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Mercedes ENTHUSIAST



Issue 244
Dec/Jan 2024

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

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"The first and subsequent owners had the foresight to preserve the original sales invoice for the upgrade"

You know the score. Up pops a rare and early AMG, but the lack of supporting documents detailing the tuner's modification work means it's hard to tell if it's the real deal or not. There's a whole industry dedicated to recreating period aftermarket parts, and it makes assessing such a car's authenticity even harder. However, this certainly was not the case for the 500E pictured on this issue's front cover. Not only did the six-litre AMG V8 under the engine bay look the part, the first and subsequent owners had the foresight to preserve the original sales invoice for the eye-wateringly expensive motor upgrade. It is a good day indeed when such a car is unearthed. Read the full story from page 36.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find a series of reports on new Mercedes. When it comes to car launches the company has been on a roll lately, and I felt it necessary to create a so-called 'new car blowout' just to keep up with the latest developments. We kick off proceedings on page 20 with the most powerful S-Class built to date. Expect tests of the new CLE, AMG GT and more in months to come.



If you love 107-series SLCs then you're in for a treat, as not only have we discovered a highly original 450 V8 with 19,000 miles, we've tracked down the rally car and team members that helped inspire Mercedes' return to motorsport. Head to page 44!

Kyle Molyneux
Executive Editor

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



Kyle Fortune
"LA, Malibu and a hybrid S-Class with V8 biturbo supplemented by AMG battery power for a heady combined output of 791bhp. What could be finer?" Not a lot, discovered Kyle Fortune as he drove the Mercedes-AMG S63 E Performance for this issue of *Mercedes Enthusiast*. Somewhat unsurprisingly he loved it, almost as much as you now, entirely justifiably, hate him! The S63 (found on page 20) spearheads a five-strong line-up of features covering new Mercedes models.



Robb Pritchard
"Those in the know consider the W124 one of the best cars ever made, especially the fabled 500E/E500 model. A few examples were taken to AMG in Affalterbach to have the five-litre V8 replaced with an even more powerful six-litre block," explains Robb Pritchard. "In this issue, we look at one of the most original examples of this extra special car." Robb was the man behind the discovery of this saloon, which is well worth a closer look. The story begins on page 36.

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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

News



▷ Battery delivers a driving range of around 460 miles.

Concept CLA

Daring styling, Mercedes' brand new platform and high-tech cabin elements

It's easy to write-off the Concept CLA as just another eye-catching motor show display piece, but it's far more significant than that.

Previewing the next generation of CLA, this 'close-to-production' concept is based on the brand new Mercedes-Benz Modular Architecture (MMA) and its in-house operating system MB.OS. The high-tech concept also represents the first Mercedes model range "designed from scratch to put the company's Ambition 2039 on the road, whereby it aims to achieve net carbon-neutrality along the entire value chain in its fleet of new vehicles in 2039."

Under the candy apple bodywork is an electric drive system derived from that of the super-efficient Vision EQXX, comprising cutting-edge 800V electric architecture and an exceptionally energy-dense battery promising to deliver a range of over 460 miles. Energy consumption is rated at around 5.2 miles per kWh (12kWh/100km), and the new, permanent magnet synchronous motor features close to zero heavy rare earth elements. Further boosting efficiency is an onboard heat pump, which extracts heat from the drivetrain and ambient outside air to heat the cabin.

Enhancing the Concept CLA's eco credentials while hinting at what drivers of future Mercedes can expect from their cars, there's bamboo fibre floor mats, certified vegan door pockets and sustainable leather seat upholstery, too.



Air vents with integrated temperature readings.



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EV crash test

Mercedes-Benz recently conducted the world's first public crash test involving two fully electric vehicles, going beyond legal requirements and industry standards at its Technology Centre for Vehicle Safety in Sindelfingen.

Typically, Euro NCAP requires a frontal impact test with a 1,400kg trolley and an aluminium honeycomb barrier representing another vehicle's front. The test involves a 50kph (31mph) collision with an overlap. Mercedes-Benz exceeded these parameters by using two actual vehicles, an EQA and an EQS SUV, weighing around 2.2 and 3 tonnes, respectively, and traveling at 56kph (35mph). This resulted in a higher crash energy than mandated by law.

Despite significant deformation of the vehicles, there was good news for Mercedes-Benz engineers. The passenger safety cells of both electric models remained intact, and doors could still be opened, ensuring occupants' safety and ease of exit during emergencies. Notably, the high-voltage systems in the EQA and EQS SUV automatically shut off during the collision, enhancing safety.

Classic sales platform

Mercedes specialist SLShop, based in Warwickshire, has launched what it calls a "revolutionary" new car sales platform called SLShop | Assured, catering for both buyers and sellers of classic Mercedes.

Aiming to "help buyers acquire a classic Mercedes with reassurance, trust and transparency", the platform will also help sellers to "obtain the best possible return" using SLShop's brand, web traffic, expertise and market authority. Surprisingly, SLShop takes zero commission from sales on its platform, which should make prices competitive.

Each vehicle listed on the platform carries an SLShop Workshop Assured Condition Report, which provides an accurate description of condition, as well as a 12-month warranty. Each listing also contains over 100 images plus a walkaround video.



News in brief



△ **AMG GT 4-DOOR**
The facelifted Mercedes-AMG GT63 S E Performance 4-Door Coupe features revised styling, an electric glass sunroof and wireless smartphone charger as standard. It also gets the latest MBUX and more customisation options. Power from the V8 plug-in system remains unchanged at 831bhp. UK pricing starts at £179,325 OTR.



△ **NEW ALL-TERRAIN**
The new E-Class All-Terrain has 46mm more ground clearance than a regular E-Class Estate, plus air suspension and off-road driving modes. E220d, E450 4Matic and E300de 4Matic models will be available in mainland Europe, but none will be coming to the UK, sadly.



△ **1000 MIGLIA 2024**
Entries are now open for the 2024 running of the 1000 Miglia in Italy. Next year's event will consist of five legs taking place from June 11th to 15th, beginning in Brescia before heading to Rome and back.

△ **CORRECTION**
In our October/November 2023 issue's 'Tyres for Mercedes' feature, we incorrectly stated tyres are marked by month/year of manufacture. It is, in fact, by calendar week/year. Apologies for any confusion!


This ex-show car packs a twin-turbocharged six-cylinder engine.







RM SOTHEBY'S

B300 for sale

The Boschert B300 that featured on the cover of our December/January 2023 issue is being sold by RM Sotheby's on November 25 in a Munich auction.

Valued at €250,000 to €300,000 (£217,000 to £262,000), this unique proposition is based on a Mercedes-Benz 300CE but features R129 SL styling, significant chassis modifications and special gullwing doors – all executed by Boschert. The 1980s tuner also added two turbochargers to the straight-six engine, resulting in an output of 283hp.

This example was the car Boschert displayed at the 1989 Frankfurt motor show with a sticker price of DM186,000. "In 2023, the car benefited from €16,216 worth of repairs at CarSystems, €7,783 of paintwork at Lackprofis Kuennen, and a further €4,771 of leather repairs and recolouring at Auto Leder Toczek," explained RM Sotheby's.

Early AMG

Another highlight of RM Sotheby's Munich auction, taking place on November 25, is this 1967 230 'AMG conversion'. Based on a W110 Fintail platform, it was originally owned by one Herr Werner Kurras who, after five years and 109,000km behind the wheel, decided on a visit to then fledgling tuning house AMG in search of a more invigorating drive.

What happened next is the subject of a book called *AMG 45: The Story - The Cars* by Becker, Bolsinger and Clauss. The unsuspecting Fintail was given a new cylinder-head, camshafts and a larger intake manifold, while the engine capacity was increased to 2.8 litres. All of which increased power from 118bhp to 182bhp. This increase in performance was matched by a new rear axle (with longer gear ratio), Bilstein shock absorbers, a modified front axle and uprated brakes. The modifications totalled DM17,711.95; when new, this 230 Fintail cost DM20,912!

Chassis 026864 is believed to be among the first road-going Mercedes to wear the AMG badge, and carried a pre-auction estimate of €120,000 to €160,000 (£104,000 to £140,000).


One of the first AMG badged Mercs; Graphite Grey over light grey hide.





RM SOTHEBY'S

Talking Point



This month's Talking Point...

What is your favourite generation of Mercedes A-Class?

"The W168. I've currently got a 2000 A190. I've also got a W201 and W202 C-Class, but when it comes to practicality the little A-Class comes out on top, and it's fun to drive with the 1.9L." **Jake Reeves**

"I've got a 2005 A170 (W169) and it's been in the family since brand new. It has now covered 200,000km." **Edward Connally**

"If Mercedes brought out the W168 now, it would fit in with the EV crowd. I loved the styling and greenhouse views." **William Roberts**

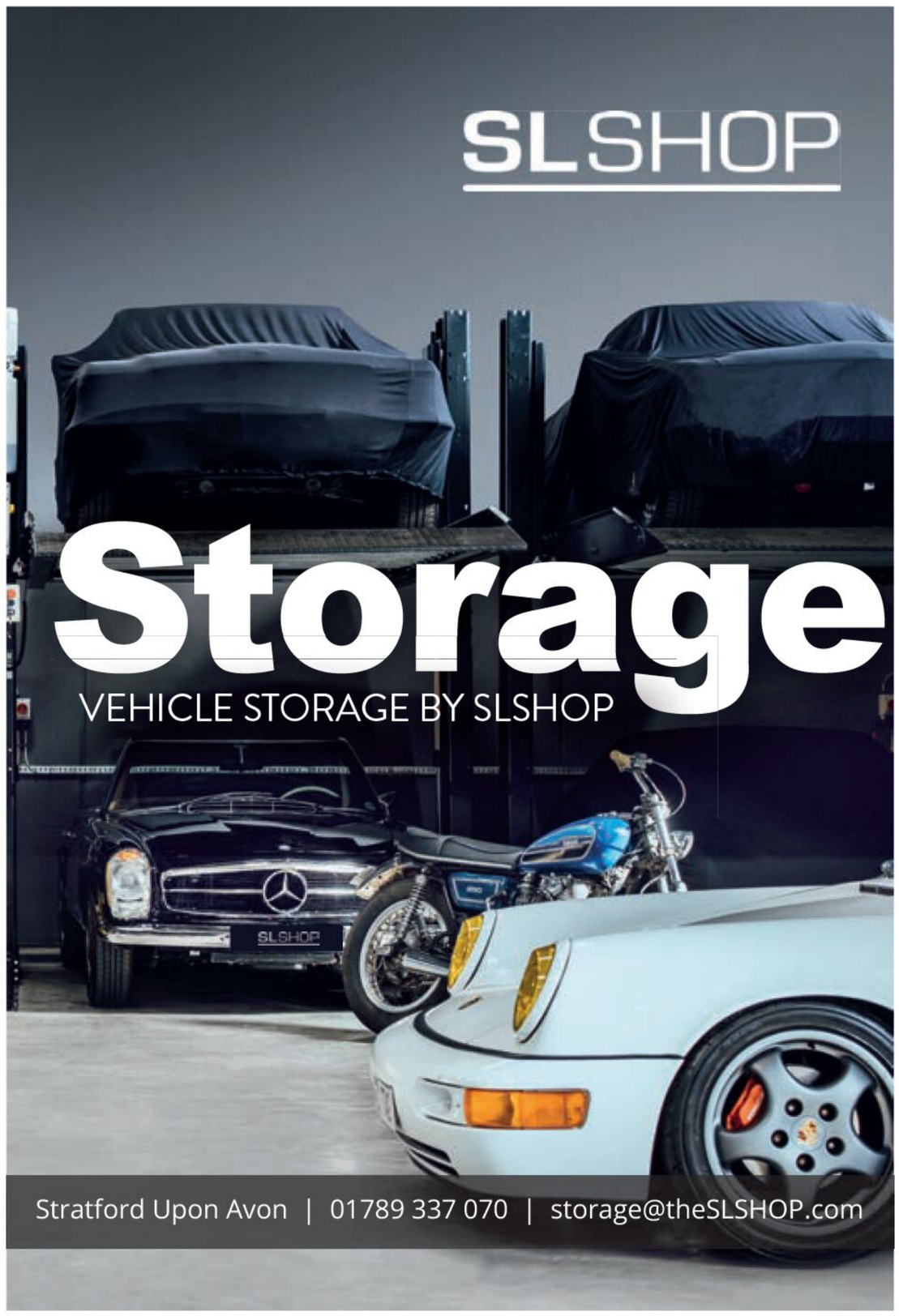
Take part in **Talking Point** every month on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. See the bottom of page 3 for our respective websites!

Merc Spotter



Mercedes originally intended to take its new W201 190 saloon rallying in the 1980s, however it was deemed uncompetitive in the face of newly developed, four-wheel drive competition from Audi and other makers. But that hasn't stopped privateer rallyists from fulfilling M-B's previously held ambitions. This 190E Cosworth was snapped by Graham Lomax during the Trackrod Rally Yorkshire in late September.

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







The Vision EQXX (pictured left) is the most efficient Mercedes-Benz of all time, capable of travelling 746 miles on a single charge of its cutting-edge battery system. This impressive prototype, which boasts a drag coefficient of just 0.17Cd, recently shared the spotlight with a 1930 Mercedes-Benz Super Sport (W06; pictured centre) and 300SL Gullwing (W198) outside the Colosseum in Rome, Italy before this year's 1000 Miglia event. The Type SS boasts a supercharged, 7.1-litre straight-six engine making around 200bhp.

IMAGE MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG


S OV 12 HT
S MB 95 H

Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear



> It was almost as if the R107 had a USA-specific design brief

R107 SL

Debuting in spring 1971 and updated several times throughout its life, the R107 SL remains one of Mercedes' most loved roadsters

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **JOHN COLLEY & MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG**

Perhaps it's down to sheer familiarity, but looking back over the seven decades of the bloodline, it's easy to forget that the SL has been a prestige roadster with no true rival. Of course, other cars down the years have qualified as alternatives, for example the Triumph Stag and the Jaguar XJ-S Cabriolet, various Ferraris such as the Dino and 308, but no marque has fed this niche so consistently and in such great numbers. A mere 3,258 of the original, 1954 to 1963 300SL Gullwing/Roadster were built, but just a model generation on, the W113 SL Pagoda life cycle ended at close to 50,000 built.

That was an impressive number for the 1960s, but it was the following model that would establish the SL as the go-to luxury cruiser, whether in Europe or the United States. By the time the R107 SL gave way to the R129 in spring 1989, 237,287 had been delivered worldwide. Its extraordinarily long, 18-year product life does distort that bare figure somewhat, but no subsequent SL has equalled the R107's sales record, and none is ever likely to.

The SL always spelt out glamour and sophistication, but it was Stuttgart's decision to target the US market for all it was worth that arguably consolidated its position. Nothing could be more logical: regardless of what the US economy was doing, Americans always wanted a droptop Mercedes, especially in California – more specifically in the cash-soaked 100-mile stretch between Los Angeles and San Diego – where the majority of Mercedes' US exports were delivered.

It was almost as if the R107 had a USA-specific design brief. In the beginning it was offered only with a V8 engine, and this just two years since Mercedes' biggest engine (other than the specialist, low volume M100 6.3-litre V8) was a not so muscular, three-litre straight-six. And that 3.5-litre (soon to be 4.5-litre) M116 mated to a three-speed automatic gearbox gave it the lazy cruising characteristics that many Americans expected.

Built to last

But if its long nose and bulky (at least compared to the lithe Pagoda) flanks made it look a natural on US highways, under its skin was to be found the technical advancement that no US domestic motorcar could hold a candle to, and which could at that time only have emerged from a Stuttgart engineering research facility. Not least its safety features, which in the post-Ralph Nader safety era had taken on new significance to the point of being an important sales tool.

For example, the fuel tank was moved from below the boot floor



▷ Supremely well engineered cabin; air con was £1.9K.



△ Careful evolution of the Mercedes-Benz SL genre...

▷ R107 SLs and W123s rolling off the Sindelfingen line.

▷▽ This 300SL was the 10 millionth Mercedes built.







△ Well-developed suspension helps to hide the SL's weight.

▽ UK range-topper, the 500SL V8, made up to 242bhp.



to a considerably less vulnerable position over the rear axle, and there were far fewer sharp switches and other protrusions on the fascia, while the A-pillars had deflectors to channel rain off and aid driver visibility, and large tail light lenses with a ribbed surface enhanced lighting brightness. The burying of the rear swing-axle used in all previous SLs might also have been considered a safety advance, the R107 SL's adoption of an independently sprung, semi-trailing arm setup offering improved on-the-limit stability due to reduced camber change.

Add to this the build quality that was in a different league to anything from America's 'big three', and the sheer pulling power of the three-point star badge, and Mercedes-Benz had a car-shaped money printer on its hands. That actually led to a bit of complacency, and the decision not to change something that people couldn't get enough of. Hence the 18-year production run.

The Middle East war in 1973 precipitated a so-called fuel crisis and multiplying pump prices, forcing Mercedes-Benz for the first time to be seen to be energy conscious. Its reaction was to install its recently introduced 2,746cc, M110 six-cylinder engine into the R107, badging it the 280SL. However, the majority of R107s were V8s, and throughout the 1970s the 450SL was the clear favourite, the perfect tool for a sun-soaked highway cruise. It wasn't an American car, but was part of the American dream, especially as deft product placement fixed the R107 in the minds of TV viewers, most notably in the original series of *Dallas*, broadcast from 1978, and in *Hart to Hart* in the early 1980s.

The long run

Yet those cruises would be unhurried, all the more so as the 1970s progressed, due to falling output from the US-spec, 4.5-litre V8 as ever tougher emissions regulations were met. By 1974, 450SLs sold in California had dropped to 178bhp, a state of tune extended to all other US states in 1975, while the very last Stateside 450s, in 1980, mustered a mere 158bhp. That year's 500SL restored some of the previous pace, as did the North America/Australia/Japan-only 560SL added to the range in 1985.

Meanwhile, in Europe the R107 SL proved a consistent seller, impervious to the growing ambitions of Audi, BMW and even Porsche, and also the Japanese marques, all of whom wanted the rewards Stuttgart was hogging. But just when it looked like the R107 might be about to slip off its perch, the R129 replaced it, catapulting the SL into a new era that saw the roadster of the rich once again reinvented.

Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

Flow philosophy



Not only were Bruno Sacco's Mercedes automotive works of art, they had more than a few aerodynamic tricks up their sleeves to enhance fuel efficiency, stability and comfort, as Ian Kuah explains

Many Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts consider the Bruno Sacco era the 'golden age' of the marque's styling. Good proportions, elegant lines and thoughtful detailing are the basic ingredients for designs that stand the test of time, and the fact that every car that Sacco and his team styled in the 1980s and 90s still looks good today is living testament to this.

From 190 (W201) to S-Class (W126) each model in the period Mercedes-Benz range had distinctly individual styling cues yet was jointly and severally, to use legal parlance, clearly identifiable as a Mercedes-Benz. The last design signed off under Sacco's watchful eye was the R230 SL, and it is universally acknowledged that the sleek and elegant wedge-shaped first iteration of this Mercedes roadster still looks fresh over two decades on.

An automotive design team starts with the conceptual sketches of the car based on the given mechanical platform and packaging requirements, the latter being the passenger and luggage space. The Sacco design language follows the "form follows function" edict coined by American architect Louis Sullivan over a century ago. This articulates the principle that the shape of a building or object should directly relate to its intended function or purpose.

The 1980s was an interesting era for Sacco's team, as the car industry had just woken up to the serious role that aerodynamics played in achieving greater efficiency. In this context, efficiency covers improved performance, fuel economy and high-speed stability. Some manufacturers interpreted aerodynamics quite literally, and the Audi 100 and Ford Sierra that arrived in 1982 both touted their aerodynamic credentials in their respective ways. While the smooth three-box Audi boasted a genuinely impressive Cd of 0.30, the Sierra's 0.34 was good but nothing special. To its credit Ford simply billed it as a significant improvement over the 0.45Cd of the outgoing Cortina/Taunus, and its rather amorphous shape quickly earned the 'jelly mould' nickname with the press and public alike.

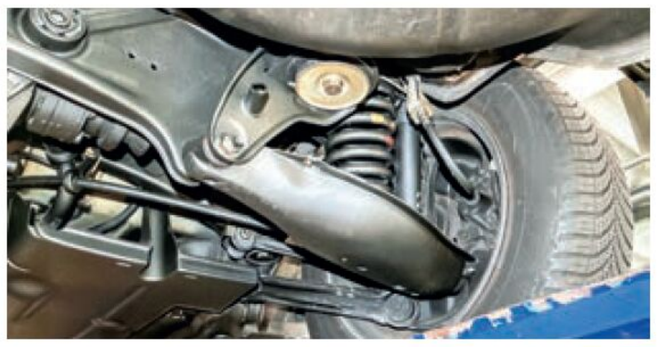
At the Paris motor show that same year, Mercedes unveiled the 190 to a stunned audience. Here was a Mercedes that appealed to a younger audience for whom the three-pointed star had always carried the staid image of the car driven by their father and grandfather. Amidst the furore of its launch, it went almost unnoticed that this ostensibly square-rigged, three-box saloon had an impressive Cd of 0.33. Given that smaller, shorter cars are harder to make aerodynamically efficient this was a huge win for Sacco's team.



◁ W124 with a drag coefficient of just 0.29 - in 1984!

▽ Suspension also received aero enhancements.





▽◁ Panel under engine helped reduce front lift.

Noting the above, it was no surprise that the larger W124 that arrived in late 1984 was even more slippery than the 190. Featuring a Cd of just 0.29 for the base 200/200D models on 15-inch wheels, the W124 incorporated many clever details that enhanced its ability to cut through the air efficiently without compromising high speed stability.

When I received my first W124 test car, I set out to understand why the car was so slippery and went around the exterior examining all the shut lines and panel shapes before putting the car on the garage lift. First of all, I noted the attention to detail around the headlights and under the bonnet where small, consistent gaps and high quality rubber seals keep air from spilling into the engine bay on the move.

All the door shut lines are small and even, and their cleverly designed rubbers produce an effective, flush fitting seal that minimises air flow disruption along the car's flanks. These tight seals also contribute to the healthy 'thunk' when you close the doors. An added bonus of this hermetic sealing is that road muck is kept out. At the rear, the vertical boot line acts like a Kamm tail to control air flow breakaway and reduce drag.

However, the really clever stuff is underneath where the engineers introduced a near flat bottom to streamline air flow under the car to cut drag and lift. If you look at an older Mercedes like the W123 or W126 travelling at speed on the motorway, you'll notice that the front rides higher as the air being rammed into the engine bay from underneath lifts it, which is bad for both aerodynamics and stability. High speed instability is caused by camber and toe changes to the front suspension geometry as the nose rises, which in turn reduces the contact patch of the tyres.

The W124 features an undertray to prevent air entering the engine bay, plus flat panels under the main bodyshell, and bolt-on moulded plastic covers under the front and rear suspension arms. Taking a leaf from the flat-bottom philosophy used by racing cars, these all smoothen air flow under the car, reducing both lift and drag.

Designed over 40 years ago, the W124 set new standards and introduced features that are now common in cars today. It is no exaggeration to say that the W201 and W124 were the jumping off point for every Mercedes-Benz model that has followed.

> "It went almost unnoticed that this three-box saloon had an impressive Cd of 0.33"

IMAGE IAN KUAH & MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

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

Previous pleasures



Like many of us, David Sutherland often ponders the fate of his old Mercedes – and thanks to a government website, he has at least some idea about what happened after they parted ways

When I sell a car, its exit from my life is accompanied by some emotion, ranging from regret at having had no choice but to let it go, to elation that it's now someone else's problem. I've rarely seen one again, but that doesn't mean I never think of them again – as with people you no longer see, you wonder what they're doing now, or in some cases if they're still with us.

It's on this sombre note that I report that none of the previous five Mercedes-Benzes I've owned are still in use. I know that thanks to the ability to check on the government MOT history site; just type in the registration number and you'll see all the MOT tests the car has undergone since new, or since 2000. This is most helpful when checking out a car you're considering purchasing, as all the 'advisories' from each test are listed, which can be telling.

The saddest case has to be the A180 CDI I bought new in late 2007, and happily ran for eight years. To fund something more ambitious and exciting, I sold it to a very pleasant lady, who I think got a reasonably good buy, given that it had only covered 40,000 miles. But the last MOT it was passed was in November 2021 at a still low-ish 62,750 miles, so given the remote chance of it being stored somewhere as a future classic, I have to assume it's now recycled.

The 'more ambitious and exciting' Mercedes replacing it was a CLK63 AMG. I was so thrilled to own a 'proper' AMG, and it was truly great to drive. But its upkeep was a nightmare due to the cost of AMG parts; its M156, 6.2-litre V8 is an incredible engine, but not as reliable as the old, M113 5.4-litre in the preceding CLK55 AMG.

I poured money into it for four years before calling time. It took a long time to sell, and I took a massive loss on it. Its MOT expired in November 2022, so where is it now? The likelihood of it having been scrapped is low, I feel, first because it must still have a 'trade' value of at least £10,000, and second, it's a borderline modern classic. Perhaps it's in a lock-up while the owner decides what to do with it. It deserves to be back in service, not least because it's one of only around 30 sold in the UK.



△ The future looked bright for David's much-loved A180 CDI, but DVLA data suggests an untimely demise.



△ CLK63 great fun to drive, but costly to maintain.



△ 1996 E320 Coupe now lives with an enthusiast.

Two years previously, having sold my wife's Mitsubishi Challenger to a man who exported it to Zimbabwe, we decided on an ML320 CDI. I managed to find a one-lady-owner, full history example at British Car Auctions, and bought it for a bit under £10,000. We both loved this Benz to bits: its three-litre, OM642 V6 is a wonderful oil-burner, offering as much pace as you need and 35mpg at the same time, it was extremely comfortable and a super-practical load carrier. It also felt utterly solid.

But after three years there were bad signs. By then we knew that London's Ultra Low Emissions Zone was due to expand to almost our doorstep, and no W164 ML diesel was ULEZ-compliant. Then the turbocharger temporarily failed, and I discovered that a rear spring had broken, making an MOT failure likely.

So in autumn 2017, with a fair chunk of its roadworthiness ticket left, we decided to unload it. On investigating a new GLC at the Mercedes-Benz World dealership, we were offered a £2,000 diesel 'scrappage' allowance plus enough discount to prevent us leaving Surrey's shrine to Stuttgart without signing for the car we still own six years on.

Mercedes-Benz World wasn't about to junk a vehicle with at least £6,000 of value in it, and I know it went back to BCA, before appearing in Auto Trader as a 'two-lady-owner' example. But its usefulness couldn't last, and although it doesn't come up on the government website, we can assume its life has ended.

I've owned two of the lovely 124-series E320 Coupe, a 1994 Tourmaline Green one I bought in 2006 and sold in 2008, and a 1996 Almandine Red one owned from 2012 to 2016. The former ended up kicking round the motor trade, and the MOT expired in August 2015. It was a decent enough example, and I do hope someone has it SORN'd because if it made that final journey, it shouldn't have.

The latter's last MOT ran out in March 2019, but there's good news. I sold it to an absolute enthusiast, who was in touch recently to tell me he's almost finished a near complete rebuild and it's his pride and joy. His future-proofing my old Merc makes me very happy.

> **"The saddest case has to be the A180 CDI I bought new in late 2007"**

IMAGES DAVID SUTHERLAND

Peter Jarvis

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



Mercedes 560SL Sports 1988 LHD **£39,500**



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



Mercedes Sports 1985 280SL **£27,750**



RHD, finished in signal red with cream hide interior, headrests, rear seats, cruise control, ABS, light up vanity mirrors, tinted glass, hard & soft tops, automatic, power steering, spare wheel unused, complete with all tools, stereo system, power windows, virtually a one owner, last owner for 33 years, this car is just remarkable condition, 86,000 miles from new, full history, garaged, papered from new, drives like new, very difficult to find a better one of this last model.



Mercedes 300SL Sports 1989 **£45,750**



Finished in gleaming Astral Silver with superb blue contrasting interior, also matching navy blue carpets, automatic and power steering, excellent chrome, tinted glass, power windows, period radio with blue tooth, walnut veneer dash, with a power sunroof, original factory alloys, complete with all original tools, only covered 46,000 miles from new, complete with all service history and various invoices. Very difficult to find a car in this condition, a rare find, always garaged and pampered from new, hence this condition. A very fast appreciating asset.



Mercedes 450 SLC, 1978 **£45,500**

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Mercedes-Benz related highlights from the world of social media



RennTech Classics

@renntechclassics

Ocean drive vibe.

