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Issue 232
Dec/Jan 2022

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Editorial comment and the latest from the Mercedes Enthusiast team



Immediately, I began wondering what new convertibles would make use of the SL's design language



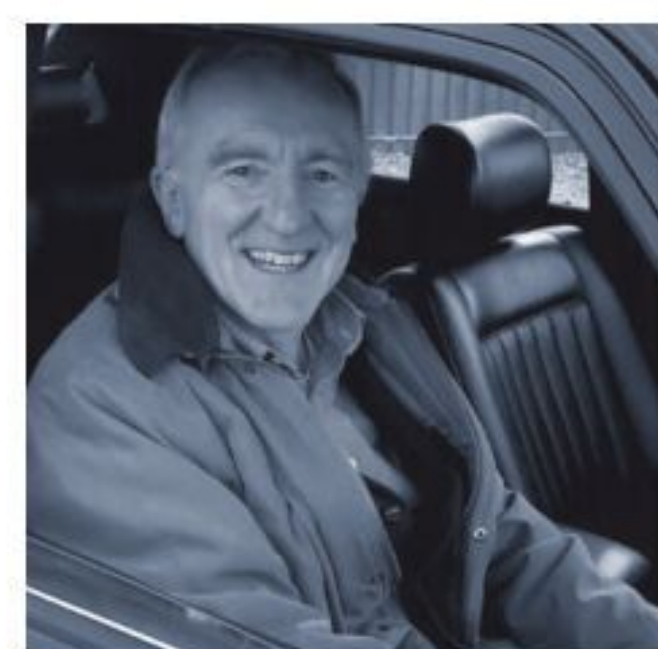
This issue's cover car *had to be the brand new R232 SL*. The problem was, Mercedes-AMG pushed back the car's launch by eight whole days (I never did find out why), leaving us perilously close to this magazine's deadline. I had a back-up plan should the worst happen and the event be postponed further still, but I *really* wanted the new SL on this edition's cover. I mean, who wouldn't? The launch of any new SL is a very big deal, after all. Happily, everything worked out OK in the end and Mercedes-AMG introduced its soft-topped roadster at the second time of asking. I've fallen for the car big time and hope you enjoy reading all about the latest SL – some 70 years in the making – from page 20.



During the SL's online launch event, Britta Seeger (responsible for marketing and sales at Mercedes) commented that the new SL "will influence roadster design for years to come at Mercedes and beyond." Immediately, I began wondering what new convertibles would make use of this design language. Could we see a replacement for the SLC/SLK? All is quiet on that front, but I miss seeing this compact roadster in the model range and believe a new hybrid or fully electric version would make a very interesting proposition indeed.

Kyle Molyneux
Executive Editor

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



Richard Mason
For this issue, Richard Mason spent time with former Mercedes-Benz employee Jonathan Ashman, who oversaw the introduction of many important models in the UK during the 1970s and 80s. "It was a time when marketing wasn't employed by the inventors of the car, who preferred instead to showcase their engineering excellence through hands-on experiences for journalists and dealers. But sometimes, the right-hand drive conversions threw up unforeseen challenges." See page 26.

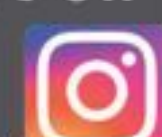


Reed Hitchcock
"At the height of travel restrictions due to the Covid pandemic, I reached out to enthusiast groups and forums in search of local Mercedes with interesting stories," explains US writer Reed Hitchcock. "John Gates responded enthusiastically about this 560SL that he bought in practically new condition in 2007 and has driven the wheels off since!" Reed is not joking either – find out what he means from page 50, where you can read more about John's R107 daily.

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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

News



EQS on sale in UK

One hundred grand gets you behind the wheel of Mercedes' new flagship electric saloon boasting a 450-mile plus range and stunning Hyperscreen dashboard

The EQS electric saloon is now available to order in the UK, from £99,995 OTR. Offered only in rear-wheel drive '450+' form for now and producing the equivalent of 328bhp (245kW), this new flagship offering boasts a combined range of up to 453 miles (WLTP) thanks to its 107.8kWh battery. An impressive 186 miles of range can be gained in just 15 minutes thanks to a built-in 200kW DC charger.

Five trim lines are available: AMG Line is the standard offering, which still boasts 20-inch AMG five-spoke wheels, 4.5-degree rear axle steering, a Driving Assistance package, MBUX augmented navigation and a flat-bottomed sports steering wheel. For an extra £7,000, AMG Line Premium ups the game with 21-inch AMG multi-spoke wheels, a Burmester sound system and a 360-degree camera. AMG Line

Premium Plus (a further £7,000) adds a gesture-controlled MBUX interior assistant among a few other things.

Luxury Line is a classic take on the EQS, doing away with AMG features. On the same level as AMG Line Premium, Microcut microfibre and Artico upholstery combined with ship's deck wood ensure a more elegant look. A rose gold key fob, a round and heated steering wheel, 22-inch wheels, and comfort orientated seats and headrests enhance the luxury atmosphere. For a further £7,000, you can purchase the Exclusive Luxury Line. Here, multi-contour massage seats trimmed in full nappa leather, and an air-balance package are standard. As a £3,995 option, the rear luxury lounge package can be chosen, key features being electrically adjustable massage seats and an armrest with built-in



5.2m-long EQS offered in several trim lines.

wireless smartphone charging. Adaptive interior lighting, USB ports and MBUX interior assistant are included too.

Further standard equipment across the trim lines include Airmatic air suspension and a panoramic sunroof. All trims apart from the base AMG Line include Digital Light headlamps (high beam reaches up to 650m) and 10-degree rear axle steering.

Deliveries from Q2 2022 can be specified with the £7,995 Hyperscreen package (AMG Line Premium and above), containing

OLED instruments, an enlarged centre console and a 12.3-inch display for the passenger within one piece of glass. Haptic feedback OLED displays and an augmented navigation head up display are all included. For now, there's still the 12.3-inch OLED touchscreen console, also with haptic feedback.

The EQS450+ will soon be joined by the first electric AMG, the EQS53 making as much as 751bhp and on sale in 2022. Find out more about this new electric car and others from page 66.



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△ Car plans how to best use hybrid set up with sat nav info.

C-Class PHEV

New C300e plug-in hybrid Saloon and Estate models have been unveiled with electric ranges of around 60 to 70 miles. The two-litre, 201bhp four-cylinder petrol (M274) engine and 127bhp (95kW) electric motor combine for a punchy system output of 309bhp and 406lb ft of torque, dispatching the sprint from 0-62mph in 6.1 seconds (6.2 in the case of the Estate). CO2 emissions range from 13 to 17g/km for the Saloon (Estate: 14 to 19g/km) and official combined fuel consumption is up to 470mpg (WLTP).

Compared with the previous generation car, boot space has improved by 40 to 45 litres due to the new

location of the battery, which sees the pack sit lower in the chassis and means there is no longer a step in the boot floor. The new C300e also uses its satellite navigation system to make the most of its hybrid drive, automatically saving battery charge and deploying the electric running mode for driving around town, for example. Drivers can also adjust the level of regenerative braking via rocker switches behind the steering wheel.

UK pricing and specifications were not confirmed at the time of writing, but Mercedes did confirm that diesel plug-in C-Classes are on their way, too.



△ G-CLASS CABRIOLET

Lorinser has developed its own Cabriolet version of the G-Class to plug a hole in the current range. Based on the previous-generation G500 Final Edition, it features a 5.5-litre, 383bhp V8 with Lorinser exhaust system, plus full Lorinser styling including bodykit and 22-inch wheels.



△ WEISTEC UPGRADE

Weistec's computer powertrain control (CPC) unit for the AMG M177 V8 is a direct replacement for the original part and promises to raise torque limits set by the engine control unit, and also remove the top speed limiter. There's also a TCU tune for the seven-speed 722.9 auto.

New Manufaktur range



△ A new name for exclusive options.

▷ Two-tone leather finish a new addition.



A new and exclusive range of personalisation options have been announced for Mercedes CLS, S-Class long-wheelbase, Maybach S-Class and AMG GT 4-Door Coupe models under the name 'Manufaktur', which will serve as a replacement for the long-standing designo label.

Buyers of these cars can choose from a special range of materials, paint finishes and interior features to create something unique. Two-tone steering wheel combinations, further wood trims and to top it all, unusually contrasting combination packages are available: deep white/black and - last seen in 2012 - pastel yellow/black. On S-Classes and Maybachs, brand logos inside can be embroidered with gold or platinum.

The new Manufaktur range revives several classic paint colours too, including Vintage Blue, which was last available in the 1980s and was a favourite for the 123-series. Another classic shade offered in the Manufaktur range is Silicon Grey Uni, last available in the late 1960s and applied to the 300SL Gullwing.

Conti tyres for AMG GT



Continental's SportContact 6 with XL load rating has been approved as original equipment for the new AMG GT63 S E-Performance plug-in hybrid. Diameter is 20 inches, size 265/40 (104Y) XL up front and 295/35 (105Y) XL at the rear, with the 'M01B' sidewall marking confirming that the tyre is specific to this model. Continental reckons the tyre's bespoke 'Black Chili' compound and 'force vectoring technology' result in extra steering precision.



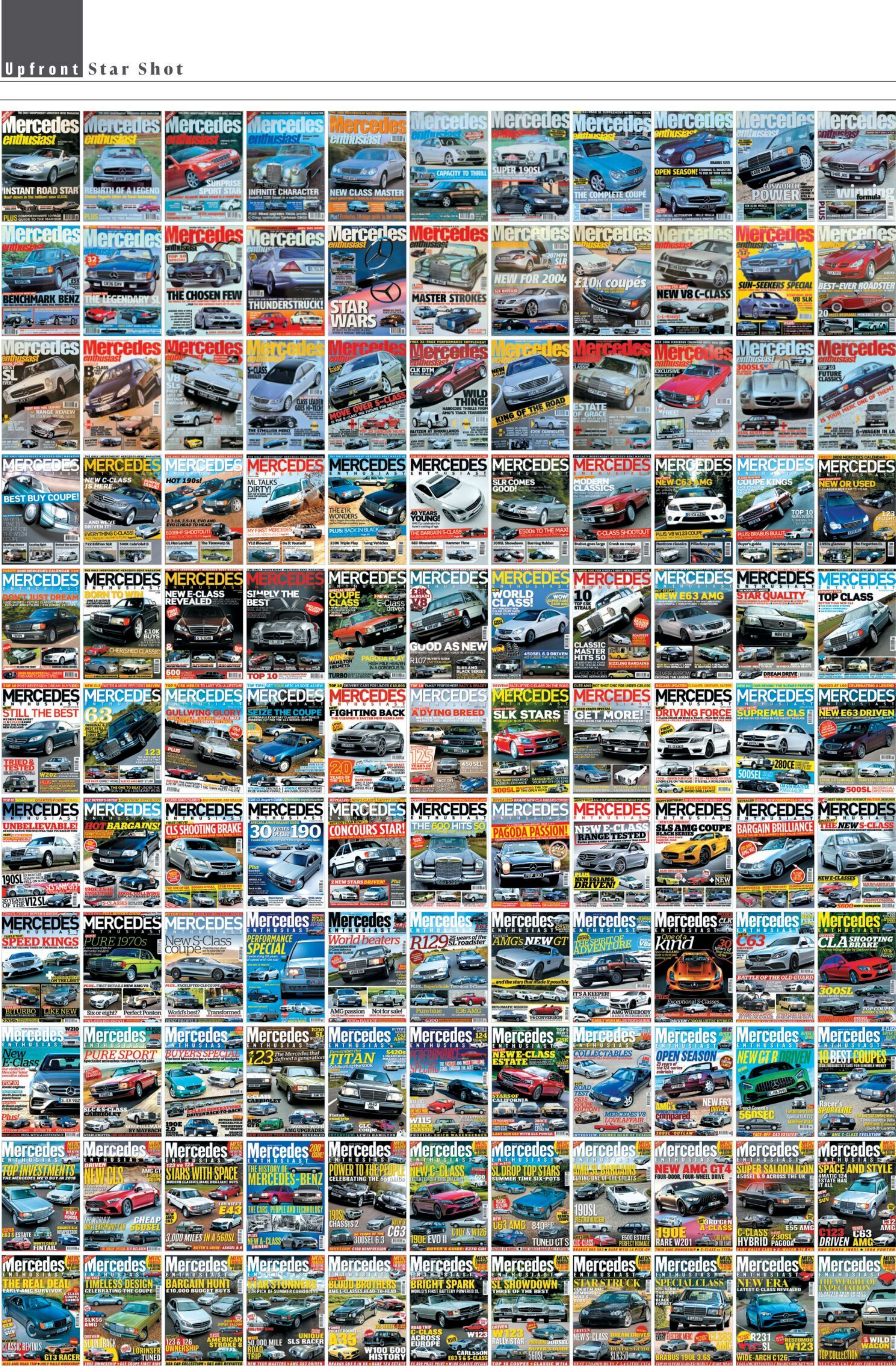
△ RUSSELL MERC F1 DEAL

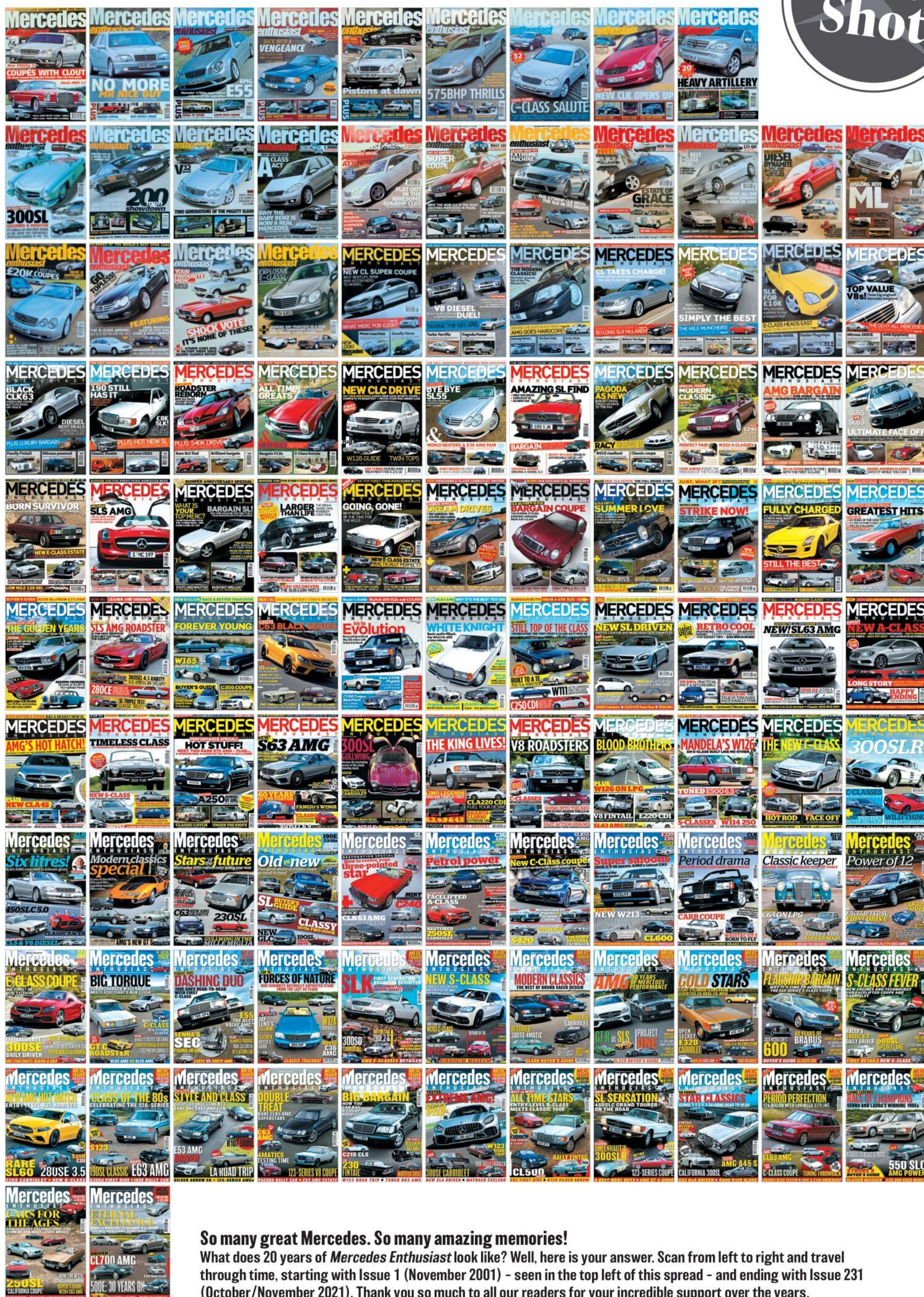
George Russell has signed for the Mercedes-AMG F1 team and will partner fellow Brit Lewis Hamilton next season. Russell replaces Valtteri Bottas.

▽ HOT WHEELS GULLWING

Watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen and Hot Wheels launched a Racing Works collector's set at the recent Goodwood Members' Meeting. Limited to 50 pieces, the set includes a Pilot's Watch Chronograph Edition IWC x Hot Wheels Racing Works and Hot Wheels Mercedes-Benz 300SL 'Racing Works Edition' model presented in a metal toolbox.







So many great Mercedes. So many amazing memories!

What does 20 years of *Mercedes Enthusiast* look like? Well, here is your answer. Scan from left to right and travel through time, starting with Issue 1 (November 2001) - seen in the top left of this spread - and ending with Issue 231 (October/November 2021). Thank you so much to all our readers for your incredible support over the years.

Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear

The launch day itself at Geneva was an occasion to remember

▷ Technicians install the pop-up rollover bar.

▷▽ R129 was a 2+2, just like the new R232 model.

R129 500SL

The next instalment of this new series recalls the arrival of the R129 SL, a car whose modern elegance and electronics injected a whole new level of competitiveness into the Mercedes roadster package

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES DAIMLER AG

The R107 model is the most successful SL series to date by a considerable margin, not least due to its unusually long, 18-year production life. It always sold well, especially in the US, thus Mercedes-Benz did not feel inclined to kill it off and by its final year, 1989, it was dated in its engineering even if its pretty looks endured.

One result of this was that when the succeeding R129 SL was unveiled at the Geneva motor show in March 1989, it seemed almost unbelievably modern and

sophisticated by comparison. *Autocar* magazine memorably wondered if whether somewhere in the Stuttgart vaults there was a stillborn ‘missing link’ SL.

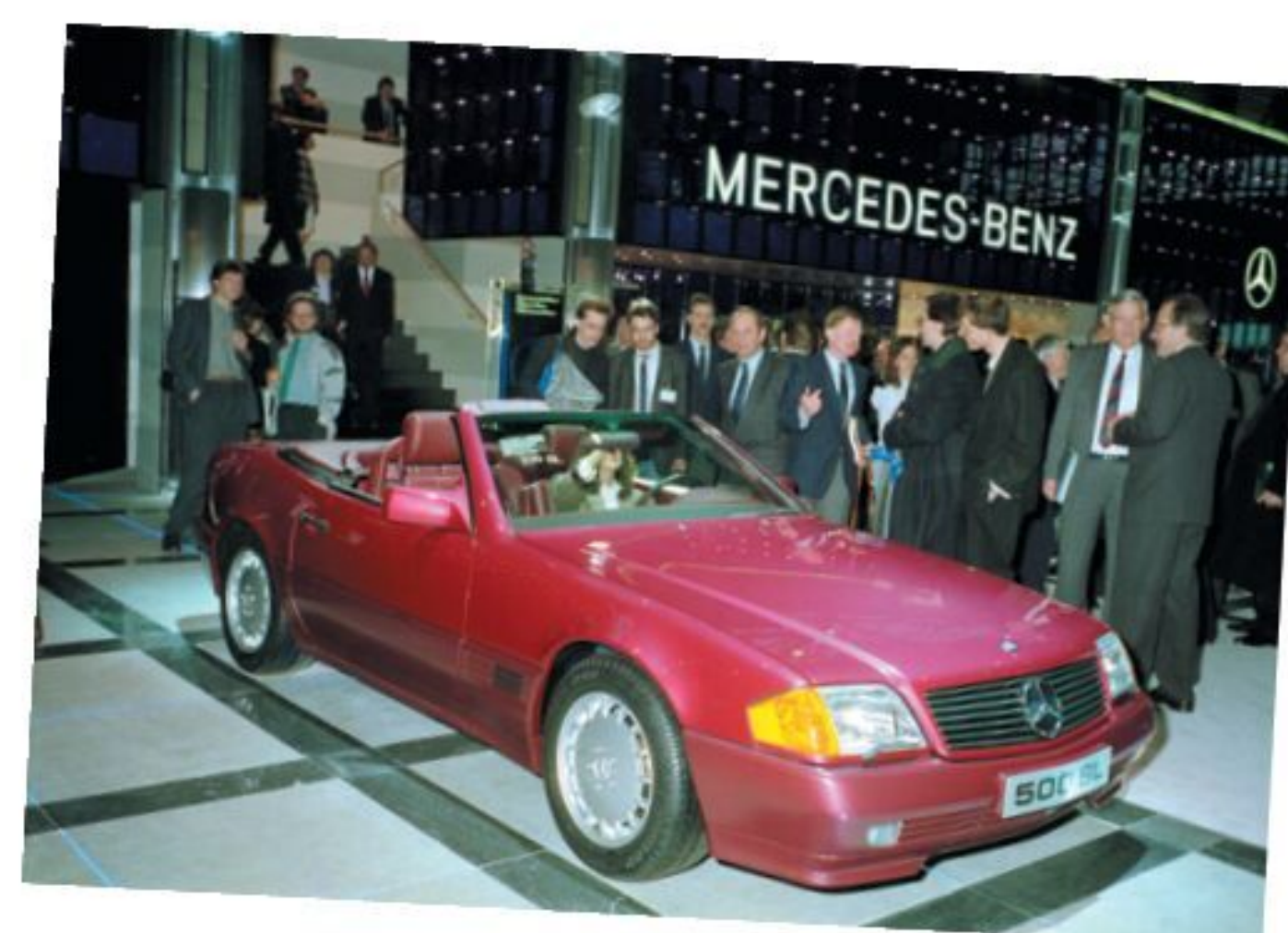
In this one model launch, Mercedes introduced a raft of developments and innovations that would form its cars’ engineering parameters for many years to come. The R129 effectively re-established Mercedes-Benz as a technological leader, the much-loved but long-in-the-tooth R107 having come to signify how the marque had been losing ground to rivals Audi and especially BMW, which

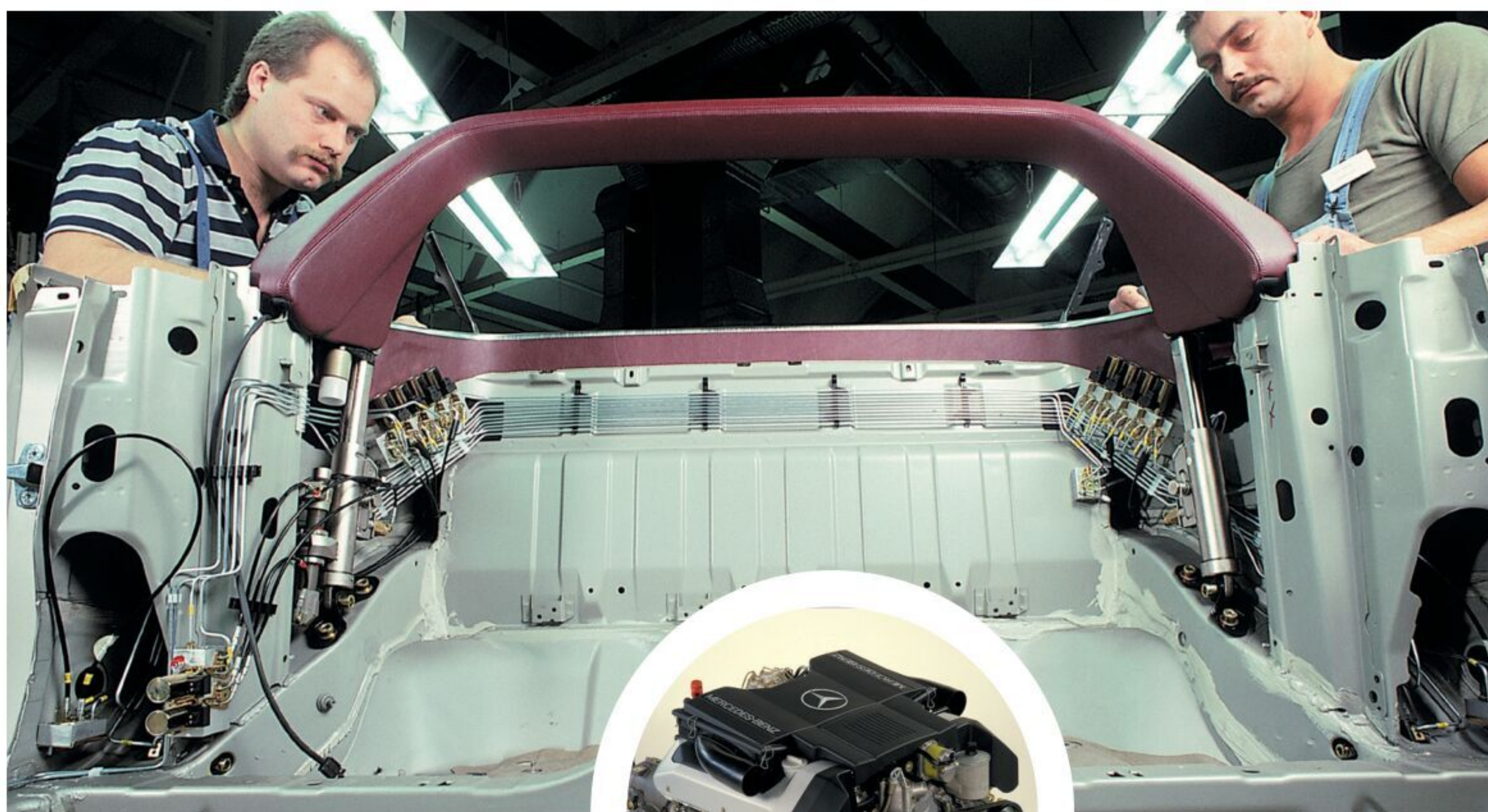
had really upset Daimler-Benz top brass by unexpectedly releasing a V12 engine for the S-Class-chasing 7-Series. It introduced multi-valve six-cylinder and V8 engines, a five-speed automatic gearbox (available after a few months) adaptive suspension dampers (ADS) and a rollover protection system, based around a pop-up rear bar, that reportedly took four and a half years and nearly £9m to develop. Integrated bumpers meant a separate

▷ The 500SL V8 on display at the Geneva motor show in March 1989.

‘federalised’ US spec model was no longer necessary.

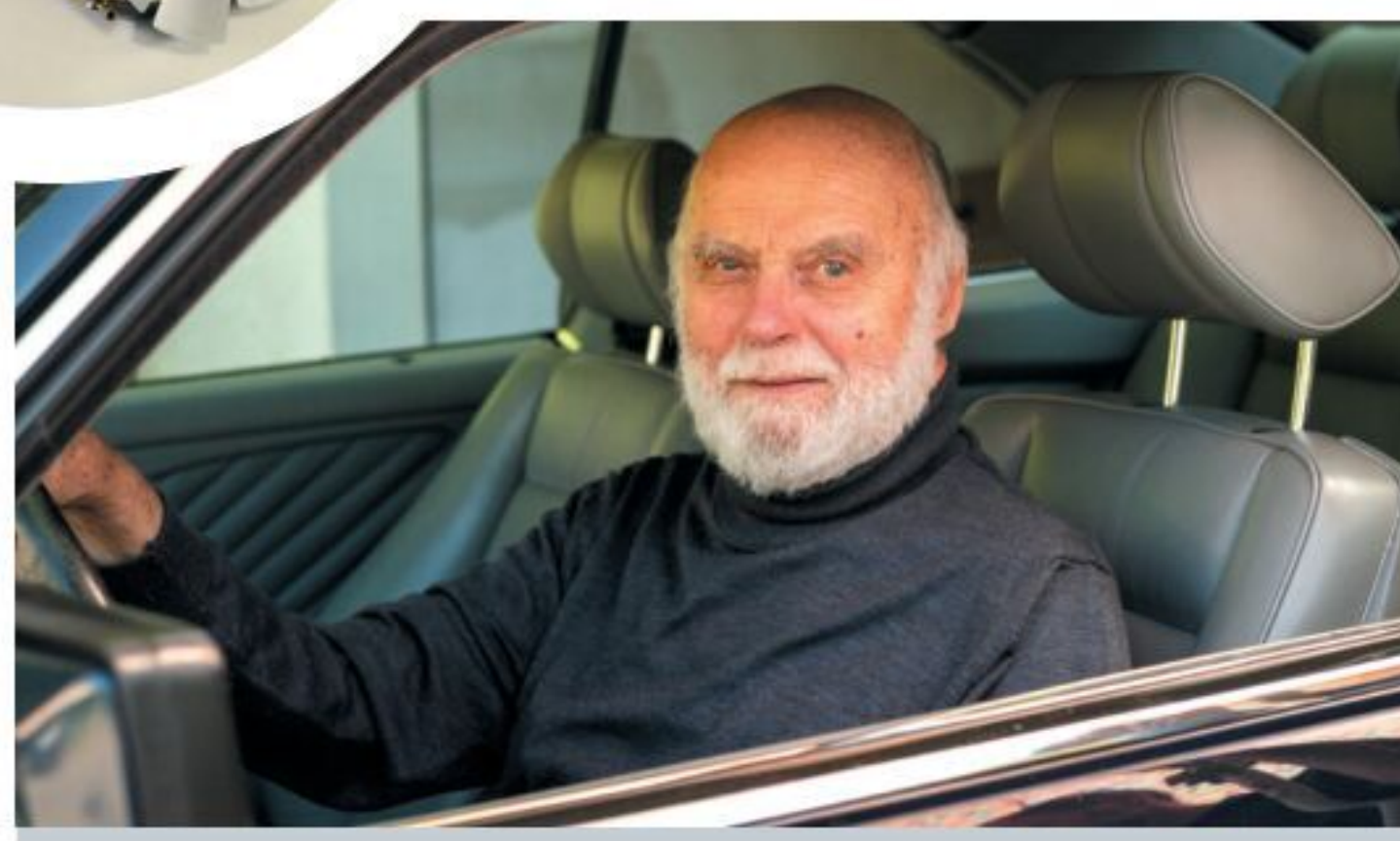
The launch day itself at Geneva was an occasion to remember. The man responsible for the R129’s styling, Bruno Sacco – still bathing in the glow of his perfect threesome, the 126 S-Class, W201 190 compact and 124-series middleweight – was in attendance, his double-breasted dark suit and neatly trimmed beard cutting an appearance as suave as the silver roadster on the stand. By the end of the day, the electric roof that show-goers given access to the new Mercedes star had no doubt raised and lowered hundreds of times still worked perfectly, a testament to Benz engineering were it needed.





◁ M119 V8 the beating heart of the 500 model until 1996.

▽ Former head of design Bruno Sacco, pictured in Jan' 2021.



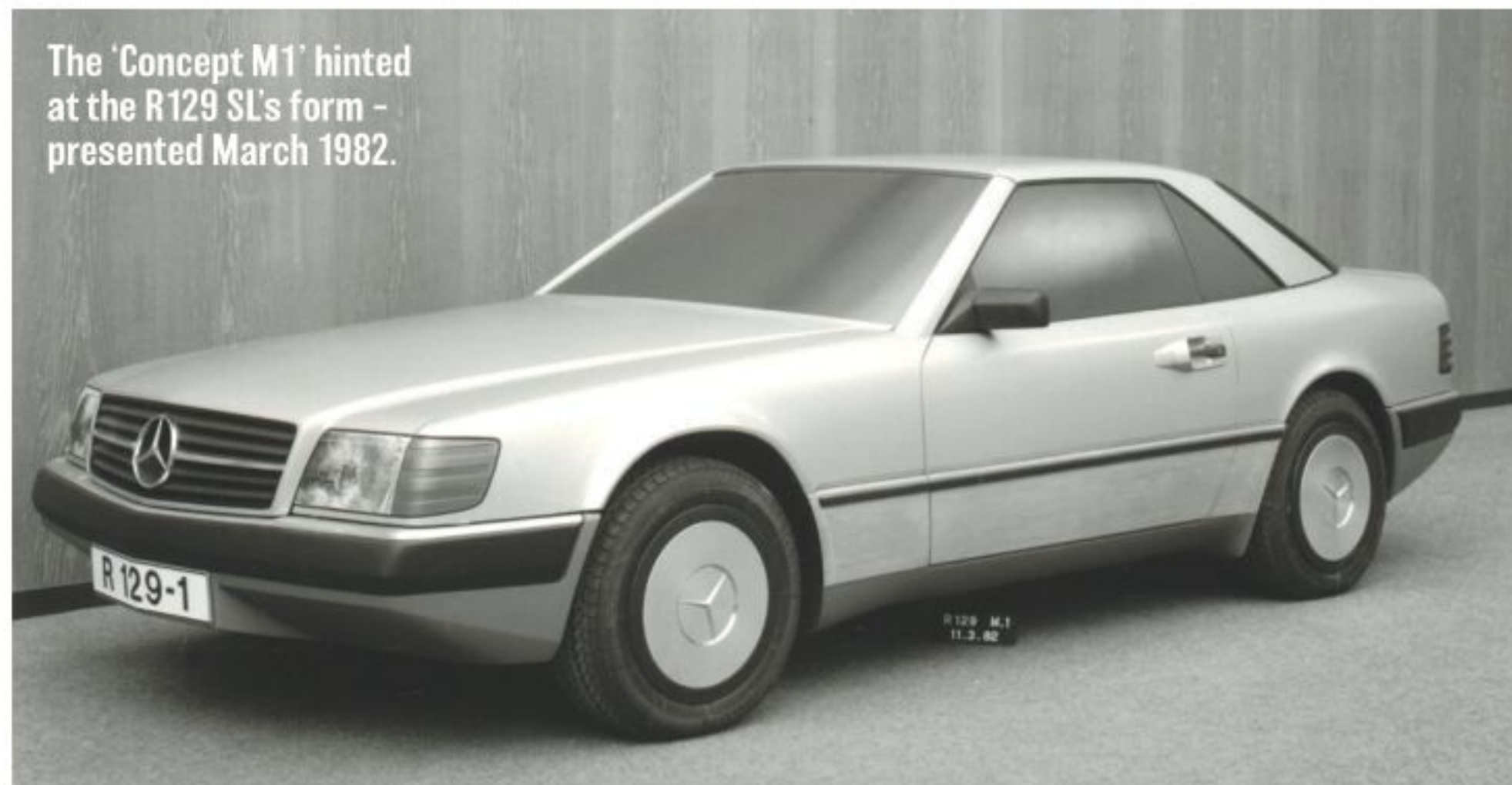
This era was probably the peak of the influence and reach of the international motor

show, and *Autocar* crowned the R129 “the show’s glamour queen”, high praise considering Geneva was packed out with jaw-dropping new cars including the Honda NSX, Aston Martin Virage, Alfa Romeo SZ, all-wheel drive VW Golf Rallye and 176mph Lotus Carlton.

