

MERCEDES ENTHUSIAST ISSUE 239 FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023

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Editorial comment and the latest from the Mercedes Enthusiast team



**EQ owners in the US will soon be able to unlock more power through a \$1,200 subscription service**



**W**hilst in the market for a used car, how often do you find what appears to be the perfect example only to discover it's missing a deal-breaking optional extra, such as a performance pack? But what if you could add that missing feature after purchase? This could be the future of car ownership if current events are anything to go by. Mercedes EQ owners in the US will soon be able to unlock around 20 per cent more performance from their vehicle's battery pack through a \$1,200 subscription. My initial reaction to this news was shock, then horror. And then I sat down and thought about it. The chance to upgrade a Mercedes over-the-air (OTA) with something as juicy as more power and torque, approved by the manufacturer itself, could be a great thing indeed.

However, other car makers such as BMW are taking this subscription model much

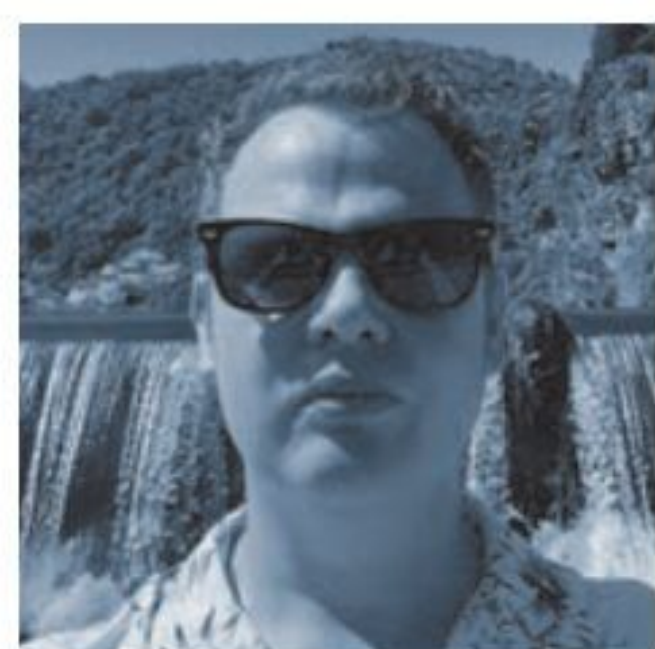


further – too far, in my book. In some of Munich's latest creations, owners are invited to pay a subscription for front seat heating, which is preinstalled but not activated. One month is £15, one year £150, three years £250, and unlimited £350.

My gut feeling is that subscription services for in-car features will become the norm. Mercedes-Benz UK doesn't offer such unlockable items yet – but I wouldn't bet against it happening in the future.

**Kyle Molyneux**  
Executive Editor

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



## Dan Bevis

For this month's cover story, Dan Bevis got in contact with trim specialist d:club to find out more about its M-B project. "This 190E is a really special build," he

begins. "I was drawn to its aggressive motorsport styling at the Players Classic show at Goodwood, but peering through the window revealed where the true magic lurked – d:club is a master of its craft, and the 190's fresh and clever interior is simply stunning." Find out why Dan was so taken with this baby Benz from page 20.



## Ian Kuah

"If the 1980s was the decade of excess, the 1990s ushered in significant restraint from overt displays of wealth. Thus, the Koenig Specials KS 600C of

1994 was viewed by many as an egregious blast from the past that was as welcome as a slap around the chops with a very large wet fish!" If that doesn't whet your appetite for Ian's feature, we don't know what will! Read how new owner Peter Qvortrup got his hands on this V12-powered grand tourer on page 26.

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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

## News



## AMG S-Class

Mercedes' performance division reveals details of its new luxury limousine with plug-in hybrid power



As you'd expect, the S-Class suspension has been overhauled by AMG, with Ride Control+ air suspension all round, as well as anti-roll technology (called Active Control) and rear axle steering to improve agility and stability through corners. Behind the 20-inch AMG wheels sit composite brakes with discs measuring 400x38mm up front and 380x32mm out back, these clamped by six-piston aluminium calipers and one-piston floating calipers respectively.

Driving modes are extensive, comprising Electric, Comfort, Battery Hold, Sport, Sport+, Slippery and Individual. There are also three modes for the ESP and four modes for the energy recuperation system, which recharges the battery during deceleration phases.

AMG's new S63 is certainly dressed to impress, but retains a pleasing degree of understatement in its styling. The Affalterbach influence extends to the cabin, where you'll find an AMG steering wheel and seats, special upholstery, exclusive trim and colours, and embossed AMG emblems. The twin-screen MBUX infotainment system is standard, with the instrument cluster packing its own unique AMG graphics. Not forgetting Dolby Atmos audio.

There are a great many driving assistance systems, but the highlight must surely be Mercedes' latest Drive Pilot providing level 3 automated driving up to 37mph.

UK market pricing and a launch date will be announced shortly.



AMG rightly decided its new S63 should feature four-wheel drive.



Road car or spaceship? Cabin brings together high tech and luxury.

**M**ercedes-AMG has unleashed its most powerful S-Class yet! The new S63 E Performance is a plug-in hybrid equipped with AMG's four-litre V8 biturbo engine and a high performance battery (HPB 150). This 13.1kWh battery provides the new S63 with a 21-mile range running solely on electric power, although the HPB's main purpose is to boost performance, driving the 187bhp electric motor on the rear axle.

The electric motor is integrated

with an electronically controlled limited-slip differential and two-speed automatically shifting transmission to create an electric drive unit (EDU). In truth, the 400V battery system can only deliver the maximum 187bhp output in 10-second bursts, but will always offer at least 94bhp.

With the electric system on song and combined with that V8, the S63 makes a colossal 791bhp and 1,055lb ft of torque, which is somehow managed by a nine-speed AMG Speedshift MCT 9G gearbox with wet multi-disc start-off clutch. With all that earth-shattering thrust, you may

imagine the S63 needs four-wheel drive – and you'd be right. AMG has equipped this uber-charge with a fully variable Performance 4Matic+ system to help transfer grunt to the road more efficiently than a rear-wheel drive setup.

The sprint from standing to 62mph is achieved in just 3.3 seconds, and if you choose the optional top speed increase you'll top out at 180mph instead of 155. These figures are packaged with an official combined fuel consumption figure of 64.2mpg and 100g/km CO2 emissions. Did we mention the new S63 weighs 2,595kg?

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## New GT2 racer

The new Mercedes-AMG GT2 is the most powerful homologated race car in the 12-year history of Affalterbach's customer sport programme. Bridging the gap

between the GT3 and GT4, the GT2 is aimed at 'gentlemen drivers' with ambitions of strapping themselves into a 697bhp, four-litre V8 biturbo-powered racer.

Those in the cockpit also have control of a six-speed sequential racing gearbox, and ride on pukka motorsport suspension with adjustable anti-roll bars. On the outside there's a carbon bonnet, large intakes and a newly developed rear wing with swan neck mounts. The GT2 also features central wheel mounts promoting swift changes of the 18-inch rims.

The new GT2 is currently undergoing final testing at circuits included in the GT2 European Series. As with the GT3 and GT4, customers of the GT2 will receive full support from motorsport experts at HWA AG.



Hard core, bare knuckle cabin design.



### △ CHARGING NETWORK

Mercedes will begin building its own charging network in 2023 for all makes of EVs. Over 10,000 branded hubs (offering 4 to 350kW) will be located in the USA, Europe and China.



### △ COMING OF AGE

In 2023, the 202-series C-Class will qualify for Germany's coveted 'H' (for historic) licence plate, as the car will be 30 years old.



### △ SCHUMACHER SIGNS UP

Mick Schumacher (son of Michael) has signed for the Mercedes-AMG F1 team as Reserve Driver for 2023. Race drivers Lewis Hamilton and George Russell finished fourth and sixth in 2022, the team itself third in the standings.

### ▽ 'RING LAP RECORD

The Mercedes-AMG One recently set a new lap record for road legal production cars at the Nürburgring Nordschleife. The F1-engined hypercar crossed the line in 6mins 35.183sec in the hands of Maro Engel.



## Stars in Miami

A mesmerising collection of high-powered Mercedes went under the hammer in RM Sotheby's Miami sale on December 10.

The highest price was fetched by a 2007 SLR McLaren 722 Edition, which found a new home for \$808,000 (£659,000). Also achieving big bucks was a 1987 560SEC AMG 6.0 Widebody, which with under 15,000 miles made an astonishing \$720,000 (£587,200). From the same modern classic era was a 1982 500SL AMG 5.0 that changed hands for \$291,000 (£237,300). This car is believed to be the first of eight examples produced with a five-speed manual gearbox for AMG North America.

Another six-litre 126-series Mercedes, this time a 560SEL AMG 6.0 from Japan, made an impressive \$257,600 (£210,000) partly thanks to the sub-40,000-mile reading in the white-faced AMG dial set. An 190E 2.5-16 Evolution II (chassis 229 of 502) with the equivalent of 54,200 miles made \$302,000 (£246,300), and a very charming looking 450SLC 5.0 that had covered a mere 43,000 miles went to a good home for \$39,200 (£32,000). That last one seemed a bit of a steal to us...

560SEC AMG 6.0 Widebody sold for about £590K.



△ 722 Edition of the SLR fetched almost £660K.

▽ 500SL AMG 5.0 manual changed hands for £237K.

▽▽ Ex-Japan, 560SEL AMG 6.0 made £210K.

▽▽▽ Mint 450SLC 5.0 sold for just £32K.

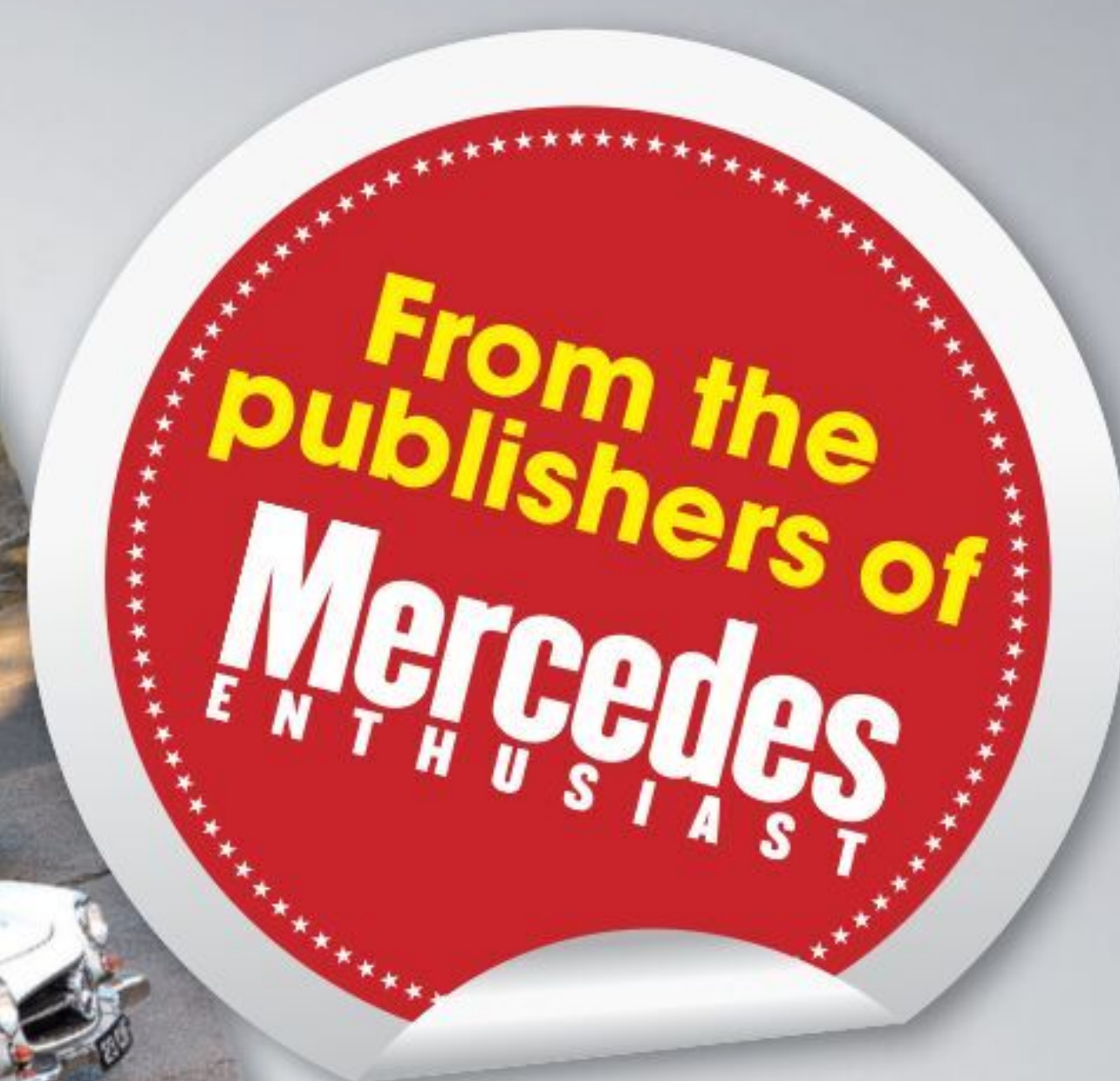




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# TALKING POINT



## This month's Talking Point...

**Do you think the 202-series C-Class is an underrated Mercedes-Benz?**

"Yes, my C220 Elegance was comfortable, capable and had great suspension. It felt like a small S-Class." **Donovan Croucamp**

"The C230 Kompressor is definitely underrated." **Ron Estolano**

"Yes! The 202 is an upcoming future classic." **Edward Fiore**

"My father owned a 1992 190E, I owned a 1998 C230 and my mother owned a 2000 C280. The W202 wasn't a bad car, but the original baby Benz was a hard act to follow." **Paul Henriques**

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

## Merc Spotter



Usually, cars from Mercedes take prime spots in front of the movie cameras. But that wasn't quite the case during Mercedes' big reveal of its 2017 F1 contender at Silverstone, where a W164 ML was used as an impressive looking camera vehicle, complete with crane mounting, matte black paintwork (possibly a wrap to reduce reflections in subjects), and what sounded very much like a stonking great V8.

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

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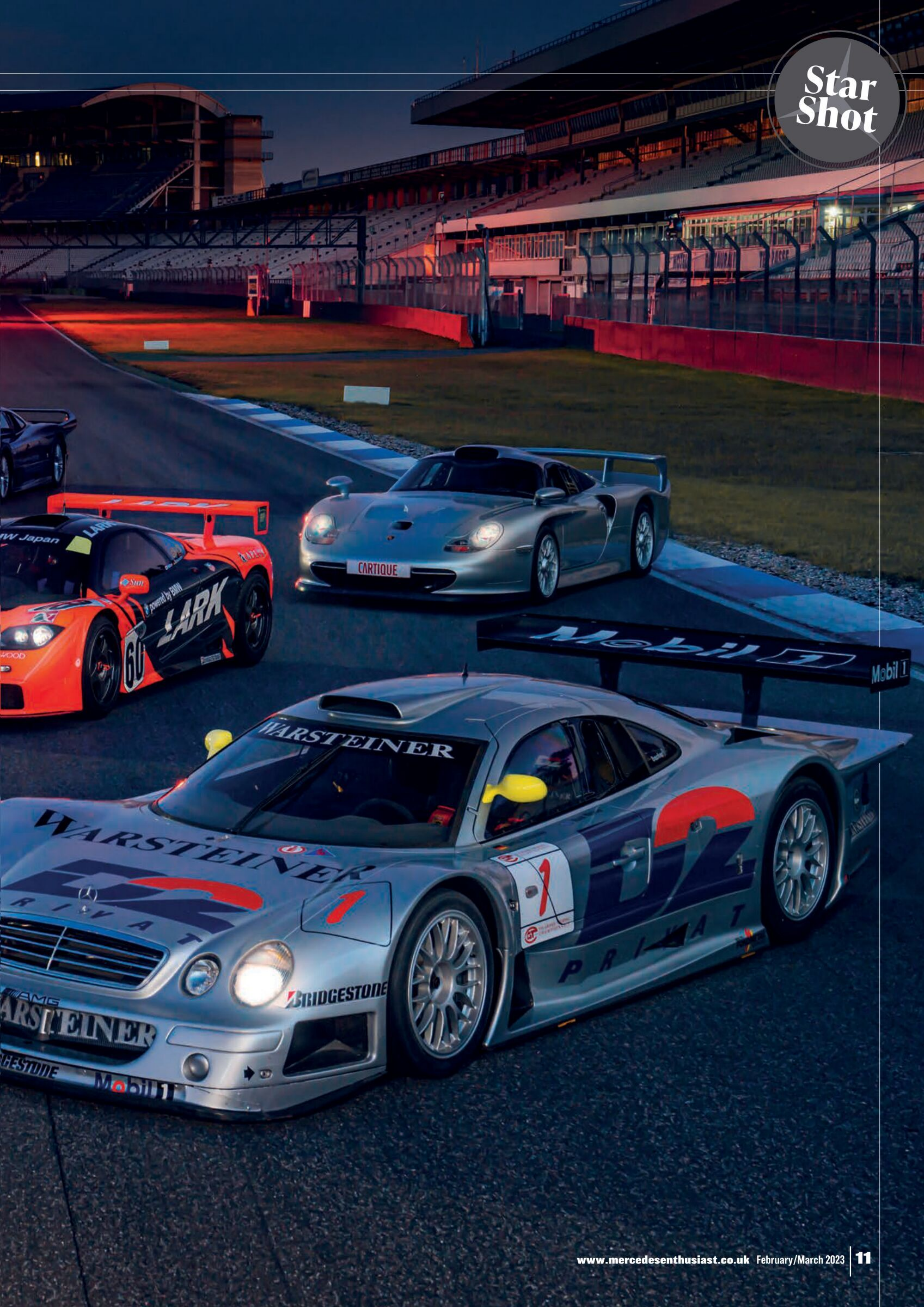
“We want to celebrate Christmas with our fans, friends and customers by sharing our most spectacular photoshoot of the year: the holy trinity of GT1 history,” announced Mechatronik, the world-renowned, German Mercedes-Benz specialist.

Pictured are the Mercedes-Benz CLK-GTR AMG, the McLaren F1 CTR and the Porsche 993 GT1, as well as road-going variants of the Mercedes and Porsche. What a sight!

IMAGE (INSTAGRAM)

@mechatronik\_official / @alexpenfold







Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear



“Right from the start, the engine choice was wide”

# 203 C-Class

**With a more dynamic appearance than its predecessors, along with a broad range of engines and trim lines, the 203-series C-Class of 2000 to 2007 was a big sales hit for Mercedes-Benz**

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

**T**he W201 190 of 1982, Mercedes' first venture into the 'compact' prestige market segment that BMW created in the previous decade with the 3-Series, was perhaps a success beyond Stuttgart's wildest dreams. The 202-series C-Class that followed ensured the car maker had a permanent presence in what was no longer a niche but a key industry battleground. And yet there was still something missing as, despite the halo effect of the 190E 2.3-/2.5-16/Evolutions, and then the W202 C36/C43 AMG,

the cars were low on the 'youth' appeal that manufacturers value so much.

Hence the 203-series launched in 2000 was an attempt to rectify that, and it started with the exterior styling. The W202's reserved – some might have said staid – appearance gave way to a curvy, sculpted look with a pronounced waistline, and a new twist on the 210 E-Class's shallow angled elliptical headlamps, all of which made for a striking design 23 years ago. Inside, the orderly formality of the original C-Class gave way to a fascia with organic curves, and half-moon dials similar to those

seen in the big CL coupe introduced the previous year.

The new cabin also included a steering wheel small by Benz standards – which signified a lot. Mercedes' traditional recirculating ball steering, never known for its communication, was abandoned in favour of the sharper acting rack and pinion that other marques had used for decades. For the first time in a mainstream Mercedes saloon, suspension was tuned for agility as well as comfort.

State-of-the-art trickery seen in the W203 (some of it imported from the then new 220-series S-Class), included the Comand

sound and satellite navigation system with Linguatronic voice activation, 'thinking' airbags for driver and passenger along with curtain airbags, Brake Assist, Headlamp Assist, and multi-function steering wheel. It was an altogether more technically sophisticated car than the 202.

Right from the start, the engine choice was wide – from the C180's two-litre, petrol four-cylinder unit up to the 3.2-litre V6 in the C320, this flagship model a marvellous package capable of making BMW owners wonder if they'd made the right choice. Supercharged fours, a smaller V6 and a couple of diesels filled out the range.

Updates to what was now Mercedes' best selling model family came thick and fast. An Estate arrived in 2001, as did the first of three AMGs, the 3.2-litre C32, and the year after the none-too-refined M111 Kompressor engines were replaced by the sweeter Twinpulse 1.8-litre supercharged motors. In 2004, a facelift – more far-reaching





◁ Five-cylinder turbodiesel in the rare C30 CDI AMGs.



△ Various trim lines offered including sportier affairs.

△△ Facelifted cabin with twin-dial instrument cluster.

△◁ A comfortable ride plus neat and nimble handling.

◁ C55 V8 inspired the next-generation 204-series C63s.

▽ Supercharged 4-cyls were unlike anything else.


than was normal – occurred, which saw a complete redesign of the instrumentation while a series of upgrades Mercedes called Direct Control were applied to the chassis, including more direct gearing for the steering, retuned suspension and a stiffer rear anti-roll bar. This term also applied to the six-speed manual gearshift, which now had a more precise shift. A wider axle track also brought a handling benefit as well as providing the car with a more purposeful appearance.



The icing on the cake was the replacement of the likeable but frantic C32 AMG with the C55 AMG, the wonderfully smooth and muscular three-valves-per-cylinder M113 V8 (362bhp/376lb ft) turning the C-Class in both Saloon and Estate form into a smaller incarnation of the performance saloon-defining E55 AMG. And we shouldn't forget the experimental 2,295 units of the C30 CDI AMG Saloon/Estate/Sport Coupe that were built in 2004, three-litre, five-cylinder turbodiesel models pumping out 228bhp and 398lb ft torque.

**The facelift was also an opportunity to address a 202-series issue that had risen almost to national conversation level:** build quality, the Achilles' heel of this otherwise consummate 'junior' executive machine which, along with similar issues on early 211-series E-Classes, was badly tarnishing Stuttgart's reputation as the supplier of the world's best made cars. In search of more sales, Mercedes-Benz had fallen into the same trap as BMW a decade earlier with its 3-Series, and released a car with some cheap looking finishing. Plus the headlong rush to introduce advanced electronics saw too many black box failures on early 202s.

Thankfully, the 203-series C-Class emerged from its facelift with those problems largely behind it, and cars built from then until the end of life cycle in 2007 were considered best in class by many. Some interesting additions made the choice even more enticing, such as the chassis enhancing Sports Package, and if you wanted the look to go with it, the AMG Sports Package, while the C320 CDI using Stuttgart's new diesel – a three-litre V6 – came close to the C55 on torque and C200 CDI on economy.

Early quality wobble aside, the 203-series showed the motoring world and Munich in particular that a Mercedes didn't have to be a car for the middle-aged, and two million buyers agreed. That the 204-series C-Class launched in 2007 was a careful evolution rather than a clean sheet design was a tribute to the 203's rightness. 



Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

# A tectonic shift



**Ian Kuah looks back on the now 40-year old W201 190 saloon – what it meant for Mercedes-Benz, rivals hailing from elsewhere in Germany, and younger car buyers with an eye for prestige wheels**

**M**y family was transplanted from Scotland to Singapore in 1966 when I was 10. During the last two years of my primary school days there, I was picked up every morning in a Mercedes 180D Ponton, and by O-Level days I was a frequent passenger in another friend's chauffeur-driven W114 200.

Despite being the 'entry-level' Mercedes models in their respective eras, this pair of saloons seemed large, comfortable and stodgy. Thus, my youthful impression of Mercedes was that of a too serious marque, further compounded by the fact that my too-serious uncle had a 600 (W100), and some of my parent's too-serious friends had various big Mercedes ranging from a 280SE 3.5 to an Adenauer!

When I returned to the UK in 1978, the W123 had taken over as the entry-level Mercedes. But for me this was yet another 'old person's car' with zero sporting appeal, and my post-graduate years were heavily invested in the Golf and Scirocco GTI tuning scene.

Then in late 1983 everything changed. Just as I began a new breakaway career from my too-serious days as an architect and was appointed Technical Editor of a car magazine, Mercedes-Benz released its groundbreaking 190 (W201) range into the wild. Penned by Bruno Sacco, the 190 was the three-pointed star's tentative foray into a brand-new segment that would see its average customer age plummet by well over a decade overnight.

**I**n many respects, the 190 was Untertürkheim's answer to the BMW 3-Series (E30), which had evolved from the hugely successful 3-Series (E21), itself a direct descendant of the -02 range whose buoyant sales had saved BMW's skin in the late 1960s. As a compact luxury saloon, the 190 featured a higher level of comfort and sophistication than the more overtly sporting BMW.