The car is a Japanese market SL60 AMG restored and 'repowered' by RennTech for the customer who imported it to the US. The Mercedes tuner carried out a frame-up restoration, including revitalising the driveline, interior and soft top. The car's spec includes a six-litre M119 AMG V8, AMG exhaust muffler and headers, an AMG aero kit and AMG Aero III alloys by Oz Racing.



Jeff Thomas

I've just bought the October/November 2023 issue and was surprised to see a feature on my own E320 that I purchased from Edward Hall earlier in the year. I searched a long time to find the right one with the right engine and interior, and this was the one for me. It is used daily but I will keep the mileage down and will not scrimp on the servicing. My local independent Mercedes specialist is Star Motor Services in Caversham, Berkshire and I trust Ian with all my cars.



HRE Performance Wheels

@hre_wheels

Choices, choices. What are you driving?

The high-end wheel manufacturer has launched new Vintage GT Series rims in size 17- to 22-inch. Pictured on the AMG GT and SEC is the 500GTM model. Credit: Gabriel Milori & HRE Wheels.



Auto Source Group

@asgmiami

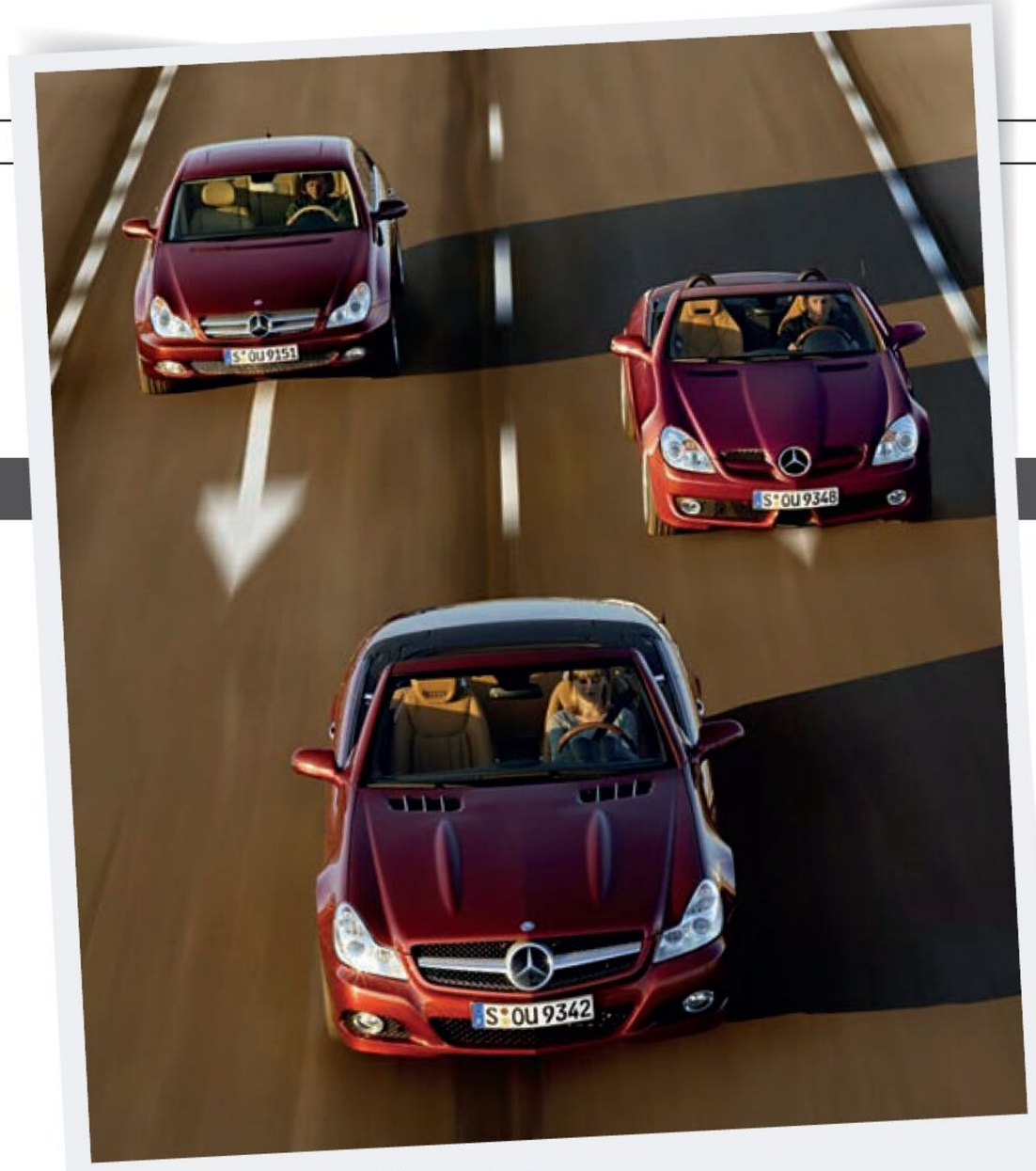
Introducing this 1994 Mercedes Benz E60 AMG in Malachite Green over Mushroom interior. It is believed to be the solitary (option code 957) example ever crafted in the mesmerising shade of Malachite Green. Distinguished further by its two-tone cladding and the tasteful omission of a sunroof, this gem stands as a testament to bespoke excellence. Ordered new directly to Venezuela, it made its way to the United States in recent years. It has recently undergone a comprehensive and meticulous $40,000 service, and is accompanied by a detailed documentation file dating back to new.

Picture by Facundo Bustos (@facundobustos).



John Beckley

This long-wheelbase Stroke 8 from 1972 was spotted inside a furniture shop at Invercargill Central in New Zealand. It has covered 86,000 miles from new.



Mercedes-Benz Museum

@mercedesbenzmuseum
If you had to choose one, which one would you pick?



40 Collection

@40collection
Driving on the Nürburgring. Lap full of laughter. Big milestone on the trip. Car survived the lap. Always great fun taking any car there.
This 560SEL recently completed a trip from Dubai to London. As well as the 'Ring, the adventure took in the Transfăgărășan mountain road in Romania, Baghdad city centre and the Saudi Arabian desert. The 560SEL collided head-on with a road sign in Istanbul, Turkey but lived to tell the tale.



AJS Performance

@ajs.performance
Whilst we were in Oxfordshire for the weekend, we took the opportunity to take a detour and pass through @diddlysquat.farmshop in the E63 S.
Diddly Squat Farm is of course owned by former Top Gear *presenter, Jeremy Clarkson, and is featured in the Netflix series* Clarkson's Farm.



Wallner Classic

@Wallner Classic
Keeping those vintage wheels on point! Axle alignment is especially important for classic cars to keep the history rolling smoothly! *A 190SL Roadster receives some attention...*



The MB Market

@The MB Market
This 1982 Mercedes-Benz 300TD Wagon is finished in Manila Beige (681) over Black MB-Tex (131), and power is provided by a three-litre, in-line five-cylinder turbodiesel engine paired with a four-speed automatic transmission.
This 196,000-mile Benz sold for $22,100 (around £18,000).



Merparts

@Merparts
Wiring harness faults are very rare, however if you need to exchange the part, it's extremely important that you use the factory clips and tie the harness down correctly when fitting.

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

Energi

The most powerful S-Class ever also happens to be one of the most effortless and enjoyable to drive, as *Kyle Fortune* explains

Gliding along the coastal road on battery power towards Malibu, California, the Mercedes-AMG S63 E Performance is doing a very convincing job as a quiet and relaxing luxury car. Yet this is the most powerful S-Class the company has ever built, and with AMG's input there's the promise of some dynamism to exploit it. On-paper performance is preposterous – 604bhp/664lb ft V8 biturbo coupled with 187bhp/236lb ft electric motor situated at the rear axle.

The electric motor and 13.1kWh battery allow this plug-in hybrid S-Class to run for a grand total of 20 miles as an EV. That would be useful in a city, but Mercedes-AMG's goal with the hybrid system isn't really to enhance efficiency. Rather, the company states that the focus is on best-in-class performance. This is an S-Class that'll sprint from 0-62mph in 3.3 seconds and romp to a 180mph maximum.

Not that such performance is obvious right now. The S63 is fulfilling its luxury car role with real conviction – the interior is richly finished, and the seats are about as comfortable as you could possibly ask for. The driving environment is a fine mix of Mercedes' plentiful tech and traditional materials. There's dark brown wood, pinstriped with metal in the car I'm driving today, and the fine caramel-coloured leather and the bright metal finishes all exude a sophisticated class that's entirely correct for an S-Class. It's pleasing, and fitting, that the massive Hyperscreen dashboard, with its multiple touchscreens and its black, fingerprint-attracting plastic finish offered elsewhere in the Mercedes-Benz line-up, isn't available on this flagship saloon.

sed



> This S-Class will sprint from 0-62mph in 3.3 seconds

The infotainment is easily accessed via the large portrait-positioned screen between the front seats, and the instrumentation is taken care of by another neat display. Naturally, these are configurable with AMG-specific possibilities should you desire, but the classic setup is difficult to fault and suits the luxury car atmosphere most convincingly.

It also maintains the subterfuge regarding the S63 E Performance's AMG status, something it carries off pleasingly well. Indeed, there's scant reference to the performance division's input – with just small AMG badges on the steering wheel and seats.

The subtleties of the AMG-spec interior extend to the exterior, with the revisions adding some simmering muscle, but certainly not overtly so. There are larger intakes on the front bumper and quad exhausts integrated into the rear end, but they're not so obvious that you'd really pay them any attention. The Mercedes-AMG S63 E Performance visually underplays its 'most powerful S-Class's status, which is a sizable part of its appeal.

Just how convincing a performance saloon it is needs to be explored, and the coast road to Malibu isn't the place to do that. The turn-offs are, however, with the roads following the mountainous topography and offering fine challenges for drivers. The V8 is now fully contributing to progress, and while it offers the promise of forceful performance, it does so while being dignified in voice. There's no deep-chested AMG bluster and blare; instead, the V8 provides a supporting soundtrack that's rousing enough to please without dominating the experience. The engine's situation on active mounts aids in that refinement while also assisting agility.

Not that the V8 must shout loudly about its output, as you might just find yourself involuntarily doing so yourself when you explore it. It's not the combined 791bhp ▷

▷ from both those motors that is so enabling here, but the massive amount of torque. That level of twisting force makes light work of the not insignificant 2,275kg kerb weight of the S-Class. And that 3.3-second 0-62mph time feels entirely possible, conservative even.

The juxtaposition of being in something so sumptuously appointed that's able to launch so forcefully takes a moment to comprehend. Even so, impressive as it is, acceleration from a standstill is not the most memorable aspect of the S63 E Performance. Rather, it's the car's ability to increase its velocity on the fly that really defines it.

The drivetrain's sheer flexibility enables that, with the electric motor and the twin-turbo V8 being a fine match. In essence, the electric motor makes the S63 E Performance a more rounded proposition. This really is a luxury car that can also be a performance car. Previous iterations of the S63 were far more one-dimensional, defined more by their AMG bent, whereas this car can truly cater to everyone.

That's true dynamically because moon-shot pace is underpinned by a chassis that's more than up to the task of exploiting it. Somewhat unsurprisingly, AMG's fully variable 4Matic+ all-wheel drive features, along with AMG-tuned suspension which, like the drivetrain, can be adjusted via the different drive mode possibilities. There are seven on offer, comprising Electric, Comfort, Battery Hold, Sport, Sport+, Slippery, and Individual. These can be selected either via the large central touchscreen or a pair of knobs positioned on the lower half of the thick-rimmed AMG steering wheel.

△ A place where high tech meets exquisite luxury.

▷△ Driving mode control located on the AMG wheel.

With the tarmac rolling under the 20-inch alloy wheels being far from perfect, Sport and Sport+ for the suspension only telegraph the poor surfaces into the cabin and upset the car's composure. The Individual setting allows the combination of Comfort suspension and the more alert drivetrain choice of Sport+, which proves ideal on these Californian roads. The automatic transmission's nine ratios can be shifted via the wheel-mounted paddles, but it does such a good job of shifting itself that you end up leaving it alone.

For such a weighty, lengthy car, the agility that the S63 E Performance is able to muster is deeply impressive. The steering is light and precise, and while there's little in the way of actual feel, there's no denying the speed of the turn-in – aided by rear-wheel steering and the stability and traction systems – gives the S63 E Performance dynamic ability that feels more like a C-Class or E-Class than an S-Class. The body control is tight, the traction and grip are mighty, and the brakes have an unerring, confidence-boosting ability to wash off the high speeds this big AMG can so easily attain.

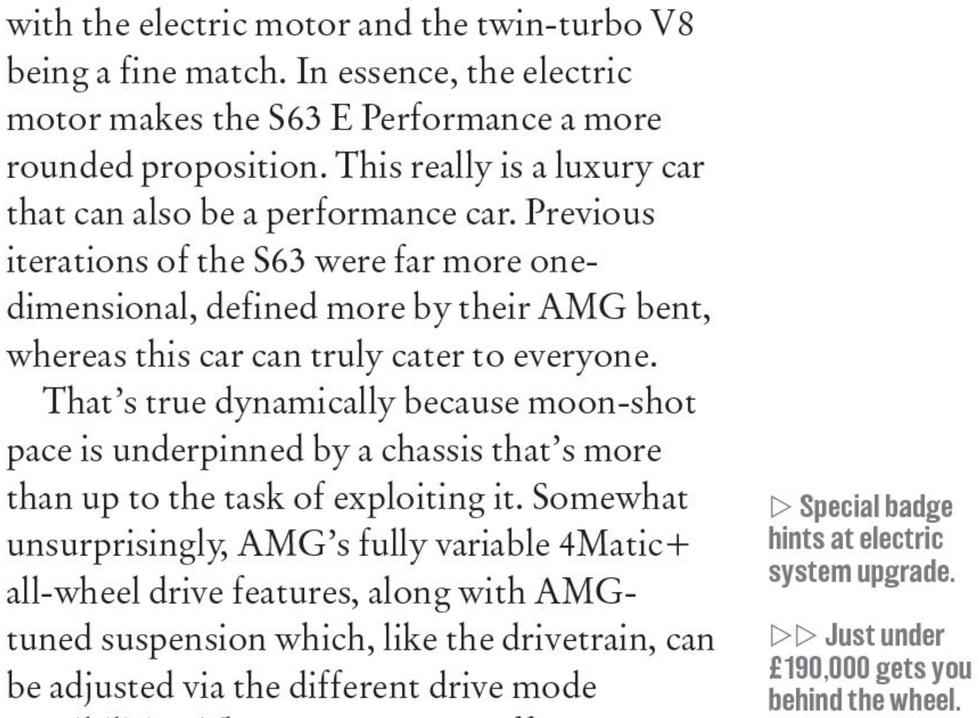
The new S63 is remarkably capable and enjoyable to drive quickly. Yet upon arriving at your destination, it'll near-silently glide up the driveway with the same style and sophistication as any other S-Class, and nobody will be any wiser about the entertainment you've had on your journey.

The most powerful S-Class the company has ever built also happens to be the best, I feel. Its broad capability is deeply impressive, and particularly as it comes without any compromises. That is, of course, if you ignore the other big number associated with this flagship model – the £186,000 asking price. Although here, I think that's entirely justified, and then some.

▷ Special badge hints at electric system upgrade.

▷▷ Just under £190,000 gets you behind the wheel.

▽ Reclining rear seats with pillows and premium hide.





“The electric motor and twin-turbo V8 are a fine match”

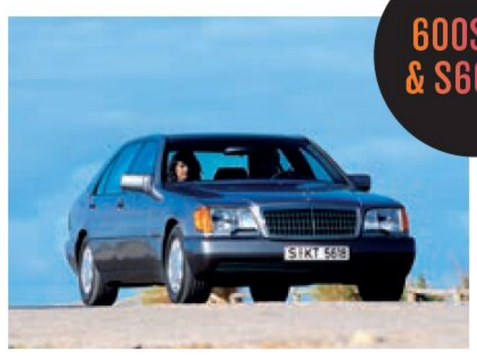
Hot limo highlights

Throwback to fast-footed S-Class types of old



300SEL 6.3 (1967-1972)
6,332cc V8, 247bhp/369lb ft

450SEL 6.9 (1975-1980)
6,834cc V8, 282bhp/405lb ft



600SE/L & S600/L (1991-1998)
5,987cc V12, 389-402bhp/420-428lb ft



S55 AMG Kompressor (2002-2005)
5,439cc V8 supercharged, 469bhp/516lb ft

S65 AMG (2006-2013)
5,980cc V12 biturbo, 604-621bhp/737lb ft



S63 AMG (2013-2020)
5,461cc V8 biturbo, 577bhp/664lb ft

Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG S63 E Performance (V223)

Engine M177 3,982cc V8 biturbo + 13.1kWh lithium-ion battery and electric motor **Power** 604bhp@5,500rpm
Torque 664lb ft@2,500-4,500rpm **Electric motor** 187bhp/236lb ft **Transmission** 9-speed auto, 4WD **Weight** 2,275kg **0-62mph** 3.3sec
Top speed 180mph **Fuel consumption** 23.9mpg **CO2 emissions** 100g/km **Years produced** 2023-on

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

Tall order

The range-topping EQE53 SUV will hit 62mph in under four seconds, but does that make it worthy of the AMG badge?

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

The Mercedes-AMG EQE53 4Matic+ SUV certainly offers plenty of settings to fiddle with. Drive modes include a Race Start with Boost function that makes full use of the 609bhp (460kW) to achieve a 3.7-second 0-62mph time. Even in Comfort mode, when the drivetrain's only developing 80 per cent of its potential output, the EQE53 is very quick.

Being an AMG, there are specific windings for the electric motors' cooling circuits, with each of the two motors (one per axle) gaining a neat water lance to help maintain performance during aggressive driving. There's an AMG-specific invertor too, all powered by an upgraded 90.6kWh battery.

Visually, AMG tweaks include sportier looking bumpers and a front grille with chrome vertical struts, plus a rear diffuser and AMG alloys from size 21-inch. Inside, you'll find AMG seats and unique graphics for the twin dashboard displays (the Hyperscreen setup pictured is a £7,995 option). On the AMG steering wheel there are ways to adjust the drivetrain, suspension and sound, too.

The synthesised sounds are more of a distraction than something to be enjoyed, which for a £133,860 AMG is something of a problem.

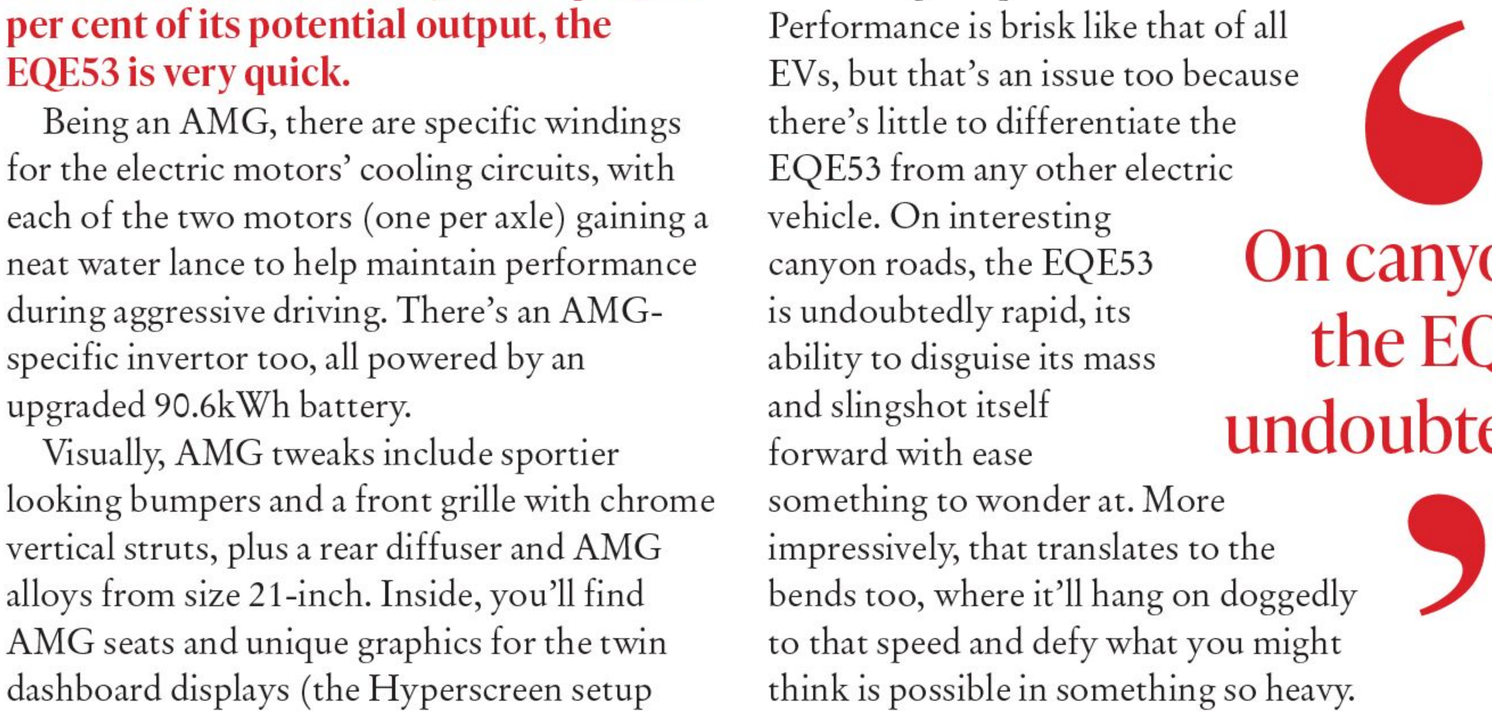
Performance is brisk like that of all EVs, but that's an issue too because there's little to differentiate the EQE53 from any other electric vehicle. On interesting canyon roads, the EQE53 is undoubtedly rapid, its ability to disguise its mass and slingshot itself forward with ease something to wonder at. More impressively, that translates to the bends too, where it'll hang on doggedly to that speed and defy what you might think is possible in something so heavy.



> On canyon roads, the EQE53 is undoubtedly rapid

The suspension prevents lean in the bends, though while the 48V roll stabilisation system is effective, the EQE53 feels more at peace when it's letting itself lean through the corners a little and the dampers are in their softer Comfort setting. The other aspect of the driving experience that involves, in a most un-AMG kind of way, is the opportunity to pick the levels of braking energy recuperation via the steering wheel-mounted paddles to maximise battery range.

And that's really the rub with the EQE53 SUV. Unlike AMGs with traditional engines, I feel this electric model doesn't differentiate itself enough from lesser-powered variants. It's a fine EV, yes. But the EQE53 is not a particularly remarkable AMG.



Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG EQE53 4Matic+ SUV (X294)

Drive system Asynchronous electric motor + 91kWh lithium-ion battery **Power** 609bhp **Torque** 701lb ft
Transmission Single-speed auto, 4WD **Weight** 2,690kg **0-62mph** 3.7sec **Top speed** 149mph **Electric range** 254-283 miles
CO2 emissions 0g/km **Years produced** 2023-on

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; electric range according to WLTP



◁ The AMG EQE53 kicks off at around £133,000 OTR.

△△ A hefty kerb weight calls for enormous brakes.

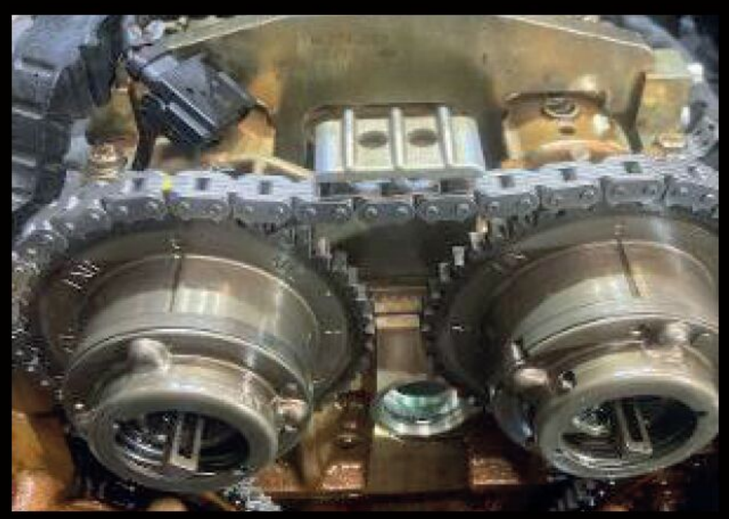
△ Hyperscreen dashboard costs eight grand extra.

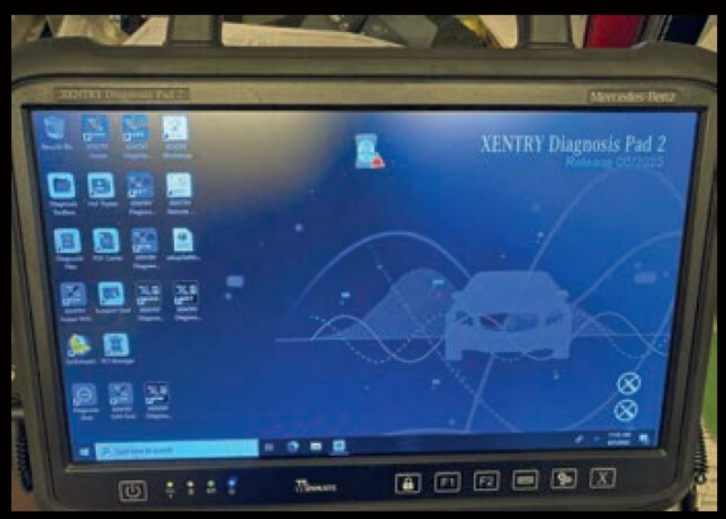
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Smart choice

New looks and improved petrol powertrains set the CLA-Class for another few years of service

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

Shortly after Mercedes-Benz previewed the future of its CLA-Class (read more about the Concept CLA on page 6), the German manufacturer threw us the keys to its freshly facelifted Coupe production car. As with the A-Class and B-Class, the CLA's four-cylinder petrol engines are now classed as mild hybrids owing to the addition of a 48V belt-driven starter-generator designed to boost efficiency.

If you're into lifting and coasting F1-style to save fuel, you're going to love this system because it automatically switches off the engine during these moments before seamlessly restarting the engine when you need power again. The sole diesel model – the CLA220d – goes without this technology, however.

The updated 'C118' CLA Coupe (and 'X118' CLA Shooting Brake) has received a new front bumper design, revised radiator grille and new rear diffuser to ramp up the perceived sportiness. There are also new LED headlamps and new rear LEDs. Hyper Blue and Spectral Blue paint colours join the options list, as do new-style alloy wheels measuring up to 19-inch diameter.

Inside, you'll find two 10.25-inch widescreen dashboard displays that are now standard-fit, and these are linked to an updated version of the MBUX infotainment system that supports Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. On the safety front, the CLA gains an upgraded Driver Assistance Package option, and Lane Keeping Assist is now easier to use than ever. The CLA is also better at parking itself than before thanks to the next generation of the Parking Package.

> Battery capacity has jumped from 10.6kWh to 15.6kWh

Trim lines in the new CLA-Class range comprise, in ascending price order, Sport Executive, AMG Line Executive, AMG Line Premium and AMG Line Premium Plus – and all of them boast more standard equipment than before, says Mercedes.

CLA250e

We're already fans of Mercedes' 250e models with their 1.3-litre, four-cylinder, petrol plug-in hybrid systems and the package has now been improved. For the facelifted CLA Coupe, power from the electric motor has increased to 80kW (+5kW) but combined system output remains at the equivalent of 215bhp/332lb ft.

Meanwhile, the lithium-ion battery's usable capacity has jumped from 10.6kWh to 15.6kWh, which increases electric driving range to as much as 53 miles (+9 miles). What's more, the battery now supports faster 11kW charging instead of the previous 7.4kW, meaning a 10 per cent to 100 per cent recharge can be completed in 1hr 15mins rather than 1hr 45mins. And it's a very similar story for the Shooting Brake version.

Tauter in feel than an A-Class, the latest CLA feels solid and stable on smooth tarmac, but generates lots of wheel drone on rougher stuff. It's not an overly engaging car to drive, and the slightly gruff engine won't deliver much beyond 40mpg on its own but, when the buttery smooth electric system is doing its thing, the CLA250e (priced at £40,115 in AMG Line Premium tested) starts making more sense. Zero to 62mph takes just 6.3 seconds, fuel economy officially tops 256mpg, and CO2 emissions are just 23g/km.

There isn't much else on the road offering those sorts of numbers, nor the CLA's sense of style. As the A- and B-Class are killed off, the CLA will gain importance for Mercedes. It will be interesting to see what comes next.



