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STEVE HALL

Executive Editor
Kyle Molyneux

Art Director
David 'Spike' McCormack

Designers
Sarah-Jane Mortimer and Claire Trent

Retoucher
Linda Duong

European Editor
Ian Kuah

Publishing Director
Paul Cosgrove +44 (0)20 8639 4401

Advertisement Sales Executive
Jacob Hayes +44 (0)20 8639 4416

Sales & Marketing Manager
Richard Cosgrove +44 (0)20 8639 4403

Contributing writers and photographers
Alan Anderson, Guy Baker, Neil Briscoe,
Martin Buckley, Jason Dodd, Piotr R
Frankowski, Barry Hayden, Reed
Hitchcock, Ian Kuah, Wilhelm Lutjeharms,
Peet Moeke, Jordan Molyneux, Shane O'
Donoghue, Terry Osborne, Robb Pritchard,
Craig Pusey and David Sutherland

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Sundial Magazines Ltd, Sundial House,
17 Wickham Road, Beckenham, Kent,
BR3 5JS, UK.
TEL +44 (0)20 8639 4400 **FAX** 020 8639 4411
EMAIL info@mercedesenthusiast.co.uk
WEB www.mercedesenthusiast.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS/BACK ISSUES
Mercedes Enthusiast Subscriptions,
Trinity House, Sculptins Lane, Wethersfield,
Essex, CM7 4AY, UK.
TEL +44 (0) 1371 853633
FAX +44 (0) 1371 851808
EMAIL mercedesenthusiast@escosubs.co.uk

Newstrade Seymour Distribution,
2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT, UK.
TEL +44 (0) 20 7429 4000

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



The more lights and dancers on stage, the better! It all felt quite cheesy, even then – but I miss the spectacle



It's evolution rather than revolution for the new E-Class, which you can read about on page 6. Strangely, Mercedes-Benz has so far made little fuss about the arrival of its 214-series Saloon. Granted, it's the sixth generation to bear the E-Class label, but normally a new car with this much history behind it receives more celebration. The automotive industry appears to be moving away from traditional motor shows, where such new cars would get proper time in the limelight and a more exciting reveal. Clearly, there are some downsides to that development. Remember how ex-Daimler boss, Dr Dieter Zetsche used to do things? The more lights and dancers on stage, the better! It all felt quite cheesy, even then, but I miss the spectacle and element of humour he brought to proceedings. Expensive? Undoubtedly. But sometimes I think the digital age isn't all it's cracked up to be.



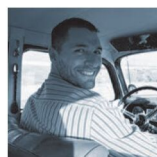
Turning to this issue of *Mercedes Enthusiast*, I'm rather proud of what the team has put together. If a 300CE versus 420SEC twin-test isn't enough, we compare a 123-series Coupe with CLK Cabriolet V8, drive the range-topping 500SLC rally rarity, scorch rubber in a C63 AMG with Weistec supercharger, find out what it takes to restore instrument clusters, and discover direct fuel injection's links to aviation. So, sit down and buckle up!

Kyle Molyneux
Executive Editor

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



David Sutherland
This long-time contributor has often written of his love of Stuttgart coupes and feels a comparison between the 124-series and 126 SEC is especially interesting. "On the one hand you have the hopefully manageable purchase and running costs of the C124, but on the other you would be owning and driving one of the most magnificent Benz coupes of the post-war years, but paying heavily," he ponders. From page 24 you can read David's thoughts on a 300CE and 420SEC.



Wilhelm Lutjeharms
"The 500-badged V8 is undoubtedly one of the best models, if not the best in the SLC range to drive along an open road," reckons South African writer Wilhelm Lutjeharms, who recently got behind the wheel of a well-preserved 500SLC for the first time to discover what makes this specific model collectable and an ideal GT for any Mercedes-Benz or 107-series enthusiast. Read the full story on this handsome, Thistle Green metallic coupe from page 32.

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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

News

New E-Class

First pictures of handsome new W214 E-Class hitting UK roads later this year!

The sixth generation E-Class has been unveiled! On sale in Europe this summer with the first customer cars arriving at dealerships in autumn, Mercedes' mid-range luxury saloon has its LED headlights set firmly on electrification, with all engines classed as mild hybrids or plug-in hybrids. Production will be based at Sindelfingen, Germany and Beijing, China.

The new W214 E-Class is 22mm longer than its predecessor and boasts the same 0.23Cd drag coefficient despite presenting a larger frontal area to the wind. Inside, new electronics architecture promises a user experience unlike anything seen in a Mercedes, the MBUX infotainment system – including the optional new glass Superscreen spanning the dashboard – benefiting from a new,

high-powered central computer. Boot capacity is 540 litres, optional Active Ambient Lighting pulses in time with music and films played through MBUX, and selfie and video cameras can be specified for tuning into conferences and so on – whilst the E-Class is stationary.

Engine line-up

Six models were detailed in the launch announcement. The E200 (2.0L, 4-cyl turbo petrol) has 201bhp, accelerates from 0-62mph in 7.5 seconds and achieves up to 44mpg with as little as 144g/km CO2 emissions (WLTP). The E220d and E220d 4Matic (2.0L, 4-cyl turbodiesel) offer 194bhp/324lb ft torque, a 7.6/7.8-second 0-62mph time and up to 58mpg with 125-149g/km CO2 emissions. All three of these mild hybrids pack an integrated starter-

generator (ISG) and 48V electrical system giving an extra 23bhp/151lb ft hit of performance.

At launch, the plug-in hybrids comprise the E300e and E300e 4Matic (2.0L, 4-cyl turbo petrol + 25.4kWh battery and electric motor), which have a system output of 308bhp/406lb ft, hit up to 565mpg (no, that's not a typo) with 12-20g/km CO2 emissions, and provide an electric driving range of up to 71 miles. The E400e 4Matic has the same electrified setup but delivers 375bhp/479lb ft for a 5.3-second 0-62mph time, this despite up to 471mpg and 14-20g/km CO2 emissions, plus an electric range of up to 68 miles.