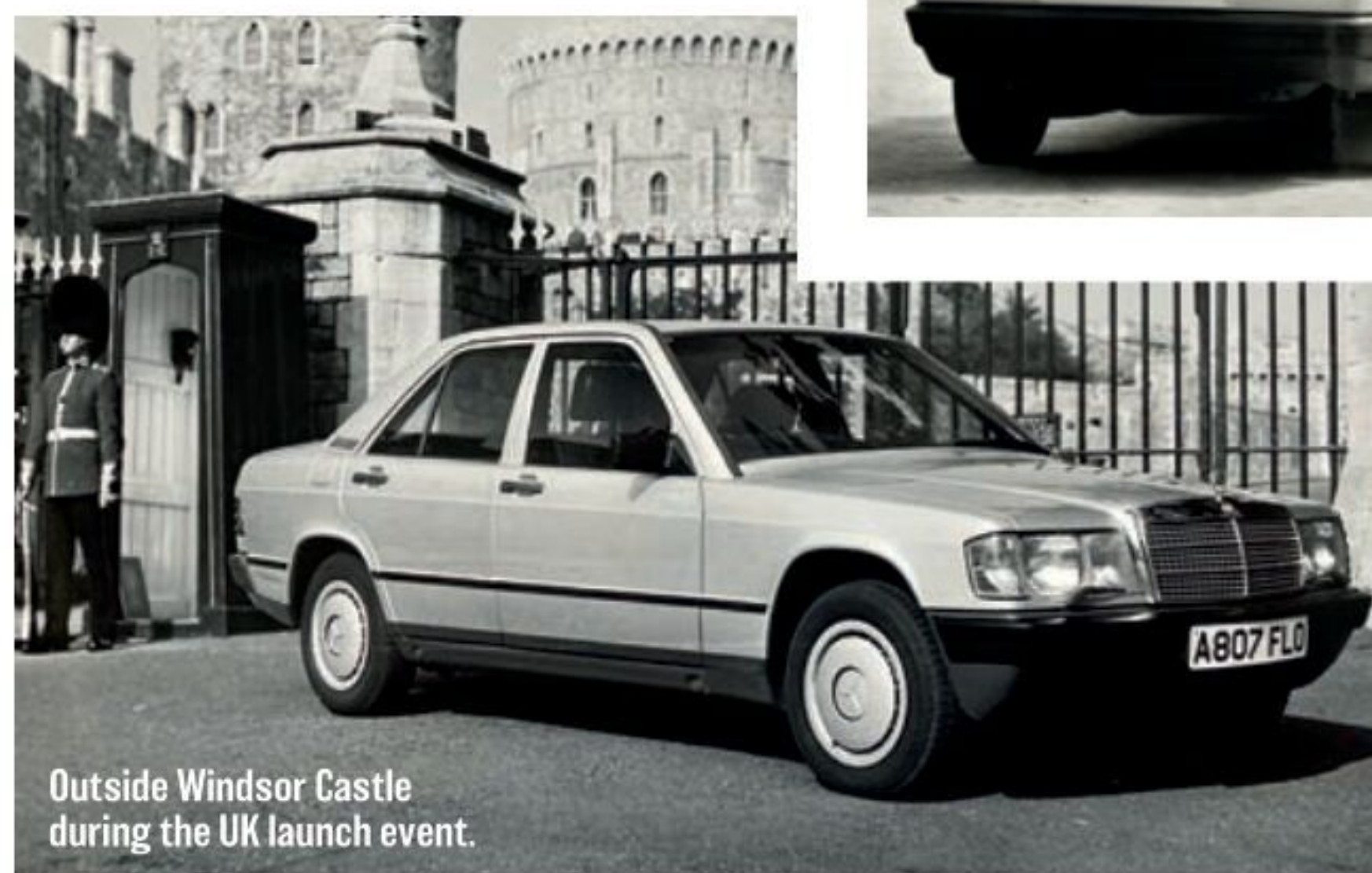
Thousands of young and youthful buyers, who recognised the over-engineered quality of Mercedes from their father's and grandfather's stolid saloons, but could not come to terms with the marque's baked-in upright image, saw

the 190 as manna from heaven and bought into the shiny new dream.

The big surprise for keen drivers was the fact that the revolutionary multi-link independent rear suspension gave the compact Mercedes superior driving dynamics to its Bavarian rival. Still relying on evolutions of the -02's dated semi-trailing arm rear suspension, the E21 and E30 3-Series had a well-deserved reputation for being treacherous on slippery roads. Three years

**The superiority of the Mercedes chassis was abundantly clear to me**

▽ Diesel power not just for keen taxi drivers...



Outside Windsor Castle during the UK launch event.

earlier I had experienced a big 'moment' in a BMW 323i (E21), when its rear tyres succumbed to the camber on a dry country road during the final phase of an overtake at a velocity I shall simply describe as 'near the top of third gear'. Thanking God for my skidpan training, the BMW was promptly crossed off my wish list!

The superiority of the Mercedes chassis was abundantly clear to me on the UK press launch of the 190E, where its superior grip and progressive handling on cold and sodden Cumbrian tarmac told me that Mercedes had a rather special car on its hands. Just how special would not become totally clear until May 12 1984 when I was handed the keys to a 190E 2.3-16 at the Nürburgring Nordschleife. With

thanks to my well-remembered friend, the late Erik Johnson, Mercedes-Benz UK's PR boss at the time, and his able assistant Marlies Salmon, that is a story for another day.

Meanwhile, the German tuning industry was busy churning out engine and suspension upgrades along with a plethora of alloy wheels and aerodynamic styling kits for the Golf GTI, Escort XR3i, 3-Series and the newly minted mini-Mercedes. By 1985, the 190 was the most tuned car in Germany as a percentage of new car sales. Just to qualify that statistic, back then a set of aftermarket alloy wheels counted as tuning.

**U**ntil the debut of the 2.6 litre M103 six-cylinder motor in the 190 in late 1985, aftermarket engine transplants were popular, with Brabus Autosport, as the company was known

in those early years, the first to shoehorn the 247bhp, five-litre M117 V8 into a 190E. But once the factory 190E 2.6 came on stream the lighter and more powerful Brabus 3.6S became the staple power unit for its masterful W201 and W124 conversions.

When I spoke to Bruno Sacco before he retired from Mercedes in

1999, he told me that the tectonic shift the 190 had created within the company's hitherto ultra conservative culture made it the most important car he and his team had created whilst he was Head of Styling.

Good design always speaks for itself and, four decades on, the 190's taut styling and clever packaging has stood the test of time and the mini-Mercedes has attained a well-deserved classic status. However, the ultimate irony is that the C-Class generations that descended from this first ever Mercedes' compact luxury saloon have slowly and inexorably grown as large as the mid-sized models that sparked off this segment's creation. The more things change, the more they remain the same.



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

# Star stuff



**The iconic Mercedes-Benz emblem is under threat, reckons David Sutherland. Here he looks back on the history of the famous three-pointed star and how its usage has evolved over the years**

**W**hat happened to it and why? That perfectly formed, unique and defining detail on a Mercedes-Benz that so many of us revere, and which for some is itself a good enough reason to buy into the German marque. At the beginning of the last century, it symbolised Daimler's ambition to supply engines for land, sea and air transport, and after Mercedes-Benz formed in 1926 was seen on all its road cars – but now only the S-Class and Maybach GLS retain it.

I'm asking, of course, about the fate of the three-pointed star that used to proudly adorn the Mercedes grille, and since the early 1990s the leading edge of the bonnet. But I know the answer, and it's a simple one: it became a victim of the unending quest to find younger buyers to replace an ageing customer demographic, no doubt meticulous market research having convinced the present curators of the Stuttgart nameplate that the traditional upright tri-star no longer conveys the brand values of 21st century Mercedes-Benz. The larger, flat grille badge – first prominent on the 1930s grand prix cars, and then the 1952 300SL sports car racer and road-going 1954 300SL, and on every SL since – is deemed to more effectively and overtly flaunt the prestige of ownership.

**T**he star did once have a practical purpose, in the 1920s being part of the screw-off radiator cap, and was even made with a built-in water thermometer. When radiators had disappeared under the bonnet by the 1940s, this now cosmetic-only feature might have been retired, but it wasn't, and I'm so glad, because little about cars stirs me like looking down the bonnet line of a Mercedes in flight and seeing the star gently rising and falling under acceleration and braking, and as cambers and

inclines are negotiated.

The further back you go in time, the more magnificent the Mercedes star is, and among the most impressive must be that attached to the W100 600 limousine introduced in 1963 to replace the long-running 300 Adenauer. So much about the 600 is larger than life, including the star, which was 20 per cent larger than those of other Mercedes of that time.

In those years, the free-standing star was often likened to a gunshot, a joke that

Owners loved their cars' star, but so unfortunately did thieves, Mercedes-Benz telling us that replacement badges are the most commonly requested items at dealers' parts counters. Fortunately the star, at least for modern Benzes, is still available and just about reasonably priced at around £40. About a decade ago, a Mercedes dealer in Spain had a special badge made up where the star could be easily removed from its base. I owned a 124 Coupe at the time and came by one, but never

got round to fitting it, and it remains on my desk to be absent-mindedly clicked and unclicked.

**W**e knew the star was in trouble by the early 2000s, because the Sport-spec models Mercedes was keen on promoting did not wear it, and those it remained on (such as Elegance spec cars) typically had the more restrained look. And on these cars you could only see the top half of the star from the driver's seat, leaving me with the impression that the marketing people were embarrassed that it was there at all.

Removing the star badge from the iconic S-Class was thankfully a re-focussing too far, at least for now. A colleague who runs a magazine for chauffeurs and professional hire

drivers told me that his readers – and their bosses/clients – expected any large Mercedes saloon used in their trade to be historically starred and would take a very dim view of the marque if they were denied that. Mercedes-Benz clearly received that and other similar messages loud and clear.

To me, Mercedes-Benz regards the upright star's place to be in the past, not the future. I can't object to a forward-looking mindset, but I'm sad to see the last of something that allowed Mercedes cars to stand out at least slightly in the increasing homogeneity of motorcar styling.



300SEL 6.3 with its traditionally located three-pointed star.



△ Big star badge on grille of W204 C-Class Sport.



△ Removable star created by a Spanish M-B dealer.

Mercedes-Benz may not have been comfortable with, and by the early 1970s, with the Fintail saloon and W111 Coupe and Cabriolet discontinued, the star began its long and slow journey to obscurity. Safety consciousness was a factor too, and while since the early 1950s the star had been sprung-mounted to make it a little less hazardous to pedestrians, a smaller design was always going to help in this respect.

**The star did once have a practical purpose**



# Peter Jarvis

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



Mercedes 560SL Sports 1988 LHD

£39,500



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



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports

£39,750



1985, finished in gleaming unmarked classic white, with black hide interior, rear seats, hard and soft tops, automatic, power steering, power windows, ABS brakes, alloys, stereo system, 69,000 miles, service history, complete with all tools, new Mot supplied on purchase, only three previous owners, always garaged, drives superb, excellent example.



Mercedes Sports 1985 280SL

£27,750



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



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports

£38,750



1985/6, finished in unmarked diamond blue, with contrasting hide interior, hard and soft tops, rear seats, over mats, power windows, central locking, stereo system, ABS, alloys, cruise control, automatic, power steering, complete with all tools, only 76,000 miles from new with complete service history from new, only two previous owners, just serviced, drives like new, and in superb condition.



Mercedes 380SL Sports 1985/6

£29,750

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# Social Club

Mercedes-Benz related highlights from the world of social media



Scott Newman

 @addictedtosliding

Call me King Arthur because today I found the Grail. I've loved this car ever since it was sold new in Hobart and I'd see it on the way to university (unless the company sold two bronze E55 Estates...) and every time I see it a bit of drool comes out. Fabulous that such a rare car is still in immaculate condition. Dribble.



Hilton & Moss

 @hiltonandmoss

For sale - Mercedes-Benz 300SL. The R107 is arguably one of the most promising classic cars in the market today. This 1989 example has covered just 43,000 miles from new and is finished in Light Ivory paintwork. The asking price was £42,500.



Noortje Blokland

 @noortjeblokland

Took this interesting duo to the city centre of Breda. Ferrari Roma and Mercedes-Benz SL-Class, photographed for @dparcluxurycarsart.



Mechatronik

 @mechatronik\_official


Pushing limits on the most challenging race track on earth. #Project107

Announced by Mechatronik in the summer of 2021 and inspired by the 450SLC AMG 'Mampe', Project 107 is a track-biased version of the 107-series Mercedes-Benz SL/SLC with V8 firepower under the bonnet.






**Max Schmidt**

 @benz\_modification  
Reach for the sky.



**Warren Whyte**

 @flaneurUK  
Some Mercedes-Benz action from 10 November 2003 when we were testing layouts for the Brooklands M-B World! We wanted to make sure that the floor plates and structural columns would allow us to manoeuvre the cars into a variety of displays. We arranged for a selection of stock cars to be delivered to an old hanger and, together with our own Mercedes-Benz company cars, we spent the day moving them into a range of layouts.



**Baris Turkey**

 @thevalleyofcars  
Fascinating view.

A 215-series CL55 AMG takes in the sights of Cappadocia in Turkey.



**Tom Hollick**

 @Seat37  
Come on then, who likes a basic G-Wagen?



**Ashley Winston**

 @TheCarGuru  
I like\* walking around my local area as I get to discover lots of old rusty machines. (\*Untrue. I much prefer to drive.)



**Tim Pitt**

 @timpitt100  
Sad sight: a couple of abandoned first-gen (W116) Mercedes S-Class saloons spotted in Croydon. A straight-six 280SE and a V8 350SE.



**Auto Leitner**

 @autoleitner  
Coming soon - 1993 Mercedes-Benz 300CE-24 Cabriolet AMG. Just under 59,000km (36,600 miles) covered, the price €49,500 (£43,500).



Cover  
story

# Battle cry

Built for honour within  
d:class automotive's celebrated  
Build Battle, this DTM-styled 190E  
plaything is pretty enough to  
make grown-ups weep...

WORDS **DAN BEVIS** IMAGES **KIERAN BICKNELL**

▷▷ Performance  
seats from the  
AMC options list.

▷ The trim expert  
has outdone itself  
with this build.







**O**ne of the most annoying things about being a grown-up is the necessity to make decisions. Life is jam-packed with them, each more niggling and mind-numbing than the last: should you change energy provider, and if so, which one's offering the best rates? Should you bin that half-empty bag of rocket and watercress that's languishing in the bottom of the fridge or give it a free pass for another day? What colour should you paint the bathroom to cover up that horrible magnolia? It's endless.

Things were far simpler when we were kids. We were much freer to act on impulse, follow our whims, ignore the conventions of reality, and let our dreams flourish.

The car you're seeing here is essentially a real-world manifestation of a number of colliding childhood dreams, and Max Hawkes is an eminently appropriate ringmaster for this circus of frivolity; anyone with a passing interest in the UK modified show scene will be aware of his frankly sensational Mk4 Golf cabrio, and as he works

for the renowned interior supremos at d:class automotive, it's fair to say he's elevated playtime to the next level here.

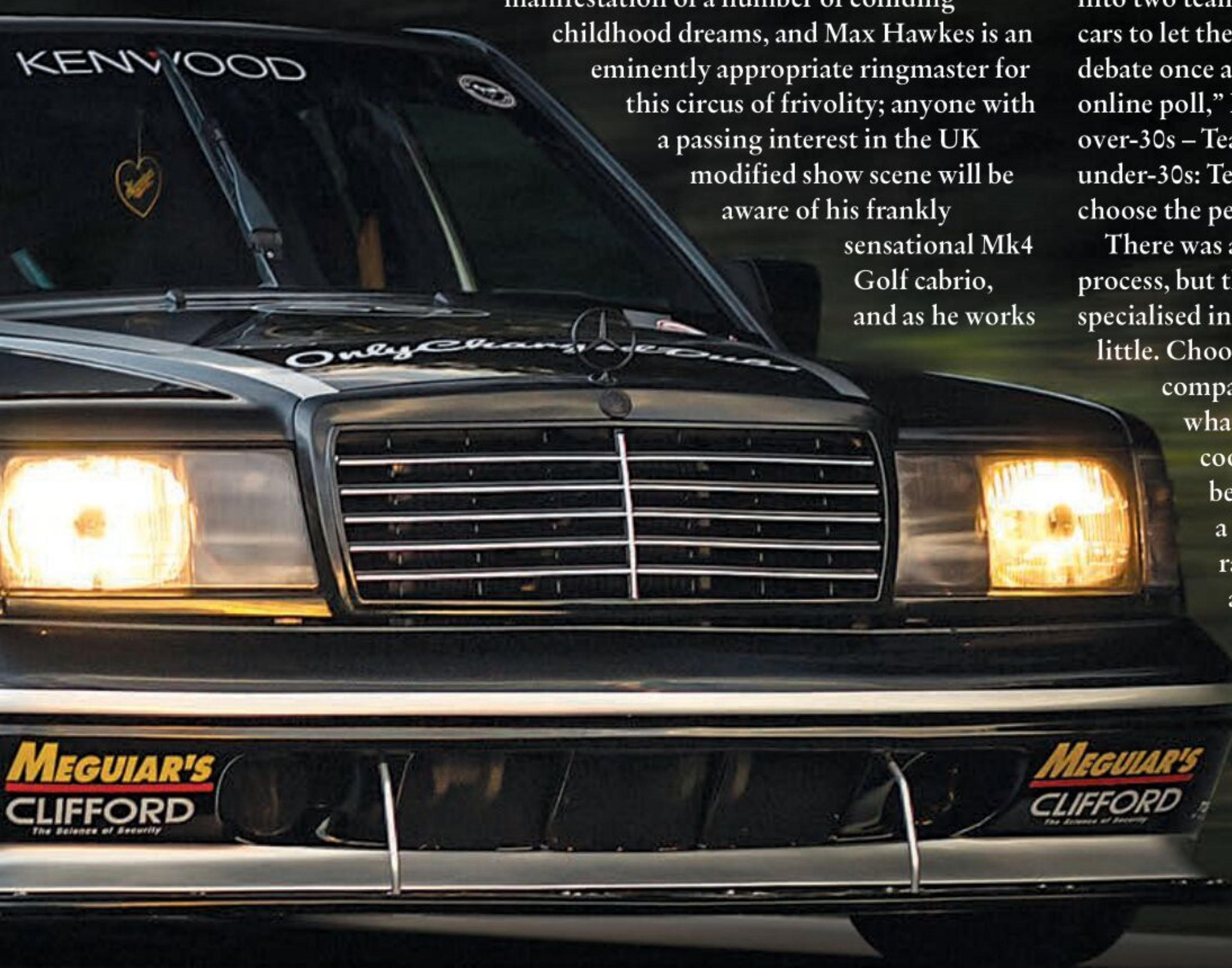
"This 190E build was part of the d:class automotive Build Battle," Max explains. "I've always debated with one of my older colleagues, Andy, over what was the better show car era: modern day or the modified *Max Power* period? I currently take part in the former, building and showing cars I own, whereas Andy used to own and build show cars back in the *Max Power* days. He was one of d:class' first customers.

"Long story short, David Price – the boss of d:class – finally decided to put our thoughts and opinions to the test: we'd split the workshop into two teams and build two cars to let the public settle this debate once and for all with an online poll," Max continues. "One team consisted of the over-30s – Team Old School, led by Andy. And the other, the under-30s: Team New Class, led by me. Now, my team had to choose the perfect car to build..."

There was a lot of head-scratching in the decision-making process, but the fact that d:class has traditionally always specialised in Mercedes-Benz helped to sway the thinking a little. Choosing a Mercedes would neatly tie in with the company values and allow the team to really showcase what they could do. The problem was that finding a cool Mercedes for around three grand that would be solid enough to modify without having to drop a bunch of cash on restoring it first was proving rather tricky – until that was, Max happened across a serendipitous post on Instagram.

"I spotted a modified 190E and the penny dropped right then," he recalls. "Personally, I had always loved the look of the old DTM race cars, and it was something I would have loved to get a chance to build. I ran the idea past the team and we all agreed. So, we set out looking for a 190E in any form to start our project!" And just like that, it was game on. ▸

**“We split the workshop into two teams and built two cars”**





▷ The modern-style build would centre around an old school platform.

Now, a heartfelt tribute is a wonderful thing. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, as the hackneyed old cliché goes, and the world is brimming with people and places paying tribute to the things that inspire them.

## “I had always loved the look of the old DTM race cars”

it's not always strictly true).

The glimmering city of Las Vegas is so enamoured of global architecture that it features its own replica Eiffel Tower, Colosseum, Egyptian pyramids, and even a little Statue of Liberty. And there's another Statue of Liberty replica in Kosovo; Thames Town near Shanghai replicates much of London; heck, in Virginia there's even a copy of Stonehenge made entirely of foam. It's called, as you might imagine, Foamhenge.

### Team effort

A little respectful borrowing is what keeps creativity vibrant and alive – this sort of behaviour is effectively a dedicated real-world version of clicking Facebook's 'Like' button. Wear your influences on your sleeve, that's the key. And so, Team New Class's 190E is a very real embodiment of this train of thought: not the sportiest example when it came from the factory, but the base doesn't matter – it's all about the authenticity and passion of the makeover.

“The whole team searched across any and every car-focused

When notable art forgers are arrested, they usually claim that their efforts are in tribute to their creative heroes rather than trying to steal a little of their reflected glory, and you can see the logic of that (even if



marketplace to help locate the correct 190E,” says Max. “We found all varieties of cars, and nearly bought a pre-modified one that had air ride and a few other bits. But then David texted me in a frenzy having found ‘the perfect car’ on the Car & Classic website; it was a white 190E 1.8 manual. I would say it was completely stock, but it had W210 E-Class alloy wheels and a slightly different front grille to normal. But essentially the rest of the car had been kept pristine.

“Finding a manual car had also become important to us,” he continues, “because we knew the path the car was going to take and an auto stick in a DTM-inspired car just wouldn't look right. So, with that, we contacted the owner who sent us a full detailed walkaround video and extensive photos. As we were doing this in

△ Rear seats removed; trimmed roll cage fitted.

△▷ Dash from CLA45; Kenwood touchscreen.







▽ Contrasting stitching on helm, dash and doors.

▽▽ Extinguisher received the d:classe finish too.

the middle of Covid, we ended up buying it unseen. We sent Loz, our transporter guy, to go and collect the car, and left it to his opinion if the car lived up to what we expected. And luckily it did!”

Inspecting the car revealed a few areas of rust, which was something of a positive for the team as it quelled any concerns about cutting up a mint car. So, with the limited budget keenly at front-of-mind, Team New Class started tearing down the Mercedes. For starters, the shell was fully stripped, then taken over to the artisans at McEwans Customs in Frome for the fitment of a bespoke bolt-in roll cage. Once it returned, the d:classe guys could set about reimagining the shell with an Evolution II bodykit, with help and advice from Barry and Darren at Multi-Tech Coachworks.

“We set about stripping down the exterior and mocking up the parts,” says Max. “It was at this point that we realised how much metal we needed to remove from the arches for the kit – so out came the Sharpie pen and angle grinder and we got cutting! Once all the arches were cut, we commenced making mounts for the arches. During this time we were designing the livery with S6 Customs, using the iconic Sonax livery as a base idea, so once the kit was fully prepped the 190E went down to S6 Customs to receive the full makeover.”

The conveyor belt of talent was operating at full tilt by this point, and within the twinkling of an eye the project was then off to Style Dynamics, who had been commissioned to craft a one-off DTM-style exhaust system. Because if it was going to look like a race car, it had darn well better sound like one. And with all this artfully achieved, it was finally time for the crew to do what they do. The cherry on the cake, the jewel in the crown, the pièce de résistance: the interior.

“We quickly decided that the existing interior wasn’t going to be enough to match the rest of the car,” says Max, “so we went all-in and bought ourselves the full dashboard and front seats from a C117 Mercedes-AMG CLA45 and started modifying to make them fit. The AMG Performance seats were fairly straightforward – the old mounts were removed to provide enough clearance for the new chairs, which are taller than the originals. However, ▷





▷ the same could not be said for the dashboard – it took us almost 100 hours to modify and make fit so that it looked like it was meant to be there!

“Once these parts were fitted, we got onto making new flat, race-inspired door cards,” he continues, “along with a rear seat delete – and then we got trimming! We decided to pay respect to the original features of this car and 190Es in general by sticking with blue leather from UK Hide for the majority of the interior, with blue Karo Sports Check cloth seat centres to pay homage

to what the 190E Cosworth interiors had. While fitting the interior, we also installed all new audio equipment that we got from Kenwood, including a new CarPlay head unit, four door speakers powered by an amp, and an under-seat subwoofer.”

This kind of custom work and creativity is all well within the d:class wheelhouse, and the guys do make it sound easy – but in fact, this manner of makeover is hugely intricate, complex and time-consuming, and certainly not without its unforeseen challenges along the way. The ignition barrel,

△ CLA dash took d:class 100 hours to integrate.

▷△ Ignition switch located in retrimmed roof.

for example, was a bit of a head-scratcher, as it didn’t want to play with the new-generation dash. Barry at Multi-Tech came up with the solution, swapping out the old mechanism for modern ignition switches and a push-button start – all of which feeds neatly into the race car vibe.

## Crowd-pleaser

And the finished product? Well, it’s simply magnificent. The other team in the build battle may have achieved something mould-breaking with their Toyota Celica project, but this 190E really is something else. “People’s reactions to the car have been fantastic,” Max beams. “The first time we took it out was just to get petrol, and literally everyone on the forecourt stopped and asked us about the car. Sadly though... a lot of them just asked how fast it was! But everyone loves the look of the 190E with the loud and bold livery it has, which works perfectly to draw them in to take a look at the interior, with people often noticing the modern seats from the outside. And don’t worry, I’m still nudging the boss to let us do an engine swap.”

