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Mercedes ENTHUSIAST



Issue 245
Feb/Mar 2024

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

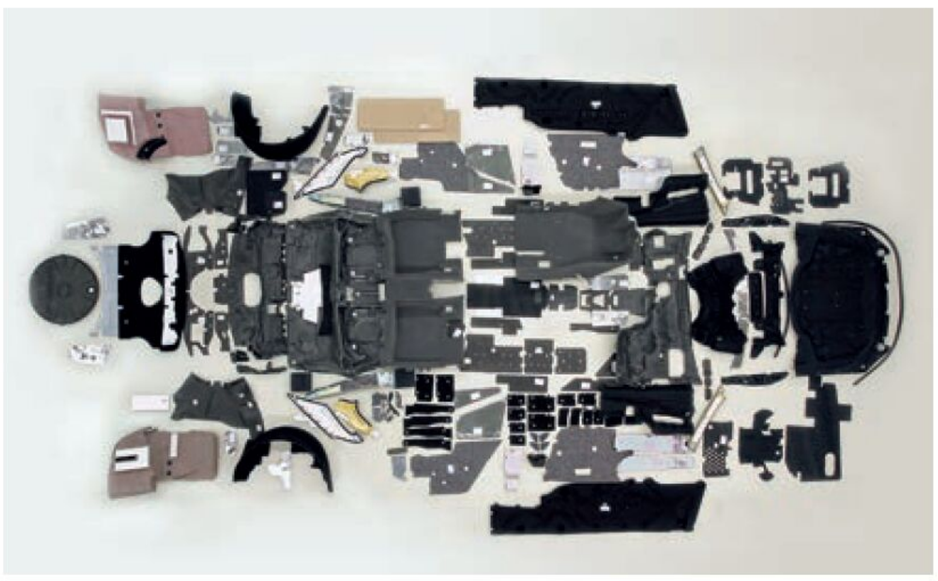
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> ***A 500SL was around 100kg heavier than an Aston Martin Volante, and 300kg weightier than a Porsche 928***

Do Mercedes have a weight problem? My gut told me something was off when I saw the kerb weight for AMG's new GT sports car. At just over 2.1 tonnes, the GT63 is well over 400kg heavier than its (C190) predecessor, which is quite an increase. Granted, there's extra seats, more luxury tech, plus four-wheel drive and rear-axle steering, but it's still carrying over 300kg more than a similarly powered Porsche 911 Turbo. Read new contributor Raziz Rehan's expert review from page 20 to find out if this situation adversely affects performance.

Of course, Mercedes have always been heavier than rivals owing to their superior build quality. More robust chassis, better quality seating, and more plentiful sound deadening material increase kerb weight. The picture below shows all the sound absorbing material used in a single 221-series S-Class, for example. An R129 500SL of the late 1980s was around 100kg heavier than an Aston Martin Volante, as well as 60kg heavier than a Jaguar XJ-S convertible, and 300kg weightier than a Porsche 928. It's just the way things have always been at Mercedes.



However, with the dawn of electric cars and their chunky battery systems, perhaps it's time Mercedes refocused efforts on developing new weight-saving materials among other things, before things really get out of control.

Kyle Molyneux
Executive Editor

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



Raziz Rehan
New contributor Raziz Rehan (IG: @rokenr) was the lucky man charged with testing this month's cover star – AMG's second-gen GT. "The new AMG GT Coupe answers our prayers for a traditional V8 from Affalterbach," he says. "But as exciting as it all sounds, doubts linger around the 577bhp sports car: it's heavy, expensive and loses elements that arguably made the C190 GT great. You'll be pleased to know then, that I've yet to wipe the smile off my face since driving it!" Find out why from page 20.



Wilhelm Lutjeharms
For this issue of *Mercedes Enthusiast*, our South African contributor Wilhelm Lutjeharms has tracked down one of only two C43 AMGs believed to live in South Africa. "It is a long story of how the owner found the car, in Namibia of all places," he says. "Now, following a three-year partial restoration, we take the car for a drive and sit down with the owner to find out what it took to recommission this rare four-door AMG." Read the full story from page 44.

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Cover story



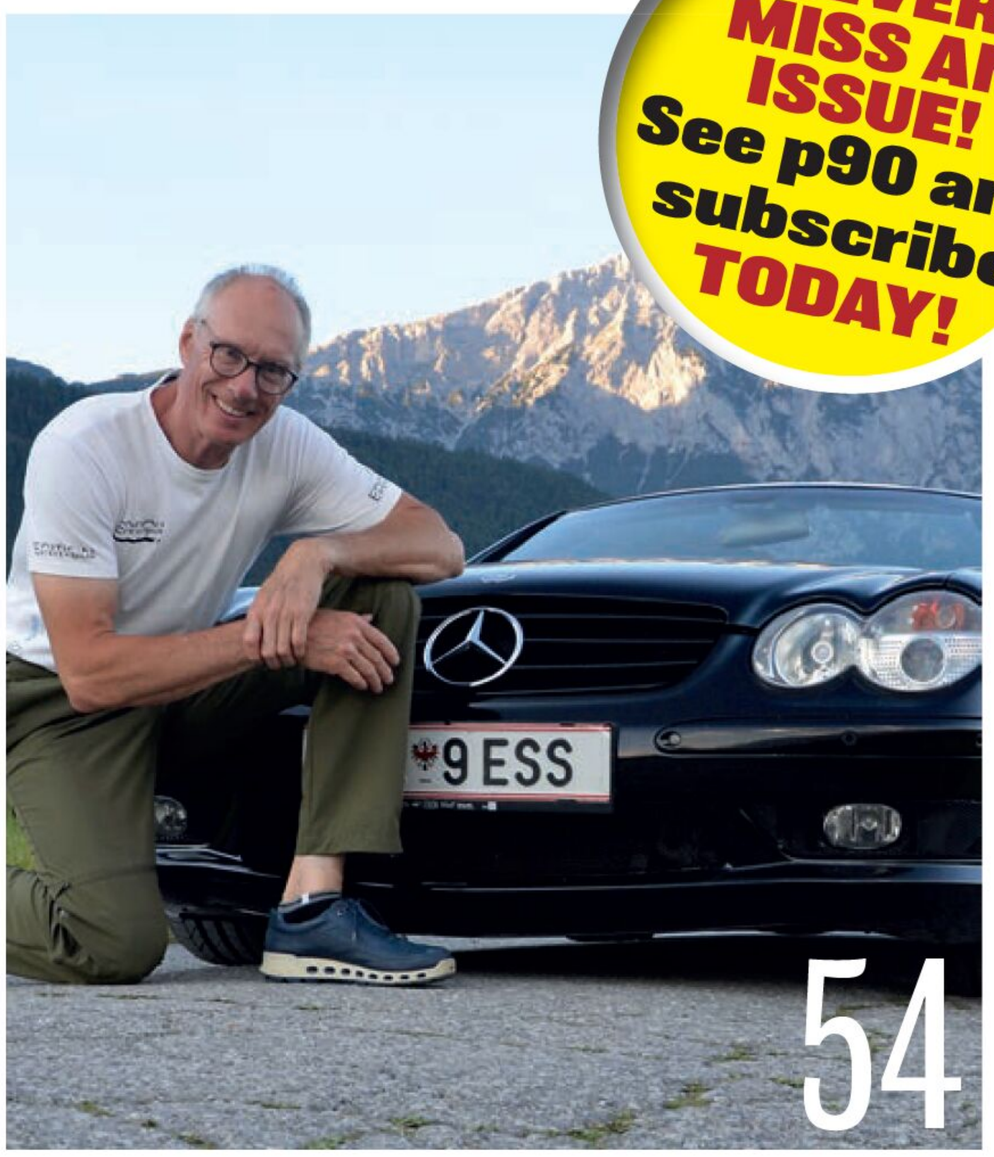








6



54



60



12

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Contents

February/March 2024

UPFRONT

6 **News** Round-up of the hottest Mercedes stories
9 **Talking Point** What's your favourite 1980s Mercedes?
10 **Star Shot** Three generations of E-Class Estate
12 **Past Master** Remembering the 126-series S-Class
14 **Star Talk** A chance encounter with a 1970s superstar
16 **Merc Man** Making the switch to battery power
18 **Social Club** Eye-catching cars from around the world

FEATURES

COVER STORY
20 **Crimson brawn** We are among the first to drive AMG's brand new GT sports car in 577bhp 'GT63' form
26 **Two for one** The new CLE Coupe combines attributes of two-door C-Class and E-Class models – here's our verdict
30 **New Generation** Martin Buckley gets behind the wheel of two- and four-door W114s complete with 250 badging
38 **Tourmaline treasure** Well presented R129 SL500 with eye-catching paintwork and effortless performance
44 **Second chances** Read how this South African came to own and restore a 202-series C43 AMG originally from the UK
50 **Closer to nature** A vegan entrepreneur explains his love for 123- and 124-series Estates, plus a 1970s Unimog
54 **Sound machine** This supercharged SL55 AMG packs an immense sound system from an award winning installer
60 **White knight** An American car enthusiast details his passion for Mercedes and his moon-mileage E320 Coupe
64 **Bridging the gap** The A35 slots between the A45 S and regular A-Classes – but does it deserve the AMG badge?
69 **Black magic** A quick drive of AMG's 831bhp GT 4-Door Coupe with V8 biturbo and electric power system
70 **Second-hand steals** Here are six very different used Mercedes that are attainable on a £25,000 budget

THE BACK END

74 **Mercedes Buyer** Deals, tips, top three steals and more
79 **NEXT MONTH**
80 **Buyer's Guide** R107 300SL – everything you need to know
86 **Running Reports** Latest updates on the Merc fleet
91 **Merc Trader** Find your next three-pointed star here
98 **From the archives** Vietnamese ambassador's 280SEL



80



▷ 443bhp should keep drivers on their toes.

The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

News

AMG CLE53

High-performance coupe packs an upgraded straight-six turbo powerplant

Mercedes-AMG has released details of its new CLE53 4Matic+ Coupe, equipped with a three-litre, 443bhp/413lb ft torque, straight-six biturbo engine. An integrated starter generator (ISG) raises torque to 442lb ft for 12 seconds, and offers another 23bhp when the driver is in maximum attack mode.

Serving as a replacement for AMG's two-door C-Class and E-Class models, the new CLE53 boasts muscular AMG styling, including flared wheelarches to cover the 58mm and 75mm increases in front/rear track widths. Fully variable four-wheel-drive is standard-fit, as is a nine-speed AMG Speedshift TCT 9G transmission, speed-sensitive steering, rear-axle steering, and AMG Ride Control suspension with adaptive damping. There are also internally ventilated front brake discs (370x36mm) with four-piston fixed calipers and AMG lettering, and internally ventilated rear discs (360x26mm) with single-piston floating calipers.

AMG has overhauled its six-cylinder engine for the new CLE53, to the point it's now called the M256M rather than M256. Updates include optimised combustion chambers with redesigned inlet and outlet channels, new piston rings, optimised fuel injection and a new exhaust gas turbocharger. In conjunction with the new electric additional compressor, this offers an increase in boost pressure by 0.4bar to 1.5bar. These changes are said to have improved torque and response, particularly in the mid-range.

Engine efficiency has also been improved, partly thanks to the second-generation ISG, which is now integrated into the gearbox bell housing and, being a central component of the 48V electrical system, also takes care of the CLE's fuel-saving and emissions-clashing hybrid functions.

Peak engine power arrives from 5,800 to 6,100rpm, while maximum torque is available from 2,200 to 5,000rpm. The CLE53 accelerates from 0-62mph in 4.2 seconds and reaches an electronically limited 155mph. Fuel consumption is 29.1 to 30.3mpg, with CO2 emissions of 212 to 220g/km.

AMG upgrades in the cabin comprise a beefier steering wheel with paddleshifters for the gearbox, leather and softer nappa leather upholstery options, and model-specific graphics for the 12.3-inch digital driver display, plus of course the latest MBUX infotainment system accessed on the 11.9-inch touchscreen.

In the UK, an optional Pro Performance package combines the AMG Optics package (aero flicks front and rear, a bigger rear spoiler, diffuser between tailpipes, Performance seats, extra steering wheel buttons) with the AMG Dynamic Plus package (Race driving programme with Drift Mode and active engine mounts).

The CLE53 4Matic+ Coupe arrives later this year, and should be followed by a Cabriolet equivalent.



UK cars offered with the optional Pro Performance package.



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GT pricing

UK pricing has been revealed for Mercedes-AMG's new GT. For now, the GT63 4Matic+ Coupe is the only model in the range, starting at £164,765 OTR in Premium Plus trim line. Fully variable AMG performance 4Matic+ all-wheel drive, AMG Active Ride Control suspension with semi-active roll stabilisation, active rear-axle steering and active aerodynamics are standard. Premium Plus spec includes 21-inch forged wheels, a compound brake system, two Night packages, a panoramic glass sunroof and digital headlamps.

The Performance trim line starts at £175,765 and adds a new style of 21-inch AMG wheel, an Aerodynamic package with fixed rear spoiler, and ceramic composite brakes. A special Launch Edition trim line offers 21-inch Manufaktur forged wheels in matt techgold, an exterior carbon fibre package, a solid roof and black leather upholstery with yellow stitching. Read our full verdict on the new GT63 from page 20!



A fixed rear spoiler is optional and replaces the one shown here.

Mercedes at CES

At the 2024 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, USA, Mercedes-Benz previewed its game-changing MBUX Virtual Assistant. It takes the 'Hey Mercedes' voice assistant into a whole new visual dimension with high-resolution game-engine graphics from Unity. This advanced AI-powered feature is said to combine the intelligent systems of MBUX into a single entity and presents an expressive new face to the customer with natural interaction. The MBUX Virtual Assistant runs on the Mercedes-Benz Operating System MB.OS.



News in brief



△ E500 LIMITED
A 1994 E500 Limited previously driven by Mercedes F1's Lewis Hamilton and featuring AMG wheels and suspension, plus a black/green interior received bids up to $58,000 on thembmarket.com but failed to sell. The odometer showed 79,000km (around 50,000 miles).



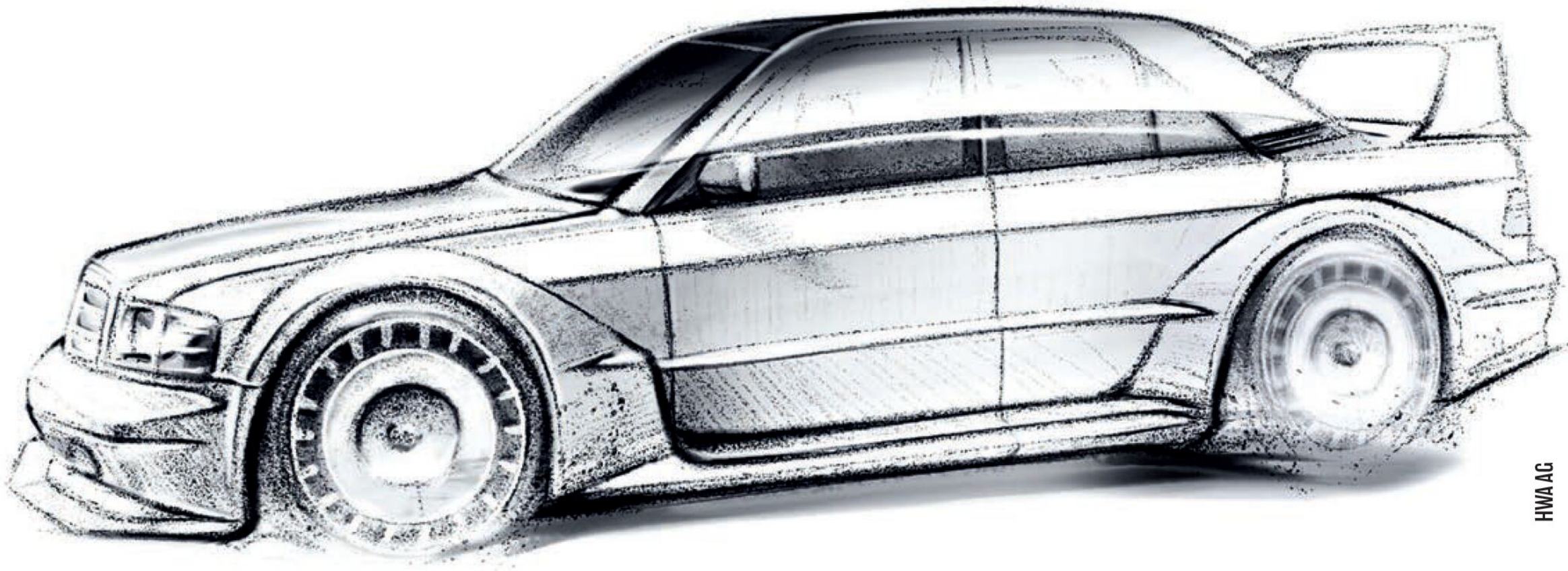
△ MOST POWERFUL SL
The Mercedes-AMG SL63 S E Performance is the most powerful SL-type roadster yet! Under the bonnet is a four-litre V8 biturbo working with a battery and electric motor to produce 805bhp and between 796lb ft and 1,047lb ft of torque. The 4WD droptop hits 62mph in 2.9 seconds and has a 197mph top speed.



△ AUTO PARKING
The automated parking function Intelligent Park Pilot (SAE Level 4) is now available for the new E-Class Saloon and Estate, the EQE SUV and the EQS SUV in the German market.

▽ F1 ENGINES
McLaren is the first customer to sign up for Mercedes' AMG F1 engines built to the sport's 2026-on power unit regulations. In development at Mercedes-AMG High Performance Powertrains in Brixworth, UK since 2022, the new power units will draw around 50 per cent of their power from a 350kW (469bhp) electric motor and run on sustainable fuel.





HWA AG

Evo II revived!

Motorsport outfit HWA AG, based in Affalterbach, has announced the development of the HWA EVO – a "furious reinterpretation of the legendary Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Evolution II".

Limited to 100 units, the W201-based car will be developed by HWA AG in partnership with US restorer and restomodder Curated. The EVO will have a modern powertrain, suspension, brakes, aerodynamics and safety measures, although the exact details are still being finalised. The price will be €714,000 (£614,000) plus VAT, and the first units are expected to be delivered in 2025.



Mille Miglia drive

Mercedes-Benz Classic is offering exclusive starting positions at the 1000 Miglia 2024 to enthusiasts of the brand and historic motorsport. For around €150,000 (£130,000), you can follow in the tracks of Sir Stirling Moss and Rudolf Caracciola behind the wheel of a works prepared and supported W198 300SL Gullwing. The package also includes a test drive weekend in Stuttgart, a racing driver as navigator in the passenger seat, and comprehensive technical and organisational support.

Just three positions are available and the closing date for applications is January 31 2024, so you'd better be quick. Contact Mercedes-Benz Classic for more information.

Supercharged sale

A 2003 SL55 AMG with just 646 miles (no, that's not a typing error) under its wheels sold for an incredible £66,080 in an event held by at Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey by Historics Auctioneers. The guide price was £15,000 to £20,000.

Equipped with over £5,000 worth of extras including a panoramic glass roof, Keyless-Go, a TV tuner and 18-inch AMG alloy wheels, this supercharged V8 was supplied direct from the AMG factory at a cost of £96,055. Owned by a husband and wife, it sat alongside a CL55 AMG and had been dry stored before the sale, which necessitated an oil change and removal of fuel in the tank, plus the fitment of new Mercedes-Benz batteries. Could this be the moment the SL55 AMG achieves collector status? We think so...



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TALKING POINT



This month's Talking Point...

Which Mercedes built during the 1980s do you love most?

"W126 S-Class, hands down. That's why I've got four of them." **Ron Yu**

"W123 230E as we had one and loved it." **Donovan Croucamp**

"I'm not sure I would say no to any of them." **Peter Bermudez**

"The G-Class, of course." **Uwe Schulz**

"W126 - there's something about the visual presence of them that speaks volumes." **Steve Holder**

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

Merc Spotter



The 238-series E-Class Coupe and Cabriolet are sadly not long for this world, following the launch of the new CLE (which you can read about from page 26). They are still handsome machines, however, as this E220d AMG Line Coupe spotted by Graham Lomax at Capesthorne Hall in Cheshire during last summer's Classic Car Show confirms. The cheapest 238 we spotted for sale was an 85K-mile Cabrio at £16,750.

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

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Cut from the same cloth – a 1979 280TE finished in Classic White (far left) poses with a 1989 300TD Turbo 4Matic in Arctic White (centre), and the latest E220d Estate in high-tech silver.

IMAGE MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG




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Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear



126 S-Class

With its 1979 to 1992 S-Class, Mercedes aimed to deliver improved safety and efficiency over its predecessor, and sell more of them without negatively affecting the big saloon’s hard-won sense of exclusivity

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

Comparing cars from different eras is always difficult and possibly futile. But of the six generations of the S-Class built since the 1972 116-series introduced the title, the 126-series that replaced it seven years later is one of the most admired.

In overall size, and also in chassis configuration, the 126 was similar to its predecessor but progress was breathtaking. It started with Bruno Sacco’s perfectly executed styling, the subtle wedge shape bringing an elegant modernity, this and the markedly reduced amount of exterior chrome trim, plus the integrated bumpers (the first Mercedes road car without separate chrome bumpers), instantly rendering the 116-series a dated looking car.

The interior was a big step up too: improved seating, with heating and multi-way electrical adjustment, and a fascia immeasurably more stylish than the sparse 116 presentation, but still with a pleasing simplicity and of course the top build quality the carmaker was famous for.

Safety features were class-leading. The 116-series had introduced significant advances including a stiffer occupant safety cell, a safer location for the fuel tank (over the rear axle) and anti-lock braking. These were naturally carried over to the 126, but with enhancements including the safety cell’s ability to withstand a 55km/h (34mph) offset impact. The 126-series was the first car in the world to achieve this.

The unveiling at the 1979 Frankfurt motor show was only the start. Two years after the Saloon’s debut, the stunning SEC coupe derivative joined it, offered in V8 380SEC and 500SEC forms. A year later, Sacco’s masterplan to create the perfectly integrated ‘family’ look emerged with the launch of the W201 190, looking like a scaled-down 126, his mission completed in 1984 when the 124-series arrived to fit between the two.

Sixes and eights

Its lengthy, near 13-year run saw over 20 variants of the 126 Saloon in regular-wheelbase SE (W126) and 140mm stretched SEL (V126) offered. These ranged from the 2.8-litre, carburettored six-cylinder 280S around until the 1985 facelift, up to the 5.5-litre 560SEL introduced at that point. There were even various 3.0- and 3.5-litre turbodiesels specially built for North America only, part of Stuttgart’s strategy to reduce ‘gas guzzler’ taxes there.

But the 126-series Saloon is undoubtedly most loved in V8

▷ Cabin feels solid, spacious and protective.





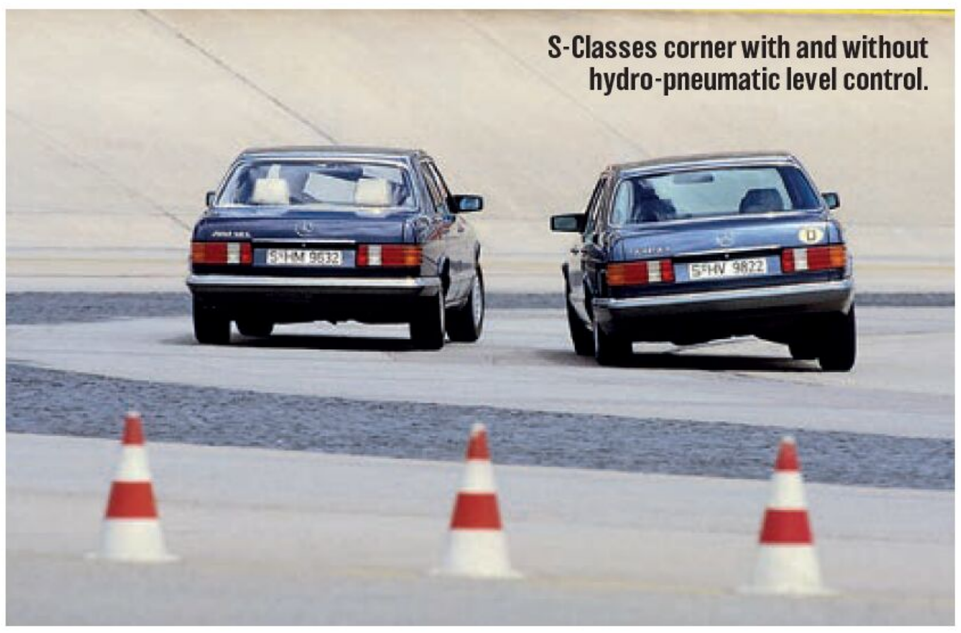
△ New rotating overhead conveyors swivel body on line.

▷ Bumper fairings could withstand moderate bending.

▷△ Performance during the new offset crash test.



S-Classes corner with and without hydro-pneumatic level control.



L to R: W112, W109, W116 and W126 at the Untertürkheim test venue.



form, either the 500SE/SEL or the 560SEL. Both used the landmark M117 engine evolved from Mercedes' first 'small' 3.5 V8 introduced in 1969 for the W108/W109 Saloon, and W111 Coupe and Cabriolet. Over the years, the five-litre 500's output rose from a little under 230bhp to over 260bhp, while 560s approached 300bhp by the end. This two-valve design was super smooth and also bulletproof, and perfectly partnered by Mercedes' own four-speed automatic gearbox.

The M117 is of jewel-like refinement, a mere distant hum from up front, and while the suspension feeds through the odd thump that a modern S-Class would not, occupants are superbly cosseted, enjoying a remarkably serene and relaxing voyage. These two models weren't the biggest sellers in the range, the chauffeur-friendly 280SE/SEL and 300SE/SEL sharing that honour, but volume was high for such expensive cars, over 106,000 for the 500SE/SEL and 75,000 for the 560SEL.

The 126-series Saloon, notching up 818,036 sales, wasn't merely an automotive landmark, but truly an icon of the 1980s, whether you're talking business, celebrity, politics or influence. It quickly became the default high end prestige car, any convention of movers and shakers littered with the discreet but charismatic limos. There was of course competition from the Jaguar XJ, the BMW 7-Series and latterly the Audi A8 and – most worrying, perhaps – the Lexus LS400, but the 126 always dominated its sector.

Those experiencing the ultimate 116-series, the 6.8-litre 450SEL 6.9, were disappointed that the 560SEL was the closest Stuttgart came to offering a 'super saloon' version. Had the carmaker been aware earlier that BMW would introduce its V12-engined 750i in 1987, things might have been different.

The legend lives on

Long after the 126-series was discontinued in April 1992 (the last ones were 500SELs and 560SELs, plus a few armoured examples), it continued to be in demand and enjoyed strong resale values. This was partly due to the less than enthusiastic reception for the succeeding 140-series S-Class, which was technically more sophisticated than the 126 but in most people's eyes far less pretty, and which had the misfortune to launch into a car market in recession, sales in its eight years half those of the 126.

The 126-series S-Class has passed through the stage of being regarded as just an old Mercedes-Benz that would be too expensive to run. That led to many being scrapped, and now a 126 is a rare sight. Those that remain tend to be the well-preserved cars, their values now solidifying.

There's a strong case that the 126 is the 'best ever' S-Class. Its combination of good looks, prestige, drivability and durability made it unbeatable in its day, and if you spent time with one now you might conclude that it retains all these qualities.

Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

Pioneering spirit



Mercedes-Benz's C111 research vehicles have kept a place close to Ian Kuah's heart since his chance encounter with one of the original cars at an official dealership in the 1970s

During our school days in the 1970s, my car enthusiast friends and I drooled over Italian exotica but considered Mercedes rather staid and too serious. So imagine my surprise one day in 1972 when, strolling past the local Mercedes dealer, I saw a car in the showroom that appeared to be straight out of a science fiction movie.

Even more futuristic looking than the mid-engined Lamborghini Miura that was all the rage at the time, thanks to its cameo in the opening scene of the *The Italian Job* movie, this bright orange apparition just sat there on a podium. It was none other than one of the spectacular Mercedes-Benz C111 concept cars, which was making its way around official dealerships all over the world at the time. In a stroke of good luck I had my camera with me, and I still have the black and white prints from the photos I took that day!

'C111' was the name given to a series of 16 experimental cars with various power unit types made by the Mercedes-Benz development department between 1969 and 1979. At the time, the company was experimenting with new technologies including Wankel rotary and diesel engines, as well as turbocharging, and wanted a spectacular looking car in which to promote their advances. The C111 was the ideal visual and technical platform, and over the course of four iterations received experimental features like multi-link independent rear suspension, gullwing doors, aerodynamic spoilers and a luxurious interior with leather trim and air conditioning. These are all features we take for granted today. While the early C111 cars were painted orange, the silver hue of the later examples that set various speed records harked back to the Mercedes Silver Arrows racing cars from the pre-1955 era.

The very first C111 was completed in 1969. Clothed in a glass-fibre bodyshell, it was powered by a direct fuel injected, triple-rotor Wankel engine that was good for 276bhp and 168mph. The C111/II appeared in 1970 with a 345bhp four-rotor Wankel engine that propelled it to 186mph.



△ Ian Kuah recently discovered old photos of a C111, which he took outside a Cycle and Carriage dealer in Singapore.



△ C111 and the electric Vision One-Eleven concept.



△ Sadly, the world missed out on a series production car.

However, Mercedes decided not to adopt the Wankel engine in its production cars and turned to experimental high-performance diesel engines for the second and third C111s.

The C111-IID's motor was based on the OM616 from the 240D saloon, and produced 187bhp. Progressive development of turbocharged heavy oil burners resulted in 227bhp from the OM617 in-line five-cylinder that powered the subsequent C111-III to nine diesel car speed records at the Nardò high-speed test circuit in Italy, mostly in the hands of C111 Project Manager Dr Hans Liebold.

As drag increases with the square of speed, aerodynamic efficiency contributes hugely to performance and economy. With a drag coefficient of just 0.191, the C111-III eventually reached 200mph at Nardò in 1978, averaging 14.7mpg at 195.4mph over 12 hours.