All engines are linked to a nine-speed 9G-Tronic automatic. A range-topping, electrified straight-six E-Class will arrive later, says Mercedes. Suspension is either steel springs with selective damping, or Airmatic. Up to 4.5 degrees of rear axle steering is available as an option, reducing the 11.6m turning circle to 10.8m and improving agility and stability.

Other features include driverless parking/unparking (market dependent), eco-friendly seat upholstery, automatically adjusting air vents (optional), and automated comfort functions based on occupant behaviour data captured by on-board artificial intelligence.



△ Superscreen dash display: on-board AI.



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Engine and equipment upgrades for GLA & GLB.



Smart compacts

The GLA and GLB have undergone a midlife refresh, with both SUVs receiving light tweaks to their already handsome exteriors, plus more standard equipment including LED headlamps. Both cars also receive new comfort seats finished in Artico/fabric, a leather-wrapped steering wheel, the latest generation of MBUX infotainment system and an upgraded Driving Assistance package.

The GLA and GLB ranges comprise the 180 model (134bhp), 200 (161bhp), 220 4Matic (187bhp) and 250 4Matic (221bhp) petrols



△ Hard to spot the design tweaks at first look.

- all of which are mild hybrids thanks to their 48V power supply and starter-generator providing an extra 14bhp. The diesel line-up includes the 180d (114bhp), 200d/4Matic (148bhp) and 220d 4Matic (187bhp). Engines are linked to either seven- or eight-speed dual-clutch automatic transmissions. UK pricing and full specs was not confirmed at the time of writing.



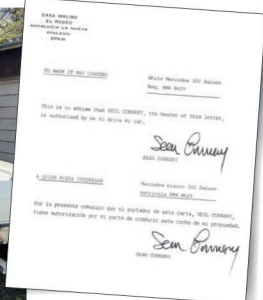
△ 500,000TH G-CLASS

The half-millionth G-Class recently rolled off the production line in Graz, Austria and it's a special version with historic elements in a nod to the original. An electric G-Class is due in 2024.



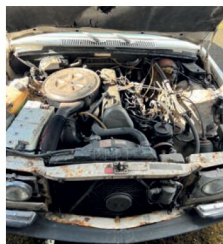
△ AMG S-CLASS

AMG S-Class customers can now specify exclusive Manufaktur upgrades for their car, including special paint finishes such as vintage blue uni, mystic blue, olive, rubellite red, and two matte shades - night black magno and Kalahari gold magno. Premium grade interior trim is also offered.



△ 1978 saloon with just over 100,000 miles.

△ Plenty of history included with the S-Class.



James Bond's S-Class

Mercedes Enthusiast has been made aware of a 1978 300SD Turbodiesel 'barn find' formerly owned by the late Scottish actor, Sean Connery. The current owner's son, Paul Wiggington, explains how his father came to own the 116-series S-Class: "Sean gifted the car to his brother Neil in 1987. My late father then purchased the car from Neil

Connery in 2013 - he was a family friend. The car is in need of serious restoration and I have a stack of paperwork signed by Sean, plus all the Spanish export paperwork."

The 300SD Turbodiesel's current mileage is 103,000 and Paul tells us the price is on application. If interested, you can contact Paul on 07816 977749.

△ DOUG STEANE PASSES

190SL Racing driver and winner of the 1956 Macao Grand Prix, Doug Steane has passed away at the age of 92.

▽ NEW GLC COUPE

The regular GLC SUV has been facelifted and now it's the Coupe's turn. Updates include exterior tweaks, mild hybrid and plug-in hybrid powerplants, more standard kit and the latest version of MBUX. European markets should see the car from July 2023.





New GLS

Mercedes' behemoth receives a light reworking

Continuing the onslaught of new Mercedes SUVs, the German manufacturer has also unveiled an updated version of its seven-seat GLS.

Arriving in European dealers from October 2023 and the US market from September, prospective customers are being tempted with new paint finishes, interior colours and trim options, not forgetting exterior enhancements such as more visually striking grille and bumper designs, plus the latest version of

the MBUX infotainment system. For those wishing to take their GLS off-road, there's a revised Off-Road Engineering package that now includes an underide guard and 30mm more ground clearance.

Engines detailed include the three-litre, 276bhp GLS450 4Matic and four-litre, 510bhp GLS580 4Matic petrols, plus the three-litre, 265bhp GLS350d 4Matic and three-litre, 362bhp GLS450d 4Matic diesels. A Maybach GLS600 4Matic with four-litre, 549bhp V8 and exclusive luxury appointments is also available.



Latest version of MBUX plus new interior colours and trim options.



Maybach version with even higher grade appointments inside.

Maybach EQS SUV

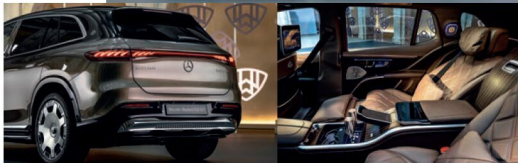
The Maybach EQS680 SUV is the first all-electric offering from Mercedes' ultra luxury brand. The two-tone paintwork is optional, but all examples will carry that immense grille and upright Mercedes star on the bonnet (oh, how we've missed seeing that on new Mercedes). Digital Light headlights are standard fitment, and 21- and 22-inch forged wheel designs are available.

As you would expect of a car bearing the Maybach label, the interior provides a memorable experience thanks to standard MBUX Hyperscreen dashboard arrangement, nappa leather upholstery, Burmester 4D surround sound system, and ventilated/massaging/heated seats front and rear (the latter recline, too). Airmatic air suspension cossets while the 649bhp, electric all-wheel drive system with 370-mile range and fast-charging capability delivers you to destinations silently and effortlessly. Smush the go-pedal into the thick carpet and this SUV will accelerate from 0-62mph in 4.4 seconds and top 130mph.

▷ Maybach's first electric model is this 4WD SUV.

▽ Two-tone paint with pinstripe an optional extra.

▽ Rear seat occupants are spoilt rotten.



TALKING POINT



This month's Talking Point...

Twin headlamps on Mercedes – love them or loathe them?

