples with a low number of previous owners. Look out for failed vibration dampers, misbehaving electrics, water leaks in the boot, perished suspension components, blown fuel pumps and damaged hoods.



△ Azurite Blue paintwork and modest 16-inch alloy wheels.



△ Under the bonnet is Mercedes' fabulous M119 V8 engine.



△ The interior has aged very well despite its light colouring.



Milan Brown 450SE from 1979 offered for £16,995 with 71,000 miles.



**BUYING TIPS**  
With a Mercedes of this age, there are two overriding issues that would-be buyers must be most alert for – rust and expired rubber components. Aside from those aspects, you should watch for worn suspension and steering parts, plus worn fuel and brake lines and worn door and window seals. Not forgetting sagging headliners and seats, cracked wooded trim, worn leather and perished carpeting. However, the 450SE's mechanicals are very robust – refurbished engines can last 600,000 miles or more.

## Saloon 450SE (W116)

Arguably one of Mercedes' most attractive saloon designs, the W116 in 450SE guise is a dream to drive. Mercedes' classic 450SE, produced between 1972 and 1980, not only looks fantastic but is also a real treat to drive thanks to its V8 engine. Impeccably built and seriously spacious, every journey in a well-fettled 450SE is a real delight with impressive road holding, handling and ride comfort – courtesy of a state-of-the-art suspension system. The first S-Class was not the most luxuriously specced saloon in standard form, but Mercedes offered plenty of options to keep its wealthy customers happy.

The great news is that our 25 grand budget easily puts you behind the wheel of a perfectly restored 1979 example, like this V-reg 450SE for sale at Classic Connection in Hampshire ([www.classicconnection.co.uk](http://www.classicconnection.co.uk)) for £16,995. Finished in a stunning colour combination of Milan Brown metallic with a tan check MB-TEX interior, this car had covered just 71,000 miles and came with a comprehensive restoration photobook.

### Just the facts

**450SE (W116)**

ENGINE M117 4,520cc V8

POWER/TORQUE 222bhp/271lb ft

TRANSMISSION 3-speed automatic, RWD

0-62MPH 9.3sec

TOP SPEED 131mph

YEARS PRODUCED 1972-1980

**£25,000 BUYS YOU: 1979 450SE with 71,000 miles**



△ This W116 S-Class underwent a full bodywork restoration around six years ago – no wonder it shines!



MB-TEX and check fabric in tan shade complement the exterior perfectly.



## Coupe CL500 (C215)

**Look and feel a million dollars in Mercedes' palatial 215-series V8 Coupe. Just make sure you go through these cars with a fine-toothed comb**

Mercedes' range-topping C215 CL has an air of elegance and exclusivity that little else can match. And the best-selling model – the CL500 – is a classic in waiting. Fortunately, you don't have to be super rich to buy one, with our £25,000 budget sufficient for a one- or two-owner, concours CL500 from 2006 with less than 40,000 miles on the clock. And frankly, this is a steal for a four-seater coupe that's better appointed than the honeymoon suite at the Ritz and comes with Active Body Control suspension to help keep the car level even in the fastest of corners.

Although £25,000 buys a mint condition CL500 with a seven-speed auto from late in production, these don't come up for sale very often, so unless you're prepared to wait for months then you are better off bagging an earlier five-speed auto instead. And they are much cheaper too – with something like this immaculate Chalcedony Blue metallic, 37,000-mile, three-owner example yours for just £10,975 at Silverwood Cars Limited in Tyne and Wear ([www.silverwoodcars.co.uk](http://www.silverwoodcars.co.uk)).



### Just the facts

#### CL500 (C215)

ENGINE **M113 4,966cc V8**

POWER/TORQUE **302bhp/339lb ft**

TRANSMISSION **5-speed automatic, RWD**

0-62MPH **6.5sec**

TOP SPEED **155mph**

YEARS PRODUCED **1999-2006**

**£25,000 BUYS YOU: 2006 CL500 with 40,000 miles**

### BUYING TIPS

Your CL500 must come with full service history and no signs of rust. Other key things to watch out for include poorly shifting gearboxes, oil leaks, illuminated engine warning lights, and knocks or creaks from the suspension. Ask to see the emissions printout from the last MOT to be sure that the exhaust catalysts are working. Any wiring damage inside the hinged door harnesses can be expensive to fix.

△ Twin exhausts and parking sensors included.

△△ A lovely ice blue tint to the factory paintwork.

< You don't need big bucks to get yourself in here.



This blue-black metallic wonder was priced at under 12 big ones.

### BUYING TIPS

Inspect the 124's bodywork and chassis thoroughly, as any hidden corrosion could prove ruinously expensive to put right. Spots particularly popular for the tin worm include the leading edge of the bonnet, the front and rear wings, the crossmember below the sump, the brake lines, the underbody and the bottom of the C-pillars. But the E220's engine is bulletproof, with very high mileages possible if properly maintained.



## SUV ML63 AMG (W164)

**Once the most powerful naturally-aspirated SUV in the world, the ML63 AMG is still an impressive beast**

High performance SUVs are all the rage now of course, but back in 2006 when Mercedes launched its ML63 AMG at the North American International Auto Show they were still something of a novelty. Some 16 years later, its thundering V8 performance means this 503bhp SUV is still one of the quickest ways to get from A to B – with the benchmark 0-62mph dash taking just five seconds. And being a top AMG model, the ML63 also vaunts a lavish spec. Facelifted 2008 to 2011 models have new headlights, redesigned front and rear bumpers, a larger front grille and a restyled interior.

Our £25,000 budget would stretch to a 2010 ML63 AMG with around 60,000 miles. But these rarely come to market. Pre-facelifted examples are much better value, with something like this 60,000-mile, 2007 example at Specialists Cars in Manchester ([www.specialistcars.co.uk](http://www.specialistcars.co.uk)) going for just £16,999. With a full service history and 19-inch alloy wheels, it looked pretty much perfect.



### BUYING TIPS

You must inspect any prospective ML63 AMG for a number of potential issues, which include underbody off-road damage, worn shocks, failed steering pumps, worn camshafts and camshaft adjusters, broken head bolts, misbehaving gearboxes and cracked radiators. A full M-B or specialist service history is a must, and there were three recalls on the W164 – make sure the relevant work has been carried out.



### Just the facts

#### ML63 AMG (W164)

ENGINE 6,208cc V8

POWER/TORQUE 503bhp / 465lb ft

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, 4WD

0-62MPH 5.0sec

TOP SPEED 155 mph

YEARS PRODUCED 2006-2011

**£25,000 BUYS YOU: 2010 ML63 AMG with 60,000 miles**

△△△ Early ML63 still has serious road presence.

△△ Four pipes out back hint at the V8 up front.

▷ The ML's cabin feels solid and is very practical.



## Wagon E220 Estate (S124)

**Mercedes' do-it-all modern classic wagon offers epic build quality, celebrated reliability and various features that modern car drivers will appreciate**

A practical modern classic if ever there was one, 124-series Estates are highly durable even with what was pretty advanced automotive technology at the time. Available in five- or optional seven-seat configurations, our budget buys the best possible, facelifted seven-seater from towards the end of the car's 1993 to 1996 production run. All 124-series Estates, including the E220, feature sophisticated rear suspension with self-levelling – perfect for transporting heavy loads.

Our £25,000 would theoretically buy a concours condition, 1996 E220 Estate with every conceivable factory option – and still leave you with change. But cars like this hardly ever appear for sale, so a rust-free Japanese import model could be your next best option, something like this seven-seat, blue-black metallic example from 1994 at Specialist Cars ([www.specialistcars.net](http://www.specialistcars.net)) in Yorkshire. With 83,000 miles, it was up for a mere £11,995.