With regards to the R129’s styling, comments at the time were respectful. “It’s not a radical design or an acutely fashionable one, because the aim is for this car to look just as good in 10 years’ time,” *Autocar* noted.

However, there was no holding back when it came to describing the performance of the top model, the 500SL (the 12-valve 300SL and 24-valve 300SL-24 were offered alongside), its super-sweet, five-litre M119 V8 attracting high praise. “Ambling along, it mumbles gently to itself,”

The ‘Concept M1’ hinted at the R129 SL’s form - presented March 1982.



Autocar said in its subsequent full road test. “But prod the throttle and it picks up instantly. By 4,500rpm it’s wailing like a CanAm V8 and its thrust deteriorates hardly at all as it hits the 6,000rpm redline.”

Very un-Mercedes like for 1989, but a signpost that the SL was

turning away from being a lazy boulevard cruiser and evolving into a luxury roadster with the dynamics of a sports car, more in the way of the original 300SL Gullwing. Retaining a fail-safe chassis with, for example, recirculating ball steering, engineers hadn’t made a Porsche

928 (even if the 500SL did out-accelerate the 928 S4), but that would come in 2001 when the R230 replaced the R129.

Another traditional aspect that all the high-tech wizardry did not squeeze out was the hewn-from-solid build quality still a virtue on every Mercedes model at that point. The cabin of the 500SL, with its leather seats (a cost option on the sixes), was beautifully made and so discreetly stylish yet at the same time fuss-free.

Big dials offered all the information you needed with great clarity, and exquisite wood veneer on the centre console housed crisp action switchgear. Comfort was in a different league to the R107, whose seats weren’t especially supportive and relied on a most awkward manual height adjuster; the R129’s chairs were sumptuous and along with the headrests and steering wheel glided electrically into position.

The 500SL cost £58,000 in the UK when launched, the equivalent of almost £150,000 now. That didn’t put off buyers, who would be prepared to wait possibly a year for delivery and with no prospect of a penny off the price. You didn’t have to look far to see delivery mileage cars offered for £10,000 over list.

In its 12-year life, the R129’s powertrains were frequently updated, engine capacity reaching down to 2.8-litres and extending up to six-litres in the form of the V8 SL60 AMG and V12 600SL/SL600, plus there was the ultra-rare 7.3-litre SL73 AMG V12.

Yet no later variants, not even the much loved SL60, could make the same first impression as the original 500SL, its glorious engine now regarded as more desirable than the M113 three-valve unit which replaced it in 1998. The way the R129 transformed the SL’s character was simply extraordinary.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 500SL (R129)

ENGINE M119 4,973cc V8 POWER 322bhp@5,500rpm TORQUE 332lb ft@4,000rpm TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,770kg
0-62MPH 6.2sec TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 17.0mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1989-1998

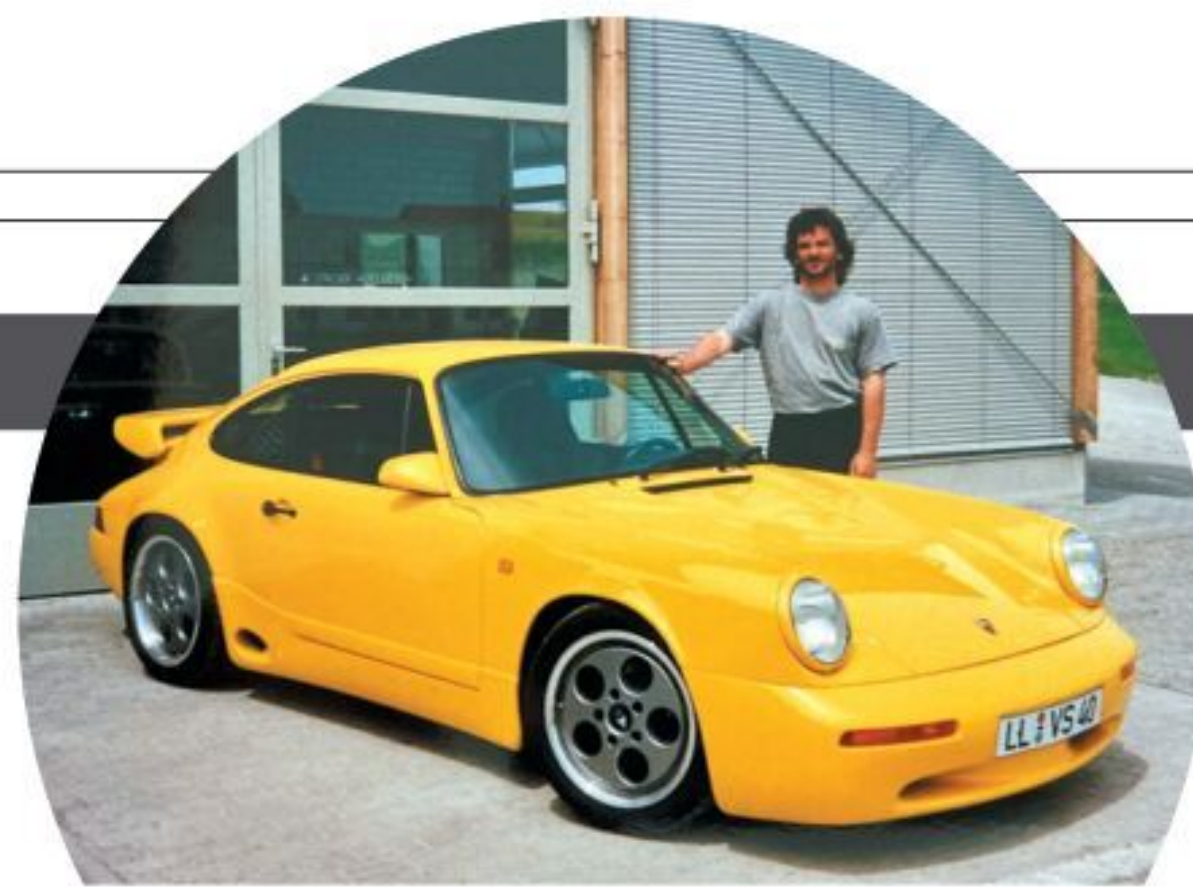
All figures from Mercedes-Benz for launch spec car; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; model renamed ‘SL500’ from June 1993; 1998-2001 SL500 equipped with M113 V8

Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

Mind the gap



When it came to modified Mercedes, the sleek R129 SL created by Vittorio Strosek was one of the 90s era's highlights, combining big power with highly distinctive styling, as Ian Kuah recalls



As Bruno Sacco's elegant, wedge-shaped R129 SL has moved into the realms of desirable youngtimer classic, there has also been an uptick of interest in rare, tuned versions from the likes of AMG, Brabus and RennTech.

The most powerful of the lot was the Brabus 7.3S, which packed a whopping 574bhp from the same bored and stroked motor that thrust the E V12S to an accredited 206.25mph vmax, and the *Guinness Book of Records* title of 'Fastest Production Four-Door Saloon'.

I drove the black Brabus SL 7.3S shortly after it was finished and was astonished by its pace on the local autobahn. And when you dropped the hammer on country roads the trees lining the street just went into a blur! For my car-to-car action pics, my late departed friend Bodo Buschmann asked his son Constantin's nanny to drive the roadster. Today, of course, Constantin is the CEO of Brabus!

However, the one tuned SL from this era that stands out in my memory for its unique visual individuality was the Bornite metallic Strosek Roadster that Vittorio Strosek presented on his stand at the 1993 Geneva motor show.

Vittorio who? Just as Canadian composer David Foster is the 'Hit Man' behind countless well-known songs from famous artists as diverse as Barbra Streisand, Chicago, Earth, Wind and Fire, and Whitney Houston, Vittorio Strosek is the designer whose creations put internationally renowned tuners such as Koenig Specials, FAB Design and Novitec Rosso on the world stage. He has also done freelance work for OEMs such as BMW and

VW where high internal overheads make it more cost effective to farm out special projects.

A 1970 graduate of the famous Wuppertal design school, Vittorio worked for the legendary Luigi Colani before starting Strosek Autodesign in 1982, which debuted with his Porsche 928 styling conversion. He concurrently created the widebody style for Koenig Specials that became its signature, and the inspiration for many other automotive styling companies of this era such as Rieger and Kerscher.

Having expressed his personal love for Porsche cars with his 928 design, Vittorio went on to pen similar conversions for the 911 and 944. For his personal interpretation of the elegant Mercedes R129 SL, he used the same design philosophy with a bespoke nose with integrated front bumper that picked up on the smooth lines of Bruno Sacco's elegant creation.

▷△ Vittorio Strosek set up his business in 1982.

▷ Under the bonnet was a 6.0L 402bhp Brabus V8.

▽ Unique front end and 18-inch rims by OZ Racing.



Vittorio Strosek created the widebody style for Koenig Specials

Made from heat-resistant automotive grade GRP, the main design tenet of this unique front was no panel gaps to interrupt its organic form. A practical solution that solved this issue, as well as engine bay access, was the forward-

hinged flip front that saw the OE locking mechanism moved aft to the bulkhead area.

Another Strosek signature design feature was the deep-set headlamps utilising Hella DE projector headlights that had similar light output to much larger conventional reflectors with

H4 or H7 bulbs. The front turn signals with position lights were Maxda MX-3. The styling kit was completed by matching side panels and a rear bumper incorporating rounded cut-outs for the stainless-steel sports exhaust.

Strosek has retained his distinctive telephone dial alloy design to this day with the latest 19-inch wheels for his 964-based Strosek 911 Mega 30 Anniversary, albeit in smoother one-piece deep-dish form. Back then, the bespoke two-piece OZ Racing wheels for the Roadster were sized 8.5J and 10.0J x 18-inch and shod with 235/40ZR18 and 265/35ZR18 Pirelli P Zero rubber. Combined with the 40mm lower suspension, they fill out the arches and give the car its more purposeful stance.

Wealthy customers attracted by the head-turning individuality of the Strosek Roadster no doubt wanted the go to match the show.

While the SL600 was the obvious choice for autobahn storming, the heavy M120 V12 in the nose was not an advantage on twisty roads. Thus, the Strosek Roadster shown at Geneva featured a Brabus 6.0-litre V8 motor whose 402bhp matched the output of the factory V12, while its 445lb ft of torque went about 18lb ft better. Of course, the factory V12 or a Brabus version was also an option.

As Strosek was also the designer behind Swiss Mercedes tuner FAB Design, it was logical that Roland Rysanek's company should market the Strosek Roadster in Switzerland under FAB Design, so you will find cars wearing either label.



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

Star quality



The 1980s was a dazzling period for the auto industry – you could tell where a car came from simply by opening the door, particularly when it came to a vehicle from Mercedes, as David Sutherland explains

As we progress through life, many of us incurable car enthusiasts more clearly pin-point an era of motorcars we love most. For me, the 1980s was the decade that produced the goods in the greatest number. And judging by the attention that 80s cars – even quite mundane ones – generate, I think many people feel the same.

Of course, cars continually get better in their dynamic ability, energy efficiency and safety features, while their connectivity enables them to perform functions few would have imagined possible back in the days when shoulder pads and hair were at their biggest, and Charles and Diana were still seen as the golden couple. Drive any car from the era now and it will feel dated.

But in my book, cars had more identity, and more charisma. A Mercedes-Benz looked and felt like a car built in Untertürkheim and the same individual character was evident in a BMW from Munich, a Saab from Trollhättan, a Jaguar from Coventry and an Alfa Romeo from Milan. Car manufacturing itself was so diverse, with so many more independent car makers compared to today's handful of global players.

Mercedes-Benz in particular was at the height of its powers in terms of charisma and market position, if not in industry muscle, producing 'only' half a million cars per year. It offered a mere five model families compared to nearly 20 today, including the G-Wagen, which by the mid 1980s wasn't doing so well and looked like it might wobble out of existence.

But it was quality not quantity, and in part can be attributed to the perfect judgement and styling prowess of Bruno Sacco, the Italian who took over as Mercedes' design boss in 1975 and over the next decade set about constructing a trio of models that were not only masterpieces in their own right but perfectly complementary to each other – the 1979 126-series S-Class,



W201: the bottom rung on the Mercedes ladder, but a quite magnificent one.



△ Mercedes saloons designed by Italian master Bruno Sacco.



△ Few cars can match the sheer robustness of a 124-series.

1982 W201 190 and 1984 124-series. They not only embodied everything a Mercedes should look like and be, but offered a hierarchy allowing customers to look no further than the star marque regardless of what stage of life and affluence they were at.

But there are aspects of Mercedes-Benzes of these years other than the immaculate

execution of the model ranges that endear me. I love the neatness and more compact sizing, for one thing. The door posts on my 1980s-built garage at home are wide enough to take a 190, a 124- and maybe a 126-series, but our GLC is too broad in the beam to fit through.

I also love how well you can see out of 1980s cars, with their far slimmer A- and B-pillars, and lower bonnet lines. Jump into a 190 and you'll probably be surprised at how small it feels inside (the same will apply to a contemporary BMW 3-Series or Audi 80), but also delighted at the unimpeded

visibility to the front, sides and rear. Back in the 80s, the idea of a reversing camera would have seemed faintly ridiculous, but now it is difficult to reverse a modern car without using one.

A journalist colleague recently sang the praises of a system in a Kia whereby the right- or left-side dial in the instrument panel becomes a rear-view camera showing the side of the car when the direction indicator is switched on. I later tried it and was impressed, but I couldn't help thinking that if the car had been designed so it could properly be seen out of this trickery wouldn't be needed.

A further joy of an 80s car is operating the minor controls – they are so simple! A basic Mercedes air conditioning system had sizeable rotary controls whose purposes were obvious, and without a mass of on-board electronic functions, while a few switches dealt with everything else. Now most things are buried in menus, some of which owners will never discover. My GLC has a parallel parking aid, but I've never found it.

The 'good old days' can't come back, and I wouldn't want that anyway, despite my regular rants about moderns' overly complex controls. Car makers must address many more demands in design now than then, and this will no doubt

ramp up as electrification takes over. However, I reserve the right to be unreservedly, unapologetically and no doubt tiresomely nostalgic! ■

A Mercedes-Benz looked and felt like a car built in Untertürkheim

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



Letters

Star letter

OURS ARE KEEPERS

■ My wife and myself have both been big Mercedes fans since acquiring my first ever Mercedes, an Obsidian Black E320 CDI. On retirement, a grey C220d Estate AMG Line Premium was purchased. The C220d is the family workhorse and is used for everything from DIY to first class transport for friends and family. Our Shih Tzu dog, Marley, sleeps soundly in his special back seat dog bed! My wife treated herself to her dream car, an Iridium Silver SLK200 AMG Sport. It's the natural choice when attending motoring events such as Silverstone Classic and Goodwood. Driving with the roof down is such fun!

How are other readers feeling about electric cars? There are some great looking electric models available, but the cost is prohibitive. What's more, the quoted range is questionable and without a thrilling soundtrack, there's no soul either. The plan is to hang onto both of these wonderful cars for as long as possible.

Martin Brommell, Berkshire



the vehicle's groundbreaking attribute of its time: the ABC suspension. It's heartbreaking every time another one is found converted to coil-overs. I got lucky and found a fully loaded 600 V12 biturbo that is also ULEZ compliant.

Recently, the beast went on a track day, where the suspension wizardry really came in handy. This and the semi slick tyres upset a rather talented Porsche 911 driver! These coupes are a very well kept secret. It's the perfect choice for driving across the continent. With luxurious massaging seats, a fantastic stereo, and a minimum of 302bhp available on tap, they still mean business!

Chris Behan, via email



△ Chris Behan's CL600 with additional iPad.

astonishing performance even before you start tuning it. We will be in touch...

Matthew Rogers, via email

CARROT ON A STICK

■ The UK car market is very strange at the moment and a frustrating place for those people considering making a change on

their driveway. Trade-in values for used cars are through the roof, which makes jumping into a brand new car even more tempting than usual with all that additional equity to play with.

However, new car stock levels are way down and delivery times are unpredictable to say the least. One Mercedes dealer I spoke to suggested anything from four to seven months for a new A-Class plug-in hybrid.

Michael Willshire, via email



△ DTM-spec CLK found a new fan in F Rafique.

CLK DTM

■ The recent review of the rather rare CLK DTM was very enjoyable indeed. With carbon fibre interspersed into its design, a special ergonomic interior with sports seats, and a fantastic powertrain with nearly 600bhp, it's certainly very different from the standard car. The CLK DTM AMG still manages to feel current. There's just one word to summarise this car – scintillating!

Faisal Rafique, via email

FLAGSHIP COUPE

■ It was exciting to read the response to JM Jamieson's letter in the October/November issue. Also being a fan of the 215-series CL, it's a privilege to own a 600 V12 biturbo.

Nowadays, these vehicles tend to be rather unloved thanks to high running costs much owing to their complicated suspension, which doesn't help their market value. One can pick up a 500 V8 for very little, but at this price it's unlikely owners will invest in



△ The AMG GLC63 S makes a hearty 503bhp.

MERCEDES PERFORMANCE

■ Are there any plans for future issues of *Mercedes Performance* magazine? And if you're looking for cars to feature, I own a highly modified AMG GLC63. It would be fantastic if it could be considered.

As soon as another issue of *Mercedes Performance* is confirmed, we'll let you know! And we're envious of your GLC63 – a compact SUV with



△ Order this mag from our website.

Dealers are struggling to source stock due to the computer chip shortage.



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TALKING POINT



This month's Talking Point...

Say hello to the new R232 SL Roadster by Mercedes-AMG! What do you think?

"I actually like this more than the R231. Having a five-year old, I also like the 2+2 configuration." **Bart Lukas**

"Fabulous! What a redesign!" **Matthew Boisvert**

"Angry and aggressive, back end of a Porsche 911, non Mercedes people will love it." **William Roberts**

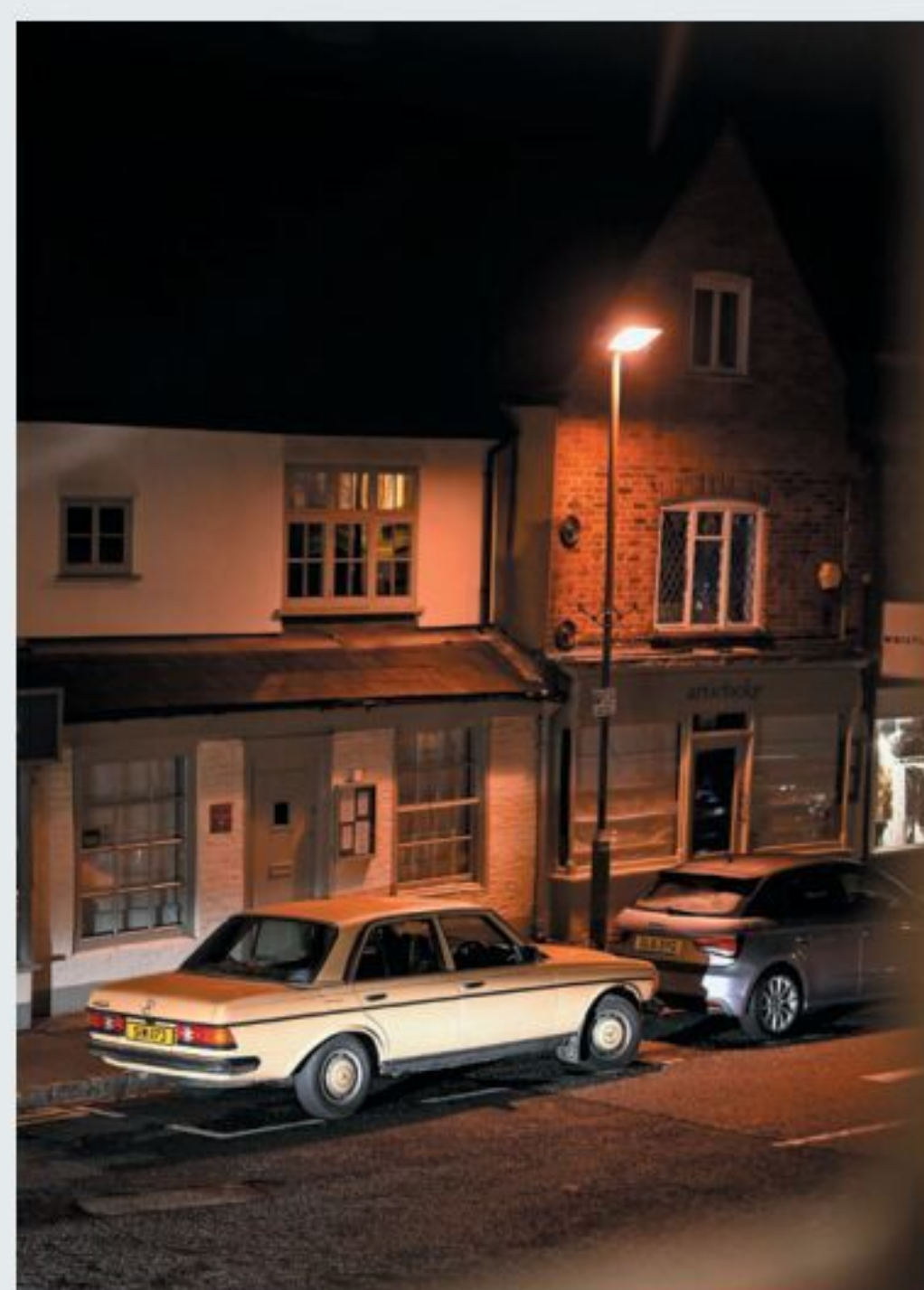
"So an AMG GT, but with a fabric roof..." **Vincent van Ockenburg**

"Not as classy as the R107 but in the mood of the time."
Philippe Haquette

"Love it - a return to form." **Mathew Kean**

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

Merc Spotter



You never quite know when you're going to stumble across a Benz of significance. For *Mercedes Enthusiast* contributor Jason Dodd, such a fateful moment occurred recently. "I was staying at the Crown Inn in Amersham, Buckinghamshire. I went back to my room after a nice meal and saw this W123 230E from the bedroom window," Jason explains. "I took out my camera and captured the subdued light, which gave an atmospheric feel to the image and car."

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

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Social Club

Mercedes-Benz related highlights from the world of social media



Electric Classic Cars



@elecclassiccars

New arrival at the workshop. One thing's for sure, there's plenty of room for batteries. A 1964 W111 220 Fintail is primed to receive electric power at this company in mid Wales and gain a new lease of life.



Andrew Young



@Andy_Young

I've bought a W126 300SE with 185,000 miles. For £400!



Mechatronik



@mechatronik_official

It is Sunday 5:30am, the autobahn is yours. What would be your dream car(s)? Well, we answered that question. Image by @alexpenfold.



David Turnbull



@DavidDjt0311

Looking through old family photos and stumbled upon this beauty from 1993 - my wife's father purchased this stunning blue-black Mercedes-Benz 500E brand new and how I wish it was still in the family today - the ultimate W124.

The MB Market




@thembmarket

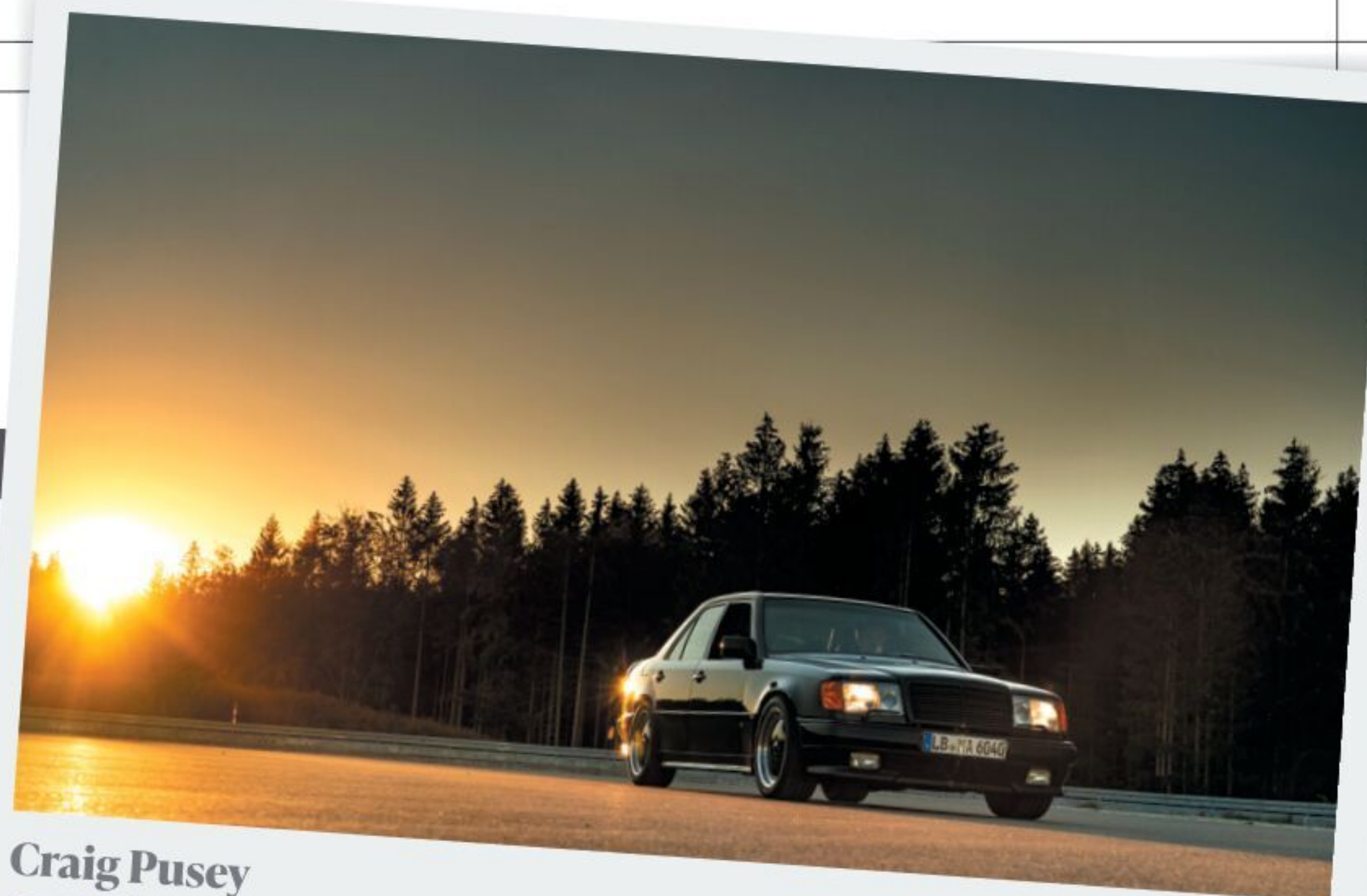
This RennTech-modified 2006 Mercedes-Benz CLS55 AMG was originally sold through Mercedes-Benz of Palm Beach to RennTech founder Hartmut Fehyl and registered to RennTech as a corporate vehicle in Florida. The car was built by RennTech as a SEMA show car to showcase available modifications for the C219 chassis upon the first year of launch.






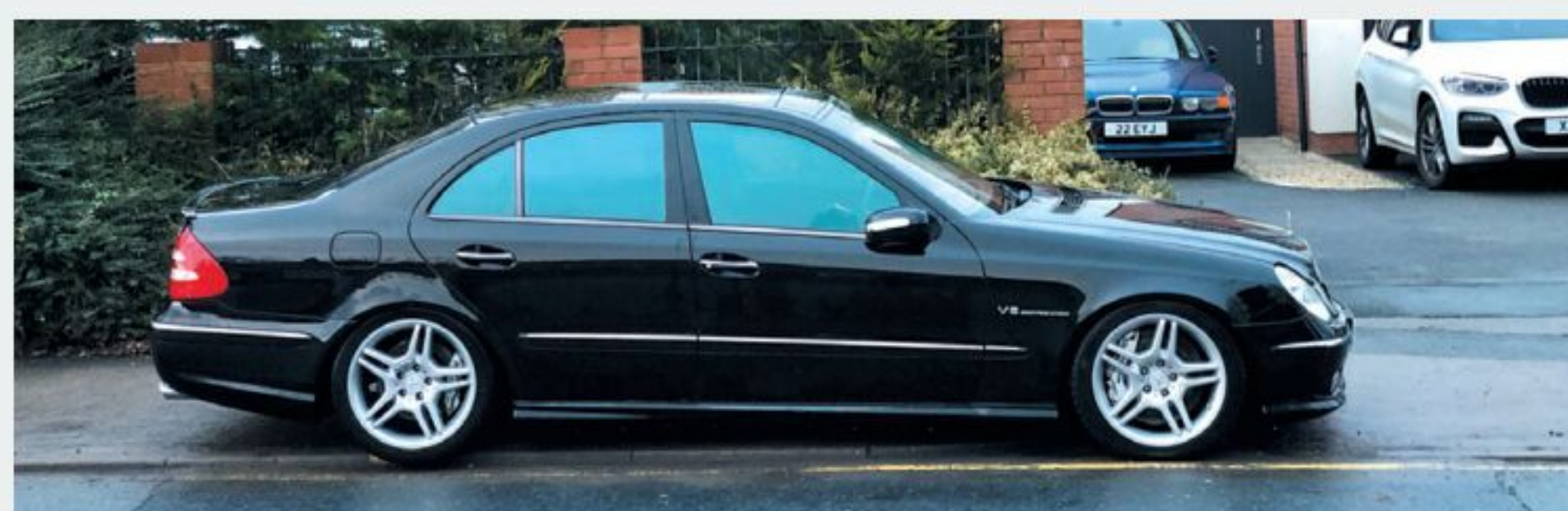
Prestige Car Service

 **@mercedes_workshop_horndean**
Oh dear. Major surgery on this 2017 OM642 engine (V6 diesel). 240,000 miles and one of the intake flaps decided to leave its home and cause some damage. The symptoms were a big engine knock and nothing else. Luckily we managed to repair the head, piston and rod damage. Could have easily been a totalled engine. It's time-consuming work and not cheap but very rewarding.




Craig Pusey

 **@craig_pusey_photography**
If Thor drove a car... naturally it would be an AMG Hammer. A little flashback to a photoshoot with the @mercedesbenzmuseum.



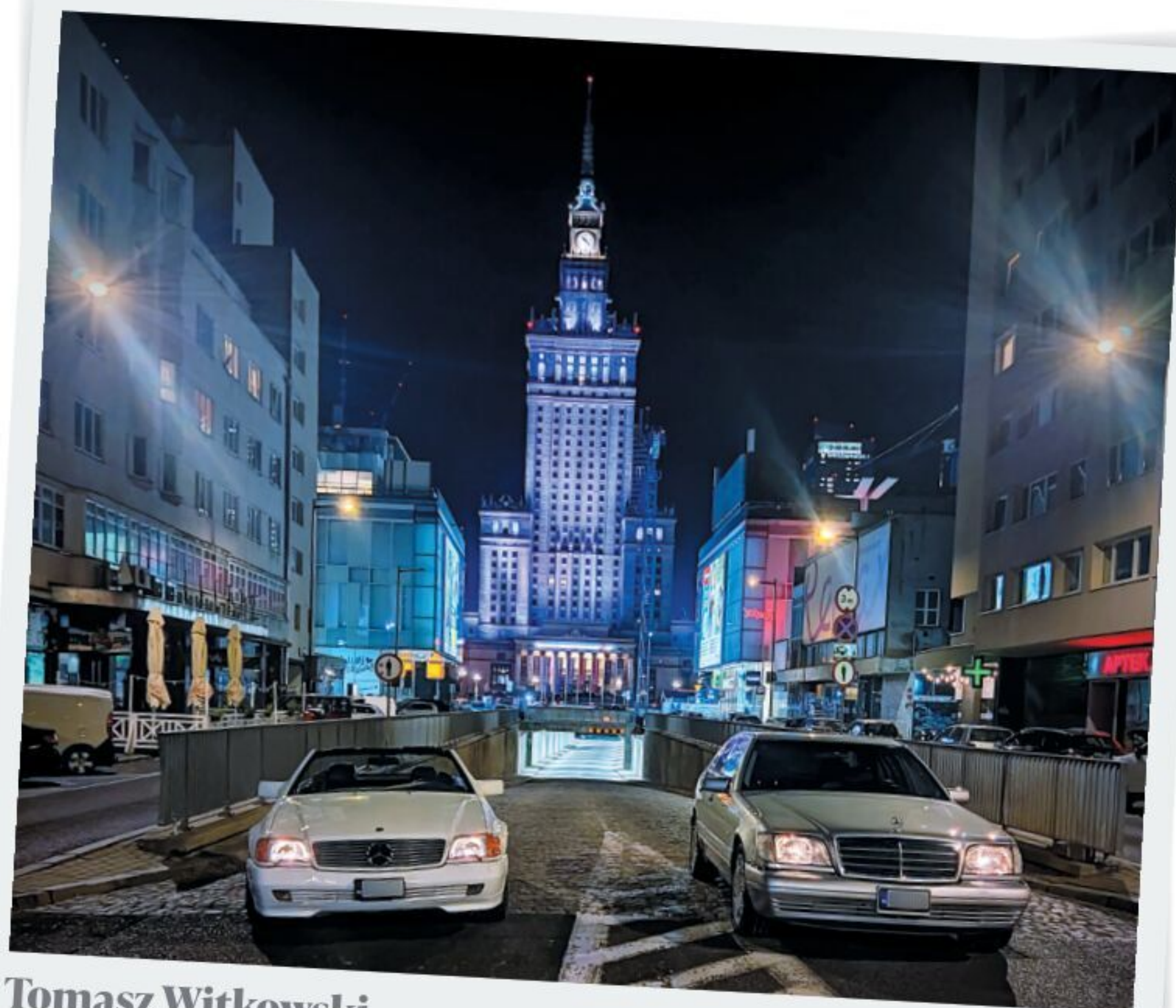
Modern Classic Motors

 **@modern_classic_motors**
My W211 E55 AMG supercharged. I always wanted the 63 in this shape and only bought this car as a gap filler. My plan was to sell it and get the 63 but WOW I just can't. I've had two seriously good offers for this car that I've turned down and some did call me stupid, but I know I'll probably never find one in this spec again. Extremely underrated car!