The fourth and final C111-IV variant reverted to petrol, its 4.8-litre twin-turbo V8 developing 493bhp, which was an enormous output well beyond any production supercar at the time. This took the silver Mercedes prototype to yet another accolade, setting a new speed record of 403.978km/h (251.032mph) at Nardò on May 5 1979, with Dr Hans Liebold behind the wheel once again.

Fast forward to 2023 and the latest Mercedes Vision One-Eleven concept car is a 21st century re-interpretation of the marque's 1970s icon.

As with its spiritual predecessor, the freshly minted Vision One-Eleven combines avant-garde design with innovative drive system technology.

A new battery technology using high-performance, liquid-cooled cylindrical cells powers two exceptionally powerful YASA axial-flux e-motors. Significantly lighter and smaller, yet more powerful than the radial-flux motors currently used in 99 per cent of all electric cars, these work out just one third the size and weight for the same output, with commensurate packaging advantages.

The Vision One-Eleven features a sports car interior with lounge-like feel, and represents a paradigm shift from owner-driven sports cars to autonomous electric vehicle. In 'Race' mode with the backrest upright and the compact driver-oriented touchscreen, the interior is transformed into that of a minimalist driving machine. Conversely, in 'Lounge' mode, the seats are fully integrated into the interior sculpture, merging the sills, centre tunnel and luggage compartment into a single unit.

Billed as a self-driving sports car, this concept is somewhat controversial. However, I'd expect nothing less from a vehicle built in the spirit of the original C111s.

> **"The company was experimenting with new technologies, including Wankel rotary and diesel engines"**

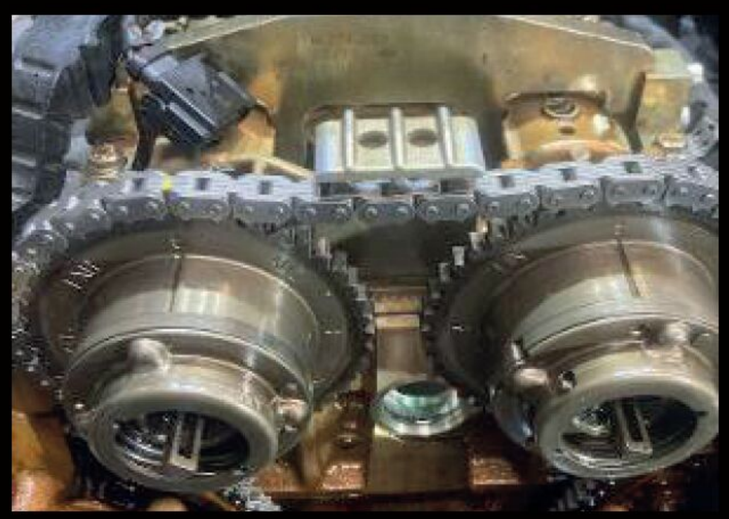
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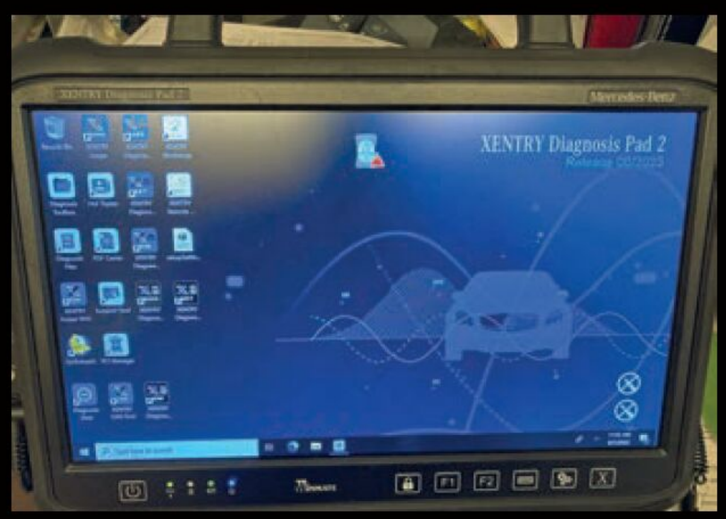
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The expert on all things Mercedes gives us his latest views...

Turning tide



Turbodiesel SUV driver David Sutherland is growing increasingly interested in Mercedes' electric offerings, but when will he make the switch? It all comes down to price, as he explains...

One of the ways you can tell that electric cars are becoming mainstream is by the conversations they generate. At dinner parties the talk used to be about property prices and schools, and if it did stray towards cars it might well be about the rights and wrongs of SUVs.

But now, there's high chance that at least one of your guests, keen to establish his/her environmental awareness and commitment, will mention their electric car and, if you're unlucky, embark on a long and less than fascinating tale of, for example, how on one journey they finally reached home with just one mile of charge left in the battery.

After not paying the current breed of EVs much attention, I'm becoming more interested in them and even found out how much a home charger would cost. Working as a motoring journalist I am lucky enough to try a few, and I've also been to a dealer for one or two test drives. Perhaps I'm subconsciously preparing for the inevitable.

It must be 40 years since I first wrote a story on an electric car, some of which were estates so that the load bay could be filled with the massive battery pack. Mercedes built a 123-series wagon in 1982 with a huge battery pack that could be slid out of the bay, and sported an aircraft-like tail wheel to support the 600kg weight. Output equated to 40bhp, around the same as a mid-1950s Ponton diesel.

Now of course the technology has advanced immeasurably, and I am astounded at how good electric cars are, some better to drive than the internal combustion models. About a year ago I drove the Mercedes EQC, which is the equivalent of the GLC we own, and found it very similar to drive, except quieter and smoother. Ironically, at a fuel station recently, while pulling up to the pumps in the diesel GLC I had to brake sharply when someone walked across the forecourt in front of me. He said, "I just didn't hear you. Is that electric?"

The auto industry has recently thrown everything it has at electrification, and in a short space of time has brought more than credible products to market. The migration towards electric power was effectively foisted on them by politicians convinced that this was a vote-catching green policy (though whether electric cars are truly the way to save the environment is another matter), and carmakers have done their bit with honours.



1982: Daimler's first battery-powered car was this S123 with 40bhp electric motor and nickel-iron battery in the boot.



David found the EQC smoother and quieter than his diesel GLC.

But impressive though electric cars have become, they are so eye-wateringly expensive. I'm assuming that electric cars have been so costly to develop that their makers have no choice but to build that into the price. But the car industry can't rely on curious, well-heeled early adopters, it needs to shift mass volume to keep revenue flowing and geared-up factory production lines moving when we enter the electric-only era. In the past, manufacturers have sustained sales by offering cheap personal contract purchase (PCP) schemes, hordes of budget Citroëns, Vauxhalls and the like knocked out at £99 down and five years to pay, and mainstream electric cars will have to be marketed the same way to get critical mass.

The cheapest new Mercedes-Benz available in the UK is, at the time of writing, the petrol-powered A180 Sport Edition at £30,700. But if you want the nearest electric equivalent, it'll be the EQA at £50,200. If I wanted to replace our GLC, an EQC starts at £65,000. Last time I checked, I didn't have that to spare.

Nor will too many others, which is why Mercedes-Benz comes to the rescue with one of its famously keen Agility PCPs. Thanks to zero per cent interest, I could have a brand new EQC400 4Matic AMG Line for £528 per month over four years. That, and the £11,300 deposit (invariably covered by the trade-in) will be manageable for lots of people. The downside is the enormous £28,000 final 'balloon' payment to keep the car after four years. That effectively locks you into handing back the car at the end of the contract and signing up for a PCP on another car, because when it comes to financing that £28,000 you won't be offered 0 per cent interest and the monthly payment will rocket, probably by at least £200.

The tipping point of car electrification may well bring with it more cost-reducing technology that carmakers could choose to pass on to customers. So when the price is right, I may well be seen in the electric car department at the local Mercedes-Benz dealer.

> **"It must be 40 years since I first wrote a story on an electric car"**

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



Mercedes 560SL Sports 1988 LHD — £39,500



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



Mercedes Sports 1985 280SL — £27,750



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



Mercedes 300SL Sports 1989 — £45,750



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



Mercedes 450 SLC, 1978 — £45,500



Finished in unmarked gleaming signal red, with hard and soft tops, rear seats, headrests, overmats, stereo system, power windows, tinted glass, complete with all tools, auto, power steering, only 87,000 miles from new, all original paperwork from new. Absolutely first-class history, with only one previous owner, amazing condition, drives smoothly just like new, pampered and garaged from new, probably one of the finest available.



Mercedes Sports 280 SL 1981 with personal reg number — £27,500



Finished in brilliant smoke silver with, beige hide interior, hard and soft tops, headrests, light up vanity mirrors, expensive stereo system, power windows, tinted glass, air con, alloys, abs bakes, air bag, srs, power steering, automatic, complete with all tools, 49,500 miles, history garaged from new. This car is just breath taking.



Mercedes 560SL sports 1988 LHD — £44,750

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Hidden away since 1975! 1 of just 562 UK RHD Mercedes-Benz 190SLs coming soon to auction at no reserve.

This incredible barn find with 82,000 miles attracted over 100 bids at auction on November 23 and sold for £50,135. It will make a fascinating project if the new owner decides to revive it.



Daniel Sullivan

@DanielSullivan74

This Emerald Green C43 AMG looked stunning at Cars & Coffee, Bray. With a 4.3-litre V8 and 302bhp, I'm sure it sounds as good as it looks.



Nostalgear and Aroldi Cremona

@nostalgear and @aroldi_cremona

Check this out: a 1999 Mercedes E55 AMG wagon in Imperial Red. Rare? You bet. This isn't your average family hauler. It's the needle in the haystack of performance wagons, boasting a 5.4-litre V8 engine with 349bhp at the ready.



Lawton Prestige

@lawton_prestige_ltd

One of my own cars that I'm considering selling: 1991/H 300CE-24. Only 33,000 miles. Really interesting spec: Sportline, dog-leg manual, SLS, rear blind, sports check interior, sunroof, air conditioning and period C126 SEC bonnet conversion.

Owner James Simpson told us the price for this unique C124 (based in Berkshire) was on application.



Johannes Einemo and Eirik Peders

Ready for the winter snow with 15-inch studded tyres on the 80s Evo Merc, the right outfit and ski rack. We go for the top!



Craig Pusey

@craig_kahl_photography

Not your typical Spa track car. A little trip down memory lane when we took a Mercedes-Benz 220 Ponton on a trip to Zoute via Spa in Belgium.



NKT Automotive

@nktautomotive

This 2004 CL500 was previously owned by a Mercedes-Benz Club member and boasted full Mercedes-Benz service history. Equipment included ABC suspension, bi-xenon headlights, massage seats, a Bose sound system, burr walnut wood trim and Keyless-Go. With 127,000 miles under its wheels, this CL500 had a sticker price of £5,250 before it was sold.



Edward Hall Classic Mercedes

@edwardjshall

Long day yesterday collecting this 1965 230SL. French market car with, for me, the essential manual gearbox. Such a fun car to drive, shame I trailered it!



Blakley Leonard

blakleyleonard

What a difference a decade can make.

Pictured are a 1992 W124 500E and 1984 W123 280E with period-correct AMG bodykit and alloy wheels. Which of these two Mercedes would you drive first?



John P Mohan Classic Cars

@johnpmohanclassiccars

A W126 Mercedes that is literally like new with only 3,800 miles.

This 1983 280SE was offered for €40,000 (£34,400) at the specialist dealer in South County Dublin, Ireland.

We get our hands on the brand new GT Coupe in 577bhp form for a blast through the Spanish countryside and see if AMG's reimagining of its top sports car lives up to expectations

Crimson brawn

Cover story

Less than one hundred yards into driving the new GT along a winding road in Granada, I almost involuntarily exclaim, "This is AMG!" Mercedes-AMG is well aware of this too, with the marketing tagline for this car ("SO AMG") plastered on nearly every available flat surface of our hotel.

It couldn't have come at a better time. The AMG customer of today is not unlike the wanderer stranded in the desert in dire need of tenance. The difference being, we'd rather wither away than quench our thirst with anything but an old fashioned V8.

Following a myriad of four-cylinder AMGs that have yet to convince customers, the new Mercedes-AMG GT appears to hit all the right notes from the off. Both the GT55 and GT63 are pure V8s with no hybrid assistance, featuring the much loved four-litre biturbo pumping out 469bhp and 577bhp respectively. The exterior design wholesale steals the striking features of the Black Series predecessor, encompassed in a larger car with greater usability, thanks to the 2+2 layout.

Yet as good as that all sounds, doubts still linger over the capabilities of AMG's new 'C192' flagship, particularly when compared to its C190 predecessor. That car was arguably a purer sports car with the engine positioned front-mid and connecting to the transmission via a carbon torque tube – in other words, a 'rear transaxle' layout. This gave the predecessor wonderful 47/53 weight distribution alongside the purer rear-wheel-driven format.

Conversely, the new GT features a more traditional pairing of engine and transmission in the front, and comes as standard with 4Matic+ all-wheel-drive. This makes it slightly front heavy, almost reversing the perfect weight balance of old. Fitting in 4Matic and rear bench seating meant a 184mm increase in length and an extra 465kg (compared with the old GT C Coupe), resulting in a 2,130kg kerb weight. That's a figure many detractors of the new car are quick to point out.

And there are plenty of detractors, particularly those who consider this car nothing more than an SL with a fixed roof.

WORDS
RAZIZ REHAN
IMAGES
MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG & JAMIE BRITTAIN



> “Pick up speed and you find the nose keen to point in, and the rear keener still to swing out”

On paper it’s hard to argue with this accusation, as both machines share the same new sports car platform, along with almost all significant components – heck, they even have the same interior.

Beyond the numbers

However, there’s more to the new GT than a casual glance of facts and figures would reveal, and it’s evident in those first hundred yards. Push the start button and a familiar V8 rumble awakens – sadly the exciting ‘AMG Emotion Start’ feature has been lost to EU regulations, but in spite of this the GT sounds consummately angry on start-up.

Things become more interesting as you begin to pick up pace. The GT has a distinct engine note – low revs almost sound like the snarl of a wolf before it pounces. It’s thoroughly addictive! Although sharing components with the SL, AMG wanted to make sure the GT feels and sounds like its flagship sports car should. Therefore it’s loud both inside and out, so much so that it felt like I’d been transported back to the heyday of 2015 and the hilariously loud AMGs of that golden era! In Sport+ and Race modes, the exhaust snarls, bangs and pops on command, making any seasoned AMG musicians feel at home very quickly.

Spanish canyon roads are notoriously narrow, with a seemingly limitless number of exaggerated corners: the perfect testing ground to get the grips with the GT dynamically. Slower manoeuvres in Comfort mode provide quick feedback through the Dinamica-wrapped steering wheel – there’s a directness and sharpness that is less prominent in the SL. Pick up speed and you find the nose keen to point in, and the rear keener still to swing out. Confidence and speed then quickly build, and the realisation soon dawns on you that this really is a different car to the more hot rod-natured SL.

As confidence builds, I’m piling on more speed and braking later into corners. The more exaggerated turns see the GT magically shrink in size as it immediately changes direction, undoubtedly thanks to the rear-wheel steering. What’s more pleasing is how flatly the car corners, akin to the on-rails ▷

“As good as things sound, doubts still linger over the capabilities of AMG’s new flagship”

▷ feeling of the old GT R. With a good few miles done, I’d wager the new GT63 could give a 911 Turbo a good chase down these tight Spanish canyons, something I would not have thought possible looking solely at the figures. It’s not anywhere near as sharp, but it doesn’t feel remotely like a 2.1-tonne grand tourer.

My only complaint on dynamics is the rear-wheel steering, which takes a lot of getting used to. It effectively shrinks the car’s wheelbase in shorter turns, thus you end up overcompensating with your steering inputs. Rear-wheel steering isn’t new to the GT – it was introduced by the GT R – however where it seemed to take a back seat in that car, one sometimes feels overwhelmed by its directness in the new GT. I’d like to spend more time behind the wheel to see if it’s simply a matter of experience, or if there’s an overactive ESP setup.

The four-litre V8 is still the reliable partner it’s always been, doing the best impression of a naturally aspirated engine’s power delivery that any turbo engine could. There’s zero throttle lag thanks to the ‘hot V’ positioning of the twin-scroll turbos, although the engine is sometimes let down by the



nine-speed MCT. It's nowhere near as laggy as most modern torque converter systems you'll find in rival cars, but it does have a hesitation every so often that would feel alien to a driver of the previous generation car. I can only assume this is partly due to the positioning of these initial models as slightly more relaxed daily partners.

Red hot

But that doesn't mean the GT63 is not ballistically fast! Another indicator of the chasm between GT and SL is the sheer speed and grip on offer. The SL63 consistently achieves a 0-62mph time of 3.5 seconds and I've tested this in both wet and dry. The GT63 is in another league altogether, smashing my expectations with a blistering time of 2.9 seconds, as confirmed on AMG's in-built Track Pace software (the official 0-62mph time for the SL63 is 3.6 seconds, and 3.2 seconds for the GT63). If anything, the GT63 is too fast for Granada's roads.

So, what has AMG changed to differentiate the GT from the SL? AMG's head of vehicle dynamics, René Szczepek, was eager to fill us in on the differences between the siblings. While most competitors add more stiffness for convertibles versus coupes, AMG has kept everything from the SL and built upon it for the GT.

First of all, the rear transmission is a new unit completely unique to the GT. It's able to handle more torque and, alongside the wider tyres front and rear, helps shave time from the benchmark acceleration test. Due to the GT's wider tyres, AMG enhanced the five-link front axle's camber and toe stiffness by adding stiffer rubber bushings. The ESP system also features a new generation of software, focusing on immediate interaction between each wheel to maintain traction while increasing agility as you go up the modes.

Most crucially though, is the tuning of the standard-fit AMG Active Ride Control suspension – a system only available on the SL63, but standard on both GT variants. It's a semi-active system that uses hydraulic pumps instead of heavier traditional roll bars, regulated by an oil pump sitting in front of each rear wheel. The dynamics and roll stabilisation can thus differ greatly between modes, and allowed AMG to differentiate this sports coupe from the roadster. There are more differences too, with the GT featuring unique tuning for the 4Matic+ with added Drift mode, transmission software, steering, and the engine. ▷

▽ Electronically controlled LSD as standard.

▽◁ 11.9-inch central display for MBUX system.

▽◁◁ 4.0L V8 biturbo sits on active mounts.







Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG GT63 4Matic+ Coupe (C192)

Engine M178 3,982cc V8 biturbo **Power** 577bhp@5,500-6,500rpm
Torque 590lb ft@2,500-5,000rpm **Transmission** 9-speed auto, 4WD **Weight** 2,130kg **0-62mph** 3.2sec
Top speed 196mph **Fuel consumption** 20.0mpg **CO2 emissions** 319g/km **Years produced** 2023-on

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







> “The extreme reactions from people you pass really prove the design hits more like a supercar than a sports car”

△ Writer Raz Rehan (IG: @rokenr) is no stranger to AMGs having owned more than a few of them, including many of the latest models.

△△ More practical than the previous generation GT.

△▷ 321L of boot space with rear seats in place.

▷ What René is clearly most proud of is the teamwork between the different departments. AMG is a smaller company than most would assume, allowing for better collaboration between each of the car’s systems. Unlike the SL, AMG has not differentiated the GT55 from the GT63 on a technical basis – it is identical in everything but power. I suspect the GT55 will prove the pick of the bunch, but this variant won’t launch until summer next year in the German market (Mercedes-Benz hasn’t confirmed this model for the UK, but did say the GT63 will start at £164,765 OTR – see full market details on page 7).

Now don’t get me wrong, this new GT doesn’t drive like a successor to the C190 GT S. That was an out-and-out sports car, which I suspect is much more at home on a track than this car would be. But that was part of the problem with the old GT family – every version was basically a capable, two-seat track car instilled with varying degrees of sportiness. When looking at the whole family together, it’s a little one-dimensional.

The new GT is very different in this regard, with much improved practicality. It takes a good amount of luxury and technology from the best Mercedes-Benz currently has to offer, so inside you’ll find creature comforts alien to drivers of the old GT – equipment such as the latest MBUX infotainment system from the S-Class, a 360-degree camera system, a head-up display and, for the first time, even a front lift system. There’s also the standard-fit rear bench for your favourite little humans, and a 321- to 675-litre boot that literally swallowed me whole; the old GT Coupe offered just 175 litres of boot space.

That practicality extends to pottering around in Comfort mode, where the new GT proves as capable being a boulevard cruiser as it does a B-road bruiser. Suspension is softer yet still purposeful, with a little more roll and lighter steering. It’s much better at this than the old car. Yet the extreme reactions from people you pass really prove the design hits more like a supercar than a sports car.

Family values

The fact track driving was not part of the GT63’s launch event suggests there’s more to come from AMG’s C192. After all, the company went out of its way to crack the Nürburgring lap record set by the Porsche 911 GT2 RS, and created the AMG One hypercar with F1 V6. The lack of options such as a carbon fibre roof, and the sheer amount of weight-adding luxury tech in these first GT models points to potential for some stripped-back, track-focused versions in the future. If that’s the case, then we will be looking at a family with far more breadth of ability than the last generation of GTs offered buyers.

As for this first car, it’s a project that’s clearly had the singular focus of invoking those specific emotions that get the AMG fan excited, while providing more all-year-round usability. The new GT63 can thus sit proudly as the flagship of the current Mercedes-AMG line-up, serving as the company’s fastest, loudest and most dynamic car. SO AMG, indeed!

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As the world's leading classic Mercedes-Benz destination, we continue to set the standards for the classic SL market. Our **Reborn** programme creates the extraordinary and with three different ways to achieve your remarkable, you've just discovered the ultimate SL destination.

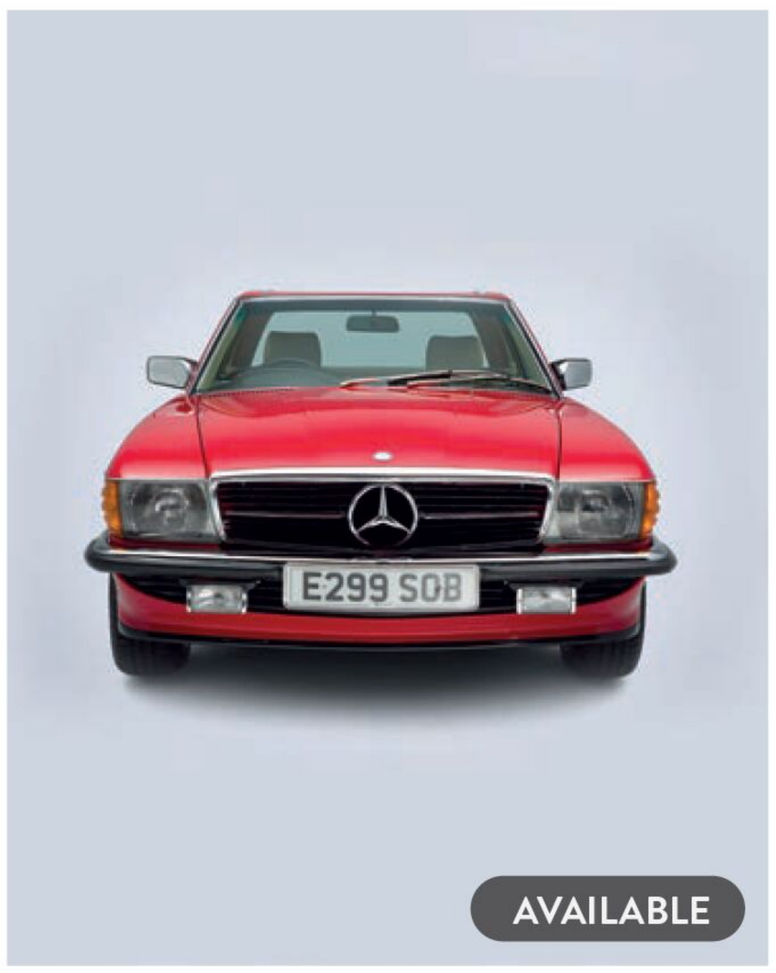
















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Two in one

Mercedes combines the space and presence of the E-Class Coupe with the driving dynamics of the two-door C-Class for its new CLE

WORDS **NEIL BRISCOE** IMAGES **MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG**



◁ Cabin details shared with those of the C-Class.



▷△ CLE trumps the old C-Coupe for rear space.

▷ All CLEs have a 9G auto and 48V mild hybrid tech.



So that's it. What began in 1886 doesn't quite end here, but it reaches a major turning point. Mercedes-Benz has been making engines, and the cars around them of course, since then but this new CLE represents – probably – the last time a new Stuttgart model will be launched with only combustion engines, and no all-electric option.

We say 'probably' because there's the Frank Sinatra Syndrome to consider – the chance that there is always room for one last farewell tour. Perhaps there will be a miracle cure involving hydrogen, synthetic fuel, chip fat or something we haven't even thought of yet. Mind you, it says a lot about the car industry's overall move to electrification that climbing aboard a shiny new Mercedes CLE220d, with the gentle grumble of its two-litre diesel engine seeping into the cabin, feels a little like stepping back in time.

Of course, that effect is heightened by the fact that the CLE is a coupe, and not a coupe-crossover nor coupe-SUV. It's a 'proper' car, if you'll permit us to be old fashioned for a moment. It has an engine in the front, four seats (at least three of which are useable at any one time) in the middle, drive at the rear, and a ride height you'd struggle to squeeze a football underneath.

It's a sad indictment of the seemingly unstoppable rise of the SUV that the CLE is replacing two models at once. Previously, there was room in the Mercedes range for a whole plethora of coupes and sports cars. The SL, SLK, CL, CLK, CLA, E-Class Coupe, C-Class Coupe and so on. Now, very few remain — this CLE, which replaces the previous C-Class Coupe and E-Class Coupe in one fell swoop, the CLA, and the vastly more expensive SL and AMG GT models. Everyone else gets to pick from a line-up of SUVs.

The previous E-Class Coupe, the C238, was one of our favourite cars: slinkier than dropped silk, roomy enough to count as practical, engaging to drive when you were in the mood, but unobtrusively refined when you weren't, and with that magical ability to drop all its side glass and provide a pillarless experience. No wonder we're concerned that the new CLE will lean closer to being a C-Class than an E...

The shapes of the roof and the haunches are definitely more old C-Class Coupe than E-Class, and ditto the design of the grille and the slim lights. The CLE also looks quite small and compact, even though it's pretty close to the previous E-Class Coupe in overall size. ▷

> "The CLE looks small and compact despite being close to the E-Class Coupe in overall size"





▷ In fact, the CLE's body is 6mm longer overall than the old E-Class Coupe's, but the CLE's 2,865mm wheelbase is 8mm shorter.

In the cabin

Disappointingly, the rear side glass is fixed in place so there's no opportunity for any pillarless driving. Inside, again the whole thing looks and feels more C than E. The cabin is roomy, and there's that lovely sweep up from the doors into and around the back of the dashboard. The 12.3-inch driver's digital display and the square-shaped, 11.9-inch MBUX touchscreen on the dashboard, laying back at a coquettish angle, are all very like the current W206 C-Class's interior, right down to the serried ranks of air vents.

This is not a bad thing, you understand. The MBUX system remains one of the more explicable and easy-to-use touchscreens around, and quality levels are as good as you'd want them to be from a Sindelfingen product (actually, this one's made in Bremen, but you know what we mean).

Space in the back is also perfectly acceptable. We drove three-up, with the front seat passenger thoughtfully cranking their seat forward to free up space in the rear. There's enough

▽▽ **Sports suspension as standard in UK.**

▽ **Interesting door design; Burmester audio.**

▽▷ **There is still life in turbodiesel power yet...**





> “It’s an engaging car despite weighing 1,870kg”







space in the wheelbase to do that, and for neither person to be uncomfortable, so although it doesn’t feel quite as airy and spacious as the old E-Class Coupe, the CLE proves thoroughly practical, more of a 3+1 than a 2+2. That’s backed up by a decently practical 420-litre boot.

△ **Headlamps are LED or Digital Light variants.**

On the move

The two-litre, OM654 turbodiesel engine, part of Mercedes’ FAME (Family of Modular Engines) range, is a familiar unit and it fires up with a reassuring, distant grumble. All engines in the CLE line-up are at least mild-hybrid, with a plug-in hybrid launching next April, about the same time that the open-topped CLE Cabriolet arrives. That 48V mild-hybrid technology consists of an integrated starter-generator which can boost the combustion engine’s output by up to 17kW (nearly 23bhp) and 147lb ft of torque. The 220d’s rated outputs are 194bhp and 324lb ft of torque.

That’s enough for brisk acceleration (7.5 seconds to 62mph from rest), although as with other similar engines it feels quicker through the mid-range thanks to the swell of torque and the hybrid assistance. It’s not a high performance engine, but it’s hard to imagine sincerely needing more. Fuel economy of 58.9 to 60.1mpg (WLTP) is quoted, and that seems entirely achievable. It’s also reassuring to look down at the fuel gauge and see that you have more than 500 miles of driving range before you need to top up again.

Once you’re rolling, the CLE is entirely predictable, in that the steering is lightly weighted, but feels quick and accurate, and while it doesn’t quite bristle with feedback, there’s enough coming through that you feel on top of things. A faint edge to the low-speed ride eases out into that classic Mercedes lope once you hit the motorway, and through tighter turns on curvier roads the CLE feels agile, planted and – yes – fun. It’s an engaging car despite weighing 1,870kg.

Long journeys in this CLE should be effortless, especially with the even smoother and quieter six-cylinder CLE450 petrol motor. The CLE is effectively a C-Class Coupe in all but name, and it feels like a C-Class inside, and largely drives like a C-Class too. Is that a disappointment? Faintly so, but given what a stylish and well-rounded car this is, it should win over many fans of the old E-Class.