### Just the facts

#### E220 Estate (S124)

ENGINE M102 1,998cc 4-cyl

POWER/TORQUE 148bhp / 155lb ft

TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD

0-62MPH 11.6sec

TOP SPEED 120mph

YEARS PRODUCED 1993-1996

**£25,000 BUYS YOU: 1996 E220 Estate with 25,000 miles**



◁◁ Unusual rear spoiler; eight-hole alloy wheels.

◁ This 1993 E220 was imported from Japan.

▷ Right-hand drive and air conditioning.





The SLK55 is a treat for the senses with the metal roof up or down.

**BUYING TIPS**  
The SLK55 AMG appears to be one of Mercedes' most reliable modern vehicles, but the key areas to check according to owners are the cam covers - which can sometimes leak - and the brake pads and discs that wear rapidly and can be expensive to replace. Put the gearbox through its paces, and test every electrical item carefully. With 16 spark plugs to change, the major services are expensive.

## Future classic SLK55 AMG (R171)

**Small but perfectly formed, the SLK55 AMG is a guaranteed future classic thanks to its sharp looks and even sharper performance**

Mercedes' glamorous R171 SLK55 AMG is a little monster. Capable of fierce acceleration yet wonderfully composed when it needs to be, the SLK55 is also lavishly equipped. You can buy a mint 2008 example with just 45,000 miles for £25,000.

The Roadster's 355bhp M113 V8 pulls hard from 2,000rpm and claims 376lb ft of torque, with impressive acceleration in every gear. The 0-62mph sprint takes just 4.9 seconds and under heavy throttle the SLK55 AMG's melodious exhaust sets your spine tingling. Manufactured from 2005 to 2011, with a gentle facelift in 2008, the factory spec includes almost everything in Mercedes' options cupboard at the time.

You could buy a pristine 2008 car for £25,000, but as with our previous contender, pre-facelifted examples are better value. A low-mileage 2005 SLK55 AMG like this Iridium Silver example advertised for £19,990 at Snippers Gate in Tyne and Wear ([www.snippersgate.co.uk](http://www.snippersgate.co.uk)) looked just as good and drives pretty much as well as later cars. With a full service history record and a mere 37,000 miles on the clock, it packs an all-embracing specification too.

### Just the facts

#### **SLK55 AMG (R171)**

ENGINE **M113 5,439cc V8**

POWER/TORQUE **355bhp/376lb ft**

TRANSMISSION **7-speed auto, RWD**

0-62MPH **4.9sec**

TOP SPEED **155mph**

YEARS PRODUCED **2012-2015**

**£25,000 BUYS YOU: 2008 SLK55 AMG with 45,000 miles**



△ Iridium Silver metallic paint suits the second-generation SLK, which is ageing very nicely indeed.



△ This car's spec included Comand sat nav, Airscarf neck heating and electric seats with memory.



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# Quick appreciation

With UK buyers tightening their purse strings, now could be a great time to bag an AMG bargain, as our UK market expert reveals

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES VELVIS CARS, TEWIN CAR SALES & RICHARD HARRIS CARS



C32 AMG at Velvis Cars was offered for £11,995 with 65,000 miles.



**T**here was a time when owning a Mercedes that carried the ultimate AMG badge was a lifetime goal – and buying one cost a pretty packet. But a proliferation of AMG-badged models released over the last decade, combined with the increasing importance of fuel efficiency, and a so-called ‘cost of living crisis’, have led to falling values on many older models – and the potential to unearth some serious AMG bargains.

However, they remain high performance driving machines, so owning an older AMG will inevitably come with elevated ownership costs. But if you’re not intending to cover a large annual mileage, or have access to a more cost-efficient daily driver then treating yourself to a slightly older AMG Mercedes won’t necessarily break the bank. And if you can afford a model that’s only a few years away from claiming classic status then it could prove a sound longer-term investment.

If you’re looking for the very best bargains of this age then it’s wise to steer clear of AMG roadsters – as these can retain greater value – and seek out saloons or coupes instead. Sticking to AMGs with less than 85,000 miles or so will help to keep the car’s future value as high as possible, and may also mean you have to spend less on maintenance over the next few years. And although these criteria will limit your pool of potential purchases, there are still plenty of AMGs out there that fit the bill.

The rare W203 C32 AMG Saloon is a perfect example – especially if you can find one in as good condition as this stunning Brilliant Silver



△ 2004 CL55 with 76,000 miles had a sticker price of £15,995.



△ C63 is a fan favourite; Tewin’s example yours for £16,995.

metallic, 2004 example for sale at Velvis Cars ([www.velviscars.co.uk](http://www.velviscars.co.uk)) in Essex. Advertised for £11,995, it had covered just 65,000 miles and had been owned for nine years by the last of its four owners.

## Supercharged

There are only around 200 C32 AMGs left on UK roads, with this mint four-door packing a history file containing related paperwork, old MOTs and receipts and the original handbooks. A full Mercedes-Benz service record shows that

the latest service in May 2022 included new spark plugs and a replacement water pump. If you can find a C32 AMG in anything like this condition, it may very well appreciate over the next five years.

The C32 AMG isn’t the only great-value Mercedes-AMG saloon around at the moment though, with the later W204 C63 AMG also a prime candidate for bargain hunters. This silver, 2008 saloon at Tewin Car Sales ([www.tewincars.co.uk](http://www.tewincars.co.uk)) in Hertfordshire, for instance, could be yours for just £16,995 – and it came with just 70,300 miles and a full service history record. There are others like it around too, but make sure yours packs a plush spec like this one for maximum future resale value – a Harman Kardon Logic 7 Surround Sound System, 18-inch AMG alloys, an electric glass sunroof, AMG nappa leather, heated seats and Speedtronic cruise control are all essential items.

For similar money you could, however, pick up an even more exclusive model, the C215 CL55 AMG Kompressor. A rare sight nowadays – there may be less than 100 examples on UK roads – this particular blue, 76,800-mile, 2004 car had just three former keepers, came with full Mercedes-Benz history and was advertised for £15,995 at Richard Harris Cars ([www.richardharriscars.com](http://www.richardharriscars.com)) in Merseyside. Fast and palatally equipped, a low-mileage CL55 like this would make a great investment, and one that you can continue to enjoy on a regular basis.

► Looking for a droptop? Then check out our top three £15,000 Mercedes roadsters on page 76!



## Forecourt find

## 500SEC (C126)

Grand and imposing, Mercedes' 126-series 500SEC is built to last, and last. And if you can find a great example, such as this rust-free, 1989, four-speed automatic equipped car we spotted at Slades Garage in Buckinghamshire, then you have done well.

Advertised for £25,950, the striking two-door coupe had covered a lowly 80,000 miles and came with blue metallic paintwork, contrasting grey leather upholstery, power steering, anti-lock brakes, electric windows, electric mirrors, cruise control, air conditioning, heated electric seats, an electric sunroof and self-levelling rear suspension.

The last owner rebadged it as a range-topping 560SEC, but it comes with its original 500SEC badge, a full service history, the original manuals, service book, a folder full of old MOTs and service receipts. The car has been stored in a climate-controlled garage for the last 22 years, apparently.

**Dealer information:** Slades Garage  
Tel: 01494 812115  
Web: [www.slades-garage.co.uk](http://www.slades-garage.co.uk)



△ Kept in a climate-controlled garage for the last 22 years.

▷ Grey leather and wood trim; four-speed automatic gearbox.

▽ Ignore the 560 badge - this is a 1989 500SEC model.