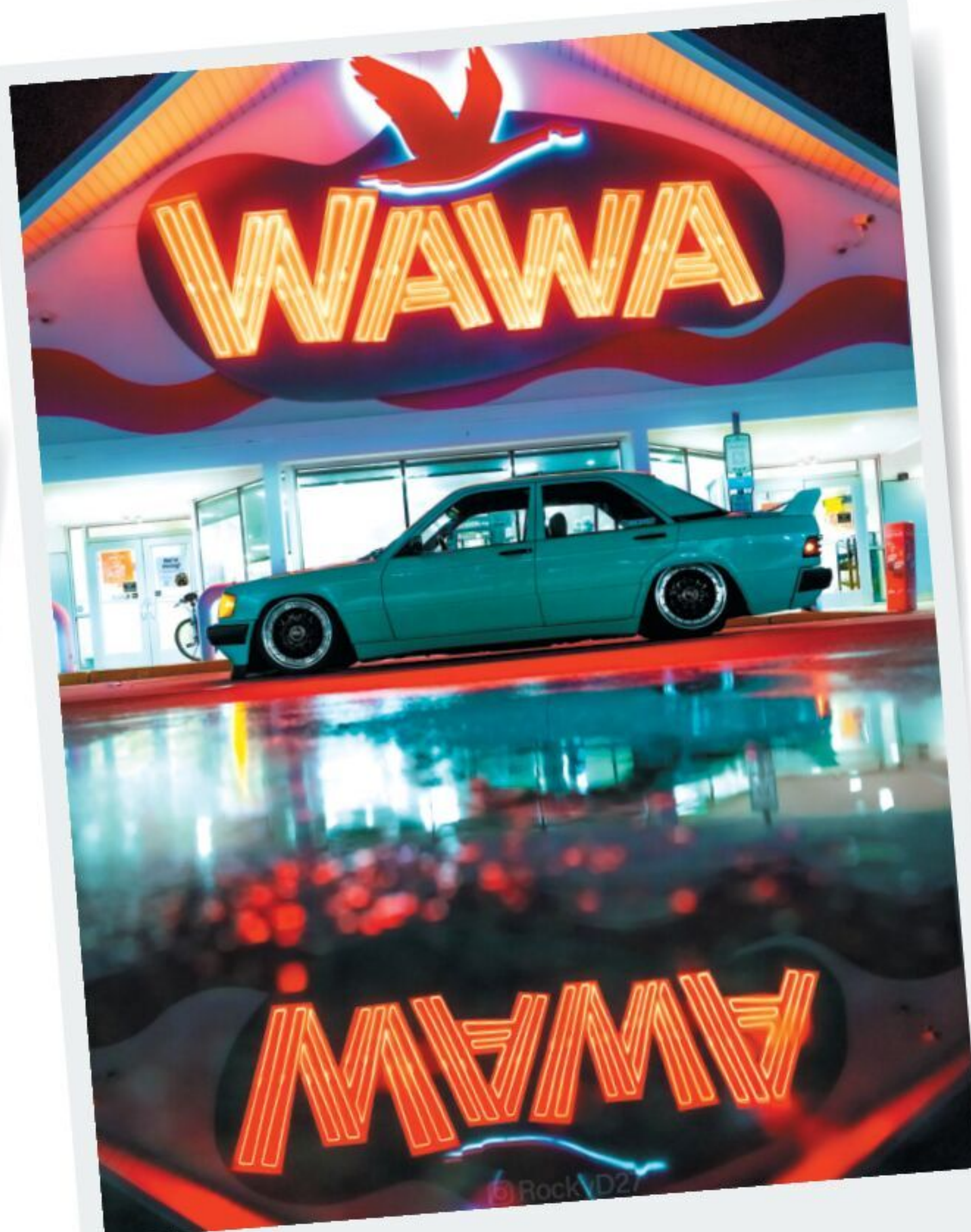
John Haynes Mercedes

 **@johnhaynesmercedes**
One of our company workshop and bodyshop technical open days. This was the W123 day back in 2003. We have just about covered most models in our technical open days over the years, but we're always open to doing more. Any suggestions for the next one?




Tomasz Witkowski

 **@podlaski_klasyk**
R129 500SL owner Tomasz Witkowski took this fantastic photo of his car outside the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, Poland. Alongside the bright white roadster is @szymon.krzyzanowski's W140 S320.



Rocky Demas

 **@rockyd27**
This crazy-looking W201 190E rides on Air Lift suspension and BBS wheels, and is owned by Rocky Demas. The neon lights of the Wawa convenience store added a distinct retro feel to this picture.

Wow factor

Cover
story

AMG has earned the honour of developing the brand new R232 SL from scratch - find out how Mercedes' performance division has broken new ground with the automotive icon using a range of technological advancements

WORDS **KYLE MOLYNEUX**
IMAGES **DAIMLER AG**



So, this is it – the brand new R232 SL. It's based on a state-of-the-art, 2+2-seater architecture and packs four-litre V8 biturbo power at launch, plus much high-tech wizardry and several eye-widening surprises. Not only is this the first SL wholly developed by AMG (meaning all models will be badged as such), this new-generation roadster is also the first SL to feature four-wheel drive – and it's standard!

The body shell – a mix of aluminium, steel, magnesium and fibre composites – is a clean-sheet design from Merc's performance division in Affalterbach and it doesn't share a single component with the previous-gen R231 model, or even the AMG GT Roadster. Weighing just 270kg without doors, bonnet or bootlid, the new body shell is massively more rigid than the old one, with transverse rigidity up a significant 50 per cent, for example. That's great news for handling and refinement.

Offsetting the additional weight of the 4Matic+ all-wheel drive system is a new, space-efficient soft top that saves 21kg over a folding metal vario-roof. Opening and closing in 15 seconds at speeds of up to 37mph, the soft top's lesser weight also contributes to the new SL's improved centre of gravity.

To our eyes, and we suspect many others, the R232's styling is a great leap forward from that of its predecessor's. Chief designer Gorden Wagener and his team's new roadster blends a long wheelbase with short overhangs and a long bonnet to great effect, the added AMG aggression in the snarling mouth and aero addenda only adding to the visual punch. In a nod to SLs of old, there are two power bulges on the bonnet, while sharply outlined digital LED headlamps and slim LED rear lights remind us this is a car for 2022 and beyond.

Indeed, Mercedes said the SL's styling would inspire other roadsters in the future – a

replacement for the SLC, perhaps?

Despite all that styling flair, however, the new SL's drag coefficient is as low as

0.31 thanks to several active aerodynamic ▷

“This new-generation roadster is the first SL to feature four-wheel drive – and it's standard!”



New R232 SL is longer, wider and heavier than the outgoing R231.

▷ devices, including a new, two-piece air control system called AirPanel hidden behind the front intakes that reduces front end lift. There's also an active rear spoiler with five angles of attack that deploys above 50mph, and a new optional carbon element for the underbody, which moves downwards by 40mm at 50mph to create a Venturi effect and suck the SL into the ground, boosting steering precision and stability.

Return of a familiar name

Unveiled during an online event shortly before we went to press, the new SL will be launched with two variations of AMG's M177 3,982cc V8 twin-turbo motor. The SL55 4Matic+ (yes, we're as excited as you to see the return of that model name!) boasts 469bhp with 516lb ft torque and will rocket from 0 to 62mph in 3.9 seconds before topping out at 183mph.

The other model is the SL63 4Matic+ and its V8, complete with active engine mounts (optional on the SL55), develops 577bhp plus 590lb ft torque. That's enough for a 3.6-second 0-62mph time and 196mph vmax.



Rear-wheel steering, 4WD, active aero – the R232 has it all!

Both models are equipped with a nine-speed AMG Speedshift MCT 9G transmission with wet start-off clutch promising snappy responses to accelerator pedal and paddleshift inputs. The SL63 gets an electronically controlled limited-slip differential as standard, but you'll need to tick the option box for the AMG Dynamic Plus Package to get this feature on your SL55.

For the new SL, AMG has given its stalwart four-litre *powerhaus* a new oil pan, repositioned the intercoolers and added active crankcase ventilation, while improving exhaust gas flow. The SL63 makes its extra grunt mostly through an increase in turbo boost pressure and an engine software upgrade.

At least one plug-in hybrid model will join the SL range later, complete with AMG E

AMG Active Ride Control

The SL63 4Matic+ features a newly developed hydraulic suspension system called AMG Active Ride Control (the SL55 gets regular Ride Control). Active hydraulic elements replace the conventional mechanical anti-roll torsion bars and compensate for body roll in fractions of a second.

The adaptive shock absorbers have two hydraulic connections – one of them is on the compression side of the damper, the other on the rebound side. The connection of the damper chambers at all four wheels and the lines is made directly via the control valves of the adaptive dampers. The

hydraulic interconnection of the four suspension struts, as well as the pressure regulation of the pump and switching valves allow a very wide roll rate but also reduced roll movements. On the road, this set up increases comfort as even one-sided bumps are individually compensated for, and during fast cornering the hydraulics also actively reduce a loss of camber, ultimately resulting in precise turn-in response all of the time.

The hydraulics of the Active Ride Control suspension also feed the optional lift system for the front axle, which lifts the front end by 30mm.



Hyperanalogue cabin design includes shroud for the driver's display.

Performance badging. It should use a similar V8 hybrid system to the GT S E Performance, which packs in an electric motor and high-density battery pack for a system output of 831bhp and 1,084lb ft torque, plus a modest seven-mile range in electric mode.

In terms of suspension, the R232 is the first AMG with five front links arranged within the wheel rim, improving kinematics. At the other end of the SL, you'll find another five-link set up plus something else new to the SL genre – active rear axle steering (fitted as standard), which enhances vehicle agility and stability.

The SL55 has newly developed AMG Ride Control steel suspension with adjustable damping, aluminium shock absorbers and lightweight coil springs, while the SL63 carries AMG Active Ride Control suspension with active, hydraulic anti-roll stabilisation for flat cornering and excellent ride comfort (we'll confirm all that once we've driven it in around spring 2022). The R232 SL also makes use of electro-mechanical steering.

As standard, the SL55 runs on 19-inch AMG multi-spoke alloys, and the SL63 sits on

20-inch AMG five twin-spoke rims. Nine wheel types are available in total, up to size 21-inch. The base braking system comprises 390x36mm lightweight discs up front gripped by six-piston calipers, plus 360x26mm discs at the rear grabbed by single-piston floating calipers; the SL55's calipers are painted red and the SL63's yellow.

The lightweight discs feature a re-considered perforation direction said to improve heat dissipation, response in wet conditions and cleaning after use. An AMG ceramic composite braking system with larger discs is optional.

Details to savour

We've got this far without mentioning the SL's fabulous, driver-focused cabin, so it's about time we dived in. Mercedes-AMG describes the R232's interior design as 'hyperanalogue' because it repackages classic SL themes in an ultra-modern way – and looking at the pictures, we're inclined to agree.

Two lavishly appointed chairs with integrated headrests are positioned up front, while seating for two people up to 1.5m tall is found just behind. The 12.3-inch touchscreen – linked to the latest, second-generation MBUX



SL55 4Matic+ shown in grey; new soft top saves 21kg over old vario-roof.



The market introduction of this new roadster is set for spring 2022.

“The cabin repackages classic SL themes in an ultra modern way”

“The new SL will be launched with two variations of AMG’s 3,982cc V8”

▷ 21-inch the largest rim size; ceramic brakes.

▷▷ Hand-built M177 V8 linked to MCT 9G autobox.

▷ infotainment system – that slides up from the centre console reduces the button count and adds to the cabin’s minimalist feel, while the digital instrument cluster flanked by highly detailed air vents dazzles with its crystal clear graphics and sporty flashes of AMG-themed splendour.

Merc’s fabled Aircraf neck-level heating system is standard (front occupants only), and the driver can switch between the host of driving modes (Slippery, Comfort, Sport, Sport+, Individual and Race) via dials on the chunky AMG twin-spoke steering wheel. Note, Race mode is standard on the SL63 but part of the optional AMG Dynamic Plus Package on the SL55. The level of intervention from the ESP system can be adjusted too, and the SL is able to briefly brake an inside rear wheel to tighten its line through a bend.

Driving assistance systems available on the new SL include Active Distance DISTRONIC cruise control, Active Steering Assist, Traffic Sign Assist, Active Lane Keeping Assist, Active Brake



Assist with cross-traffic function and Active Blind Spot Assist with exit warning function. Furthermore, the standard-fit digital LED headlamps with 1.3 million micro-mirrors each, can project guidelines or warning symbols onto the road to alert the driver.

Arrives spring 2022

First impressions of the R232 SL are hugely positive. The newly-installed 4Matic+ system with variable torque distribution should make the very most of the

available thrust, while the AMG-developed suspension should deliver new-found poise missing from the SL in recent years without robbing the car of exceptional levels of ride comfort.

There’s even a 213- to 240-litre boot, plus at least one hybrid to look forward to. The cabin is a dream – surely one of Merc’s best to date – and we’re big fans of the exterior styling, which seems far better resolved and better proportioned than that of its predecessor. That there are 12 paint shades to choose from including new Hyper Blue metallic and Manufaktur Monza Grey magno, plus three roof colour options, is the icing on the cake. We can’t wait to take this Bremen-built beauty for a spin very soon! 



Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG SL55 4Matic+ (R232)

ENGINE M177 3,982cc V8 biturbo POWER 469bhp@5,500-6,500rpm TORQUE 516lb ft@2,250-4,500rpm TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, 4WD WEIGHT 1,950kg
0-62MPH 3.9sec TOP SPEED 183mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 22.2-23.9mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 268-288g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2022-on

Mercedes-AMG SL63 4Matic+ (R232)

ENGINE M177 3,982cc V8 biturbo POWER 577bhp@5,500-6,500rpm TORQUE 590lb ft@2,500-5,000rpm TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, 4WD WEIGHT 1,970kg
0-62MPH 3.6sec TOP SPEED 196mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 22.2-23.9mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 268-288g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2022-on

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

The inside story

WORDS RICHARD MASON
IMAGES LAURENS PARSONS &
JONATHAN ASHMAN

Progressing through the ranks at Mercedes-Benz in the UK, Jonathan Ashman soon found himself making big decisions for his home market. Here, he talks to *Mercedes Enthusiast* about his experiences developing, launching and marketing some of the manufacturer's best-known models



“For a big car, the 126 was phenomenal in the way you could chuck it around”





◁ Volvo showed that a 123 Estate could sell here.

▽ Ornate roof rails also served a practical purpose.

▽▽ 97,000 miles on the clock; note the large wheel...

Mercedes-Benz vehicles in the UK were distributed from 1960 until 1973 by the Thomas Tilling Group in Brentford, West London. In 1971, student Jonathan Ashman spent a year there as part of his business studies course.

Dropping by for lunch with ex colleagues after graduating, they tipped off Jonathan about a vacancy as 'PA' to the new German managing director. In December 1973, Thomas Tilling had sold the business to Daimler-Benz Germany which then installed its own MD. This shake up gave Jonathan the opportunity of a lifetime when he was hired.

Quickly, Jonathan progressed to 'car product manager' with responsibility for which models were sold in the UK, as well as taking care of the specifications and pricing. Mercedes-Benz eventually relocated to Milton Keynes in 1984, prompting Jonathan to join Toyota.

Subsequently, he became head of commercial motorsport at the RAC and later president of the FIA's Rally division and then WTC. *Autosport* magazine names him as one of the 50 most influential people in motorsport. During Jonathan's 11 years at Mercedes, he was deeply involved with models that are mainstay classics today.

"Quite early on, I was involved with getting type approval for the new models we would import for the UK market," Jonathan explains. "One of my first experiences of left-hand drive cars not converting seamlessly to right-hand drive was the R107 280SL. This small-engined SL was in response to petrol price hikes caused by OPEC in 1973.

"I took a prototype and some mechanics to

the Longcross track in Surrey and drove the SL to the limit. I discovered at around 80mph on left-hand bends there was a worrying banging sound. We traced the problem to the G-force causing the engine to hit components that had been re-sited to enable the steering conversion. It took a while to convince the factory because they hadn't had this happen on left-hand drive 280s. From then on, the technical team in Stuttgart would always consult me on new models and I would test prototype right-hand drives in Germany on the company track."

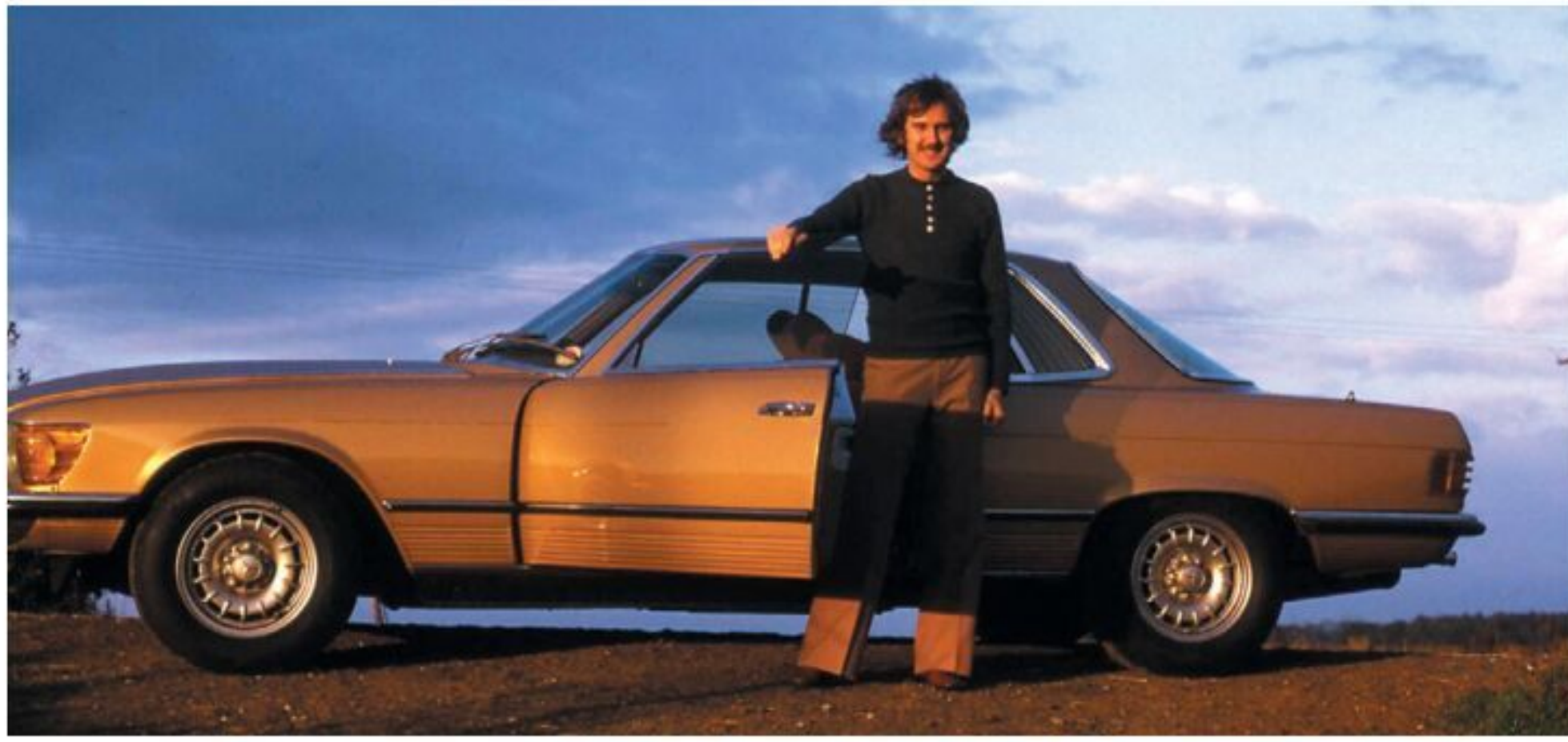
Jonathan had a comparatively free hand in deciding sales strategy. "M-B didn't have a marketing department as such – the cars had hitherto pretty much sold themselves on their engineering credentials. Nobody dared ask for a discount and we were making a lot of money. But times were changing and it wasn't always easy getting my colleagues to move with the times," Jonathan remembers. "Estate cars were popular in the

UK and prestige brands like Volvo, not to mention Ford, were doing well in this segment.

"I had a helluva job convincing our German MD and the board that we should import the 123 in Estate form. Mercedes had never made an estate before. The company feared importing so-called tradesmen's cars would damage our UK reputation, which had a higher cachet than in Germany. They thought an estate was too down market, despite the fact

"I took a prototype and some mechanics to the Longcross track in Surrey and drove the SL to the limit"





△ Jonathan quite rightly looking very happy to have a brand new 450SLC as his company car.



△ Handy behind the wheel, Jonathan made M-B sit up and take note of the SLC's rallying potential.

Volvo was proving the very opposite. Eventually, I got my way in 1978. In fact, the UK board were so nervous that they priced the 123 Estate at little more than the equivalent Saloon. No wonder they sold well."

Jonathan being a bridge between Stuttgart and Brentford on both sales strategy and technical issues was unique. As an accomplished rally driver, he was happy taking cars to their limits on test tracks, hence his discovery of the 280SL's issue. It was Jonathan's rallying exploits with his 450SLC company car that eventually led Mercedes back into motorsport, but that's another story.

In 1979, Jonathan was busy launching the G-Wagen. It required extra special attention being the first off-road vehicle from Mercedes. The company was attacking an established market so the stakes were high. "I chose Eastnor Castle in Herefordshire for the launch because of its steep inclines, lots of water-filled ruts and twisty terrain. It's the main Land Rover test track and has a reputation for destroying four-wheel drive vehicles," Jonathan confirms. "But that's why I wanted to go there – I was convinced, having done a lot of the test driving in Germany, that these were the best off-road vehicles by far.

"So we weren't going to duck the issue – we would launch at the toughest track. And to prove the point I also bought some Land Rovers, Range Rovers and Toyota Land Cruisers, which people could drive before

trying the G-Wagen. I also arranged another six events around the country for dealers and other relevant people who couldn't attend Eastnor."

Tested to the maximum

Smiling, Jonathan recalls something that nearly derailed his plans. "The very first right-hand drive G-Wagen we got was a red, short-wheelbase, canvas top 230. We never actually imported these, but this prototype was for testing and to get type approval. And this is where I had some influence on the development. Forget Eastnor, I wanted a tougher track and went to the military tank testing track at Bagshot in Surrey. Very, very tough.

"The G did remarkably well apart from catching fire," Jonathan continues. "This was caused by brake fluid leaking onto the exhaust manifold. The right-hand drive conversion necessitated moving the brake master cylinder

from left to right. The tube to the brakes needed fastening to the engine to stop it flapping about. However, it should have been lengthened to allow for engine movement in extreme off-roading conditions. Eventually, the tube pulled off, depositing flammable brake fluid onto the exhaust manifold. Luckily, we put the flames out before any significant damage was done. Actually, there was more smoke than flames.

"Again it highlighted, like the 280SL, that only us testing the right-hand drive vehicles in extreme ways were we able to find problems. So, a dead easy fix."

Meanwhile, back at Eastnor, Jonathan had 20 G-Wagens for testing against their competitors. "We had a big back-up team to help when people got stuck because most people would never have driven an off-roader before. I had the layout designed so that it was almost impossible for anyone to complete the course.

First off, they were sent out in the Land Rover and this would get stuck very soon because it has rigid axles at both ends and the springs didn't give much articulation. Next, they went in the Land Cruiser which also had old fashion suspension but mysteriously would always get much further than the Land Rover.

"The last of the competitors was the Range Rover, which had four-wheel independent suspension. Typically, most people got a lot further in this than in the Land Rover," Jonathan recalls. "Finally, people had the chance to try ▷



△ Jonathan recently reacquainted himself with the 123 Coupe.

Charles Ironside: Dealer & enthusiast

"Good 123 TE's are hard to find," Charles Ironside explains. "In nearly 20 years in business, I've only sold about a dozen. As this was the first estate made by Mercedes-Benz, I think the company threw everything at it to get it right. The build quality is superb.

"This Barolo Red 230TE I'm driving at present is one of the last made – April 1986. Aside from air conditioning, it has every option including heated orthopaedic front seats. The orthopaedic adjustment is manual via a strap in the back of the seat. The sunroof on the Estate is also manual and I like that – it's one less thing to go wrong.

"Back in the day, they sold like hotcakes. Barry Gibb of the Bee Gees had a 280TE that he kept 29 years until 2018. And that's the thing, people hang on to good ones. Everyone smiles when they see you driving one of these. It's harking back to another era when cars had personalities. In this case, it's about practicality combined with quality.

"They've really stood the test of time," Charles continues. "However, because they were so loved and used, it's hard to find good ones that have had lighter use. They are simple cars to maintain because everything is fixable. Personally, I prefer the 230 because the engine is more modern and well known for reliability. It's certainly powerful enough, with enough torque to make for relaxed driving. And that's the thing – the 123 is a very pleasant place to be."



△ Charles' Barolo Red 230TE was manufactured in April 1986.



△ Good condition 123s are hard to find, but worth the effort.

▷ the G-Wagen and everyone got further round the course than in any of the competition. The automatic version suited inexperienced people best, and because it had diff locks front and rear, which none of the competition had, this was the secret of its success.

“This was a great practical experience for the sales people because they could say to customers that they had driven the competitor vehicles and knew from experience how good the G-Wagen was off-road. This is way better than showing them a video.”

However, not everything went to plan, as Jonathan explains. “A few days before the launch, Daimler had sent over two of its off-road experts to teach us how to drive the G. Would you believe it, one managed to tip over a G-Wagen by making the classic mistake of not keeping the front wheels pointing in a straight line on a deeply rutted track. The wheels were at 45 degrees and when they caught on something the momentum pitched the G-Wagen onto its side.”

Jonathan concedes that, as with other Mercedes models, engineering excellence comes at a price. “Yes, the G was pricey compared to its competitors – double the price of a Range Rover, which was one of the reasons we had to highlight its off-road capabilities that put the competition in the shade. The 280GE became the most popular model at that time and even Nigel Mansell had one. In fact, he called me from his home on the Isle of Man one afternoon sounding quite excited. Apparently, he had been down to the beach walking his dogs when he got cut off by the tide. The only way back was across sand dunes. Nigel said, ‘I can’t believe how easily the G went over the dunes. It was beyond belief. I’d tried this before in my Range Rover and it couldn’t do it. I just had to tell you.’

“Technically, the G-Wagen was fantastic but so blooming expensive that we didn’t sell many, only hundreds a year, but we sold all the ones we



“Nobody dared ask for a discount and we were making a lot of money”

△ The hand-built G-Wagen was very pricey when new.

◁ Front, centre and rear diff locks gave G an edge.

could get hold of.” No wonder Mercedes made the promise, ‘Where there’s a G, there’s way’...

Letting the car do the talking

A car that sold in hundreds of thousands was the 126-series S-Class. Yet Jonathan describes its October 1982 launch as almost a non-event compared to the G-Wagen. “We had a few technical issues, nothing significant, just random bits and pieces but it kept our technical team occupied. The big thing with the 126 was it was equipped with ABS, which back then was unusual.

“The launch was at Walton Hall, a country house then owned by Danny La Rue in Warwickshire,” Jonathan continues. “Nearby was a disused airfield which we hired so that everyone could experience the ABS. However, this was to be done at high speed which was too risky to let people do on their own. So instead, I drove with three passengers in the car. I chose to drive on the perimeter road, which in effect was a series of curves around the edge of the main runways. One of these was a very long fast corner, 180 degrees, which I entered at 80 to 90mph, at which point the 126 was just beginning to slide. I would hit the brakes hard when the car was at its maximum sideways and the ABS brought the car to a stop.

“To do this, I adjusted the tyre pressures so the car was only slightly rear biased and inclined to four-wheel slide with little oversteer,” Jonathan explains. “It was great fun for me because I knew what would happen but for the passengers it was terrific shock. ▷

James Nuttall: G-Wagen fan

“I’ve grown up with G-Wagens,” begins James Nuttall. “My uncle, who’s a farmer, had one, as did my two cousins. I just love the look of them. They’re well built and fascinating vehicles. This March 2000 G500 RHD is rare. It has electronic differential locks front and rear, plus a lock on the transfer case, operated by three switches on the dashboard. I’ve had this one about a year and a half. The previous owner had spent £1,000 servicing it, so it looked a good bet. I bought it sight unseen during lockdown.

“Later, I discovered that an earlier wealthy owner had changed the leather interior for this brown cloth one. Apparently, he wanted it to match the clothes he wore when he went grouse shooting. In fact, he only used it in winter for shooting trips to Scotland. He’d also had the tinted windows replaced with clear glass and dispensed with the two jump seats in the back.

“Previously, I had a 300GE which I wish I’d never sold. These are useful vehicles particularly where I live on Exmoor when it snows. I once used one to pull an articulated lorry that was stuck in snow in a lay-by. During the ‘Beast from the East’ freeze in 2018, I used my 300GE to ferry people to hospital appointments. They have amazing ability for a vehicle weighing around 2.5 tonnes.

“I like this era of G500 because of the simplicity, which means I can do most repairs and maintenance myself,” James confirms. “Having said that, if I could get a G55 AMG in right-hand drive then I would be tempted, as I think that’s the ultimate G-Wagen.”



△ James Nuttall grabbed this 2000 G500 during lockdown.



△ Former keeper changed factory leather to this brown cloth.

“Nigel Mansell called me from his home on the Isle of Man one afternoon sounding quite excited”

▷ Here's Jonathan 'making the most' of a 126 S-Class.

▷▽ Ashman's own G-Class in snowy Wales.



▷ I always explained what I was going to do beforehand, as I didn't want anyone to have a heart attack. You see, people could grasp the ABS concept in straight-line braking, but not what you could do by steering in the middle of a corner with the brakes full on.

Special class

“We let people drive on a course with plastic bollards, which they had to steer around under braking. Some drivers just froze – they couldn't bring themselves to push the brake pedal. This was just revolutionary. I did a short stint at the Hendon Police Driving Centre instructing them on ABS. For that, I used a 350SLC which I had also rallied. I was doing everything that they taught you should never do. And they were right – in a normal car you would have a colossal accident.

“For a big car, the 126 was phenomenal in the way you could chuck it around. It was so forgiving – it never did anything suddenly and horribly that would catch you out. It was so easy to drive fast and on the limit – and beyond the limit,” Jonathan smiles.

Early S-Classes had some intriguing options, such as heated reclining rear seats. “Yes, in practice we would offer about 20 options but the factory options list ran into hundreds,” Jonathan remembers. “I had to decide which options we would sell in the UK. There was no point in having things with a low take up such as hydraulic suspension. It doesn't end there – these options have to be supported by spares and servicing.”

The one thing Jonathan never influenced was



the size of the steering wheel. “Yes, it was bizarre that we had pre-war sized steering wheels on cars with power steering. But the man who decreed it was a certain Herr Sorcher. I begged him to reduce the size of the wheel but he was adamant in his refusal, the rationale being that in case the power steering failed you still needed a steering wheel with enough leverage with which to steer. Once he retired in 1982, guess what? The steering wheels got smaller.”

The 124-series was the last Mercedes to benefit from Jonathan's input. “The German engineers called me over to meet with them and discuss how and where to site the parking brake. Normally, they would only call me in when a prototype was ready to drive, but this time they were still in the development process, so I knew it was serious.

“As you know, 124s have a foot-operated parking brake, which for the UK market then was a novelty. Previously, on say the 126, it was an umbrella type brake handle in the dashboard, or on the 190E a lever in the centre between the

front seats. The engineers couldn't use the lever solution because there wasn't room between the seats, and the umbrella one wasn't an option because the 124's bulkhead was completely different to a 126's,” Jonathan explains.

“But there was more bad news. The transmission tunnel sticks out more on the right-hand side and so there was less room to put this extra pedal. Also, the exhaust system passes at this point causing the floor to be higher, again taking away space. The engineers had created a mock-up of the proposed system, but even with my small size 7 feet it was only just about viable.

“I returned to Brentford and my solution was making sure that the training department knew what was coming, and also the service people. One mitigating factor was that most 124s we imported were automatics and people often never use the parking brake. Not long after this trip I left the company, but I wouldn't mind betting that in the early days of the 124-series a lot of people took off with the parking brake on.”

A company like no other

Jonathan sums up the philosophy during his years at Mercedes. “In those days, a Mercedes was almost without equal as far as Daimler was concerned. Apart from the G-Wagen, where we did put ourselves up against the competition, the launches of the 126 S-Class, 201 190 and 124 E-Class were simply showcasing the car on the basis of, ‘This is a Mercedes’.

“Of course, the press made comparisons like *Motor* using my company 450SLC in a test against a Jaguar XJS. For us, there was never a thought of comparisons because our brand loyalty was extremely high. It was always about selling the strength of the product, be it luxury, safety, off-road capability or engineering superiority. Price almost never came into it. And this approach was a spectacular success.” ■



◁ Making 124s in right-hand drive was a challenge.