Whether or not the power arrives, the class and quality of this build is undeniable. And the crux of it is that it’s basically a big toy, a wonderful expression of childhood dreams made real. Built by enthusiasts for enthusiasts, it’s a splendid plaything that’s a marvel to behold.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Engine & transmission**  
M102 1.8-litre eight-valve, DTM-style exhaust system, FEV fire suppression kit, five-speed manual gearbox

**Chassis**  
17-inch Compomotive TH1882 alloy wheels, road-legal Bridgestone Potenza semi-slicks, MTS Technik coil-overs (supplied by Only Charged Dubs), OE brakes

**Exterior**  
190E Evo II bodykit, bespoke livery designed and wrapped by S6 Customs

**Interior**  
C117 Mercedes-AMG CLA45 dashboard and seats, bespoke McEwans Customs bolt-in roll cage, fully retrimmed d:class interior using blue Karo Sports Check cloth and blue nappa leather, Kenwood DMX5020DAB head unit, Kenwood underseat subwoofer, 4x door speakers and amp, custom rear seat delete



“Everyone on the forecourt stopped and asked us about the car”

## With thanks

Jake McEwan (@mcewans\_customs) - custom roll cage; Tops Bodykits - Evolution II bodykit; @onlychargeddubs - MTS Technik coil-over kit; Chris at CTS Autoworks - suspension installation and car maintenance; Barry and Darren (@multitechcoachworks) - bodykit fitment; Dan and Paige (@s6customs) - designing and applying exterior wrap; Sakab and the boys (@styledynamics) - DTM-style exhaust; FEV fire suppression; UK Hide (@ukhideco) - Dynamica and leather supply; d:class automotive - Karo Sports Check material; Clifford - alarm system; Keith at Kenwood - audio system; Meguiar's - cleaning bag and kit supply; Notomoto - wheel stickers; not forgetting David Price, Gael Samin, Laurence Burchall, Storm Mills-Thurley, Jamie Norris and Harry Pitcher (d:class automotive on YouTube).





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# Muscles from Munich

Spotted in Japan and then shipped to the UK, this 600SEC-based V12 by Koenig Specials is now living the good life on the south coast of England

WORDS & IMAGES IAN KUAH



**“The team  
at Koenig Specials  
began designing the  
KS 600C in 1993”**





# M

y first visit to Koenig Specials in Munich was in 1984 when I tested and photographed the company's twin-turbo Ferrari Boxer and Mercedes 500SL (R107). By the time a decade had elapsed, I had driven several more Koenig cars including the legendary 'Testarossa twin turbo', all of which created excitement around the globe.

Willy Koenig seemed to like what he saw, and one day out of the blue in 1994 he asked me if I would do all the publicity photos for his new cars. The first of these turned out to be the KS 600C based on the newly-minted Mercedes 600SEC. Resplendent in blue-black metallic (199), this widebody transformation dominated the courtyard car park outside his office/workshop near the Hauptbahnhof railway station in central Munich.

Munich is rich in potential backgrounds for car photoshoots and I chose the driveway of the HypoVereinsbank HQ and the nearby Olympic Stadium as locations for pictures. In those days, gaining permission required just a quick word with the manager, and afterwards we used a nearby stretch of autobahn for the action images.

The team at Koenig Specials had begun design work on the 600C in 1993, soon after the flagship Mercedes coupe's Geneva motor show debut. Made from fibreglass, the new body panels were bonded and blended into the front and rear wings, increasing the car's width by around five inches per side! The tapered side strakes that emanate from the doors and sills incorporated large air intakes just in front of the rear wheelarches, and culminated in an F40-style wrap-around, three-piece rear spoiler. Wider front and rear bumper/spoiler sections completed the radical conversion.

Koenig filled the big wheelarches with the same three-piece OZ Racing wheel design as on its R129 SL conversion, but for the larger coupe these came in even wider 10.0J and 12.0J widths, with the choice of 18- or 19-inch diameters. To complete the purposeful stance of this flagship coupe, the ride height could be lowered by between 20mm and 40mm with bespoke springs.

Owners who simply wished to pose could retain the standard V8 or V12 engines, with Koenig's stainless steel four-pipe sports



△ A robust feel to the 140-series coupe's cabin.

△△ Something old and something altogether new...

◁▽ Three-piece 18-inch OZ alloys with large offset.

exhaust adding a deeper, throatier soundtrack and a few extra bhp. However, if more performance was required, the five-litre V8's output could be increased to 490bhp and 439lb ft (595Nm) of torque with the same Albrex supercharger and modified Bosch Motronic management system used on Koenig's R129 SL conversion. The ultimate knock-out punch came from the seven-litre upgrade for the normally aspirated V12, which delivered 525bhp with 531lb ft (720Nm) of torque. This flagship model blasted from 0-62mph in just 5.1 seconds, and went on to reach a vmax close to 190mph (305km/h).

In line with its role as the ultimate luxury express, the Koenig 500/600C could have a custom interior trim crafted from the finest leather and wood, with what was state-of-the-art audio, video and navigation systems.

Soon after the KS 600C went on sale, I remember Willy Koenig's son Walter relating a story to me about a particular client: "One of our regular German customers ordered a new KS 600C with one condition being that we part-exchange his old widebody 500SEC [126-series], whose decade-old styling was rather gauche by mid-90s standards. We were wondering how to sell it, but within a week a Russian mafia type, who dropped by our office, fell in love with the car and bought it on the spot for the full asking price.

"We were really glad to be rid of it, especially for strong





money, but became seriously worried when the Russian re-appeared a week later,” Walter recalled. “We started breathing again when a big grin appeared on his face and he told us how his business partner back in Moscow loved this car so much he wanted to have one too!”

## Extreme machine

Fast forward to 2022. To call Peter Qvortrup a ‘collector’ of significant tuned Mercedes is probably an understatement. Every time he shows me what he has acquired since my last visit, I feel like I am in ‘fast rewind’ mode, reliving some of my adventures in these 1980s and 90s cars when they were new.

Peter’s Koenig Specials 560SEC, which I drove during a previous visit (see the April/May 2021 issue), was one of the legendary German tuner’s best selling conversions. This was the car that put the Koenig name on the map in the US after Sylvester Stallone bought a Koenig 500SEC in silver with the licence plate ‘Rocky’. The publicity from that saw further cars going to Michael Jackson and other big names. Eventually, over

100 complete cars rolled out of the Munich works, with a further 100 kits going to export markets worldwide.

The look of the Koenig KS 600C is quite different from its predecessor. A standard 600SEC looks and feels substantial, as a flagship Mercedes coupe should, but the Koenig’s lower and wider stance, and overt body styling addenda give it far more gravitas. A Mercedes-Benz enthusiast will instinctively know that a 140-series Coupe lies beneath, but the legally required replacement of all the Mercedes stars with KS logos tends to confuse those who aren’t so into cars.

While Koenig had to do this for its demo cars presented at motor shows and in its sale literature, there was nothing to stop the customer replacing the Mercedes badging after delivery as is the case with this car which, as with his 560SEC, Peter imported from Japan. However, his latest acquisition took a lot longer to arrive than expected no thanks to the pandemic. Shipping also cost a lot more for the same reason, and when the car finally reached England, the costs continued to mount up.

Recounting the story from the beginning, Peter explains how an Australian friend, who was a customer for his high-end audio equipment, moved to Japan and ended up marrying a Japanese girl. “He is very interested in tuned Mercedes and found this one in a private auction in the newspapers,” Peter recalls. “As he is fluent in Japanese, I asked him to speak to the seller and we came to an agreement on the price.”

Unfortunately, the pandemic began as the car arrived at the port in Yokohama and everything slowed right down. Together with the Suez Canal botch, this resulted in an acute lack of

▽ The 6.0L V12 has been rebuilt at great expense.



**“The ultimate knock-out punch came from the seven-litre upgrade for the normally aspirated V12”**





▷ shipping capacity and a huge hike in rates. The car sat in a dry storage facility at the docks for five months and, by the time it finally arrived in the UK, nearly a year had passed since the seller had handed over the car to Peter's friend!

"The car finally arrived in the UK in August 2021," Peter explains, with clear frustration in his voice. "The good news was that the bodywork was immaculate, so it must have been garaged all its life. The bad news started to roll in when I sent it to John Haynes in West Sussex for a health check.

"John's engineer found that the plastic timing chain guides had disintegrated, resulting in small pieces blocking some of the lubrication channels and scoring some of the valves guides. Luckily, the pistons were not damaged but the cylinder-heads were and they are expensive. The total bill for the engine rebuild worked out at nearly £40,000!"

### Back to the future

The other issue was the infamous bio-degradable wiring loom, as Peter explains. "Mercedes wiring looms from this period were a disaster. They tried to make an eco-friendly loom that would eventually bio-degrade, but these ended up coming apart after just a few years. Sometimes, trying to be the first to roll out revolutionary new technology is not always a good idea."

The main loom had already been changed in Japan, but the three sub-looms had begun to disintegrate as well. You can still buy the main loom from a US supplier that makes new ones, but the others are not available at this time. Since then, Peter has found a company in Kent (r129.co) that can recondition them.

The 10.0Jx18 and 12.0Jx18 three-piece wheels shod with 245/40ZR18 and

335/30ZR18 Michelins have massive offsets to achieve 'the Koenig look', but this puts significant extra load on the suspension bushes, universal joints and wheel bearings. All those parts were renewed at John Haynes, but Peter intends to install new springs and dampers as this 28-year old car is very heavy and the suspension has gone a bit soggy.

"These Koenig cars are really iconic," says Peter. "The Sussex chapter of the Mercedes-Benz Club meets at the Toat Cafe just outside Pulborough every first Sunday of the month, and I took along the car recently. It certainly generated a lot of interest, and

people asked me to start it up so they could hear the amplified V12 bark from the four-pipe sports exhaust. Indeed, all my Koenig cars have a very good sound, especially when you fire them up and accelerate away."

So how does this 90s symbol of excess stack up in 2022? When we were stopped at the traffic lights on Brighton sea front, two young lads in a van next to us asked Peter what it was as they had never seen anything like it. They were very surprised to learn that it was nearly 30 years old, and said they thought it was really cool. Maybe the late Willy Koenig was ahead of his time after all? 📌

▽ The mark of a tuner that doesn't do half measures.



◁▽ White-faced dials; speedo reads to 300km/h.

▽ Peter's 600C is causing quite a stir in the UK.

“All my Koenig cars have a very good sound”





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“ I saw the car on the  
Beverly Hills Car Club  
website and brought it  
back to the UK ”



# Grey matter

This W108 lowrider was the talk of last summer's show scene – we meet the brains behind this divisive but fascinating project

WORDS **NATHAN CHADWICK**  
IMAGES **GEORGE F WILLIAMS**



△△ Dougie McColl deals in M-B Unimogs.

▷ American market V8 with 197bhp stock.





“The interior also provided the opportunity to upgrade the car, but in a sympathetic manner”

“We built it right, and we built it the way we wanted it from day one,” Dougie McCollm says. “A lot of people ask me what I’ve got to do over the winter; I’m going to store it, polish it and leave it, because I made it right the first time around.”

That single-minded vision resulted in one of the show stars of 2022. If you’ve been to the likes of Bicester Sunday Scramble or the NEC Classic Motor Show, you can’t have ignored Dougie’s W108 – and the crowd that seemed to be permanently around it, jaws as low as the car itself.

For Dougie, who looks after sales and marketing for Unimogs at Mercedes-Benz HQ, it’s the culmination of a plan borne out of necessity around five years ago. “I also have a Chesil Porsche 356 Speedster, and my wife and I loved having the roof down and going on tours,” he explains. However, seven years ago along came his son Archie. Happily, Archie took to roof-down thrills as well – but there’s just room for two in a 356. Time for a new project, then. “I wanted something all three of us could go out in – and this Mercedes ticked that box.”

### A familiar shape

Talking of boxes, it’s the W108’s angular form that appealed to Dougie and Archie. “If you ask a seven-year old to draw a car, it would be this,” Dougie chuckles, though obviously the inspiration to go the W108 route was based on a bit more than a sketch. “I’d seen a couple of slammed 108s in Germany and the Netherlands, and there was a certain car in the States that I aspired to own.”

It would be to the USA that Dougie would turn, in particular sun-kissed California. “I saw the car on the Beverly Hills Car Club website and brought it back to the UK, and ran it as a rat rod for a year,” he explains. “I knew it was reliable and solid, so worth restoring, so me and two friends started pulling it apart in my garage.”

Those two friends, Chris Woolsey and Harvey Nichols,

would find the car remarkably free from corrosion other than in a well-known spot for grot, the spare wheel well. With the unwanted ventilation cured with a replacement panel, the car was bare-metal shot blasted by ABS Blasting ([absblasting.co.uk](http://absblasting.co.uk)) to reveal a remarkably clean body for Classic Car Revivals in Offley ([classicarrevivals.co.uk](http://classicarrevivals.co.uk)) for paint and metalwork.

Choosing the paintwork was no laughing matter and took considerable time to get just right. “I had a load of colours painted up from the likes of Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, BMW and Ferrari, but I wanted more glitter,” says Dougie. “Then one day a Ford Transit drove by and I said ‘I want that!’”

Dogie pulled a favour with a friend who works for the Blue Oval; after supplying him with the van’s registration plate, the precise hue was found: Magnetic Grey. “Some Mercedes-Benz people hate it,” Dougie chuckles.

### When worlds collide

However, while the car was apart, Dougie decided to indulge in perhaps the most divisive part of the restoration. “I wanted something where I could rock up to a classic car meet at full standard height, with a car that could be appreciated by Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts who know a good, straight, standard car,” Dougie says. “I also wanted something that could be sitting right on the ground; something to turn up to a Rollhard-type event in and be appreciated by those guys too.”

A big fan of the lowrider scene, Dougie had already fitted an air ride setup during the car’s rat rod era. However, he wanted to go lower – all the way down. “While it was ripped apart, we notched the front and rear suspension arms so the subframe and rear footwell are on the ground,” Dougie explains. He chose an Airlift Performance kit, and he’s very happy with it. “It’s very plug and play – you need specific top and bottom mounts to replace the spring mounts, take the springs out and the airbags simply drop in,” he says. “There are two compressors in the boot, and one large air tank which holds enough air to take it to full height, then when you drop it down the compressors kick in to refill it.”

Happily, the air suspension has been the only source of ups and downs on this build, though parts were initially a challenge. “New parts were expensive,” he says. “However, I’d been quite

△ Bird’s eye view of a gloriously restored interior.





◁△ Airlift system neatly hidden in boot.

◁ Control for pressure/ride height settings.

△ Wortec exhaust unleashes V8's immense bellow.

spoiled when I bought the car because the dollar-to-pound exchange rate was favourable then.”

This international mindset came in useful when sourcing interior trim pieces. “In Turkey they still run a lot of W108s as taxis, so they make a lot of stuff over there that you wouldn’t find anywhere else,” Dougie says. “Turkey being Turkey, you don’t pay in euros, you pay in dollars, so timing-wise I was lucky to find someone to make bespoke parts very cheaply.”

The interior also provided the opportunity to upgrade the car, but in a sympathetic manner. “A Webasto roof, curtains and a front bench seat were all options in 1972, which my car didn’t have,” says Dougie. All of those pieces are now in place, thanks to the work of d:classic automotive in Chobham (dclass.co.uk). “The basket weave indents in the leather were sent to the only place in Europe that could do them, which is Germany – it’s the exact way it was fluted when in factory specification,” says Dougie.

Dougie’s subtly upgraded the car with the help of d:classic. “They did everything in their bespoke way, but everything has a Mercedes-Benz twist,” explains Dougie, pointing to the ruched leather door pockets. “The 108 didn’t have these, they’re off an SL. They’ve also fitted a screen that folds away to be hidden for classic car shows, and I’ve got 6x9 speakers underneath the back – I’ve got practicality but I can flick it back to that classic car look.”

### Under the bonnet

The interior and exterior look great – but what about the mighty M117 V8? Being a Californian car, it’s a 4.5-litre version of the 3.5-litre the rest of the world got, but with a longer stroke to make up for restrictive emissions regulations that choked the standard 3.5-litre. “The engine has fuel injection, which was crazy for the time,” says Dougie. “It’s got an ECU behind the headlights the size of a Commodore 64.”

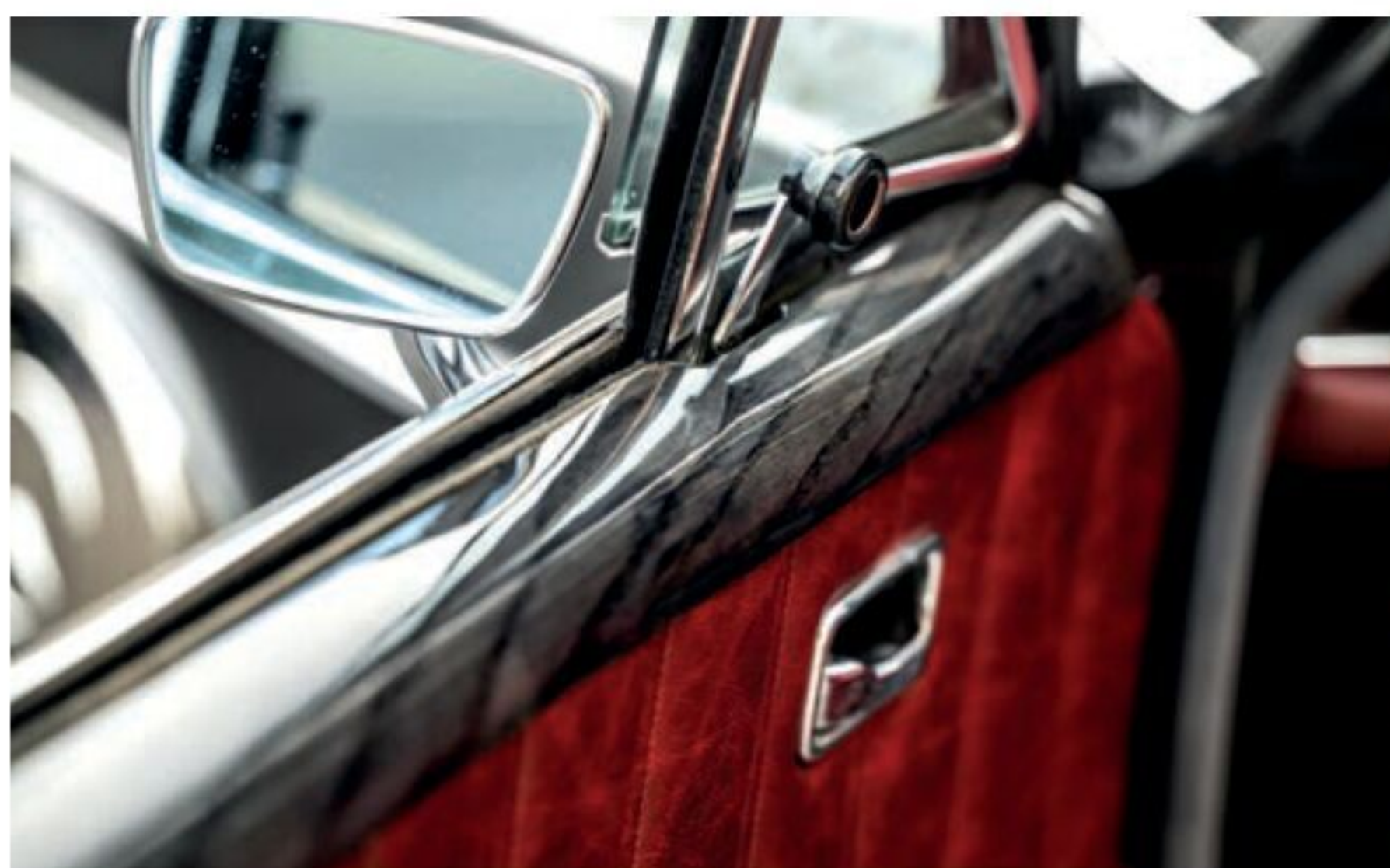
Despite such cutting-edge technology getting on for 50 ▷







“We didn’t build it as a show car,  
or to win trophies”



◁ “Honestly I’m not broken, I’m just having a snooze.”

◁◁ Cabin trim was sourced from Turkey.

▷ years old, it’s still an old-school Mercedes-Benz so other than replacing some gaskets, Dougie didn’t need to do any major stuff. “It was faultlessly reliable, so we left it,” he says, keen to point out that the technical fettling is entrusted to Paul Sumner and Michael Ward from Roger Edwards Motors in Amersham. “They’re great with part numbers,” Dougie adds.

### Split personality

Though the engine is standard, the exhaust certainly isn’t – it’s a switchable bi-modal exhaust from Wortec, with an ingenious setup to avoid floor-based embarrassment. “The exhaust downpipes would have stopped me going down to the ground, so we’ve put them up and over the transmission tunnel; if I’d left it as it was, the ride height would have been two or three inches higher than I wanted,” Dougie explains.

“To get the sound I wanted, I got Wortec [wortec.co.uk] to do bespoke headers. I can now rock up to a classic car show in standard ‘silent’ mode, then I can slam it on the floor, press the noisy button and it sounds like armageddon.”

Since completing the build, the W108 has racked up 1,500

miles on road trips and visits to shows. “It’s reliable and easy to drive – we drive it to every show,” Dougie says. “We didn’t build it as a show car, or to win trophies, but the appreciation is nice.”

There are some naysayers out there, however – and not just because of the air suspension or Transit paint. “People said I should have converted it to right-hand drive, but being left-hand drive, column shift and with a bench seat, plus the low-riding mode and exhaust, adds to the American cruiser feel,” Dougie says. “I built the car for me, not to be a Mercedes-Benz concours-winning car. I think you end up doing things better that way.”

This means that it’s never going to be for sale. “My friends and I did it, and I paid them in beer and pizzas on a Wednesday night, so it would be wrong of me to accept money for it,” Dougie explains. “We did it so Archie, my wife and I can enjoy it; when the bench seat was fitted, the first thing we did was go to a Mercedes-Benz Club meet at the Ace Cafe London – that was a moment, that was job done.”

So, what next? Though Dougie is a keen Mercedes-Benz fan, and dreams of a slammed SL or Gullwing, it’s unlikely to happen soon. “Trust me, I wouldn’t be allowed!”

### Mercedes-Benz 280SE 4.5 (W108)

ENGINE **M117 4,520cc V8** POWER **195bhp@4,500rpm** TORQUE **264lb ft@3,000rpm** TRANSMISSION **3-speed auto, RWD** WEIGHT **1,675kg**

0-62MPH **10.1sec** TOP SPEED **124mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **18.8mpg** YEARS PRODUCED **1971-1972**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a standard 1972 car; fuel consumption determined at 3/4 of top speed (68mph, 110km/h) plus 10 per cent



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# Mastering Mexico

Thrills and spills as 300SL specialist HK-Engineering takes on the legendary La Carrera Panamericana road rally in Mexico

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **HK-ENGINEERING**





*“The challenging event has long been an essential part of HK’s promotional calendar”*

▽▷ Driver Kurt Richter (right) with Ricardo Galligo.



La Carrera Panamericana is widely considered one of the most exciting classic car rallies in the world, created in 1950 for the inauguration of the Mexican section of the road route between Alaska and Tierra del Fuego, and named Panamericana. In 1952, the two German drivers Karl Kling and Hans Klenk took first place with the original Mercedes-Benz W194 300SL, and since then the 300SL Gullwing has become legendary in Mexico. Furthermore, this victory was the first major sporting success for Germany after the war, and was therefore a great ray of hope for the entire country.

La Carrera Panamericana ran from 1950 to 1954 and, as would be the case with Italy’s 1,000km Mille Miglia Road race three years later, was banned after a number of fatalities. After a long interruption until 1988 the rally resumed, and celebrated its 35th anniversary in October 2022. In seven intense and challenging days of competition, more than 90 vehicles compete against each other and cover more than 2,000 miles. In the process, they tackle more than 300 miles of speed stages on Mexico’s most spectacular roads.

For leading 300SL specialist HK-Engineering, based in Polling in southern Germany, the challenging event has long been an essential part of its promotional calendar. The firm’s greatest success was in 1999, when HK founder and boss ▷





▷ Hans Kleissl was the overall winner in the historical cars classification and on top of that drove to third place in the overall placings.

This was the best classification ever achieved by a historic vehicle in the 'new' edition of the Carrera Panamericana. In the rally there are two classifications: one is for historic cars based on the FIA's regulations in Europe, and the other is the so-called 'free' category, which are cars with an historic shell but modern technology. Traditionally, 1950s Studebakers are one of the event's most popular entrants, running with up to 600bhp, which of course normally cannot be beaten by an historic car with original mechanicals.

**Kurt Richter had already been part of the service team as a 'German' Mexican in 1998, 1999 and 2002,** when HK-Engineering participated in the Carrera Panamericana with a 300SLS replica it built (the SLS was a lightened 300SL Roadster that Stuttgart supplied to Paul O'Shea in 1957 for US sports car racing, the two built no longer in existence). But for the 70th anniversary of Mercedes' double victory in 1952 on this route, Kurt had set his mind on taking part in the Carrera Panamericana with an HK-Engineering racing Gullwing.

But even before he set off on one of the greatest motorsport adventures of our time, there was a tricky challenge of a different kind, which threatened his very participation. Entering the Carrera Panamericana is a very expensive undertaking, particularly since freight prices have recently multiplied, hence a sponsorship partnership is a must. It was not until three weeks before the start of the Carrera that Kurt had the complete financial package in



△ The 300SL Gullwing was received in Mexico with open arms.



△ Hunting down a Porsche on track where the SL felt at home.

place, and could give the green light for the car to be readied and brought to the airport. This left HK's technicians only four days of preparation time to get the Mercedes ready for the race, including fitting it with the disc brakes that are allowed in this event.

The Gullwing, accompanied by sole team mechanic Zoltan 'Senior Zoli' Szavéri, arrived in Mexico City by air freight three days before the start, but customs clearance was delayed by several days, making it more than questionable whether the car could be brought to the race in time. However, the HK team did make it to the start line in the port city of Veracruz with the vehicle in time – just one hour before the flag, and with scrutineering to pass through!