"I thought they didn't really work on the W210 but I think the W211 facelift is possibly the best looking E-Class." Sam Wong

"Nothing wrong with them if you stop to think about the early 123s or even Pontons with auxiliary lights" Juan Guevara

"I love them on the 208 CLK and 210 E-Class, but can't stand them on the 209 and 211!" James Rehill

"They took some getting used to, however they grew on me." Ron Yu

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

Merc Spotter



"These W123s have been sitting behind a restaurant in Williamsburg, Virginia for over 15 years," explains Brad Purvis. "They were owned by the restaurant's original owner who passed away many years ago. The late owner's daughter has run the establishment since her father's passing, but doesn't seem interested in parting with the cars, thus they sit and deteriorate more with every passing season."

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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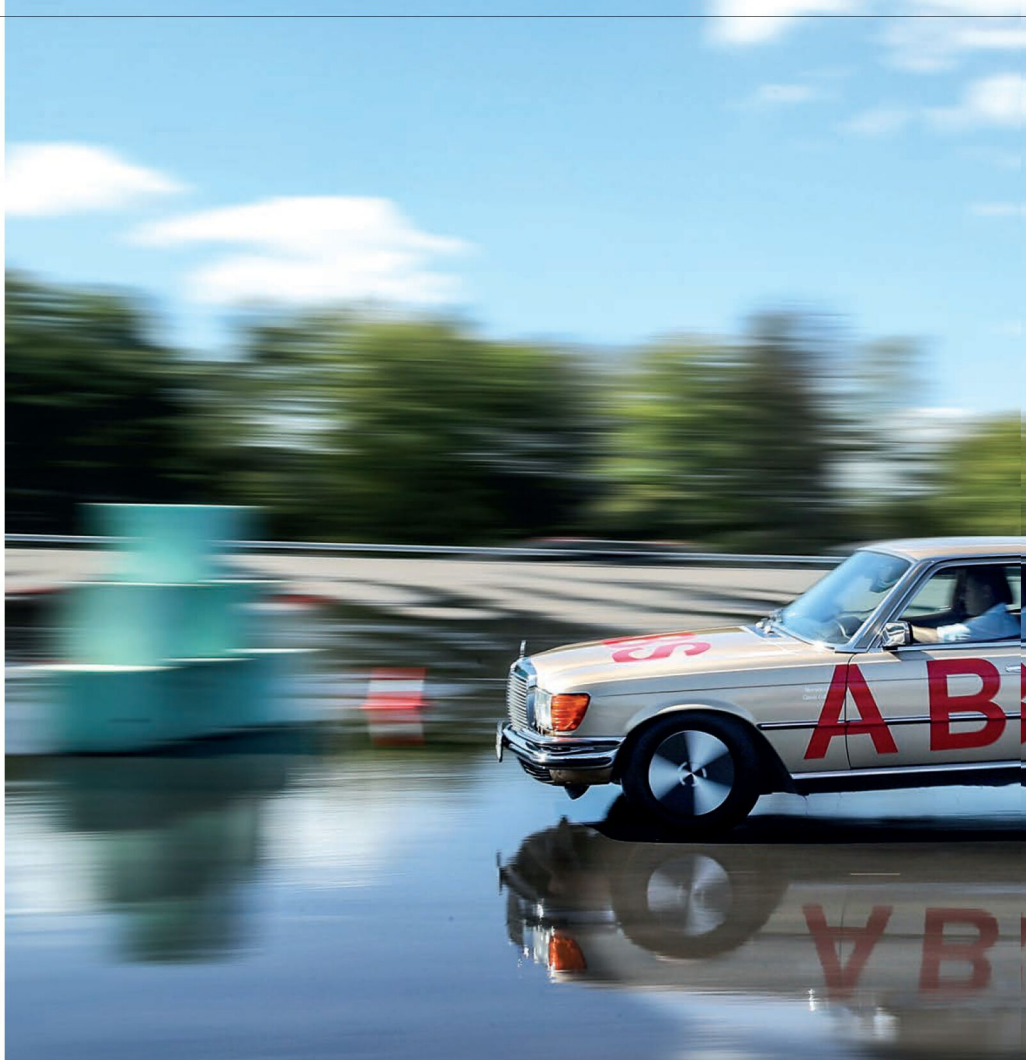
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A 116-series S-Class demonstrates the effectiveness of its anti-lock braking system (ABS) at Mercedes' Immendingen test facility. Developed in partnership with Bosch and introduced in 1978, ABS - as its name suggests - minimises wheel lock-ups during heavy braking, meaning the driver can continue to steer around obstacles even when applying maximum braking pressure.

IMAGE MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG



Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear

Just over a decade on from the C36 launch, Mercedes and AMG found their stride with the hot C-Class



C55 AMG

The C55 AMG of 2004 to 2007 set Affalterbach on an eight-cylinder powered path to stardom it has stayed true to until recently

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

When in the early 1990s AMG was contracted to build road cars that Mercedes-Benz would sell through its showrooms with full factory warranty and back-up, what emerged was essentially what the Affalterbach tuner had been doing all along, except in more refined form, certainly as far as the four-door models were concerned. The cars were essentially 'tuned-up' versions: Mercedes' 3.2-litre M104 straight-six was increased in capacity to 3.6 litres and given

sportier camshafts and bigger valves. Very much the traditional engine modifying pathway.

What customers of both the 202-series C-Class and 124-series E-Class got for the not inconsiderable extra they paid were the C36 AMG Saloon, and the E36 AMG in Coupe and Cabriolet form (with a few Saloons and Estates made too). A little more horsepower, firmer suspension and some discreet badging. Desirable and prestigious – but perhaps underwhelming for anyone who knew what was on offer from BMW, whose M Power

treatment defined the modern performance car.

By the mid-1990s, having allowed time for the AMG/Mercedes-Benz relationship to bed in, the carmaker opted for a new approach: cubic inches, and lots of them. The mid-term revision to the C-Class saw the C36 AMG replaced by the C43 AMG, using the newly engineered M113 V8 in 4.3-litre form, with enough output (302bhp/302lb ft torque) to change the car's character from rev-hungry and raucous to quietly muscular.