► Thank you to **Charles Ironside** for the loan of the S123 230TE and the photoshoot location Tel 07950 379560 Web www.charlesironside.co.uk and to **James Nuttall** for the loan of his G500

“Without even a sniff of messing about, the engine from the CLK55 was dropped into the C-Class”



The essential problem with human existence is that, on a physical if not conceptual level, nothing lasts. All of our achievements, no matter how seemingly significant, will ultimately turn into dust, the base elements returning to the cosmos from whence they sprang forth. It's a truism to say that our lifespans, when taken as a percentage of the Earth or the universe as a whole, are so mind-bogglingly insignificant that there's no purpose whatsoever to anything we do, but at the same time this little pocket of near-nothingness that we inhabit is still *our* nothing. It's mankind's prerogative to make things better for that brief flash of time in which we get to enjoy them, and it's for this reason that great and inspiring art has always characterised mankind's achievements; why architecture is often beautiful as well as functional, why

▽◁ Gears can be changed with this lever or paddles.

▽ Thick bolsters for the perforated leather seats.

clothes are colourful and stylish instead of drab and utilitarian, why food is tasty and pleasing to the eye rather than merely fuel, and why we like to drive entertaining cars. We don't need to spend all this money on automobiles that are powerful or lavishly equipped – but who ever cared about 'need'?

The Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG is a clear embodiment of this way of thinking. Take the W203 C-Class which provides the architecture: this in itself was an exercise in excellence, conceived as a plushly appointed compact executive with a broad variety of drivetrains ranging from the reasonably powerful to the extremely hilariously powerful. It had crisp exterior styling, sure-footed roadholding, a tastefully trimmed cabin and practicality in spades. Upon this amenable canvas was painted ▷

Executive action

The proverbial iron fist/velvet glove scenario, the C55 AMG took the compact executive segment to strange new places

WORDS **DAN BEVIS** IMAGES **JASON DODD**



“I had no intention of buying a new car, but I saw this C55 on sale at the dealership and I just loved it”

▷ the lunatic C55 with a broad brush, AMG's hellions imbuing improbable firepower into the unsuspecting C-Class.

△ 108 Saloons sold in UK and 4,021 globally.

This wasn't their first stab at it. The C32 AMG of 2001 to early 2004 took the W203 base and stuffed in a supercharged 3.2-litre V6, keeping BMW's E46 M3 (also a 3.2) squarely in the crosshairs. With 349bhp it was a thoroughly capable thing, but its successor proved to be slightly more hysterical. A common idiom in the world of motoring is 'using a sledgehammer to crack a nut'; we revel in it, this notion of throwing unrelenting brute force at a task in order to get it done with, if we're honest, far more force than could ever be necessary.

The task in question here is simply getting from point A to point B – generally via an amusing jaunt through the winding lanes of point C – and this doesn't require oodles of power. It requires just about enough power, that's all. But since when has 'just about enough' been any fun? Power corrupts, as the old saying goes, and absolute power corrupts absolutely – and if you're not interested in being absolutely corrupted by a frightening display of unnecessary power then, frankly, you might want to skip to another feature because the C55 AMG positively encourages you to give in to it. Let the horsepower wash over you. Too much is never enough.

For the 2004 model year, all the stops were pulled out.



The M113

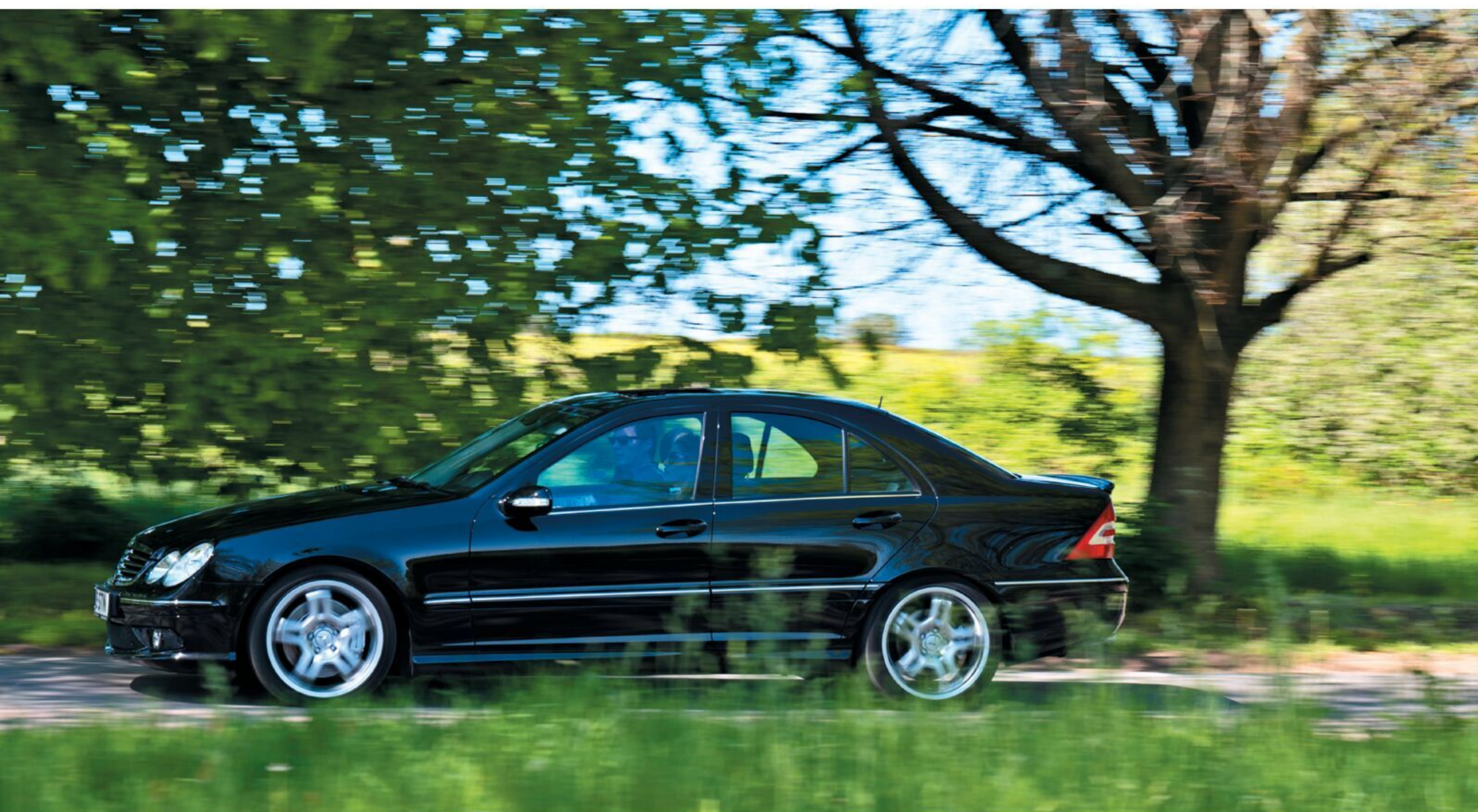
The M113 V8 has become a bit of legend in Mercedes-Benz circles and beyond. A family of engines, the shared highlights include aluminium blocks and heads, a twin-plug-per-cylinder layout, sequential fuel injection, forged rods and a magnesium intake manifold. The first iteration of the formula arrived in 1997, with a 4.3-litre displacement debuting in the C43 AMG and E430. Later swelling to 5.0 litres, it was then found in models including the S500, CLK500, E500, and assorted other models with '500' written on the boot.

The 5.4-litre M113 is a favourite for many, as this is the motor you find in cars wearing the iconic '55' badging. Across models including the C55 AMG, SL55 AMG, ML55 AMG, G55 AMG and assorted other fifty-fives, power of the naturally aspirated V8 ranged from 342 to 362bhp, rising to a hysterical 395bhp in the deranged SLK55 AMG Black Series.

Speaking of deranged, the decision was made to add a twin-intercooled supercharger to the 5.4-litre engine in 2002,

and this format – designated M113K – could be found in some truly iconic machines, such as the 469bhp E55 AMG, and the 574bhp CLK DTM AMG.

Special mention must also go to the M155 SLR engine. An evolution of the supercharged 5.4 M113, this is the powerplant found in the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren, putting out 617bhp in standard form (if such a term can indeed be applied), and a colossal 641bhp in the 722 Edition. Truly, the M113 is one of Mercedes' all-time great engines



△ C55 replaced the supercharged, 349bhp C32 V6.

▷ Pristine 18-inch alloys with Pirelli tyres.

Without even a sniff of messing about, the engine from the CLK55 was dropped into the W203 – the venerable M113 (see sidebar), a brutal 362bhp 5.4-litre V8. Which is an enormous amount of engine to squeeze into a compact executive. Indeed, the front end of the car required a little elongation to accommodate the mighty engine, hence the nose aesthetic shared with the CLK55; mated to a five-speed AMG Speedshift autobox, the 0-62mph run was despatched in a brisk 5.2 seconds, with the top whack electronically limited to the usual 155mph. By every reasonable measure, this was very much a *Spinal Tap* car, each element turned up to 11.

The example we have here belongs to Eastbourne resident and long-time Mercedes-Benz enthusiast Dean Stone. He's had a diverse and unusual selection of cars over the years, including a Fiat 131 Mirafiori, Triumph Dolomite Sprint, Honda Civic VTi and a Nissan Cherry Europe, but it's the three-pointed star that seems to be really holding him in its thrall; he's now owned the C55 AMG for 11 years, having traded in a C230 Kompressor SE at his local M-B dealer in Westham.

"I had no intention of buying a new car," he recalls, "but I saw this C55 on sale at the dealership and I just loved it. I hadn't seen one on the road before, and the size of the engine really filled me with excitement... and perhaps a little fear of the unknown!"



△▷ Owner Dean Stone traded up from a C230 K.



Fear, of course, is what keeps us alert and alive, and a healthy dose of a V8 would do most people some good. It was, however, a somewhat ignominious start, with an unfortunate journey home doing little to dilute Dean's trepidation. "On that first day of ownership, while I was driving it home with my wife, I was so unlucky to get a flat tyre. I felt that maybe I had purchased a car that was jinxed, especially as the numberplate ended with DOA [Dead On Arrival], but having changed that, the car has been as good as gold for the last 11 years."

It's been a hilariously playful steer too. Naturally, AMG's approach wasn't just to shoehorn in a huge engine and see what happens – this was a thorough and holistic effort which left no stone unturned throughout the W203. Behind those stylish alloy wheels lurks the full-fat AMG brake package, and standing firm above is the dependable sports suspension set up; the track is wider, the steering quicker, the automatic transmission featuring proper manual control, it's all engineered toward the sporting driver.



▷ So Dean's been enjoying it to the fullest whenever the whim demands, but it's also interesting to note that he's been impressively restrained. With just 47,000 miles on the clock, this has to be one of the freshest and tightest C55s in the UK, and he's keen to ensure it stays that way. "I've always had it serviced at the same dealership I bought it from, as they're helpful and honest," he enthuses. "The car is always garaged and properly maintained, and I only use the super unleaded petrol for performance cars. It's all standard too, with no modifications – it's just as AMG intended. I never felt the need to change anything, apart from de-badging the bootlid and removing the star from the bonnet."

An exercise in stealth, indeed. As long as the shiny quad exhausts don't catch the eye, most unassuming motorists would probably disregard Dean's C55 as just another soon-to-be youngtimer C-Class – right up until the moment the national speed limit signs appeared, and suddenly they didn't see which

▽ Rack and pinion steering in the 203-series C55.

All of this power, all of this quality, it's proven to be a formula as addictive as it is evocative

way he went. All of this power, all of this quality, it's proven to be a formula as addictive as it is evocative.

“There was a time when I'd considered selling it,” he admits. “But instead, I decided to spend a few thousand on it, having the car fully detailed inside and out with ceramic coating, getting the wheels refurbished, and doing all the little jobs to get it top-notch.” His endeavours have really paid dividends. Magnificent to behold, isn't it? And all the more so for the fact that knowing what lurks beneath that bonnet invites us into a special club; those who are aware that there's substance behind the sheen, in the form of an utterly massive engine graced with know-how from Affalterbach.

“We are all in the gutter,” Oscar Wilde once said, “but some of us are looking at the stars.” Legendary ad man Leo Burnett had a similar outlook: “When you reach for the stars, you may not quite get one, but you won't come up with a handful of mud either.” And who could forget the ineffable, timeless wisdom of S Club 7, those pastel-hued popstrel troubadours who eagerly yelped, “Reach for the stars, woo-oo, yeah, oooh”?

OK, that last example perhaps doesn't quite share the gravitas of the others, but the crux of the matter is this: we enter this world to play the hand that we're dealt, and it's up to us to make the best of it in whatever way we can. When you aim high, you might fail, but you might also succeed and make life rather a lot better for yourself and those around you. Mercedes-Benz and AMG did precisely this, turning the W203 into something brilliantly and fabulously unnecessary. Because life's too short for 'need' without enjoying a little bit of 'want'.



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG (W203)

ENGINE M113 5,439cc V8 POWER 362bhp@5,750rpm TORQUE 376lb ft@4,000rpm TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,635kg

0-62MPH 5.2sec TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 23.7mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 286g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2004-2007

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to NEDC Combined; top speed electronically limited



Clear and his
team are more
than up to
transforming
not just the
power but also
the way a car handles





AMG

unhinged

When an owner's Mercedes-AMG C63 became hydro-locked, he took another older example to Arkham Performance to regain some of the lost magic – and then things got interesting...

WORDS MARK SMYTH
IMAGES JASON DODD

A water-logged engine is not something anyone wants, but for one enthusiast it led to a conversation that ultimately saw him work with the team at Arkham Performance to create a Mercedes-AMG C63 Saloon that is truly tailored for him.

Named after the rogue asylum in the fictional city of Gotham in DC Comics' *Batman* franchise, Arkham Performance was born out of Auto Upgrades in 2020. Based in Eastbourne, East Sussex, the company is owned by Nathan Clear who has over 20 years' experience working on everything from French and Japanese cars to the latest models from Mercedes-Benz.

This particular project happened after one customer suffered water damage to his 2018 C63, a car which Clear and his small team had done some work on. Sadly, the engine was a write-off and so the customer turned to another C63 in his possession, a 2016 model. One of the things the client really wanted was the same level of visual data that he had in a head-up display in his 2018 model. In order to achieve this, Clear turned to one of his suppliers in China to provide a customised steering wheel that perfectly met the client's needs.

"We have a resource out there that can customise them, so you can pick and choose a flat bottom wheel, a rounded bottom wheel, a thumb imprint around the sides of the wheel, Alcantara, nappa leather, different kinds of stitching. It's quite extensive and tailorable to each individual customer," he says. "Basically you code the shift lights, so you set the shift lights up to however you want to have them," explains Clear. "Obviously, we set them up to go red just after peak torque, so just shy of 7,000rpm because the power starts to tail off a little bit after that.

"You're able to get a digital readout of water temperatures, battery voltage and get the boost displayed, too," he continues. "There's a lap timer function if you're on the track, but it's not really a track car. There's a couple of other smaller options – it has quite a lot of functionality."

In this instance, the customer also wanted red carbon fibre.

Not a choice Clear says he would go for, but he explains that the client wants to continue the theme throughout the car including red carbon on the centre console, which will have to be specially made because not many people offer that option. "I think we'll also be looking at a red carbon fibre induction system



△△ 20mm lower ride height with new H&R springs.

△ Nathan Clear of Arkham, based on the south coast.



if we continue to push the car forward in terms of performance,” reveals Clear.

Performance is as important to Clear as styling and he and his team are more than up to transforming not just the power but also the way a car handles. At the moment, this particular C63 has benefited from stage two ECU tuning as well as MTC exhaust downpipes with a factory AMG Valvetronic exhaust and Pipercross panel filters. Power is up slightly to 580bhp and the V8 biturbo now boasts 627lb ft of torque. The chassis has been dropped by 20mm using H&R lowering springs and 19-inch matte bronze Inspiri wheels have been fitted and shod with Michelin Pilot Sport 4 tyres.

Next up, Clear says they are talking about making it a ‘vmax’ car, tuning the engine and gearbox and bolting on larger turbos to make this C63 capable of more than 200mph. They will also be upgrading all the cooling components because the last thing the customer needs after water damage on one car is things getting a little too hot on another.

That’s the next stage, but what about the

◀△ V8 with stage two tuning produces 580bhp.

◀ Carbon fibre rear diffuser with Arkham badge.

Once the wrap had been agreed on, Clear says the project just snowballed into a complete exterior overhaul



Arkham recently moved into brand new premises



▷ rest of the styling work that has been done? Interestingly, the full matte grey metallic vinyl wrap came about because a friend of the client started working for Arkham and he was a trainee wrapper. Once the wrap had been agreed on, Clear says the project just snowballed into a complete exterior overhaul. The customer wanted it to look a bit sinister but not overdone and that's what Clear says they have managed to achieve.

Apart from the wrap, this C63 features a DarwinPro carbon fibre bonnet, a GTR front grille with a tinted Mercedes star, light smoke-tinted front and rear lights, and a full black badge set. The AMG brake calipers have been re-coloured in liquid bronze and then there's a long list of carbon fibre elements, including the rear wing and diffuser, front splitter, cooling ducts and mirror caps. The side skirt extensions are also carbon fibre and feature a special Arkham Edition badge, but what defines a car that gets this badge?

Clear says he's seen lots of bland modifications over the years and that he wanted to offer something different, both in terms of styling and performance. "It's basically a service we're offering to customers that want something that's tailor-made to



△ 19-inch matte bronze wheels made by Inspiri.

them – everything from interior through to exterior. Then we'll put our Arkham Edition badge on the back of it," he adds before confirming that feature is saved for special projects involving much more than wrapped bodywork, for example.

It's not all about customers creating their own specification, though. Arkham recently moved into brand new premises and the next stage of the company's development is launching an online shop. This will not only provide access to a wide range of products, but Clear would like to get to a point where customers can select one of various Arkham packages such as a handling pack or a styling pack, designed to suit a specific vehicle and featuring the best components Clear and his team can offer.

Many of these will be geared towards Mercedes models, with the C63 easily the most popular that the team at Arkham work on. It's followed by the A45, but Clear says that they've also been doing some work on newer A35 models recently too, and that they're keen to expand their work throughout the Mercedes line up, although they do work on other marques as well.

For now, the team at Arkham Performance are taking business to the next level, even wanting to provide some sponsored products

for those who fit the right profile but that's just one part of their strategy for the future. "Vehicle enhancements for road and track' is our motto," Clear explains. "We are aiming to be a complete in-house one-stop shop for anything if you like your cars and you want to improve performance, handling or styling."

It's also about building a business that started during the pandemic. It wasn't quite the launch that Clear and his team wanted, but now he is confident he has everything in place to fulfil his dreams for the business and deliver the best products and service for his customers, whatever they may need.



Grand entrance

Based on sketches by Australian Peter Arcadipane, the 215-series CL-Class cut a handsome dash in the late 1990s and eventually became a flagship Benz coupe that many could afford to buy, although maintaining it is another matter...

WORDS **NEIL BRISCOE** IMAGES **DAIMLER AG & TERRY OBORNE**

▷ Glorious walnut trim; early sat nav with disc drive.

▷ Just enough room for adults to sit in the rear.

▽ Simple and elegant dials in front of driver.



We don't tend to think of Mercedes as being especially rare cars. The output from Sindelfingen and other points of the Mercedes compass has never been especially mass-market in its volume, but nonetheless a Mercedes, almost any Mercedes, is a common sight on the nation's roads.

The kicker in the last sentence is 'almost'. Almost because there are some Benz models that are close to being vanishingly rare. There are obvious examples of this – you will not find too many original 300SL Gullwings no matter how hard you look. Nor, equally, are there over-many of that car's spiritual successor, the SLS AMG knocking about. Fancy an SLR McLaren? Good luck – you're shopping from a list of just slightly more than 2,000 cars.

You wouldn't automatically think that the second CL coupe, the C215-series, based on the W220 S-Class, is especially rare. After all, big and expensive it may have been when new, but in its essentials, it's a two-door S-Class, so surely a good few were made?

Well, not really – in fact, according to the official Mercedes-Benz record, a mere 47,984 were built between June 1998 and February 2006 (standard production began in August 1999). The vast majority of those (32,224) were the CL500 with its 302bhp V8 engine. If you fancy one of the other versions, you are shopping on shelves even more lightly stacked than those of the vaunted SLR. If, indeed, it's the ultimate C215 CL you fancy, the mighty 604bhp V12-engined CL65 AMG? Only 777 were made.

Wait – we can go rarer still. How about the CL55 AMG F1 Limited Edition, made at the back end of 2000 to celebrate the CL being used as the official Formula 1 Safety Car? Only 55 such examples were made.

A new benchmark

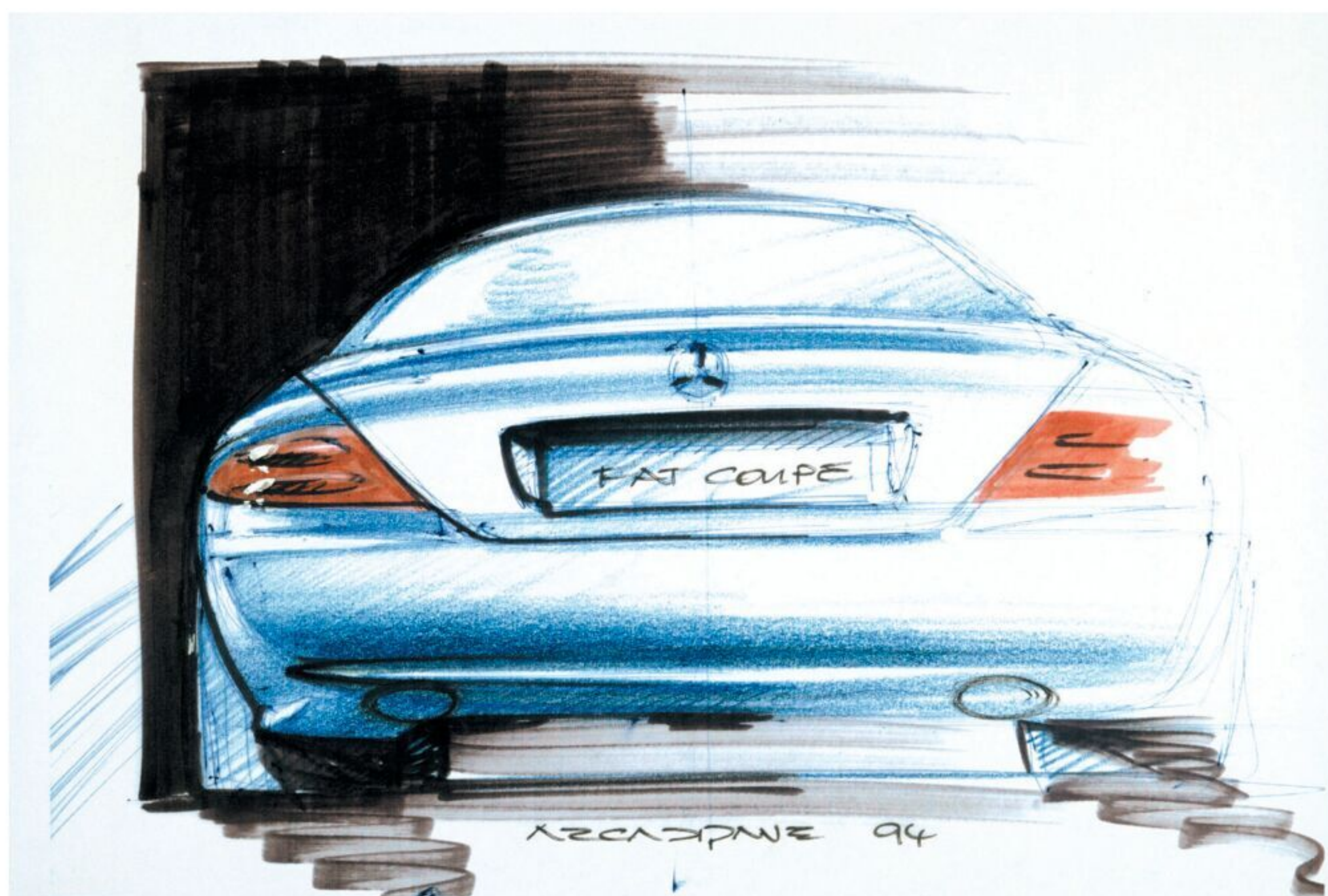
When the 215-series CL was launched, it was widely and rightly considered the most electronically and mechanically sophisticated car you could buy. The CL came with electronic stability control, brake assistance, bi-xenon headlamps (with that distinctive four-light 'squint' styling at the front), automatic climate control, active radar-guided cruise control, the first 'Pre-Safe' crash detection system, a speed limiter, keyless ignition, built-in navigation, Active Body Control (ABC) suspension; a passenger's airbag that detected the weight of the person sitting in the seat and could deploy in two stages to better cushion any impact, and a sound system by Bose. There are modern luxury cars that don't have that litany of equipment, more than 20 years on.

Little wonder that the world's motoring press showered the CL with praise. Germany's *Auto Motor Und Sport* said, "The special fascination of the CL600 lies in the unique effortlessness of driving, and the new 5.8-litre V12 engine is a perfect match in this respect... The five-speed automatic, which interacts with the V12 in rarely encountered perfection, also deserves praise." ▸

“You wouldn't automatically think that the second CL coupe, the C215-series, is especially rare”

▽ Arcadipane's 'Fat Coupe' penned back in 1994.

▽▽ Every angle of the C215 CL just works – fantastic!





CL55 AMG F1 Limited Edition now a much sought-after model.



△ Components of Active Body Control suspension set up.

▷ ABC Sport mode further reduces body roll.

▽ 5.0L M113 V8 in CL500 gave 302bhp plus 339lb ft.



▷ Across the Atlantic, America's *Road & Track* was equally keen, saying, "The CL55's progress proved effortless and serene, even at autobahn pace where one is obliged, after all, to keep to the fast lane and set a good AMG example."

That original 5.8-litre V12 in the CL600 had 362bhp, but Mercedes added two turbos at the 2002 update and increased output to 493bhp. By the end of that year, the 5.5-litre V8 engine in the CL55 AMG would be upgraded to the same power output with help from a supercharger. Also in 2002, the complex ABC suspension was altered so that it could also measure the weight of the CL as you drove it, making fine-tuned adjustments to the suspension. Thanks to ABC, the CL is a remarkable car to drive, even today, and is exceptionally light on its toes for a big, two-tonne luxury coupe.

What to look for

As an ownership proposition, though? That is a double-edged sword. With so much equipment stuffed into that big body, and with large-displacement, multi-cylinder engines, there's an awful lot to go wrong in a CL and bills can be staggeringly expensive when things do go pop. Some items – such as brake pads and even brake discs – are actually not outrageously expensive, thanks to being shared with other Mercedes models. Other items? A common fault is the air pump that helps to warm up the engine from a cold-start, and when it goes it's at least £500 to fix, plus labour.

Many of the original electrical glitches will have been sorted by now, but you'll still need to be extremely suspicious of anything that has a wire in the back, and in the CL that's pretty much everything. Watch for rust, too, especially around the edges of the wheelarches, and in behind the brakes.

The ABC suspension uses high-pressure hydraulics, and is full of sensors and pressure regulators that are fragile and expensive to replace. A single suspension unit, with the hydraulic actuator, can cost as much as £700 to £900, and that's without fitting. A new ABC hydraulic pump is £1,500, while pump control valves are £2,000 for a pair. A complete suspension refurb could run to more than £7,000.

The engines – and the CL was only sold with V8 or V12 powerplants – are actually pretty robust, but you'll want to see a nice, fat, complete service history file and stack after stack of receipts to ensure that everything's been kept up to code. Only use a very high-quality synthetic lubricant at service times, every 10,000 miles (Mobil1 oil was the original recommendation, and we see no reason not to continue with that). Keep an eye out for heavy oil use, which might indicate a leak, as well as coolant



Owner's view

Jim Jamieson is a company director from Scotland who owns a 2002 Mercedes-Benz CL600 V12 finished in gorgeous Almandine Black metallic paintwork.

"I drove a CLK420, but when the CL500 and 600 first came out, back in 2002, I just thought they were even more beautiful cars. I wanted one, but the company budget wouldn't stretch," Jim explains. "The CL600 I have now was originally a £125,000 car, and it was owned by a diplomat, apparently. Mercedes-Benz told me that it has known about this car from new, so it was obviously owned by someone a bit special."

"At the time we bought it, we were looking for a car for my wife, and we were going to get a Range Rover, which was going to cost us around £700 a month. And then I saw this CL advertised on eBay for £7,500, and I just thought – if we buy this car, even if it only lasts a year and gets thrown in the bin, then it's basically the same deal. It had done 42,000 miles at the time, and being a diplomat's car it had been looked after beyond the norm. Anything that was ever wrong was fixed right away. Obviously, I guess it was driven in and around London and didn't go much further than that most of the time."

"So, you won't have the reliability of a new car, but it's now got just over 50,000 miles on it and it's a stunning, stunning car to drive. You close that big door and with the double-glazed windows it just cocoons you. It's so quiet and so smooth. OK, so we'll have to do the V12's coil packs at some point and so on, but what else could you buy for £7,500? You could just buy some old rubbish thing, or you could buy one of these."

issues, ignition coil problems, fuel injectors and problems with sensors that can send the car into 'limp home' mode.

Don't forget that both engines have dual spark plugs per cylinder, which means a whopping 24 plugs each time you want to change them on a V12 model. Both engines have timing chains, rather than belts, which should be good right up to 180,000 miles, but as ever with such things it's a good idea to get the chain tensioners checked regularly.

A world apart

On the inside, the fascia and switchgear are shared with the W220 S-Class, so parts availability isn't a huge issue. Beware of problems with the headlining though – Alcantara headlining was one of the CL's few options when it was new, and if there are tears or stains then it's an expensive thing to sort. You're better off going for a CL with a dark leather interior too, as the lighter coloured hides don't wear well. Models that originally came with a TV in the centre console are now rather obsolete since analogue television transmission is no more, and they're not equipped to pick up digital TV.

Back in 1999, the original CL brochure stated that, "When you are back on the ground after a trip in the CL Coupe, it's as if you were awakened from a beautiful dream. Make sure you find a fixed point of orientation – you'll need it. Because you just returned from a different world. From the world of the CL Coupes." I don't think we could put it much better today, only to say that the cost of entry to that world has fallen dramatically.

△ Rare designo trim option made from real stone.

“Thanks to ABC, the CL is a remarkable car to drive”

▽ V12 biturbo in CL65 made 604bhp and 737lb ft torque.

▽▽ CL65 had unique styling; just 777 made.



Just the facts CL-Class (C215)

LAUNCHED March 1999, Geneva motor show

STANDARD PRODUCTION August 1999 to February 2006

FACELIFT DEBUT Autumn 2002

NUMBER BUILT 47,984

MODELS **Pre-Facelift** CL500, CL600, CL55 AMG, CL55 AMG F1 Limited Edition, CL63 AMG **Post-Facelift** CL500, CL600, CL55 AMG, CL65 AMG

IN THE CLASSIFIEDS 2001 CL500, 88,000 miles, Chalcidony Blue metallic with Orion Grey leather, £10,975, Silverwood Cars (Gateshead)







Star shining bright

TV and film lighting expert John Gates talks to Reed Hitchcock about his 1986 560SL that he's made the very most of driving during the last 13 years

WORDS **REED HITCHCOCK**
IMAGES **KAVEH SARDARI**

John Gates is a man with an amazing eye – and he should be, considering that he spent a career as a lighting guru for the motion picture and television industries. John has worked on projects with household names like Danny DeVito, Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones, but he doesn't have the aura of someone overly impressed with celebrity – more like he knows where the bodies are buried. Instead, in conversation his passion for the detail aspects of his life's work is tangible. It seems somehow appropriate to me that a man with an eye for colour, light and composition has owned this aesthetically pleasing, Mariner Blue 1986 560SL for 13 years and over 150,000 miles.

Classic Mercedes-Benzes have not been a staple of John's garage since he first started driving. In fact, he was more of the practical Honda owner type for much of his driving life, but he had an appreciation for Mercedes' reputation for over-engineering. It likely didn't escape his attention that for nearly two full decades the venerable R107 was also the 'it' car among Hollywood's elite. Just think about it for a minute: *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *Wonder Woman* drove 107s, so did Jonathan Hart and Bobby Ewing. A few years later, a 107 featured prominently in *Beverly Hills Cop* – even featuring on the movie poster. For the entire 18-year production from 1971 through 1989, there was no two-seater that compared to the 107 – in all, eight in-line six and V8 configurations – in terms of quality, presence, prominence and exclusivity.

Actually, exclusivity in this case is a bit of a misnomer. They were exclusive in that only well-heeled buyers could afford them, but in total Mercedes built a remarkable 237,287 R107s – or almost five times the number of 113-chassis 'Pagoda' SLs that preceded them. John's 560SL is one of 13,788 of that model produced for worldwide consumption in 1986: nothing to sneeze at, but not quite Toyota Corolla numbers, either.

In good hands

So, while 560SLs are not particularly hard to come by, at least here in the good old US of A, which was their primary market, when he set about looking for one circa 2007 John wasn't looking for just any car. He'd already had the epiphany that "for the same money as a new Honda I could buy a pristine classic Mercedes", but that was only the first step. A lot of 560SLs – even 13 years ago – had seen better days. Unfortunately, like many eventual classics, even R107s went through a "just a used car" period, and many buyers got into them cheap, drove them hard, and then parked them in the corner when expensive bits broke.

For years, there was discussion among the Mercedes enthusiast community about R107s as collectible classics. While there were always true believers and cars that had been hermetically sealed and not driven past delivery miles that commanded a hefty premium when they came to market, it really wasn't until Pagoda prices started trending upwards at a surprising pace that the R107s started coming into their own. Seemingly overnight, all 107s – from the fight pigs to the garage queens – were a "rare, pristine collector car" with premium prices affixed to them. For John, this car was going to be his only car – not a weekend cruiser or trailered show circuit regular – so he was looking for low miles and a comprehensive history detailing a lifetime of care lavished upon it.

But before he started his search in earnest, John joined the Mercedes-Benz Club of America and engaged: before plonking down his cash on the counter for a premium 560SL, he wanted to check his thought process with enthusiasts in the know. His question was simply, "Am I daft for even considering buying an R107 as a daily driver?" Of course, enthusiasts sometimes look at these things with rose-tinted specs, but John's



△ Light grey hide complements the deep blue paint.

◁ John has added over 150,000 miles since 2007.