UK pricing

- **CLE200** (201bhp, 4-cyl, AMG Line) £46,605 OTR
- **CLE220d** (194bhp, 4-cyl, AMG Line) £49,060 OTR
- **CLE300 4Matic** (254bhp, 4-cyl, AMG Line Premium) £55,745 OTR
- **CLE450 4Matic** (376bhp, 6-cyl, AMG Line Premium) £66,265 OTR

Coming soon

- CLE plug-in hybrid
- AMG CLE53 (443bhp, 6-cyl)
- CLE Cabriolet

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz CLE220d Coupe (C236)

Engine **OM654 1,993cc 4-cyl turbocharged + ISG** Power **194bhp@3,600rpm** Torque **324lb ft@1,800-2,800rpm** Transmission **9-speed auto, RWD**
Weight **1,870kg** 0-62mph **7.5sec** Top speed **148mph** Fuel consumption **58.9-60.1mpg** CO2 emissions **123-126g/km** Years produced **2023-on**

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

New Generation

Building on the success of their predecessors, the 114-series Mercedes brought advances in safety, performance, handling and practicality. Here we drive two beautifully preserved examples with 250 badging - a carb-equipped saloon and fuel-injected coupe - and learn more about their past

WORDS **MARTIN BUCKLEY** IMAGES **CRAIG PUSEY**

The late 1960s and early 70s was the era in which Mercedes' badging policy reached a pinnacle of confusion. There were, for instance, four- and six-cylinder 230 petrol offerings (the 230.4 and 230.6), the W108 280SE had a 4.5-litre V8, and the W123 240D also came as a five-cylinder 240D 3.0. All of this had a logic of its own that only the product planners of Stuttgart, juggling a wide range of engine and body combinations to suit the differing requirements of world markets, fully understood.

*"These cars maintained the Daimler-Benz tradition of efficient, **high revving engines** allied to **low gearing**"*

At first glance these immaculate W114 250 twins from the early 70s (a 1972 250 Saloon and 1970 250CE coupe) seem to buck this trend by being exactly what they say they are on their respective bootlids. But in the case of the 250 Saloon, things aren't always as they seem. There was also a 2.8-litre 250 model, which was produced from 1970 but was only available in North America until April 1972 when it became more widely sold.

This freewheeling approach to identifying its cars had its origins in the North American market where, from its introduction, the 250C coupe had a 280 single-overhead-cam engine to maintain performance in the face of tightening emissions regulations. Even in relatively high powered 250 form, these cars maintained the Daimler-Benz tradition of efficient, ▷

▷ high revving engines allied to low gearing in a vehicle that was both relatively large yet also extraordinarily costly for what it seemed to offer on paper.

At £2,864 (including purchase tax) on the British market in 1970, the four-door 250 was only outranked by the new BMW 2500 as the most expensive 2.5-litre saloon available; the fuel-injected 250CE was comfortably pricier than a basic Porsche 911. In neither case were the cars lavishly equipped. Items such as tinted glass, a radio, rev counter and even seats belts – standard on rival cars – were all extra cost options that could add many hundreds to the already hefty price tag.

For those who bought into the Mercedes reputation for quality, none of this mattered. The high purchase cost was incidental because a Mercedes-Benz was an investment in engineering that would last you twice as long as the average car and was likely to prove more reliable. Doubtless the original owner of the pictured 250 Saloon – a Welsh farmer – needed no convincing on this point. He bought the car from Nayland Motors of Swansea in March 1972 and doted on it for the next 22 years until his death in 1994.

In fact, the pre-facelift W114 250 was 'Ziebarted' from new and only used for special occasions, after which all the wheels came off for cleaning inside the arches. The second owner retained the 250 for 28 years until, at 52,000 miles, it came into the hands of Oxfordshire-based Mercedes specialist Edward Hall, who says it is the finest W114 Saloon he has ever owned.

Before the arrival of the M110 twin-cam 280 engine, the 250 and 250CE were the flagship models of the 1968 'New Generation' range and the firm's 'entry-level' six-cylinder offerings. The 250 ran an M114 engine with 128bhp and two Zenith carbs, while the 250CE used the same M114 block but featured Bosch D-Jetronic fuel injection and developed 148bhp. The M114 engine was derived from the M180, which originated in the 1950s. As the M108 it powered the W108 250S, and as the M129 it featured in the W108 250SE. Both versions displaced 2.5 litres. Not for UK consumption was the W114 250C coupe that shared its 128bhp twin-carb engine with the W108 250 Saloon.

Finished in classic white with black MB-Tex, Edward Hall's 25,000-mile 250CE – yours for £37,995 – is similarly immaculate and unrestored. It was bought new by a Mrs Capriotti as a birthday present for her husband Emilio in the summer of 1970 from Mercedes-Benz Great West Road. Like the saloon, it only

"The fuel-injected 250CE was comfortably pricier than a basic Porsche 911"

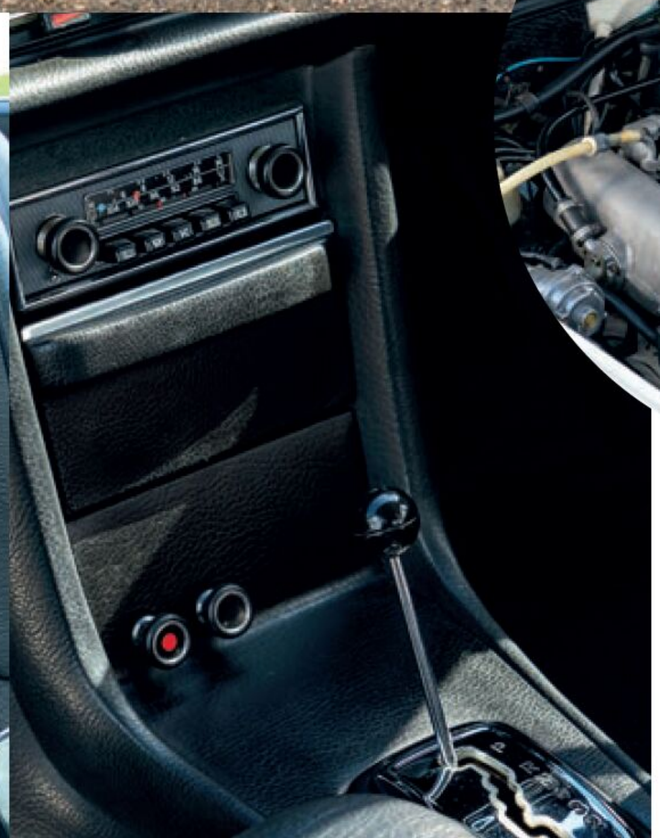


◁ Presented at the Hockenheim track in 1968.

▽ Electronically controlled Bosch D-Jetronic injection.







◁ Optional auto did not affect fuel economy.

◁◁ Good space in the back for a two-door coupe.







△ W114 features double-wishbone front suspension.

▷ 250's carb motor with two valves per cyl.

▷▷ 4-/5-speed manuals, and 4-speed auto were available.

saw use on special occasions or sunny days and was garaged throughout the 1970s until Mr Capriotti's death on Christmas day in 1979. The 250CE remained in the Capriotti garage until its discovery in 2010. It was carefully recommissioned by its second owner (who had the CE for six years) and saw a little more use with its third keeper, who parted with the pillarless two-door after seven years. Edward thinks it may be the best preserved W114 coupe in captivity.

With its neat, airy roof line and vertically arranged Bosch headlights, the 250 Saloon maintains a strong family resemblance to the W108 – strong enough to confuse the uninitiated: it was out of this confusion the unofficial 'Stroke 8' shorthand emerged, referencing the 1968 introduction of this smaller body.

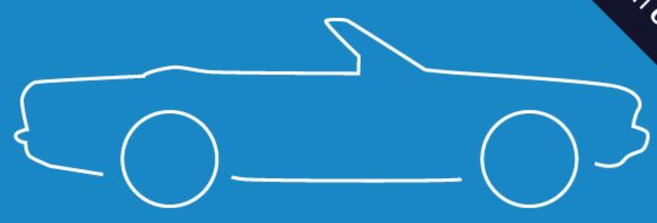
The W114 coupe, only marketed in six-cylinder form, is not so easily mistaken for anything else. It is probably a better looking car in 2023 than it was in period. Among bizarrely shaped moderns – where its hard to be sure if styling is factory intentional or panel damage in some cases – the CE seems an exceptionally graceful machine with its squat roof and long tail. Parts that are unique to the two-door models can be hard to find, particularly body panels and rubber seals, but there is evidence to suggest that these once overlooked coupes are due to have their day in the not-too-distant future.

Introduced in 1969, the C/CE body was Stuttgart's first attempt to make a coupe that was less rarefied and expensive than the hand-finished, low-volume W120 and W111 models. Its styling is identical to that of the four-door up to the base of the windscreen, but the shorter, 45mm lower and pillarless greenhouse gives the coupe a markedly different profile, the dished roof panel a visual link with the Pagoda's hardtop. As a payoff for the slightly larger boot and lower set seating position you get less rear legroom in the coupe, but the long doors at least make access easy.

Both these cars have the taller grille, Bakelite steering wheels and smooth (as opposed to ribbed) rear lights associated with the pre-1973 facelift W114/W115 range. Paul Bracq styled ▷

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◁ Mercedes built 21,787 examples of the 250CE.

▽ Richer looking wood trim in the 250CE Coupe.

▽▽ Cushioned steering wheel boss ups safety.

*"The big **steering wheels** and **pared-back interior** detailing link the W114s to **earlier models**"*





▷ both versions, the W114 Saloon being 220mm shorter than a W108 yet roomier, and only 50kg heavier than the outgoing Fintail.

The W114/115 shell incorporated the latest safety thinking in terms of crumple zones, collapsible steering column, and ventilation, but the really important news was to be found underneath, where semi trailing arms – diagonal swing axles as Mercedes preferred to call them – had finally usurped DBAG's beloved low-pivot swing axles, establishing a new engineering bloodline that would form the basis of the firm's chassis architecture through to the end of 1980s.

Combined with larger 14-inch wheels, anti-roll bars and new ball-jointed, sealed-for-life anti-dive front suspension, the result was a nimbler car that was naturally more stable in all situations than its predecessors, and with much less tendency towards camber changes. All models had servo-assisted four-wheel discs and most 250 buyers opted for the autobox (column or floor shift) that had been evolved from the previous models complete with fluid coupling rather than torque converter.

'Our' 250 Saloon is one of the rare exceptions; perhaps the original owner was mistrustful of labour-saving assists as he specified the car with manual steering as well. The 250CE, like most W114 coupes, has both yet does without either a rev counter or electric windows, items you would expect to find in this flagship version.

Doors that shut as reassuringly as probably any car ever made are common to both cars. Inside, the 250 and 250CE are everything you expect a Mercedes-Benz from this era to be – austere and practical with few embellishments, and in both instances virtually 'as new' in terms of preservation. The big steering wheels (with chrome horn rim) and pared-back interior detailing link the W114 250s to earlier models with which they share the virtues of superb visibility, commanding driving positions and no wasted space or unnecessary distractions.

With all its side glass lowered, ▷

Before and after

Four-doors that preceded and succeeded the 114-series New Generation

BEFORE



W120/121 Ponton
Made: 1953-1962
Number built: 442,963

W110 Fintail
Made: 1961-1968
Number built: 628,312 (including chassis with partial bodywork)

AFTER



W123
Made: 1976-1985
Number built: 2,397,513 (including LWB saloons and chassis for special bodies)



W124
Made: 1985-1995
Number built: 2,221,907 (including LWB saloons and chassis with part-bodies)

MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG



◁ 78,303 of the 2.5-litre 250 rolled off the line.

◁▽ Just over 52,000 miles on this 250 Saloon.

▽ Plush rear bench seat with centre armrest.





> "They feel **sprightly**, are relatively **refined**, and **handle neatly** and effortlessly"

▷ there is an almost semi-convertible feel about the pillarless 250CE. The lack of rattles, excellent steering and resilient if not super cossetting suspension make these cars a pleasure to drive. They manage to ride almost as well as the W108/111 brothers while preserving the virtues of a tight turning circle and huge boot.

The automatic 250CE pulls away in bottom gear rather than second, so it feels lively off the mark with changes that are crisp rather than silky. There is a tightness to both Mercedes that you only get with low-mileage originality. Perhaps the novelty of the 250 Saloon's manual steering and DIY gearbox would wear off quickly in town use, but neither control is excessively hefty in weighting. If anything, the four-speed manual change feels light and disconnected, and the gears are quiet and unobstructive while providing more ready access to torquey flexibility.

At just under 1,400kg, these 50-year-old Mercedes are not heavy by modern standards. They feel sprightly, are relatively refined, and handle neatly and effortlessly, demanding nothing special in terms of concentration even from somebody who is an old car novice. The saloon's manual steering seems slightly lower geared than the power-assisted 250CE's, but both Mercedes exhibit levels of agility and ride comfort that are matched by only a handful of cars in period.

Although they were very similar under the skin, the 123-series cars of 1976 were an attempt to make an even more approachable Benz – with more international appeal – than the slightly stern and uncompromising W114. It was an approach that worked. Yet I cannot help admiring the 'we know best' feel of the authentically Teutonic 250 and 250CE, very much the products of a company focused on making the cars it thought you needed rather than the ones you thought you wanted.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 250CE (W114)

Engine M114 2,496cc 6-cyl **Power** 148bhp@5,500rpm **Torque** 156lb ft@4,500rpm
Transmission 4-speed auto, RWD **Weight** 1,390kg **0-62mph** 10.8sec
Top speed 115mph **Fuel consumption** 24.1mpg **Years produced** 1968-1972

Mercedes-Benz 250 (W114)

Engine M114 2,496cc 6-cyl **Power** 128bhp@5,400rpm **Torque** 147lb ft@3,600rpm
Transmission 4-speed manual, RWD **Weight** 1,375kg **0-62mph** 12.8sec
Top speed 112mph **Fuel consumption** 24.1mpg **Years produced** 1967-1972

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1972 250 and 1970 250CE as pictured; fuel consumption determined at 3/4 of top speed (not more than 110kph/68mph) plus 10 per cent

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Tourmaline treasure

This early SL500 has covered just 20,000 miles since new in 1994 and features an unusual and appealing specification

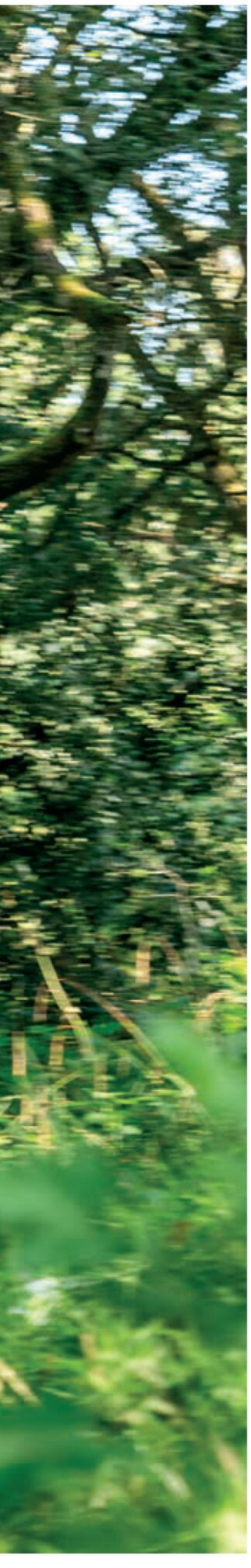
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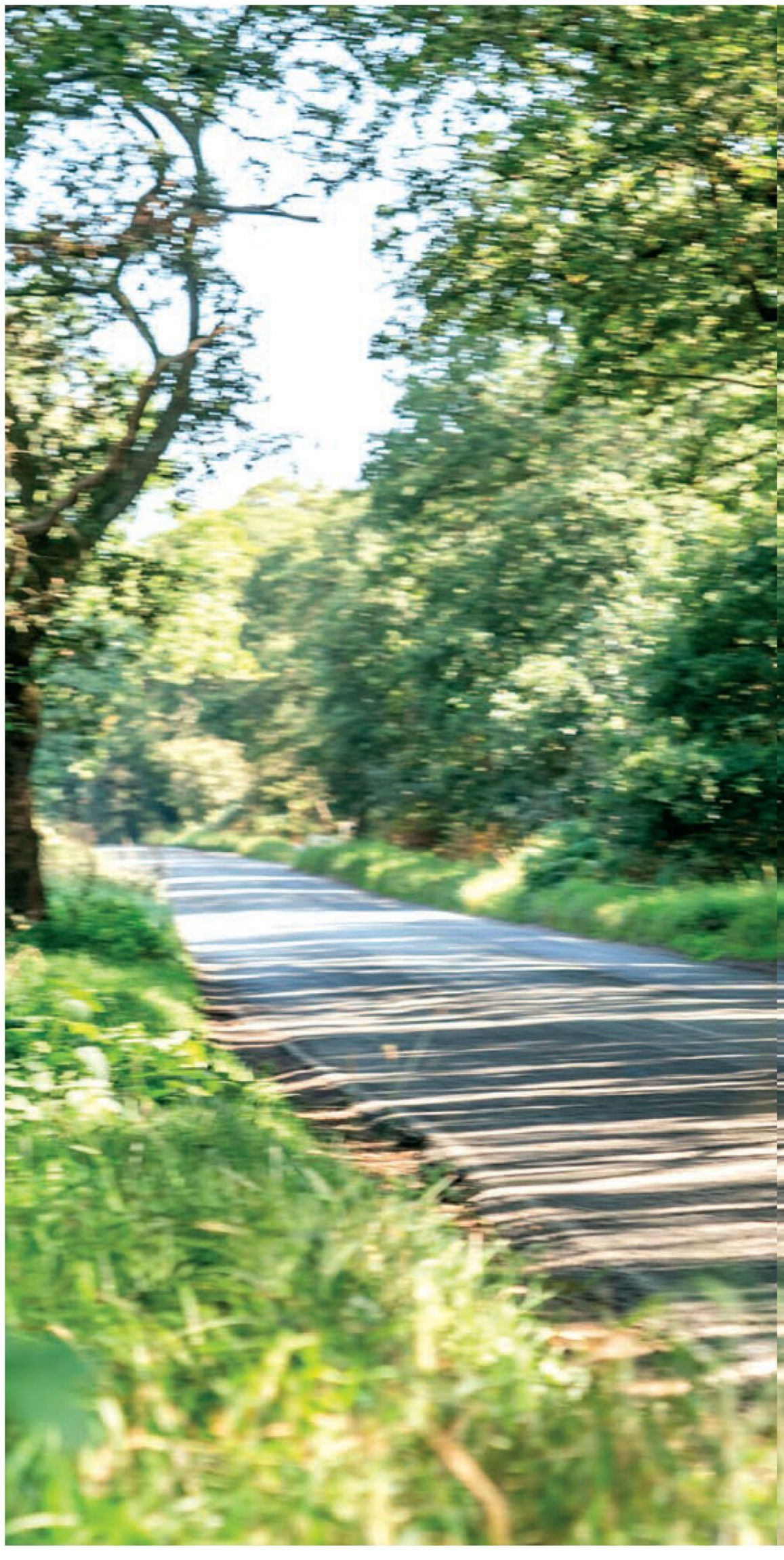


▷ Big red button to left of gearlever controls the roof.

▷▷ Orange lenses were phased out in '95 .

▷▷△ 79,827 of the M119-engined 500 model built.





It's interesting to consider how classic model SLs reflect the automotive era that conceived them. In the then futuristic, aeronautical styling of the original 300SL of 1954 we see early jet age thinking. The W113 Pagoda replacing it in 1963 was, in total contrast, automotive branding at its most sophisticated, a stunning motorcar as much about high-end fashion as engineering, and one that represented the white-heat coolness of the mid-1960s.

By the time the R107 arrived eight years later, North America was the holy grail for European prestige carmakers, hence the V8-only line-up at first, in a larger, boulevard-friendly body that abandoned any pretentions that the SL was a sports car.

The R129, introduced at the 1989 Geneva motor show, was about what was under the skin, not the skin itself: a multi-valve V8 engine, traction control, adaptive damping, an electronically controlled, pop-up rollover protection bar, and motors for almost everything that moved in the cabin. The innovation set to almost burst out of its body seams was, curiously, not matched by the excitement generated by the body styling, the work of Bruno Sacco, who'd invented the 1980s Mercedes 'look'. The grille was reduced almost to the characterless, slanting air inlet that mass produced cars had featured for some years, while the softish but straight body lines brought to mind the diluted blandness of what America was by then passing off as muscle cars.

But if the R129 SL failed to deliver the stunning visual hit of predecessors, that mattered little to those in a position to buy. The allotted R129 production of 20,000 units per year nowhere near satisfied demand, hence a long queue for the new-generation SL existed from day one; a number of customers who got their hands on one re-sold them at a fat profit, displeasing Mercedes-Benz.

Production life

The R129's dozen years in production, during which 204,940 were built, included two facelifts. The first came in 1995, cars distinguished by a new design of wheel along with colour-coded exterior trim and some cabin tweaks. Three years later the wheels were again changed, with lower models now sporting 17- rather than 16-inch diameter items, and folding SLK-style door mirrors were adopted, along with other minor styling revisions.

Quite often, the final models are the most sought-after, as they incorporate a life cycle's worth of improvements. But equally, the early, original spec cars can become sought-after too, given that they retain the pureness the designers and engineers envisioned, ▷







> **The allotted production of 20,000 units per year nowhere near satisfied demand**



R129 - The alternatives

Whether you're talking about an early M119-engined car or the post-1998 M113 V8 model, the 500SL/SL500 is, overall, regarded as the R129 of choice: fast, super-smooth and with acceptable fuel economy. But what do other R129s offer?

For less money you can buy a six-cylinder car that looks identical, lacking the V8 magic, but still with decent enough performance. Pre-1998 cars were the 300/280/320, all using the M103/M104 engine is various sizes, notable for being possibly Mercedes' sweetest ever straight-six. As of the 1998 facelift, the 280/320 ran the M112 V6s, which don't feel or sound quite as nice as the M104 but offer easier maintenance.

Those with bottle and deep pockets will gravitate toward the AMG or V12 badges. The first AMG, the 1993 SL60 AMG, is by common consent the most glorious R129 built, although what it offers over the 500 is a bit more performance, handling and soundtrack - not a wholly different driving experience. The SL60's 1998 replacement, the SL55 AMG, pales by comparison, due to it using the 5.4-litre M113 instead of the ultimate M119 V8.

The hitherto low value of the V12 makes the 600SL/SL600 enticing. But the six-litre, normally aspirated M120 is a complex V12 built more as an engineering showcase than anything else, one is tempted to think, and all these years on problems that it can throw up could cost almost as much to fix as the car is worth, not least its multiple ECU system. There is also the ultra-rare SL73 AMG to consider that has a 7.3-litre reworking of the M120.



RM SOTHEBYS

▽ Four-speed auto replaced by five-speed at the 1995 facelift.



While late enough to bear the 1993 rebadging, this example showcases the R129 in its original form

▷ and that is what we see in the 1994 SL500 photographed here, supplied by Dominic Paul, proprietor of Kingdom Specialist Cars based in Alton, Hampshire, and which specialises in classic Mercedes models, and also offers storage.

While late enough to bear the 1993 rebadging, this pre-facelift example showcases the R129 in its original form: orange indicator lenses, and the simpler, less stylised bumpers. It sits on 16-inch, '15-hole' alloys shod with 225/55 tyres, this modest spec – compared to the chunkier, 1998-on 17s with lower profile rubber – another aspect endowing the early R129 with more understated elegance.

Time warp

Under the bonnet you see the usual black plastic shroud, but beneath it lies something else R129 aficionados treasure – the wonderful, five-litre M119 V8. This 32-valve motor is the perfect combination of power and torque, jewel-like refinement and an emotive but appropriately subdued soundtrack. SL500s after the 1998 facelift switched to the three-valves-per-cylinder M113 V8 of the same capacity (but slightly less output), and although this is another classic Stuttgart motor that would become the heart of most AMG models, the original V8 works better in the luxury roadster, many would say.

Since being delivered to its first owner, this SL500 had covered just 20,200 miles; there have been seven owners but the law of averages tells us that most of them must have kept the Mercedes garaged for most of the time. The Tourmaline Green paintwork is unusual for an R129 and probably not the hue that suits it best, although it's undoubtedly striking in direct sunlight, and the equipment spec of this SL was the work of someone intending a new car to fit like a glove. Extras specified included automatic climate control, memory front seats with heating and the infrequently seen orthopaedic backrest, rear seats, and the part-wooden steering wheel. It has clearly been properly looked after by all involved, as the car looks much like new, and also comes with three folders of service/maintenance history, including every MOT certificate.

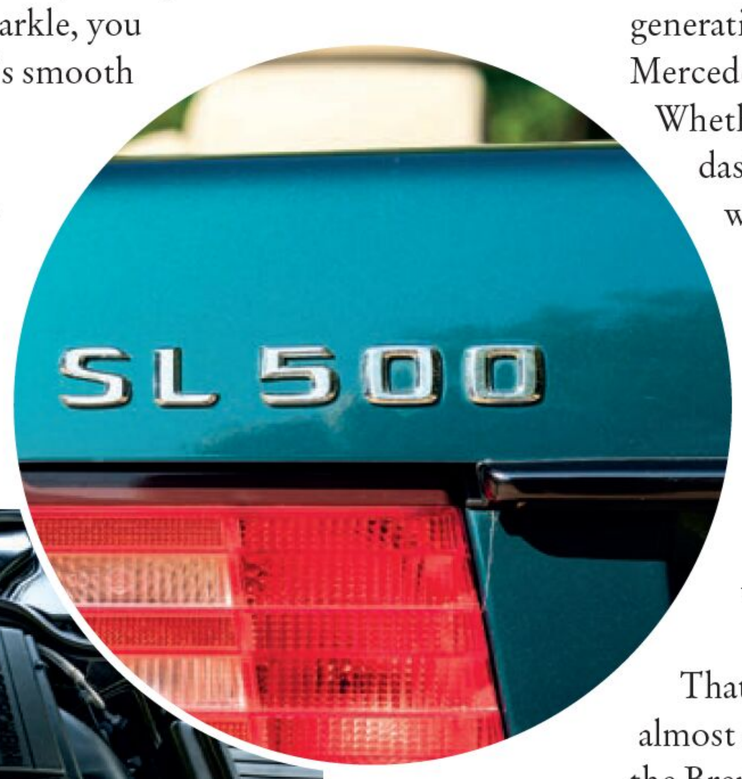
If the R129 lacks the charisma of the R107, its driver appeal is in a different league, much more responsive and a lot tauter, the ▷

▷ stiffer suspension providing far better poise but with no loss of ride comfort. It's still a 'traditional' Benz though, set up for cruising above all else; it would be the succeeding R230 SL generation that would see Mercedes-Benz pursue, and come close to attaining, Porsche-like handling.

Early gains

Mercedes' insistence on giving the R129 and some other models of the time a stiff accelerator pedal manages to promote a more restrained driving style, as flooring the throttle doesn't feel right. It doesn't matter because although when worked hard the M119 can produce an emotive howl that's low key but still sufficient to stir the soul, it's delightful in the mid-range, which is more suitable for a modern classic SL. This car was just a year away from the five-speed, electronically-brained automatic transmission that would be fitted (six-cylinder models were already five-speed auto), but although this does bring added sparkle, you won't miss it because the four-speed action is smooth and seamless.

No R107 left the factory with a powered hood, so here was another advance the R129 could boast. Furthermore, no clamps or catches need releasing – you merely hold back the button on the centre console for 25 seconds while the canvas and windows rearrange. The process is, however,





△ This style of badging arrived in June 1993.

◁ Five-litre M119 V8 one of Merc's best engines.

"As a classic car, when will the R129's time truly come?"

somewhat rough and bumpy by today's standards. As with the Pagoda and R107, every R129 came with a hardtop, so substantial that removing/fitting required four hands, resulting in many hardtops being permanently left on the car or in the garage.

Nonetheless, the R129 SL is a beautiful car to drive al fresco. To avoid wind turbulence, keeping the windows raised does most of the work; this car has the draught excluder that was a very expensive Mercedes-Benz dealer option, but it isn't essential and restricts access to the rear seat.

Built to last – and last

It's often pointed out that the 215-series CL and R230 SL generation that followed the R129 marked a downgrading of Mercedes-Benz quality, and you can see that in the R129 cabin. Whether it's the heavy precision of the minor switchgear or the dashboard plastics, there's no trace of the flimsiness that would follow.

The R129 feels a 'bigger' car inside than the R107 because there's a little more cabin space, the dashboard is a larger moulding, the instrument panel is huge and with more dials, and the seats are bigger. The seats have Mercedes' excellent electric adjusters built into the doors, and an adjustable steering column allows fine-tuning of the driving position. Nonetheless, some will find the seats disappointingly flat and shapeless.

As a classic car, when will the R129's time truly come? That's a prospect *Mercedes Enthusiast* has been pondering almost ever since the last example rolled off the production line in the Bremen factory in northern Germany 22 years ago. One particular model, the SL60 AMG, is now worth more than others, if still not super-collectible, and the rare V12 600SL/SL600 now attracts more attention. Plus late, limited edition cars have added value, as have pristine, low mileage V8s such as Dominic's SL500, stickered at £30,000. But broadly, the R129 SL is still a financial underperformer – which leaves it a brilliant, premium convertible Mercedes roadster that is priced to be affordable and enjoyable.