## Top tips

## Used Car Warranties

## The pros and cons

- ⊕ If you buy a used Mercedes from a franchised dealership it should come with a warranty, but level of cover can depend on the car in question. So make sure you check what is covered and what's excluded.
- ⊕ Although Mercedes-Benz Approved Used warranties cover mechanical and electrical component failure, interior trim and some bodywork issues, wear and tear problems are excluded. If a non-insured component damages any other parts they aren't covered.
- ⊕ All warranty policies have an excess, in addition to your monthly or annual premiums. And this can sometimes be sizeable - so it may not be worth claiming for smaller problems.
- ⊕ Approved Used Cars are nearly always more expensive than equivalent vehicles on sale elsewhere, and you can buy an independent used car warranty instead - so compare the costs of both options before you buy.
- ⊕ Balance the cost of any warranty against the likely risk. A warranty for a low-value but reliable Mercedes model may not be worth it, but it could be a great idea for an expensive, but less reliable model.
- ⊕ Check the small print carefully for exclusions. Most policies specify when the car must be serviced and include maximum claim limits for different types of problems.
- ⊕ Many policies exclude things like diagnostic fees, and some also exclude problems that regularly affect older Mercedes - like lighting, interior trim, tyres, electrical items, exhausts and suspension issues.



## Auction spotlight

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

● **CLK220 CDI Coupe Avantgarde**  
2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/56 plate,  
123,000 miles, **£2,550**

● **CLS320 CDI**  
3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/57 plate,  
103,000 miles, **£5,250**

● **SL500 Roadster**  
5.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2006/56 plate,  
105,000 miles, **£8,000**

● **B180 Sport**  
1.6-litre, petrol, auto, 2016/66 plate,  
31,000 miles, **£14,400**

● **CLA180 Coupe AMG Sport**  
1.6-litre, petrol, manual, 2017/67 plate,  
17,000 miles, **£20,600**

● **GLA180 AMG Line Limited Edition**  
1.6-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19 plate,  
20,000 miles, **£23,100**

● **A200 AMG Line Premium Plus**  
1.3-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/68 plate,  
21,000 miles, **£23,800**

● **AMG SLC43 Roadster**  
3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2017/17 plate,  
38,000 miles, **£24,700**

● **AMG SLK55 Roadster**  
5.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2015/65 plate,  
37,000 miles, **£25,700**

● **C300d Coupe AMG Line Premium**  
2.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2019/19 plate,  
13,000 miles, **£28,200**

● **GLE250d 4Matic AMG Night Edition Premium** 2.1-litre, diesel, auto,  
2018/18 plate, 58,000 miles, **£28,900**

● **E220d Estate AMG Line**  
2.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2019/19-plate,  
33,000 miles, **£30,200**

● **GLC220d 4Matic Coupe AMG Line Premium** 2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2018/18 plate,  
25,000 miles, **£30,300**

● **AMG C43 4Matic Cabriolet Premium Plus** 3.0-litre, petrol, auto,  
2018/18-plate, 19,000 miles, **£32,600**

● **S500 L AMG Line**  
3.0-litre petrol, auto, 2018/18 plate,  
11,000 miles, **£46,000**

## 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 roadsters

Some manufacturers would have you believe that the British passion for droptops has waned over the last couple of years, but demand remains high for roadsters in the used market – and Mercedes-Benz has produced some of the finest contenders. Perhaps surprisingly, many of these convertibles are also very affordable, with a £15,000 budget opening the

door to an array of options with a three-pointed star emblem on the nose. For this issue of *Mercedes Enthusiast*, we've scoured the classified to highlight three of the current best buys for those looking to spend this kind of money on Stuttgart's finest. Offerings range from a modern classic SL to five-year old SLC with turbocharged four-cylinder engine.



## SL500 (R129)

If it's prestige you're after then it has to be a Mercedes SL, with a well-maintained, 130,000-mile SL500 from 1995 within budget. Specialists are the best place to look, with a few coming up for sale every month. Your SL500 should possess a mint leather interior, the detachable factory hardtop, a wind deflector, electric memory seats, climate control, full Mercedes-Benz/specialist service history, no sign of rust and a long MOT. Cherished examples usually come with a complete history file.



## SLK350 (R171)

Fancy something a bit more sporty? Then our budget bags a swift-footed, 2010 SLK350 with around 30,000 miles. With a 5.4-second 0-62mph time and 18-inch alloy wheels, it's guaranteed to impress – and that M272 V6 engine sounds fantastic. Facelifted in 2008, these later SLK350s benefit from more power (301bhp), a higher redline, throttle blips from the 7G-Tronic auto's downshifts, and slightly improved fuel economy and emissions. Most have had relatively few owners and been maintained to a high standard.



## SLC200 (R172)

From the start of 2016, Mercedes rebranded the SLK as an SLC, which wasn't a universally popular decision. As a result, you can now pick up some of the earliest, 181bhp SLC200 AMG Line models for as little as £15,000. Admittedly, they're likely to have around 80,000 miles on the clock, but as long as the SLC200 you're looking at claims a pristine service record and no obvious faults then there should be little to worry about. With lively performance, an automatic car's top speed is 147mph, but you can still return a handy 47.9mpg.

## Latest products and accessories

### Pioneer VREC-130RS dash cam

Pioneer has released a new high performance, entry level VREC-130RS full HD dash camera – a front-facing entry level model that offers a generous level of camera features in a small package. These include a wide 132-degree recording angle, a two-inch colour IPS LCD screen, full HD recording, plus three different recording modes: 'Normal' (continuous), 'Event' and 'Photo', as well as still image capture. Installation is simple, with a swivel cradle and cigarette lighter power cable included, and the retail price is £69.99. Full details and a list of stockists can be found at [www.pioneer-car.eu](http://www.pioneer-car.eu).



### Genuine Mercedes-Benz clothing – Mens polo shirt

If you're looking for a summer polo shirt either for yourself, or as a gift, then this stylish White and Energy Blue polo shirt from Mercedes-Benz could be the ideal choice. Breathable and moisture regulating, thanks to Coolmax EcoMade, it comes with single-rib cuffs, a tri-coloured neck band and is available in slim fit sizes S to XXL.

Available through all Mercedes-Benz dealerships, the recommend retail price is £110.



### EBC brake discs for A45

EBC Racing's acclaimed two-piece, fully floating brake discs are now available for AMG's A45, GLA45 and CLA45 models. Ideal for fast road and track use, they are usually a simple bolt-on upgrade and allow the outer cast-iron friction ring to expand freely with temperature, totally eliminating disc warping. Discs are grooved to allow the pad to vent, with race-derived, G3500-grade, high-carbon cast iron is used for the friction rings and aluminium bells that are hard anodised for longevity. Check out [www.ebcbrakes.com](http://www.ebcbrakes.com) for more information.



# In Focus **CLA220 diesel Coupe** (C117)

The 2013 to 2018 CLA220 CDI/CLA220d Coupe looks expensive but may be more affordable than you'd think. There are over 250 used examples offered for sale in the UK, priced from £12,500. The most popular colours are black and white (making up 48% of the total), and a facelift occurred in 2016

## 60-second buying guide

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

### Walk around

You'll garner plenty of admiring looks as long as your CLA's bodywork and wheels are in tip-top condition. Check for kerbed alloys, rusty brake discs, bonnet stone chips, scuffed mirrors, misbehaving parking sensors and any sign of paint peeling around the rear wheelarches. Yours should come with the optional panoramic sliding sunroof.

### Get inside

Test every electrical item carefully - a few owners

have reported glitches. And listen out for any strange noises from the electric seats or sunroof. For maximum residual value your CLA should have Comand Online sat nav, heated front seats, and 18-inch AMG alloys. If it has the AMG Exclusive or Night packages then even better.

### Start it up

The CLA220d's 2,143cc four-cylinder turbodiesel engine produces a strong 258lb ft of torque at just 1,400rpm, plus 168bhp (175bhp at the facelift), so overtaking in all gears should feel easy - any

hesitation should set alarm bells ringing. And although the official combined fuel consumption is an impressive up to 70mpg, most owners report achieving around 55mpg on longer journeys.

### Check the paperwork

Ideally, your CLA220d should have had no more than two or three owners and must come with a spotless service history, with no missing services. A few examples do possess a full M-B service record, but a Mercedes specialist history after three years is fine - however you must check that all M-B recalls have been addressed.