But with a lot of effort and goodwill, especially on the part of all Mexicans involved, who, due to their huge enthusiasm for the 300SL, absolutely wanted to bring the vehicle to the start, what had looked impossible was achieved. At 7:30am Kurt Richter and his co-pilot Ricardo Gallingo set off with HK's Gullwing to the first stage – the La Carrera Panamericana 2022 had begun, a goosebump moment for the three-man team plus the helpers drawn from HK's local associates.

**The rally is not only super demanding for the drivers, but also for the HK-Engineering technical support people,** who must work hard to keep up with the high speed, and the first day of racing took the team a little under 300 miles south to Oaxaca. But technical problems began on day two when the engine alternator kept going crazy because it couldn't cope with the Mexican heat.

By day three, the many speed tests have ▷

From the right angle, the Mercedes Gullwing can look incredibly mean.







△ Obligatory cactus photo in the bag...

▽ Thick road book not for the faint-hearted.

▽▷ Paying a road toll on the way to Durango.



*“The first day of racing took the team a little under 300 miles south to Oaxaca”*



## La Carrera Panamericana

South America's exotic landscapes and wide open, mountainous terrain sees the continent host many car rallies of varying status, and La Carrera Panamericana is among the most prominent, thanks to its historical link to the La Carrera Mexicana (The Mexican Road Race) last run nearly 70 years ago, and having run for over 30 years.

The original event that spanned nearly 2,000 miles south to north, from Tuxtla to Juarez was, according to Mercedes-Benz team manager Alfred Neubauer, a combination of the Tripoli Grand Prix, the Italian Mille Miglia, the German Nürburgring and the 24 Hours of Le Mans. It was revived in 1988 as a week-long special-stage rally in October on closed public roads for vintage cars, to offer drivers a taste of what the original road race road was like, and included racing against the clock, much of this through the mountains of Mexico.

The overnight stops are in Oaxaca, Mexico City, Morelia, Aguascalientes, and San Luis Potosí, with the finish line in Durango. It's open to both 'professional' and 'amateur' drivers, however the organisers point out that there is much paperwork to prepare with regard to visas and temporary vehicle import licences. They also warn that violence perpetrated by drug cartel gangs are a factor to be considered. There's more information at [lacarrerapanamericana.com.mx](http://lacarrerapanamericana.com.mx).



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▷ worn the nerves of the drivers – but no problem, because the alternator was still spinning, and the mood made up for any difficulties. The Gullwing was welcomed in the Mexican cities with open hearts and big hellos. The people here love this Mercedes, the unbelievable joy and enthusiasm carrying the drivers as well as the rest of the team.

**B**y the fourth day, the team had the problems with the 300SL well under control. It received a new set of tyres from the travelling mechanics at the halfway point, and the brakes were also renewed. Here, other minor technical problems could be fixed promptly. In contrast to some other cars, HK's Gullwing was safe and well in Morelia; today there had been some serious accidents on the track, unfortunately inflicting injuries.

During the speed stages, smooth interaction and strong nerves were required from driver and co-driver alike. But Kurt and Ricardo are experienced pilots and proved their multi-tasking ability, demonstrating perfect foresight combined with simultaneous roadbook reading while keeping an eye on the timing meter.

*“Kurt and Ricardo are experienced pilots, and proved their multi-tasking ability”*



The mighty 300SL encountered all kinds of roads on its journey.

Even with this Gullwing's side screens modified for added ventilation, air flow in the cabin is notoriously restricted, and with the outside temperature a hot, dry 35C despite partial cloud, the last stages of the rally, requiring up to 550 miles per day to be covered, were extremely strenuous. Everyone had to be in top physical condition, especially as there was time for no more than four to five hours of sleep per night. Nonetheless, Kurt and Ricardo

maintained their second or third position in the class throughout, and without any damage to the Mercedes. At 1,500m altitude – and up to 2,800m in parts – they encountered untouched landscapes with breathtaking views, although constantly driving at high speed they dared not let their attention wander to absorb the impressions.

**A**t the finish in Durango in north west Mexico (at 1,900m altitude and in the middle of the jungle), the Gullwing was frenetically welcomed by a large crowd.

The award ceremony took place at 9pm and the team spent the whole night celebrating the drivers' and mechanics' joint success. Kurt and Ricardo mastered the extremely demanding Carrera Panamericana with the Mercedes-Benz 300SL healthy and without any accident, and made a great third place in class. The team returned to HK-Engineering's Polling home proud, satisfied and still savouring this beautiful country, its warm inhabitants, the insane experience – and their great achievement in the Carrera Panamericana



▷△ All smiles and maybe ready for another go?

▷ Third place in class was a great achievement.

▷△ Team photo with a nice haul of silverware in '22.



### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz 300SL (W198)

ENGINE M198 2,996cc 6-cyl POWER 250bhp TRANSMISSION 4-speed manual, RWD WEIGHT 1,295kg 0-62MPH 8sec TOP SPEED 155mph YEARS PRODUCED 1954-1957

All figures from HK-Engineering





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# Footloose and fancy three

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

What's better than having an AMG Mercedes in the garage?  
How about three of different shapes, all with Performance Packages?





▽ Peter's fleet comprises a 2002 SL55, 2009 C63 and 2012 E63.



**W**e've discussed the notion of the three-car garage numerous times in these pages. Say your lottery numbers came up tomorrow, and modesty dictated that you didn't immediately go out and buy your top 50 dream cars, and instead distilled the wish list down to three key contenders? Something stylish, something practical, something without a roof – that seems to be the winning formula for a lot of people, and Peter Moore has a particularly strong representation of the game for us here. A triumvirate of AMG specials, each one fulfilling a crucial and desirable niche role among the three hallowed slots.

The bond that particularly ties them all, beyond being AMG superheroes, is the phrase 'Performance Package'. This tasty option box on the spec list is the one ticked with a flourish by true connoisseurs, fans, aficionados – the buyers who appreciate the merits of further tapping the potential of these formidable creations (and, errr, possessed of deep pockets, naturally). After all, why go this far and not go further? With each of the cars we have here – the droptop SL55 AMG, the C63 AMG Estate, the execu-barge E63 AMG – they're all suffixed by 'PP', and that counts for a lot.

## ***"Each one fulfills a crucial and desirable niche role"***

### **Black bullet**

Let's first turn our attention to the SL55, as this is a model which has already passed gracefully into the pantheon of the modern classic. Enthusiasts of a certain age will keenly remember these cars being tested on *Top Gear* when new (indeed, Clarkson liked them so much that he bought one), and they've been living rent-free in our affections ever since. You see, while the mainstream SL models were traditional Grand Tourers, the lunatic SL55 thought it was a supercar. It certainly went like one. Sounded like one too. The most powerful road car that Mercedes-Benz had ever built at the time, its supercharged V8 trebuchet'ed the roadster to 62mph in 4.7 seconds; costing £89,000 at launch, Mercedes was gambling on a few sales from the alt-supercar market, while largely upselling to the existing SL hardcore with something boisterous enough to really make some waves. And the gambit paid off in spades, with one in four SLs being SL55s for the next half-decade and beyond.

For Peter, the brawny credentials of the SL55 fit into his affections seamlessly. "I'm a lifelong petrolhead in my late-40s," he explains, "and I enjoy tracking down, rescuing and working on rare, modern classic cars – the type we remember when we were young but could only dream of owning. I really appreciate anything from the 1990s and 2000s that's fast, rare, big enough for the family. BMWs, AMG Mercs, and I have a soft spot for Volvos – probably because of being pulled over by the motorway police in their T5s!"

It's this ingrained passion which led to the inception of his specialist business, quickandbig.com (where, in fact, all three of these cars were available to buy at the time of writing), and his keen eye for a good example of a special machine is what led him to drawing these three Performance Pack cars together. It's not just a business, it's a passion.

Tantalisingly, there's a bit of Formula 1 DNA in this SL55 too. "It's closely derived from the official F1 Safety Car of 2002," ▷





▷ Peter explains. “The enhanced dynamic characteristics relate to an extensive range of revisions, including new air intakes, uprated brakes and suspension, and an additional engine oil cooler, while the speed limiter was raised from 155mph to 186mph.

“The SL55 AMG with the Performance Package also draws on its Formula 1 counterpart when it comes to the chassis setup, together with the choice of wheels; the Mercedes-Benz AMG engineers based the configuration of the active body control setup on that used by official Safety Car driver Bernd Mayländer on the contemporary Grand Prix circuits. The Performance Pack cars also benefit from the Safety Car’s bigger 390mm composite front brakes, 19-inch AMG split-rim alloy wheels, smoked rear lights, and an Alcantara-trimmed, flat-bottomed AMG steering wheel with F1-style paddleshifters.”

### Practical performer

So, that’s the open-top element of the dream garage taken care of. Next up? It’s the sensible one. The load-lugger. After all, there comes a point in everybody’s life – and believe us, if it hasn’t happened to you, it will – when you feel the urge to buy an estate car.

However, the C63 AMG Estate is a machine which acrobatically subverts the beigeness of the genre by shoving an Exocet missile up its backside. It’s long been acknowledged that the C63 has one of the finest exhaust sounds of any road car, and packaging all of that muscle car prowess into a boxy silhouette that would be a handy accomplice on the Ikea run was frankly a work of genius.

Arriving on the scene in mid-2008, this

△ Aftermarket grilles and light covers fitted.

▷ V8 has what Peter calls a ‘Brabus red’ finish.

▽ 19-inch AMG split alloys look outstanding.



*“For Peter, the **brawny credentials** of the SL55 fit into his **affections**”*



range-topping goliath came equipped with a naturally-aspirated 6.2-litre V8 good for 451bhp and 442lb ft torque. This was enough to spring the four-door Saloon and two-door (post-facelift) Coupe toward the horizon with improbable rapidity; 0-62mph was despatched in an eye-watering 4.5-seconds. And, rather brilliantly, an Estate version was also available for people who really needed to get their hedge clippings to the tip in a hurry; the extra mass and different aero behaviour only added 0.1s to the 62mph dash. Incredible machines indeed. Top speed was limited to 155mph for C63s, but limiters can always be removed...

The lunacy didn't stop with just the launch models either. Before long Mercedes-Benz keenly announced some spicy upgrades; the Performance Package option left the drivetrain untouched but beefed up everything connected to it, comprising bigger brakes, a limited-slip differential, stiffer suspension and a carbon boot spoiler (Saloon), while the speed limiter was raised to 175mph on cars sold with the optional AMG Driver's Package like this one.

"Of all the 'QuickandBig' estates we have sold, this is the one I'd keep to drive and have as an investment if I could!" Peter enthuses. "The C63 massively out-gunned the contemporary BMW M3, along with a soundtrack that's simply awesome. We've just had this lovely example of a practical family estate car respectfully dyno'd and it hit a healthy 462bhp at 6,700rpm, running into the 175mph speed limiter in fifth – with two gears left to go. There are reports of standard cars hitting 190mph with the limiter removed."

## Big brute

Heady stuff indeed. And with the sensible element proving itself to be not altogether entirely sensible after all, we move on to the most grown-up car of the trio. The bouncer in the Savile Row suit – the E63 AMG.

How best to describe this car? It's not exactly stealthy, you can't really apply that term to a big imposing brute like this – the crux of the design is to be impressive from every angle, that's very much the purpose of an executive saloon. A sleeper? No, that's not right either; there are enough giveaways to demonstrate to even the most ill-informed passer-by that this is



◁ The one and only 6.2-litre M156 hand-built V8.

▽ C63's 1,500-litre boot not to be sniffed at.

▽▽ AMG seats and helm; pop-up Comand display.

▽▽▽ RWD and a 451bhp V8 makes quite the combo.

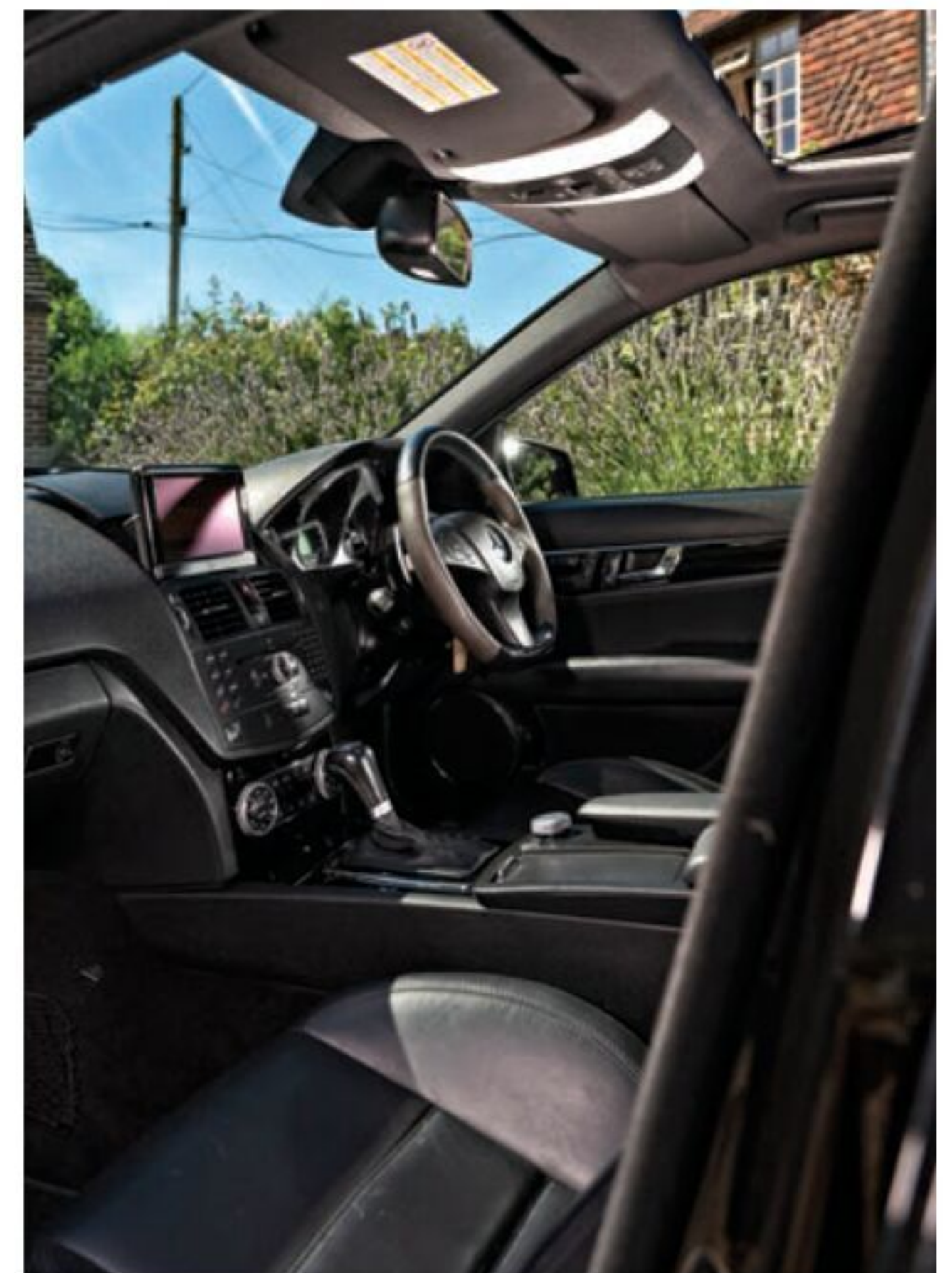


a car with a lot of chutzpah, from the 'V8 BiTurbo' badging to the colossal brakes.

Nevertheless, few people are prepared for the other-worldly performance of a car that ostensibly looks as if it'd be happiest ferrying CEOs to and from Heathrow. A proper muscle car in the truest sense.

"Even in 'basic' form, the E63 AMG dispatches the 0-62mph run in 4.2 seconds," says Peter, "and goes on to a limited 155mph. The Performance Package Plus upgrades shave that time down to 4.2 seconds, while the Driver's Package [which included an AMG Power and Passion training event] raises the speed limiter to 186mph.

"It's quick by any standards, but for a big five-seat executive saloon, it's a rocket ship. And this is the highest-spec example I've ever come across, having been specced from new with over £17,000 of extras; along with the PPP and Driver's Package, it's got the AMG ▷





### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG with Performance Package (R230)

ENGINE **M113 5,439cc V8 supercharged**

POWER **469bhp@6,100rpm**

TORQUE **516lb ft@2,650-4,500rpm**

TRANSMISSION **5-speed auto, RWD**

WEIGHT **1,955kg**

0-62MPH **4.7sec**

TOP SPEED **155mph**

FUEL CONSUMPTION **19.9mpg**

CO2 EMISSIONS **324g/km**

YEARS PRODUCED **2003-2008**

#### Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Estate with Performance Package (S204)

ENGINE **M156 6,208cc V8**

POWER **451bhp@6,800rpm**

TORQUE **442lb ft@5,000rpm**

TRANSMISSION **7-speed auto, RWD**

WEIGHT **1,795kg**

0-62MPH **4.6sec**

TOP SPEED **175mph**

FUEL CONSUMPTION **20.8mpg**

CO2 EMISSIONS **326g/km**

YEARS PRODUCED **2007-2011**

#### Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG with Performance Package Plus (W212)

ENGINE **M157 5,461cc V8 biturbo**

POWER **549bhp@5,250-5,750rpm**

TORQUE **590lb ft@2,000-4,500rpm**

TRANSMISSION **7-speed auto, RWD**

WEIGHT **1,840kg**

0-62MPH **4.2sec**

TOP SPEED **155mph**

FUEL CONSUMPTION **28.8mpg**

CO2 EMISSIONS **230g/km**

YEARS PRODUCED **2009-2013**

*All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 2004 SL55 with PP, 2009 C63 with PP and a 2012 E63 with PPP as pictured; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speeds electronically limited*



◁ There's AMG air suspension at the rear of the E63.

▽ Alcantara inserts for the AMG wheel.



△ E63's V8 twin-turbo gives enormous torque from low revs.



△ Red calipers and carbon boot spoiler hint at E63's PPP spec.

***“It’s quick by any standards, but for a big five-seat executive saloon, it’s a rocket ship”***

▷ locking rear differential, Driver Assist Pack, panoramic sunroof, DAB Harman Kardon Logic 7 surround sound, split-folding rear seats, reversing camera and all sorts.”


#### Performance packaged

The three of these cars make for quite a spectacle when they’re lined up together, and the simmering aggression of their refined-muscle powertrains adds up to something

remarkable, each one serving up enough torque to ruck up the tarmac like a hallway carpet. The SL55 is powered by a supercharged 5.4-litre V8, the C63 sports a naturally-aspirated 6.2-litre V8, and in the E63 we find a 5.5-litre V8 with twin turbos. Thugs, the lot of them, but refined thugs you wouldn’t be afraid to introduce to your mother.

Can you pick a favourite? It’s a tricky one, for sure. “The E63 has one of the best all-round power units I’ve had the pleasure of using in a road car,” Peter ponders. “And the C63 is my favourite engine wrapped up in a practical estate. As for the SL55, it was and still is a technical and performance tour de force, so good at so many things.”

Well, it’s a good thing he doesn’t have to choose, isn’t it? “I got lucky with these three,” Peter continues. “If I ever see Performance Package cars for sale privately or at auction I try to buy them, and these three represent each body shape and an example of the ‘best/now no more’ large-capacity AMG V8s.”

In essence, that’s the theme of the collection – not simply that they’re all AMG Mercs, or they’re all Performance Pack-equipped, but the over-arching truth of their format: big-banger V8s of the type we won’t see again. As three-car garages go, it’s a very strong line-up... 







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- Try finding another!
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- Less than 70k miles from new
- Comprehensive history - 13 services
- Appreciating modern classic
- Mega Rare 030 Performance Pack
- Thousand spent
- Contemporary modifications

**£29,990 (was £32,500)**

## Mercedes SL55 AMG "F1" Performance Pack

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- Comprehensive history - 9 services
- Appreciating modern classic
- Mega Rare 030 Performance Pack
- Beautifully original
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# THE WILL TO Succeed

Taking over the running of Brabus from his late father, Constantin Buschmann speaks exclusively to *Mercedes Enthusiast* about his plans for the future of the world's largest tuning house

WORDS IAN KUAH IMAGES IAN KUAH & BRABUS

I first met Bodo Buschmann in 1984 when Brabus GmbH was seven years old and operating out of a small, one-storey shop across the main road from the sprawling campus of bespoke modern buildings that it occupies today. This was also the year his son Constantin was born.

During another visit to Bottrop, Bodo invited me to Constantin's fifth birthday party at their home, and over the years I watched him grow into the young man who took the reins at Brabus in 2018 after Bodo sadly passed away. I recently spoke to Constantin about his vision for Brabus as he leads the world's largest tuner on its second lap...

**Ian Kuah:** Was there ever a time that you considered living a life outside of Brabus the company?

**Constantin Buschmann:** Absolutely. In school I went through the same career soul searching that every young person does. When I was 15, I realised that lots of people were talking about my dad's company. He was busier than ever, and my mum had long since stopped working to look after the family full-time.

A couple of years later, I started my business economics studies at a university about 50km away, but I quickly found that this was too close to home as Dad often asked me to attend company meetings. However, I soon noticed something really special was going on at Brabus and I fell in love with the company. After completing my Masters degree, I couldn't wait to start working there.

**IK:** How much time did you spend with Bodo in the company?

**CB:** During the last few years I became increasingly worried about my dad's health and spent a lot of time understudying him, learning new things every day from the man who literally gave his life for the company. The Brabus story is a drama of ups and downs that still makes me feel like I am living a dream.

**IK:** What is the biggest single change that you have personally made at Brabus since you have been at the helm?

**CB:** Streamlining our brand, marketing and communications for a new world and new customers. This is the mission I began when I became CMO in 2017.

I asked my dad to give me responsibility for the brand because I knew I had to get this right before addressing sales and



△ Brabus wastes no time modifying new Mercedes.

▷ Constantin took over Brabus back in 2018.

▽ A young Constantin and father Bodo.

marketing. I also wanted an in-house creative hub capable of producing high-resolution videos and commercials, our own configurator and so on.

This all happened very fast, and from a team of three led by Sven Gramm and mainly working with print catalogues four years ago, the marketing team is now 20-strong. Media visitors no longer need to bring their own video or stills cameraman, lighting and other equipment as we can offer full technical support, both here in Bottrop and on location.

**IK:** How has your social media presence changed the way customers and fans perceive Brabus?

**CB:** As I suddenly needed to 'replace' my dad, who was one of the big names in the industry, my first task was to





A man with short brown hair and a beard is smiling at the camera. He is wearing a black long-sleeved t-shirt with a large white Brabus logo on the chest. He has his arms crossed and is holding a pair of sunglasses in his right hand. He is wearing a silver watch on his left wrist and several black beaded bracelets on his right wrist. In the background, there is a silver car and green foliage.

“ I soon noticed something really special was going on at Brabus and I fell in love with the company ”





Brabus restores cars to a world class standard.

▷ communicate that Brabus had a new CEO at the helm.

We also decided to give people more access into Brabus through social media. Every time I walk through the company, I see stories that need to be told. There are Rockets taking off and landing all the time, and I see 400 people doing fun and interesting stuff with crazy cars, bikes, boats, and design projects every day.

This is a story we have to tell, and giving people a glimpse of what goes on inside the company – even the things that go wrong – makes us more human, more approachable. Our YouTube and Instagram channels are thriving and it's been a fun, fun ride!

**IK:** How do you see your role as the CEO of Brabus?

**CB:** A major thing you can get wrong as a new CEO is thinking you know better. About 90 per cent of the original team are still here, and that means we have a wealth of knowledge and experience on tap. There were a lot of new products in the



△ Brabus' first bike, the 1300R, made with KTM.

“My dad gave the company everything, including his life”

pipeline when I took over, and I listened and learned a lot in the first two years.

To me, the CEO is a tool for the company, someone who can activate more resources, so I tell my crew to let me help them find solutions to issues. On that score, money does not define who you are – money is just another resource. It is the

people who create the meaning. People who are on fire for their mission will achieve the most.

Our company culture is the pool of our personalities, and if I could only do two things at Brabus I would take care of the company culture and the brand. As one of my professors said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” If your company culture is off, you can fall into the trap of thinking the world is waiting for your product, and that is the start of a decline you will see two years later.

## The three musketeers

A quick look at new additions to the Brabus range



### Brabus EQS580 4Matic

Recharging an EV is time-consuming, so anything you can do to extend the range is a bonus. The carbon fibre aerodynamic package for Brabus' EQS580 reduces lift by 40 per cent at high speed. Paired



with the disc design Brabus Monoblock M alloys, the already slippery 0.20Cd drag coefficient of the stock Mercedes is improved by a further 7.2 per cent.

This number is all the more impressive since big wheels and

tyres like the 9.0J x 22-inch Brabus Monoblock M wrapped in 265/35ZR22 Continental Sport Contact 7 tyres are notorious for chipping away at aerodynamic efficiency. In real world terms, in steady state cruising between 100 and 140km/h (62 to 87mph), the Brabus aero package and wheels add a significant 7 per cent to the EQS580's 360- to 430-mile range. Job done.

### Brabus 900 Rocket Superblack

The Brabus Widestar styling kit with carbon fibre bonnet and big arches

that cover 10.0J and 12.0Jx24-inch Brabus Monoblock Z alloys shod with 295/30ZR24 and 255/25ZR24 Continental SportContact 7 rubber are already symbols of defiance on the Brabus 900 Rocket Superblack. The black paint only adds to its gravitas and sense of menace.