◁ Electric range has increased to around 53 miles.

▷ 8-speed auto and the latest MBUX system.





Tiny gains

Mercedes' baby SUV packs improved technology and offers a choice of petrol and diesel engines

WORDS & IMAGES **KYLE MOLYNEUX**

The GLA has also received a bunch of mid-life updates, many of which mirror those seen on the CLA (page 26) – minor exterior tweaks including wheels up to 20 inches, two 10.25-inch dashboard displays as standard, updated MBUX infotainment, improved safety and assistance systems, and redefined trim lines spanning Sport Executive through to AMG Line Premium Plus. There's also an Exclusive Launch Edition spec with 20-inch AMG alloys, the Night package, and Burmester in-car audio with Dolby Atmos.

The facelifted UK range is made up of the GLA200, GLA200d, GLA220d 4Matic and GLA250e, not forgetting the GLA35 and GLA45 S AMGs. The diesels continue much as before, while the GLA250e plug-in hybrid packs the same, higher-powered electric motor, and the larger and faster-charging battery of the CLA250e. The GLA200 tested here (and priced from £37,625 in base Sport Executive spec) boasts improved efficiency credentials thanks to a 48V belt-driven starter-generator that cuts the engine when it's not needed, and aids the capture of kinetic energy during deceleration for use later.

GLA200

The CLA positions occupants low to the ground, while the GLA offers higher-set seating. The driver of a CLA will find their feet near hip height and way ahead, whereas the GLA has them falling down onto the pedals. This 'sit up and beg' driving position sets you far higher in relation to the well-trimmed dashboard and, thanks to a more upright windscreen, provides occupants with an improved view of the road. Those around 6ft tall or over may find themselves bending slightly to reach the steering wheel, however.

> The GLA200 gets the seven-speed automatic rather than the eight-speed

The GLA200's 1.3-litre petrol engine is not the last word in refinement, but with 161bhp shifts this compact SUV well enough. I appreciated the new gliding function, which switches off the engine to save fuel after you've released the throttle, before restarting it with only the slightest of whispers from the drivetrain.

The GLA200 gets the seven-speed automatic rather than the eight-speed of all other models in the range and I'd say the 7G isn't quite as intuitive as the 8G, but it'll be good enough for most. Frustratingly, the GLA exhibits the same road drone as the CLA (and A- and B-Classes for that matter) on less than perfect road surfaces, but it's still a largely effortless car to drive; 0-62mph takes 8.9 seconds.

Weighing in at almost 1.6 tonnes, the GLA200 will achieve up to 42.2mpg (WLTP combined) with 152-159g/km CO2 emissions. Solid if unspectacular figures from an entry level and near 40 grand compact Mercedes.





△ There's 485 litres of boot space in the GLA.

◁ Higher driving position; great dash displays.

▷ Petrol, diesel and PHEV GLAs are available.



> The plug-in hybrid system puts out 309bhp and 406lb ft of torque



The old C-Class PHEV could do 19 miles on a charge. This one does 70.

Combined effort

Capable of more electric miles than its predecessor, we find out if the C300e plug-in hybrid is the pick of the range

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

Plug-in hybrids have received what I think is an unfair amount of criticism over the years. Combining an internal combustion engine with battery and electric motor is an exotic way to achieve propulsion, but it's true their drive systems do not offer the same electric range as that of full EVs.

This means that when you do run out of battery charge, the traditional engine must not only pull along itself, but all the now-flat electric gubbins too, which can weigh 500kg or more. That weight penalty also affects the handling of plug-in hybrids – and of course straight-line performance when the electric part of the drivetrain isn't on song.

And yet companies like Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Lexus and many others insist on making them. Carmakers deploy catchphrases such as 'the best of both worlds', 'self-charging' and 'unique technology' to woo prospective buyers who don't feel comfortable jumping straight from traditionally powered cars to an EV. Given the present state of the UK's public recharging infrastructure, I understand their hesitance.

Of course, those blessed with driveways at home can install their own charge point to make EV ownership more straightforward. But many don't have such things and yet the government is leading us kicking and screaming towards a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035. Five years after that, the sale of new hybrid cars (and vans) will also be banned in the UK. At least that's the current plan.

With that last point in mind, it is fair to say plug-in hybrids like the C300e pictured here are something of a stopgap before full electric vehicles takeover. However, in the meantime they help Mercedes-Benz and other carmakers reduce the average ▷

▷ CO2 emissions of their vehicle ranges. Why does this figure matter? Well, for the years 2020 through to 2024, the European Union has set a fleet-wide CO2 emissions target of 95g/km average for cars, and will hand out heavy penalties to those manufacturers who don't hit the mark. Down the road, between 2025 and 2029, carmakers must reduce fleet emissions by another 15%, and then a whopping 55% between 2030 and 2034. And then, from 2035 onwards, fleet-wide CO2 emissions must be 0. As in zero. Nothing. *Nada*. That's when full-fat electric vehicles really matter.

> The one bugbear I have with the C300e is the lack of DC fast charging

Enough background. Let's get stuck into the latest 206-series C-Class and what I think is one of the most interesting models in the range. Under the C300e's bonnet you'll find a two-litre, turbocharged petrol engine developing 201bhp and 236lb ft of torque. Supporting this ICE is an electric motor drawing power from a 25.4kWh lithium-ion battery and developing the equivalent of 127bhp (95kW) and 324lb ft of twist. As a combined force, this plug-in hybrid system puts out 309bhp and 406lb ft of torque for a 6.1-second 0-62mph time and 152mph top speed.

As you might hope, efficiency is equally promising. Fuel consumption according to WLTP is 470.8 to 565mpg, while CO2 emissions of just 12g/km bolster the C300e's case. For company car drivers out there, depending on spec the C300e has a benefit-in-kind rating of between 5 and 8 per cent. This is all thanks to the C300e's electric range of up to 70 miles. Happily, I can say from experience that this figure is very much achievable and possibly even beatable. For reference, the BMW 330e manages up to just 37 miles.

The one real bugbear I have with the C300e is the lack of DC fast charging for UK cars. This feature is available as an option in mainland Europe but not here, sadly. The on-board charger we're given is rated at 11kW. Using a standard 7.4kW wallbox, you'll see battery charge level jump from 10 to 100 per cent in three hours, reckons Mercedes. That time frame is just about acceptable when you're replenishing the battery at home, but it won't do you many favours on the road. In those instances when you run out of electricity, you'll very likely end up relying on what's inside the 50-litre petrol tank (there's another seven litres in reserve).

During my time with the C300e, I purposefully ran out of battery charge to see how the drive system coped and what fuel economy it could achieve. What surprised me was how often the C300e kicked back into Electric drive even when apparently out of the stuff. The silent 'gliding' function came in useful here, decoupling the engine from the silky nine-speed transmission and letting the C-Class roll along under its own momentum.

The energy recuperation system also helped keep emissions to a minimum and fuel economy higher than it might otherwise have been. This system captures kinetic energy during deceleration and turns it back into electricity to recharge the battery. The recuperation level is controlled by paddleshifters behind the steering wheel, which double as traditional gear changers when the car is in Sport mode. While using the most aggressive recuperation setting, the battery charge never returned to anything above 2 per cent during my 20-mile jaunt, so don't expect too much from this 'self-charging' system. The result of my drive along A- and B-roads with sporadic electric running was an economy reading of 42mpg. Acceptable. Just.

Did I mention the C300e weighs 2,105kg and therefore more than a long-wheelbase S-Class? This might explain why it's the







◁ UK-spec C300es have an 11kW AC onboard charger.

△ Twin digital displays are standard-fit.

▽ Gauge within rev counter shows electric motor use.



most 'understeery' model in the range (Comfort suspension is standard), and why it takes a nosedive every time you hit the brakes, which are hardly the last word in stopping power. Of course, you do not buy the C300e to blast down back roads – you buy it for whispering about the suburbs using that crisply responsive and wholesome feeling electric motor, and completing the average commute without ever waking the internal combustion engine, which serves as back up should you need to venture further afield.

I suspect most C300e Saloons and Estates will be left in Hybrid mode. Particularly because this setting assesses any route dialled into the satellite navigation system and plots where best to use the available electricity to maximise efficiency while providing visual aids in the digital instrument cluster to help the pilot drive as efficiently as possible.

Priced from £52,000 (Estate: £60,585), in the C300e Saloon you have a premium grade four-door with a spacious, very comfortable and cutting-edge cabin environment, a 315-litre boot (other models swallow 455 litres), and a class leading electric range that goes a long way to justifying the model's existence. Aside from a curiously high amount of drone from the 18-inch wheels, and the odd thump from the suspension, this is about as relaxed as C-Classes get. The fact it'll do 87mph on the battery alone shows it's not just a one-trick pony, either.

The previous generation C350e could manage just 19 miles when relying solely on its 6.2kWh battery pack, so it's safe to say the latest (and higher powered) C300e is a terrific leap forward from that car. Only time will tell if buyers believe this capability merits a closer look.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz C300e (W206)

Engine M254 1,999cc 4-cyl turbocharged + electric motor and 25.4kWh lithium-ion battery **System power** 309bhp **System torque** 406lb ft **Transmission** 9-speed auto, RWD

Weight 2,105kg **0-62mph** 6.1sec **Top speed** 152mph **Fuel consumption** 470.8-565.0mpg **Electric range** 70 miles **CO2 emissions** 12g/km **Years produced** 2022-on

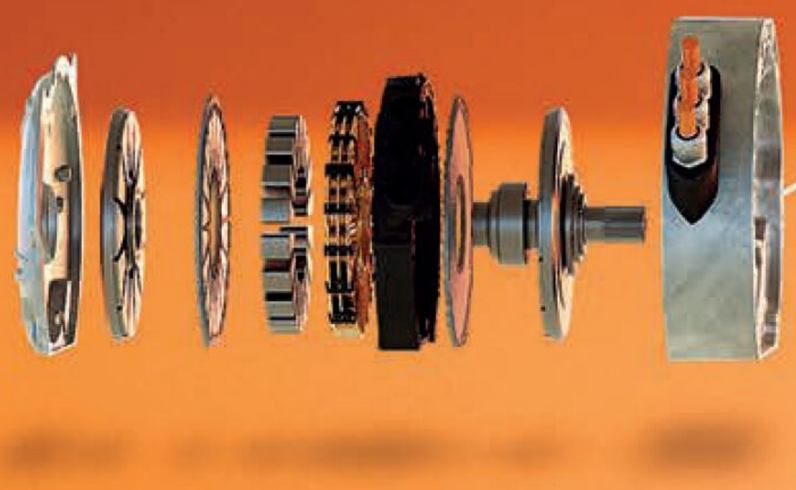
All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to WLTP

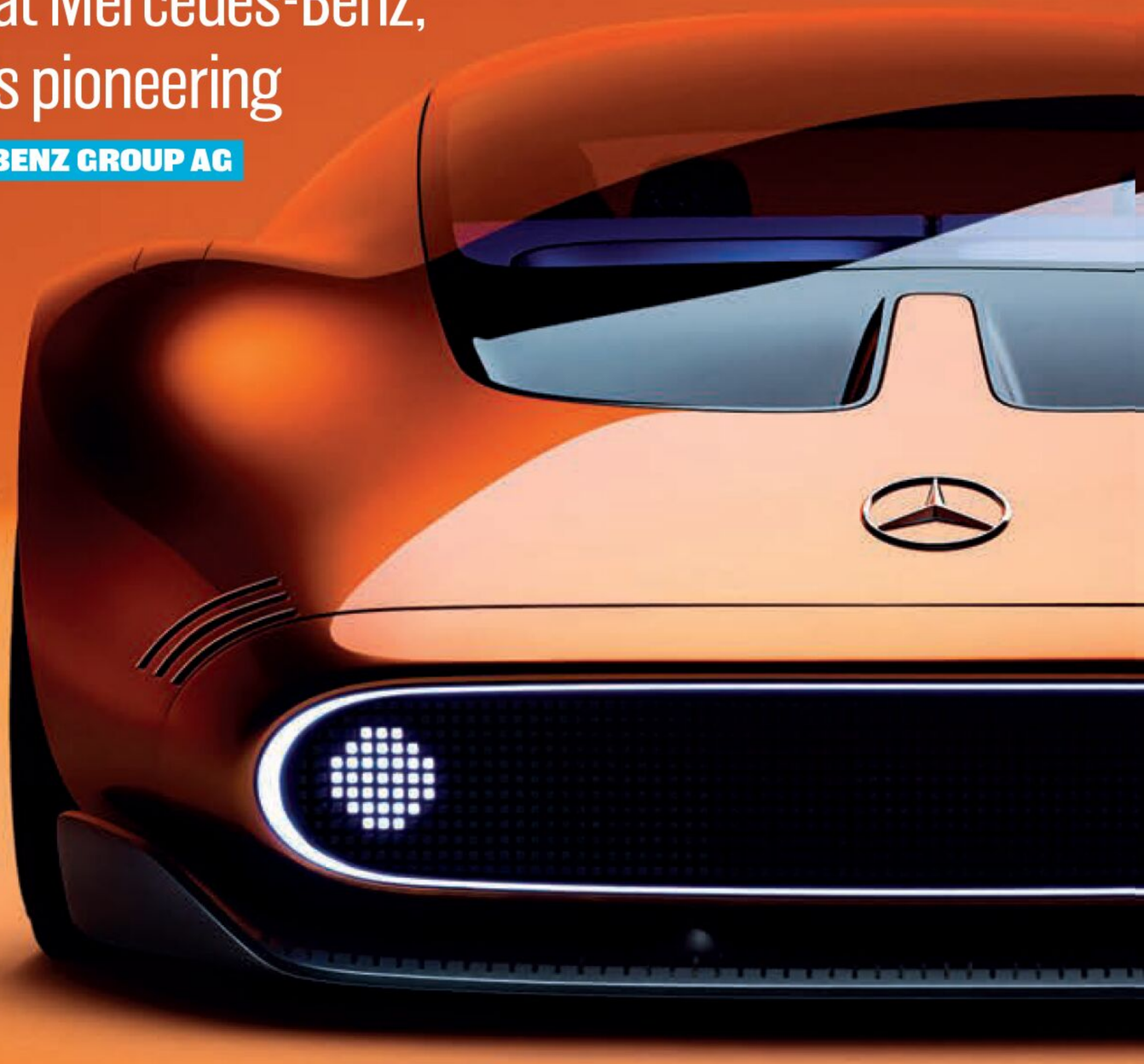
Thank you to Mercedes-Benz UK for the loan of the C300e Web www.mercedes-benz.co.uk

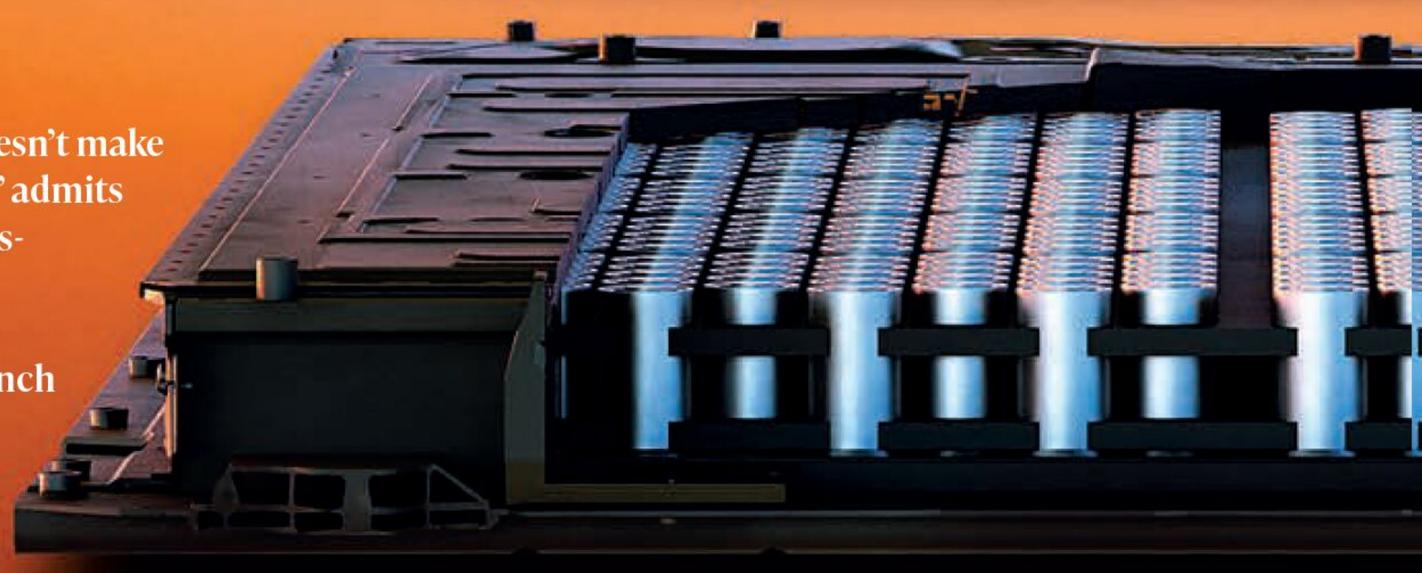
Motorheads

As the automotive world wrestles with the paradigm shift to electric propulsion, we speak to AMG boss Michael Schiebe about how the company will adapt, and explore the new electric motor technology that Mercedes-Benz, along with UK-based YASA, is pioneering

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







“At some point in time, it doesn’t make any sense to go any faster,” admits Michael Schiebe, Mercedes-AMG’s CEO. That’s quite a statement from the AMG boss while we’re having lunch on the launch of the new Mercedes-AMG S63 E Performance and EQE53 SUV (see pages 20 to 24). Among other things, the discussion is how electric vehicles (EVs) have democratised outrageous acceleration and how AMG will adapt to work in this brave new, fully charged world of cars.

Schiebe qualifies what he’s just said: “Of course, we at AMG will still be at the forefront when it comes to acceleration, but when you drive some of the EVs out there it’s already so fast it doesn’t make a difference whether you take 3.1 or 2.8 seconds from 0-100kph.” He’s also quick to highlight the benefits that EVs can deliver, particularly in relation to dynamics.

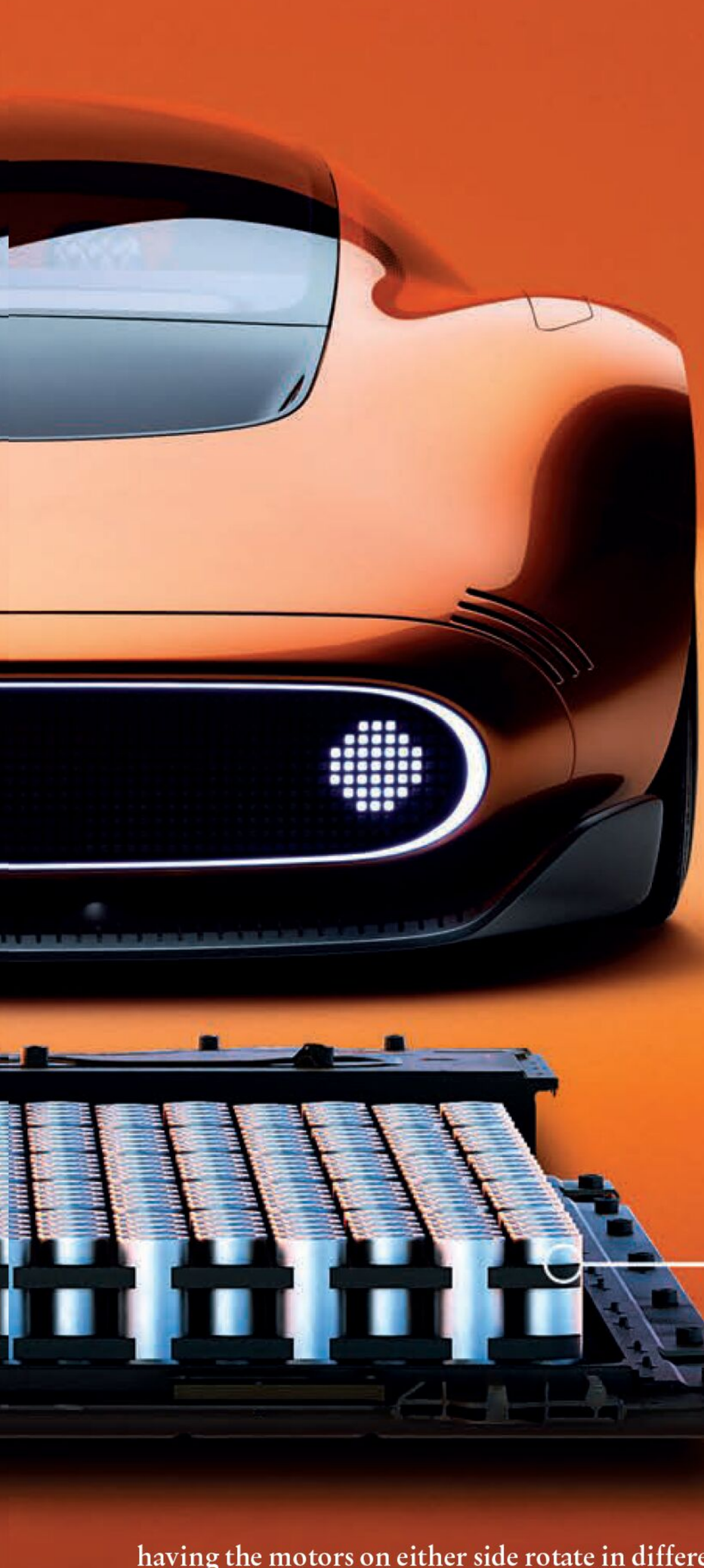
“We have to be careful. Sometimes we only see the negative sides when coming from V8s and going to electric – the latter offers a lot of opportunities for performance brands like AMG when it comes to driving performance, especially agility. Dynamics get more and more important, and here we see there is a lot of additional opportunities. Why? Because you can steer, via software, each individual wheel of the car, and you can work with differentials. If you have the possibility to steer the individual motors independently then you can do fantastic things,” says Schiebe.

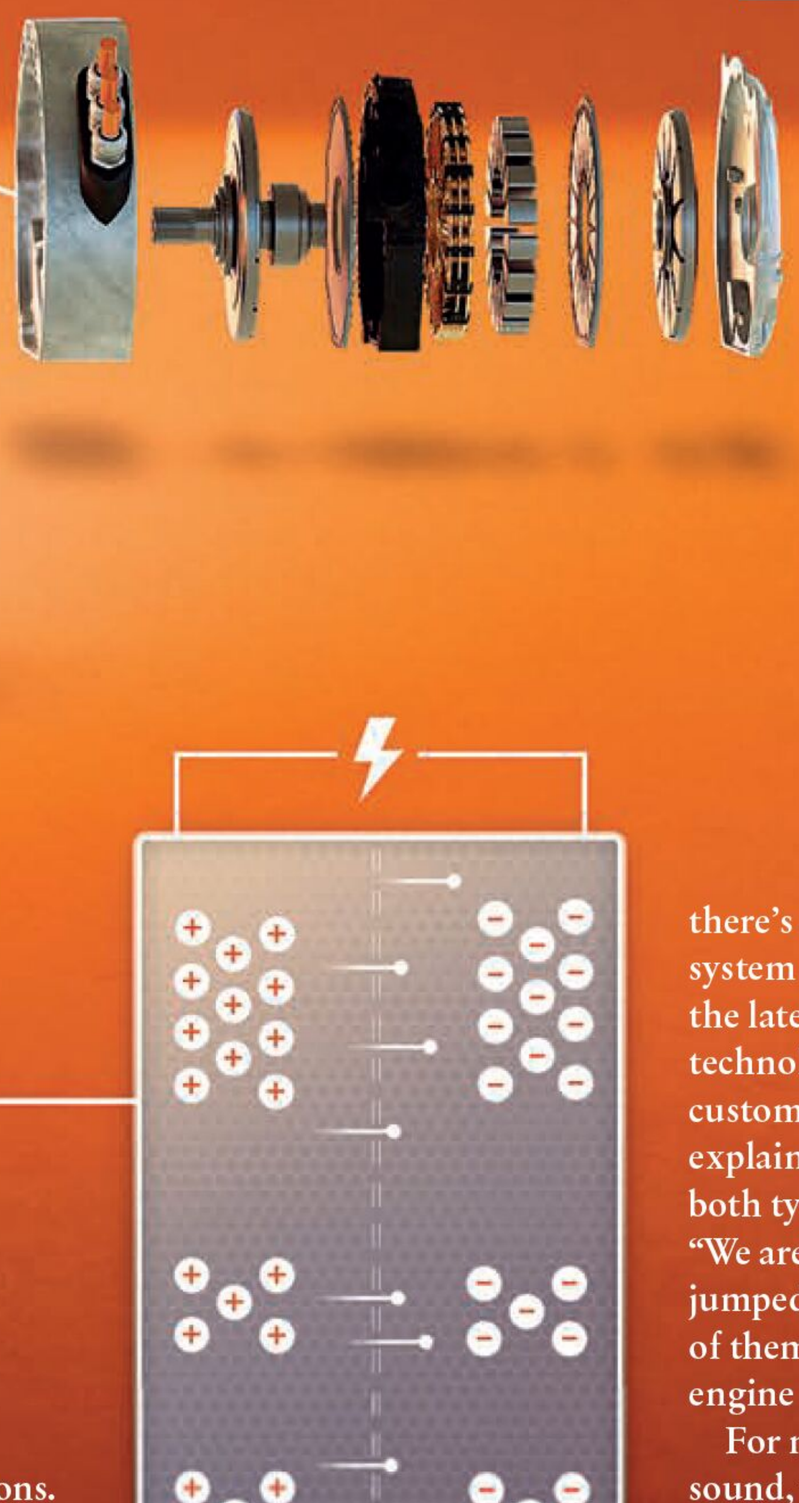
That’s recently been demonstrated with the EQG prototype, with its four independent electric wheel motors allowing it to ‘tank turn’, rotating within its own length by

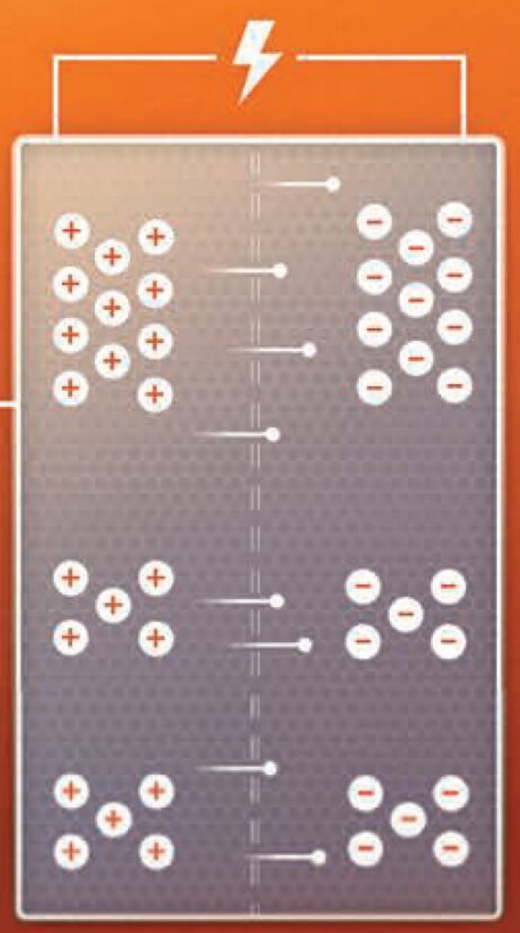


△◁ Michael Schiebe, AMG CEO since March 2023.

◁ One-Eleven concept with new type of motors and specially cooled battery.







"EVs offer a lot of opportunities for performance brands like AMG when it comes to driving performance"

having the motors on either side rotate in different directions. Of course, that's a very specific and extreme demonstration, but it shows what's possible.

No going back

There will always be detractors, Schiebe admits. As with any new technology, there will be those who embrace it and adapt to it, and there will be others who'll stay wedded to what they know and love. "We at AMG have more and more customers that are really going for this spearhead technology," reckons Schiebe. For these customers, it doesn't matter whether there's a V8, V6 or any other power system on tap, they just want to have the latest and greatest in terms of technology. "And then you have other customers who still count cylinders," explains Schiebe. AMG intends to serve both types of customer, at least for now. "We are seeing that once customers have jumped into the electric area, only a few of them return to a pure combustion engine car."

For many, AMGs are all about their sound, which presents a problem for the electric models. "In some EVs, you do not get any feedback from the cars. The noise is an important lever in this, and that's why we need to do something," admits Schiebe. "It doesn't make sense to have the latest and greatest technology backed by an overly artificial sound. What we are looking for is something which is very distinct – 'real' AMG. This is something we're working on."