CLA diesel looks great, goes well and sips fuel at a miserly rate.



## GAZ custom build suspension kits

Suspension manufacturer GAZ produces products for many Mercedes, but if you can't find one for your vehicle, or you require something more specialised, then GAZ can create bespoke suspension kits to your own specifications. Adjustable ride height, damper rates and lowered, uprated, suspension springs can all be specified, and these now feature a new GAZ black zinc protective finish, as well as the white GAZ logo. All custom units are individually tested before leaving the factory and are covered by a two-year warranty. For further details visit [www.gazshocks.com](http://www.gazshocks.com)



## Top Mercs

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

### The top 10 best-selling used Mercedes

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

- 1 **C-Class** (23.6%)
- 2 **A-Class** (18.7%)
- 3 **E-Class** (14.7%)
- 4 **GLC-Class** (6.5%)
- 5 **GLA-Class** (5.5%)
- 6 **GLE-/M-Class** (5.5%)
- 7 **CLA-Class** (4.6%)
- 8 **SLK-/SLC-Class** (3.9%)
- 9 **B-Class** (2.9%)
- 10 **S-Class** (1.9%)



### What's in a colour?

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

- 1 **Black** (28.3%)
- 2 **Silver** (20.4%)
- 3 **White** (16.1%)
- 4 **Grey** (17.0%)
- 5 **Blue** (10.4%)



### Miles ahead

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

Less than 50,000 miles **60.0%**

Between 50,000 and 80,000 miles **21.5%**

More than 80,000 miles **18.5%**

### Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

Diesel	Petrol	Hybrid	Full electric
<b>57.1%</b>	<b>38.6%</b>	<b>3.60%</b>	<b>0.70%</b>



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**The E400 proved that a V8 was no longer essential for muscular performance**



# Top two-doors

**With handsome looks, a fantastically responsive V6 twin-turbo engine and robust build quality, the 207-series E400 Coupe and Cabriolet make great used buys**

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY & MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

**F**or most of the production life of the 207-series E-Class Coupe and Cabriolet, 2009 to 2016, diesel was king. The price list for this sleek, pillarless two-door began with the oil burning models, 2.1-litre four-cylinder and three-litre V6 which were the main sellers, with the two petrol models tacked on the end almost as a token gesture and not expected to attract much attention.

But in 2013/2014, before 'Dieselgate' consumed the European car industry and forced a radical rethink on the promotion of diesel-engined models,

Mercedes slipped a gem of a petrol 207-series into the mix when the twin-turbo E400 was introduced, immediately neutralising the argument that the V6 diesel was a superior all-round drive to this 3.0-litre and then (from September 2014) 3.5-litre petrol-engined model. With 328bhp and 354lb ft torque, but still close on 40mpg on the combined cycle, it proved that a V8 was no longer essential for muscular performance.

The 207-series E400, first in AMG Sport guise before adopting the then new AMG Line title, was a short-lived car because by then the next generation of E-Class Coupe and Cabriolet was in the

wings. Nonetheless, Mercedes shifted enough units in two years to leave a good choice for used car buyers, and these cars are now in a reasonably affordable £15,000 to £25,000 price window. But of course, forced induction brings added complications, so how do the E400 Coupe and Cabriolet, many of which will be heading to a six-figure mileage, rate as a second hand prospect?

## **Design and engineering**

To see where the hard and soft top 207s fit into the Mercedes family, we need to look back to 2009 when the model first appeared. This wasn't merely another

expensive two-door from Stuttgart, but a rebirth of the 'proper' E-Class Coupe, which had not existed since the mid-1990s when the much-loved 124-series Coupe/Cabriolet gave way to two generations of CLKs. These models did not command the same respect as the 124, most notably due to their lesser build quality.

The 207 rectified matters with its bigger presence, superior comfort and refinement and more solid feel, placing it in a different league to the preceding 209-series CLK. Mercedes' hard-to-resist finance deals also helped make the two-door E-Class a common sight



**Spotted  
for sale**  
**PRIVATE SELLER**  
**E400 Coupe**  
2014, Obsidian Black, black leather,  
three owners, 63,700 miles,  
Reading, £16,495



## Just the facts

### Mercedes-Benz E400 Coupe/ Cabriolet (C/A207)

ENGINE M276 3.498cc V6 biturbo

POWER 328bhp@5,250-6,000rpm

TORQUE 354lb ft@1,200-4,000rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,735/1,845kg

0-62MPH 5.2/5.3sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 40.9/39.2mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 161/168g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2014-2016

*All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speeds electronically limited; pre-September 2014 cars have a 2,996cc V6 with identical power and torque*

on the road given the £30,000 to £48,000 list price span.

In the 207's early years, the six-cylinder petrol option was the E350 CGI BlueEfficiency with its normally aspirated M272 3.5-litre engine, rated at 288bhp/269lb ft, this later becoming the E350 BlueEfficiency, while the flagship was the E500, its 5.4-litre V8 producing 382bhp/391lb ft; it would evolve into the turbocharged E500 BlueEfficiency. The V6 and V8 cars had a 7G-Tronic seven-speed automatic gearbox as standard. The Cabriolet models, with the same powertrains, appeared in 2010.

A mid-term facelift was applied in early summer 2013, bringing with it the customary mix of visual and technical changes. Gone were the two-piece headlamps, replaced by a single lens unit containing partial LED lights, while a revised bumper had a more pronounced V-shape and sat below a new grille. At the rear, the lights and bumper were new.

On the Cabriolet, the Aircap wind deflector now automatically

engaged at over 25mph and automatically closed at speeds below 10mph, while the roof could be opened or closed in 20 seconds at up to 25mph. At that point, two trims were available, the SE on 17-inch wheels and AMG Sport with twin-spoke 18s and a number of AMG enhancements including a bodykit, twin tailpipes and nappa leather trimmed steering wheel with a flat bottom.

What was effectively the last of the line 207-series, the E400 with its M276 biturbo engine, was on the price list for the 2014 model season, at £46,000, the other petrol offering the two-litre E200. The E400 retained the seven-speed autobox, never receiving the nine-speeder that some other E-Class models got.

The sole trim level was AMG Line which included 18- or 19-inch wheels, uprated braking with perforated calipers, Agility Control Sports suspension and LED Intelligent Light System, while inside you saw leather AMG sports seats, AMG steering wheel

and a Harman Kardon Logic 7 surround sound system. That high spec left just a few cost options, such metallic paint, a reversing camera, panoramic sunroof, a Driving Assistance Package (Active Blind Spot Assist, Active Lane Keeping, Distronic and more), and Aircarf for the Cabrio.

## Driving the E400

There will be some who feel that the 207-series E-Class is too low slung for a Mercedes pillarless coupe, and prefer the higher up seating position of the 124 ancestor; you can't, for example, drape an arm over the top of the door because it's too high in relation to the seat. But otherwise the 207s delight in every way.

They're among the generation of Mercedes appearing in the late 2000s that felt better made and more expensive inside than what had gone before. The front seats are comfortable and supportive, and rear seat accommodation is good in both versions. By those years, Mercedes really had sorted handling, with a beautiful poise

replacing the safe but slightly leaden feel of predecessors, and the equal of any BMW.

All this you would enjoy in an early 207-series, but what the E400 brings is the perfect engine for a middleweight Mercedes. The M276 revs sweetly and quietly, and, unlike the old M272, has lots of usable torque – the full 354lb ft is available from just 1,200rpm, barely more than tickover.

## What you'll pay

Despite not being a big seller, there are enough E400s out there for a decent enough choice, Auto Trader, for example, showing 20 for sale when we checked. You'll find a 2014 Coupe for £15,000, but it will have a six-figure mileage or close to it; add £1,500 and mileage can drop to 60,000 miles.