Meanwhile, the AMG model of the 210-series E-Class that replaced the 124 had started out with the carried-over 3.6 M104, but this was soon discarded in favour of the five-litre M113, 2,960 of this E50 model built in 1996 and 1997. For the 1998 model year, in September 1997 the three-valve V8 was enlarged again,

this time to 5.4 litres for the E55 AMG – providing Stuttgart with a V8 of sufficient power, velvet refinement and toughness to crush all opposition. BMW was no longer king of the autobahn. The M113 in normally aspirated or supercharged form would become the much lauded, staple AMG motor for the next decade.

When the 202-series gave way to the 203-series C-Class in 2000, a C55 AMG looked like the obvious berth for the biggest M113. After all, the Affalterbach tuner had offered an uber rare, 202-series C55 model alongside the C43. But, mystifyingly, what less than enamoured enthusiast customers were offered for three years was the C32 AMG which had the regular 3.2-litre M112 V6 but with a supercharger. It wasn't short of muscle – 349bhp backed up by 332lb ft wasn't to be sniffed at – but it and the C-Class weren't the ideal combination, the car harking back to the original, low-volume 1993 AMGs rather



◀ Post-facelift cabin of 203-series a pleasant experience.



In regular form, the 203-series had a modern, well balanced appearance, and the C55 AMG was visually enhanced with perfect judgement. It wore fatter, 18-inch wheels in widened wings and a low-key bodykit, and it was necessary to extend the nose of the body by 80mm to accommodate the big engine and its ancillaries. Mercedes said at the time that this was done because the 203 hadn't been designed to take a V8; with hindsight, something of an oversight, surely.

As is often the case with cars in this Past Master slot, we look back at what our veteran correspondent and AMG expert Ian Kuah made of the C55. Attending the press presentation in Spain in early 2004, he began his driving impressions thus: "The C55 AMG starts up with a typical AMG V8 bark but settles down to a smooth but menacing burble that belies the power under its bonnet." Then commenting on its docility, he threw in, "Your granny could take it to the shops like any normal C-Class."

Up to speed, his thoughts flowed: "With the V8 snarling on full throttle up in the mountains, the uprated chassis has a good measure of extra ability where it counts. The car feels more settled over bumps and you can deploy more power because of that extra measure of confidence." He ended with an indulgence. "We found a tunnel and could not help but crank the window down and floor the throttle all the way through just to hear that amazing NASCAR grade V8 growl. Welcome back, V8 C-Class."

△ CLK front end provided space for the eight-pot motor.

△ C55 capable of considerably more than 155mph...

△△△ 203-series C55 followed the C32 supercharged V6.

◁ Just 55 Estates and 108 Saloons were sold in the UK.

◁△ The 5.4-litre V8 had it all, including a thirst for oil!



than impersonating the E55 AMG.

Finally, and partly pushed into it by customer protest, especially in the US, Mercedes launched the C55 AMG at the 2004 C-Class facelift and the V8 compact Benz

was reborn, in Saloon and Estate forms. It packed 362bhp and 376lb ft torque, 4 and 13 per cent up on the C32 AMG, and was mated to AMG's five-speed Speedshift automatic

transmission. There was of course much upgrading work done to the 203's chassis: the suspension was firmed up, the track widened, the brakes beefed up and the steering given more direct gearing.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG Saloon/Estate (W202/S202)

ENGINE M113 5.439cc V8 POWER 362bhp@5,750rpm TORQUE 376lb ft@4,000rpm TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,635/1,695kg

0-62MPH 5.2/5.4sec TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 23.7/22.9mpg YEARS PRODUCED 2004-2007 NUMBER BUILT 4,021/595

Fuel consumption according to NEDC combined

Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

Outside forces



"Improvise. Become more creative. Not because you have to, but because you want to. Evolution is the secret for the next step."
- Karl Lagerfeld

While credit for the first retractable hardtop goes to Peugeot for its 402 Éclipse Décapotable of 1935, it was Mercedes that finally brought the idea into the mainstream, writes Ian Kuah. The best-selling R170 SLK of 1996 started the folding hardtop fever, and the R230 SL took the concept to market five years later.

It all began with the SLK Concept that made its debut at the 1994 Turin motor show. This neat little roadster with its clever folding metal top left such an impression that prospective customers around the world signed up with their local Mercedes dealers. Here at last was a roadster that you could park on the street without fear of some miscreant vandalising your canvas top.

However, fashion is the first thing to go out of fashion, and after a thrilling decade-long roadster revival that kicked off with the Mazda MX-5 in 1989, the droptop two-seater market began to show signs of lethargy. While the wealthy were willing to pay thousands over list price to get their hands on the first SLK and SL models back in 1996 and 2001 respectively, discretionary spending on roadsters fell away sharply in 2008 as jobs and bank balances came under threat. The R230 SL was scheduled to be replaced by the R231 in 2008, but as sales had been slowing even before the financial crisis, Daimler boss Dr Dieter Zetsche asked his team to apply a facelift to extend its life until 2012.

Roadsters, especially premium priced ones, need to have a visual wow-factor and unfortunately the taller, squared-off nose did not sit well on the sleek, wedge-shaped R230. The R231 that finally arrived in 2012 was even worse, I thought. In a market where elegant good looks create the initial wow-factor, this was a Marmite design if ever there was one.

Model planning is a pretty

long-range science, and it takes a car manufacturer around six or seven years to design and develop a new model range. The problem is that politics and economics can have a major influence in market sentiment beyond the usual ten-year average boom and bust cycle. Launching expensive new models into the teeth of a recession is not in any manufacturer's



△ R170 SLK was both a pretty roadster and compact coupe.



A difficult relaunch for Merc's R230 SL, which gained angular looks.



△ Early version of the R230 SL remains a beautiful roadster.

manifesto, but it has happened more times than I can remember. Having a larger spread of models can mitigate this to some extent but that is expensive in development cost terms.