“For years, there was discussion among the Mercedes enthusiast community about R107s as collectible classics”





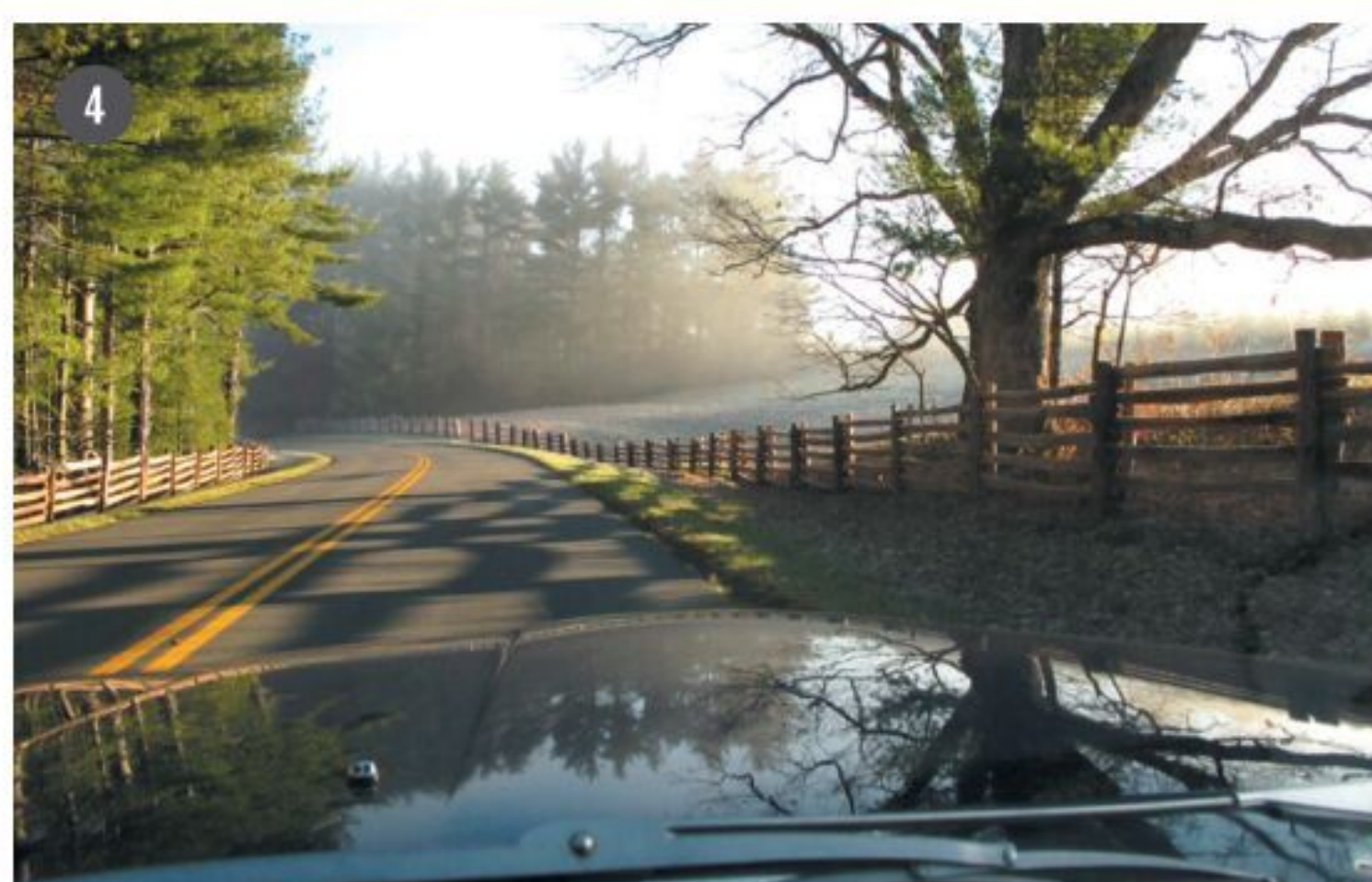
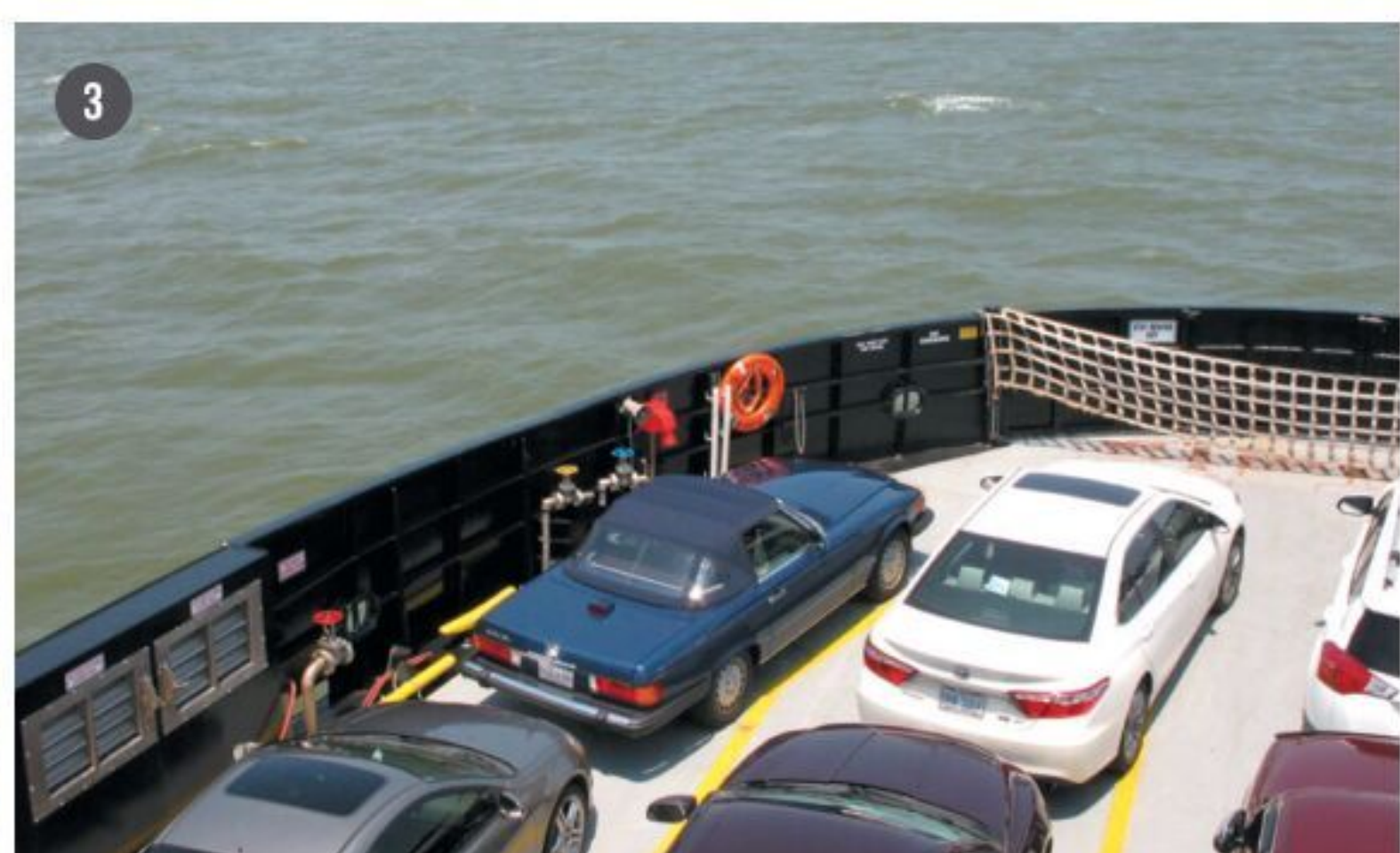
question generated a lot of support and encouragement, and even a recommendation for a local (Massachusetts) broker to help him in his search: Bob Hatch of Hatch and Sons. Bob and his team are well-known experts, and I've even had the pleasure of meeting them back when they were shoehorning M117 V8 engines into Pagodas with factory-quality detailing and driveability. Suffice to say, John was in good hands.

Prior to finding his 560SL, John drove six examples with under 25,000 miles, but he was determined to find just the right combination of colour, condition, history, mileage, and gut-feeling. The car he ultimately settled on – the one you see here – had been delivered to and spent its life in sunny and dry Arizona. With just 18,554 miles at the time John purchased it, the car had averaged a scant 884 miles per year over its first 21 years.

The first test

In his first three weeks of ownership, John put a thousand miles on the car driving around New England just to ensure it was sorted and that there were no urgent or immediate needs, or issues with the car before he ventured any further. It performed flawlessly. Confident, John then headed south on a round trip from Massachusetts to Florida and back – about 3,000 miles – and had zero challenges apart from an unexpected snowstorm in Pennsylvania and a single blown fuse, which wasn't a real problem other than needing to be a contortionist to access the fuse box and replace the busted item.

That first trip set the stage for years to come of road trips from regional outings to cross-continental excursions. John shares that he always seems to take the "long way" when he drives his 560SL. He laughs that he once spent \$200 to ➤



1 A quick stop to admire Mount Jefferson from Blue Ridge Parkway.

2 Sunrise drive offered a chance to take in Mount Washington.

3 On the ferry to Ocracoke – an island of the Outer Banks.

4 That long bonnet helps to frame a fantastic road view.

“ John has driven the entirety of Skyline Drive through the Blue Ridge Mountains twice, along with the Blue Ridge Parkway ”



▷ buy a hot dog: about \$5 for the hot dog and the remainder in gas. He has driven the car multiple times back to Florida, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. He has driven the entirety of Skyline Drive through the Blue Ridge Mountains twice, along with the Blue Ridge Parkway. He's taken it west to Wisconsin and Kansas City, south to Knoxville and Raleigh, and as far north as Nova Scotia where in 2015 he drove the car on the Cabot Trail – a 'Top 10 North American Drive'. When we met, the car displayed 174,510 miles: 155,956 from his purchase in 2007. Not too shabby for a retiree.

No stranger to the open road

During his ownership, John says the car has only stranded him twice: once for a bad voltage regulator, and the other? Well, it couldn't have been too serious because he couldn't recall. Until his recent move from Massachusetts to Maryland to be closer to family, John had the car diligently and regularly serviced at European Auto Solutions in Waltham, Massachusetts, and he has binders of receipts documenting it all, in addition to the paperwork that conveyed when he first bought it.

Even after all those miles and smiles, John has nothing but positive things to say about the car and his experience with it. "It handles well on all types of roads in most weather conditions, as long as you remember that you are in a rear-wheel drive car with more brawn than brains. With a real trunk and an almost equivalent to modern-day SL trunk-like space behind the seats, you can actually pack a lot into the car, so trip planning is a lot easier."

He does lament, however, that although the firm seats are comfortable for long trips, seat heaters would be nice. At the end of the day, John says he still smiles every time he drives the car. You can't say fairer than that.



△△ The SL has been *almost* faultless for John.

▽ 90-degree M117 V8 with one cam per bank.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 560SL (R107)

ENGINE M117 5,547cc V8 POWER 227bhp@4,750rpm

TORQUE 275lb ft@3,250rpm TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,715kg 0-62MPH 7.7sec TOP SPEED 139mph

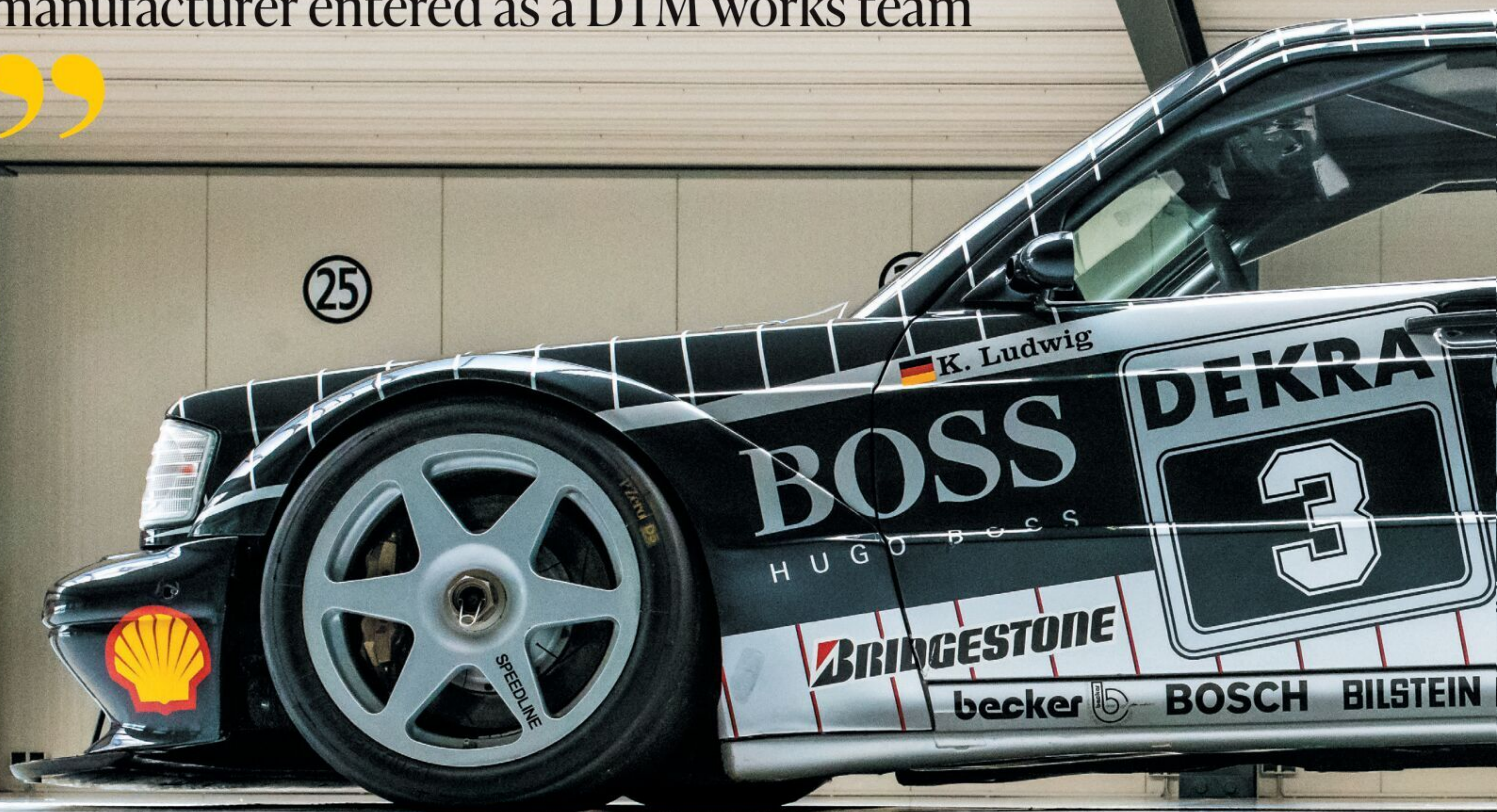
YEARS PRODUCED 1985-1989

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for US version with catalyst

“

The 190's success was enough to pique Mercedes' interest and the following year the manufacturer entered as a DTM works team

”



Recently released from the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart, this ex-works 190E 2.5-16 Evolution II is the most original DTM spec example still in existence

Evolution theory

WORDS ROBB PRITCHARD
IMAGES MARIO BOK & DAIMLERAG



In the late 1970s and early 80s, Mercedes-Benz competed in top flight rallying, even winning a couple of the most gruelling rounds in South America and the Ivory Coast with help from the 107-series SLC.

Equipped with sophisticated suspension and compact in size, Mercedes' 201-series 190 saloon – signed off for production in 1979 and launching in 1982 – had the potential to match the Porsche 911 SCRs, Opel Asconas and Nissan 240 RSs of the World Rally Championship. It was a serious undertaking and legendary engine builder Cosworth was tasked with turning the production, 2.3-litre four-cylinder block into a much more capable twin-cam with a 16-valve head and an output of around 300bhp.

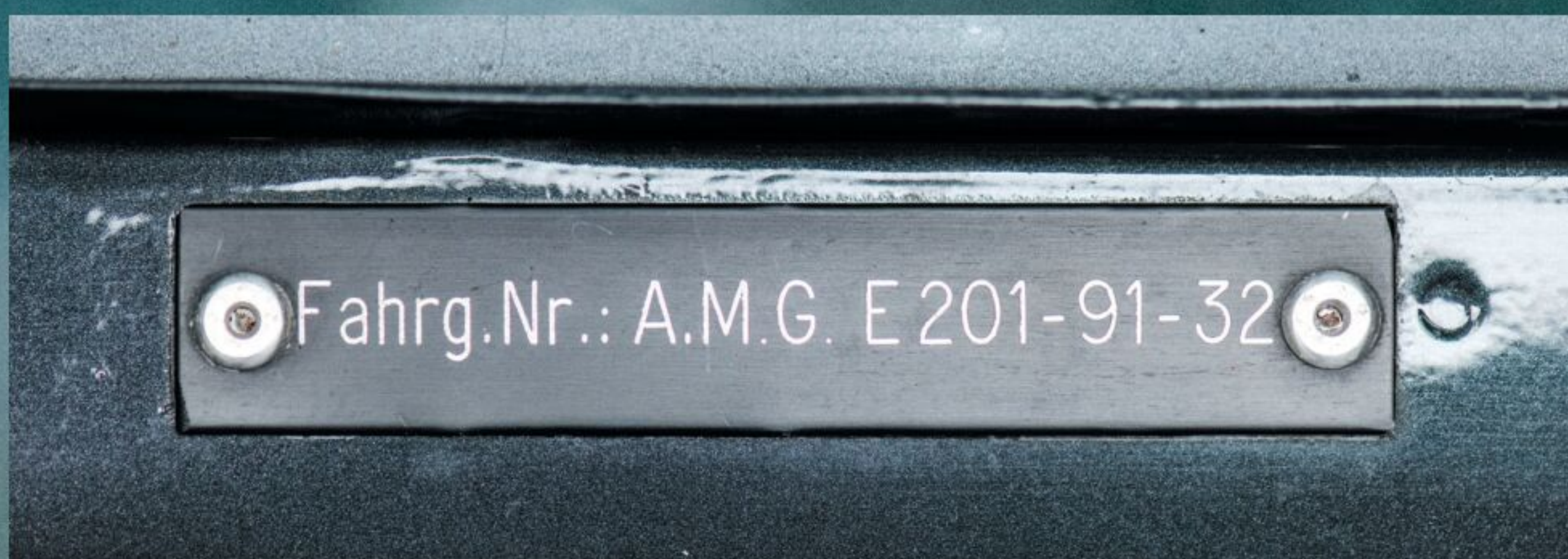
However, in 1980 Mercedes was blindsided by Audi's incredible, four-wheel

drive and turbocharged Quattro, a car that instantly made two-wheel drive rivals obsolete. Faced with this situation but maintaining its faith in the competition potential of its baby Benz, Mercedes turned its attention to circuit racing. Success didn't come overnight, though.

History of DTM

Germany has a long history of hosting racing series with much more modified cars than those seen in other countries. The DRM of the late 1970s and 80s was home to the incredible Group 5 Ford Capris and Porsche

935s, before temporarily hosting Group C cars. In 1984, to reverse the trend of dwindling grids, it ran more restricted Group A machinery. With a clever handicap system, weight penalties for the more powerful cars, and performance upgrades allowed for the smaller engine ones, 12 manufacturers were represented and the close and unpredictable racing assured the series' popularity. Called the Deutsche Production Meisterschaft (DPM), in 1985 Leopold Gallina entered in a 190E 2.3-16 with up to 296bhp, although with three retirements from three starts, it wasn't exactly a golden beginning. ▶



◀ Chassis plate confirms input from AMG division.



“Chassis E201-91-32 had been built for the 1991 DTM season and loaned out to MS-Jet Racing”

▷ For 1986, Helmut Marko, today of Red Bull fame, ran his own team in the beautiful red and white Lui livery, and despite engine issues and less than optimal suspension, as well as drivers not staying for the whole season, Volker Weidler took second in the drivers' championship standings that year.

The success was enough to pique Mercedes' interest and the following year the manufacturer entered as an official works team. Now known as the DTM (Deutsche Tourenwagen Masters), the competition came in the form of Mercedes' national rivals BMW, Audi and Opel, and the turbocharged Ford Sierras.

To keep up with the competition, especially the BMW M3, Mercedes combined its Group C and DTM operations and formed the 'st – sport-technik' division. In 1988, this department undertook the running of the DTM programme and continued to do so under the watch of Gerhard Lepler until it was dissolved in 1990; for the 1991 season, Mercedes' DTM exploits were taken care of by AMG.

The DTM ran to 'Group A' regulations but allowed significant engine development. Although keeping the 2.5 capacity, Mercedes bored out the cylinders to a slightly wider circumference. The shorter stroke, along with some internal tweaks, brought a significant power increase. Spoilers and a small rear wing (small compared to what was soon to come)



△ Chassis 91-32 ran white/yellow Kärcher livery.

▷△ 1992 title winner of driver Klaus Ludwig.

▷ Left to right: racers Rosberg, Ludwig, Thiim.



upgraded brakes, wider track, bigger wheels and adjustable suspension that could be controlled from a dashboard switch, all found their way into the new homologation special, known as the AMG-Mercedes 190E 2.5-16 Evolution, which debuted in DTM in 1989 and spawned 502 road going versions – that production number just over the 500 bare minimum needed to satisfy homologation requirements. With Kevlar body panels (the bonnet weighed just 1kg), the first Evolution racer tipped the scales at just 1,040kg, and with 328bhp/214lb ft torque on tap it was a potent weapon. The car won on its first appearance, but that proved a false dawn and by the end of the season Kurt Thiim was the best placed Mercedes driver in fourth spot behind two Schnitzer BMWs and an Eggenberger Ford.

In the early 1990s, the DTM enjoyed a level

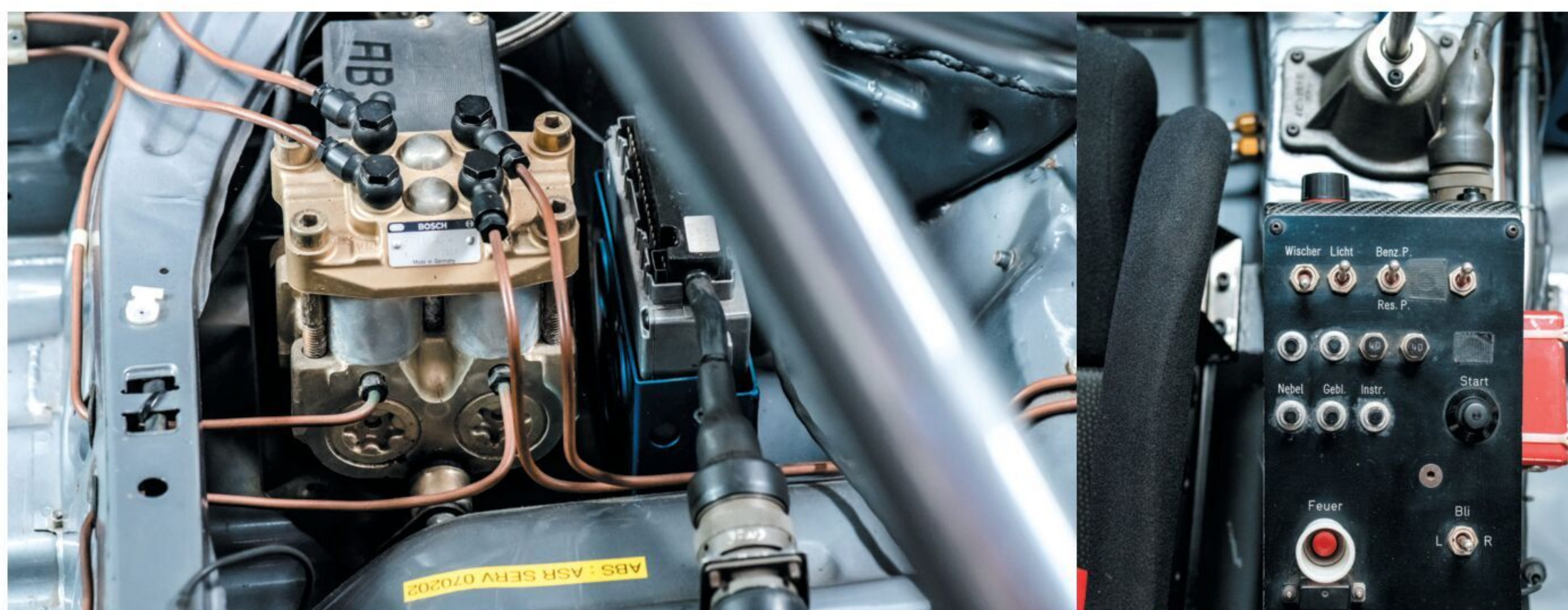
popularity that is now just a distant dream for the modern series. Full grids, comprehensive manufacture involvement, 650,000 trackside spectators and over 300m TV viewers worldwide, it was a golden age of motorsport, and off-track developments were as fast paced as the on-track action.

Technical excellence

The fevered pace of technical improvements saw the 2.5-16 Evolution replaced by the AMG-Mercedes Evolution II in 1990. So popular were the road going variants, all 502 of them had found homes before they'd even rolled out of Mercedes' Bremen factory. The massive rear wing was the most obvious change, but the new car contained a host of other modifications, including the ABS systems, with the Evo II being one the first ever non-F1 racing cars to



◁ Rearward driving position aids handling.



◁ Small toggle switches for the lights, wipers etc.

◁◁ This DTM has anti-lock brakes, traction control.

utilise the system on track. The aggressive-looking racer also packed a 368bhp/221lb ft torque version of the M102 four-cylinder engine, with peak performance achieved even higher up the rev range – 9,500rpm when it came to power.

Thiim once again became the top Mercedes scorer, improving to third overall in the 1990 championship, but Audi dominated both the drivers' and manufacturers' standings. In 1991, Klaus Ludwig came agonisingly close to first place in the championship. In the black and silver Sonax/Boss livery, he was 18 points in the lead of the championship as the series headed into the final round at Hockenheim. It was the weather that decided the outcome though, as in the rain the 4x4 Audis were in a different class and took the first four positions. Some consolation was that AMG-Mercedes did win the constructors' title for the first time.

In 1992, AMG-Mercedes was finally able to take the DTM drivers' title with Ludwig at the wheel of the winning Evolution II, the German leading home team mates Thiim and Bernd Schneider for an all-Mercedes top three.

A twist of fate

Thirty years ago, teams had different ideas about a vehicle's worth and Ludwig's championship winning car was comprehensively rebuilt for 1993's new Class 1 rules, which saw homologation regulations dropped in favour of all-out racing prototypes. Six of the Evo IIs were stripped and upgraded, but the four-wheel drive, 420bhp Alfa Romeos were dominant, and in 1994 the W201 190-based Mercs were replaced by the new 202-series C-Class platform.

After its factory racing career was over a year

later, Ludwig's championship winning car was sold to a private team. However, Mercedes understood the need for a promotional car to celebrate its achievements in the series, and so took one of the MS-Jet Racing team's cars that hadn't been converted to Class 1 of 1993.

Chassis E201-91-32 had been built for the 1991 DTM season and loaned out to MS-Jet Racing, the 'M' standing for Jochen 'Mass' – a nod to the famous F1 and Group C driver. The main drivers in this then Kärcher-liveried car were Jörg van Ommen and Frank Schmickler. Ommen was by far the most successful of the pair, and with a double podium at the Nurburgring, took 13th in the standings, while Schmickler failed to score all season.

The following year, 1992, ex-F1 driver Jacques Laffite joined the team and again, 91-32 car was shared between the drivers. Ommen ▷



▷ Pirelli slicks around 18-inch Speedline rims.

▷▷ M102 motor gave full power at 9,500rpm!



▷ won the first race at the Wunstorf circuit and took a double podium at the Alemannring round, to finish 10th in the championship, while Laffite had plenty of top 10 finishes and ended up 13th overall. With the race cars loaned to the teams rather than sold to them, at the end of 1992 Mercedes-Benz took them back.

Due to DTM's unique rules, most of the now retired Evo II racers were ineligible for any other series and so found their way into the hands of privateers where they were heavily modified for hillclimb events. Or, they had all their special DTM parts stripped away so they could be raced as normal Group A cars in regional touring car championships.

Out of all the Evolution IIs, only 91-32, preserved on its display plinth, remained unchanged in its period DTM configuration, aside from being repainted in Ludwig's championship winning livery. If you ever found yourself in the Mercedes-Benz Museum and staring in awe at the curving line up of racing cars, this is the Evolution II you'd have seen.

Time capsule

After being released from Mercedes' hallowed collection, 91-32 is now in the showroom of German classic and sportscar dealer Jan B

“Getting a glimpse back 30 years to see what the greats were racing when we were just kids is amazing”

Lühn, a man familiar with legendary machinery. Walking around this gorgeous beast, memories of my childhood came flooding back. In the autumn of 1991, I was at Donnington Park and very likely saw this car race in anger.

Front splitter almost touching the floor, looking squat on its widened track and front wheels splayed with camber, it has an awesome presence. The bonnet is so light that you can easily push it up with just a little finger, and all the immaculate Kevlar induction piping in the engine bay was, in its day, the absolute height of

motorsport technology. Just stunning!

Opening the door, it seems delightfully strange to see chequered cloth lining the inside as well as the window winder, which seems oddly out of place in such a car. The dashboard is also recognisably W201 – keeping the original installed was a DTM requirement. The instrument cluster is replaced with a rough aluminium panel with nothing but a rev counter and some warning lights.

“Despite the fact it's not actually the championship winning car, it's still the only original one in the world and so is like a little time machine,” Jan says. “Getting a glimpse back 30 years to see what the greats were racing when we were just kids is amazing. I have plenty of cars coming through my hands, but this one is special and the one that catches my eye when I look up from my laptop.”

Now sold, chassis 91-32 will soon be heading to Australia, but not before being brought back to race-ready condition. Along with its new stable mate (one of the 1986 Helmut Marko team cars) it will be seen on track for the first time in three decades. An AMG-Mercedes 190E 2.5-16 Evolution II at Mount Panorama in Ludwig's iconic colours – now there's an exciting prospect.

“Under the bonnet is the excellent OM656 diesel engine, a 2.9-litre in-line six-cylinder”



Conceivably, what we have here is the last new generation of S-Class saloon to be offered with a diesel engine. Mercedes itself already has a plug-in hybrid variant on the books (the S580e) that is expected to take a larger share of the sales than ever before. And that's before we take the incredible new, all-electric EQS into consideration. This then, could be peak turbodiesel for Mercedes-Benz, a company that knows the technology better than any other.

Fittingly, prospective buyers don't need to splash out on anything other than the entry level diesel engine to be impressed, as the S350d model is arguably all the car any self-respecting, long-distance-driving Mercedes owner needs. It is, in a word, sublime.

Under the bonnet is the latest iteration of the excellent OM656 diesel engine, a 2.9-litre in-line six-cylinder. The full 282bhp arrives at 3,400rpm and maximum torque of 442lb ft is available from just 1,200rpm. Officially, the 0-62mph time is 6.4 seconds, which is fast enough by any measure, but of more note is how smoothly the S350d gathers speed when it is already

travelling along at a decent lick. Its performance isn't ever startling, but that's partly down to how the car isolates its occupants from the outside world.

Somewhat surprisingly, as lovely an engine as this is, and as melodic as it is for a diesel, it's seemingly always audible. We'd stop short of calling it intrusively noisy, but even at a cruise there's a distant rumble from under the bonnet, something that isn't present in the petrol or hybrid versions of the S-Class.

The 9G-tronic automatic gearbox is an absolute gem, however. No matter which driving mode we used or how quickly or slowly we drove the car, we couldn't catch it out. In many automatic diesel cars, when you push the accelerator down hard, but not to the kickdown switch, the gearbox still changes down a couple of gears, unnecessarily given the torque-rich nature of a turbodiesel – the S350d's transmission avoids doing that, instead using the engine's mountain of torque to push the car up to speed. It's very satisfying.

Of course, the transmission strategy is probably also designed around economy. The official fuel economy figure is 40.4mpg and, while we struggled to get near that ambling around town and over more interesting country roads, we bettered the figure on a three-hour motorway run with the

▷ This leather colour is called Sienna Brown.

▷▷ Rear MBUX touchscreen of Premium Plus.



The last hurrah?

The straight-six diesel powered S350d is a supremely luxurious and impossibly comfortable entry point to the latest 223-series range, but in our fast-changing world its days could be numbered...

WORDS **SHANE O' DONOGHUE**
IMAGES **DAIMLER AG**



active cruise control set to the national speed limit and the car in its Comfort setting. That equates to not far off 700 miles on a single tank of diesel.

Smoothly does it

It's a brilliant motorway car too, so stable and quiet and refined and capable that it's quite obvious that it was designed to cope with much higher sustained speeds than we are allowed on Britain's motorway network. For a quarter of our journey, the rain was coming down hard and traffic was heavy, yet the active cruise control coped without a hitch and there wasn't a hint of instability over standing water. The smooth way the car adjusts its speed depending on traffic ahead aids relaxation, while the gentle steering assistance takes further load off the driver, making long trips a joy rather than a potential chore.

For a car that's going to be used by chauffeur services, it shouldn't be surprising that the S-Class is so good on the

motorway, but how it performs away from such conditions may astonish the uninitiated. It is a wide car, but that's about its only limiting factor on a twisty B-road, as it genuinely shrinks around the driver and reveals quite an engaging chassis under the veneer of luxury car sensibility. The steering is well weighted and even offers up something resembling feedback, even if the tyres' progress on the surface below is muted on almost all surfaces.

The chassis balance is excellent, allowing this big car to nonchalantly carry its speed through a corner and even change direction more quickly than you'd expect possible. Through all this, the air suspension and adaptive damping work together to keep the body flat and the tyres in contact with the road, without ruffling the feathers of the passengers on board. Driven beyond how we'd expect most to, the car does eventually run out of wheel travel on a bumpy road, but even then, it soaks up the punishment and maintains its composure and pace. Yes, we are still talking about a car





▷ many will describe as a limousine. The previous-generation S-Class, the W222, also performed this trick, but the new one is even better at balancing comfort and control.