On independent used car dealer forecourts, £20,000 gets a well maintained Coupe with as few as 20,000 miles. With so few miles, it is more likely to have been privately rather than company owned, increasing its chances of having been cosseted.

Judging by asking prices, there's more demand for the Cabriolet than for the Coupe, the differential more than the £3,700 when new in 2015. Al fresco motoring in an E400 is going to cost you at least £22,000. That said, droptops at this money are likely to have a lower mileage, some having been weekend car indulgences.

The E400 is still to be seen at franchised Mercedes-Benz dealers, and you may have to pay more for the Mercedes-Benz warranty, which no used car dealer can hope to better. Around £23,000 is probably the lowest you'll see. ▶



# E400 Coupe/Cabrio Inside and out



## Specialist overview

Sam Bates of SPR Autos in Greater Manchester

*"Overall, the M276 engine seems pretty good. There aren't many of the E400 around, but those I have dealt with have just required routine servicing. However, I would recommend using E5 high octane fuel. Why? This is a high performance, direct-injection engine so give it the best stuff!"*

[mercedescarservicing.co.uk](http://mercedescarservicing.co.uk)

SPR's website has info on a variety of maintenance topics, and the company has also posted YouTube videos on common repair jobs.

## Powertrain

- On the early versions of the M276 engine, the timing chain tensioners could make a rattling noise. This is most likely to occur in the five or so seconds from a cold start. Mercedes-Benz recommends fitting a new timing chain tensioner, and has opened a case on the matter, therefore a good Mercedes specialist will be able to access the details.
- The most common gearbox issue is the electronic speed plates failing, causing 'limp home' mode to kick in. Effectively, the transmission becomes stuck in gear, unable to shift up or down. This can be a costly fix, however Mercedes-Benz does provide an exchange service for reconditioned units.
- Check the service history for gearbox servicing. Online you'll see varying advice about when this should be carried out, but do it at 40,000 miles to be safe.



Turbocharged V6 has plenty of grunt and is not too bad on fuel.

## Suspension, steering and braking system

- On the move, listen carefully for any knocks and bangs. The front suspension is a multi-link arrangement and features various ball joints, which can wear out. It's a good idea to check the car's MOT history for any 'advisories' on the suspension, as you may be picking up the bill for them next time around. Other than this, the coil springs can break randomly, as they do on many modern cars.
- Looking through the wheels, check the condition of the brake discs, substantial wear indicated by a visible lip at the outer edge. Test the brakes from a reasonable speed, and also feel for any vibration through the brake pedal and steering wheel; this is likely to be present when the discs are warped. Again, MOT advisories can offer useful clues about condition.
- It makes sense to use official Mercedes brake

pads and discs, as the quality is very high and the cost not appreciably more than from other, independent sources.

- The 207-series E-Class's steering pre-dates modern electric systems, the power-assistance

equipped with a conventional hydraulic pump and not usually troublesome. Anything other than rock-steady steering could suggest out-of-true wheel alignment - uneven tyre wear another symptom of this problem.



E400 has adjustable dampers with Sport and Comfort settings.





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## Bodywork and wheels

- Its body panels are galvanised, so if there's any rust on a 207-series it must be due to poorly repaired crash damage. Even any stone chippings collected on the leading edge of the bodywork should not have turned into rust at this stage in the car's life.

- On the Cabriolet, operate the hood with the engine at idle, drive the car, and check hood operation again to ensure all the sensors are working. Do this without switching the engine off, to avoid resetting the ignition cycle in case there is a fault, because turning off the ignition could reset any fault codes. Always

operate the hood with the car running, ensuring the pump is getting full power, because if the car has stood unused for a while the battery could be low.

- Most, if not all Mercedes wheels of this era suffer corrosion around the centre caps. But wheels can be refurbished for around £100 per wheel so if they're in bad condition it can make sense to build this into your purchase price expectation. Also assess tyre condition (and if they match), and whether the tyres are a good, premium brand. If so, this is usually a good sign the owner liked to put quality parts on the car.

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well maintained  
Coupe with  
20,000 miles**



Red detailing of AMG  
Sport Plus spec; cabin  
feels well put together.

## Interior and electrics

- The 207-series doesn't suffer many problems in this respect, but try all the on-board equipment: electric seats, Comand unit, satellite navigation, mirrors and so on. Are both keys present? A new spare is £300 plus coding from Mercedes and some inconvenience as the relevant security procedures are carried out.

- Check that all the dashboard warning lights - engine management light, SRS, ABS, ESP - come on, and go out once the engine has started.

- Electronic systems might need a software update from time to time. A Mercedes-Benz main dealer may or may not do this free of charge, and is more likely to if the car has Mercedes-Benz service history. The 207-series's service history is not the traditional printed form, but on the Mercedes-Benz database.





## E400 Coupe/Cabrio Inside and out



## Verdict

Often, a car made towards the end of its production run is the best of all, given the numerous improvements made over the years. This is certainly the case with the E400 Coupe/Cabriolet: a great engine, the reliability you need from a high performance modern car, and a driving experience that can't be faulted. In fact, we reckon the Cabriolet must be the best four-seat drophead there is at the money. And on money, a £15,000 to £25,000 price span makes it affordable. But of course, to enjoy its virtues to the full, you need to have what you're buying properly checked out, as complex cars with problems should always be avoided.



## Best ever cabriolet... probably

Before the 207-series E-Class Cabriolet was launched in 2010, it seemed possible that the traditional canvas soft top was set to become history as far as Mercedes-Benz was concerned. The SLK and SL used the amazingly well engineered folding roof that made them two cars in one: coupe and roadster.

But the 207-series soft top proved that not to be Stuttgart's thinking, as keeping the wind and rain out was a traditional looking soft hood. The new SL's use of the same configuration underlines that it's still a

great idea. Being Mercedes, the 207-series didn't just have any old hood. The multi-layered roof was acoustically designed to damp sound efficiently to the point that there's hardly any noise penalty compared to the saloon, and the aerodynamics – always tricky with a hood – were impressive at 0.28Cd when closed and 0.32 when open. The 207-series Cabriolet also saw the debut of Aircap, a device that raised from the top of the front screen to reduce wind buffeting. All these factors made the 207-series E-Class a drophead without compromise.

**Spotted  
for sale**  
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**E400 Coupe**  
2016, Selenite Grey, black leather,  
panoramic sunroof, 38,600 miles,  
Mercedes-Benz of  
Tonbridge

## Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE
E400 Coupe/Cabriolet	£170	£290

Quotes from SPR Autos

## Non routine servicing costs

- ★ Carry out gearbox oil service **£235**
- ★ Fit new engine timing chain tensioner **£265**
- ★ Replace auto electronic plate with exchange unit **£1,140**
- ★ Replace front brake discs and brake pads **£345**
- ★ Supply and code new ignition fob **£400**
- ★ Replace front suspension lower ball joints **£335**
- ★ 4x premium brand tyres (235/35R19, 255/30R19) **£650**

## What you'll pay

**£15,000-£16,000** 2014 E400 Coupe, likely to be an ex-fleet car with over 100,000 miles on the clock

**£16,000-£20,000** 2014/2015 E400 Coupes with mileages from 50,000 upwards

**£20,000-£22,000** The lowest price for an E400 Cabriolet, and 20,000- to 30,000-mile E400 Coupes

**£23,000-£25,000** This is the price bracket for the few E400s offered by official Mercedes-Benz dealers



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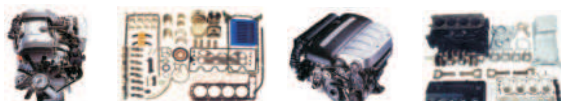
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# Active duty

The E63 V8 wagon is pressed into service for The Amelia event in Florida, and the E55 is booked in for exhaust work

WORDS & IMAGES BLAKLEY LEONARD

## FACTSHEET

CARS 2007 E63 AMG Estate/2001 E55 AMG

OWNER Blakley Leonard

LOCATION Virginia, USA

PURCHASED July 2021/January 2021

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT E63 proves as versatile as ever during a big drive; E55's boot has stopped opening



**The E63 never missed a beat from start to finish**

△ A near 20-hour round trip in the E63, which performed admirably.