As with the combustion-engined AMGs, the placing of those three letters on the back of an electric Mercedes is ▷



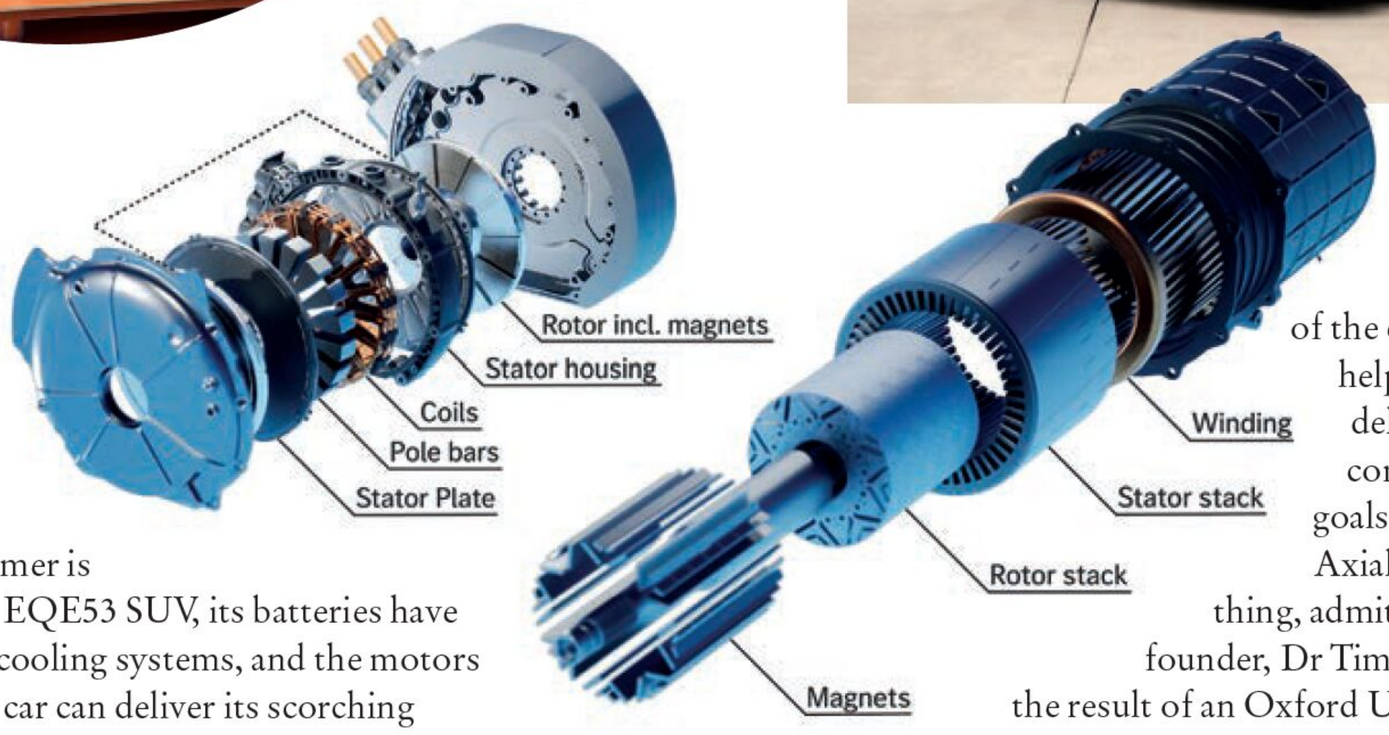
◁ YASA's founder and Oxford grad, Tim Woolmer.

▷ Schiebe views cooling as central to AMG EV success.

▷▽ We test the new S63 PHEV from page 20.

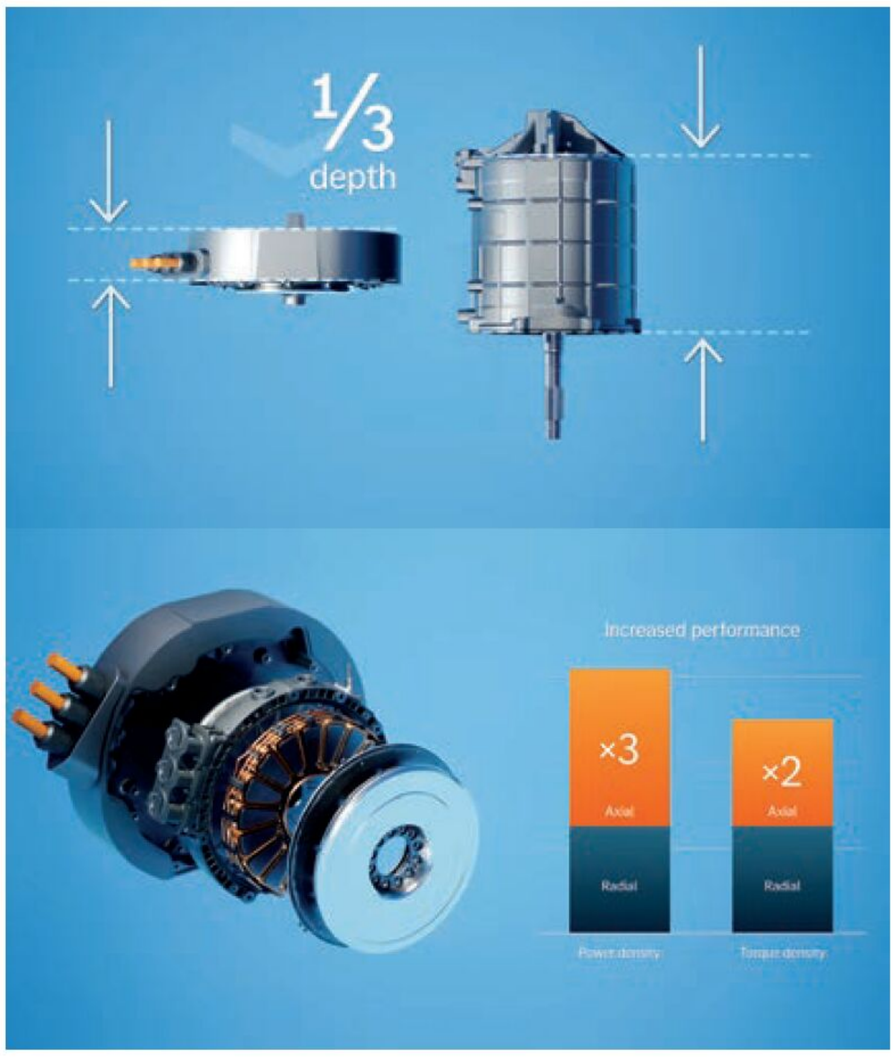






△ YASA axial unit (left) compared to radial flux motor.

▽ Compact axial motor compared to radial flux unit.



▷ This is already old technology in YASA's world.

▷ more than merely marketing, as a lot of AMG-specific engineering is involved to produce not just the additional performance an AMG customer is expecting. In the case of the EQE53 SUV, its batteries have their own AMG-developed cooling systems, and the motors do too. This is to ensure the car can deliver its scorching performance again and again.

"When it comes to electric driving, durability gets more important," Schiebe explains. "We were talking earlier about accelerating very fast from 0-100. How often can you really do this? Many know most of the electric cars in the market are only capable of doing this once, twice, maybe three times but not more than that. And that gets you in trouble when you go, for example, on a race track." As Schiebe comments, unpredictable performance on a highway could also cause problems.

This 'derating' of the performance is critical for AMG. "This is why we have a huge focus on active battery management," Schiebe affirms. "Battery cooling is a very important topic when it comes to plug-in hybrids and is even more important when it comes to full electric cars. If a battery is sufficiently cooled, we can not only take energy from the battery, but we can also push energy into the battery."

YASA

There's no doubt the technology is ever-shifting. In relation to electric motors, and specifically high performance motors, AMG will benefit from Mercedes-Benz's most recent acquisition of YASA. A small firm in Oxford, UK, YASA is revolutionising high performance electric motors and supplying companies such as Lamborghini and Ferrari. Mercedes-Benz liked the technology so much that it bought the company. It's similar to how AMG became part of the company, and it's certain to help Scheibe and his team deliver AMGs true to the company's long-standing goals.

Axial flux motors aren't a new thing, admits YASA's CTO and founder, Dr Tim Woolmer. The company is the result of an Oxford University project that arose from Woolmer's PhD looking at the technology. Radial flux electric motors are the current norm, but axial flux, as Woolmer explains, have "better torque density, better power density, with less weight and less volume." The perfect electric motor? Perhaps, but as with everything there's a 'but', although in this instance the issues are not insurmountable.

Cooling is an issue easily addressed, but axial flux motors are hugely more complicated to manufacture than radial flux motors. This is due to their architecture, which requires far more intricate 'stamping' of the lamination within the motor. This process limits production at YASA's Oxford plant to tens of thousands of units per year, at least for now. The deal with Mercedes-Benz should enhance production capabilities over time.

The axial flux motor pictured next to the recently unveiled Vision One-Eleven concept is old technology. It's around five years old and produces around 250bhp, says Woolmer. The motors that are currently being worked on have over double that output and yet are around the same size and weight. It's a fascinating technology, which with Mercedes-Benz's input and manufacturing expertise should prove revolutionary.



"Mercedes-Benz liked the technology so much that it bought the company"

Cover story

Factory sleeper

Finished in blue-black metallic, this 1991 500E may have been the very first example to receive AMG's six-litre V8 conversion, plus an expensive interior upgrade. We find out more about this super saloon from the current owner

WORDS & IMAGES **ROBB PRITCHARD**

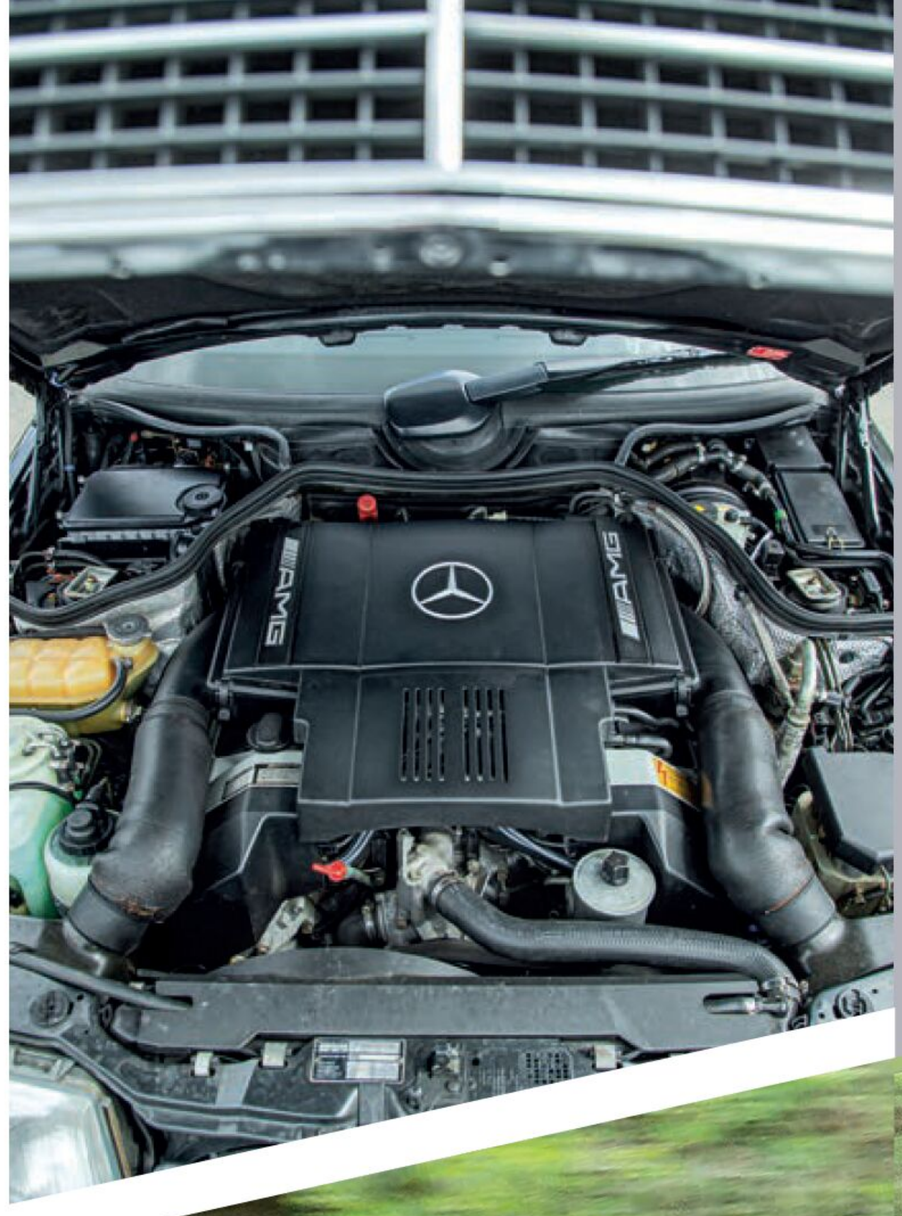
*"A few buyers wanted **more performance** and took their cars to the fabled **Mercedes tuner, AMG**"*

If someone asked what I consider the best saloon car of the 1990s, the easy answer is the W124 500E. Thanks to a slight miscalculation about the width of the car, the model wouldn't fit down the production line and so Mercedes famously delegated build duties to Porsche. The Stuttgart neighbour hand-built what is now considered a legendary motorway machine, one revered by car fans and sought by collectors.

Many buyers considered the 500E model specification, with its huge five-litre V8 engine (the same block that powered no lesser monster than the Le Mans-winning Sauber C9), perfectly adequate. However, a few buyers wanted more performance and took their cars to the fabled Mercedes tuner AMG, to have the already fabulous M119 powerplant replaced with an even more powerful six-litre version.

What you see here is not only one of the very first 500Es, ordered the day after going on sale to the public, but also one of, if not the very first, to undergo the AMG V8 transplant.

The car's first owner was Rolf Dieter Kraut, who held a high position at a German scales manufacturing company, Bizerba. Business was obviously booming in the late 1980s, as the list of optional extras he checked off meant that this 500E was a no-expenses-spared personalisation. Airbags, automatic AC, and extra bass speakers all made the list for his safety, comfort and entertainment. He even chose to have an electrical engine heater option, something usually only found on cars kept in much more northern ▷





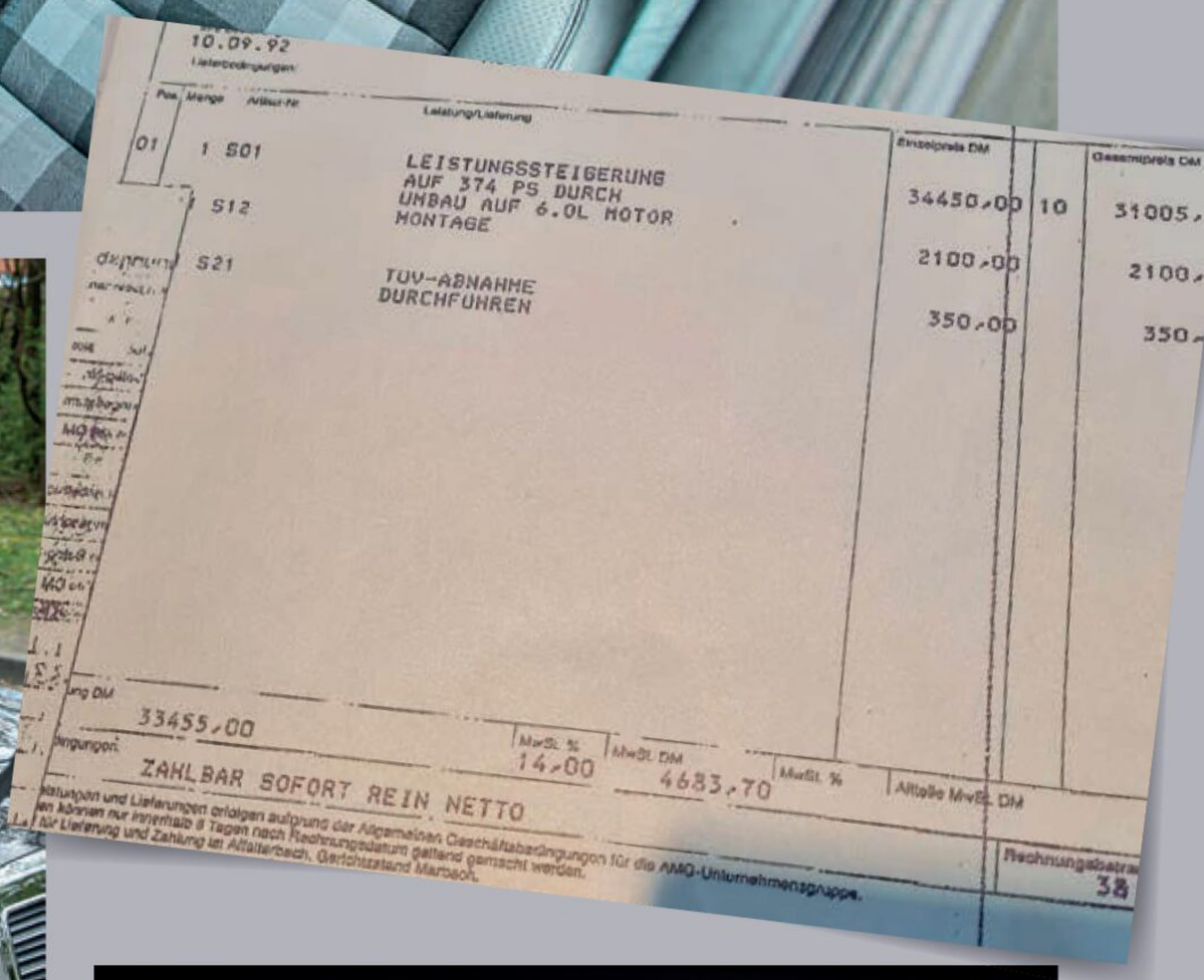
◁ Six-litre V8 bumped up 500E's output to 369bhp.

▷ Grab a bib – with this seat trim you'll need one!











△ Current owner of the 500E 6.0, Hartmut Wedler.

△ 428lb ft of twisting force hits at 3,750rpm.

△△ Invoice for the DM38,000 conversion work.

*"Even **before AMG got involved**, this 500E came to **DM149,000**"*



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▷ climes than Germany, especially considering that it stands to reason that if you could afford to buy a car like this, you'd have a garage to keep it in.

Rolf Dieter Kraut also didn't think the factory leather seats were quite up to his exacting standards, so at a rather steep additional expense he had Mercedes install an R129 SL interior. The chequered cloth looks absolutely stunning, and this example is believed to be the only 500E with such an interior. Even before AMG got involved, this 500E came to DM149,000 (a standard 500E was priced at DM134,520 in October 1990).

As for the AMG engine, it increased power from 322bhp (326ps) to 369bhp (374ps) and added another DM38,000 to the bill. Clearly, this was a 'money is no object' situation for Rolf and he certainly cherished the car, keeping it for 14 years and covering around 100,000km (just over 60,000 miles). He sold this unique 500E in 2004 but the second owner kept it for just two months before passing on the car. The third keeper held onto the V8 for 20 years, but only drove it for the first six of those; for the rest of the time, this W124 was laid up in storage.

Hartmut Wedler, a German railway logistics manager from Potsdam near Berlin, has an impressive collection of Mercedes. Sometimes people build a car collection with a special theme, and Hartmut's particular niche is rare AMGs. He has an R129 SL, W140 S-Class, 124-series Cabriolet and more modern Mercs including an SLS AMG and S-Class.

"This example is believed to be the only 500E with such an interior"



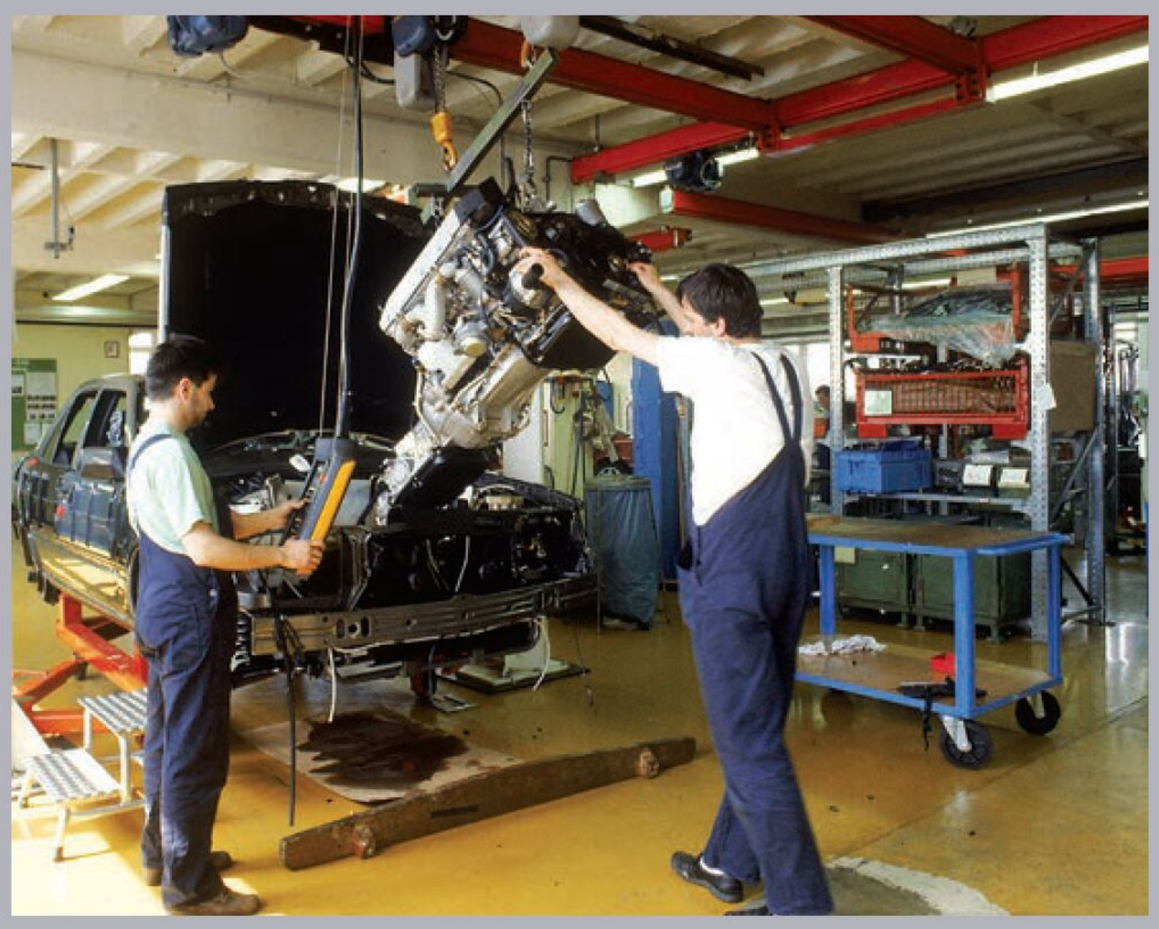
If rare AMGs are your passion, then an early 500E 6.0 conversion should be near the top of the list. As previously mentioned, very few 500Es are known to have been upgraded by AMG directly from the factory in the 1990s. According to Hartmut's personal research, no more than 12 were modified in such a way.

Between September 1993 and November 1994, AMG offered its own six-litre special based on the 500E/E500. It was called the E60 AMG (DM179,860) and featured the Technik Paket (Technical Package; option code 957), which included uprated suspension and 17-inch wheels from the 190E 2.5-16 Evolution II. Output was rated at 376bhp (381ps) plus a great 347lb ft swell of torque.

AMG did not record exactly how many ▷

◁ Wide arches part of reason for Porsche's input. ▽ This special saloon has done 72,000 miles.





Project 2758

'Project 2758' was Porsche's internal reference for the 500E. No less than 14 base W124s were sent by Mercedes to Weissach for development work in the 1980s. Indeed, 90 per cent of 500E development was carried out by Porsche. As for the build process, Porsche was responsible for modifications to the W124 bodyshell, and installation of the engine and gearbox. Final assembly was carried out by Porsche too, in the same hall as its 959 supercar. In the beginning, the sports car manufacturer could produce 10 examples per day, but this figure doubled in short order. All examples were left-hand drive.

Today, you'll find leggy cars with well over 150,000 miles advertised for around £25,000. Regular E500s with sub 100,000 miles will be offered at over £30,000, and the Limited versions at least five grand more.

▷ E60s it made – rumours suggest between 100 and 150. The dozen six-litre 500 models are therefore rarer than the E60 by a factor of about 10, which is why they were the focus of Hartmut's attention. He spent years searching for one and only very occasionally did an example come up for sale. But none were in the condition he was looking for. "I am a collector, not a restorer," he shrugs.

However, as soon as he saw the advert for this one, he had to have it, even though the price was a bit higher than he was expecting. "The first Mercedes in my life was a four-year old, three-litre W124 that arrived in 1995. It was a fantastic car. In my opinion, the 6.0 is the ultimate version of the W124."

While Hartmut wanted one that was as close to perfect as possible, he was forced to make a compromise with this one. The 14 years in storage meant everything needed renewing because all the oil seals had dried out and cracked, causing oil to leak from many places.

In his quest for perfection, he called on the help of Mercedes-Benz itself to repair the car. Following first owner Rolf 's approach, in this regard money was a secondary consideration. Receipts for the ensuing work stretch to a staggering nine pages and detail all the work that was undertaken, from replacing all of the bushes, and stripping, cleaning and refurbishing the fuel system, to having all the aged rubber parts replaced.

All the engine seals were replaced, as well as all the rubbers in the clutch system, and of course the brakes. The cost came in at over €12,000, but Hartmut considers this an investment rather than a cost, particularly as the car has now jumped in value by at least the same amount. TÜV certification (the German equivalent of the UK's MOT) confirmed the quality of Mercedes' work.

> ***"Thirty years ago, such acceleration must have felt utterly sensational"***

Hartmut has driven his V8 several thousand kilometres since returning the W124 to the road. In fact, he's driven it all over Germany, sometimes for the pure pleasure of being behind the wheel. The 500E 6.0 has also been very well received at car collector meets. Of course, if you are German and own a super saloon, you're going to visit a derestricted autobahn. "250kph [155mph] is full speed," Hartmut confirms. "The engine could take the car faster, but the top speed is limited by the four-speed automatic gearbox's ratio.

"Today, new cars can reach 300kph, so 250 is not as fast anymore. I have a W222 S-Class as a daily driver and 250kph is quite normal for it. However, the 500E is 500kg lighter than that car, so when I do 250kph in it, I do it with a smile on my face! And 5.5 seconds from 0-60 is very fast, especially in a car this size!"

Thirty years ago, such acceleration must have felt utterly sensational. Indeed, this car was a match for a Ferrari Testarossa. Yet on the outside, there is almost nothing to suggest such performance. This Mercedes could be the ultimate sleeper, one that will be protected in future. "When I first got it, I couldn't drive it enough, partly due to the great feeling of nostalgia it generated in me, but also because it is simply a really wonderful car to be in," says Hartmut. "But from now on, I don't think I will put more than 1,000km per year on it."

He evidently likes large-engined saloons, as he's just bought an E60 AMG from Japan. It's another stunning V8 deserving of a refresh – and a blast down the autobahn.



▷ Hartmut makes full use of that speedo...

▽ M-B itself has helped refresh this car.



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Into the blue

It's not often a Mercedes like this appears: an all-original and unrestored, 1973 SLC with just 19,000 miles on the clock...

WORDS & IMAGES **DAN BEVIS**







Grubby, slightly crumbly and liberally sprinkled with dog hairs, you may wonder what exactly it is that you're looking at here. After all, this isn't really the calibre of manicured finish and impeccable grooming you're used to seeing within these pages, is it? But the crux of the matter is that there's a mystique to this car, a frisson of specialness that resonates through the ages.

Peep at the milometer and you find a very small number indeed – just 19,648 miles. Averaged out across the years, that adds up to a mere 400 miles per year throughout its entire existence… although such slapdash averaging doesn't tell the full story, of course, as this particular Mercedes-Benz has (as you might imagine) spent much of its life sitting still. Let's not call it anything as twee as a 'barn-find', as that's a tortured and mangled concept that gets heinously overused. No, let's call it a survivor. An original-spec example of a car that's been exercised here and there, but – more often than not – left in the shadows. Yes, it looks a little dishevelled here, but that dishevelment is honest.