The place to be

The W223 S-Class is a conservative design, echoing the style of the rest of the Mercedes range, but elegant with it. The high-tech lighting and front bumper design give the low-set nose presence, but in general it slips by under the radar, with few realising they are looking at a range-topping model.

Until they glimpse the interior, that is. Mercedes played it safe with the exterior design, but it completely reinvented the interior. Gone is the upright 'widescreen' dashboard of the W222 and in its place a minimised design, with even more impressive technology at work. In front of the driver is a relatively modest screen for the instrumentation with several different layouts to choose from.

The tilted touchscreen in the middle draws your attention, though. When the car is switched off, it seamlessly combines with the shiny black front section of the centre console. Press the (rather oversized) engine start button, however, and it instantly comes to life, with crystal clear graphics, an easy menu system and, though the climate control switchgear has been moved to the

“Mercedes played it safe with the exterior design, but it completely reinvented the interior”




screen, it is permanently visible at its base, so it's quick and easy to use. Other switchgear around the cabin is touch-sensitive too, including the subtle fan speed adjustment buttons found on the stylised air vents. The central four rectangular vents under the windscreen look great too, but they could feel more solid.

Likewise, the adjustment switchgear for the seats. It's mounted on the doors, as before, but it isn't designed to physically move. Meanwhile, the latest generation steering wheel looks great and the switchgear is of high quality, but the response to the touch-sensitive sliders is inconsistent and difficult to get right when you're on the move.

Even with those few niggles, the cabin is a masterpiece. There's even a 'kinetics' function that will, from time-to-time, adjust sections of the seat to ease long-distance driving aches and pains. The S-Class will even automatically set the seat

position for you if you input your height. Those in the rear of the regular wheelbase model don't get seat adjustment, but they do get plenty of space and their own climate control settings. Naturally, the cabin can be upgraded to prioritise back seat passengers, and a large proportion of S-Class customers opt for the Long-wheelbase model for that reason.

The S350d starts at £80,450 OTR in 'base' AMG Line form, while the AMG Line Premium model featured here (with optional 21-inch AMG alloys) is £87,145; add another £4,000 for 'Long' spec. The more expensive petrol and plug-in hybrid models may gain popularity this time around, but if you can't or don't want to plug in a car regularly, and you also don't want to frequent refuelling stations, the S350d is undoubtedly the choice of the line up. We probably won't get to say that again when the next generation of the S-Class comes around. 

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz S350d (W223)

ENGINE OM656 2,925cc 6-cyl POWER 282bhp@3,400-4,600rpm TORQUE 442lb ft@1,200-3,200rpm TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 2,020kg 0-62MPH 6.4sec TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 40.4-42.8mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 184g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2020-on

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for Standard-wheelbase car in AMG Line Premium spec; fuel consumption according to WLTP Combined



Top fact

The EQE is one of the first vehicles built with 100 per cent recycled steel from Salzgitter AG, cutting CO2 emissions in rolled steel production by over 60 per cent.

The future is now

Mercedes picks Munich's International Motor Show 2021 to reveal a host of new electric cars, including a battery-powered alternative to the E-Class plus a G-Class concept!

WORDS **KYLE MOLYNEUX** IMAGES **DAIMLER AG**



**“Plugged
in for
15 minutes,
the EQE’s
fast-charge
set up can
achieve 155
miles of
range”**

Make no mistake, Mercedes is fully focused on transforming its range of cars. Fossil-fuelled engines are on the way out and electric motors linked to high-density battery packs are on the way in. The manufacturer’s new EQ brand is at the forefront of this shift and the line up is steadily growing.

At the IAA Mobility event in Munich, Germany, held in mid September, Mercedes debuted five new fully electric models, and reaffirmed its commitment to a greener form of motoring. Here, we provide a rundown of everything seen at the show including the all-important battery ranges and on-sale information where available at the time of writing.

EQE

Comparable in exterior size to the CLS and offering more interior space than the E-Class, the brand new EQE (above) is billed as a ‘business saloon’ and runs purely on electricity. With a range of up to 410 miles (WLTP), this new model will be produced in Bremen, Germany alongside the EQC, C-Class and GLC, and will also roll out of BBAC’s German-Chinese joint venture plant in Beijing. The on-sale date is set for the middle of 2022 and pricing is expected to start at around £60,000.

The EQE’s 90kWh lithium-ion battery feeds zero-emissions goodness to an electric motor located on the rear axle, which in the EQE350 model generates the equivalent of 288bhp (215kW) and 391lb ft of torque; 4Matic variants with an additional electric motor on the front axle will be announced in due course.

A 11kW charging cable comes with the EQE as standard, ▷



Top fact
To get to the most important applications of MBUX, the user does not need to scroll through any menu levels. Hence the term 'zero layer'.

◁ As you'd expect fast DC charging is available.

▽ LED light band a styling feature of the EQ models.



▷ while a 22kW cable is optional. The new business saloon packs a 170kW-capacity DC box, meaning you can recharge the battery from 10% to 80 is just 32 minutes; plugged in for 15 minutes, the fast-charge set up can achieve 155 miles of range (WLTP). The AC recharging time with the 11kW cable takes 8.25hrs (10% to 80), the 22kW cable replenishing the same amount of charge in 4.25hrs.

Sharing its modular architecture and rakish styling with the larger EQS, the EQE features four-link front suspension and multi-link rear suspension – the latter optionally available with rear-wheel steering to reduce the car's turning circle from 12.5m to 10.7m. Airmatic air suspension with ADS+ adaptive damping is also on the options list, bringing ride height control to assist with aerodynamics and stability.

Inside, an optional MBUX Hyperscreen spans the width of the dashboard (it basically *is* the dashboard) and features an



△△△ MBUX Hyperscreen makes up dash.

△△△△ Plenty of legroom in the rear of the EQE.

integrated, digital instrument cluster for the driver. All MBUX functions can be accessed via this impressive glass touchscreen, which uses OLED technology and spans over 141cm wide.

Other feature highlights include optional Active Ambient Lighting in the cabin, which uses over 100 LEDs, plus Navigation with 'Electric Intelligence' that helps the driver to plan recharging stops on their journey, and an optional interior driving sound which adjusts according to driving style and mode selected. Full UK specifications were to be confirmed.

EQB

Sitting between the EQA and EQC, the electric EQB is based on the conventionally-powered GLB sports utility vehicle and will have seven seats as standard in the UK market. Going on sale in early 2022, expect prices to start at somewhere around £45,000.

On the front axle of all EQBs you'll find a compact electric powertrain unit (eATS) comprising an electric motor, fixed-ratio transmission with differential, as well as a cooling system and power electronics. 4Matic models will also feature an eATS on the rear axle to make

the vehicle four-wheel drive. The lithium-ion battery is rated at 420V with a 66.5kWh capacity and is located within a tough, aluminium housing positioned underneath the cabin in the centre of the vehicle.

Two models were revealed at the international launch event in Munich: the 250bhp (168kW)/287lb ft torque EQB300 4Matic and the 288bhp (215kW)/383lb ft torque EQB350 4Matic. Both have a maximum range of 260



Two models debuted with a 260-mile range.

Top fact
The EQB is the first purely electrically-powered production vehicle from M-B's Kecskemet plant in Hungary. Vehicles for China are produced in Beijing.





Top fact
The battery sits in a crash-protected area in the underbody, embedded in the body shell structure including an aluminium profile on the side.



AMG EQS53 4Matic+

The new EQS53 4Matic+ is the first electric car from AMG and will go on sale in 2022, sitting at the top of the EQS range with its dedicated electric platform. A special AMG-spec electric motor sits on each axle, linked to a 400V/107.8kWh-capacity lithium-ion battery, this system generating the equivalent of 649bhp (484kW), or 751bhp with the AMG Dynamic Plus Package, along with 701lb ft or 752lb ft of torque. That amount of grunt is enough for a 0-62mph time of 3.8 or 3.4 seconds, and a 137/155mph top speed.

Tipping the scales at 2,655kg, the EQS53 packs in AMG 4Matic+ four-wheel drive, AMG Ride Control+ air suspension with adaptive damping, rear axle steering, and an AMG braking system comprising six-piston calipers and 415x33mm discs up front, and one-piston calipers plus 378x22mm discs at the rear. Larger ceramic discs can be found on the options list. Three stages of energy recuperation are at the driver's disposal during braking, adjusted via a control on the steering wheel.

AMG has adapted the iconic and evocative sound of its cars for the EQS, deploying special loudspeakers, bass shakers and a sound generator in the cabin to create a whole new experience for occupants. When using Race Start launch control, the



△ Panamericana grille panel; rims up to 22-inch.

◁△ Small rear spoiler and rear diffuser included.

◁ Hyperscreen with special AMG design touches.

Top fact
The optional Dynamic Plus Package includes a powerful boost function for Race Start launch control, increasing the EQS53's acceleration and top speed.

EQS53 makes a unique sound to match the acceleration, too.

The styling is subtle by AMG standards, but the EQS53 does have a Panamericana-esque grille, deep front intakes and side skirts, plus a diffuser-like rear bumper insert, a small rear spoiler and 21-/22-inch AMG alloys. The drag coefficient is just 0.23Cd.

As a fully-fledged AMG model, the EQS53 interior gets the three-part glass MBUX Hyperscreen as standard with new details to emphasise the model's sportier nature. There are also AMG seats in Artico leather with Microcut microfibre and red contrasting stitching, plus an AMG steering wheel and sports pedals. The usual AMG driving modes feature too, including Slippery, Comfort, Sport, Sport+ and Individual.

As for recharging the EQS53, the battery system supports up to 200kW at fast-charge DC points, and 186 miles of range can be fed back into the battery in 19 minutes.

“AMG has evolved the iconic and evocative soundtrack of its cars for the electric EQS”

◁ EQB350 model goes from 0 to 62mph in 6.2sec.

◁◁ Widescreen MBUX system fitted as standard.

Top fact
Eco Assist uses map data to maximise efficiency, telling the driver when to release the accelerator to make use of the 'gliding' function and recuperate energy for the battery.



miles (WLTP) and a top speed of 99mph. The EQB300 will accelerate from 0-62mph in eight seconds whilst the EQB350 will do it in 6.2 seconds.

The EQB can be charged at home or at public charging points at up to 11kW with alternating current (AC) using the onboard charger. The electric SUV is also compatible with DC fast-charging points with a

maximum power rating of 100kW, these replenishing the battery in 32 minutes (from 10 per cent charge to 80).

Styling is pure EQ and includes a closed front grille, full LED headlamps and an LED light strip at the rear. Wheels up to 21-inch will be available, and a reversing camera is fitted as standard. Interior space is said to be generous and maximum boot capacity is a useful 1,710 litres. The driver is treated to a digital instrument cluster plus MBUX infotainment system.

The concepts

Mercedes provided a glimpse into the future in Munich with three battery-powered concepts, including an evolution of the G-Wagen formula

Mercedes has made the most of its lighting tech on the electric G concept



Concept EQG

Blending 'EQ' styling cues with familiar G-Wagen angles, the electric G concept features two-tone paintwork, a black panel grille with illuminated 3D-effect star, a roof rack and unique 22-inch alloys.

The Concept EQG is based on a ladder frame chassis complete with independent front suspension and a rigid axle at the rear. Batteries are integrated into the ladder frame and power four electric motors – one per wheel. These are individually controllable and are said to provide excellent traction, in part thanks to their low-down torque delivery. Further aiding off-road prowess is a shiftable two-speed gearbox.

To ensure the EQG is fit for purpose, it will be tested on Mercedes' legendary off-road course on the 1,445m-high Schöckl mountain in Graz, Austria before receiving the 'Schöckl proved' quality

▽ No launch date for the electric G – but it is coming!

certificate that is a must-have for the 463-series G-Class.



Concept Maybach EQS

The Concept Mercedes-Maybach EQS previews the first fully electric Maybach model. Another design with 'near-production' qualities, the Maybach EQS is an SUV based on Mercedes' modular architecture for luxury- and executive-class electric cars. There's a two-tone paint finish (a Maybach hallmark) plus massive grille panel, LED light units with Maybach

emblem detailing, lots of chrome trim and 24-inch wheels with a bowl design.

As you'd expect from Maybach, the interior of this concept is rather special. An MBUX Hyperscreen makes up the dashboard, and the sculpted seating is inspired by the S-Class's – the rear chairs split by a floating centre console complete with flowerpot holder. There's a

△ The cabin is awash with luxury features – there's even a flowerpot.

flat-bottomed steering wheel too, and the cabin's feeling of spaciousness is enhanced by the combination of white and dark blue upholstery, while rose gold-coloured accents ramp up the sense of luxury.

During this concept's reveal, Mercedes let slip that the non-Maybach spec EQS SUV will go into production in 2022 and boast a range of around 370 miles (WLTP).

Vision AVTR

For now, the mind-reading Vision AVTR is bordering on fantasy, but it does offer an idea of how occupants may interact with their cars in years to come. Of course, mind-reading technology already exists, helping handicapped people carry out everyday tasks. So this striking looking vehicle isn't actually as absurd as it may first appear.

Via 'Brain-computer interfaces' (BCIs), it allows occupants to adjust settings such as the cabin's ambient lighting or radio station by the power of thought. A BCI device attached to the user's head analyses the measured brain waves and triggers a defined function in the vehicle. Clever stuff. ■

▷ Control cabin functions by the power of thought.

A forward-thinking concept with technology based on today's know-how.





1985: Mercedes in Group C

Following unsuccessful entries with Ford and BMW power, in 1985 Sauber equipped its C8 Group C racing car with a Mercedes-Benz M117 V8 engine and a new partnership was born

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **DAIMLER AG**

To those with just a passing interest in motorsport, the racing that Mercedes-Benz is associated with is grand prix, and a near total dominance of it.

The Stuttgart car maker first threw its full weight behind it in 1934 when a new, 750kg category was introduced, and with top driving and engineering talent, plus generous funding quickly became the team to beat until motor racing was brought to an end in 1939 by World War Two.

In 1954, the three-pointed star reappeared on winning grand prix cars, the same talented engineer and team manager, Rudolf Uhlenhaut and Alfred Neubauer repeating pre-war achievements until the firm quit the sport at the end of the following season. There was then a 55-year gap until Mercedes-Benz put its name on an F1 car, precipitating the off-the-scale success of the Lewis Hamilton era that continues a decade on.

But in between these eras, Mercedes-Benz has participated in other motorsport. The mid 1950s grand prix years were sandwiched by a year of sports car racing (1952, and highly successful), and two years of participation in the National Sports Car Championship (SCCA) to promote the 300SL Roadster's US launch in 1957. Factory entered or supported, Mercedes-Benzenes took part in international rallying from the mid 1950s for a decade, and then a full-on effort with C107 SLCs was mounted in the late 1970s. There was more, too.

“The C9 won all but one championship race, including a first and second at Le Mans”

It was 30 years ago this month that Stuttgart brought to an end another of its motorsport adventures: Group C, a European endurance series for prototype sports cars introduced in 1982 and which grew in profile throughout that decade to the point that it began to challenge F1 in popularity, Bernie Ecclestone

known to have been worried by its emergence. Lap times were sometimes quicker than those of F1 cars despite the series being a ‘fuel formula’, with 600 litres of fuel allowed for 1,000km races.

Factory entrants included Porsche, Jaguar, Aston Martin, Toyota, Nissan and Mazda. And as of 1985, Mercedes-Benz, which dipped a toe into Group C when it became engine supplier to Sauber, with the intention of stepping up its involvement to full team status.

Mercedes’ five-litre turbocharged M117-based V8 was installed in an existing Sauber chassis, named the C8. The debut season was not distinguished, with the car unable to run in the headline event, Le Mans, following an accident in practice. The following season saw progress, a full World Sports Car Championship entry producing the first win, at the 1,000km of

Nürburgring, Frenchman Henri Pescarolo and New Zealander Mike Thackwell crossing the finishing line first with top Mercedes-Benz management in attendance.

By 1988, Mercedes had become a factory team, Sauber-Mercedes, now fielding the C9, and to great effect, winning a handful of races

▽ Sauber-Merc C291 raced in the 1991 season.



and coming second to Jaguar in the championship. These results were built on for 1989, when the C9 – in classic Mercedes grand prix silver notably with few sponsorship decals – won all but one championship race, including first and second at Le Mans, and took the championship.

In 1990, the team name was changed to simply Mercedes-Benz although it was still run by Sauber in Switzerland. That season also introduced the C11, using a five-litre, M119-based V8 with over 700bhp and improved aerodynamics for high speed stability and lowered turbo boost to improve fuel consumption. The year also saw the team sign a driver who later in the decade would become one of the all time F1 greats – Michael Schumacher, who joined Mercedes’ junior racing programme in the World Sports Car Championship.

It was regarded as an unusual career move, as most drivers with F1 ambitions would progress through lesser single-seat formulas, but Michael’s manager Willi Weber believed that driving the ultra high powered prototypes and dealing with the greater media demands would boost his prospects. He won the final 1990 race at the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez in Mexico and finished fifth in the drivers’ championship even though he had entered just three of the nine races.

Schumacher continued with the team in 1991, by which time it was running the C291, built to new Group C regulations.

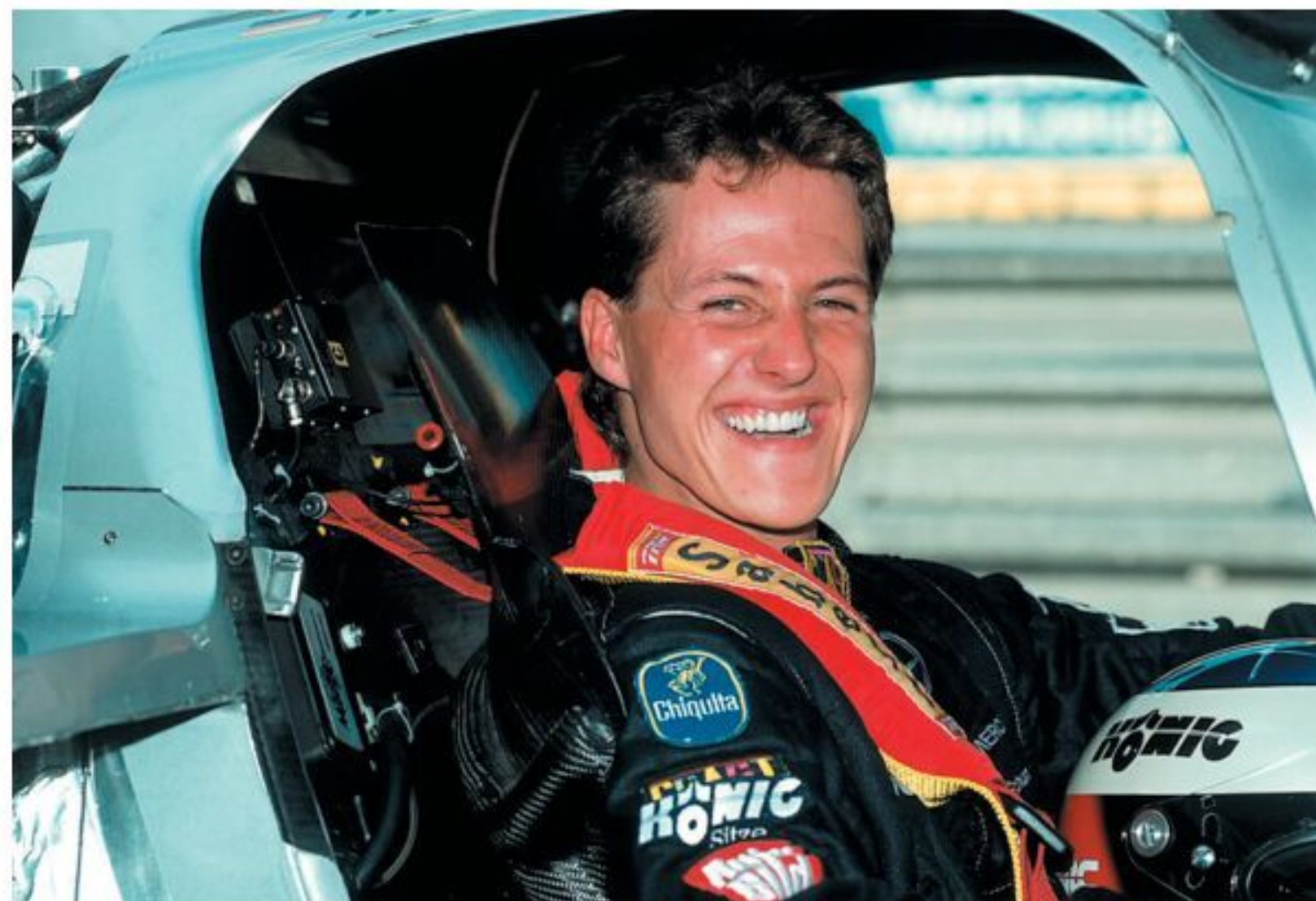
He competed at Le Mans, sharing a car with Karl Wendlinger and Fritz Kreutzpointner and coming fifth. His determinedly no-compromise driving style was exhibited at the Nürburgring in August when, during a hot qualifying lap, Derek Warwick’s Jaguar – which was still getting up to speed

◁ C9 flat out at Suzuka in 1989 en route to victory.

▷ Le Mans in 1991 saw a best place finish of 5th.

▽ M291 V12 of C291 made 641bhp at 13,000rpm!

▽▽ Michael Schumacher won at Autopolis, 1991.



– drifted into Schumacher’s path and ruined his effort; Schumacher responded by chopping across the Jaguar’s nose, damaging both cars. A violent, Warwick-initiated confrontation in the pits afterwards was only narrowly avoided.

It’s said that Mercedes took on Schumacher and Heinz-Harald Frentzen – the latter judged the better driver back then – because it was planning full F1 involvement within several years and wanted to ‘prep’ an all-German driver line up. But Group C was, with the smaller but more expensive engines, now a declining series, and even before the end

of 1991 Schumacher had signed for the Benetton-Ford F1 outfit.

At the end of that season, two years before Group C ended due to a lack of entrants, Mercedes-Benz quit the series. But Stuttgart would be back – just three years later, it did a deal to rebrand Ilmor engines to supply its former partner Sauber, now a grand prix team. A reunion with Schumacher would also occur – but not as a Sauber F1 driver, as both Mercedes and Peter Sauber had hoped. That would have to wait another 16 years until he came out retirement to join Nico Rosberg in the newly formed Mercedes GP team, and help set in train a new, enormously successful motorsport chapter for the car maker. 🏁

◁ End of 1989 season party with the C9 rocket.

▽ C291 at S’stone ’91: Schumacher, Wendlinger 2nd.

▽▷ Sauber C8 (at Hockenheim) ran a Merc V8.



Back to the future

It's time to pick up some real bargains from Mercedes' 'difficult' period, as our UK market expert explains

WORDS WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES BLUE ICE MOTORS, SURREY CAR MARKET & BEN BROTHERS



Ben Brothers' SLK280 could have been yours for less than £4,000!



It's no secret that some Mercedes models built between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s didn't quite live up to the sky-high standards of build quality and durability that previous generations had set. Thankfully, Mercedes now seems to have left that difficult era well behind. But there are still plenty of survivors from that period and many are now set to become modern classics.

However, carrying the stigma of that time means that prices – even for the finest examples – are currently artificially low. They won't stay that way forever though, with the best examples of the more desirable models sure to appreciate in time. So now could be the ideal time to bag some 90s or 00s Mercedes bargains.

So, which models should canny buyers consider? There are many from that period that could be targeted, including early W168 and W169 A-Class, larger-engined W202 C-Class, the C208 CLK, W210 E-Class and W220 S-Class, Mercedes' big-selling W204 C-Class and W211 E-Class models – and the R230 SL. But we reckon you're best hunting out cared-for examples of three particular Mercedes from that time – the 203 C-Class, the C215 CL and the R171 SLK.

The 203-series C-Class (2001 to 2007) in particular is still around in large numbers, with Saloon, Estate and Sports Coupe versions available. Good examples start from just £2,000. Search hard enough and you can still unearth cherished two- or three-owner cars with low mileages, such as this silver, 2007 C180 Kompressor SE Coupe advertised for a



△ C180 K Sports Coupe at Blue Ice Motors offered for £2,490.



△ A brave buy, but this CL500 was under six grand at SCM.



mere £2,490 at Blue Ice Motors (www.blueicemotors.co.uk) in Leicester.

With under 67,000 miles on the clock, one previous keeper and an MOT until June 2022, this time-warp six-speed manual had that all-important full service history – and the

bodywork appeared in excellent order too, as did the 16-inch alloys.

And it's not just these smaller 'CL203' Mercedes coupes that offer rich pickings – the bigger C215 CL-Class from the same era is just as good value. A rare sight on UK roads these days, prices for good examples start at just over £4,000. And if you can find one with a complete service history with predominantly Mercedes main dealer stamps and a low mileage then you could be onto a winner.

This excellent-looking, silver 2000/X reg CL500 was just such a car and had covered only 69,900 miles. For sale at Surrey Car Market (www.surreycarmarket.co.uk) at £5,950, it had a total of six main dealer stamps in a complete service history record – the last in March this year. And this CL's comprehensive spec lacked for nothing, with soft closing doors, heated and cooled memory seats, cruise control, air suspension, 18-inch alloys, chestnut wood trim and a sunroof all included.

Our final target this month for bargain hunters has to be the R171 SLK, with well-tended examples selling from as little as three grand. Something like this one-owner, manual 2006 SLK280 at Ben Brothers (www.benbrothers.co.uk) in Kent would fit the bill perfectly. Stickered at £3,995, it had covered 107,000 miles and came with a full service record, 16-inch alloys, black leather, heated seats, a six-month warranty and a long MOT.

► **Looking for something more contemporary than this trio? Then check out our top three £15,000 Mercedes coupes on page 76!**

Forecourt find

A45 AMG (W176)

The super hatch that made the AMG brand desirable to younger buyers can now be bought for less than 20 grand, but you'd be wise to spend a little more than this to bag a good example.

Something like this 49,000-mile, 63 plate, metallic silver example we spotted advertised for £22,495 at Sinclair Auto Specialists near Oldham. Boasting that all-important full service history record, it had black leather upholstery with red piping, heated front seats, a Panoramic sunroof, the Memory Package, 18-inch AMG alloys, luxury climate control, cruise control, the Mirror Package and Bluetooth audio streaming. Not forgetting the Aerodynamic Package with its front splitter and rear spoiler. Desirable options to look out for on your A45 AMG include the Performance exhaust and 19-inch alloy wheels. Remember, the first-generation A45 launched in 2013 and was facelifted in 2015 before being replaced in 2018 by the W177-series.

Dealer information: Sinclair Auto Specialists

Tel: 0161 969 7072

Web: www.sinclairmotors.co.uk



△ The 4WD A45 packs 355bhp and can see off 62mph in 4.6sec.

▷ Metallic silver paint looked in good nick, as did the rims.

▽ This example has the Performance bucket seats option.



Top tips

Brake upgrades

Upgrading your brakes makes a big difference to the driving experience

⌚ Consider all the elements of your car's braking set up in any upgrade – the pads, brake lines, calipers and brake fluid must all work together. Check out owner forums for model-specific advice, too.

⌚ Fitting cross-drilled brake discs will aid cooling, clean the pad surface, reduce disc weight and can improve wet weather performance. But they can be more prone to cracking.

⌚ Cross-grooved discs are often a more robust upgrade option and can increase initial bite too, but if they're larger than the car's OE discs you'll need new calipers too, which can add to unsprung weight and make the steering feel heavier.

⌚ Replacing your car's brake lines with braided metal items can enhance overall braking feel and performance.

⌚ Bleeding your brakes regularly is recommended for maximum braking efficiency – at least once a year for fast road use. And changing the factory brake fluid to one with a higher boiling point – like DOT 5 or DOT 5.1 – will also improve braking performance.

⌚ Expensive ceramic brake pads remove heat more rapidly but they do take more time to reach optimum operating temperature, so they're not always the best choice for general road use.

⌚ When any new braking components have been fitted you must ensure the pads are properly bedded-in, using repeated gentle application of the brake pedal, from increasingly high speeds. But make sure you do this safely!

**Auction spotlight**

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

● **CLK320 CDI Coupe Avantgarde**

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/06 plate, 81,000 miles, **£3,800**

● **SLK350 Roadster**

3.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2004/54 plate, 68,000 miles, **£4,700**

● **C320 CDI Elegance**

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/07 plate, 99,000 miles, **£4,950**

● **CLS320 CDI Coupe**

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/07 plate, 61,000 miles, **£5,750**

● **E300 Bluetec Hybrid SE**

2.1-litre, diesel-electric, auto, 2015/15 plate, 78,000 miles, **£9,650**

● **SL350 Roadster**

3.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2007/07 plate, 59,000 miles, **£9,800**

● **B180 Sport Executive**

1.6-litre, petrol, auto, 2015/15 plate, 73,000 miles, **£11,600**

● **C200 Sport**

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2014/64 plate, 73,000 miles, **£13,000**

● **A200 CDI AMG Sport**

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2015/64 plate, 39,000 miles, **£13,300**

● **CLA180 Coupe AMG Sport**

1.6-litre, petrol, manual, 2014/14 plate, 39,000 miles, **£15,900**

● **A45 AMG 4Matic Premium**

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2016/16 plate, 53,000 miles, **£24,850**

● **E63 AMG Estate**

5.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2015/65 plate, 63,000 miles, **£26,700**

● **GLC220d Coupe 4Matic AMG Line**

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2017/66 plate, 33,000 miles, **£28,200**

● **S500 Cabriolet AMG Line Premium**

4.7-litre, petrol, auto, 2017/17 plate, 31,000 miles, **£50,000**

● **AMG GT R Coupe**

4.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2017/67 plate, 8,000 miles, **£99,800**

And remember...

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

Find your nearest auction house check out www.british-car-auctions.co.uk or www.nama-uk.com



TOP THREE

£15,000 Coupes

Mercedes-Benz has been building the finest coupes since the very earliest days and demand remains strong for Stuttgart's stylish two-door (and more recently four-door) offerings. Would-be buyers on almost any budget are spoilt for choice, and if you've got as much as £15,000 to spend on a Mercedes-Benz coupe then these three very different

contenders are all worthy of your consideration. Just make sure you stick to well-maintained examples with pristine provenance and only a few previous owners. Our pick is the second-generation CLS, not least because its design is really growing on this magazine's Editor! For 15 big ones, this car is a serious amount of metal for your money.



C350 BlueEfficiency Coupe AMG Sport (C204)

Often overlooked, the rare, two-door C350 has a lot going for it, as long as you don't cover a big annual mileage. It's smooth, 302bhp V6 engine has 273lb ft of torque so is happy to pull in any gear, and the swift-acting 7G-Tronic Plus gearbox is ideally suited to the powerplant. A £15,000 budget bags a 2012 Coupe with a low 75,000 miles and a spec with a few tasty optional extras. The 0-62mph dash takes six seconds, with even more impressive in-gear times.



CLS350 CDI BlueEfficiency Coupe AMG Sport (C218)

If you like making a grand entrance, then this 219-series CLS350 CDI is sure to get you noticed. Just 15 grand buys a 261bhp, 2014 car with around 80,000 miles on the clock. 457lb ft of torque ensures rapid progress and almost all examples come with an impressive spec including 19-inch AMG alloys, Comand Online, Parktronic, Speedtronic cruise control, heated front seats, Linguatronic, the Mirror Package, front and rear Parktronic and ash wood trim.



E320 Coupe (C124)

Mercedes' 124-series E320 Coupe is a perennial favourite with Mercedes enthusiasts - and with good reason. It's classy, comfortable and built to last, and 15 big ones will put you behind the wheel of a cherished 1994 automatic with just over 100,000 miles. Despite its age, performance is still contemporary, with a 7.9-second 0-62mph time and a theoretical 143mph top speed. Yours must be rust free and pack a spotless service history, the original manuals and keys and a file full of old receipts and MOTs.

Latest products and accessories

Nexar Beam GPS dash camera

Nexar has just introduced its latest Nexar Beam GPS dash camera with impressive functionality for everyday driving comfort and safety. Nexar Beam GPS is available through Amazon and the Nexar website, and was offered for just £99.95 at the time of writing. It can easily be concealed behind the rear-view mirror and records 1080p full HD video, with a super-wide lens that provides a 135-degree field of view. And unlike other dash cams at a similar price, it comes with free cloud storage so there is no need to pay for expensive monthly subscriptions. Find full details at www.getnexar.com.



Cobra Sport AMG 45 S Venom exhaust

If you're looking to enhance the performance and the sound of your AMG 45 S then Cobra Sport's new sports exhaust could be just the thing. Manufactured in the UK from certified grade 304 stainless steel and TIG welded for a superior quality finish, this Venom cat-back performance exhaust is priced at £1,620 including VAT. The 76.2mm stainless steel pipework is said to enhance sound, air flow rate and performance, and the whole system is said to be 26% lighter than AMG's. Check out www.cobrasport.com.



Lorinser upgrades for R172 SLK

To mark 25 years of Mercedes' seminal SLK, tuning house Lorinser has released PowerModule tuning units for the third-generation R172 model. Potential power gains mean that the 154bhp SLC180 sees output rise to 185bhp, the SLC200 is elevated from 181bhp to 209bhp and the SLC300 leaps from 242bhp to 276bhp. But the biggest gains are reserved for the AMG SLC43, which sees output increase from 362bhp to 442bhp. And there are decent gains on the 250 CDI and 250d diesel models too. Prices start at 1,499 euros plus installation - see more at www.lorinser.com.



In Focus GLC250d 4Matic (X253)

The 2015 to 2020 GLC250d 4Matic (X253) is comfortable to drive, economical and fast becoming great value, too. There are around 500 well-maintained used examples for sale in the UK from £21,500, with 81% having covered less than 50,000 miles. The most popular colours are black and silver, making 47% of the total

60-second buying guide

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

Walk around

Your GLC should possess a full - preferably main dealer - service history as well as immaculate bodywork, blemish-free alloys and no signs of damage or leaks to the radiators. Check the tyre sidewalls for any signs of wear (see later comments) and optional air suspension is needed for optimum ride comfort. Check underneath for any signs of off-road damage.

Get inside

Expect excellent refinement and composed

ride quality. The GLC is spacious for rear seat passengers and pretty capable off-road too, but listen out for any rattles and squeaks and scour the upholstery for damage. Factory cars don't have a spare wheel - and there's nowhere under the boot floor to store one.