I remember BMW telling us around 2009 that it planned to expand its model range by up to 40 per cent over the next several years. Mercedes and Audi initially resisted this, but then the former got totally carried away, producing Saloon, Estate, Coupe and Cabriolet models of the C- and E-Class, with countless i4, V6 and V8 petrol engines, and i4 and V6 diesels. There was even an R172 SLK with the OM651 diesel.

Thus, it was no surprise that when Ola Källenius took over as CEO in May 2019, he set about a drastic rationalisation of the model range. Flagging sales meant the SLK was for the chop, while the slow-selling S-Class Coupe and Cabriolet would not feature in the 223-series-based range. It was pretty clear by now that the writing was on the wall for coupes and cabriolets.

So what heralded the death knell for the Coupe and Cabriolet segment?

Within the Mercedes range, the E-Class has always been the best

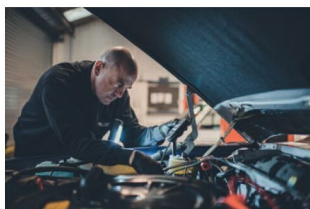
all-rounder, and the fact that its Coupe and Cabriolet versions had better rear seat room than the S-Class variants for a significantly smaller price tag was one factor. And choosing the four-seat C-Class Cabriolet was also a no-brainer when you did the numbers against the SLK Roadster with its limited interior and boot space.

However, maybe the real villain in this story is the SUV. Although not a direct competitor to a coupe or cabriolet, the existence of sporty SUVs with coupe rooflines and even a couple of rag-top SUVs has skewed the market even more. One could argue that this battle is no longer about cars, it is about culture. **A**

Ola Källenius set about a drastic rationalisation of the model range

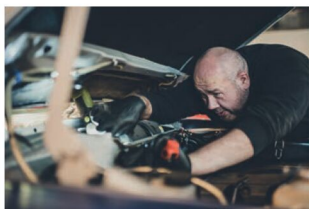
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Developed exclusively for the R107, W113 and R129 SL, our comprehensive Health Check and consultancy is an industry leading service that cannot be found anywhere else. This Health Check is a comprehensive review of your car, which takes place on the ramps, in our service bay and out on the road. A Health Check is more than just a status report, it's a chance for you to really examine your car and your future plans. It gives reassurance for you and the car, an opportunity to discuss your intended direction with an impartial expert. For customers who have recently acquired an SL, whether as part of an inheritance, from an auction or from any other source it's a great opportunity to really understand exactly what is sitting in your garage. Our consultancy platform provides a structured approach for the next steps in your SL journey. Many fine restorations have started with a Health Check, but we've also saved customers from investing money in the wrong areas or in the wrong car entirely.



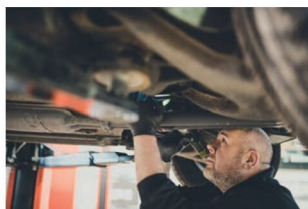
COMPLETE HEALTH CHECK

Our industry leading Health Check is specific to the SL, designed to give you a full and complete report on the wellbeing of your classic car. A great place to start if you have recently purchased a car or are about to embark on a programme of restoration.



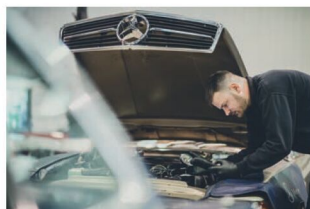
BULKHEAD CHECK

The bulkhead is arguably the one area on your car that has the potential to produce the largest bills. This Bulkhead Health Check aims to reveal the true extent of any bulkhead corrosion hidden within your SL, and form a road map to rectify the issue.



STRUCTURAL CHECK

Our Complete Structural Check combines the Under Body Check with the Bulkhead Check giving a comprehensive picture of the condition of all metalwork beneath and inside your SL.



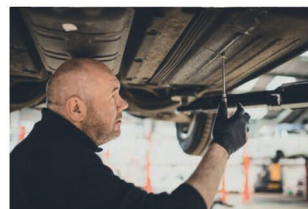
ENGINE CHECK

Chasing misfires, leaks, wobbles and squeaks results in frustration and confusion. By performing a complete Engine Health Check, you will be provided with the best possible information on the health of your engine, from top to bottom.



BRAKE CHECK

A complete report on your entire braking system, putting you in the best possible position to make a decision on what to do next to improve your SL. We work through each area of the system, from the sole of your shoe to the disc itself.



UNDERBODY CHECK

Our Underbody Check is designed to give a full report on the integrity of a car, covering the all-important metalwork and mounting points from front to back.

Perfect for getting an understanding of your SL

RUSSELL OWENS
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01789 337 070 (Option 3)
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The expert on all things Mercedes gives us his latest views...

History repeating



As covers are peeled from the brand new, 214-series E-Class, David Sutherland admits a long-held affection for Mercedes' mid-range luxury saloon and recalls the model's history

In my bleaker moments, I worry that before too long the only new cars we'll be able to buy will be a variation on the SUV. Ford's discontinuation of the Mondeo last year because of dwindling demand for the traditional four-door saloon was a telling move, given that for decades it and its Sierra and Cortina predecessors had been default, affordable family and business cars that were always among the top sellers.

It therefore lifted my spirits to learn that Mercedes-Benz has revealed the new, sixth-generation E-Class. Never mind what the rest of the industry thinks, the traditional 'three-box' passenger car, which isn't marketed as a lifestyle accessory, is alive and well. If Mercedes thinks this, that's good enough for me.

The E-Class is among my favourite Mercedes models. Its middleweight position allows it to be spacious and pleasant to ride in, and with great presence on the road, but stops it short of S-Class bragging. What I also appreciate is that it has always been perfectly pitched into its market, being the definitive prestige saloon that is nonetheless relatively affordable. And, in the 'old' days at least, once you'd begged, borrowed and stolen to buy one, it held its value very well indeed.