It's certainly an interesting model to buy and then not use much. Nowadays we're well used to the notion of playboy collectors snapping up the latest sports cars and leaving them in static collections to accrue value, but it doesn't feel like that's what happened here, and the world

△▷ Not a bad score for a 50-year-old!

▷ More collectors are taking notice of the C107 SLC.

▽ 450 model only offered with a three-speed auto.

"Peep at the milometer and you find a very small number indeed"



was a very different place in the 1970s. And what's the nature of an SLC? Ah, well what a mighty difference one little letter can make. While the Mercedes SL has always done a sterling job of signalling its open-top niche with verve and flair, adding a little 'C' to the name changes everything. The car to which that badge is affixed is in a whole other realm, a higher echelon – it's a car for plutocrats and diplomats, the jewel in the crown of the 1970s Mercedes-Benz grand-touring range.

Look at the kerning of the boot badge and you'll spot that it's not stylised as 'SLC' but ever-so-subtly as 'SL C', and that speaks volumes. In simple terms, Mercedes took the established SL roadster platform, added 14 inches to the wheelbase, fitted some rear seats that could actually accommodate grown humans (as opposed to the amusingly compact bench of the R107 SL, which is essentially little more than a nicely upholstered place to put your coat), and crafted a stylish fixed-roof shell.

The whole was greater than the sum of its already excellent parts; the details were jewel-like, from the slatted faux-curtains in the side windows to the sumptuous trim options, and in 450 spec it was packing a full-fat, 4.5-litre V8 engine. An output of 222bhp eased it to an impressive 134mph, taking all of the alluring benefits of the SL and refracting them through a super-luxurious filter. Truly the coupe of high-rollers and moneyed scallywags-about-town.

The example we're looking at here is an ▷



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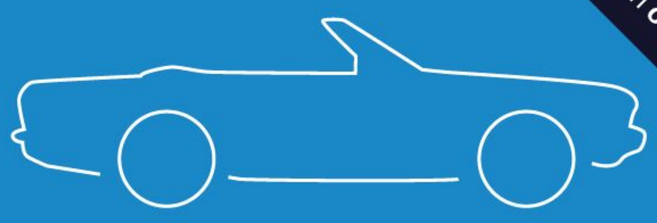
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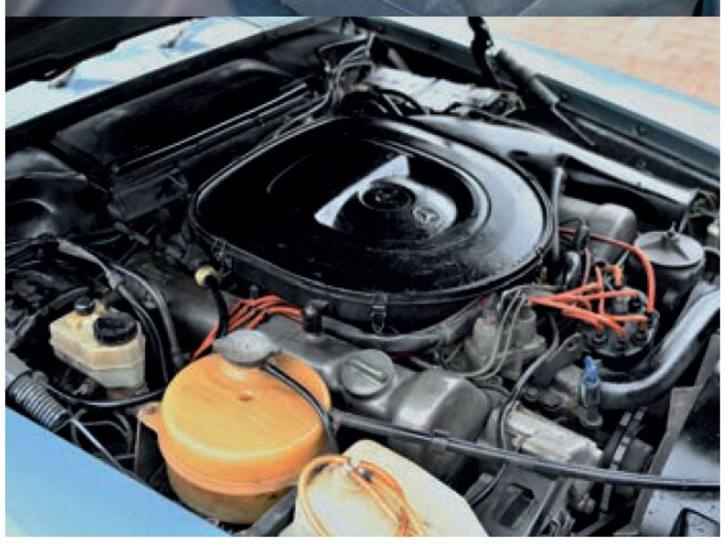
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"The whole was greater than the sum of its already excellent parts"





Cost when new

Although we don't have the exact price of this 1973 450SLC to hand, we do have UK pricing for the Mercedes range in mid 1975, which serves as a guide. In those days, a base W123 200 would have set you back £3,750 while a 230/4 was £4,422, the 250 £5,152, and a 240D was £4,802. A 280E cost £5,976, and the two-door version, the 280CE, was £6,768. Both cost less than the 230/6 LWB listed at £6,995, and the 240D LWB at £6,997.

The 116-series S-Class range kicked off with the 280SE at £7,575, followed by the 350SE at £9,303 and 450SE at £9,692; the long-wheelbase 450SEL was £10,773. In 1975, an R107 350SL was priced at £7,555 and the 450SL cost £9,286. As for the 450SLC, that set buyers back £11,271 before options.

▷ original and unrestored 1973 SLC. Interestingly, the DVLA shows it being first registered in the UK in March 1977, keen evidence that the secrets within its past are unwilling to be readily unlocked, but there are undoubtedly many tales to tell in the smoky bars of the afterlife. The Benz has spent the last decade or so largely in storage in south-west London; it has been MOT'd on-and-off, and the history shows it being tested in 2013 and 2014, but it's essentially been in stasis for the duration. A companion for the dust and the spiders.

△ The 4.5-litre V8 saw service in motorsport...

△△ Less rear legroom than in a 126-series SEC.

So, let's take a dive into the details, shall we? Swinging open the statuesque driver's door, we're confronted with a fabulous reality of 1970s Teutonic design; when Mercedes-Benz were putting this interior together, they had a very clear game plan: take all of the blueness they could find, distil it down to its very essence of purest blue, then slather the cabin with the results. It's genuinely astounding – all of the blue things on Earth are slightly less blue thanks to the innards of this car.

The seats are in impressively decent condition, plumply stuffed and sporting their factory velour (amply decorated with the aforementioned dog hairs, but thankfully without the accompanying kennel aroma). The carpets and headlining have stood the test of time admirably, and it's clear from the condition of the dash that the car hasn't spent a huge amount of time languishing in the sun – no cracks on the top, a pleasing factory blueness, all the eyeball vents swivelling properly. Perhaps the most tell-tale visual marker is the fact that there isn't any excess wear to the steering wheel or gearknob, because that's where the years always show their true colours. This is a car that has never had to work long, hard hours.

The beating heart of the 450SLC is a thoroughly robust powertrain, the 4.5-litre M117 V8 oozing out thudding gobs of grunt, and mated to an automatic gearbox of supreme smoothness. And while it's a powerful engine, what's really notable is the torque – all 278lb ft of it – allowing effortless progress-making in all driving scenarios. The quintessential grand tourer? It's certainly up there. And this pale blue example continues to throw up pleasant surprises.

You might expect a car that's been essentially unused for a while to be a bit reluctant to function, but it shrugged off its years of inactivity with casual aplomb for our photoshoot; not only does it start, run and drive, but following our session among the garages, the owner took it on a lengthy journey through rush-hour London and beyond, reporting no issues whatsoever with the way it ran. It didn't overheat, it didn't misbehave, it just did what an SLC is supposed to do. It's like it had just been patiently waiting by the door like an old Labrador, awaiting its master's ▷

▷ return so that it could jump up and undertake vigorous activities with frisbees. Never stressed, always ready.

Inarguably the most attractive thing about this SLC is that it's unrestored and complete. There are one or two very minor elements that a purist may feel compelled to address, but the key point here is that it doesn't beg questions with the unknown quantity of someone else's restoration – this is all as it came down the production line (aside from the aftermarket CD player, but such transgressions are easily forgiven). In terms of corrosion, there only appear to be a handful of very minor areas to the body – a little on either rear wheelarch, and a tiny bit on one edge of the bonnet, plus a smidge in the driver-side door-shut. Reaping the rewards of living indoors and not spending too much time slushing through gritted winter roads, the panels are solid and straight, and the paintwork is remarkably good.

"What you're witnessing here is a shimmering blue vision of potential"

The correct chrome trim is all in place, and largely free from pitting or patination. It even appears to be pretty darned solid underneath. Which is reassuring, because minimal mileage doesn't always equate to solidity. There's always a rush of excitement when low-mileage examples of unexpected cars come to market, but the uncomfortable truth is that sometimes cars don't get used very much because they're unlikable or capricious or just plain rubbish. Not so with this one. This SLC is simply a victim of circumstance.

In essence, what you're witnessing here is a shimmering blue vision of potential. The 450SLC is very much a sought-after model at the moment, and the chances of finding an original and unrestored example with such low miles is vanishingly small. That's precisely why it's here, not jumping off the page at you but casually tugging your sleeve and suggesting you give its quiet existence a moment's consideration. It will most likely be a very long time before you see another all-original SLC with 19,000 on the clock popping up out of nowhere – if, indeed, it ever happens.

And what of its fate now? Shortly after its photoshoot, the MOT history shows it rolling through a test intact, save for a lengthy list of advisories for brake hoses and chassis corrosion. But it raises the question: with a car this original, and this low mileage, which route would you go down? Is it better to leave it trapped in amber, a little-used example of an increasingly scarce entity? Or is it preferable to allow the car to finally fulfil its destiny and live out its luxurious grand tourer credentials?

Whichever way, the temptation would strongly be to do absolutely nothing at all to it beyond that which is mechanically vital for safety and smooth running. Keep the blemishes, let it wear the decades with pride. After all, it can only be original once.

▽ The original upholstery has a strong patina.

▽▽ Loathed at the time, but this detail has 'matured'.





Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 450SLC (C107)

Engine M117 4,520cc V8 **Power** 222bhp@5,000rpm **Torque** 278lb ft@3,000rpm **Transmission** 3-speed auto, RWD **Weight** 1,630kg

0-62mph 8.8sec **Top speed** 134mph **Fuel consumption** 19.5mpg **Years produced** 1972-1980

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

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THE WORLD'S LEADING CLASSIC MERCEDES DESTINATION

Going for gold

Mercedes-Benz's official return to motorsport in the late 1970s may not have happened without this 450SLC rally car and the budding team behind it, as Richard Mason explains

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

A windy vineyard in Kent. Six guys, some of whom haven't seen one another in nearly 50 years, are intently studying a Mercedes-Benz 450SLC, registration LLC 432P. Rally stickers, some in giant gold lettering, proclaim something special. Many people will be surprised to hear this is the car that reignited Mercedes' interest in motorsport, and these chaps are the unsung heroes behind it.

The story begins with a 23-year-old graduate working at Mercedes Brentford and unofficially rallying his company car. Jonathan Ashman had landed the plum job of PA to the German managing director and was based at a newly formed dealership created in January 1974 after Mercedes took back the franchise from Thomas Tilling.

Jonathan was given a wide brief and backup by the MD who knew Jonathan was nuts about cars, especially rallying. Jonathan found he could participate in Group 'B' rallies with very few vehicle modifications required. It was all the excuse Jonathan needed to take his company 350SLC rallying. The coupe was a rare sight given it was LHD, finished in white and equipped with anti-lock brakes. At the time, ABS wasn't excluded from rallying because it was a little-understood technology.

Cover star turned rally ace

"I decided to use an SLC because it's a much nicer handling car on loose surfaces than the SL thanks to its longer wheelbase," Jonathan explains. "The SL is twitchy by comparison. I'd discovered this on many tests on the Longcross track near Chobham. Taking the 350SLC on the 1975 Mintex Rally, it did better than anyone expected and ABS definitely helped. As it was inherently a very strong car, it needed little extra doing to it, but the penalty of strength is weight; air conditioning and the three-speed automatic gearbox added even more weight. And the engine output was only 197bhp.

"To do better, I needed something with more power," Jonathan says. "I discovered a new, September 1975 450SLC on our press fleet. This model has 225bhp. As you'd expect, press cars are the very best examples – Mercedes engineer Erich Waxenberger's deptartment in Stuttgart would check cars before they left Germany. LLC 432P was part of the cover story in *Motor Magazine's* May 1976 edition, going up against the Jaguar XJ-S." ▷





The story begins with a 23-year-old graduate working at Mercedes Brentford



◁ Ashman and the ex press fleet SLC ready to rally!

▷ W123 support cars deployed on the 1976 RAC rally.

▽ It was a great privilege to attend this rally reunion.





△ All guns blazing during the British Championship.







“I found the SLC quite chuckable – predictable but heavy”

▽ Tony Fowkes helped show what the SLC could do.

▷ Soon, the 450SLC was kicking up dust in a very hot British summer in 1976. “I was co-driving it, supporting Tony Fowkes, in the Texaco Tour of Britain Rally. Amazingly, the SLC won its class.” Modifications were minimal, although as Jonathan confirms, “We had to strengthen the bottom wishbones for safety. Tony discovered simulating rally forest stages that the wishbones twisted so much that the steering jammed. Apparently, the steering lock stop on full lock got inside the bottom arm and jammed the steering. To prevent the wishbones bending, he welded on angle irons to strengthen them. I can see they’re still on the car 47 years later.” The same goes for the gearbox, which was expertly upgraded by Graham Brown using experimental parts from small-scale tests conducted by Mercedes.

The weight of expectation

Back then the SLC was still in its original colour – Icon Gold plus sponsor stickers. “It took some persuasion to get Tony Fowkes to drive the SLC,” says Jonathan. “He usually campaigned Escorts and to say he was dubious about the Mercedes is an understatement. I let him take the 450SLC to Donington to get used to it [before the 1976 Texaco Tour, part of which was held at Donington]. I think he wore out the tyres after a few laps. When it came to the Tour, we were up against cars like Capris that were set up for racing – a disadvantage on forest stages.

“I found the SLC quite chuckable – predictable but heavy. The trick is to get that weight working for you, get the car drifting and then just flick it. However, we had our own issues to contend with on the race track sections. Tearing along in this great big car and stopping repeatedly from 120mph, the brakes faded from overheating. This was scary. Lots of Mercedes senior management were there and luckily we won our class and came ninth overall. They made a big thing of that in their advertising, as did our tyre supplier Goodyear.

“Next was the 1976 Lombard RAC Rally. By this time, we’d removed the air con to save weight, and fitted a bigger fan,” Jonathan continues. “I obtained sponsorship from Johnson Rally Wax on condition the SLC was repainted black and gold to match their product which it was relaunching,” Jonathan recalls. “I also put together a ‘rally support team’ that followed us in W123 saloons. I’m grateful to Chris Quantrill who’s with us today who headed up the team, along with Ken Waddy.

“This time I stepped back, however, allowing two professionals to take over – Messrs Chris Field and co-driver Keith Read. Unfortunately, on the first day in the Kielder Forest the exhaust grounded, causing the exhaust manifold to crack and by the end of the day the SLC had to retire.

“Next up was the January 1977 Tour of Epynt and we had Tony Fowkes at the helm. With his experience in previous Epynt events, this was a game-changer. The SLC was fifth overall and first in Group One category with nobody else in sight. Tony, not for the first time, was named ‘Man of The Meeting’. The weather was bitterly cold on the Brecon Beacons and there was so much snow it was touch and go if the event would take place. The top nine finishers bar us were all in Ford’s Escort RS, so our success didn’t go unnoticed. Other drivers then began showing interest in SLCs.”

In the Avon National Forest Rally of April 1977, a frustrating 35th place finish confirmed the team had taken the 450SLC as far as it could. “However, our profile was such that Erich Waxenberger and colleagues in Stuttgart were now considering the SLC’s potential as a competition car,” smiles Jonathan. “Weight

▽ Taking pride of place in Danny Lucas' museum.

▽▷ There have been a few tweaks inside the coupe...

▽▽ Sideways on the 1977 Tour of Epynt in Wales.











loss and power gain were the key items they focused on. This led to the lightweight SLC with the new, five-litre M117 engine. In the 450SLC 5.0, finally they had a rally car capable of winning."

What happened next?

LLC 432P was sold to rally driver and Mercedes dealer, Nicky Porter. "I'd become aware of the SLC when I saw it in the 1976 RAC Rally being towed to North Riding Garages in Pickering," Nicky explains. "When it came to disposing of it in 1977, I asked Jonathan for first refusal."

Jonathan agreed, eventually. But he too wanted first refusal should Nicky wish to sell the SLC. "I collected the car after it had been displayed on the Johnson Rally Wax stand at the London Motor Show in October 1977," Nicky remembers. "In November, I entered the RAC Rally. I was sponsored by Doggetts – a company in the North East where I live. Doggetts of course wanted the car in their green livery. For a while, I changed the registration to my personalised one – NP 3.



▽ Ashman and gearbox specialist Graham Brown.

▷ The gentlemen get reacquainted with an old friend.





△ Porter about to make a splash in a 2018 rally event.

◁△ Jonathan Ashman reunited with his old SLC.

◁ Danny Lucas (right) with Nicky Porter and SLC.

"The following year, I did another four major rallies. After that, I retired the SLC from front-line rallying. I reinstated the Johnson Rally Wax livery but changed the limited-slip differential and springs to normal specification. From the 1980s, LLC 432P was on display in my dealership and attended classic car shows. During one outing in 1988 at the Oulton Park Historic Rally, it won its class and was second overall.

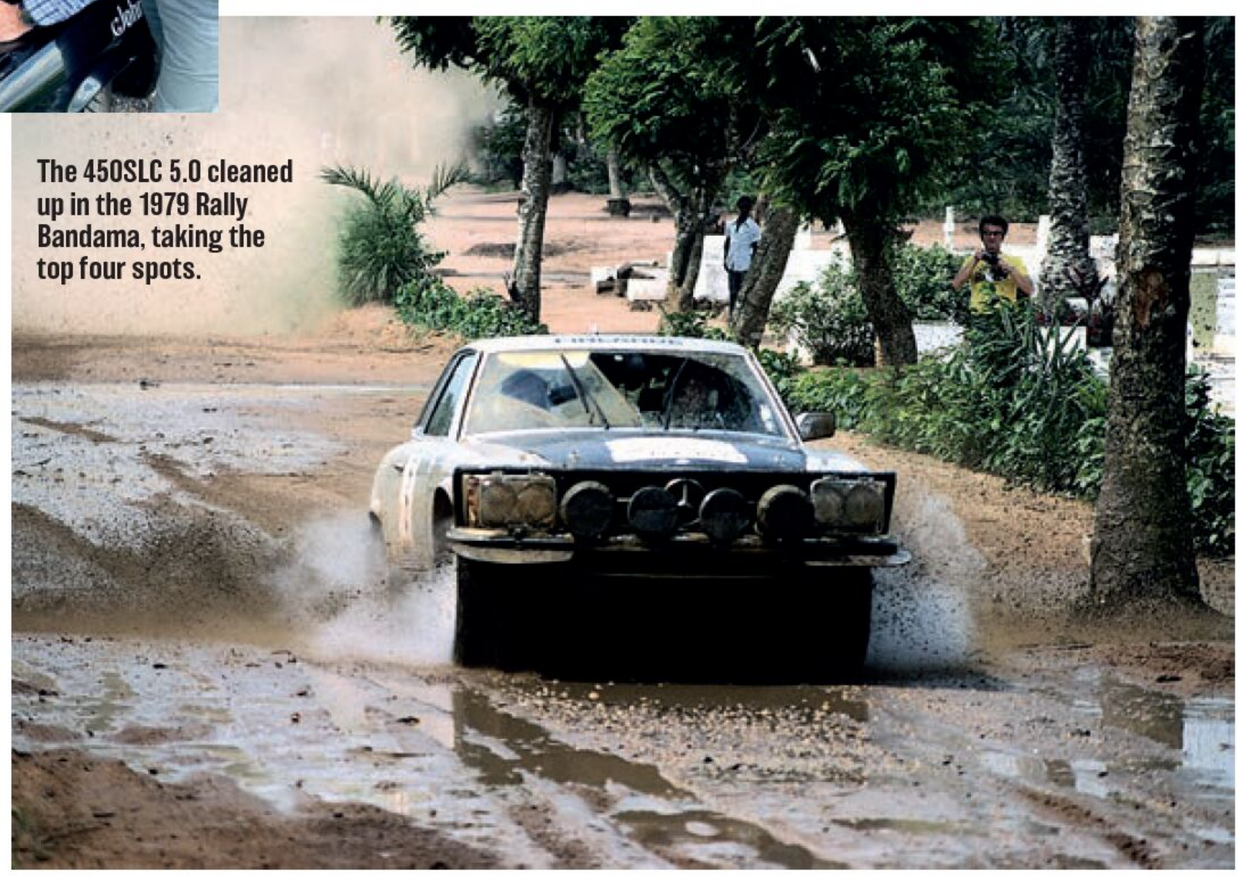
"In the late 90s, I joined the new RAC events called Euroclassics," Nicky continues. "These went to places like Spa and the Nürburgring, and used famous rally sections and hillclimbs. I also did regularity rallies in the UK and abroad. From 2010 onwards, I was doing about 3,000 miles a year going on charity tours, but then I began thinking about the car's future given its historic significance. Luckily a friend mentioned a fellow Mercedes-Benz Club member who was creating a Mercedes museum. I was duly contacted by Danny Lucas who explained his museum project to me. He promised that if I sold LLC 432P to him I could still visit it.

"Of course, I had to consult Jonathan because of my promise all those years back to give him first refusal. Danny also offered Jonathan visiting rights and a deal was done," Nicky confirms.

All agree that Danny's impressive museum (featured in issue 229) is the best way to honour LLC 432P's achievements. The group wryly comment that the car has aged better than them! It's touching to hear their stories and inspiring to see what their unsung commitment to a secret project produced.

▶ *Our thanks to Jonathan Ashman (visionary), Nic Moore (sparks), Chris Quantrill (rally support division), Graham Brown (gearbox technical), Colin Ferns (technician), Nicky Porter (former owner) and Danny Lucas (current custodian of LLC 432P).*

▶ *Thank you to Yotes Court Vineyard located in Maidstone, Kent*
Web www.yotescourt.co.uk for the location



The 450SLC 5.0 cleaned up in the 1979 Rally Bandama, taking the top four spots.

The revivalists

> “Based in Markgröningen, M&W takes its name from its founders”

M&W Classic is a little-known Mercedes-Benz restorer attuned to delivering the individual wishes of owners, as Ian Kuah discovers

WORDS & IMAGES
IAN KUAH

M&W Classic GmbH is the best classic Mercedes restoration company you have never heard of. It is one of Germany's most respected specialists whose particular area of expertise is the (W198) 300SL Gullwing and Roadster models.

Based in Markgröningen, a historic town not far from AMG's home of Affalterbach, M&W takes its name from founders Miguel Morais and Mathieu Woehrle, two car-loving friends who left their respective employers to start their own company in 2011.

If you think these are not German sounding names you would be right as Mathieu is of French-German parentage, while Miguel hails from Portugal. Mathieu has loved cars since forever, his passion going back to his childhood days in the 1980s when his uncle had a Porsche Carrera 3.2 Targa. Whenever he came to visit the family, Mathieu would rush out to sit in the car, and he promised himself that he would own a 911 by the time he was 30.

As luck would have it (or perhaps thanks to sheer perseverance), he saved enough money to become the proud owner of a nice, 1976 Porsche 2.7 Coupe by the time he was 27. "I will never sell this first 911 because of its sentimental value, and it is likely that my daughter will eventually inherit it," he says.

Mathieu's love for classic Mercedes came through working at Kienle from 1999 to



▽ **Gullwing and Roadster waiting in the wings...**





> “M&W strives to mitigate the shortcomings of the original cars in subtle ways”

2005, where he met Miguel who joined later than him and left after him in 2010. Mathieu learned a lot about the restoration business during his Kienle years before moving on to a sales job at the BMW dealership in Leonberg. “I am into sports and played hockey during my student days. Sports and sales are my inclinations,” he explains. “I leave the technical side to Miguel who is our technical genius, and this division of labour works really well here.”

M&W Classic employs eight other specialists who cover the bodywork, mechanical, electrical and trim aspects of the business under Miguel’s watchful eye. While the team is primarily focused on the restoration and maintenance of the 300SL Coupe and Roadster, they also work on the odd SL Pagoda and pre-1970s Mercedes-Benz models that may be brought along by their 300SL clients.

Hidden gem

With just 1,400 Coupes built between 1954 and 1957, followed by 1,858 Roadsters from 1958 to 1963, the 300SL world is a small one. It is also very valuable, with the price tag for a steel-bodied 300SL Gullwing or Roadster currently sitting at around £1.1 million. One of the rare 24 alloy-bodied Gullwings built in 1955 recently sold for £4.5 million, a number that pales into insignificance beside the heady £115 million achieved by one of the two 1955 300SLR Uhlenhaut Coupes at the RM Sotheby’s private auction on May 5 2022. This makes it the world’s most expensive car, breaking the record previously held by a 1962 Ferrari GTO.

While most well-known restoration specialists try their level best to spread their name far and wide, M&W’s reputation in the small circle of 300SL owners and enthusiasts is such that word of mouth from satisfied customers is the company’s best advertisement. And, as I discover when I visit the team, they are not easy to find as the long driveway to their workshop is situated behind two unrelated businesses on an industrial estate. According to Mathieu, this anonymity is a blessing that enables them to avoid tyre kickers and timewasters dropping in unannounced. This is important as their work schedule is always full.

During my visit I count four Gullwings and three Roadsters being serviced or restored by technicians in the main workshop, with another three Gullwings and seven Roadsters in the showroom and car park. Significantly, one of the Gullwings in the showroom was originally owned by the Gaylord brothers, creators of the famous 1957 Gaylord Zeppelin. ▷





△ **Miguel Morais (left) and Mathieu Woehrle of M&W.**

△△ **Trim work is done in-house, as you’d expect.**

▽ **Miguel at the wheel of an M&W 300SL Roadster.**













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> “Changing the gearbox of a classic for a later unit with more gears is not an unfamiliar concept”

▷ One unique aspect of M&W’s operation is an active and ongoing willingness to find innovative ways to make these extremely valuable classic Mercedes more useable in today’s traffic conditions. Retromodding is more predominant in the UK and USA as most owners of classic cars in Germany demand originality. But there are a few German owners who drive their cars often enough to consider under-the-skin technical improvements to make outings in today’s traffic conditions safer and less stressful.

M&W Classic does not go to the lengths of Mechatronik, whose ‘New-Tech’ M-SL and M-Coupe conversions transplant high powered, 21st century engines and drivetrains into the Pagoda and 280SE Coupe. Instead, M&W strives to mitigate the shortcomings of the original cars in subtle ways that cannot be readily seen at a cursory glance, even by marque experts. One such engineering upgrade I witness being implemented is a six-speed manual gearbox swap that improves the 300SL’s performance, economy and refinement in one fell swoop.

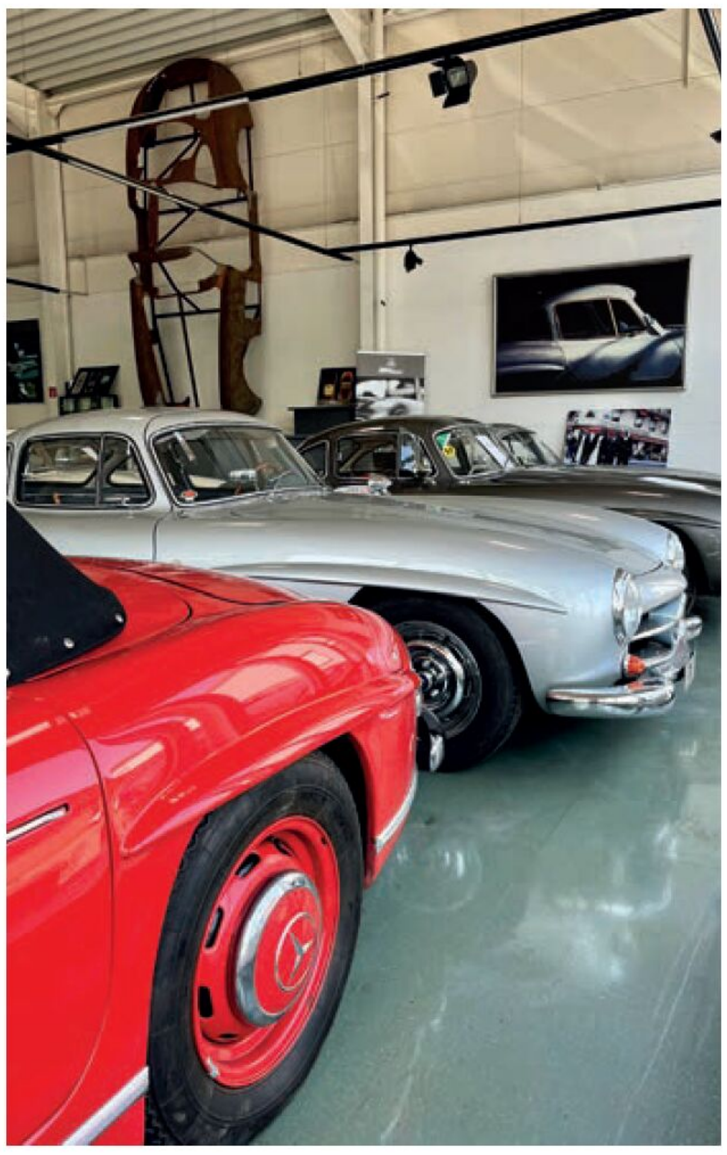
The bare bones of the autobahn network that we know today was built in the 1930s and then extended progressively after World War Two. Initially, it had only two lanes and served relatively low traffic density, with cars far slower and less powerful than they are today. In the 1950s, only the ‘supercars’ of the era like the 300SL were able to attain 100mph-plus speeds. Back then, many cars only had three forward gears, and having a four-speed gearbox was state-of-the-art. Petrol was also dirt cheap and nobody thought about fuel economy or NVH. The relatively low gearing of classic cars is a by-product of the road conditions from a bygone era, and this makes long journeys in them today seem noisy, uncomfortable and inefficient.