**T**he E63 AMG wagon has continued to be the ultimate road trip warrior for me. I recently attended The Amelia in Florida as The MB Market (my company) was a main sponsor for the event. I shipped two of my other cars down to be on display at The MB Market tent, which included the 1990 Mercedes-Benz 560SEC AMG Widebody and 1990 Mercedes-Benz 500SL 6.0 AMG. While I would've loved to road trip down in either of those cars, putting the miles on them just wouldn't feel quite right despite what others might say. Besides, we needed a cool support vehicle and the S211 seemed fit for the job.

The drive from my home in Virginia to Amelia Island took roughly nine hours one way, but I enjoyed every minute. In the E63, power is plentiful and always on tap.

While at Amelia, I threw on MB Market logos and it served as the support vehicle transporting our gear and supplies from the condo to the field. The number of other enthusiasts who recognised it was not your typical Mercedes wagon were not hard to spot, as I was given thumbs up on every trip around the island.

The E63 never missed a beat from start to finish, and after an 18-hour round trip I can confidently say that the car is truly built for the highway. The ability to go from 70mph into triple digits in the blink of an eye is something I take for granted until I'm in another, less capable car. And to do it with no fuss, a third row of seats and extended roof just makes it all the better. There are more than a few reasons why AMG wagons are highly sought after and retain premium values today. Taking mine on an 18-hour round trip helped

me to realise all of them, and if you've ever been on the fence about getting one, you won't be disappointed.

## From top to tips

I've still been driving the W210 E55 daily to the office and warehouse. As I mentioned last time, the previous owner installed an aftermarket exhaust which I admit sounds menacing paired to the AMG-tuned, 5.4-litre eight-cylinder. Unfortunately, the exhaust tips are also part of that and appear slightly smaller than the factory AMG tips. So for that, I've scheduled a visit to my mechanic to get the AMG tips welded onto the current set up. I imagine there will be some sort of fabrication work involved but that's well worth the change.

It's all about the details for me and once I notice something on one of my cars that isn't quite right, there's no question that it must be addressed. Besides, the trunk stopped opening as well and if that's not inconvenient I don't know what is. And yes, I tried the key. Ironically, I just put the factory muffler and tip in the trunk right before it stopped opening. Now I get a friendly thud in the trunk as a reminder from time to time when taking a turn. With any luck, I will be able to open my trunk by the next issue. Got to love an old Mercedes...

▽ Complete with shouty exhaust, Blakley's E55 always garners attention.

▽▷ 500SL 6.0 AMG and 560SEC AMG Widebody on display at The Amelia.





# Highs and lows

MOT and service time dramas for David Sutherland's compact SUV, which has cost him rather a lot of money lately...

WORDS & IMAGES DAVID SUTHERLAND

## FACTSHEET

CARS 2017 GLC220d AMG Line

OWNER David Sutherland

LOCATION Surrey, UK

PURCHASED September 2017

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Bills are now mounting up, with expensive suspension and brake work needed, while the stop-start works only intermittently



**Fixing the ball joint meant replacing the whole suspension arm**

**A**t what point does a car cease being new and become, well, not new? Our September 2017 GLC220d had run out of factory warranty after three years, but into year four was still looking fresh and with low mileage, and as I look after my cars and also enforce a strict behavioural code on passengers (kids eating in the back – forget it), I still considered it new. Flying through its second MOT reaffirmed that feeling.

If I may digress on the MOT. I was on a photoshoot at classic Mercedes specialist Edward Hall near Aylesbury when in late afternoon the conversation turned to MOTs, at which point I realised that the GLC's was up that very day. This sent me into a panic, because my wife would be driving into London the next day, and I believe the expired MOT might well have been picked up by a camera and a fine duly despatched. However, at 4.45pm workshop manager James Sanders got me the last slot at the local MOT garage and saved my day – so many thanks, James!

But into year five, it was no longer possible to keep up the pretence of eternal youth, and for a simple and painful reason: the fine looking, black GLC was starting to cost money,

starting with the forthcoming service. Out of its four-year Mercedes-Benz Agility finance, I felt safe waving goodbye to the high labour rates of franchised dealers and going to Klasse of Fulham, the Mercedes independent I'd been using for older Mercs since the mid-2000s.

## Having a ball

A 'B1' service was required, essentially a minor service plus brake fluid, and proprietor Steve Shali's price was easier on the plastic than the local M-B dealer. However, he mentioned that the GLC had worn out its front lower ball joints; that didn't concern me until he told me that fixing the ball joint meant buying the whole suspension arm – nearly £600 a pair, thank you very much. This bumped up the bill to nearly £1,300.

Soon after we had digested that, a warning light flashed up that the brake

△ Specialist Edward Hall came to the GLC's rescue at MOT time.

▽ Yokohama Advan Sport tyres continue to impress David.

▽ Worn front ball joints meant new arms costing £600 a pair.

pads needed renewing, which at nearly 40,000 miles was reasonable. But on closer inspection it became clear that all four discs were on the way out, and that fitting pads alone would not only leave us with squeaking brakes but would be a false economy, as the discs would need replacing soon anyway. So our joint account was battered for another £800. There was more financial pain when the Mercedes first got scratched in an underground car park, and a few months later was hit by a truck and needed both driver's side doors replacing, an accident our insurer seemed to think was our fault because we had to pay the £500 excess.

However, we're keeping our veteran, 42,000-mile SUV. In one year's time, it will no longer be liable for the 'luxury' £335 road tax supplement, dropping back from nearly £600 to under £200. Small mercies!





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



**E240 Avantgarde** 2002, 118,000 miles, two owners, silver, recent MOT, new shock absorbers, serviced regularly, smooth runner, glass tinted roof and sunroof, personalised numberplate, £2,950 ONO. Tel: 07970 128889. Maidenhead [EFW2]



**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]

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**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]



**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]



**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. Goodwood [EFW8]



**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]



**C240 Elegance** 34,000 miles, 2.6-litre V6 auto, very low mileage, owned by a Mercedes enthusiast for 16 years, garaged and SORN for last 12 years, recent MOT and service, FSH, usual Elegance refinements including full leather, parking sensors, memory seats, £POA. Tel: 07463 993934. Buckinghamshire [EFW15]



**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]



**SL500** 1998, 44,600 miles, black, grey leather, light wood, electric heated memory seats, xenon lights, panoramic hardtop, SH, MOT Nov 2022, £34,500. Tel: 01692 630441. Norfolk [EFW21]

**B200 Turbo** 2008, black, damaged driver's door, driver's seat needs attention, great car, £800. Tel: 07970 306477. Farnham [EF]



**E280 Avantgarde** 2007, 85,000 miles, genuine D5 Brabus conversion, selling due to no garage now, every extra you would expect, recent MOT and all new tyres 295 on rear 20-inch barbs refurbed alloys, well looked after mostly in storage and summer outings, any trial welcome or text for more pictures, £POA. Tel: 07949 620118. Grimsby [EFW22]



**350SL** 1980, 95,000 miles, automatic, owned for the last 28 years, Thistle Green, new soft top and original hardtop, well maintained both mechanically and bodywork, stainless steel exhaust, drives beautifully, £19,500. Tel: 01977 515575. Leeds [EFW24]



**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]



**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]



**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]



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



**E-Class Cabriolet Sportline** 1993, I have owned the car for 10 years, in storage for past three, FSH with plenty of bills, £POA. Tel: 07565 006735. Cambridge [DEW6]