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz SL500 (R129)

Engine M119 4,973cc V8 **Power** 316bhp@5,600rpm **Torque** 347lb ft@3,900rpm **Transmission** 4-speed auto, RWD

Weight 1,800kg **0-62mph** 6.5sec **Top speed** 155mph **Fuel consumption** 17.7mpg **Years produced** 1989-1995

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1994 SL500 as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; top speed electronically limited

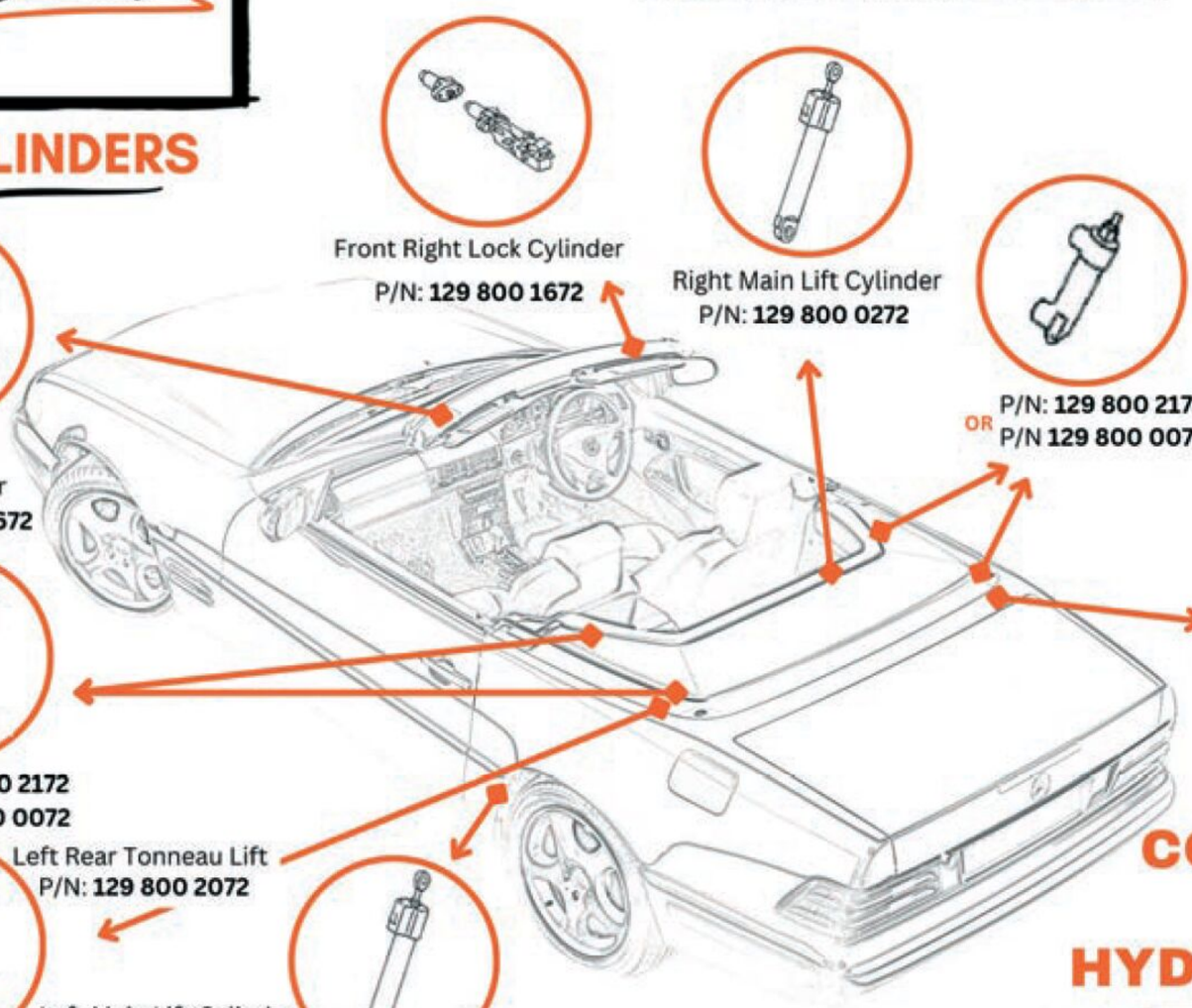
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1989 - 2001 Mercedes-Benz R129 SL-Class

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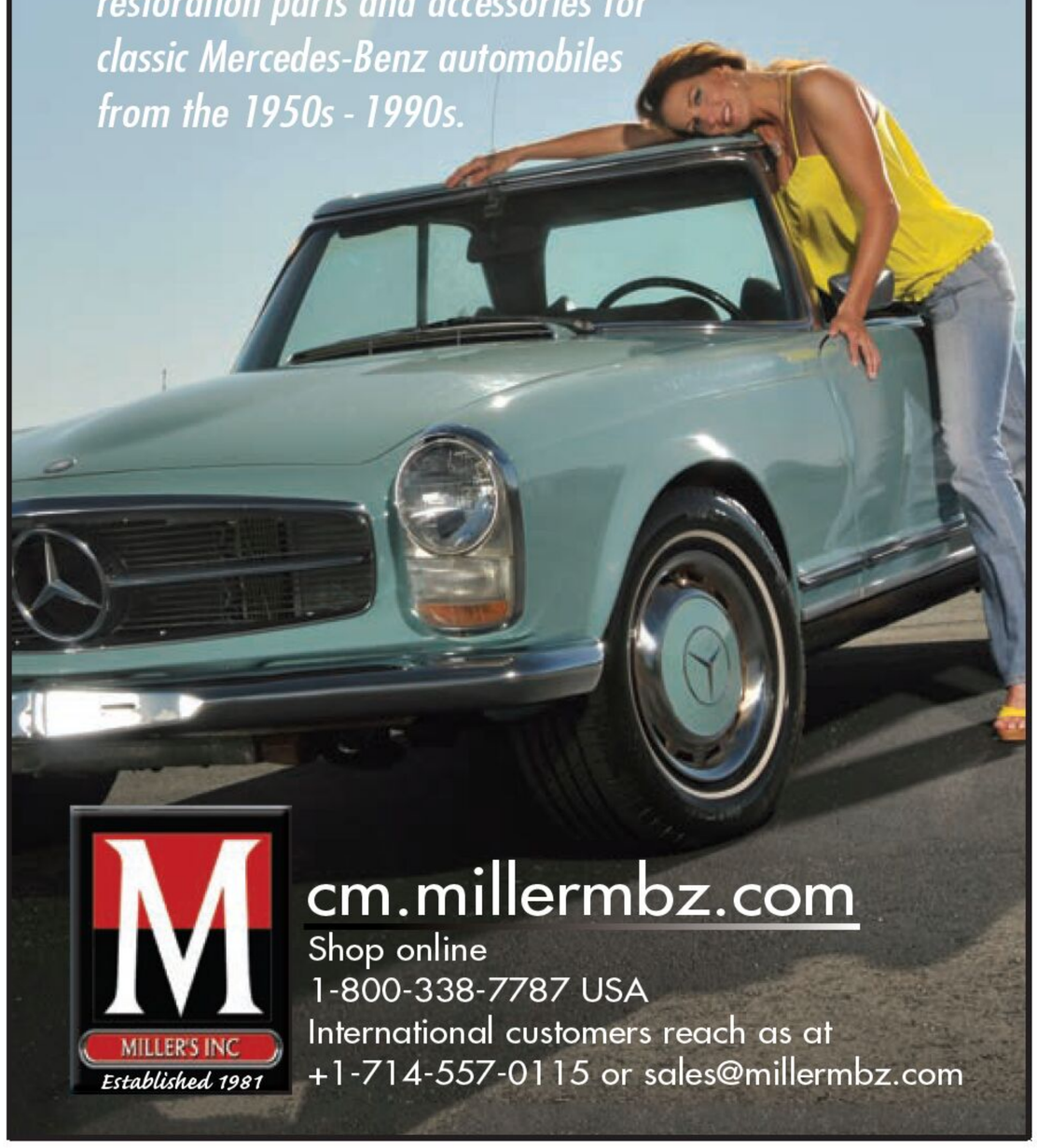

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> The decision to make it mine had been made years ago, so there was no way I was leaving without it





▽ Hole rusted into floor; leather before revival.





SECOND *chances*

Once living in the UK, this C43 AMG began a new life in Namibia where it was chased down, literally, by its current enthusiast owner. The V8 saloon has since undergone a comprehensive restoration and is now ready for its next adventure in South Africa

WORDS **WILHELM LUTJEHARMS** IMAGES **PEET MOCKE**

It's evident that Hanjo Stier is very happy with his C43 AMG. However, reaching this point, which includes acquiring this rare AMG and achieving its beautiful current condition, has taken a serious amount of time.

"I first saw it on New Year's Day eight years ago in Windhoek, Namibia," he explains. "Back when the W202 C-Class was new, there was a lookalike AMG bodykit that could be fitted to the C280, but I spotted this car's light grey inserts on the seats and realised it was a genuine C43, which I had never seen before. To this day, it is the only one I've ever seen, including during my travels through Europe." It is believed just two C43 AMGs currently live in South Africa, where Hanjo resides.

"I managed to find the owner inside a shop, but he wasn't ready to sell the car," Hanjo recalls. "I left my number, and I took his number. A couple of years went by, and I kept asking if the owner would sell the car. Then one day, he told me he had sold it to a friend in Johannesburg – I was devastated.

"Sometime later, in 2017, I was again in Windhoek on business, and this very car came past me with a 'For sale' sign on the back. So I ran after it, which is rather out of character for me because I don't run for anything! The passenger eventually told the driver that there was a guy running after them, and maybe he should stop. We exchanged details, and it turned out that the owner had indeed bought it from our mutual acquaintance.

"He told me the C43 had been on the market for half a year and no one wanted to buy it! Of course, the decision to make it mine had been made years ago, so there was no way I was leaving without it. The mileage was high, and it was in terrible condition, so I used one of my clients in Windhoek – Christiaan Bauer at Bauer's Autowerkstatt – to take a look at the car," Hanjo explains. ▷

◁ The interior has been nicely revatilised.

▽ The C43 feels quick even by today's measure.

▷ "We put it on a lift only to find more issues and more rust, also spotting control arms and bushes that needed replacing. Christiaan is Mercedes-Benz trained and worked for the local dealer at one point, so he was very useful to me. I also phoned Robert van Alphen, my Mercedes-Benz specialist in Cape Town. I showed him the car through a video call and he advised me how much I should pay for the C43 considering its condition.

"Once the deal was done, the car was sent straight to Bauer's Autowerkstatt to be checked over, serviced, and have the necessary work done so it could pass its roadworthiness test. Then I drove the car for about a year during my regular visits to Namibia. Before long, I decided to have the C43 fully refurbished, but closer to home in Cape Town. I drove it 1,000 miles from Namibia to Cape Town without issue. At one stage, it was the only running car in the family – even my pregnant wife was driving it."

Next was the process of having the bodywork done, which took by far the longest time, but for a good reason. "I decided to have all the bodywork done by Mark

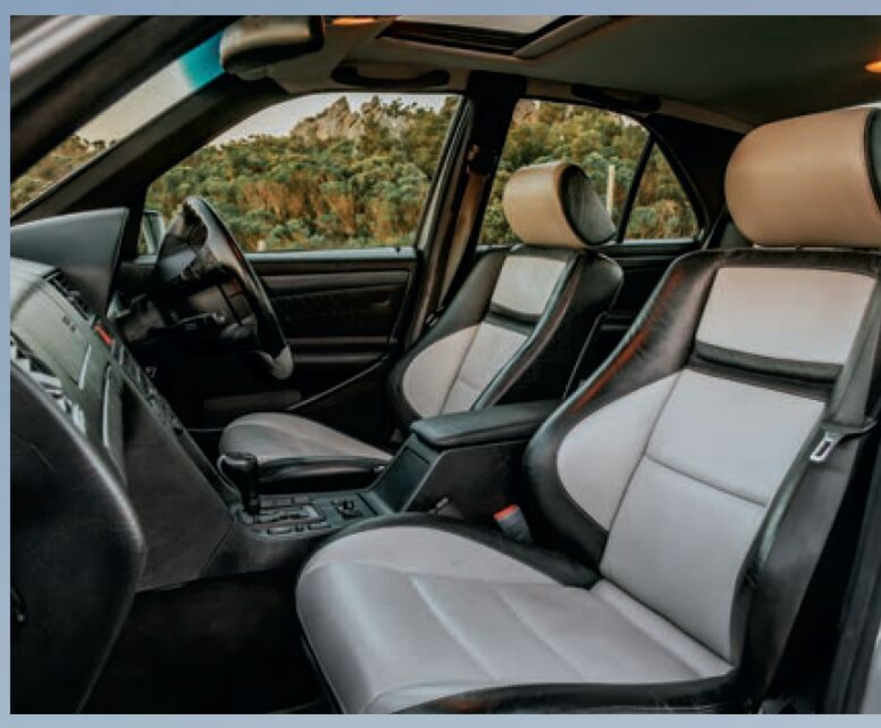
"By that time, I had forgotten what it felt

Coetzee at Coetzee's Auto Coachworks, a company well known in the Mercedes-Benz Club of South Africa. He came highly recommended, although I had to wait while other cars on his books were finished.

"I made a deal with him based on that wonderful triangle of speed, quality and cost," Hanjo explains. "I wanted good quality at a reasonable cost, so he told me, 'Don't rush me'. The car was delivered to him in January 2020, and I got the car back midway through 2023. It took that long for the bodywork to be done because the more they dug, the more rust they found, mainly around the bottom of the car. For example, there was a huge hole under the driver's footwell. The sills were a bit rotten, and so was one door.

"They stripped body panels and did well to get rid of all the rust over the following months. As agreed, I didn't rush them. For me, it was an exercise in patience," Hanjo laughs. "I visited the car several times during the process, which took place during a big move for the business owing to expansion.



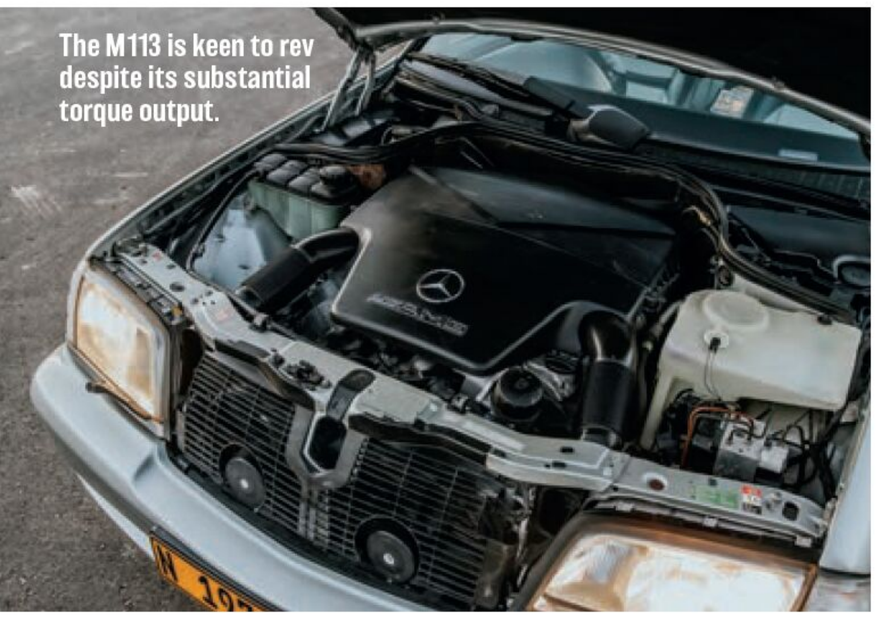


▽ White faced dials; 160,000 miles covered. △ These AMG alloys are a work in progress. ▷ AMG chairs offer decent side support.



"The interior was original but pretty worn out," Hanjo recalls. "I used Color Glo in Cape Town. The company's owner had done a very sympathetic restoration on another 50-year-old car of mine, and he had done it so well that I turned to him for the C43. He had to replace two panels in the seats, but the grain of the leather and the colour match were expertly done, while the rest of the leather also received some care. As for the rest, I wanted some patina. After all, the car has done just over 160,000 miles.

"More mechanical work was done by Robert in Cape Town once the bodywork was completed. This was necessary as the car had basically stood still for three years. These included new shocks, pipes, hoses, rubbers, and the fuel system. Thankfully, the brakes were still in good condition. I told a fellow enthusiast the other day that when I eventually ▷ like to drive and even what it smelled like"


The M113 is keen to rev despite its substantial torque output.

▷ got back the car, it felt like new. By that time, I had forgotten what it felt like to drive and even what it smelled like."

On Hanjo's to-do list is sourcing a set of monoblock C43 AMG wheels. Finding the perfect wheels is a tough job and requires patience which Hanjo is blessed with, thankfully. In the meantime, the C43 features a set of period-correct Mercedes rims. Also on Hanjo's list is upgrading the open differential to a limited-slip type. Apart from that, there are still a few final cosmetic and electronic gremlins Hanjo will attend to in the coming months. But for now, after more than three years, he simply wants to enjoy his C43 – one of the rarest Mercedes-Benz cars in South Africa.

Strolling around the C43 with key in hand, it's the AMG styling upgrades that catch the eye. As Hanjo explains, every now and then an enthusiast walks over to him, points at the car and asks: "Is it a real one?"

Exterior modifications on the C43 include an AMG front bumper, deeper AMG side sills, and an AMG rear bumper. Of course, there's also the chrome-tipped pipes of the AMG exhaust. Overall, the C43 is a very subtle looking performance saloon, especially when compared with the standards of today, but its square-shouldered shape is nonetheless unmistakable to the keen-eyed Mercedes fan.

The cabin too, underplays the C43's range-topping status. The leather seats have thick side bolsters that provide additional support, comfort and visual appeal over standard C-Class chairs, while this example's black and light grey leather reinforces the car's premium status. The two-tone treatment extends to the steering wheel, and beyond it a white-faced AMG instrument cluster presents itself. Another tantalising detail is the 'Sport' script on the gearlever's top.

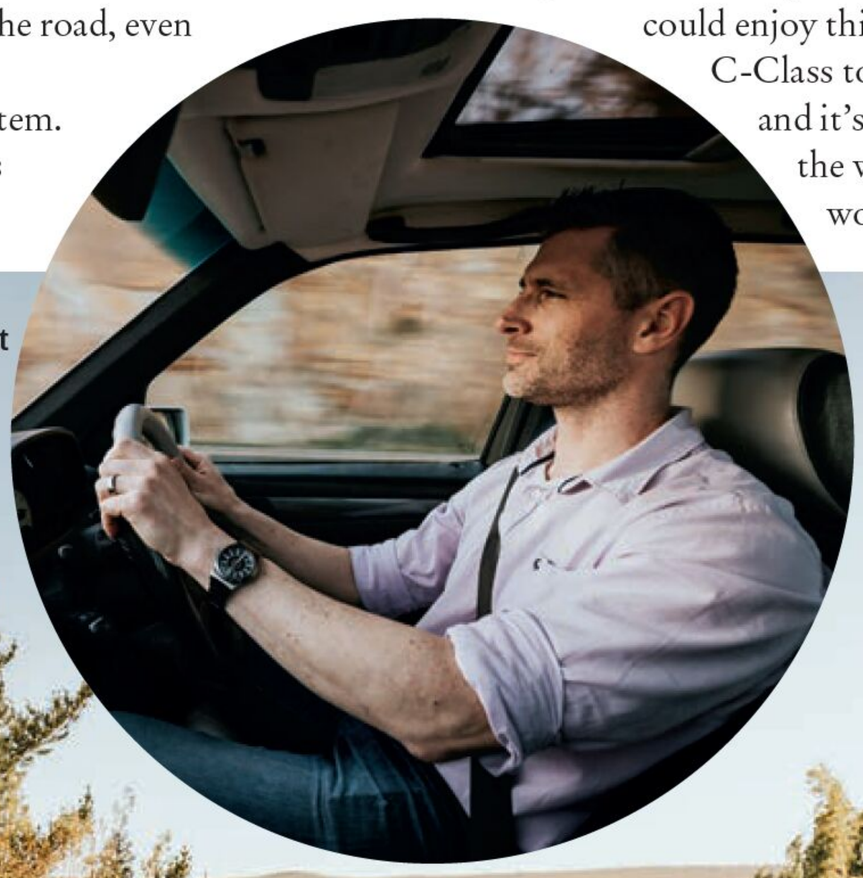
Under the bonnet lies a 4.3-litre V8 engine (M113), and as I turn the key a deep burble instantly takes centre stage without trying too hard to impress. Until now, seat time in a W202 C-Class has eluded me. With 302bhp under my right foot, I could do much worse than start my experience here…

Like the cabin, the C43's footprint is refreshingly compact – the bonnet is short and stubby, and tipped by an iconic tri-star emblem. Once on the twisty highway, the C43 is remarkably easy to place on the road, even with the completely numb recirculating ball steering system. As for ride quality, comfort is still the priority for this C-Class, but I appreciate the slight firmness that the stiffened AMG suspension offers.

> I have developed new appreciation for early AMGs like the C43 and E55

The V8 is certainly flexible with its 302lb ft of torque – press the throttle towards the carpet and the gearbox shifts down before the four-door saloon picks up speed in swift fashion. The C43 is not overly fast by modern standards, but it still delivers a great dose of excitement when you're pressing on. The brake pedal's travel is rather long, but the uprated AMG system performs admirably.

Pulling into a lookout point for a few moments of reflection, I have developed new appreciation for early AMGs like the C43 and 210-series E55. Their muscular, naturally aspirated performance and their styling purity make them among the most alluring Mercedes of their time, if not all time. Patience was required from Hanjo before he could enjoy this rare C-Class to the full, and it's safe to say the wait was worth it.


▷ Wilhelm's first time driving a 202-series.



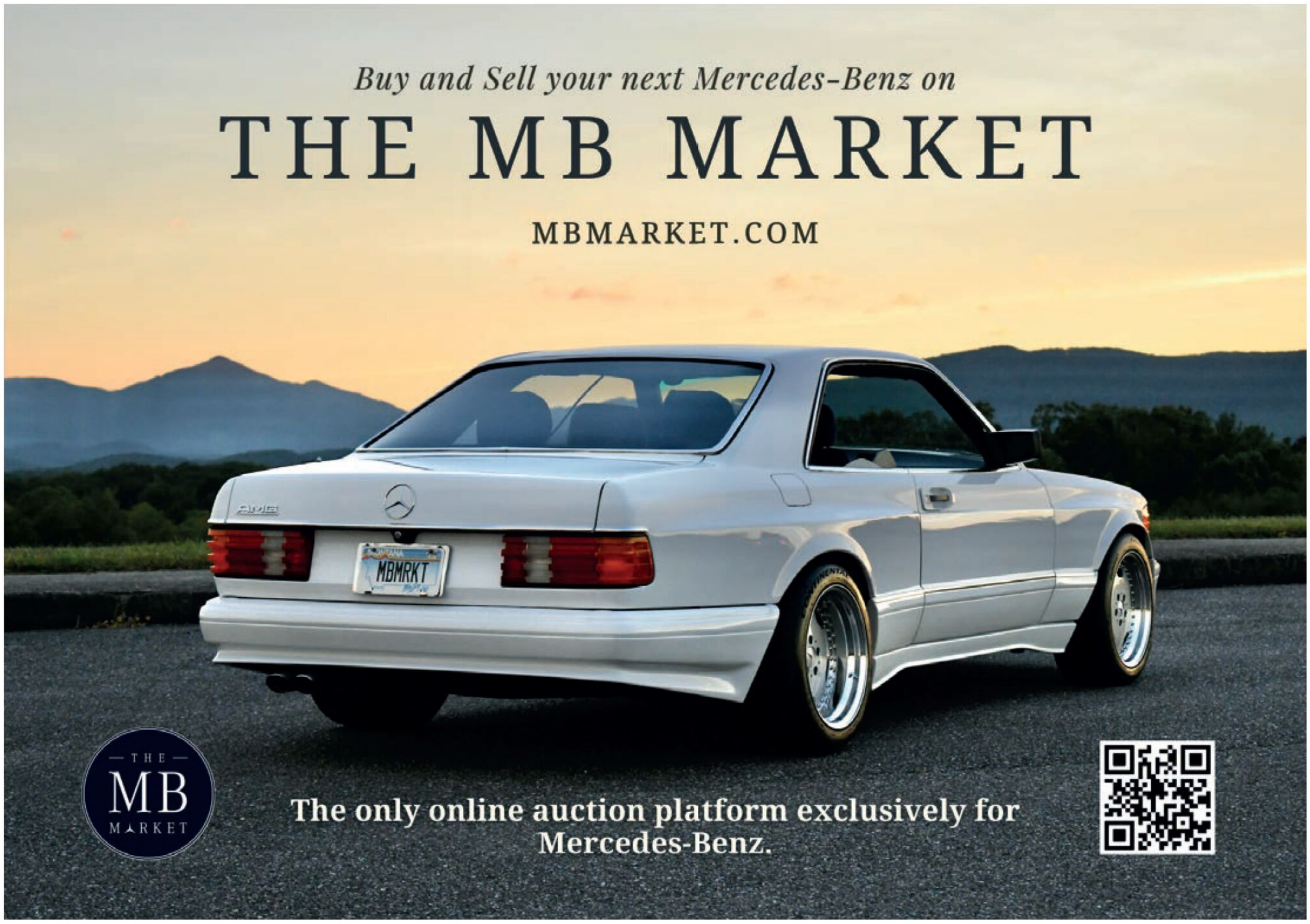
Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz C43 AMG (W202)

Engine M113 4,266cc V8 **Power** 302bhp@5,850rpm **Torque** 302lb ft@3,250-5,000rpm **Transmission** 5-speed auto, RWD **Weight** 1,570kg

0-62mph 6.5sec **Top speed** 155mph **Fuel consumption** 21.6mpg **Years produced** 1997-2000

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1998 C43 AMG as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; top speed electronically limited



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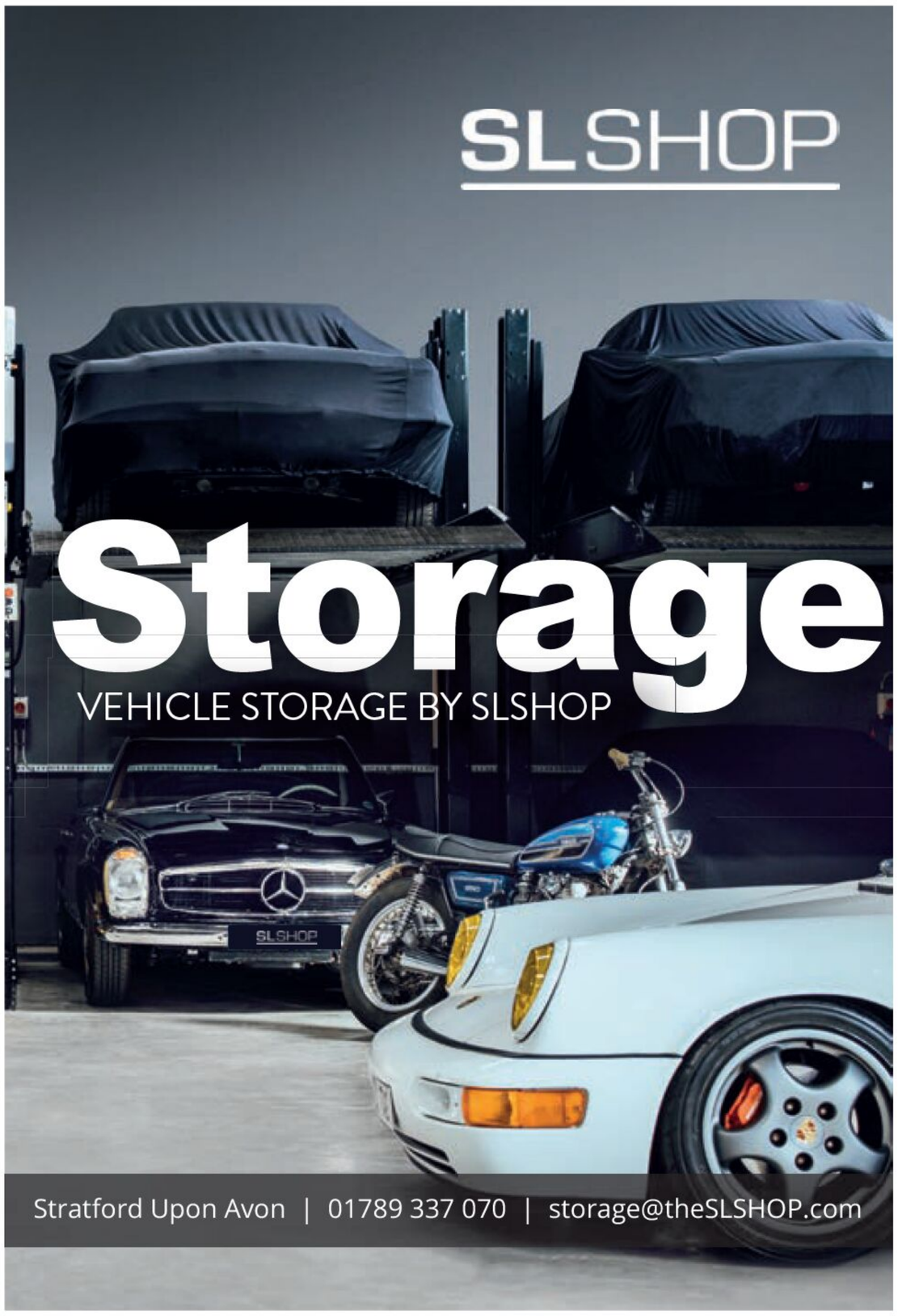


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Closer to nature

We head into the Tuscan countryside to meet photographer and vegan gourmet Simone Parri, who owns three highly practical Mercedes

WORDS & IMAGES **MARCO ANNUNZIATA**

Simone Parri has always pursued a career in photography. Initially, he worked as a photography assistant then transitioned to becoming an architectural photographer for interior design and advertising magazines. He served as an art director and stylist for men's accessories until the onset of the pandemic.

Currently, in addition to working and tending to his land, he works as a photographer while developing his website project, 'The Away From Home Vegan', focusing on vegan cooking and outdoor living. Simone lives in Tuscany on the slopes of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines and travels either by bicycle or inside one of his Mercedes. Here, he explains how he came to own 123- and 124-series Estates, plus a delightfully utilitarian Unimog.

Marco Annunziata: How did your Mercedes journey begin?
Simone Parri: I remember a quote from the movie, *The Killing Fields*, which I watched when I was 14: 'Mercedes – number one', said the young boy to the journalists who had given him





▷ Five-cylinder 250TD makes 93bhp/117lb ft.

◁ Steering wheel with airbag; five-speed manual.

“Once you’ve sat in a Mercedes it’s hard to go back to other cars”





△ 240TD with a 71bhp/101lb ft torque 4-cyl.

◁ Clock in place of rev counter; 450,000km driven.

the manufacturer’s emblem. Later, as a soldier, he saved the reporters, repeating ‘Mercedes – number one’. I think that phrase stuck with me, along with others I heard at that time from people around me, suggesting that once you’ve sat in a Mercedes-Benz, it’s hard to go back to other cars. I believe the quality of Mercedes from that era was incomparable to that of other brands. It was something else entirely.