Getrag gearbox

Changing the gearbox of a classic for a later unit with more gears is not an unfamiliar concept in the classic car world, although the topic is a somewhat controversial one. Back in the 1980s, BMW 2002 enthusiasts recognised this issue and solved the problem by installing the E21 3-Series five-speed gearbox, which features an overdrive fifth. Since the ’02 and four-cylinder E21 models share the same engine block, the conversion is straightforward and consists of a bespoke adaptor plate and an appropriate shortened propeller shaft. The five-speed gearbox drops the 4,000rpm at 70mph of the standard car to a far more civilised 3,000rpm.

Fast-forward to 2022 and Rainer Hildebrandt – Mathieu and Miguel’s business partner in their Porsche restomod sister company, EvoMax – was unhappy that his 300SL Roadster was under-geared for long distance cruising. After exploring possible modern six-speed gearboxes that might fit, the M&W Classic team developed a conversion that mates the 2,996cc Mercedes-Benz M198 straight-six motor to a BMW Getrag six-speed manual. The 212bhp and 203lb ft output of the iron-block, dry-sump Mercedes engine found in the 300SL Roadster is well within the capacity of a gearbox developed for BMW’s turbocharged straight-six motors, ▷





△ **Unconventional approach taken with the manual gearbox upgrade.**



▷ so it is comparatively under-stressed in this innovative application.

As Rainer's car was undergoing a total restoration at the time, it was the opportune moment to undertake any required adjustments to the floorpan and transmission tunnel area, and the fabrication of bespoke mounting brackets. If anything, the Getrag gearbox I watch being test fitted looks relatively compact compared to the original, and thanks to its alloy casing the new unit also confers a useful weight saving – something that matters in any sports car worth their salt. Once all the interior trim is back in place, you would never know about the conversion unless you put the car on a ramp to inspect the underside.

Win-win situation

Six forward ratios provide the classic Mercedes-Benz roadster with improved in-gear acceleration, cruising ability and fuel economy. Just how much difference the swap makes is evident from the fact that the ratios of the original four-speed gearbox and final drive result in the motor turning at 4,000rpm at 75mph. In parenthesis, the car equipped with the snappy and modern six-speed cruises at 100mph with a relaxed 2,500rpm showing on the rev counter, with a commensurate reduction in noise, fuel consumption and emissions. A win-win situation by all accounts, purists be damned!

However, if you are a stickler for originality and ask M&W Classic for a perfect restoration worthy of Pebble Beach then you will get exactly that. Mathieu and Miguel proudly show me some photos of the one-and-only 1955 300SL finished in satin silver grey metallic with turquoise interior that spent four years in their workshop being restored to reference condition.

The quality of their restoration was acknowledged with an invitation to take part in the 2015 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance where the car was acclaimed for the quality of its restoration and unique original specification. This is just one of the many outstanding restorations that puts M&W Classics on the 300SL map.

▶ *Thank you to M&W Classic for its assistance with this feature Web mw-classic.de*



△ **Fully restored 300S soft top in the workshop.**

▽ **Satin Grey over turquoise 300SL from Pebble Beach.**

> "Six forward ratios provide the roadster with improved acceleration"





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“You can jump in and cover 1,000 miles and feel as if you’ve only done 30 miles”

WORDS **NEIL BRISCOE**
IMAGES **JASON DODD**

A child’s dream

Gurdeep Grewal’s lifelong affection for Mercedes has culminated in him owning not just a CL63 AMG with rare Performance Package, but a modern classic SL too





▷ Heating and cooling for the front chairs.

▽ AMG-specific dials; paddleshifts for the AMG 'box.





△ Curdeep avoids wet conditions in his V8 coupe.

▽ Lovely carbon fibre trim and memory seats.

▷ AMG exhaust pipes housed in a carbon diffuser.





All good stories should start in a land far away, right? In this case, our tale starts in Kenya, many years ago...

"I was born in Kenya and my uncle always had a Ponton Mercedes, and I just always loved it," begins Gurdeep Grewal. "They were not just beautiful cars – they were so robust. To drive on the roads of Kenya back then, you had to have something pretty robust, even a Land Rover could struggle, and I know because my dad had a Land Rover..."

As childhood memories go, it's a pretty good one – the dusty and rugged roads of Kenya, with those dramatic landscapes seen from the back windows of an Adenauer-era 180. Little wonder that Gurdeep fell in love with Mercedes. It's a love that stayed with him, even when the family moved from Kenya to the UK in 1968. "I was 10 when we moved. I always had a passion for cars, but especially Mercedes. Most people had that poster of a Lamborghini on their wall, but I had two cars – an E-Type Jaguar and a Mercedes. I worked and worked until I was able to get my first one – a C200 Sport, back in 2005."

"This CL63 uses AMG's 5.5-litre V8 biturbo engine"

That would be very far from the last Mercedes that Gurdeep would buy. With a career in software design taking off – a successful career from which he has only just retired – Gurdeep was able to set his sights a little higher up the Mercedes range, and so the C200 Sport was followed by an E-Class, but no ordinary E – this one was an E36 AMG of the W210 generation. Even that wasn't enough. A greater three-pointed star awaited, and in 2015 the right one came along. "I always had a thing for S-Class Coupes," Gurdeep tells me. "And then when Mercedes launched the CL, I think everyone who's into Mercs aspired to have one of those because it's the top of the range coupe. I purchased mine from a collector who only bought white cars."

This one is very definitely top of the range. Well, if you ignore the CL65 V12, that is. It's a 2012 CL63 AMG with the desirable Performance Package. Based on the 221-series S-Class, and the second generation of car to wear the ultra-desirable 'CL' badge, this CL63 uses AMG's 5.5-litre V8 biturbo (M157), developing 518bhp and 465lb ft of torque. Senior numbers for a car first launched in 2006. That's not the half of it, actually. Thanks to the Performance Package, Gurdeep's CL63 is boosted even higher to 563bhp, with a faintly ridiculous 664lb ft of torque. That's good enough for a 0-62mph time of just 4.4 seconds, which still feels seriously quick today.

Not that Gurdeep drives it in such a fashion, you understand. "It never comes out in the rain," he says. "I've never taken it to the south of France or anything, but it's the car we use if



△ 20-inch, twin-spoke AMG alloys enclose uprated AMG brakes.



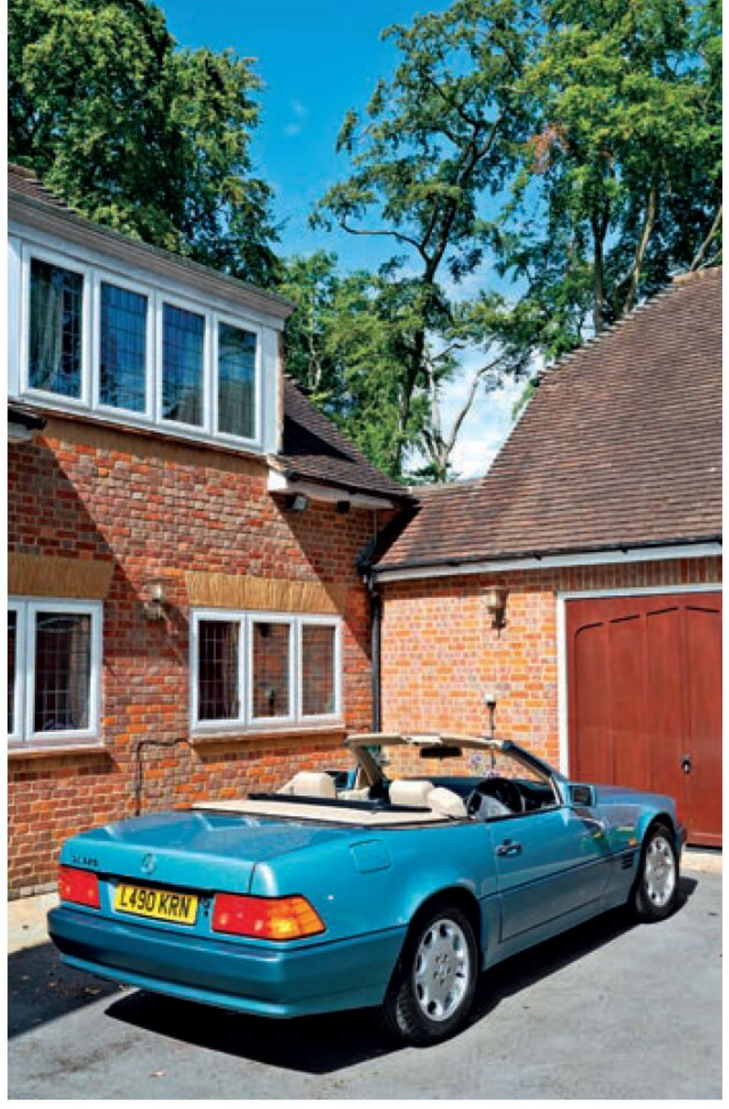
△ The optional Performance Package upgrade features here.

we want to go up to Scotland, or over to Wales. I've sat in Bentleys and all that other stuff. But in this Merc, and especially with it being an AMG, you are cosseted. You've got a lot of comfort, but you're also connected to the car. I mean, if you drive a CL500 or a CL600, they're great, but they don't have the same feel as the CL63. It really is a car that makes you feel like a million dollars."

Thankfully, it seems as if it doesn't cost a million dollars, nor pounds, to run. "I've had the suspension diaphragm replaced, but that was under warranty," says Gurdeep. "The other thing was to have the discs and pads replaced, because obviously it does like to use the brakes when you're travelling at speed. I think that cost me about £3,000 when I had it done. But that's it. The car gets serviced every 12 months, even though it only does a couple of thousand miles each year, so it's not that expensive to run, really."

Indeed, Gurdeep reckons that what keeps a car – any car – from annihilating your wallet is just straightforward and regular maintenance. "Keep it serviced, and keep on top of the consumables – things like rubber seals and so on – and keep your wheels properly aligned because obviously that can affect your suspension. And make sure your tyre pressures are correct. It's just common sense. If you look after your car, it will look after you."

It's not just about keeping a car running, though. This is clearly a special Mercedes, and one that means a great deal to Gurdeep. "It's got the comfort, it's got the speed, it has a sort of ambience about it – on the outside as well as inside. You can see people looking at it and saying, 'You don't see many of those about'. But even though it's pretty rare, you can jump in it and cover 600, even 1,000 miles and feel as if you've only done 30 miles. This one has double-glazed windows so it's very, very quiet inside. But the engine… if you just want a little buzz, you just have to touch the throttle and you fly away."



Going backwards in time

The C216 CL probably doesn't get the kudos it deserves for being a trailblazing Mercedes in the way that some others do. However, when it was launched, it was – in the grand tradition of S-Class-based models – right at the cutting edge of motoring technology, featuring one of the first autonomous emergency braking systems, adaptive cruise control, blind spot monitoring and even infrared cameras mounted to the front of the car.

It's not the only landmark Mercedes that Gurdeep owns. "I did have an SL350, an R230 version, but I sold that to finance the one I have now, which is an R129 SL320," he says. "I like the older Mercs! Most people say, 'Well, wouldn't you want a new one?' but I want to ▷





△△ Just 32,223 of these M104 cars were built.

△ M104 straight-six with twin overhead cams.

△▷ The 16-inch alloys appear to be in superb nick.

▷ Five-speed automatic fitted as standard.

▽ Striking Beryl blue SL320 with 42,000 miles.





▷ go the other way. I would like a Pagoda at some stage."

Gurdeep bought his R129 during the Covid pandemic, taking a punt on a car at auction he hadn't even seen in person, but trusting the low mileage and the extensive history that came with it. It's a 1993 SL with only 46,000 miles on the clock.

> **"For me, it's the ultimate"**

"It was owned by a fellow Mercedes-Benz enthusiast who lives close to me in Surrey," says Gurdeep. "Sadly, he became ill and couldn't drive the car anymore. The interior was a little bit tatty – well, *I* thought it was tatty. Some thought it looked fine, but maybe I just have higher standards! So I tidied up the interior and fitted a new soft top roof. It had the hardtop as well, of course.

"The car is nearly immaculate now," Gurdeep continues. "I've done most of the work on it myself aside from reconnolising the leather and fitting the new roof. It's a car with great history – I know where it's come from, and it's still one of the most beautiful cars to drive."

Could he pick his favourite, though? Or is that just too hard a question?

Gurdeep grimaces at the thought of trying to play favourites. "It's a really hard question because they are like two children. How can you pick your favourite? They are different cars doing different things, and they have different needs. If you want to go long distances and arrive at your destination feeling relaxed, you'll take the CL. If you want to pop out for a nice Sunday lunch, then you'll take the SL – as long as it's not raining."

Whichever Mercedes he picks, and in spite of having a Porsche Macan as a 'daily runabout', Gurdeep is staying firmly in the Mercedes camp. "I always say to my wife, 'I don't drink and I don't smoke, so having Mercedes is my only vice'. I've bought many and sold many and I've lost money on many, but it's my passion. I've had TR7s, I've had Capris, I've had Cortinas, I've had Hillman Imps, I've had a whole range of cars. But it's always been a Merc for me, not because I'm a badge snob – if you want to be a badge snob then you would go for a Bentley or a Rolls or an Aston Martin. It's partially about having a car that's practical as well as exciting, and I think there's a particular thing that Asians have always grown up aspiring to own Mercs.

"I mean, you have your BMWs and so on, but they just don't have the same *sona* – the same spirit as a Mercedes. I think it's down to the engineering, the styling, especially in the Bruno Sacco era – the days when they made cars that really were over-engineered. This CL63 is probably my favourite of all the Mercs that I've owned, though. For me, it's the ultimate. And I'll keep it. My son will have it after me. He's another car nut, so I've said to him that it's his if they still have petrol by then. But I'll definitely keep it, it's not going anywhere. I'll be gone before the car is."



△ Curdeep with his son, who owns this menacing black ML63 AMG.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz CL63 AMG with Performance Package (C216)

Engine **M157 5,461cc V8 biturbo** Power **563bhp@5,500rpm**
Torque **664lb ft@2,250-3,750rpm** Transmission **7-speed auto, RWD**
Weight **2,135kg** 0-62mph **4.4sec**
Top speed **186mph** Fuel consumption **26.9mpg**
CO2 emissions **244g/km** Years produced **2010-2014**

Mercedes-Benz SL320 (R129)

Engine **M104 3,199cc 6-cyl** Power **228bhp@5,600rpm**
Torque **232lb ft@3,750rpm** Transmission **5-speed auto, RWD**
Weight **1,780kg** 0-62mph **8.4sec**
Top speed **149mph** Fuel consumption **19.6mpg**
Years produced **1993-1995**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 2012, facelifted CL63 with Performance Package and 1993 SL320 as pictured; fuel consumption for CL63 according to NEDC combined and for SL320 according to EEC urban

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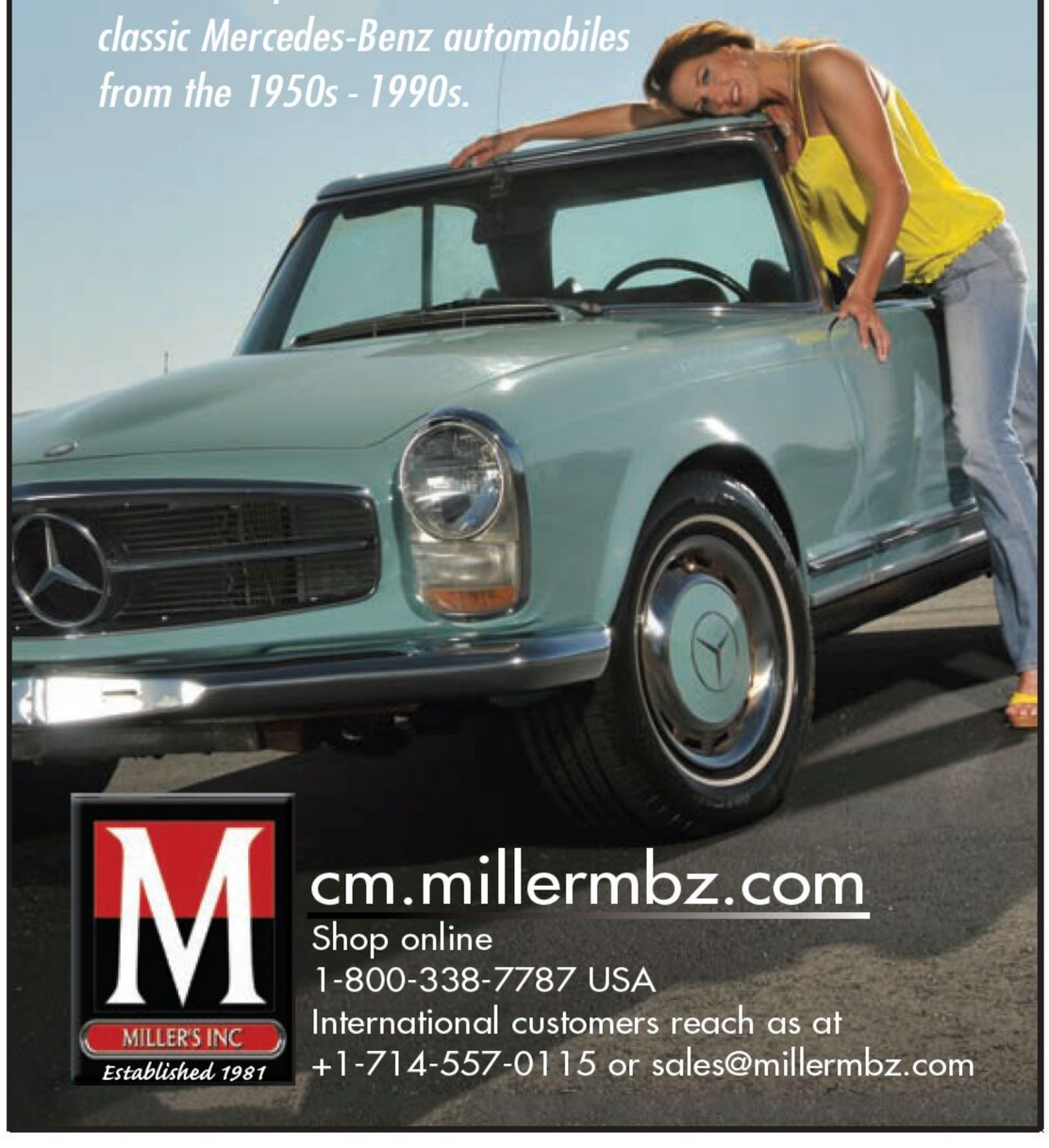
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SLS AMG acted as pace car on the MBW track.



Richard Mason was the brains behind the meet.



> “Some 200 Mercedes, mostly classics and modern classics, assembled at Mercedes-Benz World”







SUPER MEET

Owners and members of the UK's Mercedes-Benz Club come together at Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey to mark 60 years of the W100 600 and SL Pagoda, while also celebrating the W201 190 and 126-series S-Class

WORDS & IMAGES **DAVID SUTHERLAND**

Ayrton Senna's 2.3-16 was a special guest.

The original idea was to invite Mercedes-Benz Club members with W201 190s to a celebration to mark 40 years of the model's introduction to the UK market, following its international launch the previous year, 1982. It would be a relatively low-key event, similar to many others the Club runs every year – but it turned into what some have described as the biggest and best UK Mercedes-Benz gathering ever.

Some 200 Mercedes, mostly classics and modern classics, assembled at Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey on Sunday October 1 – but that included a dozen of the exalted model many people have never even seen, the 1963 to 1981 W100 600, including Jeremy Clarkson's and the one bought by George Harrison in his Beatles days. And all the 600s went out on the M-B World track, led by a modern SLS 'pace' car. The icing on the cake was the presence of the world's most famous W201, the 190E 2.3-16 driven to victory by Ayrton Senna in the 1984 Race of Champions at the Nürburgring in Germany. A sea of W201s and 126-series cars were present too.

What visitors saw was not simply a large collection of enthusiasts' cars – it was more a spiritual experience, as if Stuttgart's glorious past was being specially recreated in front of them. For many, emotions peaked when the Grossers rumbled off from their long, stationary line to take to the track, sounding like ocean liners as drivers honked the loud, deep-throated horns, and pursued each other around the circuit.

A day to remember

Without doubt it was the 600s that gave the day its very special edge, and that it was so memorable was down to one man: Richard Mason, presently M-B Club's Model Register Captain for the 126-series. He began planning back in March 2023 with modest intentions, but before long found the quest to secure the promise of 600s had become all-consuming. On the day, he had to stand back and, almost in disbelief, take stock of what he had created.

The idea took seed when M-B Club stalwart Nicky Porter learned that the hotel used for the 190/190E UK introduction in 1983 was unavailable for a 40-year celebration. After he was unable to negotiate a deal with Brooklands Museum, and living in the north of England, Nicky asked Surrey-based Richard for help in finding a suitable venue. In the Mercedes community Richard is a famously energetic networker, and within his ▷

▷ bulging contacts book was the number for Rob Halloway, then UK Marketing Director for Mercedes-Benz (and now the car maker's global PR chief), who gladly gave permission for the W201 meet to be held at M-B World, on the 'Railway Straight', the flat section coming out of the old Brooklands banking.

Job done – or not. "It occurred to me that this would be a good opportunity to add in a 126-series day, but I wasn't planning anything else," reveals the amiable 126 MRC. "However, at that time I had been writing various articles on Pagodas and 600s, and suddenly a thought entered my mind: 'Nobody is doing anything on the 600!'"

Preparation is everything

That was hardly surprising. When an M-B Club MRC needs to drum up attendees for events, little more is necessary than some basic publicity, after which the cars arrive in numbers on the due day. But not so with the Mercedes 600, the last built 42 years ago, and rare in the UK. 600s are usually in professional storage or at the very least in secure garages, and typically kept and maintained by someone other than their owners, who are often attending to business in other parts of the world. Plus it can take work, likely on the complex hydraulic suspension, to ready them for driving. Hence drawing them out into the open is difficult – and just the sort of challenge Richard relishes.

"To begin with, I just wanted one 600, but one 600 in particular, as that would join everything up," he recalls. It was the white George Harrison car, 'OLE600E', which Richard had already written about in *Mercedes Enthusiast* and which is one of the highest-profile 600s, not least because in-period footage of George driving it exists, much of this seen in the *Get Back* TV series released in 2021.

So time for another call to Rob Halloway, and a favour to be called in. "Previously, Rob had been in touch when he wanted

> "Richard's next 'target' was the green 600 owned by Jeremy Clarkson"

George's car for a concours exhibition in Savile Row in London, outside Number 3, which was the Beatles' Apple office in 1968, and I was able to put him in touch with the owner, who is in Edinburgh," Richard explains. "I asked Rob if he could have it brought down from Scotland again for us, and he agreed."

Richard's next 'target' was the green 600 owned by Jeremy Clarkson, seen on screen, probably most memorably when in an argument with *Top Gear* co-presenter over the merits of the 600 compared to a Rolls-Royce, Jeremy pointed out that, "People who had a 600 almost always had access to an air force." But would the controversial celebrity be willing to lend it to Richard, who rang his PA more in hope than expectation? "His PA said yes, he would be delighted to lend it, and that his chauffeur would bring it down," beams Richard. "When it arrived, it had Stig's helmet in it along with other *Top Gear* stuff."

Richard was on a roll. "We now had two cars of interest, and I just kept on talking to people," he says. "The more cars I got, the more I needed. But while getting 126s was easy, I needed to go ▷





Magnificent 600 owned by Jeremy Clarkson.

Restored 190 with unique d:class interior.

A dozen W100s made the trip to Weybridge.



The 126-series owners put on a terrific show.

> “In the lead up to the event, Richard had made an interesting discovery”

▷ outside the Club’s ‘eco system’ to find more 600s.”

M-B Club member Barry Pope, who had recently finished the restoration of his 600 (including replacing the engine with one from one of the 600s owned by the Sultan of Brunei which were all being retrofitted with V12s), took no persuasion; Barry also presented his 280SL Pagoda and 190E 2.6. Joe Salamone, boss of Mercedes specialist SS Motors in Chertsey, Surrey was another owner keen to participate. It was no doubt a special day for James Flynn, who had come over the UK to collect his newly restored 600 – and was driving it for the first time! One long-wheelbase Pullman was present, owned by Sufyan Mukhtar. Useful M-B Club business was also done on the day; previously the Club had no Model Register Captain for the 600, but on that Sunday the velvet-tongued Richard signed up owner Jayesh Patel for that role.

Racing royalty

In the lead up to the event, Richard had made an interesting discovery. “While chewing the fat with Rob Halloway, he told me, ‘We’re getting some interesting cars over from Germany, and that includes the one 190E you’d want.’ The 190E 2.3-16 in which the then unknown Ayrton Senna beat a bunch of established F1 stars in would be present. What a coup… and we hope that by now the person who assumed it was a replica has been put right. What was a replica was the DTM tribute 190E built and brought along by Surrey specialist trimmer d:class automotive.

With classic meetings, you never know how many of the promised cars will actually turn up, but Richard’s luck held. All the promised 600s came, the only disappointment being the early drop-out of the John Lennon Pullman. All Richard had to do now was make the event work, and he knew just the man on the ground for the job: Red Mackinnon, MRC for the CLK and a well organised, well turned out, charming but also authoritative retired traffic cop. “Mercedes said we could get 400 cars in, but that was if we packed them like a Tesco car park,” says Richard. Red marshalled proceedings to perfection – cars lined up impressively before taking to the track, and then returned to the Railway Straight afterwards. Cars moved around efficiently, and overall the event had a very professional, fluid feel to it.

It was a lot of hard work for Richard, but it was most rewarding. But he now has a problem. Club members were hugely impressed and want him to do it all again in 2024 – but how do you top this?

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Draw of four

As more buyers migrate to the driving seats of SUVs, there are some smashing deals to be had on older Mercedes-Benz saloons, as our used car market expert reveals

WORDS **GUY BAKER** IMAGES **NORWICH MOTOR COMPANY, MCCARTHY CARS & COSMIC CAR SALES**



Rare E500 V8 with 64,000 miles up for just under £14,000 at McCarthy's.





Much of the UK media would have you believe that the traditional saloon car is now a dying breed, with buyers only interested in SUVs, crossovers and hatchbacks. But the reality is somewhat different.

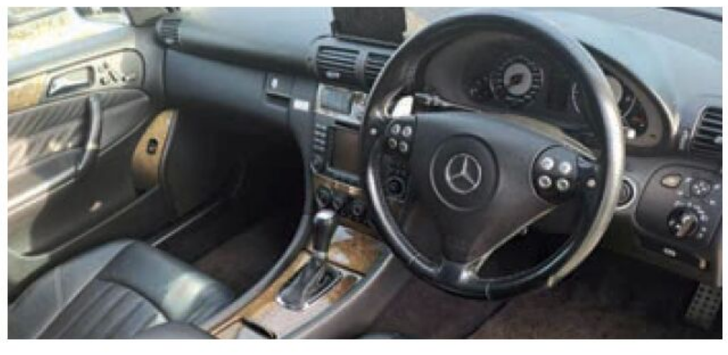
A quick search of Britain's most popular used car buying website reveals that four-door saloons still make up around 27 per cent of all used Mercedes on sale in the UK today, making them by far the most numerous body style – well ahead of SUVs (19.4 per cent) hatchbacks (18.3 per cent) and coupes (12.4 per cent).

And this sheer number of Mercedes saloons on sale means that there are plenty of bargains to be had. But it's those aged between 10 and 20 years old that offer the very best value. Neither contemporary nor classic, demand for them is generally lower, and yet they make up around 20 per cent of all Mercedes saloons currently advertised for sale in the UK.

It's this age of four-door Mercedes-Benz that we've taken a closer look at this month, with three models in particular getting our bargain-hunting antennae twitching – the W221 S-Class, the W212 E-Class and the older W203 C-Class. A number of variants seem to offer impressive value, but we reckon the S350 CDI, the E500 and the C55 AMG are your best saloon targets.