The 'E-Class' was officially born in mid-1993 when all Mercedes models were rebadged and the 124-series became the 'E220', 'E320' and so on. But in spirit, the E-Class goes back a quarter of a century before that, to 1968 and the launch of the 'New generation', W114/W115 Saloon which took over from the by then dated W110 Fintail. The last styling project French-born Paul Bracq completed before returning home to work on the TGV high-speed passenger train, it featured his hallmark razor sharp waistline and uncomplicated elegance, the look

so simple it was a shape a child would imagine if asked to draw a car.

The Stroke 8, as it came to be known, was more than just the Fintail replacement, as it set the template for decades of future mid-range Benzes. It evolved into the 123-series in early 1976, which took and built on its rightness, and when the baton was passed to another distinguished Stuttgart styling boss, Bruno Sacco, the 124-series helped establish the

from taxi driver staple in E200D diesel form to optioned-up E320 executive perk transport.

The 210-series that came next, in 1996, was dynamically brilliant but is sadly remembered mainly for the catastrophic quality fail, which saw it rusting like an old Italian car. But I can forgive that, and for one specific reason: the E55 AMG. With 5.4-litre M113 V8 power, new levels of comfort and refinement, and discreet but striking styling (especially those radical-

for-the-time droopy double headlamps that required large but concealed panels gaps to allow the bonnet to be slammed without damage), this was the consummate high performance saloon of its day.

With the perspective of time, we can see

that it took Mercedes a model generation to get back on track. The 211-series, from 2002, although as good a four-door saloon as you could wish for, had the job of debuting new generation electronics and suffered many teething problems and ended up serving as preparation for the 212-series that arrived in 2009.

Everything was right about this E-Class, from its evolutionary styling that was still Mercedes graceful but with a harder edge thanks to some sharper panels, to its bulletproof engineering and construction. The 212 is now in the sweet spot of E-Class value, with plenty of the mainstream models (I don't have space here to laud the E63 AMG) around for £5,000 to £10,000, and much cheaper with intergalactic mileage. I'm sure that when 212s disappear from the roads it'll be emissions penalties that kill them, not mechanical failure.

Mercedes fully embraced digitisation and electric power with the 213-series of mid-2016. I can't get as passionate about this generation as with the oldtimers, but someone has to do the future, and the E-Class is the ideal candidate to take on the challenge.



△ The 124-series Mercedes E-Classes remain the definitive 1980s Benzes, reckons David Sutherland.



△ The Stroke 8 models were in effect the first Es.



△ E55 AMG partly salvaged the 210's reputation.

Mercedes-Benz of the 1980s while retaining the 1968 car's ethos.

The 124-series is, I feel, the most significant E-Class there's been. It extended Mercedes' reach into the market, with cabriolet versions and the first sub S-Class V8 in the form of the 500E/E500, and by the end of its extended, 11-year production – few Mercedes models break the decade – it was the car for all reasons,

The E-Class is among my favourite Mercedes models

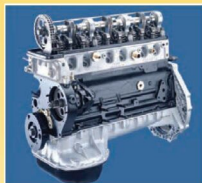
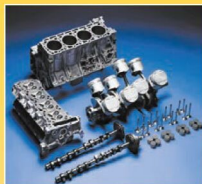
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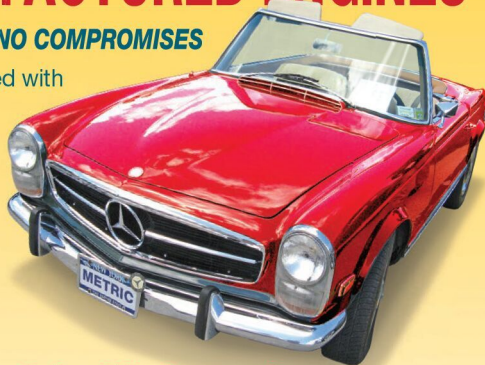
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Social Club

Mercedes-Benz related highlights from the world of social media



PCarMarket

@PCarMarket

f Finished in Impala Brown metallic over a rare Light Brown plaid cloth interior, this 1990 Mercedes-Benz 500SL Roadster was delivered new in Switzerland and is said to have been owned by Prince Abdulaziz bin Fahd Al Saud of the royal family of Saudi Arabia ever since. With under 3,000km (2,000 miles) on the odometer, this 500SL made \$99,750 (approximately £81,700) in the PCarMarket auction.



Bring a Trailer

@Bringatrailer

T Sold: 10K-mile, 1995 Mercedes-Benz E300 Diesel for \$152,607. In mid March, this Polar White W124 fetched the equivalent of £117,000 on the online car auction platform bringatrailer.com. According to the advert, the car was first delivered to Great Lakes Motor Corporation of Buffalo, New York, and spent time in Pennsylvania before being acquired by the selling dealer in January 2023. Under the bonnet is a three-litre straight-six diesel motor making 134bhp/155lb ft torque.



RM Sotheby's

@RM Sotheby's

f Four wins, three poles, and seven fastest laps. This Original Works AMG-Mercedes 190E 2.5-16 dominated the '92 DTM season, making it the quickest Evo II of the season. The 'Gruppe A' legend is a force to be reckoned with, packed with a 373hp engine paired with a six-speed H-gearbox from Xtrac.

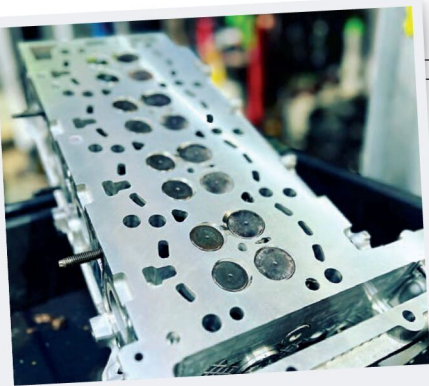
This piece of AMG-Mercedes motorsport history, once driven by Bernd Schneider, goes under the hammer on May 20 in Cernobbio, Italy. The estimate is €450K-550K (£395K-485K).



Tony Curtis

f I live in beautiful Warrnambool in Victoria, Australia. Here are my three Mercedes-Benz cars, each vastly different to the other. They are a 1984 230CE (300,000km), 2001 CLK55 AMG (212,000km) and 2006 SLK280 (71,000km). I love them all, and love reading Mercedes Enthusiast!