Start her up

GLC owners have reported juddering and jumping of the tyres on full lock, exacerbated in colder weather. The larger the wheel, the noisier it is. Mercedes originally claimed it could only be

solved by fitting all-weather tyres but have since offered a steering knuckle fix to address the problem. Check it's been fixed and watch out for fuel pump and air suspension failures too.

Check the paperwork

Call your local Mercedes dealer with the VIN number to check that all recalls have been addressed. The GLC should come with the original key fobs, and old receipts and MOTs to back up the digital service history. You could also phone the servicing dealers to confirm they really did service the car to be extra safe.



The first-gen GLC is a very handsome and comfortable car.



Classic Valvemaster additive for E10 fuel

Classic Valvemaster is a fuel additive that can save classic car engines from damage caused by ethanol-rich E10 petrol. Classic Valvemaster's unique phosphorus formula protects against valve seat recession, whilst ethanol stabiliser protects existing fuel systems and enables the use of E5 and E10 biofuels in classic petrol cars. Priced at £12.95 for a 250ml bottle (or £14.92 for Classic Valvemaster Plus which contains Octimise plus an additional additive to enhance fuel economy and performance), these additives offer optimal protection and can treat 250 litres of fuel. For more information go to www.classicoils.co.uk or www.classicvalvemaster.co.uk



Top Merces

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

The top 10 best-selling used Mercedes

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

- 1 **C-Class** (22.4%)
- 2 **A-Class** (19.5%)
- 3 **E-Class** (14.5%)
- 4 **GLC-Class** (7.1%)
- 5 **GLA-Class** (5.4%)
- 6 **CLA-Class** (4.9%)
- 7 **GLE/M-Class** (4.8%)
- 8 **SLC/SLK-Class** (4.5%)
- 9 **B-Class** (2.5%)
- 10 **S-Class** (2.4%)



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** (29.2%)
- 2 **Silver** (20.4%)
- 3 **White** (17.3%)
- 4 **Grey** (16.0%)
- 5 **Blue** (9.6%)



Miles ahead

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

Less than 50,000 miles **63.1%**

Between 50,000 and 80,000 miles **19.3%**

More than 80,000 miles **17.6%**

Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Diesel | Petrol | Hybrid | Full electric |
| 59.8% | 37.8% | 1.9% | 0.5% |

NEXT ISSUE



211-SERIES E-CLASS...

20 years of the handsome, high-tech express



PLUS

...AND ITS PREDECESSORS

123-series and Stroke 8 Mercedes compared



500SE with visual makeover ♦ Supercar club's Brabus GT800
AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Mercedes
ENTHUSIAST

February/March 2022 issue
ON SALE January 21st

Contents are subject to change

www.mercedesenthusiast.co.uk December/January 2022 | **79**



Crowd-pleaser

The CLS Shooting Brake concept debuted in 2010 and gained admirers who prayed the sexy load-lugger would make it to production. In 2012, Mercedes obliged and a new take on the coupe theme was born

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES TERRY OBORNE

Dating back to the 123-series of the late 1970s, the E-Class has served as the basis for Mercedes' middleweight estate car, a mix of prestige and practicality that has always sold well. So, it was perhaps inevitable that at some point after the sleeker version of the E-Class Saloon, the CLS four-door 'Coupe' launched in 2004, had become established in the market, Stuttgart would seek to exploit that as a wagon too.

That came in 2012 when an old-style title was re-purposed for the launch of the X218 CLS Shooting Brake. No doubt reasoning that it had to look very

different to its E-Class stablemate, the car maker pulled no punches with the styling, its pointy side windows in frameless doors and heavily slanted tail guaranteed to attract attention. Hoping it might, as did the original Coupe, spark imitations, Mercedes said it "had the potential to become the role model for a new market segment". On a more practical level, Mercedes also pointed out that with a load capacity of between 590 and 1,550 litres, its highly stylised appearance didn't prevent it being a decent load carrier.

When it went on sale in the UK in November 2012, it was a premium motorcar, priced from nearly £50,000 which was around

£15,000 more than the base E-Class Estate. By modern car standards, they held their value reasonably well – always a sign of respect in the market – but the passing of almost a decade sees prices now down to as low as £10,000. Like all Merces of its time, the CLS Shooting Brake is complex, so does an early example make a good used buy for those seeking an estate with a difference?

Design & evolution

The 2010s being the peak of diesel dominance, the CLS was initially offered with just two engines, both turbocharged oil burners. The entry model was the CLS250 CDI BlueEfficiency using the then staple, 2.1-litre four-cylinder

producing 201bhp and a spirited 369lb ft torque at just 1,600 to 1,800rpm. The CLS350 CDI had Mercedes' marvellous OM642 V6, which by then had been developed to give 261bhp and a whopping 457lb ft torque, again occurring at not much more than tickover – 1,600rpm. Both engines were mated to the seven-speed, 7G-Tronic Plus automatic gearbox.

The 350 cost a reasonable sounding £3,600 extra, but few of it or the 250 would have been delivered without at least some of the extras offered, such as Airmatic semi-active suspension, privacy glass and designo Cherry Wood load compartment trim to give a yacht-like ambience. As



When it went on sale in the UK in November 2012 it was a premium motorcar, priced from nearly £50,000

Just the facts

CLS250 CDI BlueEfficiency Shooting Brake (X218)

ENGINE **OM651 2,143cc 4-cyl biturbo**
POWER **201bhp@3,800rpm**
TORQUE **369lb ft@1,600-1,800rpm**
TRANSMISSION **7-speed auto, RWD**
WEIGHT **1,865kg**
0-62MPH **7.8sec**
TOP SPEED **146mph**
FUEL CONSUMPTION **53.3mpg**
CO2 EMISSIONS **139-143g/km**
YEARS PRODUCED **2012-2014**

CLS350 CDI BlueEfficiency Shooting Brake (X218)

ENGINE **OM642 2,987cc V6 turbocharged**
POWER **261bhp@3,800rpm**
TORQUE **457lb ft@1,600-2,400rpm**
TRANSMISSION **7-speed auto, RWD**
WEIGHT **1,910kg**
0-62MPH **6.6sec**
TOP SPEED **155mph**
FUEL CONSUMPTION **47.1mpg**
CO2 EMISSIONS **161-162g/km**
YEARS PRODUCED **2012-2014**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to NEDC Combined; top speed of CLS350 CDI electronically limited

standard, you got the Easy-Pack load compartment cover, sports seats and sports suspension among other things. A higher equipment was available in the form of the

AMG Sport trim (see page 84).

Mercedes did not offer a regular capacity petrol motor, but did create a halo effect flagship, the CLS63 AMG. By then, AMG's monster, normally aspirated M156 6.2-litre V8 was history, so despite the '63' badging this model used the biturbo 5.5-litre V8 which succeeded it, power a whopping 549bhp. However, for this Buyer's Guide we'll concentrate on the diesels.

As the Shooting Brake had been announced quite well into the 218-series CLS' life cycle, it came up for facelift after just two years. This saw the usual mid-term tweaks such as a new grille, headlights, bumpers and a redesigned steering wheel, but as a milestone is more important for introducing new, lower emissions Bluetec versions of the diesels – which comply with urban emission zones such as London's recently expanded Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ). The previous engines do not meet the standards and attract additional charges for driving in these areas.

The 2.1 – now called the CLS220 Bluetec – was rated at

175bhp/295bhp, and the V6 dropped slightly to 254bhp though its torque was unchanged. The 350 switched to the nine-speed 9G-Tronic gearbox, all other models retaining the seven-speeder. Sadly, the facelifted Shooting Brake range did not include the petrol V6 turbo making 328bhp, badged as the CLS400 in the Coupe line up.

The already well appointed CLS gained additional equipment and became available with even more options. Comand, heated seats and ambient interior lighting was made standard on all models, and the tablet screen went up to eight-inch, while Premium and Premium Plus Packs were offered. AMG Line replaced AMG Sport trim and became the default spec, wearing 19-inch alloys and AMG body styling. The Shooting Brake was sold in the UK until September 2018.

Driving the Shooting Brake

Of the two diesels, the 350 is the star. While the 250 has more than adequate pace, the V6 is a perfect companion for the Shooting

Brake, delivering a wonderfully effortless punch in the mid range combined with mid 40s fuel consumption, the effect enhanced by a gearbox so fluid you'll barely detect any of its upward and downward changes, whether the 'box is the early seven- or later nine-speed.

General refinement is also impressive, the only issue being that the 19-inch diameter wheels, wearing super low profile 255/35 front and 285/30 rear tyres, break the silence when the road surface turns coarse. Handling of the Shooting Brake is so well honed you probably won't notice it doing anything other than turning crisply into corners, hardly rolling a degree while doing so, and braking efficiently.

Any model is easy to live with. The low roof line doesn't make it unduly hard to make entry to the car, and the ample boot space does live up to Mercedes' promise. Some will find the 'infotainment' system already dated and slightly clunky at times, given all the menus to scroll through, but once learned it's convenient enough.

What you'll pay

The X218 CLS Shooting Brake had a relatively short production window, so prices outside the Mercedes-Benz dealer network are contained within £10,000 to £25,000 at most. The lower figure gets you a pre-facelift (and therefore non-ULEZ compatible), and likely to have a mileage well into six figures. After all, these cars are marvellous mile-eaters.

If you want a facelifted CLS Shooting Brake, and hence ULEZ car, prices start at £15,000, but you may still find that this has done over 100,000 miles. Something with 50,000 to 60,000 will be £17,000 to £18,000. Mercedes main dealers still have a few Shooting Brakes, and these start at £15,000 even for pre-facelifts.

Armed with a £20,000 budget, you can expect the best there is: a CLS350 from 2017 or 2018, with under 50,000 miles and the Premium Plus option pack. Paying £25,000 secures the same model but with under 30,000 miles. Year for year, there are no obvious differences in the values of four- and six-cylinder diesels, so we'd always aim for the latter. ▷

X218 CLS Inside and out



Specialist overview

Jay Manek of Mercland, Warwickshire

"The CLS was offered in three diesel variants, the CLS220, CLS250 and CLS350, and these two engine types are very good, reliable powerplants. However, service history is extremely important and annual services should be carried out using the correct 'low ash' engine oil to meet Mercedes' requirements. The most common problems are emissions related. Both the seven-speed and later nine-speed automatic transmissions are extremely reliable units, and the suspension is usually trouble-free too. Any problems here are invariably down to wear and tear."

Powertrain

- The 2.1-litre OM651 suffers coolant leaks from the water pump and fuel filter house. Some DIY minded owners may have used radiator sealing products, but these can clog up vital arteries in the cooling system.
- The OM651 leaks oil from the oil filter housing, requiring a new housing. It also leaks from the timing chain tensioner which is at the back of the engine; sometimes the tensioner has worked loose, and the cure is a new tensioner and sealing ring.
- The timing chain on the OM651 four-cylinder stretches, particularly on cars driving mainly on short runs; you'll hear a rattle on start-up.
- The OM642 V6's turbocharger has always been an issue. The electronic actuator fails, leaving the engine a non-turbo, and the intercooler hoses can fail, diminishing boost pressure.
- Another common OM642 problem is failure of the intake manifold stepper motor, due to a build up of carbon. A cheap fix is to fit a resistor to bypass the system, but the correct cure is to replace the unit.
- Earlier OM642s ate glow plugs, and the later Shooting Brake unit does to a lesser degree. You'll get a light on the fascia, and cold starting might be affected.
- The later versions of the seven- and nine-speed gearboxes have proved more reliable than earlier units, but a lack of maintenance can cause harsh gearshifts.



V6 diesel is a sweet spot in the range, although the four-cylinder diesels found even more homes.

- On both engines, NOx sensors, which help regulate emissions can fail. This happens randomly and triggers the engine warning light, which is obviously an MOT failure. The car can still be driven but will show a mileage countdown, after which the engine will not restart. All Shooting Brakes are included in recall to replace the sensor, although at the time of writing we understood there was a limited supply of the sensors, and that Mercedes-Benz will replace the units - each engine has two, and the price is up to £550, plus recoding - once only. A further emissions related issue we've been alerted to is the AdBlue crystallising in the fuel lines and causing a blockage.

Suspension, steering and braking system

- Bushes tend to split on the front torque arms, which will be an MOT failure if the rubber has separated too far from the arm.
- Braking durability is excellent, the only expense likely to be brake pad and disc replacement. Mercedes discs and pads should be used, not least because they are competitively priced.
- The only likely problems with the steering will be down to wear and tear, such as steering bushes and ball joints, but it's worth checking for fluid leaks from the power steering.
- A small number of 350s will have the optional Airmatic semi-active front air suspension, which should be at the correct ride height at all times.

All examples have rear air suspension with self-levelling.



**Spotted
for sale**
USED CAR DEALER
**CLS220 Bluetec AMG
Line Premium**
2015/15, silver, black leather,
130,000 miles, two owners,
£10,000, North London

16mm longer than the
coupe saloon; 19-inch
rims of AMG Sport spec.



**“Earlier OM642s ate
glow plugs, and the
later Shooting
Brake unit does to
a lesser degree”**

Bodywork and wheels

● While the original 219-series CLS is commonly seen with rust bubbles on the bodywork, the X218 Shooting Brake has not shown the same tendency. But it's worth checking for untreated chips and scratches

that may have developed into rust.

● The 19-inch alloy wheels with their 30- and 35-series profile tyres are vulnerable to kerbing damage. Check also for corrosion on the rims.



Optional Aubergine
leather; Airmatic's
Sport/Comfort modes.

Interior and electrics

- Check that all warning lights go out once the engine is started - an illuminated warning light is an MOT fail.
- The CLS has a lot of standard and optional electronic equipment so, where fitted, check that items such as the electric sunroof, reversing camera, remote boot closing, the Memory Pack adjustments on the seats and the heating and cooling on the Comfort ventilated front seats are all fully functional.
- Are both ignition keys supplied with the car? These cost around £300 each.

X218 CLS Inside and out

Verdict

There will be some who argue that you would be better off buying an E-Class Estate and saving some money. In cold, logical terms that's true, but the CLS Shooting Brake is such a bold and distinctive – and we think visually pleasing – wagon that it's worth paying the extra money to own.

It's one more reliable Benz, with the proviso that it must be serviced properly, and you should expect some expensive replacement items, as detailed in the 'Inside and out' section, will be necessary once mileage is over 70,000 to 80,000. And we really recommend spending the extra for a facelift model, the ULEZ compliant cars, not least because they will almost certainly hold their value better as environmental road pricing extends.



Spot the spec

There is quite a variation in equipment levels on the Shooting Brake. On the pre-2014 facelift cars, the base model came on 18-inch wheels, and the 250 had a Becker Map Pilot sat nav, the 350 full Comand. Moving up to AMG Sport brought 19-inch wheels and AMG body styling, and a manual mode on the gearbox. Besides the many individual options, the Luxury pack was offered, providing Exclusive Passion leather instead of the normal hide, a leather trimmed dash and special headlining. Designo interior options included a load space in American Cherry wood (see picture below).

Come the facelift and AMG Line replaced AMG Sport and was the sole trim available. The wide range of options remained, now accompanied by the Premium and Premium Plus Packages. Premium included a glass sunroof, memory seats and reversing camera. Plus added Keyless-Go and a Harman Kardon Logic 7 sound system. So pre- or post-facelift, there should be plenty of choice on equipment!



**Spotted
for sale**
OFFICIAL MERCEDES RETAILER
CLS350 CDI
2013/63, silver, black leather, 47,000
miles, privately owned, £15,981,
Mercedes-Benz of
North Wales

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

| MODEL | OIL SERVICE | MAJOR SERVICE |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| CLS220/250/350 | £165 | £290 |

Quotes from Mercland

Non routine servicing costs

- ★ Gearbox oil service **£295**
- ★ Replace failed turbocharged on the OM642 V6 with refurbished unit **£1,150**
- ★ Replace leaking oil filter housing on 4-cyl diesel **£750**
- ★ Fit new intake manifold stepper motor on OM642 **£550**
- ★ Replace OM642 glow plug **£30 each**
- ★ 4x premium tyres, 255/35R19 (F), 285/30R19 (R) **£700**

CLS Shooting Brake timeline

- **June 2012**
X218 CLS Shooting Brake diesel range announced
- **July 2012**
CLS63 AMG model with a 549bhp V8 biturbo revealed
- **November 2012**
CLS250 BlueEfficiency, CLS350 BlueEfficiency and CLS63 AMG models all go on sale in the UK
- **June 2014**
CLS range gets a mid-term facelift, with lower emissions engines. CLS220 replaces the CLS250 in the UK; 'Bluetec' badging for diesels later replaced by 'd' suffix: '350d'
- **September 2018**
Last new CLS Shooting Brakes registered in the UK

What you'll pay

- £9,000-£10,000** Early, 2013 CLS250 and CLS350, six-figure mile is expected
- £10,000-£15,000** All years of pre-2014 facelift cars, few with under 100,000 miles
- £15,000-£20,000** Facelifted cars, 220 Bluetec starts here, as do cars at Mercedes-Benz main dealers
- £20,000-£25,000** This price range contains the best and younger cars, typically a CLS350 Bluetec with Premium Plus options pack and under 50,000 miles

Tasty trio

Revitalised boots give the 140 S-Class a fresh appearance, while the 500SL convertible and 300TD estate remind their keeper why he owns them

WORDS & IMAGES BLAKLEY LEONARD

▷ Somebody recently left a note on the 123 wagon asking to buy it.



FACTSHEET

CARS 1998 S320/1992 500SL/1983 300TD

OWNER Blakley Leonard

LOCATION Virginia, USA

PURCHASED June 2019/July 2017/August 2019

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT S320 gets restored rims, 500SL needs roof mechanism rebuilt and 300TD's air con is on the blink

Since the last update, I've put hardly any miles on the W140 S320. This of course is no fault of its own. I decided it was time to have the 19-inch AMG monoblock wheels refinished so I temporarily swapped the stock 16-inch wheels back on. Unfortunately, the tyres on the 16s are showing their age and are unsafe for daily road use, so I was trying to be patient.

The 19s surprisingly didn't have any kerb rash. Instead, there were some noticeable blemishes including scratches and scuffs on the faces. The front wheels appeared to have been refinished at some point years ago and possibly experienced clearcoat failure as

they had begun to darken and yellow. I also discovered some uneven tread wear and realised a fresh alignment is overdue. The AMG wheels are now back and look as good as new, so I hope to have them mounted back on soon.

The R129 500SL remains one of the most enjoyable cruisers... when of course there's no chance of rain. As many R129s experience, my top hydraulic cylinders need to be rebuilt so putting the top up or down is a chore to do manually with the wrench. I admittedly have debated swapping this one for a facelifted M113-powered Sport version. I've previously had a 2001 SL500 and 1998 SL600, which both felt considerably newer despite being essentially the same as my current 1992.

Still, I prefer the look (and rarity) of the pre-facelift AMG body and mechanically the car hasn't given me any grief, so it stays for now. It is nice having one that is a driver quality spec and can be enjoyed as intended. The same cannot be said for my 1990 500SL 6.0 AMG which sees very minimal road time each year. If you couldn't tell, I really like R129s.

So, this leaves the 300TD, the car I've spent the most time in recently. For those that may not know, my dad drove

a 1983 300D which is the car I grew up in. The chugging sound of the OM617 diesel engine is unmistakable and just hearing it start up takes me back. As a

“The chugging sound of the OM617 diesel is unmistakable”

Euro spec, my 300TD does have plaid cloth interior, French style headlights, and smaller Euro bumpers. With the lowered stance and BBS Mahle wheels, it gets a lot of attention on the road. I actually came

out from the grocery store last week to see a note on my windshield that had a name and number to call if I ever wanted to sell the car. Apparently, I'm not the only one who appreciates old boxy Benzes in Southwest Virginia.

Busy with the Benz

While the 123 does have upgraded speakers with Bluetooth, it is missing other creature comforts such as heated seats. And of course things break. The AC apparently has a leak as it's slowly become significantly less cold over the last few weeks. My front passenger window regulator has also decided to give up on me, so I'll add that to the list. I am looking for a new antenna mast as mine has been missing since I bought it.

Lastly, I've been deciding between a dash pad or dash cap to cover up the cracks. With older cars, it's a constant project that's seemingly never finished, but I think the experience of driving them daily is a worthy reward.

▽ Blakley thinks his 500SL with AMG styling is a keeper - for now!

▽▽ The S320's 19-inch monoblocks looked good even before the refresh.



In its element

Big events see the baby saloon gain many admiring glances – testament to the time, money and effort that its owner has put into its revival

WORDS WILLIAM TERRINGTON IMAGES JAMES MANN

FACTSHEET

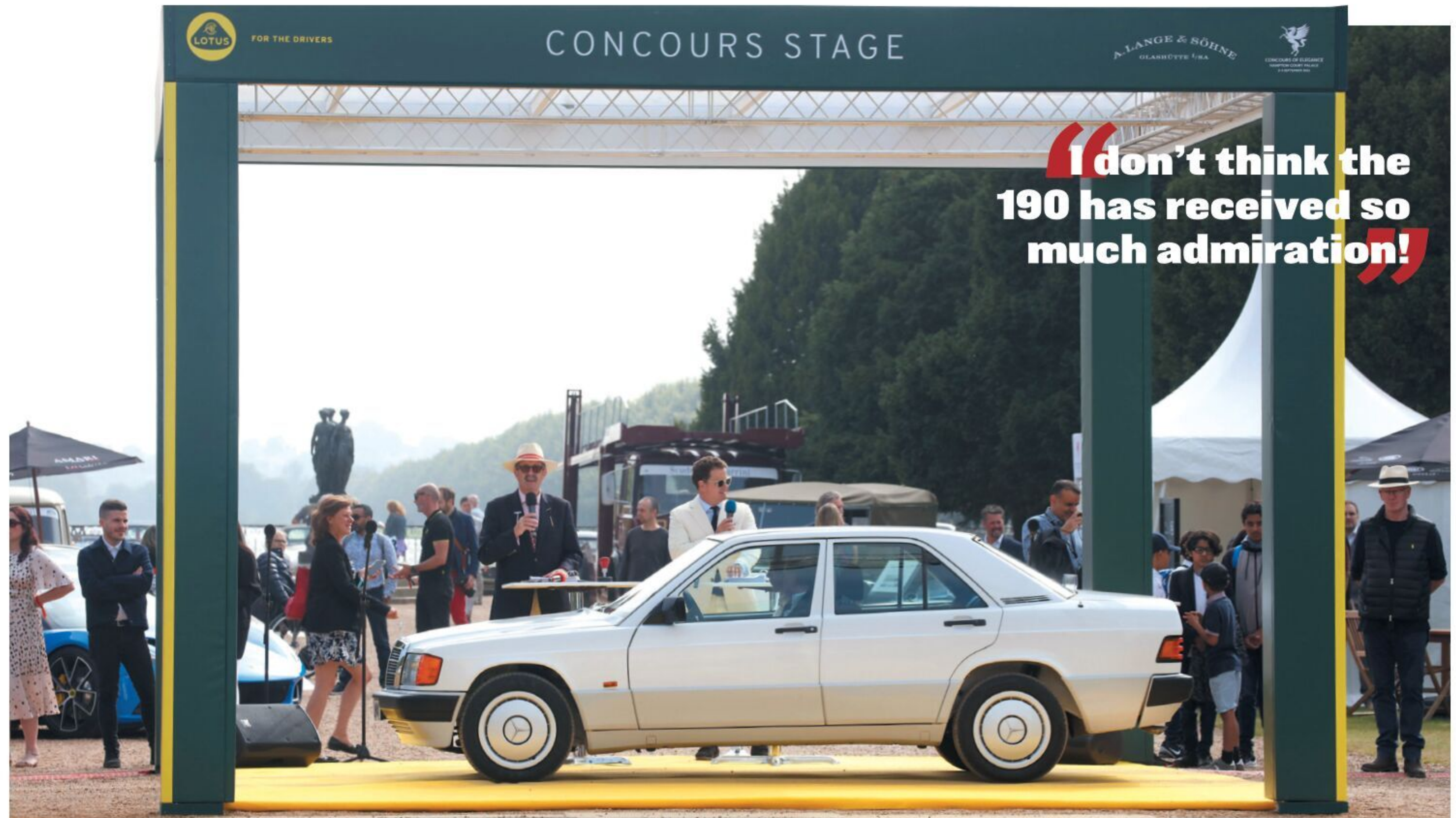
CARS 1989 190E/2011 E250 Coupe

OWNER William Terrington

LOCATION Surrey, UK

PURCHASED March 2014/March 2017

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Visits to Beaulieu and Hampton Court Palace for the Arctic White Benz



“I don’t think the 190 has received so much admiration!”

The Simply Mercedes event at Beaulieu, and the Concours of Elegance, Hampton Court Palace turned out very nicely! As expected, a fantastic array of Mercedes cars gathered at Beaulieu. This proved to be a great warm-up for the concours just two weeks later. It’s nice to see that the event is increasingly popular, surely gathering the greatest variety of Mercedes owners in the country. It’s fantastic to see younger people taking an interest in classics, not to mention people returning every year. A couple of personal favourites were a 1970s W115 in a striking yellow with green interior, and a 350,000-mile 190D 2.5.

Now that my 190 is officially on the concours scene, it’s time for change: whilst it will always be my most important car, it won’t be used at all during the depths of winter. It didn’t see much winter use in previous years, however it has been on the road for two or three average car lifespans, and despite still being more than fit for regular service, has transformed from a runabout advertised online to a concours car and I don’t fancy

repeating the work done to it recently.

Whilst the parts supply from Mercedes is still very good indeed for the W201, it may not be so plentiful years down the line. However, I doubt parts availability will become anywhere near as problematic as a 60s Fintail. Nearly two million of these cars were sold, not to mention the sheer importance of the model.

Pride of place

As for the concours itself, it was a great success: countless conversations, admirers and cars! Final preparations for the concours took place until 6am on the day of the event. Coffee was a necessity, not a luxury. My show prep usually comes down to the wire!

On arrival, the ‘30 Under 30’ cars were lined up, then drove through Home Park into the grounds of Hampton Court Palace. I don’t think the 190 has received so much admiration! The procession to the concours stage was certainly a memorable occasion. Its arrival on the concours scene, parading through to the concours stage, was 30 years in the making: it’s been 30 years since the

△ On the Concours Stage at Hampton Court Palace.

brand new purchase of our first W201 and 33 years to the month (September) since this car left the factory.

The Mercedes presence that day was strong: a 300SL Roadster, the Gulf-Porsche transporter O306, an SLR reworked by McLaren Special Operations, an excellent owners’ club display, and also in the 30 Under 30 a R129 SL and a Cosworth W201.

Even upon leaving the show, back through Home Park, the enthusiasm showed no signs of abating: many people along the way were waving and taking photos. 2021 has without a doubt been the start of a new lease of life for the 190E. Here’s to the next 30 years and beyond...

▽ William’s 190E was part of the ‘30 Under 30’ vehicle showcase.



From the archives > Modified Mercs

Modified Mercs

Modifying a Mercedes-Benz is a balancing act and the owners of these three performance stars have managed it to great effect

WORDS MATT ZOLLO IMAGES IGOR VUCINIC



Modifying a car brings compromises, right? You do not get something for nothing, after all, and the price you pay for improved aesthetics, better performance or ramped up drama is diminished comfort, poor reliability, a hit in residual values – or all three.

The fact is though that modifying does not necessarily ruin a car – it is bad modifying that does. If you do it right, with care and consideration, there is no reason why you cannot subtly enhance a car without taking anything away from it.

We say this with confidence because here we have three cars that prove the point. All of them are the creation of ChromeWheel, based in Hanover, Germany which is co-owned by Neset Özke, who also calls this CLS Coupe his own. Having always wanted a CLS, simply because it looked so good, and knowing that it had to be a car from AMG, Neset just had to decide between the 55 and 63 models.

In the end, it came down to the fact the supercharged car has the bigger potential for higher power outputs. He picked this example because he did not want a car in the usual black, grey or silver, and the Bordeaux Red certainly is not any of those colours.

The next car, a 2007 E500 4Matic, has been modified along similar lines to the CLS – big wheels, a big ride height drop and some styling tweaks. Except here there are a bunch of engine enhancements as well, although that is hardly a surprise considering the owner, Ertan Kaya, has come from a CLK63 AMG and an E55 AMG before that so knows his way around hot Mercs.

This E500 is a facelifted model so has 383bhp as standard, which gets things off to a good start. But this has been boosted by a remapped ECU and a Supersprint manifold, sport cat and cross pipe, achieving a very respectable 424bhp and 420lb ft of

“Modifying does not necessarily ruin a car – it is bad modifying that does”

△ E500 with 424bhp, CLS55 without top speed limiter, and SLK55 with modified wheels.

torque. What’s more, because the stock rear silencers have been retained, it is not so loud that it ruins the tranquillity during normal driving. Another example of modifying done correctly.

The SLK55 Roadster is owned by Dominic Seesko. Our third lifelong Mercedes-Benz owner, he bought a W123 when he was 18 years old and from that moment on became a serial Mercedes modifier. A performance air filter was dropped in and a Supersprint cross pipe fitted, but no doubt Seesko felt that quite enough considering he had just jumped from a 268bhp SLK350 to this 355bhp SLK55.

What really separates this SLK55 from the standard car is the way it sits. H&R coil-overs are partly to thank, wound down so the SLK sits around 60mm closer to the ground. But it is those 19-inch, three-piece RH Topline rims, measuring 8.5 inches wide at the front and 10 inches wide at the rear, that are the main feature.

Taking a modest approach to modifying means each car still feels like a Mercedes-Benz. A few subtle cosmetic alterations, some nice wheels, a decent suspension drop and the deletion of just a single exhaust silencer can have a profoundly positive effect on a Mercedes, with no untoward side effects. We think Neset’s friends should be very grateful to have him around.

▽ L to R: Dominic Seesko owns the SLK, Ertan Kaya the E500 and Neset Özke the CLS.