The first of these – the 2009-2010 S350 CDI with 232bhp – can be enjoyed in parsimonious BlueEfficiency guise and still boasts plenty of poke thanks to its torquey, three-litre turbodiesel motor. A meaty 398lb ft from just 1,600rpm ensures that you and your fellow passengers are effortlessly whisked from A to B in consummate comfort. If you can find an example like this 72,000-mile, 2010/60-plater we spotted at the Norwich Motor Company (www.norwichmc.co.uk) then you will have done well.





△ Modified C55 AMG from Japan yours for less than £9,000.



△ Norwich Motor Co's early S350 CDI stickered at £8,999!

Advertised for just £8,999, this silver S-Class claimed an impressive specification that included Comand sat nav, a reversing camera, 18-inch alloy wheels, Speedtronic cruise control, the front seat Memory Package and eucalyptus wood trim.

Our second saloon bargain – a 2010, Tanzanite Blue E500 Sport advertised at McCarthy Cars (www.mccarthycars.co.uk) in Croydon for just £13,795 – had a very similar spec to the S-Class. A 10-plater with only 64,250 miles, it packed a 5.4-litre 382bhp V8 under the bonnet, which can propel this understated E-Class from standstill to 62mph in just 5.2 seconds, whilst its occupants are cosseted in relative grandeur.

Rare eight-cylinder

With just two owners, this E500 came with a complete service history, Comand sat nav, a panoramic sunroof, 18-inch alloys, is ULEZ compliant, and featured full beige leather upholstery with heated memory seats.

If, however, you prefer your saloons to be full-blooded AMG affairs then you should cast your net for a 203-series C55 AMG. Capable of growling its way from standstill to 62mph in just 5.2 seconds, the C55 is a pretty rare beast these days, and that's why some buyers have sought a rust-free, Japanese import version – like this fully-converted, 2005 example we saw at Cosmic Car Sales (www.cosmiccarsalesltd.co.uk) in Enfield. With just 60,000 miles on the clock, a full service history and an unbeatable spec, it was tempting at £8,750.

▸ *Fancy something more capacious? Then check out our top three £15,000 Mercedes Estates on page 76*

Forecourt find

E220 Cabriolet Sportline (A124)

Always a popular model with collectors, Mercedes' timeless 124-series Cabriolet makes a great modern classic buy. And if you can find one in Sportline guise and looking as good as this Imperial Red E220 Cabriolet advertised for sale at Seymour Pope near Watford, then you are guaranteed admiring glances wherever your motoring takes you.

A UK automatic with 102,000 miles, only three former keepers, a full service history record and garaged since 2004, it's a rust-free example that has been rigorously maintained. And if you can match the dealer's £10,940 asking price then it could be sitting pretty on your driveway.

Dealer information: Seymour Pope
Tel: 01923 262900
Web: www.seymourpope.com



△ Four-cylinder Sportline finished in Imperial Red paint.



▷ 102,000 miles and just three keepers from brand new.



▽ Full leather trim; Sportline wheel and gearknob included.

Auction spotlight

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

- **S320 CDI**
  3.2-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/06-plate, 147,000 miles, **£2,550**
- **ML280 CDI SE**
  3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/07-plate, 124,000 miles, **£4,400**
- **SLK350**
  3.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2005/05-plate, 87,000 miles, **£5,100**
- **SLK200 Kompressor**
  1.8-litre, petrol, auto, 2006/06-plate, 44,000 miles, **£6,000**
- **A180d SE**
  1.5-litre, diesel, manual, 2020/70-plate, 34,000 miles, **£15,800**
- **SLC180 AMG Line**
  1.6-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/68-plate, 75,000 miles, **£16,800**
- **AMG SLC43**
  3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2016/66-plate, 63,000 miles, **£19,000**
- **C200 AMG Line Premium Plus**
  2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2017/17-plate, 27,000 miles, **£20,200**
- **A250e AMG Line Premium**
  1.3-litre, petrol/electric, auto, 2020/70-plate, 37,000 miles, **£20,567**
- **C300 Coupe AMG Line Premium Plus**
  2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/18-plate, 44,000 miles, **£21,100**
- **CLA180 Coupe AMG Line**
  1.3-litre, petrol, auto, 2021/21-plate, 32,000 miles, **£23,100**
- **E400 4Matic Cabriolet AMG Line Premium Plus**
  3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/18-plate, 26,000 miles, **£27,000**
- **S350d L AMG Line Executive**
  3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2019/19-plate, 94,000 miles, **£32,100**
- **EQC400 AMG Line Premium**
  Electric, auto, 2020/70-plate, 32,000 miles, **£33,000**
- **GLE300d 4Matic AMG Line Premium**
  2.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2020/20-plate, 28,000 miles, **£40,600**

And remember...

Always arrive early at car auctions, 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 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

Mercedes market

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

The top 6 best-selling used Mercedes

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

1 C-Class (20.9%)
2 A-Class (19.6%)
3 E-Class (13.5%)
4 GLC-Class (6.7%)
5 CLA-Class (6.3%)
6 GLA-Class (5.5%)

What's in a colour?

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

1 Black (29.5%)
2 Silver (18.8%)
3 Grey (17.4%)
4 White (16.7%)
5 Blue (10.2%)

Miles ahead

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

Less than 50,000 miles 56.6%
Between 50,000 and 80,000 miles 23.3%
More than 80,000 miles 20.1%

Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

Diesel 53.6%
Petrol 38.0%
Hybrid 5.7%
Full electric 2.7%

Drivetrain

Four-wheel drive Mercedes usually offer greater traction, but often poorer fuel economy. Rear-wheel drive Mercedes can be more fun to drive, but trickier on the limit

Four-wheel drive 23.8%
Front-wheel drive 30.8%
Rear-wheel drive 45.4%

TOP THREE

£15,000 Estates

Mercedes-Benz has long been the king of upmarket, second-hand estate cars, and if you're thinking you might like a slice of the action then you really are spoilt for choice at the moment. Especially if you have as much as £15,000 to spend on a capacious and comfortable companion. Like any other Mercedes-Benz, you should stick to examples with a pristine provenance and no known faults, and we'd also avoid any estates that have badly worn boot areas, mismatched tyres, and any signs of a tow bar fitting. By their very nature, these cars are often purchased as workhorses and experience more than their fair share of wear and tear, so we'd advise having patience when searching for your perfect example.



CLS350 CDI Shooting Brake (X218)

Our first contender combines practicality with style like no other estate. Yet the CLS Shooting Brake tends to be cheaper than an equivalent E-Class, so it makes a canny second-hand choice. And if you seek out a CLS350 CDI in BlueEfficiency guise then you can enjoy plenty of performance as well as sensible fuel economy. Our budget puts you behind the wheel of a smooth, 2014 V6 example with 60,000 miles, a top-notch spec and just a couple of previous owners.



C250 Bluetec Estate (S205)

If you fancy an estate with a slightly smaller footprint then a diesel, 205-series C-Class takes some beating - especially in C250 Bluetec AMG Line form. Similar to the previous CLS option, our 15 grand budget buys a 2014 car with 70,000 miles, but the C250 Bluetec boasts even more impressive economy - with a 60.1mpg combined economy figure and a relatively low £150 per annum road tax bill. It packs plenty of poke too, and if yours has options like Comand and a sunroof then you'll maximise residuals.



E320 Estate (S124)

Speaking of maximising residuals, Mercedes' 124-series Estates are a shining example. Built to last, and last, a good example can be just as enjoyable to drive today as it was the day it left the factory. They are fairly thin on the ground these days, but if you can find a good 'un then it should prove a brilliantly usable classic load-lugger. Fifteen big ones bags a 1994 E320 straight-six with options like climate control, an electric tilting sunroof, alloys wheels and electric front and rear windows.

Latest products and accessories

K&N air filter for R232 SL-Class

Unlike the majority of air filters that are disposable and require regular replacement, K&N's High-Flow Air Filters are washable, reusable and designed to last for the lifetime of your vehicle. And you can now buy one for your V8-powered R232 SL. Featuring a layered oiled cotton media to provide exceptional engine protection and increased performance, this premium filter design incorporates multiple layers of cotton gauze media and a specially engineered oil designed originally for the race track. Custom engineered for AMG's SL55 and SL63 models, the RRP is £108.33 plus VAT. Discover more at www.knfilters.com.



H&R lowering springs for 205-series C63 AMG Coupe

If you're looking for the optimum lowering springs for your C63 AMG Coupe Cabriolet then take a close look at this kit from H&R. As the official manufacturer to the AMG DTM Team, H&R's kits deliver the ultimate in handling and will enhance your C63's sporty looks while retaining the standard ride comfort. Made in Germany, they can be supplied for £347.94 including VAT by CKS Performance in Watford (www.cksperformance.com) which can also fit them for you. Just ask for part number 28766-2. Your C63's ride height will be lowered by around 20mm front and rear.



Mercedes-Benz Rose for Women

If you're searching a Christmas present for the Mercedes-loving woman in your life, then this Mercedes-Benz Rose for Women Eau de Toilette and Body Lotion combination might be the ideal gift.



Comprising a 30ml Eau de Toilette and a 100ml Body Lotion, the delicate scent is sweet, fresh and young, says Mercedes, with top notes of blackcurrant, grapefruit, rose middle notes of heart of rosewood, elemi and magnolia and base notes musk, amber, and cedarwood. Order it at your local Mercedes-Benz dealer - the RRP is £51.48 and the product number is B66956007.

Signature Tune CLA45 AMG

So you've bought a 117-series CLA45 AMG Coupe – here are some ideas to make your car even more exciting to drive without ruining the premium experience



Launched in 2013 and facelifted in autumn 2015.

The super-quick, 2013 to 2018 CLA45 AMG Coupe is essentially a sleek, four-door saloon with a highly tuneable turbocharged engine, a seven-speed dual-clutch autobox and grippy 4Matic four-wheel drive. Pre-facelift cars make 355bhp from their two-litre four-cylinder engine, while facelifted CLA45s deliver 376bhp.

With that super-slick AMG gearbox and four-wheel drive as standard, the CLA45's performance is seriously impressive – 0-62mph takes just 4.6/4.2 seconds. And from September 2015-onwards, buyers could choose the enhanced AMG Dynamic Plus package with enhancements to the acceleration, suspension and transmission. Prices for decent example start at around £17,000.

But even the best can be bettered, and a number of CLA45 owners have taken the step to boost their car's performance, handling and braking, as well as adding their own styling tweaks. And you could do the same.



Engine

This is the usual starting point for CLA45 owners, with a typical stage 1 ECU remap providing improved acceleration and throttle response. For around £500 you can expect a power increase from the factory standard to around 410bhp, with torque increased to 410lb ft. A stage 2 upgrade with an enhanced intake is nearer to £750 and could see power increased to 420bhp with 415lb ft torque, but if you want any more a sports catalyst exhaust is needed.

Transmission

A few owners have also chosen to have their CLA's seven-speed, automatic dual-clutch transmission remapped to provide slightly quicker and smoother gear changes. You'll find that a few tuning houses can do this for you, but it won't offer any more bang for your buck. Just make sure you don't go too extreme.



Suspension

Well set up for fast road driving, the CLA45's factory suspension is finely tuned, but if you're a trackday regular then you may want to enhance the handling, in which case you should consider a strut brace, an anti-roll bar kit and either some lowering springs from Eibach or H&R, or a properly matched coil-over system from the likes of Eibach, H&R, Bilstein or KW.

Brakes

Good though they are, you can still upgrade either the CLA's pads or both pads and brake discs – Forge, Brembo, EBC, MTEC and AP Racing all offer various alternatives, whilst fitting some braided brake hoses and filling them with DOT 5.1 brake fluid is also recommended.

Wheels and bodywork

A lot of CLA45 owners have kept their car's factory AMG alloys, but if you do decide you fancy something different then ensure that the wheels you're choosing don't add to the unsprung mass. Multi-spoke designs are more popular, with offerings from Vorsteiner, Brabus and Lorinser seen as the most desirable. And quite a lot of CLA owners have made minor exterior styling tweaks to their cars, with lots of options available.

Interior

This area comes down to personal choice, and although many CLA45 owners have upgraded interior items, such as seats, pedals and floor mats and the factory stereo and sat nav system, others have left their cabins completely standard. Any major interior changes may affect your CLA's appeal to any potential future buyers.

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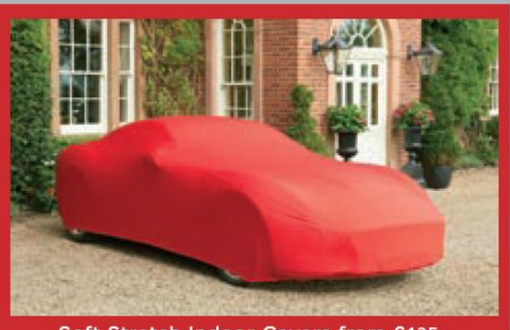
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Mercedes ENTHUSIAST February/March 2024 issue **ON SALE** January 19th

Contents are subject to change



All about the base

The C-Class range of 2014 boasted an entry-level petrol model that continues to be a fantastic buy in the second-hand market. Here's everything you need to know about the two-litre C200

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG & KYLE MOLYNEUX**

It's 30 years since the first Mercedes-Benz C-Class launched as a replacement for the W201 190, and we now have to think for a moment to remember how many successive generations of the compactly dimensioned saloon and estate have appeared since.

Following the unveiling of the 206-series in 2021, the answer is that the carmaker now offers the fifth-generation car, and perhaps the reason some struggle to tell them apart is their strictly evolutionary appearance; no need has arisen in three decades to radically repurpose this staple seller in the Benz range.

Nonetheless, significant engineering changes do happen, such as when the 205-series C-Class came along nine years ago, given that it introduced an important new platform, the MRA (Modular Rear-drive Architecture) underpinning on which a host of other models would be based. However, Mercedes stuck to its tradition of staggering chassis and engine replacements, hence the C200 base models used the 204-series's petrol and diesel units for the first four, pre-facelift years. At that stage, 'Dieselgate' was a damaging horror story still to unfold, hence the C200 Bluetec with its 1.6-litre diesel engine was an important base-level model, but since then many buyers have turned away from the black fuel.

That leaves the petrol C200 as an obvious choice for those seeking a high quality, elegant saloon or estate (more than any previous C-Class, the W205 four-door looked like a scaled down S-Class) offering good fuel economy and as reasonable running costs as can be expected from Mercedes-Benz ownership.

Concentrating on the early, 2014 to 2018 cars, we see that prices are below £10,000 if you don't mind high-ish mileage, bringing this only just superseded model series into an affordable bracket. So how well will it serve as a used buy?

Design and evolution

The C200 was available from the start, the 'W205' Saloon arriving in UK dealer showrooms in July 2014; the identically-engined 'S205' Estate was added two months later. Under the bonnet of the C200 saloon, priced at first from £28,000, is the M274, 1,991cc four-cylinder turbocharged engine, producing 181bhp and a useful 221lb torque across a wide, 1,200rpm to 4,000rpm rev band. A six-speed manual gearbox was standard, but unsurprisingly there was a high take-up of the seven-

Spotted for sale

OFFICIAL MERCEDES-BENZ DEALER C200

2015/65, SE saloon, automatic, grey metallic, black Artico leather, Executive Package, 45,700 miles, £15,950, Mercedes-Benz of Stratford-upon-Avon



"The C200 continued with the same engine spec until the facelift in 2018"

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz C200 (W205)

- Engine M274 1,991cc 4-cyl turbocharged
- Power 181bhp@5,500rpm
- Torque 221lb ft@1,200-4,000rpm
- Transmission 6-speed manual/7-speed auto, RWD
- Weight 1,445/1,465kg
- 0-62mph 7.5/7.3sec
- Top speed 147/146mph
- Fuel consumption 53.3/53.3mpg
- CO2 emissions 123-132/123-131g/km
- Years produced 2014-2018

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined

speed 7G-Tronic Plus automatic, a £1,500 option. By now, complex electronics were part of even the basic Mercedes fare. Like other models, the C-Class relied heavily on electronic systems (some of it optional) or 'assistants' – Agility Control suspension, Driving Assistance, Lane Keeping Assist and more.

Although this was the base model, it was available with all three factory trim packs plus other individual options. Cars in SE form had 16-inch alloys, climate control, a digital radio and pre-wiring for Garmin navigation. Sport (always a popular choice on Mercedes models) added 17-inch rims, LED headlamps, Active Parking assist, 15mm lowered suspension, heated front seats and leather-bound steering wheel. AMG Line (pictured above) got you 18-inch wheels, uprated braking and speed sensitive power steering under the banner of 'Sports Direct-Steer'.

Other equipment bundles were there to tempt. The £995 Executive Pack added sat nav, heated front seats and a split-fold rear seats to the SE; the Driving Assistance Package (£1,595) brought Distronic Plus cruise control, Blind Spot Assist and Lane Keeping Assist to Sport and AMG Line; the Premium Pack added a glass roof, memory front seats, keyless-go and ambient lighting to these same two models, and Premium Plus for £1,200 more saw the enhanced sat nav Comand Online and a posh Burmester sound system thrown in.

But it didn't have to stop there because other individual items like self-levelling Airmatic suspension, a 360-degree camera and the Air Balance Package offering a choice of four in-cabin fragrances could be ordered, even if they're a rare sight on C200s.

While new models, including the C350e plug-in hybrid in 2015 (see Issue 235's buying guide), were added to the range, the C200 continued with the same engine spec until the C-Class's facelift in early 2018, although the previous year its seven-speed auto gearbox was replaced by the nine-speed 9G-Tronic Plus unit. It then switched to the 1.5-litre M264 petrol engine, and numerous updates were applied to the interior too. Their newness leaves these cars significantly more expensive than the pre-facelifts, hence we exclude them from this Buyer's Guide.

Driving the C200

The 205-series C-Class is probably exactly as you would imagine it: quiet, smooth and comfortable, and its turbocharged engine delivering robust performance. The claimed 0-62mph acceleration of mid-seven seconds for the manual and auto give a clear idea of how peppy the 205 is compared to the earliest, somewhat pedestrian C-Classes.

On the W205's launch in 2014, Editor Kyle Molyneux tried an C200 SE in manual form. "It feels punchy like a middling turbodiesel yet speaks in a far quieter voice, with barely a finger quivering vibration felt through the gearstick," he enthused. "If I wasn't doing big miles every week, I'd think very hard about whether the £1,715 more expensive C200 Bluetec diesel, despite its greater efficiency, is a better all-round proposition."

He found the interior space as generous as was needed: "Slot yourself into the back of a W205 and almost all people will find clear air between the top of their head and the roof lining – even more than that found in the previous C-Class." His overall verdict on the entry-level petrol car was short but concise: "Basic? Don't you believe it."

What you'll pay

Unusually for a model in our Buyer's Guide, this is one you'll find at official Mercedes-Benz dealers, albeit it not in large numbers, and which will be well checked and supplied with a comprehensive 12-month warranty. But you'll be charged top price: don't expect a 50,000-mile car for much less than £15,000.

Independent dealers have the majority for sale – hundreds advertised on the Auto Trader site alone, mostly automatics. The very cheapest cars tend to be 2014/2015 SE models, and with a fairly heroic 120,000-plus miles, offered for under £8,000; ex-fleet cars, quite probably.

Keeping the mileage to around 80,000 bumps the price up to £10,000, and if you insist on 50,000 miles maximum, a £12,000 budget is needed. You can in fact pay almost double this for a humble C200 – but would have to be an immaculate 2017 or 2018 C200 AMG Line and with, say, the Premium Pack, and showing under 30,000 miles. Estates make up a minority of C200s and are valued a little higher than comparable Saloons cars. ▷

W205 C200 Inside and out



Specialist overview

Steve Dickens, Autoclass Garage in Milton Keynes

"The C200 is a good, reliable car, one we don't see too many issues with. It's certainly less troublesome than diesel C-Classes, which have problems with NOx emissions, and also AdBlue. Overall, the C200 is a nice car to own and drive, and it's good value too. But you need to get one that's been well looked after - these days we see quite a few cars that have not been adequately maintained."

Powertrain

● The two-litre M274 petrol engine is generally well behaved and trouble-free, although a problematic water pump can make the engine overheat and bring on an engine management light. Thermostats can fail too.

● Skimped servicing or the wrong oil can see the timing chains stretched, which causes the engine light to come on.

● Check for a fuel smell under the bonnet around the back left-hand side of the engine. This is as a result of the fuel pipe weeping.

● Be aware of the importance of automatic gearbox servicing - if this is not carried out properly there is an increased chance of the speed sensor giving trouble, leading to the transmission going into 'limp home mode'. Check that the oil change has happened on time, at five years or 75,000 miles.





Four-pot makes 181bhp; Agility switch for the various driving modes.

Suspension, steering and braking system

● Failed front ball joint problems are common on all 205-series C-Classes, the symptoms being a squeaking or knocking noise from the suspension over bumps or when turning. This is from either the spring link arm or thrust arm, and the only way to rectify this is to replace the affected suspension arm.

● Early 205s suffered an annoying squeak when steering, heard inside the car and sometimes felt through the steering column. This was caused by a plastic element in the column becoming detached from the metal part. The Mercedes-Benz fix was to glue them back together, we're told.

● The W/S205's brakes don't give many problems, but inspect the condition of the discs and pads to assess remaining life. Note that the rear brakes will wear out faster than the front ones due to the Crosswind Assist system. Also listen and feel for judder when braking.



Four-link front axle and five-link rear axle, plus speed-sensitive steering.

Spotted for sale

CAR SUPERMARKET C200

2015/64, Sport saloon, automatic, silver, black Artico leather, 63,400 miles, £14,199, Milton Keynes





"The two-litre petrol engine is well behaved and trouble-free"

Bodywork and wheels

● Mercedes-Benz anti-rust treatment has clearly improved after a low period in the 202/203-series era, so even the oldest 205s should still be solid in the body. All panels are galvanised panels so should not rust, but of course check for any poor accident repairs that might have left incorrect panel gaps.

● Stuttgart wheels still seem to take wear and tear badly. Like all Mercedes-Benz wheels, they do suffer from cracking and buckles, so inspect closely and check for judders on the road test.



Less solid in feel than the W204 generation, but far better trimmed.



Interior and electrics

● On a fairly young model like this, there is unlikely to be any failures with electrical equipment but it's always worth checking that everything works properly: air conditioning, electric seats, satellite navigation, audio and so forth.

● Modern Mercedes receive regular software updates from main dealers, which makes a full Mercedes-Benz history a useful bonus. There is no paper history other than payment invoices, but Mercedes dealers should be able to bring up details.

● The 205-series C-Class was a popular company funded car, so look out for 'user abuse', such as damaged interior trim, especially the seats. All this is expensive to rectify, which is why it usually isn't on cars of this age bracket. ▷

W205 C200 Inside and out



Spotted for sale

PRIVATE SELLER
C200
2015/15, Sport Estate, automatic, black, black Artico leather, Panoramic roof, 98,200 miles, £12,995, Hayes, Middlesex



Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including 20% VAT)

Model	Oil Service	Major Service
C200	£265	£325

Quotes from Autoclass Garage

Non-routine servicing costs

- ★ Automatic gearbox service (7/9-speed) **£295/£395**
- ★ Replace automatic's electronic change plate **£1,130**
- ★ Fit new water pump to engine **£520**
- ★ Replace engine cooling thermostat **£530**
- ★ Cure weeping fuel line in engine bay **£250**
- ★ Fit new front brake discs and pads **£350**
- ★ Four premium tyres (225/45R18, 245/40R18) **£480**

What you'll pay

£6,000-£8,000 2014/2015 C200 SE with well over 100,000 miles, possibly ex-fleet

£8,000-£10,000 2014-2016 SE and Sport models, likely around 100,000 miles

£10,000-£12,000 2014-2016 SE and Sport trim lines, 80,000-100,000 miles

£12,000-£15,000 SE, 2015/2016 Sport and AMG Line with around 50,000 miles

£15,000-£20,000 2016/2017 Sport and AMG Line, under 50,000 miles and with Executive or Premium Pack

£20,000-£25,000 Late, 2017/2018 pre-facelift cars, under 30,000 miles, high spec and top condition

Verdict

Time was when an entry-level Mercedes-Benz C-Class was a relatively dull car with uninspiring performance and a low specification. That description simply doesn't apply to the C200, which even in base SE form has most of what you need, and lively performance. And there are lots of examples to choose from at dealers, car supermarkets and private sellers.

It has a good reputation on reliability – better than the equivalent diesel, specialists tell us – which makes it a car you can run up to a high mileage. But as with every other modern, complex Mercedes, you need to buy sensibly, avoiding the temptation of the very cheapest, and paying the due price for one that's been properly looked after.



Petrol vs diesel

In his original road test, Editor Kyle Molyneux reckoned the C200 was a better all-round prospect than the 1.6-litre diesel model, originally named C200 Bluetec and later C200d. But what is the case for each? The diesel was more expensive when new, but they're similarly priced now; £15,000 gets you a 2017 example of each, with 60,000 miles.

The first hurdle the diesel clears is that every car complies with the London Ultra Low Emissions Zone standard. So there are no penalties to offset the oil-burner's 35 per cent better fuel economy (72.4mpg 'combined' in manual form), which over 10,000 miles saves about £350. Presently the diesel's annual road tax is also £55 cheaper, at £210. So setting aside likely repair costs, which are difficult to assess on a comparative basis, the diesel won't offer a significant cost advantage unless you knock up a huge mileage. On that basis, our choice would be the petrol C200: it has more power, the same torque, and its engine is smoother.





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High hopes

There is just the odd little issue on the six-cylinder SL, while Martin Buckley swaps the Stroke 8 for a coupe version of its successor

WORDS & IMAGES **MARTIN BUCKLEY**

FACTSHEET

CARS 1996 SL280/1984 230CE
OWNER Martin Buckley
LOCATION Cirencester, UK
PURCHASED November 2021/October 2023
UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Bulging tyre on the SL280; succeeding R230 SL model purchase considered; four-cylinder 123-series Coupe joins the fleet



△ The ever-dependable SL280 has benefited from Martin's regular use.

Unlike my other classics (or alleged classics), where the allotted running report space is hardly sufficient to list the latest tales of woe and frustration, the SL280 doesn't give me much to report on. One of the rear tyres developed a bulge and needed changing because it was also showing signs of sidewall cracking, which is strange as I don't think they were changed all that long ago. The hood works nicely and, as I have put a few miles on it this year, I've had none of the usual flat battery issues.

The SL is pressed into service if I'm going on long trip, as it's more restful than my Audi A2 and is the only car I own with fully functioning air conditioning. It must have among the smoothest straight-six engines Mercedes has ever built – it absolutely sings. Plus the automatic gearbox is versatile and fun to use.

SL upgrade?

I have a passing fancy for the next generation of SL, the R230, especially now they are cheap, although having had a brief ride in an SL350 that might come my way one day, I'm not in a hurry to do a swap. It just didn't feel as solid as the R129, although the idea of a convertible that doesn't come with a separate hardtop, which always gets in your way, is most appealing.

> **"It must have among the smoothest straight-sixes Mercedes has built"**

The build quality of the R129 SL is good but not beyond reproach, however. On ours, the trim that covers where the door mirror attaches – and partly secures the driver's door card – has come off due to a broken clip, and my incompetent attempts to reattach it have so far failed.

Meanwhile, an older Mercedes in the form of a 123-series 230CE has joined the fleet. It had been stored for 20 years in a lovely dry Bristol garage. In fact, it is still in the garage but is due for recovery in a few days.

It's a manual in mid blue with pretty horrible, non-standard alloys and, from what I can see, a seemingly solid body. Hopefully it won't prove rusty below the level of old boxes and other detritus that was covering it. The mileage is nothing special at 130,000, but the seats and all the trim looked good, so I have reasonably high hopes for it. More news on this Mercedes next time.

▽ Assessing the C123's overall condition was not exactly straightforward.





Comfort zone

The 124-series convertible is pressed into service as daily transport while owner David Mallon awaits delivery of new family wheels

WORDS & IMAGES **DAVID MALLON**

FACTSHEET

CAR 1997 E220 Cabriolet
OWNER David Mallon
LOCATION Manchester, UK
PURCHASED April 2022
UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Mysterious leak onto garage floor traced to coolant system - thankfully it was an easy fix!



As we said goodbye to the most miserable, anti-convertible summer I can recall, we took the Mercedes across the Pennines for a weekend in Sheffield. The car performed faultlessly and we even managed some open air motoring on the way back.

It was, however, the first time I've noticed the E220 feel a little gutless! It's obviously a heavy car with an average, 2.2-litre engine developing 148bhp, and at times it made quite hard work of the hills on the famous Snake Pass road. It does handle surprisingly well though, so once I got my head around maintaining the energy from the downhill sections, it made for a really pleasant drive in a style I've not had to do since passing my driving test a long time ago!