Prestige Car Service

@mercedes_workshop_hordean
Love a bit of head work. Snapped timing chain on an OM654 diesel engine. Luckily it only bent two valves. 400,000 miles on a 2016 numberplate.



Nikhil Thakrar

@mercedesportfolio
A few of the classics. Looking forward to those sunny countryside drives and car shows/meets!
Nikhil used his father's W115 for his wedding and the saloon certainly looked the part.



Jay Agraviador

@motor.drive.photo
This photograph of Jay Agraviador's E320 Cabriolet has a distinct retro vibe befitting a cool Mercedes-Benz drophead hailing from the 1980s/90s.



Nutley Sports & Prestige

@nutleysportsprestige
Remember the very dusty, one-owner Mercedes-Benz 300SL with just 9,800 miles from new, which had been dry stored and unused for eight years? Well, we have completed all of the mechanical re-commissioning and she has done her first road test... faultlessly.



Christian Dawson

@mercedes_benz_sl400
Who else goes straight to the top of a multi-storey car park?



Andrew Christopher

@andrew.c63
The Dark Knight



Marc Luca Automobiles

@marcluca_official
190E 2.0. Mint condition. Beryl metallic. 85,000km.
This baby Benz sold for £13,900 (around £12,300). Image by @blendenring.



End of the

“Merc’s
compacts
have matured
considerably
since their
original
iterations”



line

We get our first chance to drive the A-Class and B-Class in facelifted form, comparing mild hybrid petrol and ‘old school’ diesel powerplants

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

“The cabin is an interesting place to be, with its two 10.25-inch screens dominating the dashboard”



A180 is a bit gutless at higher revs, but does the urban crawl well enough.

If rumours are correct, what you are looking at are the last A-Class and B-Class from Mercedes-Benz before the company doubles down on electric propulsion and larger models with bigger profit margins. Merc's compacts have matured considerably since their original iterations with their what would transpire to be battery-less – sandwich platforms, jittery rides and somewhat flaky quality. Today's A-Class and B-Class are more sharply styled, better made and in possession of some lovely cabin features, including a marvellous infotainment system called MBUX with 'Hey Mercedes' voice assistant.

On sale since October 2022, the A-Class Hatchback starts at £31,880 OTR, while the A-Class Saloon (pictured) kicks off at £32,475, and the B-Class range is priced from £35,100 – all of them four-cylinders. The A250e is a plug-in hybrid with battery and electric motor providing up to 51 miles of emissions-free driving, while all other models in the A/B ranges with petrol engines (including AMG's 302bhp A35 but not the 415bhp A45 S) are now classed as mild hybrids due to their new 48V electric system and electric motor delivering a 14bhp boost from standstill, among other benefits. The turbodiesels, however, do without any electric support.

Engines are linked to seven- and eight-speed dual-clutch transmissions (model dependent), and driving modes Eco, Comfort, Sport and Individual give pilots the chance to prioritise maxing out efficiency, driving with minimal effort or lots of it, or experiencing a combination of all three by tweaking engine, suspension, throttle and steering settings. As a way of improving economy and smoothness, Mercedes has fitted its latest petrol A-Classes and B-Classes with a belt-driven starter-generator (RSG), which provides quieter engine starts and a 'sailing' function that cuts the engine during steady cruising.

A180

The 134bhp A180 is the entry level A-Class, sitting below the 161bhp A200, 148bhp A200d and 215bhp A250e. Those buyers hoping the AMG Line spec featured will bring some extra pizzazz in the performance department will find only slightly sexier styling and 18- or 19-inch wheels rather than base Sport spec's 17s.



△ Cabin has real wow-factor: good seating position.

< There's little to separate the Saloon and Hatch.



In terms of kerb weight, this chunky looking four-door is an insignificant 10kg heavier than the Hatchback, while the Saloon also has a marginally bigger boot.

On the move, there is a sense that this baby Mercedes-Benz finally knows what it wants to be. Gone is the third-generation car's brittleness in the ride quality department, which never quite delivered the go-kart handling that it should, replaced by something far more polished and settled. Hard cornering will reveal some body roll, but that's fine in a car clearly trying to be comfortable above all else. The 18-inch wheels generate a subtle background hum on rougher road surfaces, but I still found the A-Class pretty impressive in the way it managed Oxfordshire's country lanes. This is a small car with big car ambitions.

I can't say the same for the 1.3-litre, four-cylinder engine developed with Renault-Nissan, however. Step-off with the seven-speed DCT and assistance from the electric motor is smooth enough, but the lumpen and coarse delivery as the revs pile on will have you praying for the next upshift; despite the outright lack of performance, the A180 rediscovers its big-car feel



Diesel's extra torque very welcome, ride not as good as the A's.



< Both cars are smartly styled; AMG Line shown.

△ B beats the A for rear leg and headroom.

△ Higher driving position in the B-Class.

once holding steady at motorway speed with revs reduced.

I do like the hybrid system, though. There's a definite sense of satisfaction using the Eco mode's sailing function, plus regenerative braking, and the 50mpg I achieved driving a mixture of roads was a good effort. Had the A180 banged in a reading of 60mpg or above that would have been truly excellent in my book.

The cabin is an interesting place, its two 10.25-inch screens dominating the dashboard and begging for your attention with their sharp graphics. The rear quarters are a small squeeze for adults but are fine for journeys that aren't overly long; if you want more space inside a similar footprint, you'll need a B-Class.

In this day and age, I suspect the A200 with the higher-powered 1.3-litre engine is the one to have if you can't stretch to the A250e. A little more mid-range guts would go a long way in a car as comfortable in its own skin as the latest A-Class.

B200d

Much of the B-Class is shared with the A-Class, although the MPV unsurprisingly has you seated higher in relation to the handsome dashboard whilst offering more headroom. Rear legroom also gets a welcome boost.