A loud bark from the double exhaust outlets heralds the awakening of the 888bhp/922lb ft potential within. Perched behind the wheel on the 'Brabus Masterpiece' fine leather-trimmed driver's seat, you feel totally in command and ready to take on the world.

◁ EQS bodykit from Brabus reduces drag.





◁ Remap for latest E63 unlocks 789bhp/737lb ft.

▽ Aggressive kit for this regular A-Class AMG Line.

◁▽ Brabus has also entered the speed boat arena.



You will never hear me say we are the best at something. My job as CEO is to maintain a bird's eye view of all the innovative, inventive, fantastic ideas out there, take it all in without judgement, interpret new inputs and convert them into a spark for new projects.

My dad gave the company everything, including his life, so part of my personal mission is to respect that and move on the Brabus brand further still. But ultimately our customers are the ones who will judge if we are doing the right things, and vote with their wallets.

**IK:** How many 'limited series' cars can Brabus build each year?

**CB:** Bespoke cars like the G900 Rocket consume hundreds of man hours to build by hand, which puts a natural cap on production numbers. So there will only ever be 25 G900 Rockets and 15 Crawlers over a production run of two years. Anything ▷



◁ Brabus Rocket Superblack with a 888bhp 4.4L V8.

▽ Remapped V8 gives 591bhp; special blue cabin.

Yet while this big G looks like a thug in a business suit, caressing its well-calibrated throttle allows 2,560kg of Stuttgart's finest to amble along at urban speeds like a gentle giant. Push the organ-stop throttle pedal to the plush leather floormat and the Brabus-tuned, 4,407cc twin-turbo V8 ups its game with a deep, gravelly voice and a mission to defy the laws of physics. Initially eyebrow-raising, its crushing and relentless forward thrust quickly becomes addictive.

Some people think that cars like the Brabus 900 Rocket Superblack are irrelevant, but you only have to drive one to 'get it' and have your perspective up-ended.

**Brabus 600 Masterpiece**  
Brabus wanted a contrasting interior to set off its black, Maybach-based 600 Masterpiece show car, and the Turquoise Blue interior certainly achieves that goal. Leather and Dinamica microfibre trim the steering wheel, seats,

dashboard, centre console, door panels, floor and headliner. There are also Brabus carbon elements on the dashboard and centre console for an additional sporty flavour.

A PowerXtra B40S-600 performance upgrade developed by

Brabus raises the S580 V8's output to 591bhp/590lb ft torque. The grand limousine rides on 22-inch Brabus Monoblock M Platinum Edition forged wheels, and there's a module for the air suspension that can adjust the ride height.



BRABUS





“Projects must pass the ‘1-second-wow’ test”

▽▷ Porsches and Rollers now on Brabus' radar.

▽▷▷ 820 tuning for Porsche 911 Turbo S Cabrio.

▷ longer than that period prevents us from creating the next unique series.

**IK:** What influences do you have from outside the automotive world?

**CB:** The fine watch industry stands out. The smaller, more delicate machines it creates have many similarities to Brabus in terms of design, engineering and a bit of craziness! I love small family or independent watchmakers as their culture is the power that drives a company in an empathic, normative way. This culture is the polar opposite of big corporations where people are only hunting big annual bonuses.

**IK:** How does Brabus address the personalisation of electric vehicles?

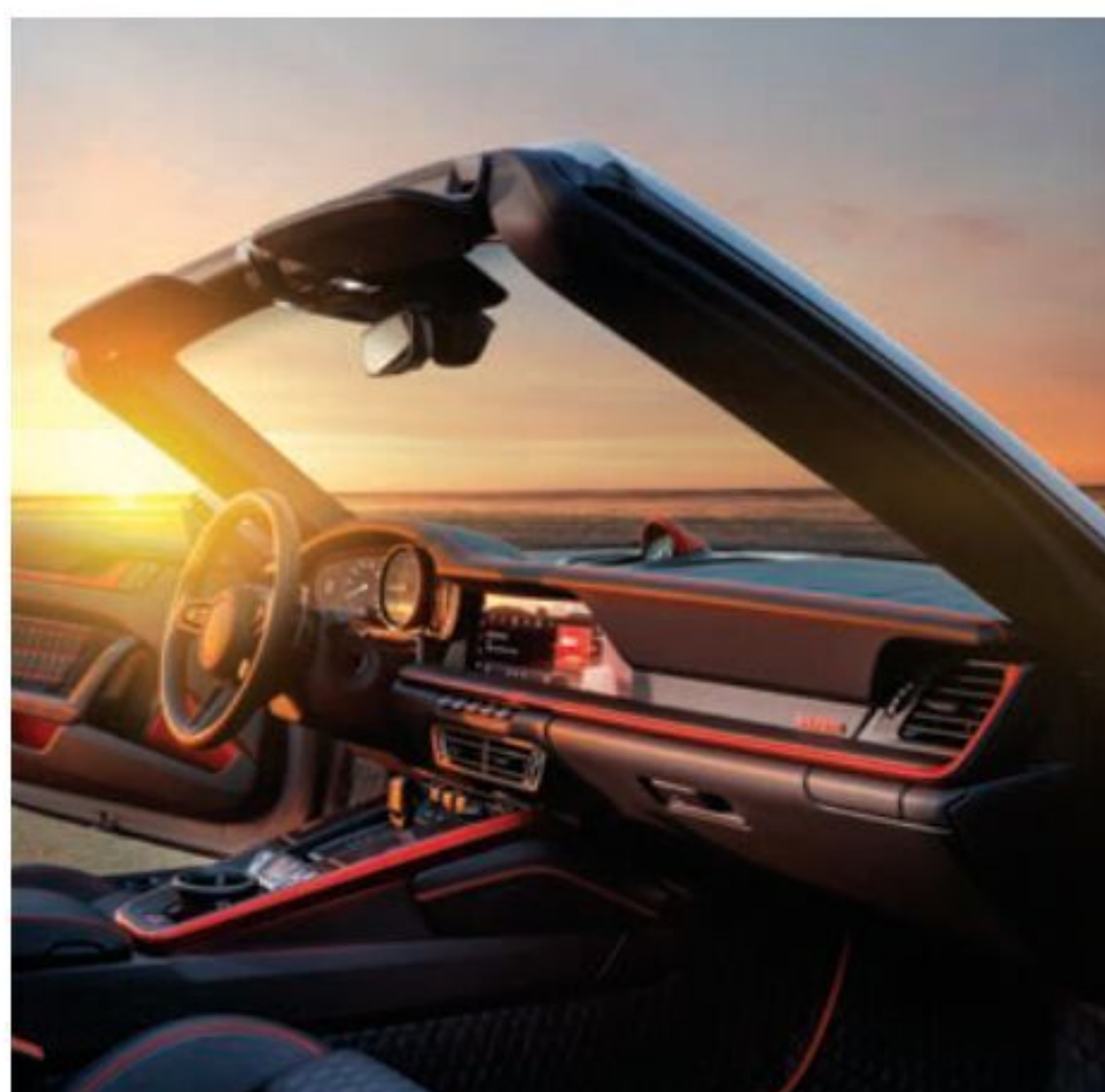
**CB:** The ingredients we use to 'Brabusize' an EV are different, but not that different. After all, your choice of interior decor or bed at home is not dependent on whether you use oil, gas or solar panels to generate power. People want good looking, sporty cars infused with individuality, personality and high quality whether they are powered by a combustion engine, hydrogen or electricity.

**IK:** Bodo loved to drive G-Class and be driven in Maybachs. What are your favourite cars?

**CB:** My favourite Brabus car is the next one! I change cars frequently because I need to be able to tell our customers and fans what each of our models is like. Right now, I am driving the EQ models but I am also a big fan of the G-Class, which is an all-time icon.

**IK:** What about the other marques now being tuned under the Brabus brand?

**CB:** Experimenting how the Brabus DNA works with the Porsche and Rolls-Royce marques that we began working with recently has brought new energy into the company. I must stress that this is in addition to what we did before, with not one less Mercedes model being modified. Our core will always be Mercedes, respecting our brand from the last 40 years.



▽ Limited edition Brabus Panerai luxury watch.



**IK:** What is your game plan for the future?

**CB:** My dad was good at seeing the spark of an idea for what it was. Putting a V12 into an E-Class or converting the smart City Coupe into a luxury microcar, for instance. In the beginning, many people laughed at the idea that we were tuning 'golf carts', but we sold over 150,000 smart Brabus cars over 20 years in partnership with Daimler.

Another spark of an idea led to the limited edition Brabus 1300R motorcycle that we created with KTM. All 77 were sold out in two minutes! The Shadow 900 powerboat and the limited edition, titanium and carbon fibre Panerai watch were also born from a spark of an idea. Cool projects like these have to pass the '1-second-wow' test that is the yardstick for everything we do. This makes for efficient design approvals: you walk in, pull off the cover and say, "Wow!" Or not.

We have a lot of ideas in the pipeline, which is why we are investing millions of euros in new buildings and facilities for the campus.

Personally, I am working to my 85-10-37 rule. This assumes an 85-year lifespan, with 10 years for bad behaviour. I am 37 now and I don't have time to waste. So now it's all go, pedal to the metal! 🏎️







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“  
It takes either  
a brave or a very  
knowledgeable  
person to  
purchase a car  
from a distant  
country  
”

▽ Kamil has  
driven his SEC to  
Austria and more.



White







# ***knight***

Imported from Spain, this 1988 500SEC has been on quite a journey in the hands of Polish Benz fan, Kamil Andrysiak who has injected fresh energy into the flagship coupe

WORDS & IMAGES ROBB PRITCHARD



“  
While making  
the engine run  
as smoothly as  
it did in 1988,  
Kamil ramped  
up the volume  
”

**P**oland's Kamil Andrysiak is both a classic car trader and collector. Despite many cars passing through his hands, he is not known to keep, restore, modify and call one his dream drive. However, this tastefully modified 1988 500SEC is just that.

Common advice is to never buy a car sight unseen, but that's exactly what Kamil did with this grand coupe, which he spotted on a Spanish auction website with 150,000km (93,000 miles) on the clock. It takes either a brave or a very knowledgeable person to purchase one from a distant country in a different currency, as the possibility of things going wrong is exponentially higher.

Having a rust-free shell was a priority for Kamil and the seller's pictures filled him with enough confidence to submit what turned out to be the winning bid. There were some nerves during the couple of weeks Kamil waited for the SEC to arrive in his hometown of Lodz in eastern Poland. However, after insuring it and undertaking a quick test drive to the local car wash, Kamil knew he had a good Mercedes, although it was 30 years old back then so wasn't in perfect condition. Kamil wasted little time before starting the revival process.

Unlike the generously salted winter roads of Poland, the hot and dry Iberian climate had preserved the metalwork so, just as Kamil was hoping, the shell was entirely rust-free, even around the 126-series SEC's known weak spots such as around the windows and wheelarches. However, the harsh sun had not been kind to the interior.



After a thorough service, the four-seat cabin was the first thing Kamil worked on. He bought a few rolls of the same type of leather that Mercedes had used in period, and a local company re-did the rear deck which was bleached and baked beyond repair. The car came with a nice pair of Recaro C-Classic seats with heating and three integrated air cushions, and he had them redone in matching leather. The wooden trim on the dashboard, doors and centre

console was also faded, so it was refinished with new burl wood. A Nardi Torino steering wheel and a retro looking radio finished the interior, and for a year and a half Kamil enjoyed the Mercedes-Benz without further upgrades.

**T**hen came the urge to improve the big Benz's road stance. When it comes to suspension, Kamil considers himself from the old school way of thinking, so opted simply for







◁ Magnificent Recaro C-Classical chairs up front.



◁ Kamil has restored his big coupe in stages.

△ Lowering springs ramp up the kerb appeal.

a set of lowering springs. What really makes this Mercedes stand out, though, are the wheels. Kamil sent his 16-inch Penta rims to a local company called South Wheels, where the centres were cut out to make them into 18-inch three-piece items. Returned to Kamil, the new wheels didn't fit at first, but a set of wider 560SEC front wings solved half the problem while a metalworking company

cut out the rear arches and added a little metal to flare them out.

The SEC's edgy appearance was further enhanced by an AMG bodykit. The effect is subtle but striking once fully appreciated. This modification has compromised ground clearance (the front splitter is around 30mm off the floor), so Kamil must be extra careful when driving around Lodz with its many potholes and speed bumps.



◁◁ Cabin treated to new leather upholstery.

◁ M117 V8 received new camshafts.

**Last year, Kamil began his SEC's third round of upgrades, this time focusing on the engine.** It had obviously been well looked after in Spain, and the five-litre V8 still had plenty of life left in it. But as Kamil plans on keeping the Mercedes for the foreseeable future, he was keen for the powerplant to be as good as new. Therefore, all the ancillaries were replaced, including the alternator, radiator, and oil and water pumps, and everything was re-installed with anodised bolts to make it look show spec – should he ever decide to display it. Inside the ▷



“  
When friends  
organised a driving  
holiday to central  
Italy, Kamil and his  
wife took the Benz  
”

▷ M117 eight-cylinder, there are new camshafts, along with new timing gear and chains, and the cylinder bores have been re-sleeved.

While making the engine run as smoothly as it did in 1988, Kamil ramped up the volume with a custom stainless steel exhaust. Internet searches for AMG exhaust headers didn't return photographs with enough detail to have a set made especially for his white coupe, so the only thing Kamil could do was spend a lot of time tracking down genuine items, remanufacture them out of stainless steel and then sell the originals for profit. Vehicle decibel limits are strictly enforced in Poland, so Kamil decided to install a bypass valve in the exhaust system – just to be safe.

**L**odz in rush hour is no place for cruising in such a big Mercedes. We inch around town until we find an open stretch of road away from the traffic. Bypass switch on, Kamil puts his foot down. The acceleration feels lazy,



◁△ Modified Penta rims under 560SEC wings.

△ Nardi wheel with push-button horn in the centre.

almost effortless, but the custom exhaust makes that five-litre V8, which is rather subdued in original form, sound amazing – like a thoroughbred American muscle car.

Output for this post-September 1987 example is 261bhp/299lb ft, which was very strong for the time. However, today's fuel prices and the V8's hefty thirst stop Kamil spending too much time in the driving seat; he owns around a dozen other classics, so the SEC must fight for his attention.

For long hours cruising the motorways, though, he owns nothing else like the 500SEC, so when a few friends in their similarly modified cars organised a driving holiday to central Italy, Kamil and his wife took the Benz. In the time Kamil has owned the coupe it has

never developed a problem, and during the run through Italy it never missed a beat. Kamil and his wife have also toured the Austrian Alps, which included a visit to Wörthersee where the car was warmly received. His wife likes the Mercedes so much, in fact, she happily agreed for it to be their wedding car.

So, what exactly makes the SEC so special? “I think you would need to be a poet to explain it properly,” Kamil smiles. “It's from 1988 – the same year I was born – so it's a little sentimental that way, but for me the SEC has a soul, a presence. I never get bored of looking at it, never mind driving it.”



#### Just the facts

#### Mercedes-Benz 500SEC (C126)

ENGINE M117 4,973cc V8 POWER 261bhp@5,200rpm TORQUE 299lb ft@4,000rpm TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,650kg 0-62MPH 7.2sec TOP SPEED 146mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 17.9mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1981-1991

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1988 500SEC without a catalyst; fuel consumption according to EEC urban



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“ The Mercedes-Benz star  
has always fascinated me ”

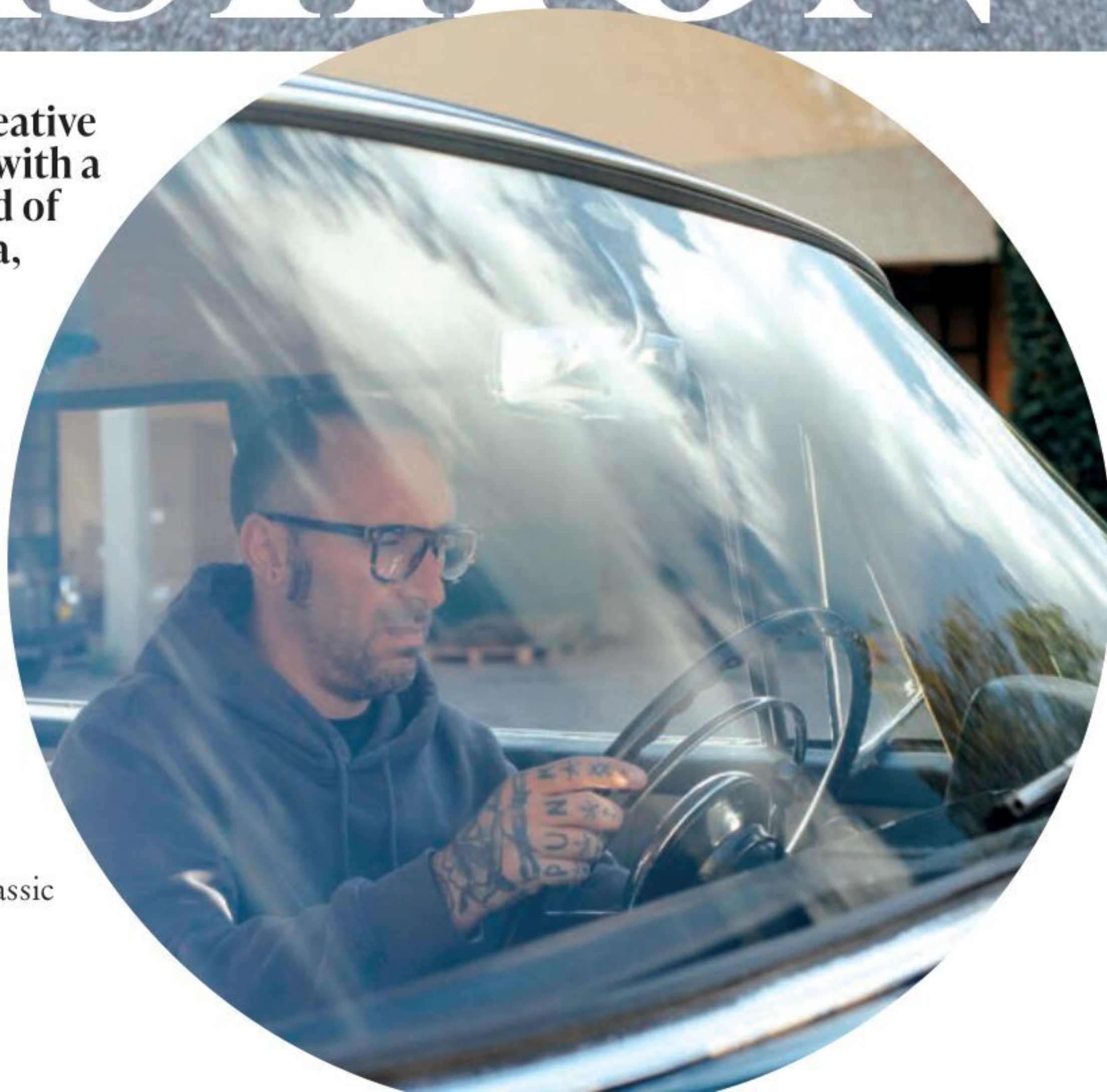


# BEYOND FASHION

**D**aniele Bianucci is an Italian creative director and fashion designer with a passion for classic cars. Instead of the usual Alfa Romeo or Lancia, 40-year old Daniele has two classic Mercedes that are rare sights in Italy. So much so, when I spotted his shiny black W115 220 with a surfboard on the roof, I chased it along the road that leads from Florence to the sea. Once Daniele – creative manager for the Sundek beachwear brand – stopped to add gas and buy coffee, I introduced myself and learned of his passion for cars...

As an Italian designer, one would expect an unconditional love for the lines of Italian classic cars, so why do you drive Mercedes?

“Of course, I really like the lines, details and interiors of classic







## Living in the heart of Italy, two classic Mercedes cut striking figures on local byways as their owner indulges in his passion for supreme design

WORDS & IMAGES **MARCO ANNUNZIATA**

Italian cars, but unfortunately my favourites are beyond my budget for now. The Mercedes-Benz star has always fascinated me, and my father had several when I was a child. I remember well his 190E, 250CE and 500SL. I probably indirectly fell in love with these cars in those early years.”

### What do you think of the Mercedes-Benz brand and how do you think it is perceived here in Italy?

“For me, Mercedes-Benz means reliability. The engines of these cars, especially those of older cars like mine, are indestructible. If I had to compare the Mercedes-Benz brand to an Italian brand, I would think of Moto Guzzi for the same reason. I believe that Mercedes-Benz has always made good numbers in Italy, even with the latest models.”

◁ Daniele was brought up in Mercedes cars.



### What do you like aesthetically about a car? How and when do you think this taste was born? What are your stylistic influences?

“I like the proportions between the front and the back, and especially cars with a design in which round or rounded shapes are combined with angular shapes. This is a contrast that I seek for the influence of my work as a fashion designer. Often, I find that combining two opposite things leads to a result of efficiency and a cutting-edge aesthetic.

△ Star emblem proudly fixed above the grille.

△△ Fintails shared with the six-cyl models.

“Stylistically, I like streetwear brands with references to underground subcultures. I have always followed the work of Hedi Slimane who works with this type of contrasts.”

### Where did you find your two Mercedes-Benzes?

“I don’t watch a lot of television. In the evening on the sofa, I often take my notebook and browse through marketplaces and specialist websites for classic cars. I found my Mercedes-Benz cars without going too far in Tuscany – one was in Florence and one was found in Arcidosso near Grosseto.

“When it comes to the search, my approach is based on patience! Once I have decided which car or motorcycle model I want to add to my collection [currently made up of four classic cars and 15 vintage bikes], I don’t get rushed but wait for the best prospect in terms of price, condition, colour and options. Then I visit the seller and see if I can strike a good deal.”

### Who were the previous owners of your two Mercedes?

“The 1969 W115 220 belonged to a boy from Arcidosso who ▷





△ The Ponton's famous upright speedometer.

△△ 190's two-valve motor with Solex carburettor.

▷ Daniele finds plenty of joy in the cleaning process.

▷ owned a gas station. The car previously belonged to a long-time customer of his who, given his advanced age, no longer drove it and decided to sell it. The 1964 W110 190c belonged to a gentleman who was a driver and used this car for ceremonies and events. Unfortunately, due to an injury he had to change jobs and decided to sell the car."



### What condition were they in at the time you bought them?

"Both cars were very well preserved but, as I am a maniac, I have found a way to fix a lot of small details. I have worked on the W115 the most. A general service was done on the engine, but the most complicated work was carried out on the cabin floor, which was completely restored and re-upholstered. The bodywork was repainted in its original colour, too.

"The W110 has been professionally polished by a body shop and also received attention to its interior floor, plus I added white bands on the wheels. As for the powertrain, the car needed a small clutch adjustment but was otherwise perfect."

### Do you often drive these Mercedes?

"Even though I carefully store them in a garage, I try to use them as much as possible. I love to wash and polish them, but I often use them to go to the office. At least once a month, I take them for longer drives to the sea in Viareggio where I was born."

### What kind of maintenance do you carry out on your cars?

"The cars are checked I would say almost daily. I keep them at my partner's family business, a traditional hat factory. I often check the oil levels, radiator fluid, tyre pressures and so on."

### What do you love most about the W115 and W110?

"The W115 is an easy car to drive daily and has great fluidity. For me, the W110 is the Sunday car – it is extremely comfortable and the driving is really relaxed. I like the gearlever on the steering column, as well as the suspension which guarantees a stable drive. It makes me feel the master of the road."



### In terms of how they drive, what are the biggest differences between your Mercedes?

"I could define the W115 as a slim and easily manoeuvrable city car, while the W110 is a majestic elephantess – a little slow but reliable, and once you reach cruising speed you can focus on the surrounding landscape."

△ The Stroke 8 also shares space with a Citroën DS.

▷ The W115 is agile, the W110 a relaxed cruiser.

### Are there other Mercedes you'd like to own?

"I recently bought a 1969 280SE with a red leather interior and wooden dashboard. Obviously, I would like a W113 SL Roadster from the 1960s. Who knows, maybe one day an example will enter my garage."

### If it were possible, where would you teleport these Mercedes for a dream drive?

"I have recently returned from Norway, and I think back to the fjords and the wonderful and deserted roads. I would like to go back and see those landscapes again from the windows of my W110 Mercedes."