**230E** 1990, 21,338 miles, fully undersealed, new condition, original tires, toolkit, first aid kit, concours apart from stereo, one UK owner, three previous in Jersey, Champagne metallic, unmarked wood and cloth, lifetime garaged, service, MOT on sale, stamped history, £14,995. Tel: 07824 476564. Thornton-Cleveleys [DEW1]



**E55 AMG** 2004, 28,500 miles from new, paperwork to prove, FSH, dry-stored from new, owned by wealthy Japanese businessman, driven only 250 miles in six months, factory carbon fibre spoiler and rear splitter, £POA. Tel: 07825 374132. Falmouth [DEW3]



**AMG S63** 2013, last of 221-series, outstanding, 40,000 miles, special Java tan interior, fully serviced, long MOT, £42,500. Tel: 01483 282830. Surrey [DEW25]





**220E** 1994, reg M988AG0, convertible, silver with black soft top, heated front seats, air conditioning £8,500 ONO. Tel: 01268 725128. Basildon **[DEW12]**



**190E** modern classic and one of the last over-engineered Mercedes, 70,301 miles, manual transmission, 1.8L, very original, minor paint chips, very good history and paperwork, £7000. Tel: 07976 968723. Albury **[DEW11]**



**320CE** 1993, black, available with FSH (Automerc in recent years) in SE10 (London) available, drove 10,000 miles on European ventures in year before lockdown (including down to Greece and back), but it has been serviced annually since, I bought K59MMM in May 2012 from CCB, EPOA. Tel: 07711 761232. Greenwich **[DEW10]**



**C36 AMG** 1996, 170,000 miles, great condition, head gasket and wiring loom replaced, Koni adjustable suspension, new discs, lots done, have owned the car for 12 years, has a couple of items which need sorting mainly fan and air con, reluctant sale but space needed, £8,250. Tel: 07976 923091. Cardiff **[DEW20]**



**260E** 1991, straight-six 2.6, legendary Mercedes engineering, MOT until November, bodywork needs attention, arches mainly, roadworthy UK example, recent service including both fuel pumps, needs a good home, £3,500 offers considered. Tel: 07521 227883. Nottingham **[DEW21]**



**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]**



**E280 Elegance**, 57 plate, 7Gtronic automatic, Airmatic suspension, Parktronic, split rear folding seats, hands free, Indium Grey metallic, interior seats Palma Grey cloth, burr walnut wood, very low mileage 14,000, serviced at same main dealer since new, pristine condition, £8,495. Tel: 07751 560818 Hertfordshire **[DEW30]**



**230CE**, low owners, about 64,000 miles, registered Dec '89, spec includes leather, sunroof and air con, for sale due to lack of use, recent maintenance includes head gasket, full service, gearbox service, discs/pads, 4 tyres, radiator, gearbox pipes, fuel filter and more, excellent, EPOA. Tel: 07809 200005 Caterham **[DEW31]**



**E270 CDI Estate** 2005, 7-seater, green, 205,000 miles, passed last 3 MOTs, had 3 injector back brake pipes replaced, last owner of 4 years has original invoices of regular repairs and servicing, good solid reliable Merc, £2,500. Tel: 07592 176617 Bolton **[DEW32]**



**500 SL** 1991, appreciating classic with 106,000 miles, in excellent condition, had major overhaul 2 years ago by Mercedes specialist, drives excellently with many new parts, new MOT etc, rust free example ready to use every day, £12,000 ONO. Tel: 07710 552677 Weston-Super-Mare **[DEW33]**



**280SL** 1995, convertible (R129) automatic with hard top/soft top, finished in silver with grey leather interior, grey over mats, roll over safety bar, wind deflector, cd/stereo, air con, electric windows, alloy wheels, good tyres, service history, 69,500 miles, MOT to Nov '22, boot spoiler, rear parking sensors, new spare tyre, tool kit, new hard top roof lining, in very good condition, part exchange possible, £11,995. Tel: 07831 511781 West Sussex **[DEW34]**

**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]**



**S55 AMG** 2001, 87,000 miles, showroom condition, MBSH, 3 previous owners, rare Titanite Red with Saffron Nappa leather, fully loaded with every extra including rare Distronic adaptive cruise control, unbelievable history file, no expense spared, I believe to be the best example in the UK, £11,995 ONO. Tel: 07572 056231 West Yorkshire **[DEW35]**



**CLK 320 CDI AMG Sport** 2006, only 114,000 miles, grand tourer, serviced above and beyond by specialists, very good condition for year, only selling due to being able to cycle to work now, good home sought, park sensors, leather, auto, rare dual Tiptronic, privacy glass, memory seat, 6x CD changer, MoT Mar 2023, wheels refurbed, just had service, great economy, great torque and power, £4,299. Tel: 07792 887729 Stockport **[DEW36]**



**SL500 R129** 1992, rare LHD, 83,000 miles, one UK owner registered, fully loaded including electric windows, mirrors, seats, steering column, heated seats, cruise control, black leather, Lorinser alloys, hard top roof, excellent throughout, £16,950. Tel: 07703 176137 Sunderland **[DEW38]**

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**CLK V6 320 CDI** 2005, silver, 149,000 miles, one owner from new, full Mercedes service history (last service 01/22), MOT until 08/22, Distronic, Keyless Go, sun roof, leather heated seats, Command Sat Nav etc. personalised number plate (J55CLK) included in price although will sell either separately, £3,499. Tel: 07885 156001 Essex [DEW39]



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



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

**E320** 2002, AMG spec, FSH, 177,000 miles, white leather interior walnut dashboard, alloys, AMG extras, sale due to lack of use as working from home, 11 months MOT, private plate not included, suit Mercedes devotee, £2,350 ONO. Tel: 07523 195247. Porthcawl [DE]



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



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

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



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



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



**W111 220SEb Coupe** 1961, LHD, manual floor change, steel sliding sunroof, arrived in the UK from the States as a very solid rust free example, owned by me from 2017 having since undergone a comprehensive restoration including total bodywork and repaint (DB906 grey Blue metallic), retrimmed in leather (1088 Bright Red), new veneer, headlining in correct cloth, mechanical overhaul with many new genuine and refurbished parts, displayed at M-B World Brooklands for many months and now stored in a Carcoon, stunning and never used since completion, £48,950. Tel: 07976 254804. Hampshire [CDW18]



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



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





**CLK270 CDI** 2005, auto, 05 reg, excellent condition internally and externally, recent service and four new tyres, 10 months MOT with previous advisories rectified, 150,000 miles, drives excellent with good MPG, photos on request, £2,995. Tel: 07904 207460. Stockport **[CDW23]**



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



**SL320** 1994, 83,000 miles, excellent engine and automatic transmission, clean grey leather interior, good soft top and hardtop, nice alloy wheels and good tyres, wind deflector, new battery, recent new brake discs fitted, new spark plugs, oil change, drives very nice, POA. Tel: 07895 954531. Hertfordshire **[CDW24]**



**S320 CDI** 2005, showroom condition, fully loaded, £9,000 of factory options, rear DVD player, Keyless-Go, wood/leather steering wheel and gearshift, M-B Bluetooth mobile phone ready, 18-inch alloys, xenon headlights, M-B floor mats, unmarked light grey leather, M-B service history, 122,000 miles, £4,995 ONO. Tel: 07879 433521. Saffron Walden **[BCW1]**



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

**E320 CDI** Auto, black, beige leather, light interior, electric heated seats, full electrics, sunroof etc., FSH, always garaged, two keys, registration LS56 KUV, as new, 79,000 miles, no offers, £9,995. Tel: 0208 505 4678. Woodford Green **[CD]**

**350SL** 1980, auto, owner for the last 28 years, Thistle Green, 95,000 miles, new soft top and original hardtop, well maintained both mechanically and bodywork, stainless steel exhaust, drives beautifully, £19,500. Tel: 01977 515575. Yorkshire **[CD]**