> **"As a family runaround, the E220 Cabriolet has been great"**

Stand-in star

With the general lack of summer mileage, I sold my family car a few months before its replacement arrived and committed the old Mercedes to daily use. Before I did this, I had to get to the bottom of a mysterious liquid appearing on my garage floor. My mechanic couldn't find any leaks while pressure testing the coolant system. We were a bit stumped to be honest, until the next morning when the car cooled down on the workshop ramp and left some coolant on the floor exactly as it has been doing in my garage! It was simply some loose jubilee clips, which were quickly tightened. Since then, PRO 55T has been put to regular use with confidence.

△ **Drives into Manchester and on the Snake Pass road.**

▽ **Who says these modern classics aren't practical performers?**

▽▷ **David finally got to the bottom of a small coolant leak.**

Thankfully, the weather picked up at that point and the Mercedes was reliable and economical. Wafting around in something different always makes you feel special even when commuting to work, or taking the kids to school or to a muddy football club. The long rear trunk easily swallows suitcases, or a family shop to boot!

As a family runaround, the E220 Cabriolet has been great. I just have to be strict with the cleaning regime, especially with the muck that gets inside the freshly repaired wings and the detritus that comes with ferrying young children about the place. Hopefully the new family car arrives before winter and the salt does!





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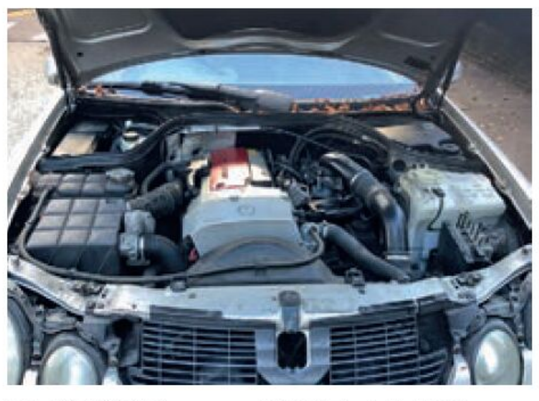
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SL500 2010 (Jersey registration), no delivery option available – must be collected. Very good condition overall, some small marks commensurate with age. Silver with grey leather. AMG alloys with new Yokohama tyres. Full-service history. Drives very well. 30,000 miles. Two owners. £14,000. Feel free to text. Tel: 07829 990082. St Lawrence, Jersey ***[LAP11]***



CLK320 Coupe 2005, 15,500 miles, silver with grey leather, immaculate condition, sat nav, heated seats, three owners, service history, new MOT, ULEZ compliant, spare wheel with unused cotton cloves. Second CLK not used and space needed. £5,000. 07507 388003. Wiltshire. ***[LAP10]***



C140 CL500 35,000 miles, superb condition with Brabus wheels and exhaust. Fine impressive example. Silver with black leather. MOT May 2024. £18,500 Tel: 07970 288908. Cardiff. ***[LAP16]***



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CLK200 Kompressor Cabriolet Avantgarde Two-door, 2008/08 plate, 91,500 miles, 1.8 petrol, 184bhp, MOT May 2024, automatic five-speed Tiptronic auto. Comprehensive service history – seven service stamps. Car located in Bradford but has come from Edinburgh. £3,790. Tel: 07947 730561. ***[LA8]***



CLS320 CDI Very clean in and out, 172,000 miles on the clock, 18-inch alloy wheels. Tel: 07868 858687. Dartford. ***[LAP7]***



A-Class AMG 104,000 miles, good condition throughout. Tel: 07552 497917. Leighton Buzzard. ***[LAP10]***



A-Class Hatchback Immaculate condition, one owner from new, service history from Mercedes. Has another two years warranty from main dealer. Two keys, Guard X cleaning pack. Tyre pressure machine. Tel: 07878 820763. Derby. ***[LAP15]***

SLK280 2007, only 47,800 miles, super smooth 3.0L V6 with seven-speed auto, petrol, 231bhp, leather interior, Airscarf, parking sensors, £5,250. Tel: 0711 132422. Essex ***[LA]***



C124 E220 Coupe 1995,165,924 miles. Almandine red with mushroom leather interior. FSH, owned for last 22 years and currently on SORN. Any reasonable offer considered. Tel: 01905 773720 for further details. Worcestershire. ***[CM45P1]***

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230E Automatic, fuel injection, Smoke Silver metallic with brown cloth, electric windows, sunroof, very good condition. A pleasure to drive, priced to sell. Would PX a 190D. £POA. Tel: 0151 6390149. Wallasey. ***[JK37]***



SL320 2000, 57,800 miles, full service history. Fastidiously maintained condition, full mechanical appraisal on SLShop website. £19,500 ono. Tel: 01746 783878. South Staffs. ***[JK35]***



500SL 1986, silver, blue leather, 116,000 miles. Recent factory hood. Long term lady owner. MOT July 2024. Drives superbly. £26,500. Tel: 01904 700 277 or 07968 056464. York. ***[JK34]***



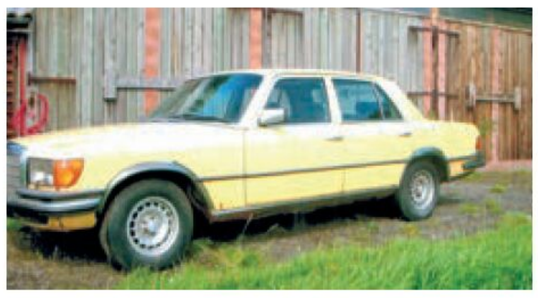
350SLC 1972 fully restored in 2014 for Drew Pritchard, repainted, all welding done, gearbox rebuilt three years ago, leather trim, steering box overhauled, £15,955. Tel: 07503 739538. West London. ***[JK31]***



CLK230 K Cabriolet Evolution 2.3-litre, red top, supercharged engine, 99,347 genuine miles, 12 month's MOT, one previous lady owner, in very good overall condition. Everything works as it should. Drives and looks great. More pics available call or Whatsapp. Tel: 07785 712087. Crosby. ***[JK28]***



350SL 1976, rare colour Mercedes, black textile trim, needs paintwork, 95,000 miles, many invoices, fully recommissioned, automatic, personal plate, tax and MOT exempt, ULEZ exempt, £1,395. Tel: 07503 739538. West London. ***[JK32]***



450SE 1978 automatic, yellow, brown leather, 112,000 miles, full Mercedes service history, ESR, alloys and much more. Some body corrosion but a worthwhile restoration. Not run in 15 years. £3,750. Tel: 01904 700277 or 07968 056464. York. ***[JK33]***



380SL 1985, Smoke Silver with 76,622 miles. Factory hardtop with convertible top tucked inside. I have owned the car for 25 years. Reason for sale is I'm getting too old. No MOT but in running order, needs some TLC to bodywork. Good refurb project. £8,000 no offers. Tel: 01822 841757. Tavistock, Devon. ***[JK27]***



450SL 1980, 89,000 miles. Historic car, ULEZ compliant. Silver blue, tan leather interior, hardtop and dark brown soft top. Well cared for and maintained for last 23 years. FSH and MOTs. Runs beautifully. Always garaged. £29,500 Tel: 07864 712297. Orpington, London Borough of Bromley. ***[JK23]***



300SL-24 1993, black/tan, two owners, full Mercedes-Benz service history, 99,000 miles, new discs/pads always garaged, cost new £69,575, 14,000 miles in last 20 years, MOT March 2024. £8,000. Tel: 01371 876647. Essex. ***[JK25]***



SL350 with full service history, absolutely stunning, 79,800 miles, full set of spare wheels with winter tyres included, £8,000. Tel: 07427 161268. Barnstaple. ***[JK3]***



S320 CDI L 2009, LWB, luxury saloon with only 79,000 miles, silver, grey leather, all S-Class refinements with fully adjustable rears seats. One previous owner, full M-B main dealer service history, all invoices and current MOT. This car has always been garaged with little winter use and is now surplus to my requirements. Please call for further details. £9,750 OVNO. Tel: 07836 232969. email: mbdneg@gmail.com. ***[JK20]***

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190E 2.6 1990, in need of respray and minor body work. AMG bodykit, split alloys, sunroof. Broken front screen and O/S front drop glass, but otherwise intact and drives well. Nice engine gearbox not too far off, nice project. Tel: 07950 872537. ***[JK26]***



C-Class Elegance An original example of Mercedes W202. Only two owners from new, cared for by current lady owner for last 23 years. Full service history, under 100,000 miles on the clock. Viewings and sensible offers welcome. £2,000. Tel: 07588 484630. Portsmouth. ***[JK22]***



E320 Cabriolet Sportline 1996, P reg, automatic, Tourmaline Green, black leather, black soft top. 142,000 miles, MOT till 2024, service history. Full Sportline spec, air con, cruise etc. One of the last registered 1996 cars. Needs cosmetic TLC, offers on £10,700. Tel: 07956 995556. Pinner, Middlesex. ***[JK21]***



190E 1990, automatic, petrol, three keys, replaced front calipers, pads, rear springs, shocks, starter. Faults rear electric windows, offside door outer handle, door card tops, driver's seat. Paint good but lacquer peeling and pitted. £2,550. Tel: 07712 638766. Worthing. ***[JK1]***



300SE 1986, W126 frame, Petrol blue, sunroof, automatic, five-seater saloon. With present owner for 30 years. 166,000 miles now and MOT until December 2023. Full history receipts, and £3,000 spent on the superstructure recently. Health condition denies me the energy to complete an update. This vehicle needs a new owner to complete the task. £2,000 ono. Tel: 0208 789 5466 or 07940 019857. ***[JK6]***



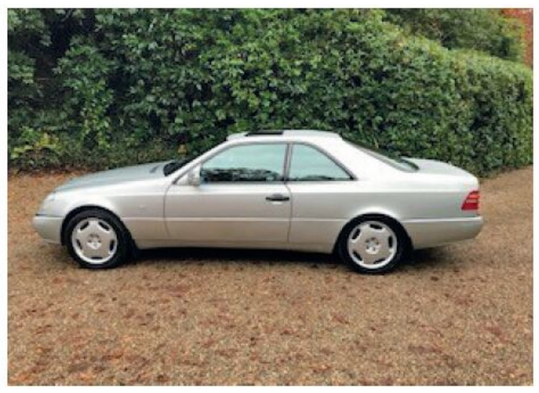
C215 CL55 AMG 2002, low mileage 78,000, FSR, MOT Nov 2023, automatic, fully loaded, double glazed, heated/cooled seats, bi-xenon headlights, keyless entry/ignition, etc. First to see will buy, loss of storage forces sale, £9,500. Tel: 07584 020272. Whyteleafe, Surrey ***[JK4]***



A180 CDI AMG 2015, Night edition**,** covered 31,000 miles from new with service history. Finished in metallic Cosmos Black with contrasting black Anthracite leather/microfibre interior. This Mercedes has all the usual luxurious refinements and is a stunning example of this model. Exceptional quality and it drives without fault. Must be one of the best examples of this model. Will come with 12 months MOT and warranty. Please feel free to ask for any more information. £POA. Tel: 07779 335737. Burton on Trent. ***[JK10]***



SLK200 spares or repair in Linarite blue, 2000, failed MOT (rear suspension mounts corroded), 113,000 miles, upper bodywork good, engine/transmission good, vario-roof all working, no warning lights on dash, car in South Yorks. Buyer to collect £500 or best offer. Tel: 07970 864242. Doncaster. ***[JK2]***



C140 CL600 V12 coupe, 1998, 90,000 miles, silver metallic, refurbished two-tone blue-grey nappa leather, refurbished alloys, fully loaded spec, FSH, immaculate inside and out, drives perfectly, MOT to Aug 2024. Price reduced to £17,500 ono. Tel: 07714 471014. Dorking, Surrey. ***[JK11]***



E220 Coupe 1994, 114,000 miles, red, FSH, refurbished alloys, refurbished cream leather with red piping, new front/rear windscreens, new tyres, immaculate inside and out, MOT to Mar 2024, last serviced Feb 2023, Price reduced to £6,000 ono. Tel 07714 471014. Dorking, Surrey. ***[JK12]***

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E350 CDI Coupe V6, 2012, less than 42,000 miles on the clock with FSH, and fully updated Mercedes-Benz virtual logbook. The car has been maintained via both Mercedes-Benz main dealers and specialists. Low-mileage coupe is finished in metallic black with a light grey leather interior with Apple CarPlay upgrade. £13,000 ono. Tel: 07872 594487. Ilkey. ***[JK8]***



W116 450SE 1979, 95,000 miles, auto, metallic magnetite blue, bamboo leather interior, air con, excellent chrome, M-B splashguards, owner's wallet, histories, spare wheel, tools, jack, M-B first aid kit, fire extinguisher, £POA. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk ***[EFW1]***



W123 280CE 1983, 80,000 miles, auto, flat Sahara beige, olive cloth interior, ESR, air con, excellent chrome, M-B splashguards, spare wheel, tools, triangle, MB first aid kit, history, £POA. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk ***[EFW2]***

E220 Cabriolet 1995, fabulous**,** refined car in great condition and drives perfectly. Always garaged and regularly maintained throughout its life with an extensive documented service history. The car has just passed its MOT with no advisories and benefits from virtually new Goodyear tyres, as well as refurbed alloys. Only four previous owners. Happy to answer any questions or arrange a viewing. Next MOT due May 19 2024, 15-hole alloy wheels. Tel: 07902 433000. North London. ***[JK]***

MERC TRADER



C126 500SEC, 99,000 miles, Arctic White, black leather interior, ESR, air con, AMG monobloc alloys on Pirelli P Zero tyres, bills, history, tools, jack, triangle, M-B first aid kit, £POA. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk ***[EFW3]***



380SLC 1980, 86,000 miles, petrol blue with cream velour interior, very good condition throughout, drives very well, three owners and full history since new, tax free and ULEZ exempt, a real head-turner, £22,000. Tel: 07721 746433. Kent ***[EFW7]***



180 Ponton 1954, petrol saloon, I have no time to complete this easy project, some re-chroming and bead blasting has been done, it is now ready for someone to complete the project, £8,000 ONO. Tel: 07877 198628. Bedhampton ***[EFW11]***



CLK55 AMG Cabriolet 61,000 miles, metallic black, pristine light grey (rather than usual black) nappa leather, two keys, M-B Club member, very good history – nine stamps, last serviced by specialist October 2022 (£1,250 spent), dry stored in winter, very good Michelin Pilot Sport tyres, £11,450 ONO. Tel: 07770 765554. Gerrards Cross ***[EFW15]***



W124 200E Avantgarde 1990, metallic silver blue, auto, spares or repair, £POA. Tel: 07413 064712. Suffolk ***[EFW4]***



E200 BlueEfficiency Avantgarde 2010, 60,000 miles, four-door, auto, reg with private plate, full M-B service history, metallic grey, full black leather seats, sat nav, two keys, two owners, well maintained with documentation, just been serviced, gorgeous condition, £7,000 ONO. Tel: 07805 933528. Essex ***[EFW8]***



CLS350 CDI Grand Edition Four-door, two owners from new (one being the dealer as ex-demo) same owner since 2010, FSH with all receipts, excellent condition for the year, one-year MOT, two keys, £6,450. Tel: 07768 511243. Milton Keynes ***[EFW12]***



C43 AMG Estate 2000, 150,000 miles, one-year MOT, full history folder up to date including original bill of sale, all the toys you would expect from an AMG of this year, very recent full service (including spark plugs), gearbox service by John Haynes, lots of money spent this year, this very rare car is very clean inside and out and drives very well, comes with two keys, £8,995 ONO. Tel: 07710 414854. Worthing ***[EFW19]***



W201 190E 1990, Arctic White, auto, very good blue block cloth interior, ESR, spare wheel, M-B splashguards, tools, hack, triangle, first aid kit, bills and history, £POA. Tel: 07413 064732. Suffolk ***[EFW5]***



W202 C280 Sport 1998, 75,000 miles, in excellent condition throughout, only three previous owners, brilliant silver with black leather interior, M112 V6 (197bhp), full AMG bodykit, exhaust, electric seats, Goodyear Eagle 1 Tyres, full respray November 2022, good SH, all paperwork available, £POA. Tel: 07745 623664. Tring ***[EFW9]***



E280 Avantgarde 2001, 81,000 miles, auto saloon, two owners from new, comprehensive service history, immaculate inside and out, Ruby Red metallic with anthracite leather, £4,999 ONO. Tel: 07850 187400. Ormskirk ***[EFW14]***



CLK270 CDI Coupe, 38,000 miles, M-B owners club member, drives superbly, £650 spent in January in gearbox full service and conductor plate, private plate, Sony apple car play stereo, last MOT no advisories, MOT history online, any inspection welcome, some history, rear seats unused, two keys, £POA. Tel: 07855 861825. Glasgow ***[EFW20]***



W123 230E 1981, 120,000 miles, metallic silver blue, four-speed manual, good blue cloth interior, air con, MB alloys, service history, spare wheel, tools, jack, triangle, first aid kit, £POA. Tel: 07413 064732. Suffolk ***[EFW6]***



E320 Cabriolet Sportline 158,000 miles, rare, metallic bornite, light brown leather interior, five-speed auto, FSH with plenty of bills, sold with 12 months MOT, drives beautifully, competitively priced, £9,750. Tel: 07565 006735. Cambridge ***[EFW17]***

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C123 300CD Coupe 1984, 84,000 miles, (not California import), bamboo leather interior, 2,996cc diesel engine, five-speed manual, stripped for spraying, all welding complete, £POA. Tel: 07413 064732. Suffolk ***[EF]***



SL350 2004, 55,950 miles, 3.7 litres, rare Firemist Red metallic (C548) with cream leather interior, glass panoramic roof, in my ownership since September 2017 and has a full service history for that time, additionally it has upgraded Brembo discs and pads, new coil springs, fully refurbished 18-inch AMG diamond cut wheels, as new tyres, private plate and a tailored cover included, MOT to September 2023, much admired and regularly shown, £9,950 ONO. Tel: 07739 737889. Cardiff ***[EFW22]***



SL280 1995, petrol, automatic, grey leather interior, drives beautifully, navy blue soft top and matching hardtop, excellent condition all round with great service history, no expense spared maintaining this fabulous future classic, £9,950. Tel: 07973 344201. West Midlands ***[EFW21]***



SL500 AMG 2003, silver with red interior, MOT until March 2024, in excellent condition and has had 'B' service 1500 miles ago at Mercedes independent garage, lovely looking car in exceptional condition, £9,750 ONO. Tel: 07710 459055. Chester ***[EFW26]***



CL63 AMG Biturbo 65,000 miles, pearlescent white with black leather, factory carbon fibre exterior and interior trim, too many extras to list, reluctant sale due to house purchase, £25,500. Tel: 07789 513517. Surrey ***[EFW23]***



V124 260E long-wheelbase 57,450 miles, auto, silver, grey interior, very clean, private plate, ultra smooth, quiet engine and gearbox, good oil pressure, very good condition all round, service records, owned 10 years, six-door limousine, seats eight, £POA. Tel: 07982 825394. Tyne and Wear ***[EFW24]***



C43 AMG 2001, 100,000 miles, one of the last ones produced, FSH and will have fresh MOT, always garaged, absolutely no rust and never modified or damaged, more pictures can be supplied upon interest, £10,000 ONO. Tel: 07989 888880. New Romney ***[EFW25]***



SLK Kompressor 1999, four excellent tyres, serviced during my five-year ownership by John Haynes, blue/black leather interior, Bluetooth CD radio with USB, M-B and Sadcase member, new oil/filter, 12-month MOT valid until July 2024, all extras still with car, £2,950. Tel: 01403 710029 / 07730437219. Horsham ***[EFW27]***



W109 300SEL 1969, 106,000 miles, 6.3, LHD, auto, blue metallic 387, mechanically excellent, no rust or rot anywhere, drives superbly, ivory leather, interior and carpets, FSH, only one previous owner, £30,000 ONO. Tel: 07818 471980. Canterbury ***[EFW28]***



V220 S320 CDI L 2004, 141,000 miles, long-wheelbase model, fully loaded, electric heated seats front and rear, mirrors, windows, sunroof, cruise, park assist, air suspension, FSR, MOT March 2024, unmarked interior and paintwork, top of the range model, beautiful drive, 4 x recent tyres, spare unused, well looked after, £2,250. Tel 0208 660 4538 / 07584 020272. Surrey ***[EFW30]***

INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



W201 2.5D Five-cylinder, 40,000km on mechanicals, total rebuild and blueprinted with Evolution II rims. Body has original colour, no rust and has done 599,000km. Exhaust has been handmade, uses 4.6 litres of fuel per 100km. AUD$16.200. All invoices available and total $25.000. Tel: +61 437 356887. Tasmania, Australia ***[LAP14]***



190SL Roadster 1963, completely restored. Everything has been rebuilt, refinished or replaced. Runs and drives as new. This car is a work of art. It would look at home in an art gallery as well as the street. The hardtop is completely restored as well. The Dove Grey soft top is a nice touch. Tel: +852 4532 7865. Pontianak, Indonesia. ***[CM45P12R]***



190SL 1957, in excellent restored condition. Red with light beige interior, interior is in excellent condition, good set of tyres all around and a spare also comes with the car. The engine runs strong and is the original fitted from new. The transmission goes into gears with no problems. The clutch is tight. Good chrome, rare find in such beautiful condition. There are no dents, dings or scratches anywhere, no rust and very solid underneath, the top is also in excellent condition, all the gauges work. Tel:+812 6902 8460. Surabaya. Indonesia ***[CM45P13R]***



C124 300CE 1987, white with burgundy interior. Stunning, original LHD car with 61,000km. POA. Tel: +1 250 8120988. Email: james300ce@gmail.com North Saanich, Canada. ***[CM45P2R]***

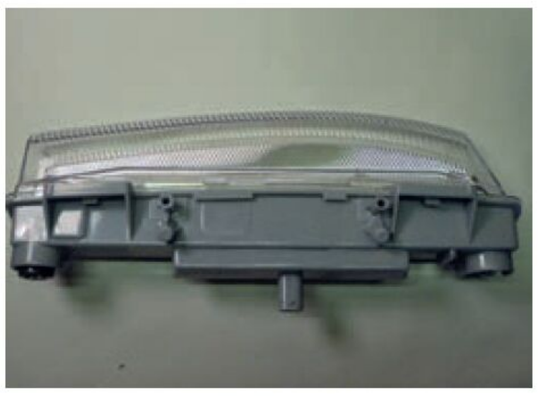
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PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES





W212 E-Class SE headlights For 2013-2014 facelift model. Includes both control modules on each headlamp. Price £1,290. Tel: 028 66341988 or +353 862553232. Enniskillen. ***[LAP5/6]***



Pair of new SLK sidelights/ running lights £50. Tel: 01903 784375. W.Sussex. ***[LAP1]***



Gearbox paddleshift extensions For SLK (2011-on), new condition, £30. Tel: 01903 784375. West Sussex ***[LAP2]***



Large Perspex windbreaker With fittings, for SLK (2011-on), as new, £50. Tel: 01903 568799 or 01903 784375. W.Sussex ***[LAP3]***



W124 brochure pack 1985-1988 brochures, interior, paint, price list, data sheets, accessories & press photo. Covers 200, 230E, 260E, 300E. All in good condition. Perfect for W124 owner. £75 for all. Tel: 01329 849901. Fareham. ***[CM45P3R]***



Pre-merger AMG brochure pack Early pack covering W123, W126, R107, G-Wagon as per photos. Fold out brochure and 7x vehicle photos/data sheets. Rare pack in good condition. £350. Tel: 01329 849901. Fareham. ***[CM45P4R]***



Pre-merger AMG brochure pack Early brochure pack cover 1980s range. Good condition. Fold out brochure and x 9 vehicle pictures. Rare and hard to find. £450. Tel: 01329 849901. Fareham. ***[CM45P5R]***

Pair of W124 Mercedes front wings With hole cut out for direction indicators. Manufactured by Hadrian Group circa 2009. New and never used, £110. Tel: 01905 773720 for further details. Worcestershire. ***[CM45]***

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Full pre-merger AMG brochure pack Includes high quality vehicle photos, engines/ tuning brochure, interior and exterior/ accessories brochure, colour chart. This is a rare complete set. £495. Tel: 01329 849901. Fareham. ***[CM45P7]***



Pre-merger AMG photo set High quality photo brochure set, 7x vehicle photos. Good condition. £285. Tel: 01329 849901. Fareham. ***[CM45P6R]***



LED headlamps for E-Class Pair for 212-series model (removed from 2014 car). Part numbers A 212 826 11 91 and A 212 826 12 92. £POA. Tel: 07879 697475. Stirling. ***[JK5]***



Bosch windshield wipers In stainless steel, new and unused for 1960 Mercedes Fintail. £25. Tel: 07899 8 30420. SW London. ***[JK13]***

NO. PLATES



R4 PMG My lovely old Mercedes isn't for sale merely the registration plate. I was given a quote for it two years ago, but willing to accept less, perhaps £800 ONO. Tel: 01296 436814. Aylesbury. ***[JK30]***



126 MPH Personal plate, purchased for a Pagoda in 1971 and used on many cars since. Looks good and has no legal problems (gapping). On retention certificate. £POA. Tel: 0208 366 4639. Middlesex. ***[JK]***



JM8 414 Private plate for sale, £4,200 ono. Tel: 07760 404032. Middlesex. ***[JK]***



190 COS Personal plate, currently has certificate of entitlement. Ready to transfer, open to offers. £POA Tel: 07999 993268 Email: kyingcheng@yahoo.com. Newcastle upon Tyne. ***[JK]***



CG02 AMG Registration currently on retention. Any reasonable offer will be considered. Tel: 07586 322031. Ferndown. ***[JK]***



F1 SLC Registration number and plate. Quick sale £7,500. Tel: 07468 907131. Portsmouth. ***[JK]***

WANTED

Wanted Small amount of leather, walnut and chrome. Tel: +61 69 426723. NSW, Australia ***[LA]***

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"Here was a four-seater coupe with almost as much power as the most potent Ferrari of its day"

C140 V12

Controversial styling should not put you off the 140-series Coupe, writes Martin Buckley, especially in V12 600 form

WORDS **MARTIN BUCKLEY** IMAGES **TERRY OBORNE**

The 140-series S-Class range was one of those periodic demonstrations of technological muscle-flexing that Mercedes-Benz likes to do. Developed at a cost of $1 billion, these were cars that seemed to raise two fingers to Stuttgart's luxury rivals, pummelling them into submission with a slew of technological luxo-gimmicks you never knew you needed.

But while I never really liked the W/V140 Saloon, I have always had a sneaking regard for the C140 Coupe version, particularly the V12 600 model. While I never thought it a pretty shape, it did have a certain bloated, plutocratic appeal. The 140-series Coupe was imported to the UK in small numbers and cost an absurd amount of money – £96,000 in the case of the early, V12-engined 600SEC. But I instinctively knew it was a car whose residuals would drop through the floor. And so it proved, mainly due to the styling and thirst.

Even designer Bruno Sacco must quietly acknowledge that this dinosaur of a coupe did not carry the sheer elegance of the 126-series Coupe that it succeeded. Only the pillarless construction linked it to the large S-Class Coupes that went before, although those with longer memories might have spotted a certain kinship with the Pininfarina-bodied 300SEL 6.3 Coupe show car of 1970.

But even without the imposing size, it would still have been a wonderfully excessive car and the V12 option took that excess to another level. As if the 'poverty' 316bhp 500SEC wasn't enough, Mercedes-Benz – countering BMW's new 850 V12 coupe – felt the need to offer this 389bhp V12 engine (coded M120) seemingly just because it could.

Here was a large, four-seater coupe with almost as much power as the most potent Ferrari of its day, the F40. This meant 600SEC/S600 Coupe/CL600 buyers were placing themselves in a class more or less of their own: exclusive grand touring, mixed with near supercar performance, created by an unprecedented combination of technological innovation from a company which continued to set the benchmark for automotive excellence for another generation as a direct result of the 140-series S-Class.

△ Mercedes-Benz built just over 8,000 of the V12-engined 140-series S-Class two-door.

▷ Not only is it powerful, the mighty M120 V12 engine looks sensational too.

▽ Recirculating ball steering was light in feel and very good at absorbing shocks.

The 140-series Coupes turned out to be pretty rare, with just 26,022 built between 1992 and 1998. Of those, 8,573 were V12s. I wonder if we will look back in 20 years to the £3,000 or £4,000 that would have bought one in 2015 and say, "Were they really that cheap?"





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