### And the soundtrack for this road trip?

"That'd be *Drive* by The Cars – on repeat!" 🎧



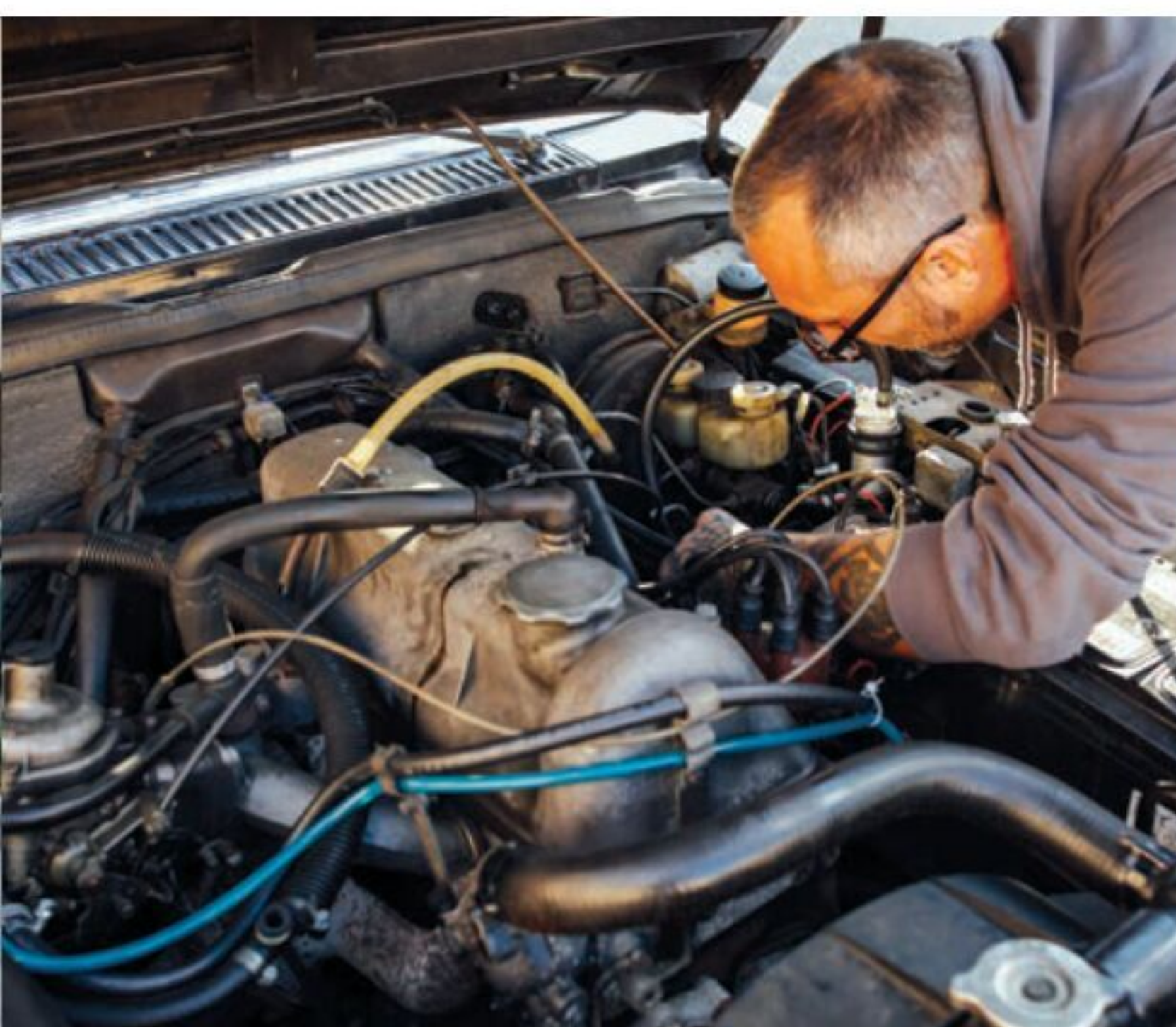
▷ Integrated headlamps on both saloons.

▽ 220's 2.2-litre engine uses a Stromberg carb.

▽▷ A floor-mounted shift in this 1969 220.



“I try to use them as much as possible”



#### Just the facts

##### Mercedes-Benz 220 (W115)

ENGINE M115 2,197cc 4-cyl POWER 104bhp@5,000rpm TORQUE 132lb ft@2,800rpm  
TRANSMISSION 4-speed manual, RWD WEIGHT 1,335kg 0-62MPH 13.7sec  
TOP SPEED 104mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 25.5mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1968-1973

##### Mercedes-Benz 190c (W110)

ENGINE M121 1,897cc 4-cyl POWER 79bhp@5,000rpm TORQUE 105lb ft@2,500rpm  
TRANSMISSION 4-speed manual, RWD WEIGHT 1,250kg 0-62MPH 17.7sec  
TOP SPEED 90mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 26.2mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1961-1965

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



I'm in a new kind of G-Class, driving around the same route that Mercedes-Benz used for the launch of the current 463-series near Carcassonne, France. The route takes in a vineyard situated in a precipitous valley. I like to

think that the best sommeliers might note a hint of burnt hydrocarbons or a soupcon of kicked-up dust from the 2018 vintage's grape, as a result of many hundreds of driven miles in G-Class through and around the vineyard back then. The car I'm in today shouldn't make such an impact, at least in relation to the hydrocarbons, but there's still a bit of dust being sent into the air...

The near silence today is also telling – there's only the crunch of the ground under tyres as this G makes light work of the terrain. I'm in an EQG prototype, experiencing the electric version of Mercedes' iconic off-road machine from the passenger seat. We've already seen the concept, and Mercedes' people say we can expect to see the production car in 2024.



◁ Kyle spoke to G-Class boss Emmerich Schiller.

▷ Pretty French vineyard part of the test route.

This EQG development vehicle is wearing a disguise, though the camouflage is the automotive equivalent of Clark Kent's glasses, as there's no hiding the chiselled, purposeful shape the G-Class

presents. It's what's under that familiar bodywork that's of interest today and, despite lots of probing questions, Merc's engineers seem to have been taking lessons from politicians with some expertly vague responses. They'll not be going into much detail, then, but what they do reveal is that the EQG features four electric motors, each driving an individual wheel.

If that sounds like a dream specification for an off-road vehicle then you'd be right. Instant, linear and easily managed torque makes electric motors ideal for off-roading, and being able to control each wheel individually is even more beneficial to such activity. This is crucial because Mercedes would only entertain such a vehicle if it remained faithful to the G-Class's original remit. Meeting that brief certainly isn't the work of a







moment and Emmerich Schiller, CEO of Mercedes-Benz's G-Class sub-brand, admitted he had reservations about the car's prospects early on.

**T**he four wheel motors were a result of that need for the EQG to retain its authentic G-Class ability. Mercedes-Benz could have just slapped a G-styled body on one of its existing skateboard EV platforms and put it in showrooms, but feelings run deep for the G-Wagen and it had to be done right. Therefore, the EQG retains a ladder frame chassis, with the body on top. There's all the axle articulation of the regular G-Class, meaning it's all but unstoppable on terrain you'd think twice about tackling on foot, or with ropes. This G-Class might be treading more lightly, environmentally speaking at least, but it does so with no less prowess and authority.

That much is obvious as I'm physically hanging off my seat belts as Schiller drives us down a descent on the testing terrain. Hailing from AMG, Schiller admits that the EQG did take some inspiration from the SLS Electric Drive, which also



**The camouflage is the automotive equivalent of Clark Kent's glasses**



# Off-roading revolution

*Mercedes Enthusiast* gets very early access to the electrified G-Class, riding shotgun with engineers as they test the forthcoming battery-powered, off-road icon

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







The four-wheel motor arrangement gifts the EQC some new abilities







featured an electric motor for each wheel, and while there were some differing goals for that car, like everything in engineering there were some transferable tech and ideas between them. Unique to the EQG over any other EV application is the requirement for the electronics (specifically the battery) to be protected from the extreme conditions and unique stresses experienced during serious off-roading.

**T**he battery is placed between the chassis rails and serves as a structural member, so replaces some of the ladder elements. It needs to be stiff to prevent any flexing, because doing so would cause issues with sealing. The battery's location also reduces the likelihood of impact from underneath. Schiller is unconcerned about the battery, deliberately dropping the EQG into a gully in such a manner that has it bottoming out on a protruding boulder. There are protective plates underneath the EQG and these are made from a carbon/Kevlar mix rather than steel, which provides the required protection while reducing weight by some 30kg.

The battery itself is derived from

▽ Spin on the spot with new G-Turn mode.

▷ Being electric, air intakes are not necessary...



△ Batteries in the floor lower the centre of gravity.

△◁ It wouldn't be a G-Wagen if it couldn't do this!

those in the existing EQ line-up. Mercedes-Benz has registered EQG560 and EQG580 model names, with the possibility that either or both will feature more advanced battery chemistry than that available today, such is the speed of battery development. Certainly, Mercedes-Benz will be looking to maximise the potential range because the EQG will be heavy, while the G's iconic shape is far from the slippery EV norm. Right now, the manufacturer is not admitting how much heavier the EQG will be than a regular G-Class, but when I guess at an increase of around 20 to 30 per cent over a V8 model, the response is less evasive. Therefore we can expect an increase of 400 to 500kg over the 2,330kg G500.

That weight has no bearing on the EQG's off-road performance, which is simply extraordinary. The almost complete absence of sound makes progress feel even more effortless from the passenger seat, the EQG clambering, climbing and descending with seemingly greater ease than the G500 out front containing the photographer. There's a creep mode allowing low speed crawling, and each motor effectively has its own low range gearbox – useful for off-road antics.

What's impressive is that we leave for the off-road route with around 70 per cent of battery charge and, even after some not insignificant time on the move tackling some very testing terrain, the charge level only drops by a low single-figure percentage, the clever Mercedes powertrain using descents to scavenge energy and recharge the battery.

**T**he four-wheel motor arrangement gifts the EQG some new abilities, including a so-called G-Turn. Pushing a button on the dashboard allows the EQG to turn within its own length, with the wheels on one side spinning in the opposite direction to the others, enabling the EQG to turn like a tracked vehicle. It's as hilarious to watch as it is to experience, and brilliantly demonstrates what's possible with the individual wheel motors. While you could write off the G-Turn as a party trick, this action is potentially very useful in an off-road setting. Tantalisingly, there's another, as yet unexplained button next to the G-Turn's. On the evidence of this early passenger ride, it should do something interesting...

The EQG is a fascinating juxtaposition of iconic, retro G-Class styling and off-road ability mixed with cutting edge, electric drivetrain technology. Bring on the production car launch and some time behind the wheel!





# Future classics

In the latest installment of our buying-focused series, we reveal our top six future classic Mercedes for a budget of £15,000

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES DEALERS

Some of the best value Mercedes could be termed 'future classics' – models which have lost any contemporary allure but haven't quite acquired true classic status yet. Typically, these are models built in the last 10 to 20 years and there are many of them, as Benz expanded its range considerably during this period. If you happen to have as much as 15 grand to spend on your next Mercedes then these six contenders – selected from this era – are well worth considering.



## Hot hatchback A250 4Matic (W176)

**Merc's Golf GTI rival comes with the bonus of four-wheel drive and a readily tunable turbocharged engine**

If you're looking for a hot hatch that's stylish and fun to drive, but also reassuringly safe and well-equipped, then Mercedes' W176 A250 4Matic Engineered by AMG fits the bill perfectly. Produced from 2015 to 2017, this pre-facelift A-Class is powered by the 1,991cc turbocharged four-cylinder powerplant (M270), producing 215bhp at 5,500rpm and 258lb ft of torque from 1,200 to 4,000rpm.

The grippy 4Matic version of the A250 covers the 0-62mph dash in just 6.4 seconds and tops out at 149mph. Up-rated sports suspension, perforated brakes and red detailing are the big draws of Engineered by AMG spec.

You will find most cars at Mercedes and specialist dealers, but we discovered this great looking, 76,000-mile car from 2015 at Acorn Kia in Crewe ([www.acorn-group.co.uk](http://www.acorn-group.co.uk)). Stickered at just £13,999 it was great value, came with a very handy 12-month warranty, and boasted a comprehensive spec that included 18-inch AMG alloys, part-leather upholstery, a panoramic glass sunroof, a 5.8-inch display on the dashboard, USB and Bluetooth connectivity with handsfree and cruise control.

### Just the facts

#### A250 4Matic (W176)

ENGINE M270, 1,991cc, 4-cyl turbocharged

POWER 208bhp@5,500rpm TORQUE 258lb ft@1,250-4,000rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, 4WD 0-62MPH 6.6sec

TOP SPEED 149mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 42.8mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 154g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2013-2015

**£15,000 BUYS: 2015 A250 4Matic Engineered by AMG with 75,000 miles**

**BUYING TIPS**  
As well as a complete service history and no more than two owners, your A250 4Matic should have no signs of accident damage on the bodywork and alloy wheels, no uneven panel gaps and perfect paintwork. Check the electrics thoroughly, as well as ensuring all recalls have been addressed. And watch out for oil leaks, any indication of turbo wear (white smoke) and water ingress into the footwells or the spare wheel well.



△ Carbon effect trim and red inserts add a sporty vibe.



△ Twin exhausts and stiffer ride in Engineered by AMG spec.



## Sports saloon C55 AMG (W203)

**One of the most reliable neo-classic AMG Mercedes, a cherished example of the facelifted W203 C-Class is hard to beat**

A rare modern classic, the M113 V8-engined C55 AMG delivers brutal performance and claims excellent reliability, yet you could buy one of the best examples for just £15,000. And the 362bhp engine is a masterpiece, with silicon/aluminium-lined bores, stratified fuel injection, forged steel con rods and a magnesium intake manifold.

A hefty 376lb ft of torque equates to a 5.4-second 0-60mph time, whilst a range-topping spec includes leather upholstery, cruise control, heated electrically adjustable memory front seats and xenon headlights; the optional Comand infotainment system is fitted to most examples too.

C55 Saloons (and Estates) don't appear for sale that often so you'll need to move swiftly when they do, especially if you want to bag something like this 54-plater for sale at AA Car Sales in West Sussex ([www.aacarsales.co.uk](http://www.aacarsales.co.uk)). Up for £13,999, it had covered just under 80,000 miles and was sold with complete service history, three-month's warranty and an opulent spec that included a factory sunroof, Bose premium surround sound system, front and rear parking sensors and AMG heated seats.

### Just the facts

#### C55 AMG (W203)

ENGINE M113, 5,439cc V8 POWER 362bhp@5,750rpm TORQUE 376lb ft@4,000rpm

TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD 0-62MPH 5.2sec TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 23.7mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 286g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2004-2007

**£15,000 BUYS: 2004 C55 AMG with 70,000 miles**



**BUYING TIPS**  
The C55's mechanicals seem very dependable if regularly maintained, but you must stick to cars with relatively few owners, rust-free bodywork and a full service history record. Keep an eye out for leaks from worn breather pipes, failing air con compressors, tired alternators, oil leaks, any issues with the power steering, and worn suspension components. Quite a few owners have fitted aftermarket exhausts, brake pads and brake discs.



△ AMG exhaust system makes a great noise.



▷ AMG leather seats and multi-function wheel.

## Sexy roadster SLK320 (R170)

**The six-cylinder version of Mercedes' first SLK is a rare find these days, but it's great to drive and could prove a sound investment**

Cherished examples of Mercedes' ground-breaking R170 SLK are becoming increasingly sought-after. And the six-cylinder SLK320 is the model of choice for many enthusiasts. Probably the best balanced of all the SLK models, the 150mph SLK320 combines good performance and fine handling – and good examples could appreciate in years to come.

The 3,199cc V6 motor produces 215bhp at 5,700rpm, along with 227lb ft of torque from 3,000rpm, and the SLK320 could originally be ordered with a five-speed automatic transmission or a six-speed manual should you wish to be more connected to the driving experience.

Our 15 grand budget is sufficient to bag the very finest examples around, but if you can find a better car than this one-owner, 2002 SLK320 for sale at Tynemouth Select ([www.tynemouthselect.co.uk](http://www.tynemouthselect.co.uk)) then we want to hear about it! With a mere 14,543 miles on the clock, a blemish-free service history record and an unbeatable specification, it was in immaculate condition and could have been yours for £13,999.



△ R170 remains a fantastic looking compact roadster.

▷ You'll feel pretty safe inside this Mercedes...



**BUYING TIPS**  
Aside from pristine bodywork, your SLK320 should show no signs of moisture ingress into the foglamps, no rust (it's common around the wheelarches, bootlid lock and chrome wheel nuts) and have exhaust cats that are in good condition as replacements are expensive. Check everything works as it should, especially the indicators and the roof mechanism. Central locking control units can suffer water damage if the roof is folded shut when wet.

### Just the facts

#### SLK320 (R170)

ENGINE M112 3,199cc V6

POWER 215bhp@5,700rpm

TORQUE 229lb ft@3,000-4,800rpm

TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD

0-62MPH 6.9sec TOP SPEED 150mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 27.2mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 254g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2000-2004

**£15,000 BUYS: 2004 SLK320 with 25,000 miles**



## Sleek coupe CLS63 AMG (C219)

### Cut a dash in Mercedes' radical, first-generation AMG CLS – but make sure you buy a cherished example

If you're looking to make a statement then the stunning CLS63 AMG surely takes some beating. Fifteen grand bags a rare, 2008 V8 model with a whopping 507bhp and 465lb ft of torque. The 0-62mph time of 4.5 seconds puts the 219-series coupe in an exclusive club, whilst the swooping styling guarantees compliments wherever you go.

The elegant CLS63 AMG replaced the supercharged CLS55 AMG (469bhp) and seats four adults in leather-trimmed luxury, whilst the impressive AMG spec includes six airbags, LED brake lights and Pre-Safe as standard.

A rare beast, you may have to look for a while before you find a good example, like this immaculate, metallic silver 2008 CLS63 AMG Coupe we spotted at Car Sales Hoddesdon ([www.carsaleshoddesdonltd.co.uk](http://www.carsaleshoddesdonltd.co.uk)). Advertised for £15,995, it had covered a relatively low 78,000 miles, had just three previous owners and packed a spec that would leave you wanting for nothing – six-CD autochanger, heated and ventilated front and rear seats, Comand and a Harman Kardon Logic 7 surround sound system.



▷ First-gen CLS still cuts a fine figure in 2023.



▷▷ Masses of wood trim and early Comand.

### Just the facts

#### CLS63 AMG (C219)

ENGINE M156 6,208cc V8

POWER 507bhp@6,800rpm

TORQUE 465lb ft@5,200rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD

0-62MPH 4.5sec TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 19.5mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 345g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2006-2010

**£15,000 BUYS: 2008 CLS63 AMG with 80,000 miles**

### BUYING TIPS

As well as the essential full service history, your CLS63 AMG must also have had all recalls addressed and show no signs of rust, or any issues with the power steering, sunroof, cooling system, camshaft and valve lifters, brakes or the air suspension. And if the CEL illuminates on the test drive demand a full evaluation before making any offer. High mileage engines should have the valve covers removed and the camshaft lobes inspected for any signs of wear.



### BUYING TIPS

Check that your car was properly serviced by a Mercedes main dealer for the first three or four years of its life. After that period, a specialist history is fine, but watch out for failed fuel pumps, worn alternators, flat batteries, broken exhaust catalysts, any signs of water leaks into the boot, and SBS control box failures. Any repairs to the hydraulic suspension or the ECU could prove very expensive.





## Luxury limousine S500 BlueEfficiency L (V221)

Little else on the road projects a greater sense of sophistication than a turbocharged V8 S-Class. Just make sure yours is glitch-free...

If it's metal for money you're after, then a Mercedes-Benz S-Class of a certain age is almost impossible to beat. And the potent 221-series S500 is not only fast, quiet, super smooth and unbelievably comfortable, but it can also handle surprisingly well too.

The facelifted S500 BlueEfficiency model packs a 4.7-litre V8 under the bonnet, turbocharged to produce 429bhp and deliver 516lb ft of torque from a mere 1,800rpm. And despite this awesome output, it can still top 30mpg on longer journeys. However, a chauffeur is not included!

The long-wheelbase 'L' version makes a great luxury buy – as long as you have the parking space. Our £15,000 budget puts you behind the wheel of a well-tended, 2012 S500 BlueEfficiency L with around 80,000 miles – such as this metallic black 12-plater we discovered at Darin Autos Ltd in Middlesex ([www.darinautos.co.uk](http://www.darinautos.co.uk)). Priced at £14,995, this S-Class had covered 78,000 and had a huge spec.

### Just the facts

#### S500 L (W/V221)

ENGINE M278 4,663cc V8 biturbo

POWER 429bhp@5,250rpm

TORQUE 516lb ft@1,800-3,500rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD 0-62MPH 5.0sec

TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 30.1mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 219-224g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2011-2013

**£15,000 BUYS: 2012 S500 L with 80,000 miles**

▷△ We're big fans of the 221-series V8 S-Class.

▷ Elegant dash with integrated Comand screen.



### BUYING TIPS

With so many things to potentially go wrong, it's essential that your S500 comes with pristine service history, immaculate bodywork and no known faults. It's worth paying for a specialist to carry out a diagnostic check before you agree any deal, and ask if any upgrades have been carried out. Look out for any issues with the air suspension, timing chain and tensioners, oil leaks onto the wiring harness, and worn valve guides or cam adjusters.



## Classy convertible SL500 (R230)

Class is permanent and the appreciating R230 SL500 is great value right now, too

As alluring today as it was when it was launched, Mercedes' V8-powered R230 SL has aged beautifully. It was facelifted twice during production and our budget bags a low-mileage, early pre-facelift SL500 capable of 155mph! With 302bhp on tap, the SL500's performance is ample – the benchmark 0-62mph sprint is completed in just 6.3 seconds. And although this five-speed auto is more of a cruiser than an outright sports car, if you need to move more quickly the R230's 339lb ft of torque from low revs rapidly takes care of things.

Needless to say, fuel economy isn't great (22.2mpg is the official figure), but the SL500's palatial standard spec leaves little to be desired. Just make sure you buy a good example like this 49,000-mile, 2002 car advertised for £13,500 at Hollins Hill Cars in Bradford ([www.hollinshillcarsales.co.uk](http://www.hollinshillcarsales.co.uk)). With one owner for the last 10 years, it had been immaculately maintained and came with a full service history record. But please ignore the SL55 AMG badging – it really is an SL500!



◁ SL55 AMG add-ons for this SL500 model.

▷ A lovely, sweeping console design in the R230.

### Just the facts

#### SL500 (R230)

ENGINE M113 4,966cc V8 POWER 302bhp@5,600rpm

TORQUE 339lb ft@2,700 to 4,250rpm

TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD 0-62MPH 6.3sec

TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 22.2mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 292g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2001-2006 (early SL500s)

**£15,000 BUYS: 2002 SL500 with 50,000 miles**





# Mini marvels

Fancy a high performance A-Class model? You're in luck as some examples – from the top turbodiesel to early and newer AMGs – represent good value right now, as our UK market expert reveals

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES CARS TO GO, IDEA CAR LTD & LONDON MOTOR COMPANY

This 2019 A220d combines 187bhp with 55.4mpg fuel economy.



**T**he idea that the Mercedes brand could be associated with high performance hatchbacks no longer seems radical and, incredibly, it's nearly a decade since the first (W176) A45 AMG hit UK roads! Ten years later – and a generation on – Mercedes' mighty pocket rocket still hasn't been bettered, although the VW Golf R, BMW M140i and Audi RS3 have had it in their sights for years.

So successful has the hot A-Class format become that Mercedes took the opportunity to diversify the range, adding the slightly less wild AMG A35 model (302bhp) in 2018, as well as an even more extreme AMG A45 S version (416bhp). And from all reports, new sales continue to do well.

Especially popular with private buyers, these AMG models rarely appear in company car fleets. But for those with a penchant for speed but a need to be pragmatic, Mercedes also produced the W177 A220d, which in AMG Line guise looks very nearly as impressive and delivers down-to-earth, diesel hot hatch performance.

## Four-cylinder firepower

A range of hot hatches which no one would have believed Mercedes might produce, and yet they have flourished. Fortunately, that means there are plenty of well-maintained used examples just waiting for their next owner, and you could be one of them.

The emergence of a slightly milder, but eminently tuneable W177 A35 AMG model altered the used market dynamic. And there are



△ First-gen A45 AMG yours for £16.5K at Ideal Car in Notts.



△ AMG A35 up for £27,950 with 35,000 miles at Cars to Go.

plenty of early, good-value A35s now advertised for sale, with this striking, one-owner mint Polar White 2019 example at Cars to Go ([www.carsto-go.co.uk](http://www.carsto-go.co.uk)) in Dorset typical of what you could buy for just under £28,000.

The best value for a Mercedes hot hatch can be found in early W176 A45 AMGs (376bhp), like this metallic black 2013 car we spotted at Ideal Car Ltd in Nottingham ([www.idealcarltd.co.uk](http://www.idealcarltd.co.uk)). For just £16,490, it had 86,000 miles on it and boasted a full service history. In addition to the usual AMG features, it came with a 5.8-inch colour display, Active Park Assist with Parktronic, and Speedtronic cruise control. This looks like a great car, but be careful – some A45s have had less-than-pristine pasts, so it's essential to thoroughly check an A45's provenance.

If you're after a hot hatch with a lower profile and more affordable running costs, Mercedes' W177 A220d AMG Line (187bhp) could be the perfect fit. With 295lb ft of torque available from just 1,600rpm, it can reach 62mph from a standstill in just seven seconds, yet it boasts a combined economy figure of 55.4mpg. This 2019, one-owner car with 35,000 miles is representative of what you can expect to find, with a luxurious spec and a £22,500 price tag at the London Motor Company ([www.lmc-cars.co.uk](http://www.lmc-cars.co.uk)) in Essex. If you need A35 and A45 AMG levels of grip, there are also some 4Matic versions advertised for sale.

► **Looking for a more capacious Mercedes?**  
Then check out our top three £10,000 diesel estates on page 76!



## Forecourt find

E220  
Cabriolet  
Sportline  
(A124)

One of the best-built Mercedes of all time, the 124's popularity never seems to wane. E220 Sportline Cabriolets are especially in demand with enthusiasts. This Brilliant Silver metallic example from 1997 had only covered 48,173 miles and was offered for sale for £19,995 at Woldside Classic and Sports Car in Lincolnshire. It had black leather upholstery and was built in the final few months of production. It came with diamond-cut, eight-hole alloy wheels, heated front seats with driver memory, air conditioning, and an AMG sports steering wheel. In great condition inside and out, this E-Class Cabriolet also had an extensive service history record with an accompanying folder containing old receipts and MOTs.

**Dealer information:** Woldside Classic and Sports Car **Tel:** 01507 606725  
**Web:** [www.woldsideclassics.co.uk](http://www.woldsideclassics.co.uk)



△ Under 50,000 miles covered and looking great with it!