My first Mercedes was a 1985 123-series 240TD, which I still own. When I decided to live in the countryside, I bought a Mercedes W463 200GE. Unfortunately, despite my love for that model, the engine for the Italian market was undersized for the vehicle’s weight and it consumed fuel like a tank. I swapped it for a beautiful, 1973 Unimog 421, which I still have and use for work on my land. Later, alongside my 123 Mercedes Estate, I added a car with a bit more modernity – a 124-series 250TD from the early 1990s.

MA: Tell us more about your Mercedes

SP: The 123 is the car in which I’ve travelled the most distance, and perhaps I’m more attached to it than the others having spent around 30 years of my life with it. It has never let me down; those few times it didn’t start, there was always a simple solution – small tricks revealed by old Mercedes mechanics who knew the ins and outs of these vehicles, which remained largely unchanged during their entire production life. ▷







▷ I sold the G-Wagen out of desperation, maybe the same desperation as the person who sold it to me. It consumed a lot of fuel and didn't have an engine powerful enough to propel a body of such weight. The undersized engine had been designed for the Italian market; at that time, exceeding the 2,000cc displacement meant paying an exorbitant circulation tax.

The Unimog has never given me any problems, although the 124 is starting to vibrate and the transmission is becoming noisy. I'll have to intervene to fix it, or perhaps abandon it to its fate…

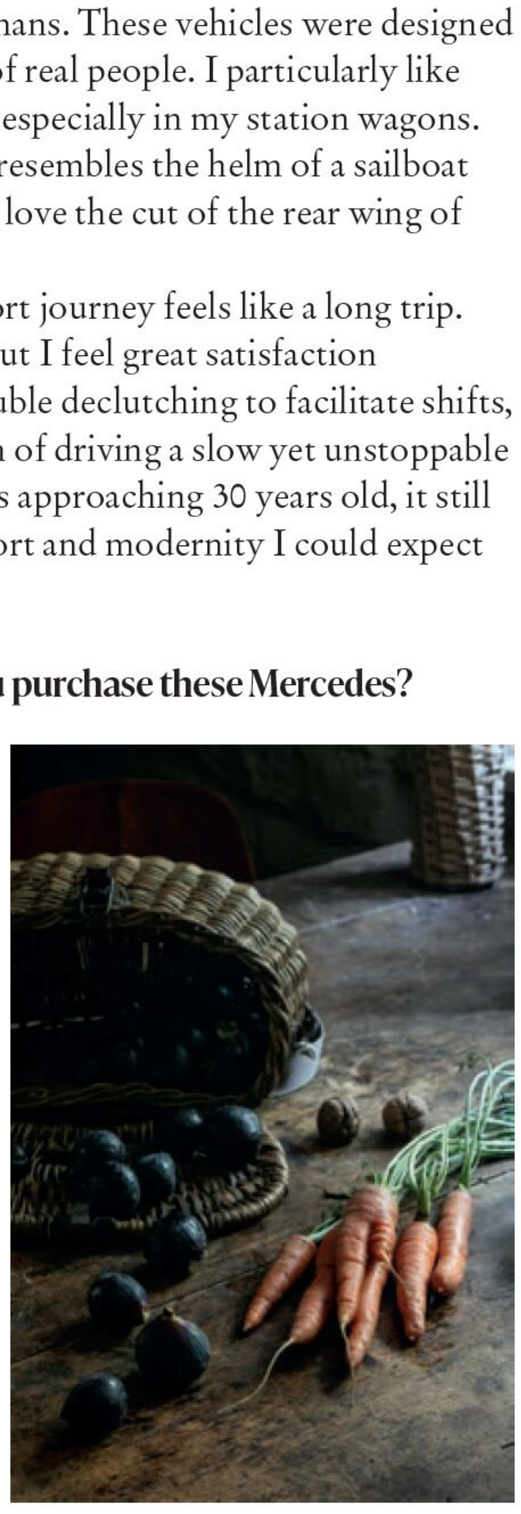
MA: What are your favourite features of your Mercedes?

SP: I find their simplicity fascinating. Every detail seems closely connected to the world of humans. These vehicles were designed to last and built by the hands of real people. I particularly like the simplicity of the interiors, especially in my station wagons. The steering wheel of the 123 resembles the helm of a sailboat due to its large diameter, and I love the cut of the rear wing of the 123 station wagon.

With the Unimog 421, a short journey feels like a long trip. It's noisy and tiring to drive, but I feel great satisfaction traversing off-road routes, double declutching to facilitate shifts, and experiencing the sensation of driving a slow yet unstoppable vehicle. Even though the 124 is approaching 30 years old, it still provides me with all the comfort and modernity I could expect from a car.

MA: In what condition did you purchase these Mercedes?

SP: All the cars I've purchased were used – in good condition but still used. With the 123, I made some interventions on the body to stop the oxidation process in certain weak points of the vehicle, as well as tending to the rear differential. I reupholstered the driver's seat with the original fabric, too. I've always maintained originality – all the replacement parts down to the floor mats are from Mercedes-Benz.



△ **This orange beast replaced a thirsty G-Wagen.**

△◁ **Simple interiors greatly appeal to Simone.**

△△ **Unimog 421 manufactured back in 1973.**

"These vehicles were designed to last and built by the hands of real people"

Regarding the Unimog 421, aside from a few blown fuses in the electrical circuit, I haven't performed any mechanical interventions, except for restoring the originality of some parts, and routine maintenance. As for the 124-series 250TD, I may need to work on the transmission, differential and driveshaft, and I'm even considering selling it.

MA: How do these Mercedes serve you?

SP: I mainly use them for short journeys when I need to transport loads that I can't carry on a bicycle. The Unimog helps me with specific tasks like moving firewood from the forest to home, and transporting olives to the mill during the harvest season.

▽ **Originality is important for vegan Simone.**

MA: Are there any other Mercedes you would like to own?

SP: I would like to have a G-Class again. I'm not interested in the luxurious versions with a lot of electronics; a few years ago, they produced a 'worker' version of the G-Wagen which I find appealing. If I lived in a different location, perhaps I'd own a Porsche 911 SC among other sports cars.



MA: Have you undertaken any memorable trips in your Mercedes?

SP: I have driven the 123 in Northern Europe several times, mostly in France and specifically Brittany while pursuing a personal photographic project. I enjoyed the peaceful French back roads, avoiding major highways to reach places near the sea in Brittany that I had dreamed of seeing.

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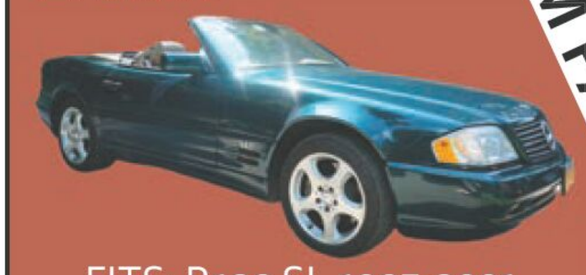
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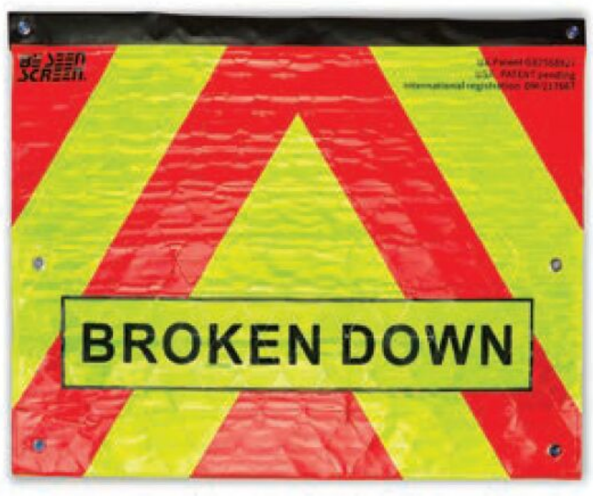
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"The Mercedes stood out amidst a throng of exhibitors"

Sound



After buying this stunning SL55 AMG, award-winning audio specialist Steven Sailer set about creating the ultimate in-car sound experience

machine

WORDS **IAN KUAH**
IMAGES **IAN KUAH & STEVEN SAILER**

I was on the Mercedes-Benz stand at the 2001 Frankfurt motor show when Professor Jürgen Hubbert, Head of the Mercedes-Benz passenger car division at the time, unveiled the SL55 AMG in a novel way never attempted by Mercedes before or since.

After a brief speech introducing the new high-performance AMG roadster, Professor Hubbert got behind the wheel, fired up the supercharged V8 and blipped the throttle a few times. The muscle car soundtrack filling the hall clearly resonated with the crowd who let loose a big round of applause. While the SL55 AMG established significant gravitas for its deep baritone voice that day, it went on to carve itself a wider reputation by slaying the acceleration and top speed numbers of some big-name supercars in car magazine tests around the world.

Fast forward two decades and the SL55 AMG still looks sleek and modern, its descendants turning distinctly baroque with their styling, and not in a good way. Meanwhile, the SL55's straight-line performance numbers and soundtrack are no less impressive than when it was new.

Those inherent attributes and the practical folding hardtop are what drove Austrian Mercedes and music enthusiast, Steven Sailer to buy this SL55 AMG in 2018. A professional high-end car audio installer by trade, Steven's search for the right SL led him to a mint Obsidian Black car with full service history and about 57,000km (circa 35,400 miles) on the clock. Taking the Covid years into account, he has added another 15,000km (just over 9,000 miles) to the total, and drives the roadster whenever he can.

In recent years, the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas has progressively moved more towards drones, flat-screen TVs and new tech gadgets. It is no surprise then that all the serious audio manufacturers simultaneously gravitated towards Munich's High End show held every May, and this is now the largest and most important hi-fi show in the world with over 500 companies exhibiting in 2023.

This was where I met Steven and his SL55 AMG on a bespoke stand. The Mercedes stood out amidst a throng of exhibitors from audio cable makers to specialists selling record players costing ▷



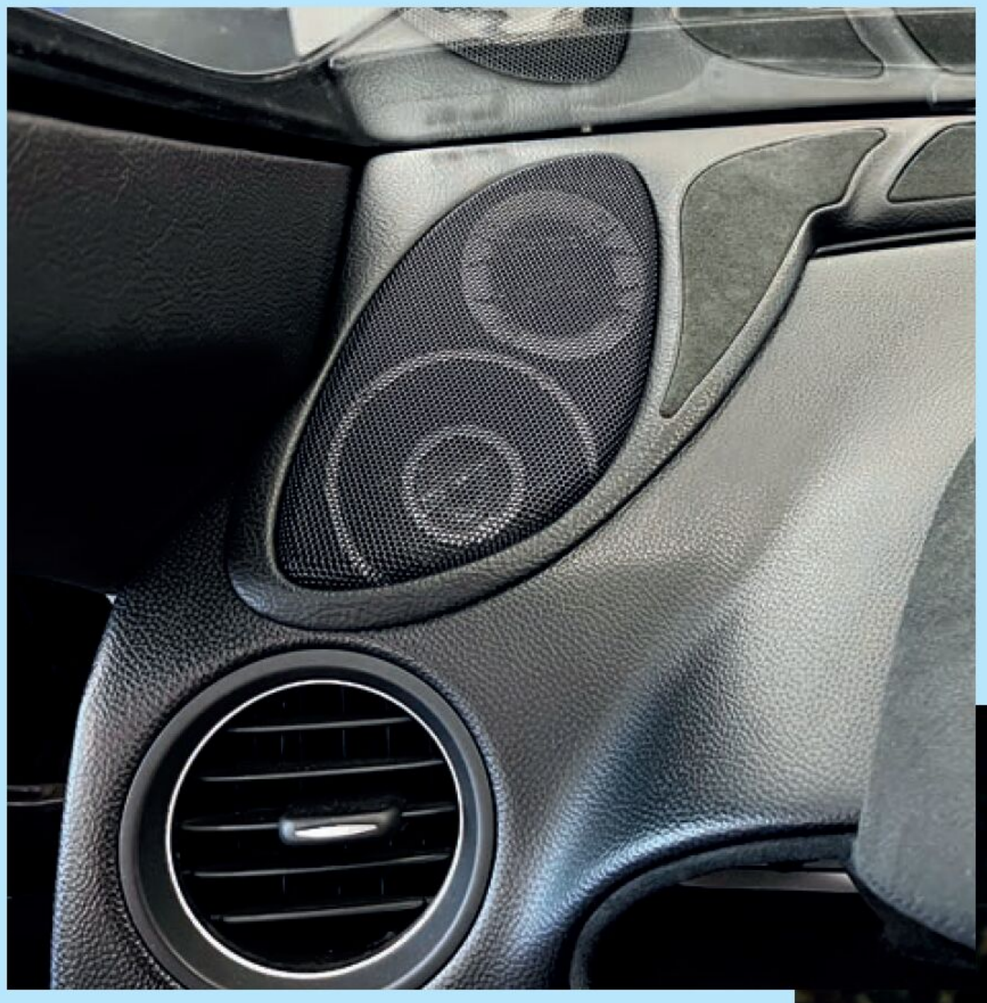


▷ Touchscreen head unit from maker Pioneer.

▷▷ Footwell mounted subwoofer.

◁ In the boot are amplifiers of 4x260W, 2x500W and 1x1,700W.

Audio upgrade – SL55 AMG



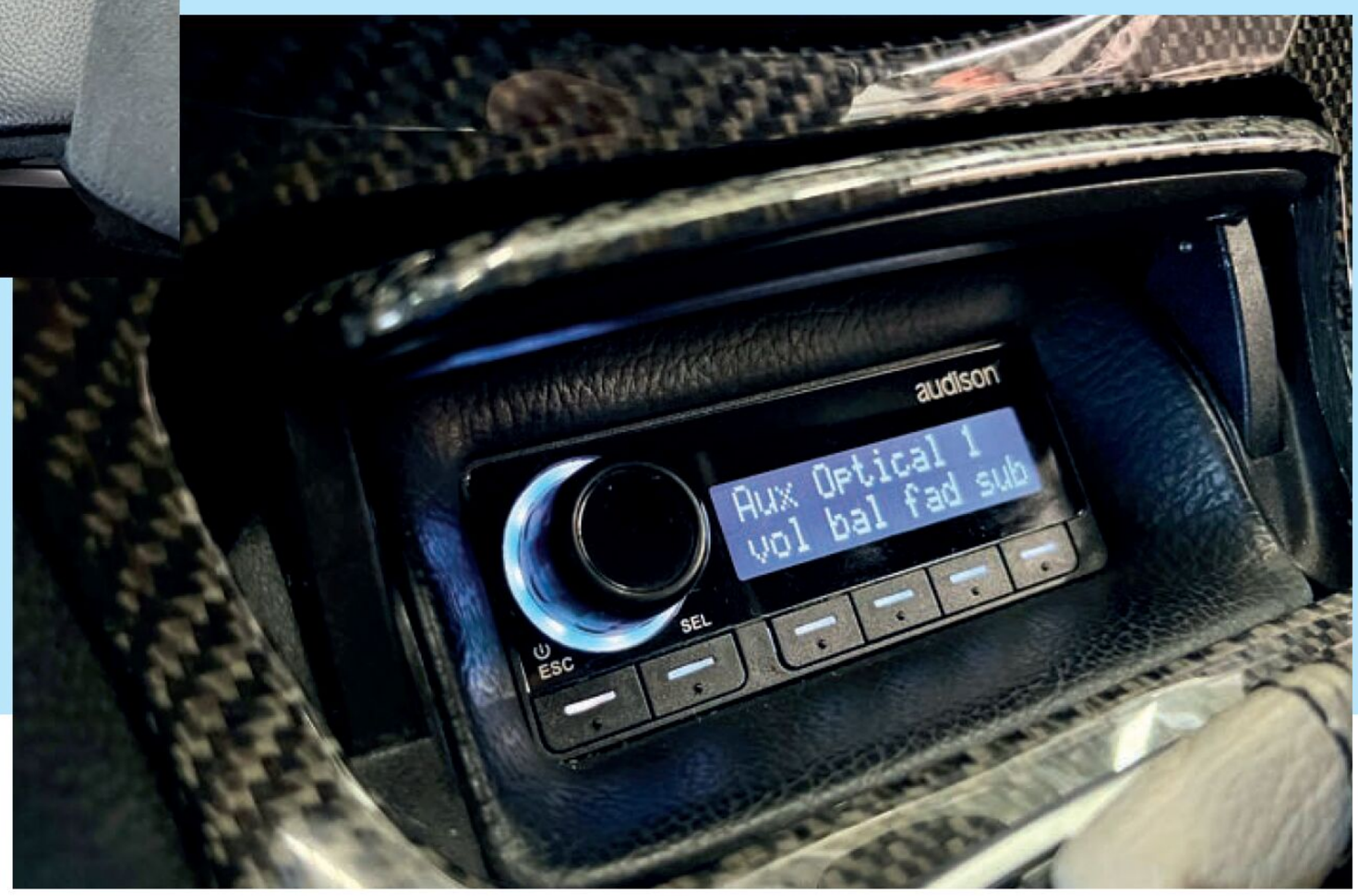
◁ Thesis kit angled towards the occupants.

▷ Sub setup adapted during the build process.

▽ Interface for the Audison signal processor.



▷ Tasteful upgrades for the two-seat cabin.



"A car has many more potential acoustic challenges compared to a room"

▷ over £100,000. Also in the mix were a Porsche 911 Carrera equipped with JM Focal speakers, as well as OE Porsche and Mercedes models demonstrating the latest Burmester 3D and 4D audio systems respectively.

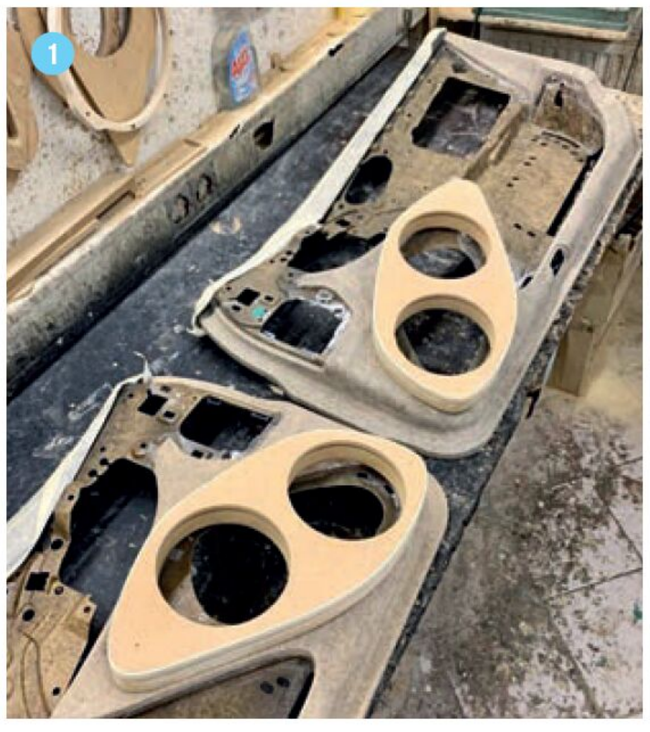
As car manufacturers have come to recognise the cachet of offering bespoke in-car entertainment systems from well respected, domestic high-end brands like Burmester, Bose, Bang & Olufsen, and Bowers & Wilkins, the aftermarket car audio installation industry has shrunk. The contributing reasons are cost, convenience, warranty, and a significant bridging of the gap between the awful head units and cheap speakers the OEs provided years ago and a good aftermarket installation from the likes of Alpine, Nakamichi, Pioneer and so on.

With the latest OE optional, high-end car audio now often more capable of realistic music reproduction than the systems many have at home, an intended consequence is the positive effect on the sales of home audio components and systems from these brands. This is good marketing in action. Another reason for the drop-off in the aftermarket installation business is of course the total integration of the infotainment system so that it operates holistically within the car's CAN bus. As every car uses different software, this in itself is a nightmare for aftermarket installers to interface with non-native devices.

Luckily that is not the case with this two-decade-old R230 SL55 AMG. With many years of expertise and several wins in the International Auto Sound Challenge Association (IASCA) behind him, Steven (who is still Car Audio Vice World Champion, an accolade no other European competitor has achieved in the last 25 years) sat down and worked out a game plan for the electrical and acoustical installation.

A car has many more potential acoustic challenges compared to a room. Changing levels of intrusive sounds from the engine, road surface and other ambient noises are one thing, but the damping effect that adding one person to such a small space has is vastly more consequential than when one extra person walks into a 250sq ft (23sq m) room. Thus, it is critical to match the characteristics of a proposed installation to the car, as what works in a Maybach Pullman will not work in an SL, which has about one quarter of the cabin volume. While state-of-the-art DSP (digital signal processing) sound shaping electronics can tailor the sound to a large extent, it is far better to start with good acoustics and just use the DSP for fine-tuning.

At a very basic level, an aftermarket installer can start by replacing the factory speakers with audiophile grade units powered by stereo or mono power amplifiers fed by a good quality signal from an upgraded head unit. However, if you really want the job

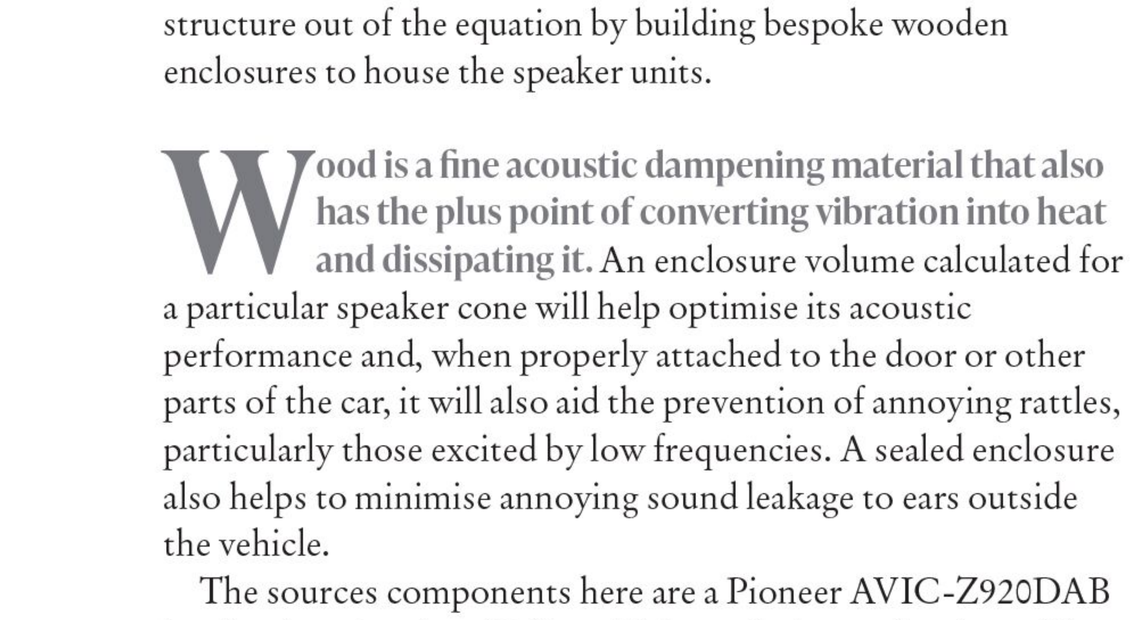




done properly, it is a good idea to start by taking the vehicle's structure out of the equation by building bespoke wooden enclosures to house the speaker units.

Wood is a fine acoustic dampening material that also has the plus point of converting vibration into heat and dissipating it. An enclosure volume calculated for a particular speaker cone will help optimise its acoustic performance and, when properly attached to the door or other parts of the car, it will also aid the prevention of annoying rattles, particularly those excited by low frequencies. A sealed enclosure also helps to minimise annoying sound leakage to ears outside the vehicle.

The sources components here are a Pioneer AVIC-Z920DAB head unit and an Astell&Kern high resolution audio player. They feed their outputs to the power amplifiers via a digital 24bit/96kHz Audison bit One HD Virtuoso signal processor that allows a huge range of EQ tweaking to optimise the sound.



◁ Bespoke housings for the new speakers.

The three power amps built into a bespoke rack in the boot are a 4x 260W Class-A Audison Thesis Quattro four-channel power amplifier, a 2x 500W Class-A Audison Thesis Due two-channel power amplifier, with a 1x 1,700W Class AB Audison Thesis Uno monoblock power amp driving the footwell-mounted subwoofer. As the rack is built into the space saver wheel well there is still boot space for a weekend away.

Each door pod accommodates two pairs of Audison Thesis TH 6.5 II Sax woofers, and when the system is cranked up you can feel the air they move bouncing off your knees! A Thesis TH 3.0 II Voce mid-range driver and a Thesis TH 1.5 II Violino tweeter live under the grilles at the extremes of the dashtop. Importantly, the speakers under these grilles have been angled towards the listeners for better imaging. The leatherwork on the dashboard and doors exactly matches the factory coverings so the system integrates seamlessly to the eye.

Bespoke brass rings machined to attach the woofers, mid-range drivers and tweeters help to remove resonance and absorption from the equation. Steven used three layers of sound deadening in the doors in addition to the wooden supports and, with all the above in place, the doors are now 25kg heavier than when the car left the factory!

In his relentless pursuit for perfection Steven was quite willing to change course and adapt if a better way or new more suitable product became available. Thus, the four eight-inch Hertz Mille ML 2000.3 subwoofers built into a box behind the seats gave way to a single 10-inch Hertz Mille Pro MPS 250 S2 subwoofer that went on sale during the build. With a mounting depth of just 3.5-inches, this subwoofer fits perfectly into the front passenger footwell and obviates the uncomfortable feeling you get when massive deep bass erupts from behind you.

However, Steve was not content with this and managed to fit the even larger 12-inch MPS 300 S2 unit using a bespoke ▷

"The system that cost Steven some 800 man-hours and £50,000 to build certainly delivers"



▷ The 5.4-litre supercharged V8 makes music too!

▷▽ Space age rack built into the spare wheel well.



▷ three-chamber speaker box and some judicious juggling of the SL's washer bottle inside the front wing area! Thankfully, the fine craftsmanship that went into making the now redundant rear subwoofer cabinet was not wasted as it was repurposed for additional cabin storage space.

I have always said that too much power is just enough, and that applies as much to a high-performance audio system as a high-performance car. The goal in both cases is effortless performance, and the system that cost Steven some 800 man-hours and £50,000 to build certainly delivers. Playing a wide variety of music, from jazz to rock and classical, the system showed that it can palpably move air in a way that no OE carmaker's system can hope to match, with enough spare headroom to avoid the annoying distortion that manifests itself when you overdrive a normal system.

At the other end of the music reproduction scale, it delivers good sound-staging on tracks recorded with that legendary 'smoky jazz club' feel. The dynamic transients of classical music are very underestimated, and the way a pianissimo passage can suddenly leap to fortissimo puts great strain on the amplifiers and speakers of any system, whether domestic or mobile. This system was not phased at all, passing the effortless dynamic range test with gusto.

Steven Sailer has created one of the hottest audio systems ever installed in a Mercedes-Benz SL anywhere, and certainly one worthy of challenging the soundtrack of its 510bhp supercharged V8. He would like to keep the Mercedes forever, but at the same time must move onto the next project to showcase his skills. So, if you are a serious music buff in the market for an SL55 AMG then look no further.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG (R230)

Engine M113 5,439cc V8 supercharged **Power** 510bhp@6,100rpm **Torque** 531lb ft@2,600-4,000rpm **Transmission** 5-speed auto, RWD **Weight** 1,960kg

0-62mph 4.5sec **Top speed** 155mph **Fuel consumption** 20.9mpg **Years produced** 2001-2008

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a standard, post-facelift car; fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited





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We all have unique stories about how we developed our affinity and passion for Mercedes-Benz cars. Perhaps it was handed down from previous generations, or the result of some life-changing driving experience, or like some of us maybe it's just in the genes! For Omar Abou-Zied, the owner of this 1995 (C124) E320 Coupe, it was triggered when he was young by a family relocation from Grand Junction, Colorado – where 'ordinary' cars were the flavour of the day – to suburban Washington, DC where the three-pointed star shines brightly, thanks in no small part to **the region's cultural diversity and of course, foreign diplomats.**

> **"Omar's car has received a full body repaint in Polar White, and a brand new set of OEM eight-holes"**

Omar fondly recalls his fifth-grade teacher whose husband was a Mercedes main dealer salesman and who brought him all manner of Mercedes literature, which Omar proudly retains to this day. He also remembers with incredible detail the sensations of just sitting in a neighbour's new W126 S-Class and absorbing the sights, sounds and smells. Another neighbour imported numerous 'grey market' (non-US specification) cars that further solidified Omar's enthusiasm. Among his cars were a few W116 saloons, one of which – a 1979 280SE in Diamond Blue over tan velour upholstery, European bumpers, and rear head restraints – Omar remarkably but unsurprisingly convinced his father to purchase. That car subsequently served as the vehicle in which Omar took his driving test and served as the chariot for his high school prom.

After Omar left for university, his father traded that 280SE for a Manganese Brown 1979 R107 450SL, and subsequently replaced that one a few years later with a 1981 R107 380SL in the same Diamond Blue as that first 280SE. Both cars were purchased from a local specialist, which ended up being the place where Omar purchased his first Mercedes in 1997: a white over palomino 1984 S123 300TD Turbodiesel estate. He bought it with 165,000 miles and over the next eight years added another 161,000 to the odometer – easy work for the old faithful OM617a engine. He kept it until 2005 when another driver prematurely and permanently removed it from service. ▷

White knight

This moon-mileage E320 Coupe is in the hands of a true motoring enthusiast who continues to lavish his Mercedes with love and attention while aiming to achieve even bigger numbers on the odometer

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



1995 E320 found at a dealership in North Carolina.

▷ Omar's dreams of converting the wagon he'd named "Ivana Trunk" to biodiesel and adding hundreds of thousands of additional miles were dashed, but his enthusiasm was as strong as ever.

Omar had long been a fan of the 124-series, and the Coupe models in particular. His father had purchased a Pearl Black, 1990 300CE-24 for his mother in the early 2000s. As an art aficionado and art history major in university, Omar viewed the C124 Coupe as a true work of automotive art. After his first drive with the pillarless side windows and sunroof open, he'd firmly decided that he needed one and spent the next three years in search of the right car.