**600SEL** V12, 1992, 408bhp, silver, blue leather, excellent condition, 87,000 miles, extensive history, very rare, only 63 left in UK, enthusiast, collectors or investment car, ask for Gary, £16,000, Tel: 07815 530652. Buntingford **[CD]**



**ML500 Special Edition** 2005, 104,000 miles, fully loaded, grey leather, very good condition, no rust, LHD, U.S import, 10 months MOT, UK Reg, full Mercedes service history, has spent all life in garage in Arizona, please call Steven for more information, POA. Tel: 07775 942389. Hampton Court **[BCW4]**



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



**W123 230** 14,810 miles, car in outstanding condition, any questions please call, £22,000. Tel: 07415 129117. Wallington **[BCW1]**

## INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



**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, £POA. Tel: +351 289 489 662. Portugal **[EFW13]**



**190C** 1964, four-door saloon, 1,897cc four-cylinder engine with 79bhp/113lb ft torque, four-speed manual gearbox, 0-62mph in 15.9 seconds, £POA. Tel: 00201222300041. Egypt **[DEW4]**

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**170V 1937**, one of the first Mercedes ever sold new in Portugal, LHD, original 1700cc gasoline engine, MOT until 2030, historic interest certificate, runs and drives like new, needs nothing, a very rare car in this condition with this originality, a true jewel, £POA. Tel: 00351916269080. Portugal [DEW29]



**280 SL Pagoda 1968**, white, leather cognac, automatic transmission, completely maintained service booklet, invoices and service booklet are available, the condition grade is 2, £POA. Tel: +49 7152 90163-0. Germany [DEW28]



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



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

## PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



**SLK230 rear left side light panel and centre console lid** Fits 1996 to 2000 models, £60 for light panel, £20 for lid – £70 for both plus postage from Ireland. Tel: (089) 400 1255. Dublin [EFW20]



**Original W220 S-Class wheels** 16-inch Carmenta alloys front and rear, wheels/rims in good condition, tyres not suitable for road use, all four wheels for £200. Tel: 01254 824277. Lancashire [EFW23]



**E-Class facelift grille** Centre for E-Class facelift model 2013 to 2016, star logo not included £100. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen [EFW13]



**W212 E-Class facelift engine undertray** Sump protector, facelift E-Class models 2013 to 2016, £130. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen [EFW14]



**W212 E-Class SE parts 2013 – 2014**, facelift model, two headlights, original Mercedes OEM, will fit from March 2013 and 2014 models, includes control units fitted, £1,290. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen [EFW11]



**AMG hardback book** Dealer supplied, dated 2004, 14 models, great photos, specs, unmarked pages, as new, £12.50. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [DEW2]



**R107 SL & C107 SLC front wing rubber/chrome moulding** Original Mercedes part, not cheaper aftermarket copies that do not look right, in good condition £50 ONO. Tel: 07818 222574. Milngavie [DEW8]



**R107 SL & C107 SLC chrome eyebrows** For above headlights, original Mercedes part, not cheaper aftermarket copies which do not look right, in good condition £75 ONO. Tel: 07818 222574. Milngavie [DEW9]



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**E240 Elegance** 2000, 6,000 miles from new, full Mercedes-Benz service history, one previous owner, superb all round, no rust, garaged from new, too much to list here so please call for a detailed history. £7,250. Tel: 07850 012794. North Yorks [JKW47]

**190D** 1987, manual, five-cylinder 2.5, diesel, MOT has 11 months condition, blue cloth interior, sunroof, radio/cassette player, car has been owned and garaged for the last four years, £2,500. Tel: 07791 561435. Glasgow [JKW44]

**CLK430 Cabriolet** 2001, good condition, well looked after, example of this model, dark blue metallic, gold tyres, blue roof replaced two years ago, grey leather interior all good, she drives really well, 113,000 miles, serviced regularly and runs well, MOT until October 2017, new battery in June 2017, xenon conversion, Bose base boost system for music. [JKW46]

**124 E200 Estate** 1994, great low mileage wagon, all MOTs, three owners, lovely condition inside and out, steel slide/tilt roof, mats and mud flaps, no issues, MOT until January 2018, serviced and brakes done, roll packs renewed, a really nice, honest car. [JKW43]

**650D** 2002, factory original, LHD, imported from Germany in 2002, 47,000 miles from new, finished in rare, Teikite Grey metallic, full black nappa leather interior, complete service history, original fully stamped service book, every MOT certificate since 2005, air conditioning, Command sat nav, electric sunroof, a truly outstanding example, unmoistened and well. [JKW43]

**R129 280SL** 1994, Brilliant Silver metallic, black leather trim, 58,322 genuine miles, MOT until July 2018, completely original, exceptional condition throughout, eight-hole alloy wheels, original hardtop, lock barrel blanking grommet fitted, Blaspunkt Casablanca stereo, wind breaker, tool roll, original document pack, service history, two keys, old MOT's, receipts for work completed new. [JKW40]

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# 280E rally car

Nearly 20,000 miles of competition across some of the planet's toughest terrain calls for a serious feat of engineering – step forward the W123

WORDS & IMAGES ERIC RICHARDSON

**W**hen the 1977 London to Sydney Rally set off from Covent Garden on August 14, it was billed as a rally that “will cover three continents, 30,000 kilometres, 30 check points in 30 days and carries a prize fund of A\$30,000. And it will be the longest car rally in history”.

To better understand what was involved in this event, I'm at Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey to meet the crew of Tony Fowkes and co-driver Peter O'Gorman, who hustled the very W123 280E seen here to second place overall in the 1977 event. “It did get tiring, incredibly so, being a two-man crew,” Tony begins. “I remember one point in Australia when we stopped to change a puncture and Peter was already undoing the wheelnuts. I then started jacking up the left-hand rear wheel, which was mad as the puncture was on the other side!”

Inside the car, there is not a great deal of difference from a standard W123. The decision to retain regular seats was based on the belief that a comfortable driver is a less fatigued driver. Pointing to a large water container, Peter explains, “That was filled up in Greece and it lasted us through to India. We didn't want to rely on unknown water as, being a two-man crew, if one of us fell sick then we'd be out of the event.”

Externally, the Mercedes saloon looks impressively purposeful with the sand ladders replacing the bumpers. Underneath the car, the rear trailing arms show the steel strap modifications made to prevent excess travel of the arm, while floor modifications allow the twin exhaust pipes to sit in a protective recess away from rocks. The engine bay looks remarkably normal aside from the cross brace. With the front suspension travel again limited by steel straps, the upper mount for the strap sits within the inner wing above the spring's locating point.

“The only problems we had were self-inflicted,” Tony remembers with a laugh. “Towards the end of the rally in Australia, we were going through a wooded section downhill and I misjudged a bend, went a little bit wide and caught a bollard, pushing the right-hand wheel back and bending the lower steering arm – totally my fault. Fortunately, we had some wire cable in the boot, so we tied that around a tree onto the suspension arm and reversed back to more or less pull it forward, so we could still get to the next major service point where Mercedes was able

△ Tony Fowkes (right) and co-driver Peter O'Gorman with their W123 rally car.

to fix it properly. Andrew Cowan [who won the 1977 rally in another 280E] once said to me, ‘Always try and start a marathon rally at the speed you intend to finish,’” Tony recalls.

**After 45 days, Tony and Peter arrived at the finish outside the Sydney Opera House,** having lost their lead during the extremely tough and tiring Australian leg of the rally to 280E team mates Andrew Cowan, Colin Makin and Mike Broad, the benefits of a three-man crew on an endurance event finally showing through. Still, a Mercedes-Benz 1-2 was a fantastic, historic result.

“We parked the cars and walked up those famous steps to the Sydney Opera House, where everyone was being congratulated for finishing, and I remember that feeling distinctly,” says Tony. “You just felt relaxed, happy, but by Christ you knew you'd just taken part in one of the hardest motor rallies that had ever been put on.”

**“The only problems we had were self-inflicted”**

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