▷ The thick fabric roof lowers at the touch of a button.

▽ Smart, facelifted cabin with airbags and glossy wood trim.

Mercedes  
market

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

The top 6 best-selling  
used Mercedes

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

- 1 **A-Class** (21.8%)
- 2 **C-Class** (21.2%)
- 3 **E-Class** (13.3%)
- 4 **GLA-Class** (6.3%)
- 5 **GLC-Class** (6.0%)
- 6 **GLE/M-Class** (4.5%)

## 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** (28.3%)
- 2 **Silver** (18.3%)
- 3 **Grey** (17.4%)
- 4 **White** (17.8%)
- 5 **Blue** (10.0%)

## Miles ahead

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

**Less than 50,000 miles**  
**61.8%**

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

**More than 80,000 miles**  
**17.1%**

## Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

**Diesel** 53.4%

**Petrol** 40.8%

**Hybrid** 4.20%

**Full electric** 1.60%

## 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** 23.4%

**Front-wheel drive** 32.3%

**Rear-wheel drive** 44.3%



## Auction spotlight

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

● **SLK230 Kompressor**

2.3-litre, petrol, auto, 2000/W-plate, 98,000 miles, **£1,400**

● **CLK320 Cabriolet Avantgarde**

3.2-litre, petrol, auto, 2004/54-plate, 119,000 miles, **£2,400**

● **E320 Avantgarde**

3.2-litre, petrol, auto, 2003/53-plate, 78,000 miles, **£2,550**

● **ML270 CDI Special Edition**

2.7-litre, diesel, auto, 2004/54-plate, 87,000 miles, **£3,500**

● **SLK350**

3.5-litre, petrol, manual, 2005/05-plate, 71,000 miles, **£5,000**

● **CLA180 Coupe Sport**

1.6-litre, petrol, auto, 2015/65-plate, 63,000 miles, **£11,300**

● **C200 Sport**

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2015/64-plate, 51,000 miles, **£13,150**

● **C300h Bluetec AMG Line Premium Plus**

2.1-litre, diesel-electric, auto, 2015/15-plate, 79,000 miles, **£14,375**

● **GLE250d 4Matic AMG Line**

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2017/67-plate, 46,000 miles, **£26,400**

● **AMG C63 Premium**

4.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2015/65-plate, 55,000 miles, **£27,200**

● **AMG C43 4Matic Coupe Premium**

3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/18-plate, 58,000 miles, **£27,400**

● **A250e AMG Line Premium**

1.3-litre, petrol-electric, auto, 2020/70-plate, 12,000 miles, **£30,800**

● **E400d 4Matic Cabriolet AMG Line Premium Plus**

2.9-litre, diesel, auto, 2019/19-plate, 29,000 miles, **£35,000**

● **AMG CLA45 4Matic Coupe Night Edition Plus**

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19-plate, 34,000 miles, **£37,200**

● **AMG E63 S 4Matic Plus Premium**

4.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2017/17-plate, 31,000 miles, **£46,000**

## And remember...

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



TOP THREE

# £10,000 diesel estates

If you believe everything you read, you might be forgiven for thinking that the Mercedes-Benz diesel estate is all but dead. But think again – there are still plenty of diesel load-luggers available in Mercedes' new UK car ranges, and there's an even greater variety of used examples for sale on forecourts throughout the country.

Providing a great blend of practicality, economy and comfort, the cars below are among the finest oil burning Mercedes estates you can buy for a budget of around £10,000. An intriguingly punchy C-Class, effortlessly stylish CLS and modern classic E-Class are all included here. Where would our money go? It's a tough call, but the C-Class gets our vote.



## C250 CDI Estate (S204)

Mercedes' popular 204-series C250 CDI BlueEfficiency Estate Sport makes an excellent used buy. Our budget gets a low-mileage, 2011 example with 75,000 miles on the clock and optional extras. Sport spec adds 18-inch AMG wheels, sports suspension, AMG body styling, the Easy-Pack powered tailgate and chrome roof rails. Capable of 147mph, the C250 CDI's four-cylinder turbodiesel engine produces 201bhp/369lb ft of torque, allowing it to cover the 0-62mph dash in 7.4 seconds.



## CLS250 CDI Shooting Brake (X218)

With a similar engine and performance, but a good deal more style, the CLS250 CDI BlueEfficiency Shooting Brake AMG Sport is a relatively rare beast – but a rewarding one to own. For around £10,000, you can get a 2013 example with 120,000 miles and a full service history. A seven-speed auto is standard. Other highlights include 19-inch alloys, walnut trim, leather upholstery, Comand Online infotainment and Speedtronic cruise control.



## E300D Estate (S124)

If you're looking for a car with real heritage, the 124-series E300D estate is hard to beat. You might have to wait a while for the right example to come up for sale, but £10,000 will get you a cherished 1995 example with 90,000 to 100,000 miles and a full service history record. Built to last rather than go fast, it may not be the ideal contemporary daily driver, but every journey in a four-speed automatic E300D feels special, and some even come with tasty extras like leather, a sunroof, or metallic paint.

## Latest products and accessories

### Be Seen Screen

Breaking down on one of the UK's many Smart motorways is a scary experience and can be extremely dangerous. Traditional warning triangles can be hazardous to deploy and not always easily seen – but a highly visible Be Seen Screen could protect you more effectively. Compact, lightweight and easy to use, you don't have to walk towards oncoming traffic to place a warning triangle – and the screen has the same reflectivity as emergency vehicles. Extensively tested at the Millbrook Vehicle Proving Ground, this product is endorsed by a former Senior Police Area Commander of Thames Valley Police. Find out more at [www.be-seen-screen.co.uk](http://www.be-seen-screen.co.uk). Priced at £35.95.



### GAZ Charged range of dampers

GAZ Shocks has announced a new range of fully adjustable coil-over suspension kits. The new GAZ Charged range is based on its GHA and GOLD ranges but upgraded with the benefits of nitrogen gas and 'helper' springs above the main suspension springs. These upgrades will give an improved and smoother ride over conventional dampers. Nitrogen also minimises the aeration of the hydraulic fluid/oil under normal use by compressing the air bubbles inside the damper. And all the current features of the GHA and GOLD ranges are included in the GAZ Charged range, which costs £150 plus the current GHA or GOLD kit price. For full details and prices visit [www.gazshocks.com](http://www.gazshocks.com).



### Mercedes-Benz Collection Men's Functional Coat

Keep warm and dry with this smart Men's Functional Coat from the latest Mercedes-Benz Collection. Boasting a 100 per cent polyamide outer material, a polyester inner lining, bonded inner seams, a hood with zipper, concealed snap fastening, a side flap and water-resistant zipped pockets plus a zipped breast pocket with an outlet for a headphone cable and width-adjustable sleeves, it's available from your local Mercedes-Benz dealer in sizes S to XXL. The recommended retail price is quoted as £240 although some dealers may offer you a better deal as part of other promotions, and the unique product code is B66958681-8685.





# Signature Tune **E350d**

So you've bought a comfortable and luxurious, 213-series E350d Saloon or Estate, but how do you improve this facelifted, six-cylinder executive?

The facelifted, 213-series E-Class arrived in mid 2020.



**F**rom 2016 to 2018, the pre-facelift E350d was Mercedes' most powerful diesel W213 E-Class model, boasting a turbocharged 2,987cc OM642 V6 engine producing 254bhp and a hefty 457lb ft of torque from just 1,600rpm. Available in both rear-wheel drive and 4Matic versions, performance was pretty impressive – the 0-62mph dash took just 5.9 seconds even in models without four-wheel drive. Packing Mercedes' impressive nine-speed automatic transmission, the top speed was limited to 155mph, although delimited cars could go much faster so we hear...

Later facelifted E350d models received the newer, 282bhp, 2,927cc, straight-six turbodiesel engine with 442lb ft of torque from just 1,200rpm. This cut the 0-62mph time to just 5.7 seconds. Both the V6 and this later straight-six version can be remapped for even greater output, but we'd recommend that buyers avoid already-modified examples and instead buy a standard car and tune it themselves. That way, you'll be sure the tuning has been done safely.

Before you start tuning your E350d, make sure any recalls have been resolved under warranty, get a thorough service and a diagnostic check to ensure the car has no known faults. Prices start at around £14,000.



## Engine

Remapping your 350d with a custom ECU remap can improve both power and torque and give you better throttle response. A variety of reputable tuners offer this service, with typical gains on the earlier OM642 V6 of around 43bhp and 41lb ft – and as much as 95bhp and 90lb ft on the later OM656 engine. The increase in performance on the later 2018-on cars, in particular, is considerable. Many tuning houses also offer sports exhausts and performance air filters.

## Transmission

A few tuning houses offer remaps for the excellent nine-speed autobox, but the vast majority of owners have been happy to stick with the factory gearbox, which appears to work well with remapped 350ds. Bear in mind that

have fitted Tein Street, Bilstein B14, YSR Dynamic Pro Sport and BC Racing BR kits. OE bushes will eventually perish – we'd replace them with poly bushes from Powerflex – and to stiffen up the front end fit a strut brace from Ultra Racing or OMP.

## Brakes

If you get your E350d remapped then some kind of brake upgrade makes sense, especially if you want to fully exploit your car's new potential. Most owners simply choose a set of performance brake pads – like those from Brembo, Ferodo and EBC – with Goodridge braided hoses. But if you desire even greater stopping power then you can fit the AMG brakes from an E43 AMG or fit uprated discs from EBC, Wilwood, K Sport Forge and others, plus six-pot calipers.

## Wheels and bodywork

Most 350d owners prefer to stick with AMG alloys, but there are quite a few AMG designs available in 19 and 20-inch sizes which look good and work well. A few owners have opted for other makes instead – with a variety of finishes. Full bodykits are available but most 350d owners have just added a few discreet touches, like carbon, chrome or colour-coordinated mirrors and spoilers.

## Interior

A conservative bunch, most 350d owners say they keep their car's interiors standard – save for sound, sat nav and wiki system upgrades. You could connect to any WiFi network with an Android DVD GPS Navigation Command upgrade, which could also allow you to install apps from the Google Play Store, play DVDs and – with the right adapter – access the ECU's diagnostic fault codes. This can prove invaluable in keeping on top of maintenance issues.



you must report all modifications to your insurer, including any transmission remaps.

## Suspension

If you simply want to lower your E350d then Eibach Pro-Kit, H&R or Tein S-tech lowering springs are the way to go. But if you want a lower stance whilst maintaining a similar ride quality then you'll need some coil-overs instead – owners



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# NEXT ISSUE



## THE SPACE AGE

Comparing official and unofficial Mercedes estates



PLUS

## THE SPIRIT OF LUXURY

126-series S-Class meets a modern successor



Interview: M-B Heritage boss ♦ 280SL in Wildberry metallic  
**AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!**

**Mercedes**  
ENTHUSIAST

April/May 2023 issue  
**ON SALE** March 17th





# Top four

**Mercedes' latest four-cylinder turbodiesel engine works a treat in the pre-facelift E220d, providing wholesome performance without the usual racket – here's everything you need to know before buying...**

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

**A**fter the electrical and build quality deficiencies that came to light in the 211-series E-Class of the early 2000s, and which caused Mercedes-Benz considerable reputational damage, the 212-series family that replaced it was a superbly thought-out and engineered car that answered all criticisms and restored the E-Class as the world's best middleweight saloon, be that from the perspective of the company director ordering an AMG V8 model or the cab driver investing in a tools-of-the-trade, four-cylinder turbodiesel.

In mid 2016, it was time for the

213-series E-Class to replace it, and what was offered was a car that would hopefully embody the durability and dynamic excellence of its predecessor, but with styling that moved from angularity to an S-Class sweeping smoothness, especially around the rear flanks. And, as was the Stuttgart way, a great deal of new technology accompanied the new, fifth-generation E-Class such as the latest generation digitised instrument panel and a number of electronic packages for steering, braking, lights and lane changing.

New, even the base model saloon was listed at not too far off £40,000 once a couple of extras such as Comand Online and

metallic paint were added, but the heavy depreciation that affects almost all volume car brands plays into the hands of the budget-conscious used car buyer.

Seven years on from launch – and with the sixth-generation E-Class coming this year – a W213 with around 100,000 miles can be purchased from a retail forecourt for £12,000 to £13,000, and that price could drop to £10,000 or even a little less if a really big mileage doesn't scare you. But does the W213 maintain its predecessor's reputation as a used car that's reliable enough for a shift-working minicab pilot, or does the extra new sophistication compromise this?

## Design and engineering

The W213 E-Class, whose platform and suspension is a mixture of C-Class and GLC, came with many engines, from two-litre petrol and diesel to four-litre, 600bhp plus AMG V8. But here we concentrate on the high-selling version, the E220d and – with a tight budget in mind – cars built before the 2020 facelift.

Traditionally, new Mercedes models carried over the engines of their predecessors for a short while, but not the E220d, which used the two-litre, OM654 diesel featuring a single turbo and produced 191bhp, and 295lb ft torque at 1,600 to 2,800rpm. Compared to the previous OM651



Spotted  
for salePRIVATE SELLER  
E220d AMG Line2017/17, Iridium Silver, black  
leather, 20-inch alloy wheels,  
95,000 miles, £14,450,  
East London

## Just the facts

## Mercedes-Benz E220d (W213)

ENGINE OM654 1,950cc 4-cyl turbo

POWER 191bhp@3,800rpm

TORQUE 295lb ft@1,600-2,800rpm

TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,680kg

0-62MPH 7.3sec

TOP SPEED 149mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 72.4mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 102-112g/km

YEARS PRODUCED 2016-2020

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a pre-facelift saloon; fuel consumption according to NEDC Combined

diesel in the last of the 212-generation models, that's eight per cent more power and the same amount of twisting force from 200cc less capacity. Fuel consumption was quoted by Mercedes at 72.4mpg on the combined cycle, 13 per cent better than from the W212. And with every 213-series diesel compliant with the EU6 emissions standard, none are subject to London's ULEZ surcharge. Just one gearbox was available, the nine-speed 9G-Tronic Plus unit, with two speeds more than the 212-series.

The base model E220d was the SE, which was well appointed. It came with 17-inch alloy wheels, Agility Control suspension with selective damping, Comand with sat nav, Keyless-Go locking and starting, Active Parking Assist, leather trim and heated front seats. Paying £2,500 took you to AMG Line and 18-inch, five-spoke alloys in titanium grey, AMG body styling, perforated brake discs, rear privacy glass, Seat Comfort package with electro-pneumatic four-way lumbar support, ash wood fascia trim and a three-spoke, multi-function AMG

steering wheel.

If this wasn't enough equipment, a multitude of optional extras could be ordered, either as single items or bundled, although less was available on the E220d than higher up models. Air suspension, Panoramic glass roof, Thermotronic three-zone air con, 360-degree camera, Burmester surround sound system, door closing aid, wireless charging and more were there to tempt those not limited to the basic vehicle.

The first development came in February 2017 when the four-wheel drive 4Matic model became available on the E220d, whose engine and nine-speed automatic 'box were unchanged for this application. It was unusual for a diesel E-Class to run with 4Matic in the UK – indeed only the 220d and three-litre E350d were offered with it at that stage – and was a model people did buy in some numbers over here.

The 213's facelift was applied in May 2020. At the front, the headlamps, now fully LED, were redesigned along with the grille and bumper, and the tail lights were tweaked too. Avantgarde

Line became the basic equipment spec, and the driving packages – for instance Active Distance Assist, Active Steering Assist and Active Blind Spot Assist – were upgraded to the latest spec.

## Driving the E220d

The 212 E-Class's driving manners did not disappoint in any way, so how does its successor rate? Let's look back to *Mercedes Enthusiast's* original driving impressions, supplied by Ian Kuah in early summer 2016.

"From the driver's perspective things have never been better," he enthused. "While the plethora of features contained within the infotainment system might at first seem daunting to a non tech savvy person, the interface quickly proves not only easy to use, but also delightful in operation. The glass cover for the twin-screens is a visual knockout punch."

On performance and handling, he commented, "The smooth, potent and economical character of this new motor will please fans of the stalwart E220d. Effective soundproofing in the cabin and engine bay ensures that the

four-cylinder diesel soundtrack remains distant, whether from cold or when accelerating hard. The electric power steering is very good indeed, and I found myself driving down winding roads at a brisk clip without ever having to think about the steering or chassis performance."

The magazine's present Editor, Kyle Molyneux, sampled the E220d 4Matic, albeit it in Estate guise, on its launch five years ago, reporting, "Strong though it is, this four-cylinder turbodiesel engine doesn't have the guts to really test the 4Matic system – the 45/55 front/rear torque split ensuring traction no matter how hard you stomp on the throttle pedal. In the dry, you can't even make the make the tyres chirrup, such is the enormous amount of grip."

## What you'll pay

There's a wide price range for the E220d, partly because it's still effectively a current model, prices ranging from a rock bottom £10,000 to just over £30,000 for a one- or two-year old. But the band that offers the best value is £15,000 to £20,000, as below that there's only a limited choice without a mileage well over 100,000 – E-Classes make good taxis, after all. At independent dealers that figure secures a looked-after example with around 80,000 miles. AMG Line cars fetch a little more than SE models, while 4Matics are more still.

Normally the cars we cover in our Buyer's Guides are too old for official Mercedes-Benz dealers, but in the case of the W213 E220d you'll see a wide choice. You'll pay more for the superior warranty and other benefits, prices starting at £17,000. There are also many cars offered for sale privately. ▷



# E220d Inside and out



## Specialist overview

Steve Dickens of Autoclass Garage in Milton Keynes

*"The early W213 isn't as reliable as the late W212, but that's usually the case with a new model. There's always teething problems with the electrics, but in fairness a software update usually fixes it. The main problem you need to look out for is the need for a camshaft box repair, which is expensive. Otherwise, there's not much that goes seriously wrong."*

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

## Powertrain

- Once mileage exceeds 100,000, it's quite likely that a booming noise – as if a pipe to the fuel induction has come loose – may be heard from the OM654 engine, possibly accompanied by an illuminated engine management light. This is caused when the camshaft rockers break and damage the camshafts, often as a result of poor quality oil and/or going over the service schedule time and mileage. The cure is to replace the camshaft box.
- AdBlue systems can suffer NOx sensor faults, and also AdBlue pump/tank problems. These are expensive problems to rectify, so ensure the engine sounds good and that there are no warning lights illuminated in the instrument cluster.
- The 9G-Tronic Plus automatic gearbox is generally trouble-free other than the occasional valve body problem. If this component fails, the car will go into 'limp home' mode, remaining locked in one gear.
- As always, gearbox durability is dependent on correct maintenance, which in effect is an oil service at 75,000 miles or when the E-Class is five years old.



Latest 2.0L unit arguably Mercedes' smoothest four-pot diesel ever.

## Suspension, steering and braking system

- No major problems are to be expected with the suspension, but listen out for squeaking noises when driving over bumps, which indicates that the front spring links are wearing out.
- The same noises over bumps can also indicate wear in the steering joints. The steering itself should feel tight and precise, with any wandering or pulling to one suggesting a tracking problem.
- On the road test, listen and feel for brake judder, possibly caused by aftermarket discs which are not of the compound type, and are of an inferior quality. Replacements should obviously be of original equipment standard, and when fitted the hub must be thoroughly cleaned, and the wheel torqued in the correct sequence so as to not damage them and cause a subsequent judder.
- It's possible that the engine vacuum pump will fail, allowing oil to enter the vacuum system and ending up in the brake servo. If this happens the car will have a brake pedal that feels rock hard, or at least harder than it should.



Adaptive damping is standard. Air Body Control optional.



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sharper body styling.

**“The main problem you need to look out for is the need for a cam box repair”**

### Bodywork and wheels

● The 213-series bodywork is galvanised, so with the oldest cars eight years old at most, no corrosion should have appeared. Any rust that has developed must therefore be due to a below standard accident repair. Serious accident damage to any car that has been through an insurance claim is logged and easily accessed. Category N or S means it has been rebuilt following an accident,

this usually impacting value negatively.

● In recent years, Mercedes wheels have proved vulnerable to corrosion. This is an aesthetic issue only, but if they are rusted, which often starts at the centre, it's as well to factor a refurbishment cost into the car's valuation. Check tyre condition, as a new premium brand set of 17-inchers will be around £500, and 18s £600.

Digital dials part of  
optional Comand; shifter  
on steering column.

### Interior and electrics

● As with all modern Mercedes, the W213 can suffer electrical gremlins. All you can do is check that all equipment works; for example, GPS aerials often fail and the car loses its location. Make sure the DAB tuner works, as these also can fail and lose sound or stations.

● On cars with six-figure mileages you're quite likely to see the Artico seat leather starting to split, so make sure the seats are in good condition. Some of these cars will have been used as taxis, and apart from very high mileage will have a worn rear seat. ▷





## E220d Inside and out

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## Verdict

The W212 E-Class was a hard act to follow, the late cars in particular combining impressive durability with a top driving experience. But it seems that while the W213 is as good to drive, and equally stylish, the early cars weren't as bulletproof as they might have been, our specialist tells us.

However, the chances of avoiding trouble are significantly increased if you stick to cars with a solid service history, particularly the inclusion of the gearbox oil change if over five years. These cars will cost more, but with good examples available from around £15,000, it's not such a high premium to pay.

### Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE
E220d/E220d 4Matic	£250	£310

Quotes from Autoclass Garage

### Non-routine servicing costs

- ★ Replace failed engine cam box (camshafts, lifters, rockers and oil change) **£1,995**
- ★ Fit new gearbox valve body (including transmission service) **£1,550**
- ★ Replace both front suspension spring arms **£660**
- ★ Fit new front brake discs and pads **£380**
- ★ Fit new rear brake discs and pads **£350**
- ★ Four premium brand tyres (size 245/45R18) **£600**

### What you'll pay

**£10,000-£12,000** Rock bottom price, early, 2016 E220d SE likely with over 150,000 miles

**£12,000-£15,000** SE and AMG Line cars from 2016/2017, used car dealer stock will probably have over 100,000 miles

**£15,000-£20,000** The price bracket with the best value cars, including from M-B dealers: 50,000 to 80,000 miles and full service history

**£20,000-£25,000** 2018 cars from independents and M-B dealers, AMG Line and 4Matic models, sub-50,000 miles for £25,000



## 4Matic: gains and losses

The first Mercedes-Benz E-Class with 4Matic was the 124-series in the late 1980s; in the UK, the part-time, self-engaging system applied to the 300E Saloon and 300TE Estate. Thirty years on, the 213-series arrived, with the then latest 4Matic hardware, permanently engaged and splitting the torque 45/55 front/rear to give rear-biased, but largely neutral handling, sensors monitoring the wheels, steering wheel angle and yaw regulating it.

When new, 4Matic added £1,600 to the new price, a figure easy

enough to lose in a PCP deal, which may explain why it was more popular than might be expected in the UK, which isn't a strong 4x4 road car market. Some of that extra price is still reflected in used values. The 55 extra kilograms knock back the E220d Saloon's economy 13 per cent, acceleration is fractionally affected and, depending on wheel size, the slightly higher CO2 emissions can trigger a small increase in UK road tax. However, for those who love the added traction of 4WD that will be a small and worthwhile sacrifice.



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# Carrying the torch

Returning to these pages after a hiatus, Martin Buckley explains how he's unexpectedly become the owner of a six-cylinder R129 SL

WORDS & IMAGES MARTIN BUCKLEY

## FACTSHEET

CAR 1996 SL280

OWNER Martin Buckley

LOCATION Cirencester, UK

PURCHASED November 2021

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Fuel pump causes mischief and roof electronics require a good old reset



**“There were matching sets of tyres, a new ECU and lots of other bits and pieces”**

△ A trip down to Swansea didn't quite go according to plan.

**M**y father-in-law's Mercedes-Benz SL280, which he doted on (and which I have written about before in *Mercedes Enthusiast*) was always earmarked to be inherited by my wife Mia. Sadly, we ended up with it a lot sooner than we thought as he died unexpectedly in September 2021. We didn't actually inherit it as such, as we paid market value to Mia's stepmother. Luckily, I had a bit of pension money coming my way. It was also an opportunity to divest myself of Mia's CLK230.

In fairness, this R129 SL is an exceptionally good car: while under John's care it received whatever it needed – and quite a lot more – and he would regale me for hours about its many fine qualities including an ability to return 30mpg if he drove it gently! He was a lovely guy and I miss him every day.

▽ Dark blue fabric roof is a pleasant contrast to the paint.



The Mercedes never went without. There were matching sets of tyres, a new ECU for the hood mechanism, and lots of other bits and pieces over the four or so years he used the car. One Christmas I even bought him a hardtop crane to mount on his garage ceiling.

Given that this Mercedes is one of the more modern and sensible cars I have access to, I thought it was a suitable candidate for taking on a photoshoot in Wales about six months ago. Cruising up the M4 towards Swansea, I suddenly detected that the engine was faltering. Rather than stop and investigate, I thought the best thing to do was press on and get to my appointment. Things got a little trickier once I left the motorway, as the SL didn't want to pull at low speeds and I was in danger of getting in the way of other traffic, but I limped on and dumped the 'sensible' Mercedes in the car park which my photoshoot was using as a base.

### Rest and recovery

A call to the AA produced a patrolman quite quickly and he diagnosed a faulty fuel pump. I put in a call to Mark Cosovich at W123 World in Swansea and tried to organise AA recovery to his workshop. All went to plan until I found out I no longer had 'Relay' on my cover, so Mark's recovery man had

to retrieve the Mercedes. The trouble was, he couldn't do the job until after the weekend, which meant leaving the SL in a pub car park for two days. John would not have liked that, bless him, but I had no option.