As luck would have it, just a few months before the accident that killed his 300TD, Omar found the Polar White over Parchment leather E320 Coupe that would become his new daily driver at a dealership in North Carolina just a handful of hours away. The car belonged to the owner of the dealership and was only being sold because he'd recently found a 124-series E320 Cabriolet for himself and he didn't need both cars. The Coupe had been a previous Starmark Mercedes-Benz Certified vehicle and showed just 85,000 miles. That was

18 years and 261,000 miles ago. The car now proudly displays 345,970 miles, which Omar rightly regards as a badge of honour and testament to the engineering and quality of the 124-series chassis. There's a reason that many 124s still serve as taxicabs around the world!

While Omar's E320 has been a steadfast companion over the years, it has weathered some drama and required periodic bouts of remedial therapy. On an 18-hour round trip to Georgia for the famed Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, he lost both headlights in a freak road debris incident shortly after heading back home. Luckily the local constabulary was understanding and let him complete the journey with a well wish and without a citation. He fortunately made it back just ahead of dark.

The cylinder-head gasket – a known fail point on M104 straight-six engines – has been replaced on Omar's car more than once. Another known issue with this generation of all Mercedes is the wiring harnesses made with biodegradable plastics. His has been replaced with the newer, more durable version from Mercedes. He has also had the engine and transmission serviced and sealed, steering linkages replaced, some remedial body work to address some rot underneath, and a front windshield replacement with OEM glass. Omar has an OEM glass and replacement seal for the rear window but has struggled to find an old-school glass person willing to take on the job!





△ Omar describes his E as a "kinetic sculpture".

△△ Remarkable condition given the high mileage.

Cosmetically, Omar's car has received a full body repaint in Polar White, and he has replaced the worn original alloy wheels with a brand new set of OEM eight-holes. In order to help keep those new wheels spotless, he also switched from OEM brake pads to Akebono ceramic pads that significantly cut down on brake dust. "I wish I did more of my own work on the car," Omar shares, "but I have a great W124 specialist in GP Singh of Sterling Star Automotive in Sterling, Virginia who takes excellent care of the car – and me!"

To say that he ultimately immersed himself in Mercedes culture over the years would be a gross understatement. In addition to his commitment to his own Mercedes habit, Omar has been actively involved in the Mercedes-Benz Club of America's Greater Washington Section for many years, and started serving on the Section's Board of Directors starting in 2013. He has served the club in a variety of capacities, including Concours Chair and club Vice President. In all his club engagements, his love for the marque is absolutely contagious. Car clubs can often be a little cliquey and exclusive, but Omar helps ensure that the Greater Washington Section is neither and is inclusive of all Mercedes cars and people.

In fact, Omar's car passion expands even beyond Mercedes-Benz, but Mercs remain his first automotive love. As an Auction Specialist and Research Specialist for Bring a Trailer, the pre-eminent US online car auction web platform, Omar is in a coveted position where he gets to indulge his automotive interests in whatever cars cross his desk, and literally talk and write about cars all day long.

As for his own automotive future, when asked about his Mercedes 'wish list' Omar shares that he would very much like to own a W124 500E, a W111 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet, and very specifically a 1979 450SEL 6.9 – the last and best of the best W116 chassis, he says.

Until those cars land in his forecourt, however, Omar is content to keep caring for and driving his prized E320 Coupe. "It's a kinetic sculpture. Its pillarless design and sober lines work in concert with the W124 programme's emphasis on aerodynamic efficiency to symbolise the bridge between Mercedes-Benzes past and its future."

His goal is to usher the car well past the million-mile mark, and he's already over one third of the way there.

"There's a reason that many 124s still serve as taxicabs around the world!"

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz E320 Coupe (C124)

Engine M104 3,199cc 6-cyl **Power** 217bhp@5,500rpm **Torque** 229lb ft@3,750rpm **Transmission** 4-speed auto, RWD **Weight** 1,500kg

0-62mph 7.9sec **Top speed** 143mph **Fuel consumption** 19.2mpg **Years produced** 1993-1996

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1995 car as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; this model was known as the 320CE from 09.1992 to 07.1993

Bridging

The first hot A-Classes were certainly not the Häkkinen and Coulthard editions of the original A160, which appeared at the Essen motor show in November 1998. These hatchbacks may have celebrated then-engine supplier Mercedes' first Formula 1 championship win (with McLaren) since Juan Manuel Fangio took the title in 1955, but they are remembered more for their lairy, F1-inspired exterior decals, eye-searing interiors and 125-unit production runs than their 101bhp four-cylinder engines.

A go-faster version of the original, 168-series A-Class did come later, though. The A210 Evolution of 2002 wielded a peppier 138bhp, as well as sports suspension and upgraded brakes. Some may not know that AMG, then three years post-merger with Mercedes, had a hand in the body styling. The A210 Evolution (sold in standard- and long-wheelbase forms) was certainly no Ford Focus RS killer and received mixed reviews from the motoring press, but its existence suggested Mercedes believed in the idea of performance A-Classes.

Things stepped up a gear for the W169 generation of A-Class, which gave birth to the 190bhp A200 Turbo with boosted, two-litre four-cylinder powerplant. Again, styling was lowkey but this new-era baby Benz could crack the 0-62mph sprint in 7.9 seconds and hit 142mph flat chat.

Despite this jump in performance, there was a pervading feeling, however, that Mercedes was fighting a battle against key rivals with one arm tied behind its back. The first- and second-generation A-Classes featured a sandwich floor concept designed to aid safety, ease entry to the cabin, and possibly house a battery pack if the technology was sufficiently

Slotting between regular A-Classes and AMG's carnivorous A45 S, we find out if the A35 deserves its association with Affalterbach

the gap

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

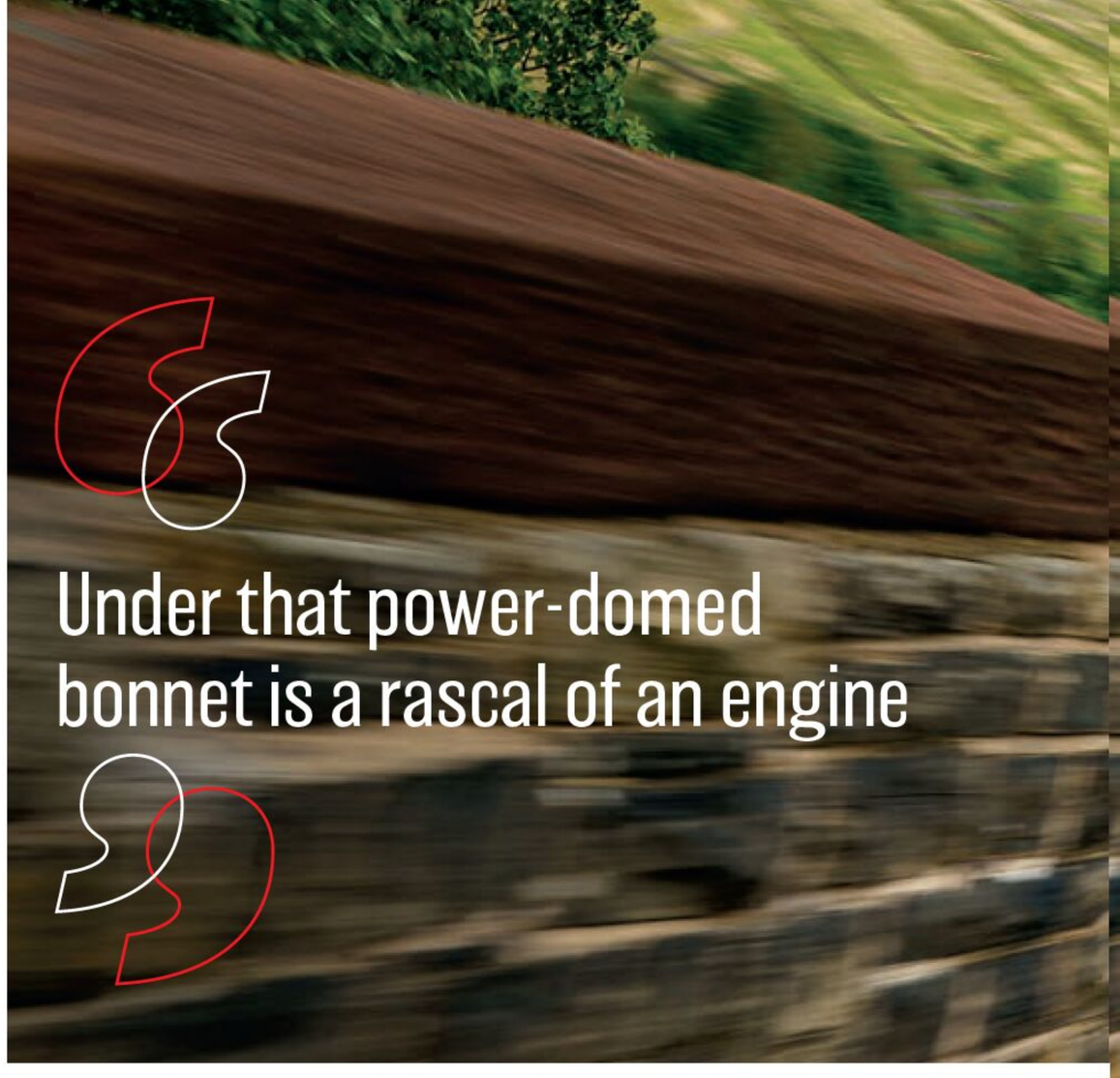
> There was a pervading feeling that Mercedes was fighting with one arm tied behind its back

If Mercedes and AMG were going to challenge Audi and Volkswagen on the premium hot hatch front, a rethink in the chassis department was in order. That notion crystallised with the W176 A-Class in 2012, which injected the Mercedes range with fresh energy and became ultra-desirable to buyers who'd never considered a Benz before. Out was the double floor and in was a lower-slung driving position plus new MacPherson-style front struts and a more sophisticated four-link rear axle. A 208bhp A250 model took aim at the likes of VW's Golf GTI, while the revelatory, 355bhp A45 AMG aimed higher still and at four-wheel-drive weapons such as the Golf R and Audi RS3. From humble beginnings, the hottest A-Class now claimed the highest output per litre (178bhp) of any production car in the world. AMG engineers had a nickname for their first A45 – the beast.

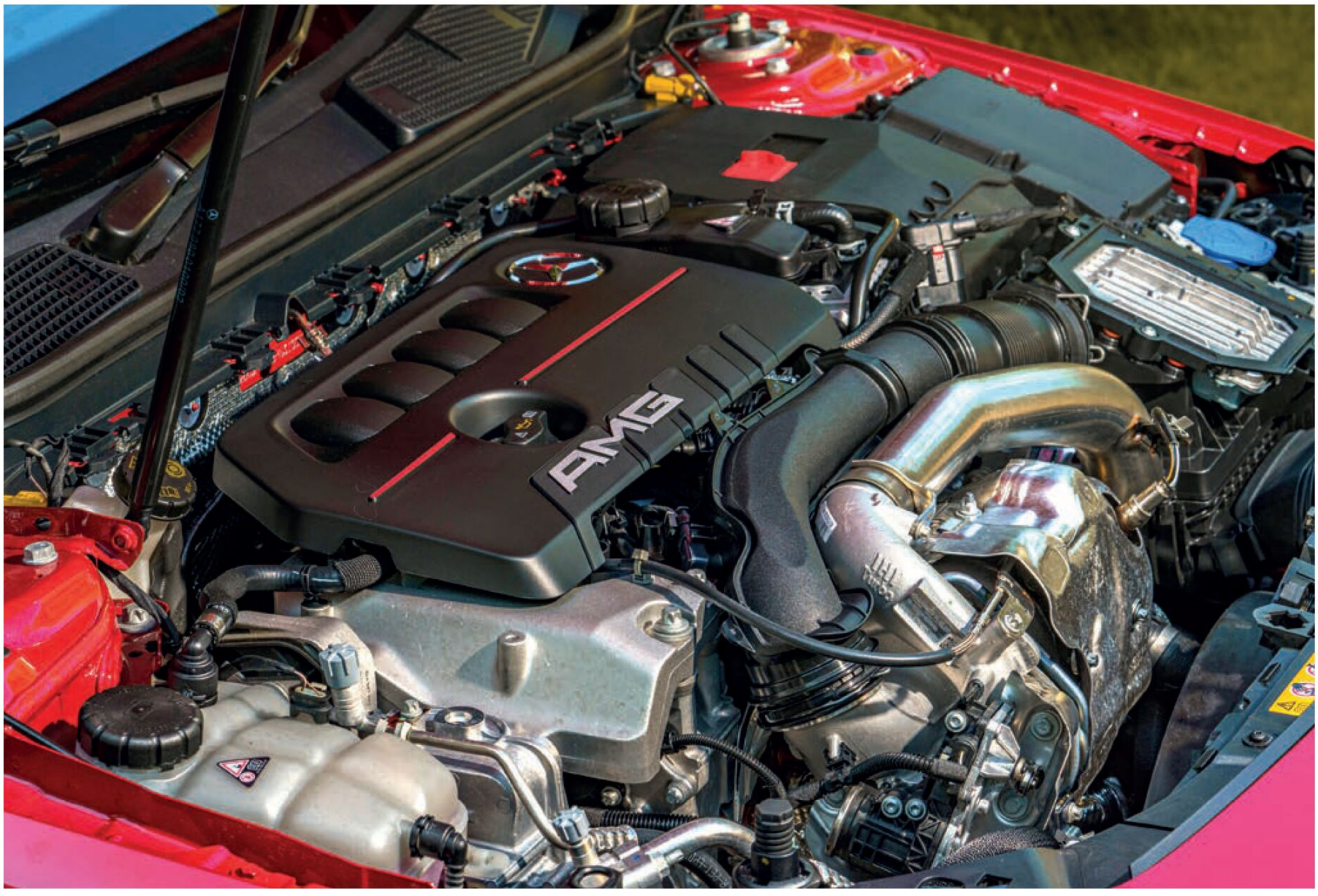
As to be expected, power outputs have only grown during the last decade. The current-gen W177 A-Class arrived in 2018 and received a facelift in late 2022. Fast-footed members of the line-up include a 215bhp A250e plug-in hybrid and full-fat AMG A45 S with an astonishing 415bhp. You'll notice a rather large gap between those two power ratings. AMG did too, which is why it created the A35 4Matic pictured here. With its optional aero addenda, rally car-like stance and shark nose punctuated by gaping grilles, it certainly looks the part. The product of a cynical hole-plugging exercise, or a worthy addition to the AMG catalogue? It's time to find out… ▷

developed. A significant downside of this unique configuration was that it raised the vehicle's centre of gravity and compromised handling dynamics. For A-Classes of a spicier disposition, it was the equivalent of attempting to speed skate on stilts.





Under that power-domed bonnet is a rascal of an engine



△ You can't upgrade these seats, sadly.

▷ 4-cyl is flexible and sounds better than expected.

▷▷ MBUX system and a proper AMG wheel as standard.

▷ Package deal

The A35 Hatchback kicks off at £46,075 OTR, which is over 17 grand cheaper than the A45 S. And if you're expecting a significant performance deficit to explain that difference in price, then you are mistaken. Under the bonnet of the A35 is a two-litre, turbocharged four-cylinder (M260) producing 302bhp and 295lb ft of torque, which will propel this 1,645kg hatch from 0-62mph in 4.7 seconds. So rapid is the A35, Mercedes-AMG was forced to peg its top speed at 155mph. Of course, the M139-engined A45 S is faster, taking 3.9 seconds to hit 62mph. But does that alone justify the enormous chasm between the asking prices of these two Mercedes? I think not.

The first chink in the A35's armour becomes apparent when you jump into the all-too-familiar driver's seat. The regular A-Class-spec chair may sport lovely leather here and present you to a proper AMG steering wheel with paddleshifters, but I haven't even set off yet and I can tell its lack of side support is going to be a problem with AMG suspension in the equation, not forgetting over 300bhp under my right foot.

Having spent the previous seven days driving a C300e plug-in hybrid, the difference in seat quality between that car and the A35 is stark. I'm perching on rather than nestling into the A-Class's shallow chair. Prospective buyers who think they can solve this problem by heading to the options list and ticking the box for AMG Performance seats are going to be disappointed, as those figure-hugging pews are strictly reserved for the A45 S. Unless, of course, you can find a good retrofitter…

In fact, aside from choosing between 11 exterior and two interior colour combinations, plus a Driving Assistance package, there are few traditional options available on AMG A-Classes. Instead, Mercedes has gone down the bundle route with Executive, Premium and Premium Plus equipment grades topping off the big list of standard kit. The A35 shown here is

Premium Plus spec so gets adaptive suspension damping, a 15mm lower ride height, cookie cutter 19-inch AMG alloys, a full helping of AMG aerodynamic upgrades, Multibeam LED headlamps with adaptive high beams, and a panoramic sunroof, bumping the asking price to £50,825.

Does this look like a 50 grand car? I'm not so sure. But maybe it drives like one. I leave everything in Comfort for the time being, but there remains a textured rawness to the A35's ride quality that distinguishes it from lesser powered A-Classes. However, this feeling is at odds with overly light and desperately numb steering. The eight-speed dual-clutch gearbox is also sending mixed messages when configured in relaxed auto mode. It'll row through upshifts near seamlessly, but it deals with deceleration in a slightly jerky manner, bumping down the gears rather than sliding home the cogs with oily precision. For now, the braking system, comprising AMG-spec calipers and perforated front disks, proves effective at scrubbing modest speeds without doing so in a snatchy manner.

The A35 sounds great, though. Under that power-domed bonnet is a rascal of an engine that builds an invisible wall of hard-edged sound in front of the dashboard with every long press of the throttle. You'll also notice a turbocharger chirrup on the overrun if you've dropped a window, which is delightfully un-Mercedes like. I suspect there's artificial sound enhancement at play in the cabin, but to my ears the A35's two-litre turbo sounds very nearly as exciting as the A45 S's motor. And it loves to rev. Peak power arrives at 6,100rpm so you'd better hang onto those gears. The A45 fizzes with more venom still, delivering its full beans at 6,750rpm, but I don't question the A35's acceleration figures as I wring out the four-pot to its redline. ▷

Blasts from the past

A160 Edition Häkkinen/ Coulthard

This one was for sale at Mechatronik in Germany, priced at €30,000 (£26,000).



A210 Evolution

76,000-mile example sold for £3,200 in a Car & Classic auction.



A200 Turbo

Used Cars Supermarket located in Birmingham offered this 92,000-mile car for a mere three grand.



A45 AMG

2013 example with 80,000 miles priced at £16,100 at Flexy Cars in Southall.







Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG A35 4Matic (W177)

Engine M260 1,991cc 4-cyl turbocharged **Power** 302bhp@6,100rpm **Torque** 295b ft@2,500-4,000rpm **Transmission** 8-speed auto, 4WD

Weight 1,645kg **0-62mph** 4.7sec **Top speed** 155mph **Fuel consumption** 32.8-33.2mpg **CO2 emissions** 195g/km **Years produced** 2023-on

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a post-facelift A35 hatchback as pictured; fuel consumption according to WLTP Combined; top speed electronically limited

△△ Ventilated brakes with AMG branded calipers.

▷ I'm on back roads now and after three corners I'm lamenting the light steering and body roll allowed by the comfort-oriented driving setting. Travelling on routes like these with spirit all-too-obviously requires the A35's Sport and Sport+ settings, which weight up the steering while stiffening the (optional) adaptive damping. Thus adjusted, the A35's responses become crisper and more predictable.

Impressively, planting the throttle in the middle of a tight left-hander doesn't result in biblical levels of understeer. Rather, the four-wheel drive system distributes power to the wheels most likely to maintain the cornering line, and the A35 drives hard towards the corner exit without even a whiff of catching a cat's eye in the middle of the road.

Several minutes later, I'm heading into an open sweeper of a bend and the A35 pulls another rabbit out the hat. Into the groove and with confidence growing, I snap shut the throttle and sense a modicum of rotation from the rear end. That's a glowing sign of a well-sorted chassis. I'd say this generation of AMG A-Class feels more playful at legal road speeds than the previous-gen A45, which felt steadfastly locked to the road to the detriment of excitement. Side note – I hustled an early A45 on the Hungaroring several years ago and only at near three-figure approach speeds could you get the tail swinging into a turn.

I enjoy myself so much in the A35 that the brake pedal goes long and stopping performance begins to fade. Once again, I'm frustrated to find a possible upgrade such as beefier brakes reserved for the A45 S. Another job for the modders, perhaps? If this were my car, I'd also be requesting a gearbox tune to sharpen the manual shifts in the sportier driving modes, as they're not as decisive as I've experienced in the A45 S.

And that's the A35 in a nutshell. Parts of its arsenal – the styling, the twin-scroll turbo engine, the suspension, the exhaust sound – are fantastic, particularly when you're in the mood for fun. While other aspects of its makeup – the seats, the brakes, the gearbox – don't achieve the same level of greatness. As a car designed to bridge the gap between regular A-Classes and a hard core AMG offering, there were always going to be compromises. But viewed in isolation, the A35 is undoubtedly an entertaining package with class-leading safety and infotainment, 40mpg plus capability on a run, and what turns out to be a peach of an engine.

Parts of its arsenal - the styling, the engine, the suspension, the sound - are fantastic

▶ *Thank you to Mercedes-Benz UK for the loan of the car*

Web www.mercedes-benz.co.uk.



▷ You can get three in the back of the A-Class.



"The GT63's natural habitat is certainly not tight and twisty back roads"

Black magic

Despite a colossal kerb weight, AMG's GT63 4-Door Coupe plug-in hybrid delivers astonishing performance and is deserving of another time around the block

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

Mercedes-AMG has already revealed its facelifted GT 4-Door Coupe which, along with tasteful restyling of the nose and rump, is crammed with more standard kit than before, including a newer version of the fascinating MBUX infotainment system. Buyers are offered even more customisation options too, including special trim and paint finishes.

In the UK, the new GT 4-Door range comprises the regular GT63 S 4Matic+ Premium Plus (£156,415 OTR), and the GT63 S E Performance (£179,325) which packs a plug-in hybrid system in addition to the four-litre V8 twin-turbo and nine-speed MCT gearbox. The latter is the exact same drive system found underneath the bodywork of the pre-facelift car pictured here. Not one to turn down a drive in any Mercedes, let alone an AMG making 831bhp, my short time in the hot seat of this now-replaced GT63 nonetheless provided excellent insight into the new car's driving experience.

"Are you ready?" It's important passengers are asked this question before the GT63's driver deploys full throttle, and especially from a standing start. Using launch control, the GT63 plug-in accelerates from 0-62mph in 2.9 seconds and reaches three figures a very short while later. Of course, that's absurd because it weighs 2.5 tonnes. Aside from halving emissions and doubling fuel economy, the point of the rear-mounted 6kWh battery, which weighs 89kg and drives an electric motor connected to the rear axle, is to fill the few holes the four-litre V8 biturbo has in its armoury. It works extremely well with the four-wheel drive setup and means face-bending acceleration off the line.



△ Centre console design looks a bit old hat now; MBUX system.



△ The GT 4-Door Coupe is AMG's answer to Porsche's Panamera.

The four-seat GT63 never quite shakes off its massive weight, though. Even the steering is notably heavy, which is unusual for a Mercedes. AMG's Ride Control+ suspension certainly has its work cut out here, but does an admirable job of rounding off what could quite easily be a very uncompromising car. There's inevitable body roll through the bends, but I found that extra communication beneficial to the drive.

At 5m long and 2m wide, the GT63's natural habitat is certainly not tight and twisty back roads. This AMG works best on flowing A-roads and motorways, where its titanic performance, high grip and pleasing road manners really come to the fore. At a cruise, the V8 musters a delicious burble that continually reminds you that you're in an AMG. Ramp up the various driving modes and your ears are treated to a whole new level of adrenaline-inducing battle cry complete with electrified undertone.

On battery power alone you'll not get further than eight miles, reckons this car's maker. But when you are letting the V8 take a break, you'll discover an electric drive system that is even more responsive and far, far smoother than the eight-cylinder under the bonnet, while delivering a synthesised soundtrack that has its own appeal.

I suspect the GT 4-Door isn't long for this earth, so we must appreciate its niche-busting existence, even if it does have gawky looks!

Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG GT63 S E Performance (X290)

Drive system M178 3,982cc V8 biturbo + 6kWh battery and electric motor **System power** 831bhp
Torque 664lb ft (engine) + 221lb ft (electric motor) **Transmission** 9-speed auto, 4WD **Weight** 2,569kg **0-62mph** 2.9sec
Top speed 196mph **Fuel consumption** 35.8mpg **CO2 emissions** 180g/km **Years produced** 2018-2023

All figures from Mercedes; fuel consumption according to WLTP

Second-hand steals

In the latest installment of our buying-focused series, we reveal six of the best used Mercedes available for a £25,000 budget

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES DEALERS

A budget of £25,000 might seem like a fair sum to spend on a used Mercedes, but even a new, entry level A-Class will cost you at least six grand more. For this issue, we've scoured the marketplace and selected six of the very best used models currently available to UK buyers. With everything from an AMG hot hatch right through to a modern classic coupe included on the following pages, we guarantee there is at least one Mercedes here that will appeal to you!



The previous-generation S-Class is turning into a serious bargain...

Saloon

S400 Lh (W222)

Elegant and frugal, you can travel like the chairman of the board. Even the finance director will approve!

Nothing feels classier than a long-wheelbase Mercedes S-Class, and in terms of metal for money, the 328bhp S400 Lh petrol-hybrid takes some beating. Looking commanding in AMG Line guise, this 2013 to 2017 S-Class boasts not only a luxurious ride and palatial spec, but a 6.8-second 0-62mph time and 42mpg economy. And most examples have a host of optional extras selected by their first owner.

All cars come with a seven-speed automatic transmission, air suspension, LED lights, alloy wheels, Park Assist with rear camera, full leather upholstery, electrically adjustable front seats and Comand sat nav as standard. A £25,000 budget buys a 2014 S400 Lh AMG Line with 55,000 miles. Add a private plate and the neighbours will probably think you've won the lottery.

Something like this 2013/63-plate S400 Lh would fit the bill. Priced at £23,989, this V6 had covered 58,000 miles and was for sale at Blackstone Motors (www.blackstonemotors.co.uk) in West Drayton. With full service history, black leather and an impressive spec that included a panoramic sunroof, 360-degree camera, Burmester audio system and the Memory package, the next owner will want for nothing.

BUYING TIPS

Stick to cars with no more than three previous owners and no known faults. Carry out a Mercedes diagnostic check before agreeing a deal, as there's a lot that could go wrong. Fortunately, very little does but if you're unlucky it could cost you a packet to put right. A full service history record is a must, and watch out for any issues with the Comand system, engine oil leaks, noises from the suspension, water in the headlights, and recalls that haven't been addressed.





Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz S400 Lh (V222)

Drive system 3,498cc, V6 turbocharged + electric motor

Power/torque 328bhp/273lb ft **Transmission** 7-speed auto, RWD

0-62mph 6.8sec **Top speed** 155mph **Fuel consumption** 42.2mpg

£25,000 buys 2014 S400 Lh Saloon with 55,000 miles

Roadster
SL500 (R230)

You know you've made it when you own a Mercedes SL500, and the last R230 incarnation is one of the best

Class, as they say, is permanent. If you own a well-maintained SL500 then you'll feel like a Lord. The R230 version is good value at the moment, with 25 grand enough for an M273-engined, second-facelift example, and this could be a 2008 SL500 with a low mileage, or a 2010 car with a more typical mileage.

As appealing today as it was when first launched, Mercedes' 2008 to 2012 SL500 remains properly fast and it comes with an opulent spec including a folding metal vario-roof. Producing 383bhp, you'll rocket to 62mph in just 5.4 seconds.

If you're lucky, you might find a very low mileage example like this 58-plate SL500 Sport with black leather upholstery and just 24,800 miles. Advertised for £23,990 at Denton Cars in Yorkshire (www.dentoncars.co.uk), it looked stunning and appeared in immaculate condition, with 19-inch AMG alloys and M-B service history included.





BUYING TIPS

Watch out for any hint of rust, a failing fuel pump, a worn alternator, water leaks into the boot, SBS control box failure, and issues with the automatic transmission. Flat batteries and broken exhaust catalysts are also quite common. A proper specialist inspection is well worth paying for, and any repairs to the Active Body Control suspension, or the ECU could prove pricey. Try to find a cherished example with a full M-B service history and just a couple of owners.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz SL500 (R230)

Engine **5,461cc V8**

Power/torque **383bhp/391lb ft**

Transmission **7-speed auto, RWD**

0-62mph **5.4sec**

Top speed **155mph**

Fuel consumption **23.7mpg**

£25,000 buys 2009 SL500 with 25,000 miles



▷ A V8-powered Mercedes SL is hard to resist!

Hatchback
AMG A35 4Matic (W177)

Fast, fun and well equipped, Mercedes' hot A35 is arguably better value than its A45-badged big brother

It may not be the full-fat A45 S, but AMG's vigorous, 2018 to 2022 A35 4Matic is still a mean hot hatch, boasting four-wheel drive, a 302bhp four-cylinder turbo, a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic, and a very impressive 4.7-second 0-62mph time.

First unveiled at the 2018 Paris motor show, the A35 is well equipped as standard, with two large digital displays presented to the driver. Early cars run on 18-inch alloys as standard, but more expensive trim lines added 19-inchers, an AMG Aerodynamic package, plus Multibeam LED headlamps and a panoramic glass sunroof.

Facelifted in late 2022 for the 2023 model year, later W177s claimed new headlight and tail light designs, plus an interior makeover and a new MBUX infotainment screen. Our £25,000 budget bags a 2019 A35 with around 50,000 miles on the clock.

We spoted this one-owner, Sun Yellow example for sale at Motor4U in East Sussex (www.motor4u.com). A 19-plater with 55,000 miles, it was advertised for £24,990 and came with 18-inch AMG alloys, a reversing camera, black nappa leather and a seven-inch touchscreen.

BUYING TIPS

Along with a full main dealer service history, your A35 should have just one previous owner and any recalls addressed. Reliability seems OK but a few owners have reported squealing brakes, electronic glitches, dash rattles, kerbed alloys, blown coil packs, and a handful have reported cylinder-head problems so an engine warranty would be a good idea. Scour the bodywork for repaired accident damage and ask if the car has ever been tuned as some have. A stage one remap makes 370bhp.