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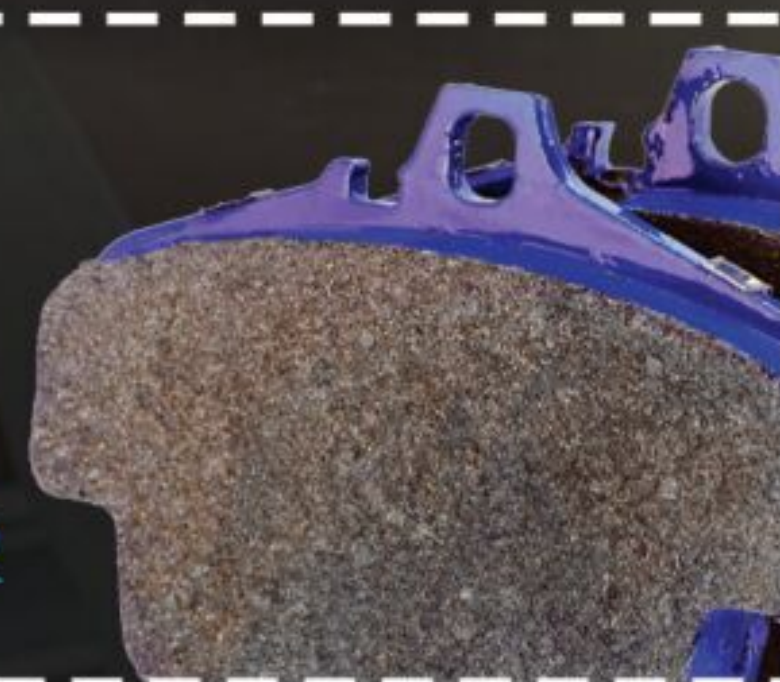
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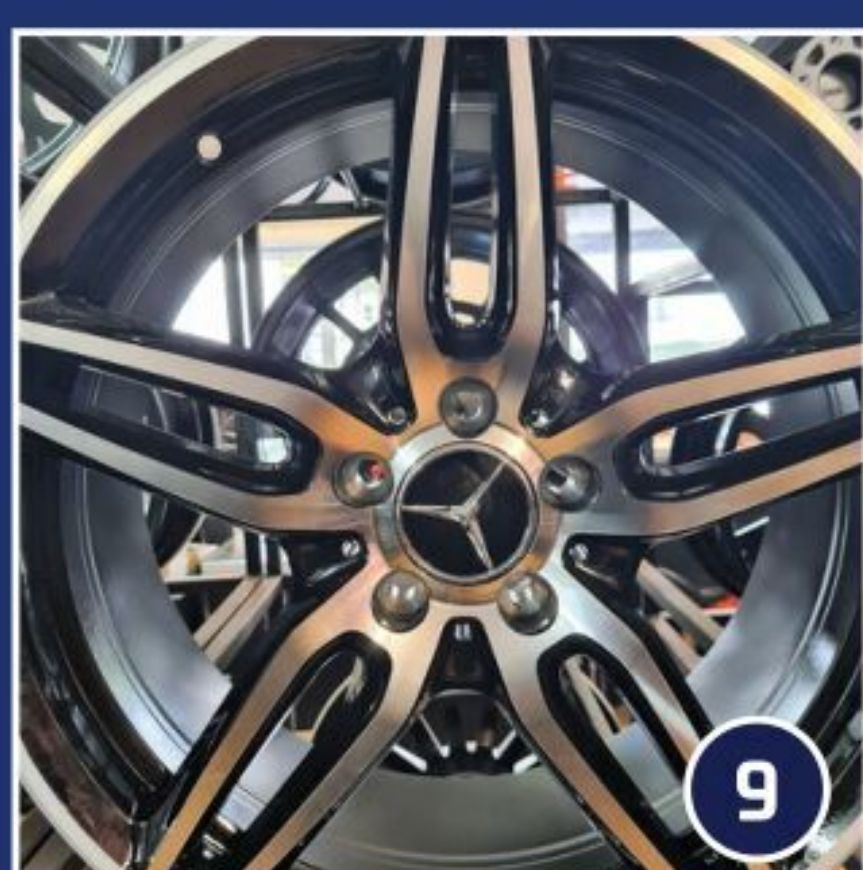
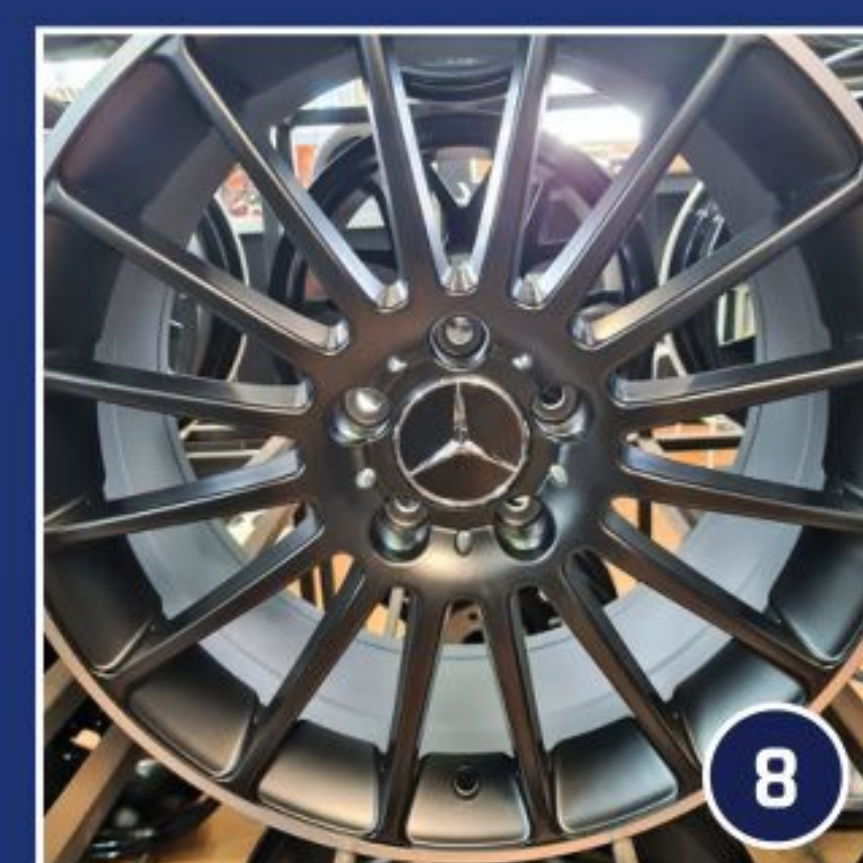
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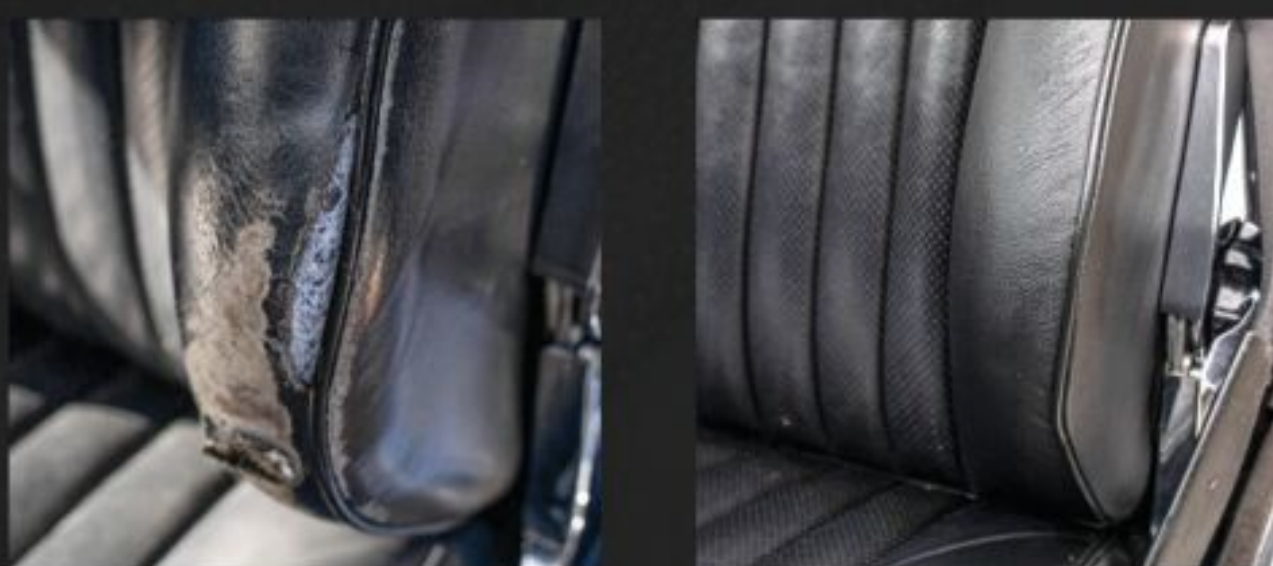
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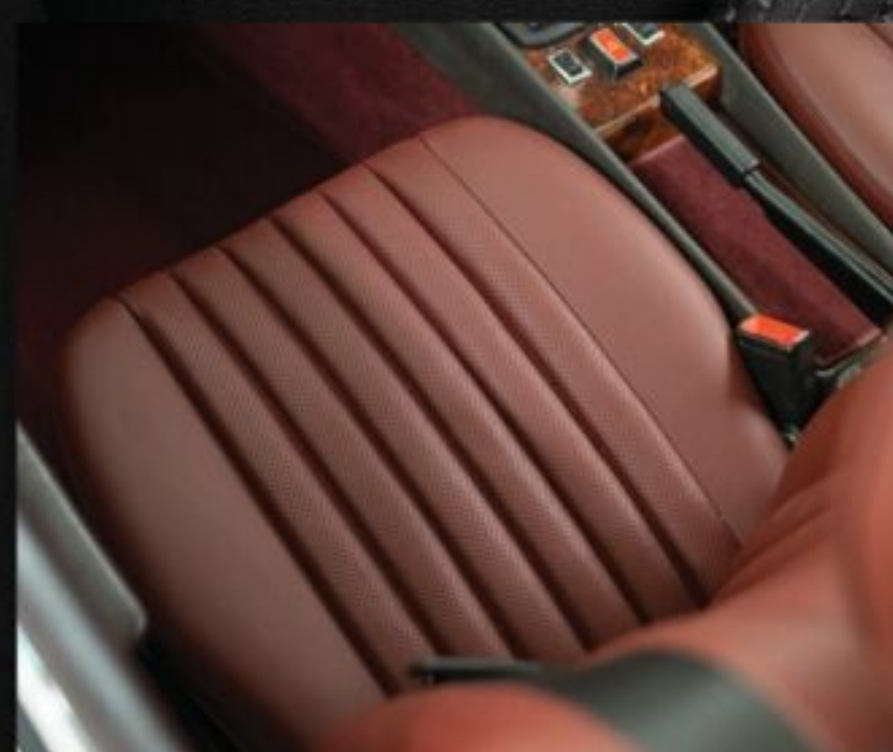
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CLK230 Kompressor 2001, Jasper Blue, AMG wheels, 127,000 miles, two-tone leather, two new keys, service history, radio card, owner's manual, thousands spent, all receipts, MOT, immaculate car, phone mornings up to lunch time, £POA. Tel: 01619 454615.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



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



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

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



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



A124 E220 Cabriolet Four-seater, 93,331 miles, Azurite Blue, two-door, petrol, automatic, replacement mohair roof installed, mushroom leather interior, electric leather heated front seats, two owners from new, excellent condition, MOT until May 2022, additional front interior included, £11,000 ONO. Tel: 07788 196478. Epsom **[CM37W4]**



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



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



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



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



SL320 1999, almost like new, no dents, scratches or rust, pristine condition, regularly serviced, automatic, leather interior, walnut dash, heated seats, three owners from new, excellent condition soft top with wind deflector, Mercedes service history, old MOT certificates, electric seats, climate control, CD stacker, nice sound system, good alloys and tyres, 12 months MOT, new car is the only reason for sale, £7,990. Tel: 07940296074. Brentford **[CM37W11]**



R171 SLK200 2008, Midnight Blue, ivory leather interior, 66,500 miles, MOT until March 2022, lack of use forces sale now that I am retired, owner for the last six years, brings a smile to my face every time I drive it, very good condition, offers around £4,990. Tel: 01686 651284. Welshpool **[ABW2]**



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



E55 AMG 2004, immaculate, 29,000 miles, garaged, zero rust, new-leather smell, collector's piece, £POA. Tel: 07825 374132. Cornwall **[ABW3]**



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



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



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



SL320 1998, special limited edition, 91,000 miles, automatic, convertible, very good condition, new alloys, hardtop stand, original manuals, first aid kit, radio, Bose CD player, £10,000 ONO. Tel: 01364 716331. Devon **[ABW7]**



C270 CDI Elegance SE Saloon, automatic/Tiptronic, showroom condition, Brilliant Silver, unmarked Pacific Blue interior, one driver from new, 52 Reg, 34,900 miles, no short runs of less than 30 miles, garaged from new, fitted with a heated/dehumidifier, usual MB refinements: electric seats, cruise, heated mirrors etc., serviced and MOT'd exclusively by Mercedes main dealer from new, full records, original handbook/documents, full set of keys, exceptionally well cared for, £5,500. Email: Bazhylda1.11@outlook.com. Buckinghamshire **[CM36W6]**



Benz Patent Motorwagen Unique opportunity to purchase a fully working replica, owned since 2017, supplied new from Vintage and Prestige, trailered to Mercedes Benz Club events, it has not covered one mile, £POA. Tel: 07739 250610. Telford **[ABW9]**



SL500 1997, 100,411 miles, MOT due March 2022, rare Pearlescent Green/Blue two-tone colour, the last of the R129 SLs, more powerful 32-valve quad-cam V8 M119 engine, later improved five-speed autobox, SL private plate negotiable. £14,500. Tel: 07812 648345. Corby **[ABW10]**



SLK230 Kompressor 1999/V, auto, 20,500 miles, one elderly owner from 2000, Mercedes history, clean and proper, two keys, all books, collectable car indeed, £7,995. Tel: 07961 808069. Silverspeed. London **[CM36W1]**



230E 1992, excellent condition, two owners from new, nine years with current owner, under 16,000 genuine miles, automatic transmission, immaculate leather interior, electric windows, sunroof, beautiful drive, current numberplate not for sale, £4,500 ONO. Tel: 07970 237864. London **[CM36W2]**



W123 280CE 1984, 80,000 miles, beige with olive cloth interior, auto, air, call for further information, £17,500. Tel: 07710 350602. Suffolk **[EFW1]**



280CE 1985, a refined classic coupe, a period-perfect colour scheme, low mileage for its age, four owners from new, recommissioned in 2019 by John Haynes Mercedes at a cost of around £12,000, gold paintwork, beige velour upholstery, electric windows, rear headrests, Blaupunkt stereo, retrofitted air con (not functioning due to broken fan belt), original owner's manuals and service book, maintenance invoices and registration documents, a copy of **Mercedes Enthusiast** will also be included which features this 280CE as a 'Forecourt Find' in 2018, a few small dents on the underside and one small indent in the plastic bumper trim, performed a 6,000 miles service before fitting new engine mounts, a new exhaust and new brakes, 2.7-litre, 182bhp DOHC straight-six with Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection, four-speed automatic, £23,495. Tel: 07940 296074. Croydon **[CM36W3]**



W126 300SE 1987, super order throughout, impeccable service history, blue velour interior, automatic, electric roof, windows, mirror, Zebrano wood trim, dual air con, radio/cassette, classic wheel trims, FSH 23 stamps, MOT until April 2022, plate excluded, £9,450. Tel: 07958 431991. Northampton **[CM36W5]**



E320 Coupe Auto, silver, grey leather, slide and tilt electric sunroof, electric mirrors and windows, 10 months MOT, four new tyres, two owners since new, reasonable condition for year, 180,000 miles, £3,200. Tel: 07903 030474.

Iverheath [CM36W4]



W124 260E 1991, saloon, Midnight Blue, immaculate cream leather interior, original, minimal body rust, partial service history, £2,000 ONO. Tel: 07815 776196. West Wickham [EFW9]



E55 AMG 2004, 28,500 miles, power/heated seats, xenon lights, cruise control, air suspension, immaculate condition, fresh Japanese import, grade 4.5B, zero rust, undersealed, ceramic coated, FSH, £26,500, Tel: 07825 374132. Truro [EFW3]



E220 CDI Estate Avantgarde 2004, auto, 132,750 miles, seven-seater, silver, grey, leather, xenon lights, rear air suspension, pre-wired integrated phone kit, converts to Bluetooth, six-CD player, mudflaps, tow bar, two owners, £4,995 ONO. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen [EFW2]



300SL Sport 1989, auto, facelift model, last of production, fully galvanised body, waxoiled, only 52,000 miles, service history, some invoices, immaculate condition throughout, garaged with dehumidifier, metallic silver, full dark blue leather interior, heated seats, cruise control, ABS, power assist steering, central locking with remote fob, rear seats, new dark blue soft top, hard top in metallic silver, Mercedes fire extinguisher, sealed unopened factory first aid kit and toolkit, vanity lit mirrors, external temperature gauge, more photographs available on request, MOT until June 2022, constantly growing in value, obvious investment, £38,500 ONO. Tel: 07818 222574. Milngavie. Scotland [EFW16] + [EFW17] + [EFW18]



500SEC 1991, 140,000 miles, unmarked burgundy paintwork, cream leather (no marks), recent full gearbox rebuild, no visible rust, rear parcel shelf has been replaced, drives remarkably well, keeps pulling above 100mph, all electrics work, no air con, fully serviced, £17,500. Tel: 07709 391252. York [EFW5]



300SL-24 1993, 61,000 miles, March 2022 MOT, a treat to drive, effortlessly capable whilst remaining enormously comfortable, Imola Red, pebble leather, equipped with factory hardtop, power hood (black), £15,990. Tel: 07812 013963.

North Yorkshire [EFW4]



W123 200 1982, under 85,000 miles, 109hp, superb condition inside and out, no rust, new brakes, shocks, battery, timing chain, MOT until December, Tax-free from 2022, South African import, could be concourse with little effort, £7,800 ONO. Tel: 07910 060390. Edinburgh [EFW8]



E320 Cabriolet 1993, FSH, blue, cream upholstery, good condition, 192,000 miles, in the past two years it has had new fuel pumps, rear shocks, hood, MOT until 30 June 2022, £8,995. Tel: 07734 106885.

West Midlands [EFW10]



SL320 1999, 3.2-litre, excellent condition throughout, the entire bodywork and interior is very nice, three owners, nice condition, air con, electric heated seats, electric roof, alloys and good tyres, full Mercedes history documented service and MOT history, mohair soft top, recent service, £7,395. Tel: 07958431991 Northampton [EFW20]



300CE 1992, 24V, silver, black leather, 143,000 miles, five-speed automatic, Sportline suspension, air con, electric sunroof, windows and seats, full history, owned since 1999, £4,500. Tel: 07776 842312.

Worcestershire [EFW21]



S500 Facelift, very low miles 49,000, great history, great spec, factory AMG kit and wheels, black, black leather, wood trim/steering, memory pack, xenon lights, Parktronic, soft close, six-CD, new tyres, sunroof, UV reflecting double glazed, beautiful car in great condition, MB club member, £POA. Tel: 07870 963662.

Leicester [EFW22]



W212 E350 CDI BlueEfficiency Estate Avantgarde March 2010, two careful owners, full service history, 109,000 miles, excellent condition, silver, grey interior, Comand audio system, memory package, sat nav, heated front seats, reversing camera, Parktronic, leather seats, sliding glass, sunroof with tilt, 7G-Tronic auto, paddles, cruise control, Harmon Kardon Logic7 surround sound system, cornering light function, adaptive main beam assist, tyre pressure loss warning system, £7,000. Tel: 07770 935744. Kent [DEW15]



C220 Elegance 1995, one owner from new, covered 18,000 miles, excellent condition throughout, Almandine Red, grey cloth interior, electric sunroof and windows, original Michelin factory fitted tyres, all old MOTs and original purchase invoice, MOT until 2022, £6,995 ONO. Tel: 07979 803938. Uxbridge [EFW23]



CLK320 Cabriolet 1999, automatic, 105,000 miles, stunning metallic blue, grey leather, one year MOT, £2,750. Tel: 01483 282830. Surrey [EFP1]



C240 Sport 1998, 102,000 miles, FSH, black, grey leather interior, auto, climate control, air con, immobiliser, four electric windows, four headrests, AMG wheels, central locking, smooth clean engine, all M-B serviced at Portadown, over £4,000 service bills, £3,250 ONO. Tel: 02840 622535. County Down. Northern Ireland [EFP2]



350SLC 1972, Icon Gold, restored for Drew Pritchard, original leather seats, reconditioned auto gearbox, 70,000 miles, reconditioned steering box, new sills, all welding done, resprayed, many new parts, £16,995. Tel: 07503 739538. London [EFP3]



C180 Sport 1998, 107,000 miles, saloon, Imperial Red, black interior, dogtooth black and grey dash, pillars etc., one owner, automatic with manual option, runs well, five alloy wheels, electric windows on front doors, cruise control, original Blaupunkt radio/cassette, numberplates to be retained by owner, exterior paintwork and body etc., needs attention, interior good, with some attention it will be a good collector's car for the future, £2,200 ONO. Tel: 07935 403525. High Wycombe [EFP4]



E320 CDI Avantgarde 2002, auto, 3,226cc, diesel, five-door, saloon, dark blue, light beige leather, MOT, 87,000 miles, full service history, amazingly economical, fast and powerful, superb 3.2-litre diesel engine, would make an excellent tow car, please note the MBZ registration, £2,600 – PX old car, kit car, motorcycle or three-wheeler. Tel: 07756 567248. Dorset [DEW2]



SL320 1999, 3.2L, excellent condition throughout, the entire body work and interior is very nice, in stunning Almandine Red factory Metallic, beige leather interior, radio, three owners, nice condition five-spoke alloys & good tyres, full Mercedes history, substantial documented service & MOT history, electric mohair soft top, maintained regardless of cost, recent service, Mercedes Pagoda forces sale, £7,695. Tel: 07958 431991. Croydon [DEW3]



CLK320 Cabriolet 2003, convertible, 82,000 miles, only two former owners, comprehensive service history, most recently serviced & MOT'd March 2021, five tyres and battery in 2020, excellent condition, working roof, future classic, £POA. Tel: 02089 422066. Mob: 07590 551640. Ewell [DEW6]



C180 1996, full MOT, three previous owners, very good interior, original radio, first aid kit, outside very clean and in great condition, £1,995. Tel: 07414 006863. Middlesbrough [DEW5]



E220 Cabriolet AMG Diesel, 2016, 17,000 miles, full Mercedes services, white, navy blue top, navy and cream leather interior, Airscarf heated comfort seats, unmarked AMG alloy wheels, all usual extras including, AMG carpet mats, totally as new throughout, £20,000 ONO. Tel: 07944 732666. Essex [DEW4]



CLK230 Cabriolet Sport 1996, 2,295cc, 147,000 miles, petrol, automatic transmission, silver, black leather heated seats, serviced and MOT March 2021, has been well looked after, excellent condition, £1,200. Tel: 07890 04700216 [DEW8]



C320 2003, Brilliant Silver, very low miles at 49,000, full M-B history, maintained regardless of cost, 3.2L V6, automatic, full service book and history available, cream interior unmarked, electric glass sunroof, electric steering column, front heated/memory seats, Comand sat nav, factory upgraded Bose sound system, DAB radio, folding rear seats, air conditioning system, in-built phone system, unmarked five-spoke alloy wheels, owned from only six months, previously owners by a M-B director, spare never used, garaged all its life, ULEZ compliant, £4,650 OVNO. Tel: 07970 403617 [DEW9]



2x 280SE One is from 1969 and the other is from 1971, both require reconditioning as have not been driven for some time, both are extremely solid cars having been in Cyprus since they were nearly new, £POA. Tel: 07734 102121. Borehamwood [DEW11]



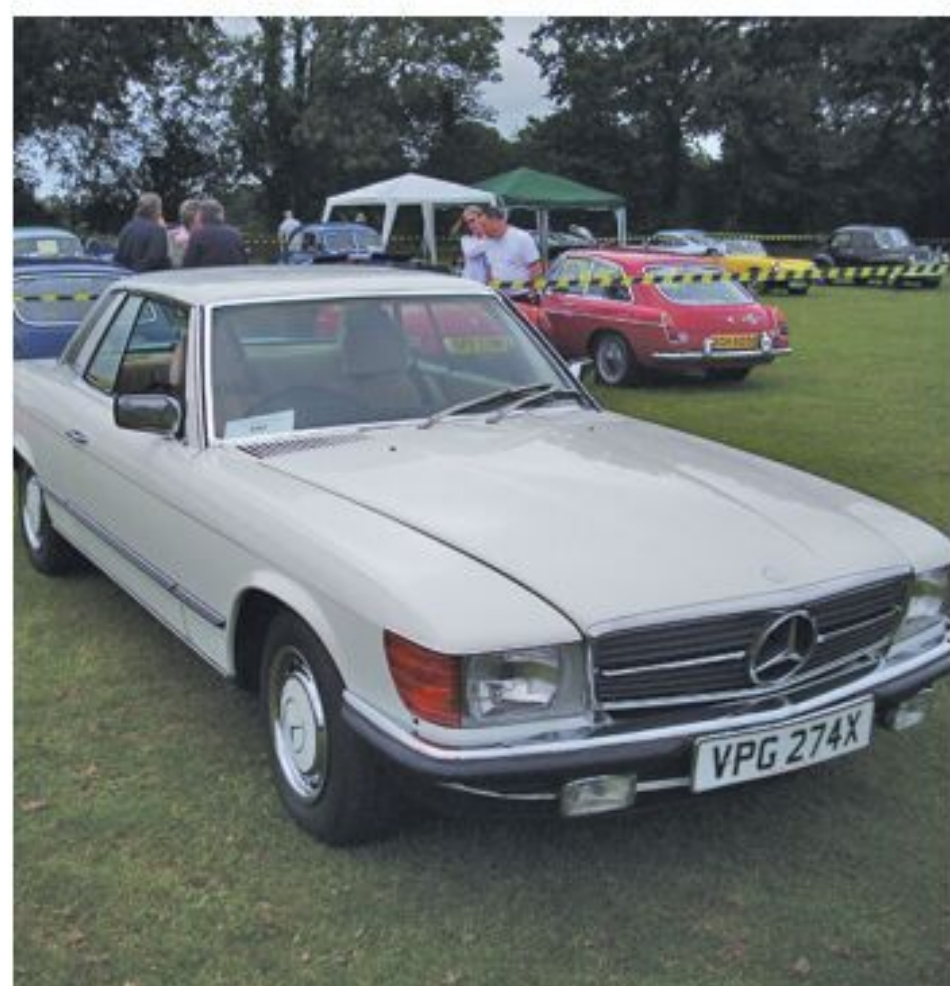
W123 230E 1983, fabulous example, South African import, RHD, complete service history, MOT until November, automatic, 79,000 miles (genuine), factory air con, everything original, all paperwork and service book, kept covered in a garage with a de-humidifier, excellent condition, no rust, £9,000. Tel: 07809 557451. Leicester [DEW12]



W140 S320 1995, 145,000 miles, Onyx Grey, owned for 13 years, full service history, MOT until March 2022, garaged, spare keys, excellent condition, a wonderful car to drive, £5,000. Tel: 07908 114234. Kent [DEW16]



W124 E280 1994, rare Rosewood Metallic, club enthusiast's car, owned seven years, main dealer maintained with no expense spared, perfect oatmeal cloth, all maintenance records from new, smooth quiet six-cylinder engine, alloys, sunroof, airbags, Air Con, M-B radio CD, two remote keys. £2,550 ONO. Tel 0781 8068307 Wiltshire [DEW10]



280SLC Automatic, 150,805 miles, classic white, cream velour interior, owned for 12 years, restored to concours condition, voted best SLC in Mercedes Club and others, MOT August 2020, no time wasters please, £POA. Tel: 01932 787178. Middlesex [DEW13]



E-Class Cabriolet 1994, convertible, only three owners, current owner for the last 18 years, in fantastic original condition, only 75,000 miles, silver, blue hide hood and interior, I will gladly fit a new battery and MOT the car, £15,000 ONO. Tel: 07802 491561. Worthing [DEW20]



S212 E350 CDI BlueEfficiency Estate Avantgarde March 2010, two careful owners, full service history, 10,900 miles, excellent condition, silver, grey interior, Comand audio system, memory package, sat nav, heated front seats, reversing camera, Parktronic, leather seats, sliding glass, sunroof with tilt, 7G Tronic auto, paddles, cruise control, Harmon Kardon Logic7 surround sound system, cornering light function, adaptive main beam assist, tyre pressure loss warning system, £8,500. Tel: 07770 935744. Kent [DEW15]



SL300-24 1993, very good condition both inside and out, 83,325 original miles, as new electric hood, including factory hardtop, as new matching Goodyear tyres, service history including receipts for work carried out, all old MOT's, maintained regardless of cost, new MOT, £7,250 ONO. Tel: 07598 791860. Nuneaton [DEW17]



450SL 1980/V Reg, sky blue, nearly 113,000 miles, new soft top and with original hardtop (needs some repair), well maintained and serviced by Devon Classic Cars, MOT until September, kept garaged, in very good condition, engine purrs beautifully, £18,500. Tel: 07860 670403. Bath [DEW19]



190E 2.6 1991, rare manual, white with black leather, e/windows, e/sunroof, Becker radio/cassette, 143,000 miles, all MOTs, all original books, not currently MOT'd as on SORN, not used in two years, only 600 miles in the last five years, garaged, trailer collection for light recommissioning before road use, £POA. Tel: 07449 205448. Southampton [DEW18]

INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



W124 E500 Rare, no sunroof, Brilliant Silver metallic (744), Alpaga Grey leather (278A), preserved in pristine original condition, accident free, 90 per cent factory paint, third owner, original 118,889km, full Mercedes service history, new tyres, all original books and tools, data card, £POA. Tel: +393293 293538. Monte-Carlo [ABW8]



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



190SL 1957, originally purchased in Germany, arrived in Toronto in 1970, my father purchased the car in July 1965 with 58,000 miles, never been in an accident or driven in winter, motor taken apart in 1981 with a bad head gasket issue and the engine has not been reassembled, body has been sanded down to bare metal and finished with primer, been in storage since 1981, open to serious offers only. Tel: 1-778-833-2954. Canada [CM37W3]



220S Ponton Cabriolet 1959, ground-up restoration, Magnificent Yellow, classic red interior, burgundy canvas roof, imported to South Africa from UK, 1,800 miles since competed, 2 million South African rand (roughly £100,000), Tel: + 27 (0) 83 303 4304. Johannesburg. South African [EFW6]

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123-series 280E One of the best, dream condition, classic data 01/07/1982, black velour always in Germany, auto, electric sunroof, central locking, cruise control, Becker Mexico, etc, £POA. Tel: +49 17610 222255. Email: kaymel@web.de. Bremen. Germany **[CM34W4]**



560SEC 1987, rare 822 option, 300hp, tri-Y exhaust, Euro spec, low 113,313km, recent black pearl 199 glass-out repaint due clear coat issue, excellent black leather, burl wood interior, never any rust, recent service, carfax \$35,000 USD. Tel: 016046446631. Email: bleasdaleadrian@gmail.com Vancouver. Canada **[CM35W13]**



W114 280C USA spec, 1975, 69,000 original miles, with a shifter in the column, four-speed automatic transmission, factory equipment includes power steering, power windows, air con, cruise control, very rare Becker Europa II stereo with cassette, interior in mint condition, zero rust, £POA. Tel: +1506 6003 9000. Texas. USA **[ABW2]**

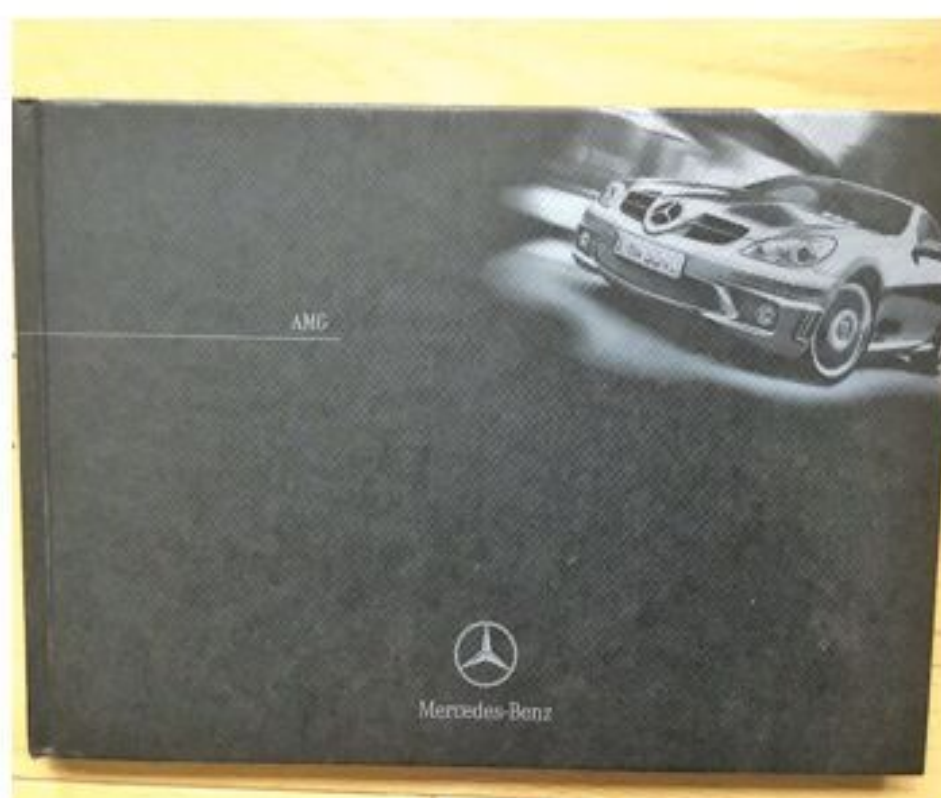


190E 1989, in mint condition, garage stored for all 30 years, no rust, 77,000 miles, new tires, retractable sunroof, \$4,000. Tel: +001 60980 41105. New Jersey, United States **[GHW12]**

PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



Four alloy wheels and winter tyres Originally for a 204 C-Class, good condition, good tyres, collection only, £199 for set. Tel: 01202 747595. Poole **[CM37P5]**



AMG hardback book 14 models, dealer-supplied, dated 2004, great photos, specs, unmarked pages, as new, £12.50. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury **[CM37W5]**



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

230SL hardtop 1967, ivory in good condition, could use new headliner, \$4,900. Tel: 8058 841994. Email: bilflowers@gmail.com. Santa Barbara, C **[CM37]**



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]**



Water cooler radiator and fan and frame cowl Fits C-Class (W204), E200 CGI and E250 CGI petrol engine model, part numbers A204 9060 212, £223. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen **[EFW12]**

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

Window regulators with motors R171 SLK, O/S and N/S quarter, 2005, model, also a supercharger for the same model, all in good condition, £50 each, Tel: 07825 544213. North Wales **[CM37]**

Every issue of Mercedes Enthusiast from Issue 1 to present Carefully stored but now need to make space, everyone in superb condition, collection only, open to sensible offers. Tel: 01527 402225. Worcestershire **[CM37]**

18-inch AMG alloys with Goodyear Eagle F1 tyres Genuine, wheels were recently refurbished, came off a W220 S55 AMG W220, will fit other models, staggered fitment, £900 ONO. Tel: 07850 187400. Ormskirk. **[CM37]**

NO. PLATES

M1BCY

M1BCY Open to offers, feel free to call or message me, £1,350. Tel: 07738 556978. Radlett **[CM36]**

E19 MKM

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

A19 OEM

A19 OEM Perfect to add to any classic Mercedes Benz 190E, plate is on retention, available for quick transfer with costs already paid, £900. Tel: 07449 205448. Southampton **[DE]**

RAF 668

RAF 668 For sale, 668 was a WW2 squadron number, owned by me since 1973, has original registration book and 1973 MOT document, placed on retention in 2015, £POA. Tel: 07842 586858. Cheshire **[CM33]**

WANTED

Dateless numberplates Top price paid. Tel: 07858 264064. Nr Malpas **[CM36]**

W202 halogen headlamp units Post-facelift, pair of complete UK specification, new or good used. Tel: 01344 876043. London **[EF]**

Set of genuine carpet mats for a 2006 W211 E320 Saloon Preferably a new or mint condition set. Tel: 07949 792278. Leeds **[DE]**

W124 front/passenger or driver seat Black, the car is from 1994. Tel: 01516 390149. Wallasey **[CM34]**

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E320 Coupe 1994, blue/black over silver/grey, beige leather interior, sunroof, long MOT, very good condition, no rust, excellent engine and gearbox, lovely to drive, with many recent new parts to include, engine wiring loom, tyres, exhaust, suspension, £3,250 ONO. Tel: 07851 250111. Southport [JKW45]



280SL 2000, red with cream interior, excellent condition, fully loaded, 45,000 miles, full service history, £13,750. Tel: 07808 366076. East Sussex [JKW24]



123-series 230TE 1985, seven seater, automatic, Thistle Green metallic, this is a one off, collectors car with many extras and in superb condition, current recorded mileage is 7,519, top specification, heavily loaded with many extras, steel sliding sunroof, air conditioning, all electric windows, sun dim glass, graduated tinted front shield, electric mirrors, self levelling suspension, recommissioned at the beginning of the year, pristine condition, £23,800. Email: geminternational@ntworld.com Hampshire [JKW40]



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 left, 65,000 miles, good condition, blue cloth interior, sunroof, radio/cassette player, car has been owned and garaged for the last four years, £2,500. Tel: 07791 661436. Glasgow [JKW44]



230E 1984, two lady owners from new, cherished and meticulously maintained, 112,000 miles from birth, genuine, cylinder head off with new valves in January 2016, brand new set of tyres, will be sold with 12 months MOT, nearest offer, £15,000. Tel: 01225 425096. Bath [JKW43]



G500 2002, factory original, LHD, imported from Germany in 2002, 47,000 miles from new, finished in rare, Tektit 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, unmolested and still [JKW42]



CLK430 Cabriolet 2001, good condition, well looked after example of this model, dark blue metallic, good 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 [JKW41]



124 E200 Estate 1994, great low mileage wagon, all MOT's, 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, coil packs renewed, a really nice, honest [JKW46]

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