W123 World installed a new fuel pump and Mark met me a few days later, halfway between Gloucestershire and Swansea, to hand over the SL. He deemed it a genuinely nice example, but not as good as a W123, naturally.

Since then, the only problem has been with the hood electronics, which tend to go a bit haywire if the battery goes flat. My Mercedes guru, Gus Meyer popped round with his magic laptop and reset everything, so the R129 does its party trick perfectly now.

I used it to drive over to SL Shop in late summer to get an opinion on it from Bruce Greetham. He agreed it's a nice car – these SLs tend to stand or fall on the condition of things like wiring looms under bonnet – but said these small engined R129s can struggle to sell just because everyone wants the V8s. Not that there is a plan to sell it – there is too much sentimental value attached to this SL, almost to the point where Mia finds driving it a bit too emotional. Like all things, those feelings will pass and I'm looking forward to seeing her have some fun in it this year.



# Midlife crisis

The E-Class wagon may have swallowed a few more dollars but it remains in its owner's good books, as the V8 SL recovers from its rally exploits

WORDS & IMAGES REED HITCHCOCK

## FACTSHEET

CARS 1986 560SL/1972 280SEL 4.5/2011 E350 Estate

OWNER Reed Hitchcock

LOCATION Virginia, USA

PURCHASED November 2021/April 2020/May 2015

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT E-Class boot cover and exhaust intake flaps break; R107 SL radiator leak solved but worn driver's seat needs more attention



**“Since the car needed an oil change anyway, I took it to my friends at Silver Star Motors”**

**I** am reasonably convinced that my need to perpetually change cars is genetic. It has got to the point that every time I look in the general direction of our eight-years-owned S212 E350 4Matic Estate I get shivers and chills. OK, perhaps that is over-dramatising just a tad. Besides, it could have nothing to do with my vehicular attention span and everything to do with the fact that every time I look at it something new needs fixing.

I'm hoping that with just under 110,000 miles it's just going through some sort of mechanical midlife crisis, and that there is a respite on the horizon. The latest foible is the rear cargo cover, which keeps your things in the boot area private, and raises and lowers as you open and close the tailgate, started making a loud clicking noise and stopped moving. First world problem? Yes. Still, not something to make me feel warm and fuzzy inside.

Since the car needed an oil change anyway, I took it to my friends at Silver Star Motors in Vienna, Virginia for a looksee. The verdict was not great: the rotating mechanism on one side basically lunched itself, and the cost to fix it would be in the four figures, given high parts prices and a good amount of labour. The choice was a second

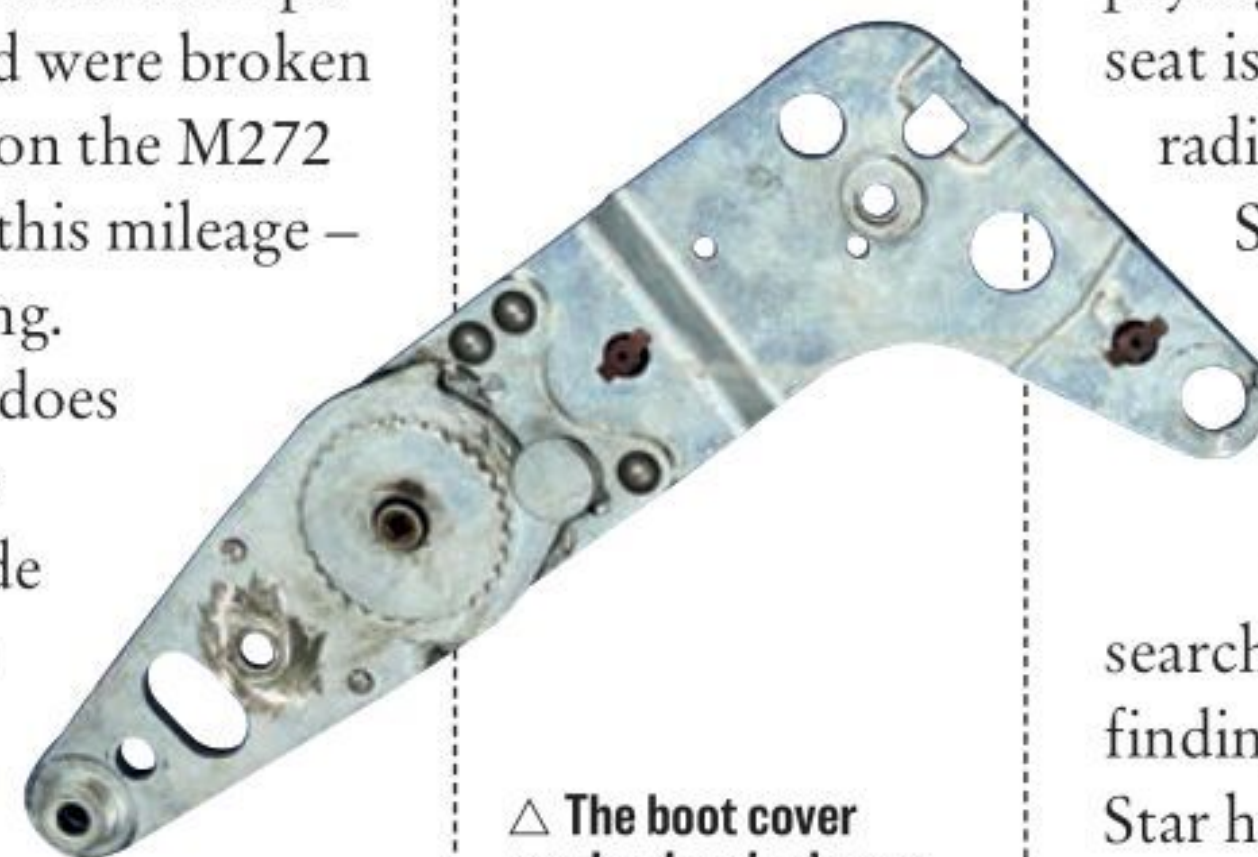
mortgage, or we could just disconnect it and use it like one that doesn't raise and lower. We chose the latter.

### Rally SL

“But,” came the voice on the other end of the phone, “that's not all.” Of course it wasn't. It turns out that the air flaps inside the intake manifold were broken – a not uncommon issue on the M272 V6 petrol engine around this mileage – and really needed replacing. Interestingly, this failure does not throw a check engine light, but does store a code for curious mechanics to find. As I am forbidden by contract of marriage from selling this car, I had the work done. Knocking on wood, \$2,100 later we got the car back and it's been nearly a month since I spent any money on it. I'm still pondering replacements, but my wife loves her car. Just ask her.

It probably wouldn't have been as frustrating if I hadn't just spent about the same amount of money on the R107 560SL. Having taken that car on a proper road rally, I have truly bonded with it. Unfortunately, on the rally two things happened: first, it became obvious that the sloppy driver's seat back is not something I want to live

△ Reed has bonded with his SL after a recent road rally.



△ The boot cover mechanism had seen better days...

▽ Replacing the E's boot cover was more pricey than expected.

with. Second, the radiator started leaking. As with all Mercedes of this vintage, the seals where plastic tanks on the sides of the radiator meet the metal part gave up the ghost.

I'd have done the radiator job myself, but for the fact that I was definitely paying someone else to deal with the seat issue, and I couldn't find a quality radiator to save my life. Back to Silver

Star and it was determined that one of the adjustment mechanisms was just worn out. The other side was nearing its 'Use by' date so both were replaced – after searching high and low and finally finding a left bracket in Germany. Silver Star had better luck than I did on the radiator and replaced the hoses for good measure while the technicians were in there. All of this work was done in time to put away the SL for the winter.





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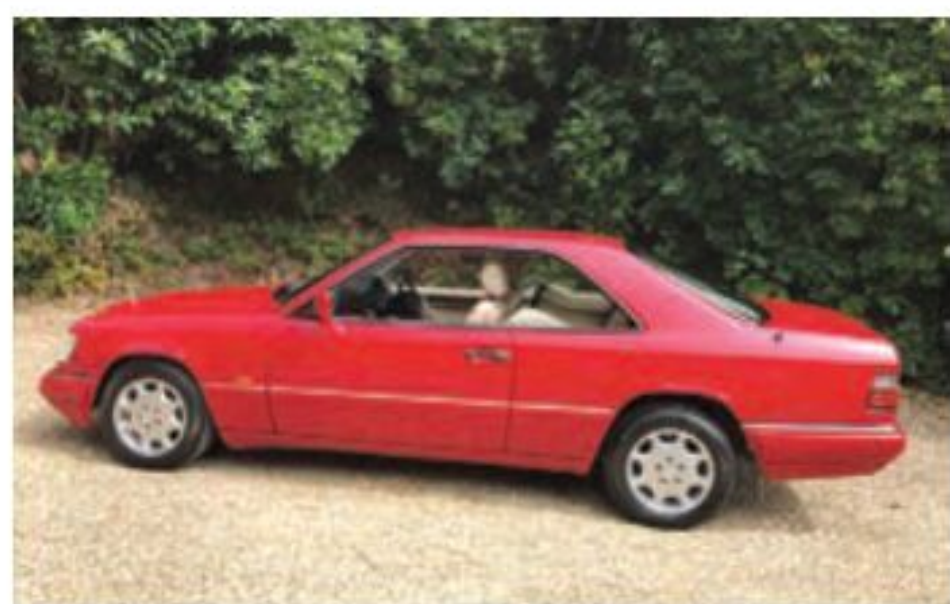
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**SLK320** 2001, 85,000 miles, facelift model, outstanding condition, automatic, full M-B service history, electric seats, sat nav, air con, £POA. Tel: 07432 007007. Milton Keynes [BCW3]



**Mercedes Unimog U90** 2001, complete and full restoration, agricultural specification, lovely machine, £18,885. Tel: 07977 008 759. UK [BCW8]



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



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



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



**C140 CL600** V12, 1998, 90,000 miles, very rare, silver metallic, two-tone grey nappa leather, fully loaded spec, FSH, £££s spent over the past three years to bring this magnificent car to immaculate condition, drives perfectly, MOT to August 2023, £20,000 ONO. Tel: 07714 471014. Dorking [BCW13]



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



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



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



**280SE** 1972, 22,000 miles, four-door saloon, four-speed manual gearbox, ex-South African car, totally rust-free, original paintwork, unrestored example, beautiful car, MOT until May 2023 or will test now if required, £27,750. Tel: 07592 543631. North Yorkshire [BC17]



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

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



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



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



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

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



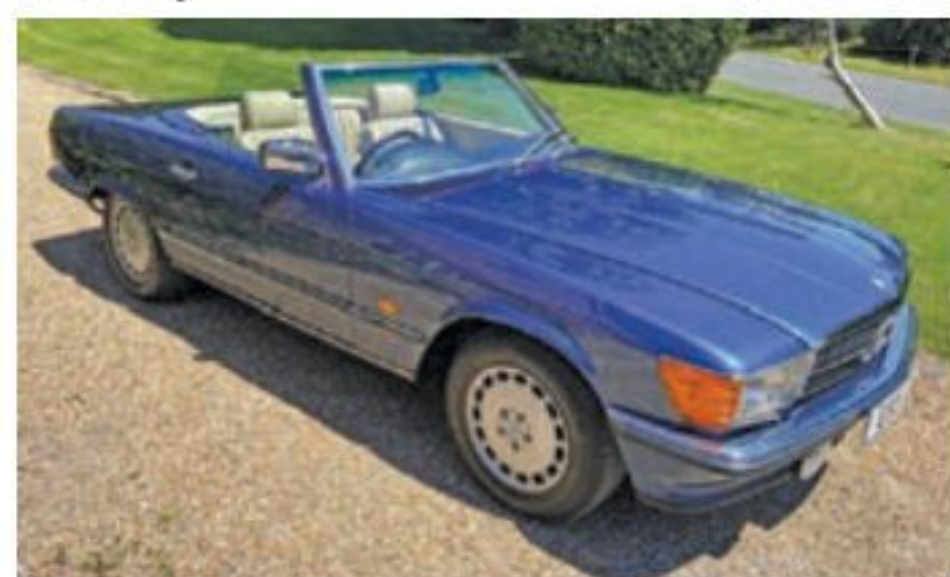
**SL350** 78,000 miles, black metallic, full panoramic roof, usual extras, mostly motorway miles as I used this for my daily commute (120-mile round trip), drives superbly, with FSH carried out by either M-B main dealer or M-B independent specialist, very good condition, £POA. Tel: 07903 027850. Oxfordshire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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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

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



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



**C270 CDI Elegance SE** Saloon, automatic/Tiptronic, showroom condition, Brilliant Silver, unmarked Pacific Blue interior, one driver from new, 52 Reg, 34,900 miles, no short runs of less than 30 miles, garaged from new, fitted with a heated/dehumidifier, usual MB refinements: electric seats, cruise, heated mirrors etc., serviced and MOT'd exclusively by Mercedes main dealer from new, full records, original handbook/documents, full set of keys, exceptionally well cared for, £5,250. Email: Bazhylda1.11@outlook.com. Buckinghamshire [CM36W6]



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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





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



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



**220E** 1994, reg M988 AG0, convertible, silver with black soft top, heated front seats, air conditioning £8,500 ONO. Tel: 01268 725128. Basildon [DEW12]



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

**W123 280CE** coupe, petrol, blue metallic, spares or repair, also W123 280E saloon silver metallic spares or repair, set W126 flat face alloys + v good tyres, set S class alloys + tyres, 10x W123 steel wheels, some with tyres, W123 wheel chrome/colour wheel trims, plus smaller items, £POA. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk [AB]

## INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



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



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



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



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



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





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



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



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



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

## PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



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



**Genuine Mercedes W221 alloys** Fitted with Bridgestone Potenza tyres, £500 ONO. Tel: 07850 187400. Ormskirk [BCW5]



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

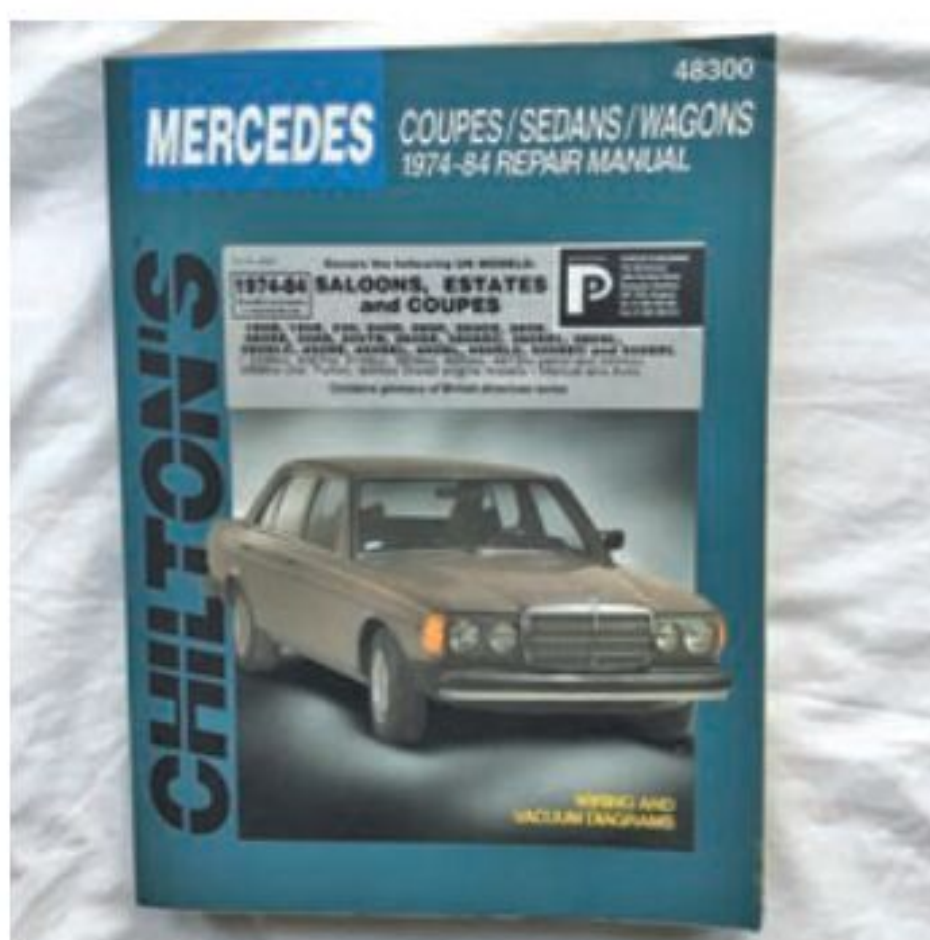
**1994 S124 seats and door cards** Full set of five, in good condition, all are unmarked in blue fabric (362) with some wear on the driver's offside squab, collection from west Wales or buyer pays for courier, £300 ONO. Tel: 01239 820390. Pembrokeshire [BC]



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



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



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

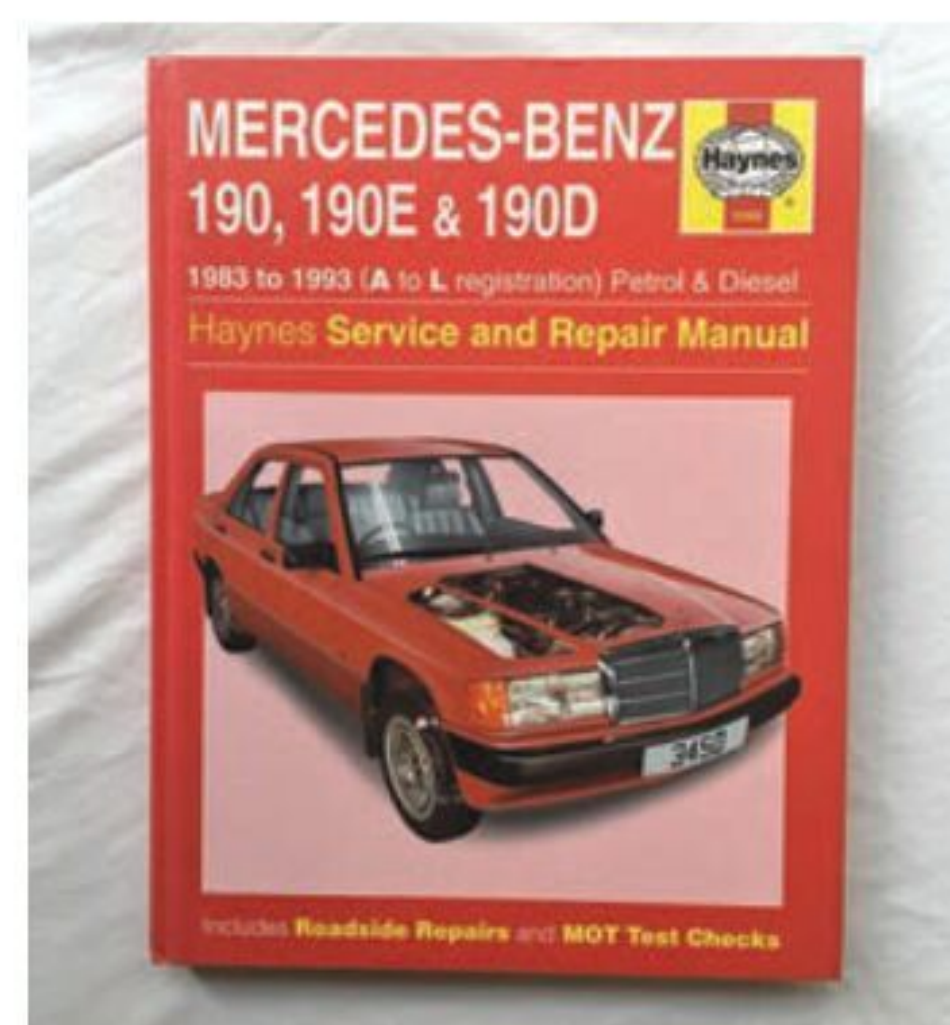


**Two W111 Fintail wings** Need work on corrosion around the lights, otherwise in good condition, more photos on request, removed from my 1964 220SE Fintail as I found others that didn't need work, £200 for the pair. Tel: 07785 293683. Hampshire. [CM41-18]

**Every issue of Mercedes Enthusiast** From Issue 1 up to September 2022, collection only, £150 ONO. Tel: 07960 805331. Manchester [BC]



**Front bumper for W201** Complete, plus front grille and right-hand headlamp, in excellent condition, buyer must collect, £200 ONO. Tel: 07901 567961. Dereham. [CM41-16]



**Haynes workshop manual for W201 190** 1983 to 1993, petrol and diesel models, unwrapped, unused, unmarked, superb, brand new condition, £18.75. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury. [CM41-17]

## NO. PLATES

### V10 KEV

**V10 KEV** Personal plate, £2,100 ONO. Tel: 07939 309325. Norfolk [BC]

### MER 5L

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

## WANTED

**190 diesel or 2.5 190D** Manual or auto, high or low mileage, with or without MOT, enthusiast private buyer, will travel anywhere in the UK, call any time and ask for Eric. Tel: 01516 390149. UK [BC]



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**SLK32 AMG** 2002, 94,000 miles, full service history, V6, superb condition, new wings, respray, wheel refurb, new set of Rainsport tyres, new battery, secondary cat delete, sold with full MOT, Alpine hi-fi, iPod connection, call for more info and pictures, £10,000. Tel: 07539 935573. Wirral [JKW48]



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



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



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



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



**190D** 1987, manual, five-cylinder 2.5, diesel, MOT has 11 months left, 65,000 miles, good condition, blue cloth interior, sunroof, radio/cassette player, car has been owned and garaged for the last four years, £2,500. Tel: 07791 661436. Glasgow [JKW44]



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



**CLK430 Cabriolet** 2001, good condition, well looked after example of this model, dark blue metallic, good tyres, blue roof replaced two years ago, grey leather interior all good, she drives really well, 113,000 miles, serviced regularly and runs well, MOT until October 2017, new battery in June 2017, xenon conversion, Bose base boost system for music system, really nice, honest title, 12 months MOT, £12,500. Tel: 07851 250111. Southport [JKW45]



**G500** 2002, factory original, LHD, imported from Germany in 2002, 47,000 miles from new, finished in rare, Tektit Grey metallic, full black nappa leather interior, complete service history, original fully stamped service book, every MOT certificate since 2005, air conditioning, Command sat nav, electric sunroof, a truly outstanding example, unmolested and still in excellent condition, £28,000. Tel: 07851 250111. Southport [JKW45]



**R129 280SL** 1994, Brilliant Silver metallic, black leather trim, 58,322 genuine miles, MOT until July 2018, completely original, exceptional condition throughout, eight-hole alloy wheels, original hardtop, still has original driver's door lock barrel blanking grommet fitted, Blaupunkt Casablanca stereo, wind breaker, tool roll, original document pack, service history, two keys, old MOT's, receipts for work completed, new car, £12,500. Tel: 07851 250111. Southport [JKW45]

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**“The original 190SL Racing’s claim to fame came in 1956”**



# 190SL

**Coming perilously close to a rusty end, this 190SL now fires around South Africa as a fizzing tribute to one of the rarest Mercedes-Benz racers ever to compete in motorsport**

WORDS WILHELM LUTJEHARMS IMAGES KIAN ERIKSEN

**T**his 190SL was basically scrap metal when its latest owner found the wreck around 15 years ago. It was discovered in a small railway station scrapyard in Wolwehoek, 60 miles south of Johannesburg in South Africa. Once trailered to his residence, the owner began selling and cannibalising parts for his other 190SLs. However, he quickly realised not only how valuable the parts were, but that the wreck was salvageable.

He bought back everything that he had sold and decided to build a tribute to the 190SL Racing car, one of the rarest track stars in Mercedes’ history. What followed was a two-year journey. The original 190SL Racing’s single claim to fame came in 1956: with Welsh driver Doug Steane behind the wheel, it won the Macau Grand Prix in Hong Kong.

Sourcing parts for the tribute was like working on a jigsaw puzzle. In the end, the Perspex wind deflectors, mesh grilles for the headlights, side mirrors, pseudo knock-offs attached to the wheels, and two doors were sourced from another Racing tribute owner in America, Bruce Adams. The seat frames and bonnet were imported from the Netherlands, one front wing was bought from a fellow collector in Cape Town, and the rear end from another. Period-correct 300SL seat upholstery, meanwhile, came from Germany.

Elsewhere, the 1.9-litre, 104bhp/105lb ft engine has received a set of side-draft Weber carburettors, a more aggressive camshaft, an electronic fuel pump, a special manifold and a free-flowing exhaust system.

**Your view over the bonnet is possibly the most unobstructed you’ll experience in a Mercedes-Benz.** The shift action of the four-speed gearbox is the same as in any other 190SL; it feels very mechanical, and you must operate it with careful precision. As the car is so light (200kg has been shaved from the 190SL’s 1,140kg kerb weight) and changes direction with minimal effort, the steering wheel suddenly feels slightly oversized. There is also very little play in the steering system, so the moment you move away from the dead-centre position the car reacts.

△ Perspex screens in front of the occupants provide a small degree of comfort.

▷ The classic details are sublime: direct steering builds driver’s confidence.

▽ Rorty Weber carbs for the 190SL’s 1.9-litre M121 four-cylinder powerplant.

Although the 190SL was never known for having a high-revving engine, the improvements to this motor provide another level of performance and aural drama. Press the throttle and the little engine responds eagerly – this lighter SL seemingly happier when driven hard, unlike the standard car. The owner admits taking the car to an indicated 105mph!

The words ‘replica’ and ‘tribute’ usually have negative connotations attached to them, but this Mercedes-Benz is an exception to the rule. Beautiful and positively unique, its owner should be proud of what he has achieved with this once down-and-out classic.





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