△ Snappy styling, lots of on-board tech, and very strong performance.



Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG A35 4Matic (W177)

Engine **1,991cc, 4-cyl turbocharged**

Power/torque **302bhp/295lb ft**

Transmission **7-speed auto, 4WD**

0-62mph **4.7sec**

Top speed **155mph**

Fuel consumption **33.2mpg**

£25,000 buys 2019 AMG A35 with 50,000 miles

Estate

E300de Estate (S213)

In five-door AMG Line guise, the E300de is something of a hidden gem on the used market

Most used E-Class Estate buyers opt for a default diesel derivative, but there is a more contemporary alternative – the classy and capacious E300de. Produced from 2018 to 2020 in pre-facelift form, this plug-in hybrid was expensive when new but is now surprisingly good value, partly because buyers don't know what it is.

Better value than an E400d – despite being just as fast – the E300de is more frugal too. Power comes from a combination of a four-cylinder turbodiesel engine and an electric motor, system output an excellent 302bhp/516lb ft. The battery only takes a little bit of boot space and you should average 50 to 60mpg over the long term. Our budget puts you behind the wheel of a 2019 E300de Estate AMG Line with 70,000 miles.

We liked the look of this Selenite Grey E300de AMG Line Estate from 2019 for sale at Affordable Cars Prestige Car Supermarket in Yorkshire (www.affordable-cars.co.uk). Stickered at £23,199, it had covered 84,030 miles. As well as a black Artico leather and Alcantara-style upholstery, this E300de also had a plush spec that included black ash wood trim, heated electric front seats and 18-inch AMG alloys.





Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz E300de Estate (S213)

Drive system 1,950cc, 4-cyl turbocharged + electric motor

Power/torque 302bhp/516lb ft

Transmission 9-speed auto, RWD

0-62mph 6.0sec

Top speed 155mph

Fuel consumption 201.8mpg

£25,000 buys 2019 E300de Estate AMG Line with 70,000 miles

BUYING TIPS

If possible, stick to cars that come with a full Mercedes-Benz service history and buy an AMG Line spec car with a few optional extras to maximise the car's future residuals. Check all the electrics and the Comand system work as they should, and note that a few owners have had issues with juddering brakes, interior rattles, the rear air suspension system (fitted as standard) and misbehaving 'Mercedes me' applications.



△ Some boot capacity lost to battery pack.



BUYING TIPS

Seek a cherished example with few owners, little if any rust corrosion, a gap-free service history book, and an expansive history file. Budget between £300 and £400 for a pre-purchase inspection by a Mercedes specialist, and make sure the 560SEC you're thinking of buying doesn't have misbehaving electrics, worn hydro-pneumatic rear suspension, camshaft oil leaks, worn hoses and water leaks, tired leather and cabin trim, and untoward timing chain noises.

SUV
AMG GLC43 4Matic (X253)

Who says SUVs are boring? Certainly not AMG GLC43 drivers. Early examples are now good value

SUVs continue to be the most popular cars with UK buyers, and AMG's mid-sized GLC43 is not only safe, practical and well appointed – it's also damn quick. As a used buy it's become even better value too, with many used SUV buyers less interested in performance.

Sitting just below the 63-badged V8 model and above the 300 version, the 362bhp GLC43 looks good on 19-inch AMG alloys, has a premium feel, and thanks to uprated suspension and a rear-biased 4Matic handles very well. That V6 turbo is capable of 40mpg on the motorway and delivers stonking performance.

A £25,000 budget buys a 2016 or 2017 example with enticing options. It will have a higher mileage, but that shouldn't be a problem as long as the car boasts a blemish-free service record, like this stunning blue example at WR Car Sales in Bradford (www.wrcarsales.co.uk). Advertised for £24,995, this GLC43 had covered just over 100,000 miles but looked immaculate and came with a smorgasbord of optional extras.



BUYING TIPS

As well as that all-important full service history record, your GLC43 should have no signs of off-road damage, and we'd steer clear of cars with a tow bar. Some owners have reported a juddering sensation with tyre skip from the front end at low speeds when a high degree of steering lock is applied, and the adaptive suspension can be pricey to fix if it goes wrong. Watch out for water in the headlights, noisy brakes and jerky gear changes in Sport+ mode.



Just the facts

Mercedes-AMG GLC43 4Matic (X253)

Engine 2,996cc, V6 biturbo
Power/torque 362bhp/383lb ft
Transmission 9-speed auto, 4WD
0-62mph 4.9sec
Top speed 155mph
Fuel consumption 34.0mpg
£25,000 buys 2017 AMG GLC43 with 70,000 miles



▷ Fantastic looks and a super sweet V6 turbo engine.

Modern classic
560SEC (C126)

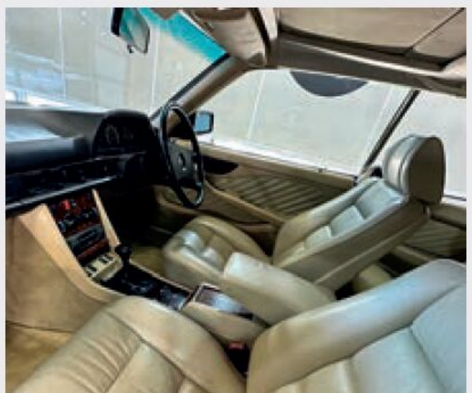
A film star car that never seems to lose its appeal. Find out what all the fuss is about for just £25,000

Forever loved, the 126-series 560SEC is a wonderful luxury cruiser with plenty of power and appealing pillarless styling. And if yours is in good nick and well maintained then you'll have an appreciating asset on your hands.

Produced from 1985 to 1991, the 560SEC arrived with the grand coupe's facelift and packs a naturally aspirated, 5.5-litre V8 producing 268bhp/317lb ft, or 296bhp/336lb ft after September 1987. Grunt is transmitted to the rear wheels through a four-speed automatic transmission, and with seating for four plus a capacious boot, you'd do well to find a more capable modern classic for the money.

For £25,000, you should be able to buy a tidy 100,000-miler with no major issues. Note that the V8 would be due a new timing chain at this mileage. This 1992, Smoke Silver 560SEC for sale at Motorzone Northwest (www.motorzonenorthwest.com) in Blackpool appeared ideal. With 108,423 miles and just two previous owners, it was up for £22,965 and came with a fresh MOT certificate and full service history record.





Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 560SEC (C126)

Engine 5,547cc V8
Power/torque 296bhp/336lb ft
Transmission 4-speed auto, RWD
0-62mph 6.8sec
Top speed 155mph
Fuel consumption 16.5mpg
£25,000 buys 1992 560SEC with 100,000 miles

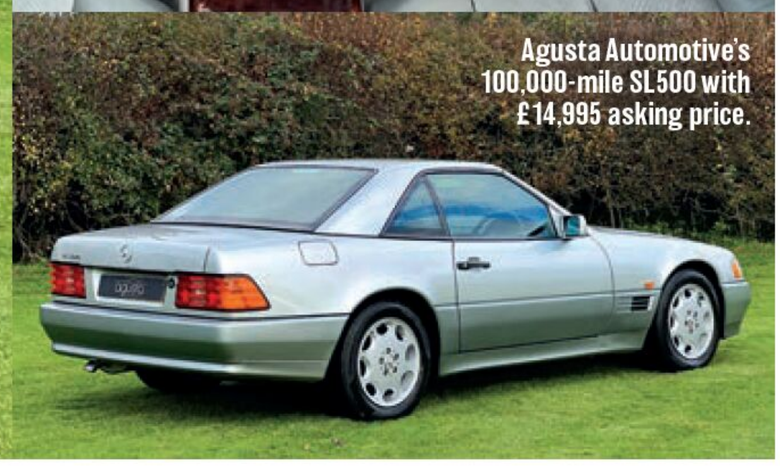
Winter blues

There are some great SL deals to be had at the moment if you know where to look, as our used car market expert reveals

WORDS **GUY BAKER** IMAGES **JUSTIN BANKS, AGUSTA AUTOMOTIVE AND RICHARD HARRIS CARS**







Agusta Automotive's 100,000-mile SL500 with £14,995 asking price.

It's harder to sell a car at this time of year. Buyers are more likely to splash out on a holiday deposit than cold hard metal. And if the car in question doesn't sport a permanent roof, then selling it becomes even harder, which is why early 2024 could prove the ideal time to bag a bargain Mercedes-Benz SL.

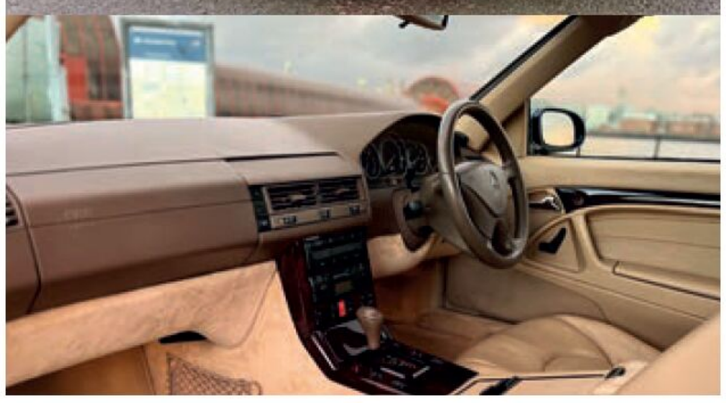
Both new and used car markets have slowed, but that doesn't always mean prices will be lower – even for convertibles. Many larger dealership chains, with plenty of storage and high cash flow, can afford to sit tight until late spring when demand – and SL prices – will rise again.

Smaller dealerships, however, simply don't have that luxury. Many can't afford to stockpile roadsters and need to keep the cash coming in, so they're the best targets. And, of course, any privateers attempting to sell an SL in January or February are almost certainly in serious need of cash. Mercedes' R129 SL should be your prime target, as values have only recently plateaued, but are expected to climb over the next year.

As a rough rule, we'd recommend offering sellers 10 to 15 per cent less than the asking price as a starting point and leave the offer with them. You'll be surprised just how many stony-faced R129 SL sellers will eventually warm to your offer after a few days and start negotiating.

Keep a close eye on the classifieds and occasionally a truly unique R129 will appear, like this Aquamarine Blue 1999 SL500 with Helios Beige leather we spotted at Justin Banks in Kent (www.justinbanks.com). With 68,000 miles, it was up for just £11,995 and came with full service history, an MOT with no advisories, and was originally sold in Japan but then immediately imported to the UK.





△ 47,000-mile SL280 at Richard Harris Cars priced at £15,995.



△ 1999 SL500 at Justin Banks with 68,000 miles for £11,995.

It appeared to be in extremely good condition, claims both soft and hardtops, and boasted some great options including heated front seats, cup holders, xenon headlamps, 17-inch light alloy wheels, and Bose audio with CD changer.

In more traditional livery, the Brilliant Silver, 1996 SL500 above came with light grey leather and walnut trim, and was advertised for £14,995 at Agusta Automotive in Dorset (www.agustaautomotive.com). Another ideal target, it boasted a full service history record and an MOT, had covered 100,000 miles, and featured electric memory seats, electric mirrors, alloy wheels and climate control – and an unmarked hardtop.

Across the Mersey

Most SL buyers of course are after a V8 model, but don't rule out the six-cylinder models too, which can be better value and are more economical to run. We really liked the look of this late-model, 143mph SL280 (see left) which was first registered in 2000. With just 47,060 miles and a £15,995 price tag, it was for sale at Richard Harris Cars Ltd in Birkenhead (www.richardharriscars.com).

A cherished example with a full service history plus a folder full of old receipts, MOTs and other documents, it's finished in Azurite Blue metallic with Saffron leather. Specified with some appealing extras when new, this SL280 claimed 17-inch alloys, a navy blue soft top, power folding mirrors, heated seats, nappa leather upholstery, automatic climate control and a wind deflector, as well as standard items like electric seats, cruise control, stability control, ABS brakes and remote central locking.

▸ *Fancy something a bit more practical? Then check out our top three £25,000 Mercedes-Benz saloons instead on page 76!*

Forecourt find

ML63 AMG (W166)

During wintertime, Mercedes' 4Matic four-wheel drive system is definitely king, and if you're after the ultimate in grip, performance, equipment and value then a W166 ML63 AMG sure takes some beating.

Even without the optional Performance Package, its V8 biturbo engine pumps out 518bhp, and a massive 516lb ft of torque, to deliver a 4.7-second 0-62mph time and 155mph maximum.

And you could pick up a great 50,000-mile example for just £26,000, like this 2013 ML63 we spotted with full dealership history at the Cotswold Motor Group near Gloucester. It looked in excellent condition and came with an epic spec including immaculate 21-inch AMG alloys, a four-pipe AMG exhaust system and leather interior.

Dealer information Cotswold Motor Group Select *Tel* 01242 335370
Web www.cotswoldgroup.com



△ 5.5-litre V8 biturbo replaced the NA 6.2-litre V8 engine.



▷ AMG-specific dials and Comand with satellite navigation.

▽ Immensely practical and also highly powerful.



Auction spotlight

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

- **CLK350 Cabriolet Sport** 3.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2007/07-plate, 107,000 miles, **£5,150**
- **ML280 CDI SE** 3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/07-plate, 112,000 miles, **£5,150**
- **SLK200 Kompressor** 1.8-litre, petrol, manual, 2006/06 plate, 94,000 miles, **£5,400**
- **C220d Estate AMG Line** 2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2016/66-plate, 85,000 miles, **£10,600**
- **GLA220d 4Matic AMG Line** 2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2017/66-plate, 73,000 miles, **£12,250**
- **CLS350d Shooting Brake AMG Line** 3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2016/66-plate, 55,000 miles, **£15,000**
- **A250e AMG Line Executive Saloon** 1.3-litre, petrol-electric, auto, 2020/70-plate, 33,000 miles, **£17,100**
- **C300 Cabriolet AMG Line** 2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19-plate, 36,000 miles, **£18,000**
- **CLA180 Coupe AMG Line** 1.3-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/69-plate, 45,000 miles, **£18,750**
- **GLB200d AMG Line** 2.0-litre diesel, auto, 2020/70-plate, 79,000 miles, **£20,600**
- **S350d L AMG Line Executive Premium Plus** 3.0-litre, diesel, 2018/68-plate, 109,000 miles, **£25,900**
- **AMG E53 AMG 4Matic+ Premium** 3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19-plate, 30,000 miles, **£30,000**
- **SL400 AMG Line Premium** 3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19-plate, 31,000 miles, **£34,400**
- **AMG GLC43 4Matic Premium Plus** 3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2020/69-plate, 20,000 miles, **£37,700**
- **AMG GLE53 4Matic+ Premium Plus** 3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2020/70-plate, 23,0000 miles, **£56,900**

And remember...

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

Mercedes market

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

The top 6 best-selling used Mercedes

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

1 A-Class (20.7%)
2 C-Class (20.6%)
3 E-Class (12.8%)
4 GLC-Class (6.8%)
5 CLA-Class (6.2%)
6 GLA-Class (6.0%)

What's in a colour?

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

1 Black (29.4%)
2 Silver (18.2%)
3 Grey (17.7%)
4 White (17.4%)
5 Blue (9.9%)

Miles ahead

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

Less than 50,000 miles 57.2%
Between 50,000 and 80,000 miles 23.9%
More than 80,000 miles 18.9%

Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

Diesel 51.8%
Petrol 39.1%
Hybrid 6.3%
Full electric 2.8%

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 24.3%
Front-wheel drive 31.8%
Rear-wheel drive 43.9%

TOP THREE

£25,000 saloons

Twenty-five grand is a fair sum to spend on your next Mercedes, and if you're in the market for a saloon then there are plenty of appealing choices around to tempt you. And whether you're seeking a prestigious economical daily driver, a potent AMG model or something altogether more timeless we can point you in the right direction. All three of this month's £25,000 selections have their own particular strengths – but which one would suit you best? A turbodiesel powered E-Class that's just one generation old, a rorty V6 turbo-engined C-Class, or a consummate modern classic barge with eight-cylinders under the bonnet?



E350d (W213)

Those looking for a contemporary four-door with a plush spec, plenty of poke, good fuel efficiency and a comfortable ride should consider the W213 E350d Saloon, especially in top AMG Line guise. Our budget bags a mint 2018 or 2019 example with no more than 40,000 miles, the nine-speed automatic transmission, and a few tasty optional extras. With 254bhp and a substantial 457lb ft of torque, overtaking in almost all gears is effortless yet you could touch 50mpg on longer motorway journeys.



OUR PICK

AMG C43 4Matic (W205)

Fancy a saloon with even greater performance? A low-mileage, 2017 Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic is within budget. £25,000 would buy a car with just 30,000 miles on the clock and a spec that includes parking sensors, a reversing camera and cruise control, plus all the usual AMG accoutrements. With 362bhp, 383lb ft of torque and four-wheel drive, the C43's performance is stunning, with a 4.7-second 0-62mph time in factory trim and - when remapped and delimited - a top speed approaching 180mph.



560SEL (V126)

If you wish to enjoy things at a slightly more leisurely pace, and in the company of a classic weekend Mercedes, then the 560SEL is hard to beat. It does have plenty of power in reserve should it ever be needed but prefers to cruise along majestically, allowing you to enjoy the admiring glances from other road users. A 1987 example with just 40,000 miles could be yours for £25,000 but at this price it might need a bit of fettling. Just make sure yours is rust free and comes with unimpeachable provenance.

Latest products and accessories

Lorinser G-Class (W464)

Lorinser's G80 programme for the latest W464 G-Class includes striking Obsidian Black metallic paintwork and full light blue leather upholstery featuring piping, embroidered lettering and decorative stitching in dark blue. Other items, which can be ordered separately, include 23-inch Lorinser RS 10 S forged wheels with Yokohama 305/35 profile tyres, 30mm lowering springs, Light Blue brake calipers with Lorinser lettering, a front bumper attachment with air intakes, roof wing lowering and a sports exhaust. And power output from the four-litre biturbo V8 engine can be raised to as much as 800bhp. Find out more at www.lorinser.com.





Webcon carburettors and intake manifold for 190SL

Webcon has produced a special intake manifold that enhances its original Weber kit for the Mercedes 190SL. Although the car's carburettors fit onto the original Solex manifold, the Solex manifold is 'siamesed', whereas this Weber manifold is not, thus allowing one carb venturi to feed one cylinder. Priced at £1,195 plus VAT, the original Weber kit includes two jetted genuine Weber 40DCOE carburettors, rubber mounts, an air box mounting kit and new linkage rods. And this new twin manifold enhancement set costs £597 plus VAT. Full details can be found at www.webcon.co.uk.

Dodo Juice Crudzilla Car Cleaner

Removing salt, mud and road grime in winter isn't easy, so the chemists at Dodo Juice have developed a car cleaner called Crudzilla, which will rip through any accumulated crud, blitzing contaminants at the pre-wash stage to take care of most of the nasties before the contact wash stage begins, making it all much easier and much safer for the paintwork beneath.

It's also good at stripping back older wax layers if required and is available in both a 1.0-litre version, priced at £11, and a great value five-litre refill priced at £38. For more information go to www.dodojuice.net.

Signature Tune CLS350D

So you've bought a 218-series CLS V6 diesel – here are some ways you can improve it



Based on the E-Class but a more involving drive.

Classy and efficient, the torquey 2011-2018 CLS350 CDI/d/Bluetec Coupe is also attractively priced, with decent examples starting at just £12,000. Well specced and capable of delivering impressive fuel economy, it is also supremely comfortable to drive and packs strong performance, thanks to its V6 turbodiesel motor (OM642) producing 261bhp and a meaty 457lb ft of torque.

Boasting Mercedes' imperious seven- or nine-speed automatic transmission, and limited to 155mph in factory trim, the CLS350 diesel can return nearly 50mpg on longer motorway journeys and will crack 62mph in around six seconds.

But impressive though it is, this svelte four-door coupe can be bettered. Some CLS owners have chosen to boost their car's performance, whilst others have enhanced the handling and braking, and even added their own discreet styling touches.





Engine

A £600 stage 1 ECU remap on the CLS350 diesel should provide a noticeable improvement in acceleration and throttle response, with the OM642 engine good for around 310bhp and 520lb ft torque. If you add a sports exhaust and enhanced induction too, then you could add another 10bhp, but get these fitted before you have the engine remapped to optimise the potential gains.

Transmission

You can also choose to have the car's automatic transmission remapped at the same time as the car's ECU, and this will provide slightly quicker and smoother gear changes. You'll find that there are a few tuning houses that can do this for you.

Suspension

The CLS350 diesel is set up primarily for comfort rather than optimum handling, so a strut brace plus uprated anti-roll bars and either some lowering springs, or better still a properly matched coil-over system, makes a big difference to the handling. Eibach, H&R, Bilstein and KW are all options. You should replace any worn OE bushes with poly items on higher mileage examples.

Brakes

The CLS350's braking is strong but can still be improved, and a selection of both pads and discs are available from the likes of Forge, MTEC, Brembo, EBC, and AP Racing. If you have the funds then Brembo do both a £4,000 Gran Turismo six-pot brake conversion kit and a slightly cheaper 345mm, four-pot brake kit (£2,500). And don't forget to get braided brake hoses fitted with any brake upgrades.

Wheels and bodywork

As well as a selection of factory AMG alloy wheels there are also plenty of other different options available for the C218 CLS, with multi-spoke designs the most popular. But as with other external modifications only a few CLS owners have gone for more expensive options from Mansory, Brabus and Lorinser. And if you fancy some non-AMG alloys then check that that they won't add to the unsprung mass.

Interior

CLS owners tend to be a conservative bunch so relatively few have changed many interior items, but that shouldn't stop you. A few owners have splashed out on major interior makeovers from companies like Lorinser and Mansory. Just remember that any significant interior changes could affect your CLS's appeal to future buyers and its resale value.

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Ideal for W124 / W126



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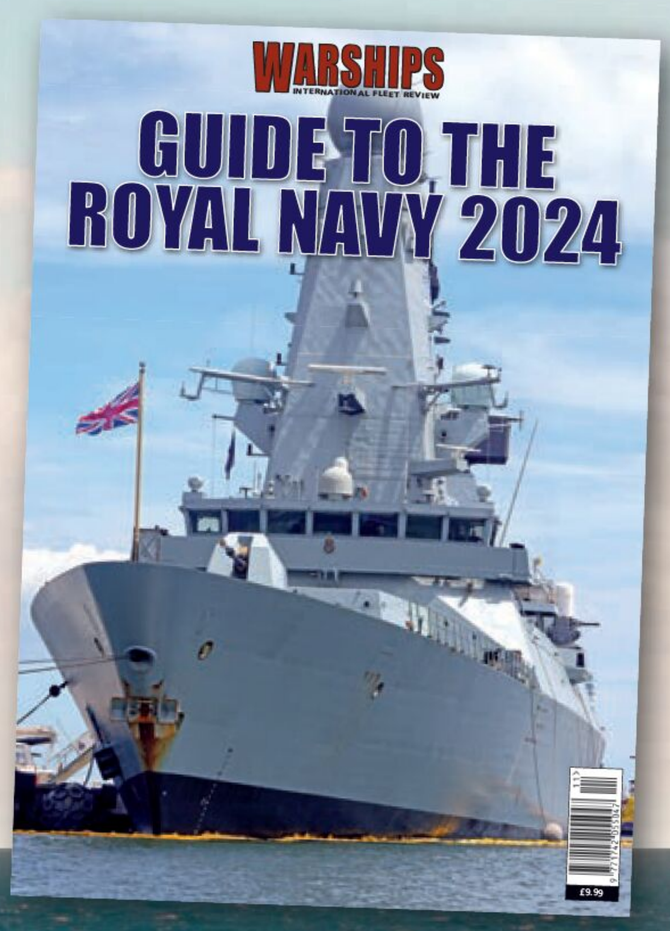
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Six-pot roadster

Arriving towards the end of R107 SL production, the 300SL replaced the 280 model and gave buyers previously set on owning a V8 something to think about

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **ADE BRANNAN & ERIC RICHARDSON**

It's unlikely that a six-cylinder version of the 1971-launched R107 SL Roadster was in the original plan. Mercedes-Benz intended to further exploit the US market and more or less designed the new SL around it, which meant installing the V8 engines stateside buyers expected, and not carrying over the six-cylinder units powering the petite Pagoda. The choice was 3.5 or 4.5 litres, the US getting only the latter.

Then came the 'energy crisis' of 1970s, following the Middle East war, during which oil supplies became politicised and forced the realisation that the black stuff and its by-products including gasoline might not be so cheap and in such plentiful supply in the future. As demand for big-engined cars plummeted (temporarily, as it turned out), the motor industry reacted by introducing economy models – even including the favourite of the rich, Mercedes-Benz.

Hence in 1974 the 280SL was added to the R107 range, using the 2.7-litre, M110 straight-six recently developed for upper versions of the 'Stroke 8' and lower-order 116-series S-Classes (the same motor went into the SLC). Of course, it wasn't branded a fuel-saver, but it sent the message that although a maker of big luxury cars, energy consciousness did exist within Stuttgart.

The 280SL turned out to be a surprise: not only did its revvy engine make it more lively than the lazy V8 SLs, especially having a four-speed automatic gearbox over the earlier V8s's three-speeder, the reduced front end weight due to two less cylinders gave it more agile handling. It was also more economical than the 350SL, although only slightly.

Having earned a permanent place in the SL family, the 280SL remained in production through the 1980 update and engine revamp before being discontinued at the R107's second facelift, in September 1985 for the 1986 model year, when the 300SL we look at here became its direct successor.

Introduced at the same time as the range-topping (but US, Australia and Japan only) 560SL, the 300SL – borrowing its title from Mercedes' iconic sports car of three decades before – used the then new, M103 straight-six in three-litre capacity. While the M110 was a twin-camshaft design, its replacement was single-cam, which in theory seemed disappointingly conservative until you drove the car. It was a super sweet, certainly Stuttgart's smoothest six-cylinder up to that point. It gave Mercedes an engine that was the equal of BMW's small six.

A two-valves-per-cylinder

Spotted for sale

PRIVATE SELLER
300SL
1988/F, white, blue/grey part leather, 105,000 miles, new hood, replacement fuel pump, £17,600, Essex



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 300SL (R107)

Engine	M103 2,962cc 6-cyl
Power	185bhp@5,700rpm
Torque	188lb ft@4,400rpm
Transmission	4-speed auto, RWD
Weight	1,510kg
0-62mph	9.4sec
Top speed	123mph
Fuel consumption	20.2mpg
Years produced	1985-1989

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

configuration (the multi-valve evolution of the M103 never made it into the R107), it produced 185bhp, along with 188lb ft at 4,400rpm (figures for cars without a catalyst). These figures, unchanged over the four years of production, were similar to the 280SL's, as was the high-revving nature which left the M103 somewhat light on low down pulling ability. By comparison, the 500SL gave 242bhp and a beefy 289lb ft torque. Some 300SLs escaped with a five-speed manual transmission, but most were delivered in four-speed automatic form.

The 1985 facelift was subtle, the only noticeable difference being a new, cleaner looking wheel design to replace the 'Mexican hats' around since 1971, and which were an inch bigger in diameter at 15-inch, and also half an inch fatter and with mildly low-profile 205/65 tyres compared to the 280SL's 195/70s. Other updates included revised front suspension geometry, a reshaped front spoiler, black plastic rather than chrome trimmed door handles, slightly more shapely seats and minor interior trim tweaks.

Equipment-wise, the 300SL came with the essentials, and much the same as the 420SL and 500SL. Automatic transmission and anti-lock brakes were standard fit, as were electric windows, electric adjustment for the passenger door mirror (both heated), central locking, leather-bound steering wheel and gearknob, and of course the steel hardtop. Plenty of factory options were available, hence why equipment levels vary a lot on 300SLs. Leather instead of cloth seat trim is desirable and many 300SLs have it, while air conditioning is good to have but probably less common. Small but still pricey extras were heated seats, a rear seat (a small, nominal affair), an outside temperature gauge in place of one of the three air vents on the centre fascia, and a headlamp wash/wipe. Other items such as an orthopaedic seat back and an engine sump shield are less common.

A total of 13,742 300SLs were delivered from 1985 until 1989 when the R129 SL replaced the R107. That makes it a low volume model considering in the same period 49,347 560SLs were purchased and it wasn't even sold in Europe. But as the R107 neared the end of its life, its imminent classic status was already obvious, so a high proportion of 300SLs survive today, making them easy to find for sale.

Driving the 300SL

This is a two-seater, and a tight fit at that. Your head may brush the inside of the roof, and your knees the bottom of the large steering wheel, which is so large that entry to the car requires the left leg to be carefully slid across the seat and underneath the wheel. The springy seats also take some getting used to, and lack the multi-way electrical adjustment found on the 124- and 126-series models of the time.

But this is all part of the charm and merely sitting in an R107 brightens the day. Ahead you have the classic orange on black, three-dial instrument panel, and in the middle of the facia the three round air vents that are extraordinarily stylish despite their mundane purpose. Below that there is the centre console – which if you are lucky might house a period Becker or Blaupunkt stereo unit – with its convincing walnut look veneer. The hood deserves mention: electric power was never offered, but a clever lowering and raising mechanism (involving a special spanner) makes it reasonably effort-free to operate.

To drive, the 300SL feels very much the traditional Mercedes-Benz. The recirculating ball steering damps road shocks but has little feeling, and much body roll is evident if the car is pushed into corners. The M103 engine feels lovely when revved, although mid-range response is weak. However, the responsive (for its time) four-speed automatic gearbox neutralises that shortcoming to some extent.

What you'll pay

Some enthusiasts feel the 300SL, with its more responsive nature, is a better car than the V8s – but after this being reflected in values for a long time, it's no longer the case, facelifted 500SLs now significantly higher in price. Some 300SLs did end up in a poor state and at one time were available for as little as £5,000, but that period has long gone and £15,000 is now the cheapest you'll see for a proper runner.

The 300SL spans a huge price range. A budget of £30,000 will buy a decent enough car, but now that specialists are restoring them prices can be anything up to triple that price. For example, Warwickshire-based SL specialist SLShop, the UK's biggest seller of R107s, was offering a 1986 300SL with red cloth and which had undergone some bodywork restoration for £37,995, and at the same time a 1989 car in blue over grey leather and with 13,300 miles, for five pounds short of £100,000. Leather boosts value, as does dark metallic paint compared to, say, a flat white. ▷

R107 300SL Inside and out



Specialist overview
Simon Wood, 300SL specialist at SLShop in Warwickshire
"A high mileage 300SL that has been well maintained will feel as crisp as when it was driven off the forecourt new, and shouldn't have any problems. The M103 engine doesn't have the V8s's timing chain issues. I personally would have a 300SL rather than a V8 - it feels far lighter at the front end and rolls much less."
www.theslshop.com

Powertrain

- Engines that have been left standing for a number of years can develop hot starting problems due to the piston rings having some wear, and a slight compression loss as a result of sticking to the cylinder bores during the period of disuse.
- Hydraulic engine mounts wear out and allow the engine to drop down, and worn subframe mounts cause the engine to move around a little. The combination makes the car feel harsh and noticeably 'wandery' at the front end. Curing both these problems transforms driveability.
- The distributor cap can become damp inside, which affects starting and can also cause misfires.
- If the engine is leaking oil at the front, it will be from the timing case cover on this end of the engine. Replacing the seals should cure this.
- The automatic gearbox can momentarily lose drive. This most commonly happens when decelerating to near walking pace and moving off again, during which a 'false neutral' kicks in. This is often found on low mileage 300SLs.



Six-cylinder doesn't punch like a V8 but still feels lively.

Suspension, steering and braking system

- The lower wishbone arms on the suspension corrode, which is an MOT failure. Replacement is the only cure, and the arms are very expensive.
- The steering idler bush typically wears and increases the amount of play in the steering. And if the steering damper is in a poor state, the wheel tracking will not be true, resulting in uneven tyre wear.
- On the steering itself, Mercedes' traditional recirculating ball setup, check for free play around the straight-ahead position, which indicates wear inside the steering box. The play can be adjusted out, but only by so much.
- On 300SLs unused for a long period, the brake calipers may bind when the car is driven.


The R107 300SL is 4.39m long, 1.79m wide and 1.3m tall with closed roof.

Spotted for sale

USED CAR DEALER 300SL

1988/E, red, grey leather, 134,000 miles, outside temp gauge, rear seat, part M-B history, £24,950, Essex



It takes two people to remove the 40kg hardtop; 15-inch alloys.



"On the steering itself, check for free play around the straight-ahead position"

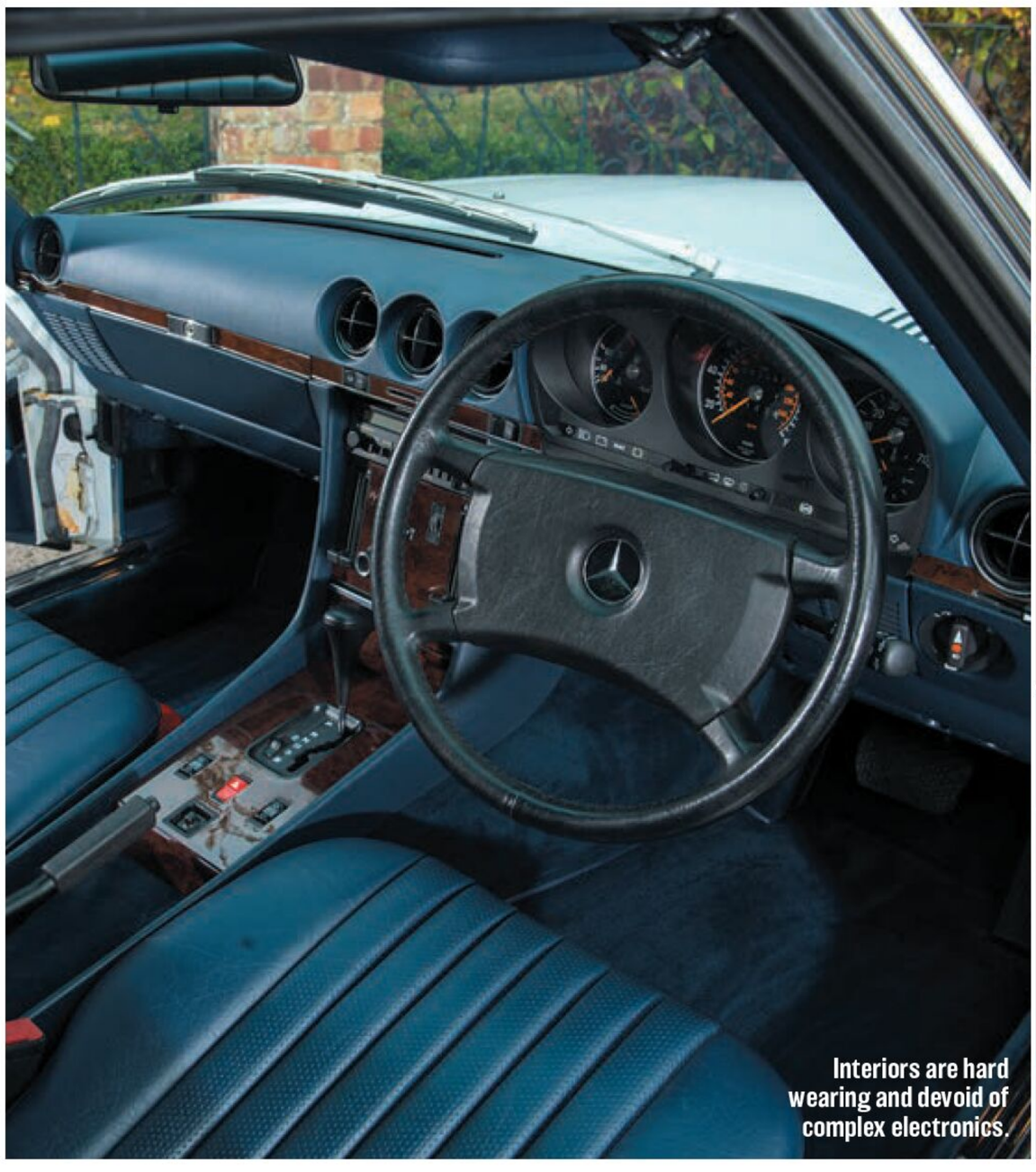
Bodywork and wheels

● The major hidden rust spot on an R107 is the engine bulkhead, which rots as a result of drainage blockages under the air intake grilles in front of the windscreen (SLShop has long offered a galvanised steel replacement bulkhead).

● Other areas to inspect for rust are the front and rear jacking points on the side of the body (a universal Mercedes Achilles heel), the inner and outer side sills, the boot floor and the front chassis legs. Check for rust along the inner base of the hardtop - the roof has to be removed for this to be visible.

● The hood may be folded down under the hardtop, but don't forget to inspect the canvas, as it could be in a bad state, with the side plastic windows split and all of them turned opaque. Hoods can crack if carelessly lowered in very cold weather.

● Mercedes wheels from the R107 years are prone to corroding, and if they are in poor condition it may be best to look for used replacements rather than refurbishing them.



Interiors are hard wearing and devoid of complex electronics.





Interior and electrics

● There were three R107 interior trims: Sport Check vinyl and cloth, all-vinyl MB-Tex, and leather. MB-Tex is by far the hardest wearing, although is the least common. Leather cracks, particularly on the outside seat bolster on the driver's seat.

● R107 seats should feel firm but very slightly bouncy. The metal seat frame can crack and collapse from sheer age and metal fatigue, rendering the seat soft and unsupportive.

● If the ABS warning light stays on, it usually means the anti-lock sensors or control unit are faulty.

● When driving, you can expect some scuttle shake, but a good R107 should ride smoothly and be free of rattles and squeaks. Blurred rear-view mirror vision is a sign of a hard worked car. ▷

R107 300SL Inside and out

Spotted for sale

CLASSIC MERCEDES SPECIALIST 300SL

1989/F, red, mushroom leather, 101,000 miles, full service history, outside temp gauge, heated seats, £32,995, Buckinghamshire





Verdict

It may be the least powerful of the late-model R107s but it is absolutely not the poor brother to the V8s; as mentioned, it has a particular following among these who believe six is better than eight. The M103 is arguably Mercedes' best pre-electronic six-cylinder engine and, other than the badge, the 300SL looks all but identical to a 500SL.

It's a wonderful roadster from a long-gone era of Mercedes-Benzes, and if you like a roadster to be more luxury cruiser than tactile performer, you'll easily bond with a 300SL. But the familiar caveat applies, in that it's almost always a mistake to buy a cheap 300SL – cheap here is £15,000 – because the chance of hidden problems is high, especially as the R107 conceals its most crucial rust issues. You don't need to spend £100,000 to get a good 300SL, but you will pay a lot. The comfort can be that with values steadily rising, you're unlikely to lose money on one provided you bought well in the first place.



Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

Model	Oil Service	Major Service
300SL	£660	£1,470

Quotes from SLShop

Non-routine servicing costs

- ★ Replace seals on timing chain cover and rocker cover **£675**
- ★ Overhaul distributor cap and rotor arm **£375**
- ★ Fit new front subframe mounts **£485**
- ★ Fit new front brake discs and brake pads **£395**
- ★ Replace corroded lower suspension arms (both sides) **£3,950**
- ★ Replace front bulkhead **From £7,500**
- ★ Four premium brand tyres (205/65VR15) **£400**

What you'll pay

£10,000-£20,000 It's still possible to buy a 300SL Roadster at this money, but be prepared for rust and mechanical problems

£20,000-£30,000 The minimum for a sound SL that's been maintained well, but don't expect perfection

£30,000-£40,000 Non specialist used car dealers will price in this band, offering sound examples

£40,000-£60,000 Above average condition is expected, as it is a good colour and spec, including leather seats and air conditioning

£60,000-£100,000 The best cars only - A1 body and mechanicals, spotless leather interior, good dark metallic paintwork and complete service history

Six vs V8

The 300SL can easily look the 420SL in the eye, but against the 500SL – and indeed the 560SL – has a more difficult case to prove. While the straight-six M103 engine is smooth and will deliver a good pace when its revved, there's nothing like the velvet smooth, heavyweight torque of a decent V8, and the five-litre M117, after much ongoing development, was and is absolutely superb in the R107. For many, this more than compensates for the 300SL's crisper handling. The 300SL will be cheaper to buy, but not much more economical in reality due the six having to work harder than the V8 much of the time. The latter is potentially more expensive to maintain, having a longer list of possible problems.

Fine details

US correspondent Reed Hitchcock takes advantage of some quiet time to fix a few niggling issues on his pair of Mercedes E-Classes

WORDS & IMAGES **REED HITCHCOCK**

FACTSHEET

CARS 2006 E320 CDI/2011 E350 4Matic Estate
OWNER Reed Hitchcock
LOCATION Virginia, USA
PURCHASED June 2023/May 2014
UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT New seat belt retainer for the S212; headlight ready and waiting for the W211





△ **Fixing the split climate control/speaker housing on the 211's dashboard.**

△▷ **Replacing the right-hand headlight is still on the 'to-do' list.**

Unlike most of my Running Reports over the past 20 years, I am thoroughly pleased to share that since my last update neither the S212 E350 4Matic Estate nor the W211 E320 CDI has made a trip to the repair shop. It's quite frankly a little strange: instead of trying to cram thousands of dollars in repairs into the handful of words this page allows, I am actually in the enviable (and probably now jinxed) position of being able to talk about the things I wanted to do with each car.

Starting with the wagon, a few years ago while preparing for a road trip with my wife, one of my sisters-in-law managed to snap off not one, but both little plastic retainers for the third seat belts. It was a ham-fisted move for sure, where brute force won out over aged plastic, but admittedly they seemed to break fairly easily and not for nothing I'd been a little bit concerned over the preceding few years, as they seemed to be doing less and less in the way of retaining the belts.

▽ **New rear seat belt retaining section ordered and fitted in place.**



On the hunt

At this point, I have to say how much I love online parts diagrams – especially when you have no idea what the Mercedes-Benz parts overlords have decided to name something. Often the names are counterintuitive at best. In any case, the seat belt retainers still proved elusive, as the diagrams are small and not terribly well drawn in the case of the S212 cargo area trim. I think it was the 'Body Panelling: Rear' section where I finally found the right diagram. Then I ordered the adjacent trim by accident. Twice. Finally, the right sections arrived on my doorstep, and installation took about 12 minutes and nothing more than a flat edge with which to pop the old trim pieces out. The new pieces are glorious, and going forward my wife and I are the only people allowed back there.

> **"I have to say how much I love online parts diagrams"**

So while I was playing with parts diagrams, I decided to check on a couple of bits for the W211. Primarily, when the left front headlight was replaced due to a run-in with a deer, they replaced that unit with new, but left the yellowed right-hand unit in place. It's functional, but slightly awkward looking. On top of that, there was a crack in the climate control/speaker housing in the upper central part of the dashboard, compounded by a blown centre-channel Harmon/Kardon speaker courtesy of my younger daughter and Harry Styles.

All three parts – like those for the S212 – were readily available through the magic of the internet, and remarkably reasonably priced. All the parts for both cars together (minus the accidentally ordered extra wrong trim for the wagon) came to less than $500. Once I'd watched a YouTube video about how to remove it, I switched the control panel from the old one to the new one and replaced the centre climate control housing unit and the integrated speaker.

That job took about an hour. I haven't got to the headlight yet, but it is sitting in the garage right in front of the car mocking me every time I pull in or out. Maybe it'll be done by my next report!

Reliable runner

The four-cylinder GLC passes a significant milestone, and thanks to its dependable service it may stick around a while longer yet

WORDS & IMAGES **DAVID SUTHERLAND**

FACTSHEET

CAR 2017 GLC220d AMG Line
OWNER David Sutherland
LOCATION Surrey, UK
PURCHASED September 2017
UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT The Mercedes is running sweetly; welcome road tax decrease from £45.50 to £15.50 per month as of year six



"I'm pleasantly surprised that everything's going so well"

When we took delivery of our GLC220d AMG Line in September 2017, I thought we'd keep it until the end of the personal contract purchase finance four years hence, and then probably change it for something else on another PCP contract. If not, we'd keep it for a bit longer, but not too long.

Yet here we are, over six years on and with the mileage topping 60,000 – bumped up from a snoozy annual 6,000 to 7,000 miles by my wife doing a semi-regular commute from Surrey to London in it. The black SUV has given such faithful service so far that we feel it might well carry on doing the same for years to come.

That said, my natural pessimism prompts me to carefully listen and feel that the nine-speed automatic gearbox is still changing seamlessly, as horrendously expensive transmission issues seem to be the bane of modern cars, and to ensure that the turbodiesel motor still idles and revs as it should, given that engine management issues can cripple a modern powerplant. Usually, the first you know about any issues is when a light on the fascia illuminates and refuses to go out.

Given the patch of lamentable quality that some Mercedes models went through in the early 2000s, I'm pleasantly surprised that everything's going so well. That said, my conclusion, unscientifically arrived at, is that if you treat and maintain a car well, it will repay you with loyal, untroublesome service. Fingers crossed I'm right.

Going the distance

With 60,000 miles approaching, I wanted to get a photograph of the odometer at that exact figure. Leading up to the 'moment', I tried to anticipate where the car might be when it happened and was alarmed that the GLC might be on its way to or from London without me inside it. But then it looked like the 60,000 click-over would occur en route to an afternoon/evening family event. However, we arrived about 10 miles short, so the 'photoshoot' would have to be done on the way back, in the dark.

△ **David didn't expect to keep the GLC for so long and loves it dearly.**

▽ **Capturing this milestone took some doing by David...**

▽▷ **AMG alloy wheels in size 19-inch showing a few battle scars.**

Thus it was in the crazy, 1am traffic of the M25 on the west side of London (I don't think that orbital motorway ever quietens down) that I had to lean over practically into my wife's lap and, so as not to block her view of the road, keep my head down and take photos blind and continuously in the one-minute window, hoping for just one sharply focussed, correctly angled image. The wonders of the iPhone camera helped me get something usable.

Why am I rambling on about my photographic 'skill'? Frankly, because there is presently little to report on the GLC, as it is running so well. The black Artico 'leather' on the driver's seat has gone a little shiny, there are a few scratches on the 19-inch alloys (all my fault) and the Eco Start/Stop still only works once in a blue moon. But the car still feels much like new, and long may that continue.





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C180 Kompressor SE 2007 silver coupe, petrol, manual gearbox. Good condition with great performance. Leather seats and a sliding sunroof. One owner, full service history, ULEZ compliant. Full year's MOT, recent warranty works and new tyre. £1,500 ONO. Tel: 07485 696275. Midhurst. ***[BCW4]***





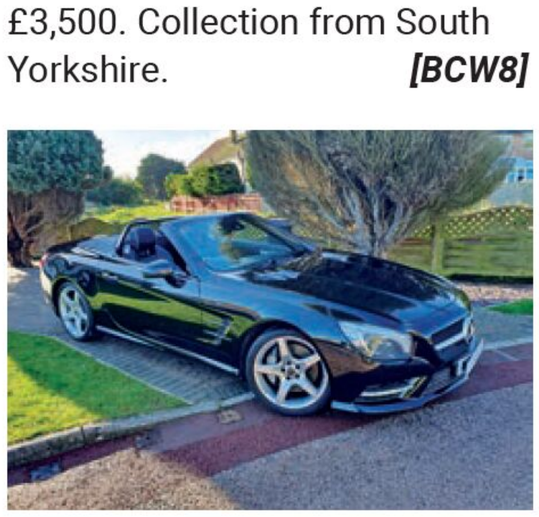
CLK500 Coupe Elegance 2003, silver, under 49,000 miles since new. Full M-B and specialist service history. Last service October 2023, MOT until November 2024. Excellent condition throughout. £5,200. 01276 66255. Camberley. ***[BCW5/6]***



R230 SL350 3.5-litre, 2008, 56,000 miles. Present owner 14 years, full service history. New batteries and tyres. Panoramic roof. ABC and Distronic. £11,750 – sell to best offer. Tel: 07876474675. Surrey. ***[BCW7]***



E500 Avantgarde 2004, automatic V8 petrol in special order Cubanite Silver in great condition with black interior. FSH – dealer and local independent. Three owners, 122,000 miles, mostly used for motorway miles during my ownership. Alloys and tyres in good condition, tinted windows and recent B service, plus MOT. Open to sensible offers around £3,500. Collection from South Yorkshire. ***[BCW8]***



SL350 V6 with AMG sport pack, 2013 facelift model. 60,000 miles, full M-B service history, Obsidian Black paint and black leather piped white, glass roof, heated memory seats, electric wind deflector, F/R PDC, AMG body/alloys/steering wheel – excellent example. ***[BCW12]***



CLK320 2005, 15,500 miles, silver with grey leather, immaculate condition, sat nav, heated seats, three owners, service history, MOT and ULEZ compliant. A nearly new car for £5,000! 07507 388003 Wiltshire. ***[BCW14]***



C240 Elegance Automatic, 1998, silver four-door saloon with 2.4-litre V6 petrol. New MOT to November 2024 (only three advisories). Service history four new tyres, original alloys. Rare sunroof, cruise control and original M-B over mats, very good and clean interior. Owned for 11 years and lovingly cared for. Private plate not included. Sensibly priced at £2,750 ONO. Tel: 07761 765401. Warminster. ***[BCW9]***



S350d AMG Line Premium Facelift model, one private owner, 2018/18 plate with 44,000 miles. Full M-B dealer history, rarely found in Anthracite Blue with black nappa hide, panoramic glass roof, 20-inch alloys, 360 cameras, heated/cooled seats. Stunning S-Class throughout. £37,950. Tel: 01323 741891. Eastbourne. ***[BCW10]***



E320 Coupe 1994, automatic, pillarless metallic blue body, cream leather seats, air con, electric seat, electric sunroof carefully owned, full service history, £6,995. Tel: 07507 757777. Stockport. ***[BCW11]***



320CE Cabriolet Sportline 1993, gold with mushroom leather and brown hood. Needs recommissioning easy winter project. £4,995 more pictures available on WhatsApp or call. Tel: 07936 151814. ***[BCW15]***



190E 2.0 1992, automatic, 185,250 miles. Full service history with all supporting bills, ESR, rear head rests, ALD and four electric windows. Recent new front wing, new front and centre exhaust, new battery, fuel pump, water pump, radiator and ATF fluid changed. Everything working, to come with new MOT for asking price. £3,250. Tel: 07483 149808. Northallerton. ***[BCW17]***



CLK200 Coupe Tanzanite Blue, electric sunroof, automatic. Full service history with Mercedes-Benz Hertford. Registered 2004. 86,000 miles only. Alloys need some attention. OIRO £3,500. Tel: 07831 639870. St Albans. ***[LAP4]***

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



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



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



190E 1994, one of the last produced. 2.0L petrol, automatic, Nautical Blue. Owned and looked after for the last 15 years, excellent condition for age. MOT. Original Blaupunkt stereo. 82,000 miles. £4,250 ONO. Contact for more information. Tel: 07711 167619. Hadleigh, Suffolk ***[CM45P8R]***



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



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



R129 300SL-24 1992, automatic, 112,000km, substantial history file including receipts and MOTs, electric soft top and rollbar, hardtop with stand and cover, stainless steel Powerflow exhaust, new hood and lining, full showerproof car cover, rare Lorinser 2.5-inch rim wheels, good 235/45R17 tyres, wind deflector, superb condition, £12,000. Tel: 07768 566336. Pewsey. ***[CM45P10R]***



A124 E220 Cabriolet 1996/N reg. Here is a chance to own a rare E220 Cabriolet finished in Ruby Red metallic, cream leather interior, electric roof, automatic, 12 months MOT, 93,000 miles with service history, dry stored, in exceptional condition throughout. Numberplate not included. £12,250. Tel: 07860 449633. Cambridge. ***[CM45P9R]***



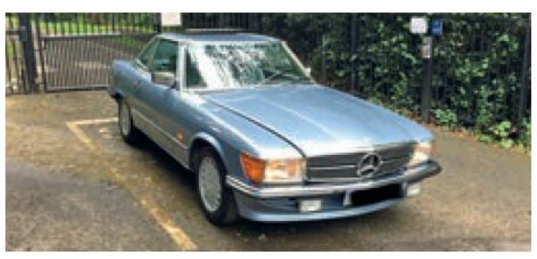
ML63 AMG 2007 with 66,500 miles, three owners, full service history – part Mercedes/part independent. Last service 3,000 miles ago with new front discs and pads. Body ding and dent free, paint with a few hardly noticeable stone chips to bonnet, and interior in near perfect order, full spec. Tel: 07531 866501. Fleetwood. ***[LAP9]***



190E 2.6 Automatic, four-door saloon, 1994, blue, in excellent condition. Only two previous owners. All documentation from when it was first bought in London. It has only done 32,000 miles. Always serviced, well maintained and kept in a garage. Price £14,850. Tel: 07928 474718. Littlehampton. ***[LAP13]***



C320 Elegance 2005, 52,000 miles, rare sporting 3.2 V6 engine, just had £1,200 full Mercedes B service, refurbished wheels, new tyres, impressive condition throughout, £7,500. Tel: 07870 506121. Peacehaven ***[CM45P11R]***



300SL 1988, Diamond Blue with grey leather interior, 140,000 miles with Mercedes-Benz service history up to 94,000 miles, MOT, heated seats, Blaupunkt radio. Always been garaged, completely resprayed over 10 years ago and only 500 miles since. Owned for 19 years. £16,500 OVNO. Tel: 07497 700972. Bath. ***[JK36]***



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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



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

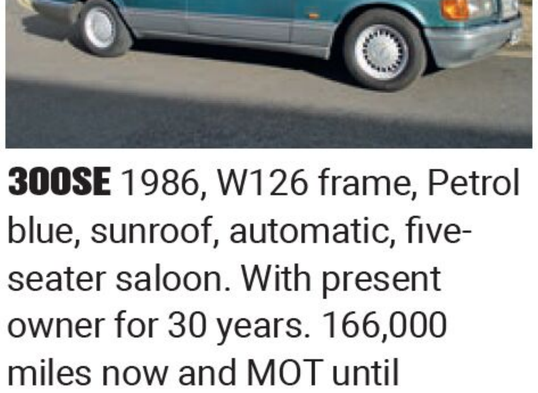


190E 1990, automatic, petrol, three keys, replaced front calipers, pads, rear springs, shocks, starter. Faults rear electric windows, offside door outer handle, door card tops, driver's seat. Paint good but lacquer peeling and pitted. £2,550. Tel: 07712 638766. Worthing. ***[JK1]***

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



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



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



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



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



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

CLK Coupe 1999, V reg, 72,000 genuine miles. Tel: 07877 632842. Watford. ***[LA]***

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



C123 280CE 1983, 80,000 miles, auto, flat Sahara Beige, olive cloth interior, ESR, air con, excellent chrome, M-B splashguards, spare wheel, tools, triangle, MB first aid kit, history, £POA. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk ***[EFW2]***



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

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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



W140 S500 1997, 153,000 miles in great condition, original silver paint, rust-free car, accessories and functions to specs. Tel: 8184379756. Los Angeles, California. ***[BCW1]***



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

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



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



Ponton doors As new with factory tags. Actual barn find. Buyer responsible for all crating and shipping. Located in Oregon City, Oregon, USA – 15 miles south of Portland Oregon. $850 USD or best offer. ***[BCW3]***



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

NO. PLATES



Private Reg Plate: CRO8 ENZ. The plate is now on a retention certificate. 07875 295998. Lydney. ***[BCW2]***

PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



Genuine 18-inch AMG alloy wheels For C-Class, part number A2054019600. £495. More photos available on WhatsApp or call. Tel: 07936 151814. Merseyside. ***[BCW13]***





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



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



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



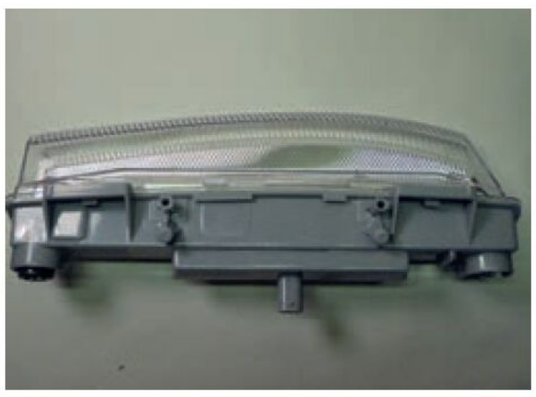
Pre-merger AMG brochure pack Early pack covering W123, W126, R107, G-Wagon as per photos. Fold out brochure and 7x vehicle photos/data sheets. Rare pack in good condition. £350. Tel: 01329 849901. Fareham. ***[CM45P4R]***



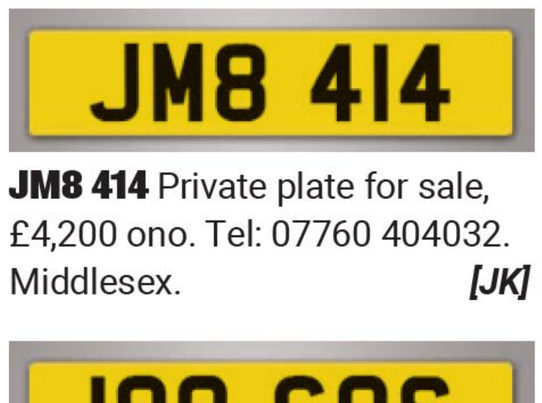
126 MPH Personal plate, purchased for a Pagoda in 1971 and used on many cars since. Looks good and has no legal problems (gapping). On retention certificate. £POA. Tel: 0208 366 4639. Middlesex. ***[JK]***



W124 steel wheels Set of four with 195/60R15 Goodyear UltraGrip winter tyres, wheel covers and steel bolts. Used on E220 Coupe. Tyres undamaged and barely worn with consistent 8mm tread depth. Not used since 2020 but properly stored. £300. Tel: 07747 691148. Warminster. ***[BCW16]***



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



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

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



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



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



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



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

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"The 280SEL uses a 158bhp straight-six engine"

280SEL

This stately Mercedes 280SEL spent the first seven years of its life transporting the ambassador of the Vietnam Embassy in London

WORDS **MIKE RENAUT** IMAGES **MATT RICHARDSON**

Sometimes, cars experience a dramatic fall from grace. This stretched Mercedes-Benz went from transporting heads of states and prime minsters to sitting under a tarpaulin on a driveway in west London. Fortunately, there are enthusiasts like Shan Habib and his business partner Ketan Hirani who get classics back on their feet.

"We had known about this Mercedes for a year before it came up for sale," Shan remembers. "At first, I thought it was a 600 Grosser. It was never driven, so we intended to knock on the door of the house and ask to buy it, but then I saw it advertised for sale online. The original plan was to drop in the engine from a 560SEL we had found, but that was more work than we first realised. Plus, this 280SEL has a nice history."

Good-condition mechanicals are a legacy of previous owners who cared for this W108. "It was ordered new through a UK Mercedes-Benz dealer on Great West Road, London, then supplied to the Vietnam Embassy on Victoria Road," Shan reveals. "It was registered with the numberplate 'RVN 1', which I imagine stood for 'Republic of Vietnam'. The embassy obviously kept the car in perfect condition, and it sold the Mercedes in 1978 with around 75,000 miles showing on the odometer."

The 280SEL uses a 158bhp (M130) straight-six engine and was one of four new models introduced at the beginning of 1968. The 280SEL came with power-assisted steering as standard, and out of around 360,000 W108 models built 91,051 were 280SEs, but only 8,250 were 280SELs.

On the road, the W108 Mercedes is a smooth cruiser. Thanks to that torquey 2.8-litre engine, the extra weight of the SEL doesn't show – if anything it helps to soak up potholes and undulations. It's only when you need to reverse into spaces, or three-point turn in a narrow street that the extra length is apparent. "I really like the styling of this car, all those straight lines and subtle curves," Shan enthuses. "The extra length does make a difference when you have rear seat passengers, and visibility is improved too."

It's a shame we weren't able to find out more about the 280SEL's early life. The 1970s were a particularly difficult period for the country of Vietnam, and it would be fascinating to know who might have sat in that comfortable rear seat in the first years of this Mercedes' service with the embassy.

△ The 280SEL was sold by the embassy in 1978.

▽ Additional rear space in this long-wheelbase W108.

▽▽ Gearlever on steering column; no rev counter.





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