The 148bhp B200d is a boggy diesel with no electric motor spicing up the action, and after driving the A180 I came to lament that fact, even if it delivered a 55mpg economy reading along the same route. I felt sad knowing my smart uses of the throttle were not translating into electricity and recharging an on-board battery. Only the 161bhp B200 petrol – the other model in the range – offers such joys. The two-litre engine itself, however, is impressively vibration-free with typical oil-burner rattles kept to a minimum. I liked the engine's larger wallop of torque too, and it seemed even more in tune with the eight-speed automatic gearbox than the A180 is with its seven-speed transmission.

I appreciated the extra visibility afforded by the higher driving position, although in the process of taming the taller body it seems some refinement has been lost. At town speeds, the B-Class is busier under bum than the A-Class, the MPV failing to mute quite so much detail about the road surface as its brethren manages. However, this is hardly a raw car – indeed, it is nicely rounded where it counts and does settle at 40mph plus.

Like the A-Class, this is an easy car to drive with steering that is light but not too light, a throttle that has predictable response, and surprisingly strong brakes that don't snatch right at the top of the pedal's travel. I just wish there was more ingenuity in the B-Class's practical elements – something to really wow families beyond a 445- to 1,530-litre boot.

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz A180 Saloon AMG Line Executive (V177)

ENGINE M282 1.332cc 4-cyl turbocharged + electric motor POWER 134bhp@5,500rpm
TORQUE 170lb ft@1,660-3,000rpm TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, FWD WEIGHT 1,450kg
0-62MPH 9.3sec TOP SPEED 134mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 45.6-48.7mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 134g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2022-on PRICE OTR £34,575

Mercedes-Benz B200d AMG Line Executive (W247)

ENGINE OM654 1.950cc 4-cyl turbocharged POWER 148bhp@3,400-4,400rpm
TORQUE 236lb ft@1,400-3,200rpm TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, FWD WEIGHT 1,580kg
0-62MPH 8.5sec TOP SPEED 136mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 51.4-55.4mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 137g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2022-on PRICE OTR £38,510

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

WORDS
DAVID SUTHERLAND
IMAGES
STEVE HALL

Cover
story

Golden

How does a 300CE stack up against a 420SEC in 2023? We compare well-kept examples to find out - and pick our favourite

age



Two of the best loved and best selling classic Mercedes-Benz coupes are the work of Bruno Sacco, the carmaker's styling chief for a quarter of a century until retirement in 1999. The 126-series SEC and the 124-series E-Class Coupe were part of his carefully planned and brilliantly executed programme to gather up the loose ends of mainstream model design and present an integrated and perfectly graduated hierarchy where, as far as is possible, they didn't compete with each other.

By late 1984, the Mercedes line-up comprised the newly launched 124-series Saloon, and the W201 190 and 126 S-Class either side of it, with the 124 Coupe joining three years later to cater for two-door fanciers who couldn't or wouldn't stretch to the SEC. It's not surprising that for many, the 1980s represented the high watermark of Stuttgart's influence, every model it built in those years now a highly regarded modern classic that while now dated in many respects somehow doesn't feel old fashioned.

Thanks to the always interesting and usually fast changing stock at Buckinghamshire-based classic Mercedes specialist Edward Hall, we're able to compare two Sacco gems – a 300CE registered in 1993, making it one of the very last of the pre-facelift 'big grille' C124s, and what as from ▶

What are
their respective
characters, and
is one worth
over three
times the price
of the other?



▷ 1985 was, if there ever could have been such a thing, the 'base' SEC, the 420SEC. In late 1991, close to the end of the big coupe's production, it cost £54,600 (the equivalent of £115,000 today), while in that year a 300CE with leather and air conditioning was around £37,000 (£80,000).

At the time of our visit, the 420SEC (a 1989 example) wore a £36,995 sticker price. That's high but here is a car so close to pristine it has never needed any restoration (even the infamously rusting SEC rear parcel shelf is virgin), has covered a mere 56,600 miles in the hands of two doting owners, has undamaged wheels and even the original numberplates. By contrast, the 300CE is a well-used, high-mileage, left-hand drive car that Edward had extensively refurbished and used for European touring, and was priced at £10,995. Both handsome, well appointed, prestigious four-seat coupes. But what are their respective characters, and is one worth over three times the price of the other?

The C126 SEC made its debut in September 1981, exactly two years after the 126 Saloon from which it was derived, and marked the return of a luxury Mercedes coupe based on a saloon platform (for cost and timing reasons, the preceding SLC was essentially a hardtop adaptation of the R107 Roadster). Measuring 85/80mm shorter in overall length/wheelbase, if anything the pillarless profile radiated ever more than charisma than the also perfectly judged 126 Saloon shape.

V8-engined only, the range began as the 3.8-litre 380SEC and 5.0-litre 500SEC, while after the mid-term facelift for the 1986 model season the 380 became the 4.2-litre 420SE and a third model, the 5.5-litre 560SEC, was added. At that point, numerous updates were applied including 15-inch wheels to replace the 14s, bigger brakes and tweaked rear suspension for reduced road noise.

Built post-September 1987, this 420SEC enjoys tickled up output, 228bhp compared to the previous 215bhp, and torque upped very slightly to 247lb ft, though developed 250rpm higher

This 300CE has an unusual history



◁ C124: cabin has solid feel and is neatly styled.

▷ SEC: more space but less tidy packaging.

at 4,000rpm. You may wonder why those who could afford an SEC didn't pay the comparatively small amount extra for a 500SEC or a 560SEC, and indeed most did: 3,680 420SECs were delivered, just five per cent of all 126 SECs.

But three decades on a different perspective has emerged for SEC buyers, as Edward explains, "If you want an R107, there are plenty of low-mileage cars around, but SECs were bought to be used and good ones are the hardest Mercedes to source. There are so few left that people should buy on condition, not spec. Better to have a good 420 than a bad 500. And even if you buy a 560, you won't win any drag races," he adds.

The C124 was also a car usually bought for packing in the miles, especially the six-cylinder models. At launch, it came in 2.3-litre, four-cylinder 230CE and three-litre six-pot 300CE form, the 300CE-24 joining it at the 124-series facelift two years later, using a multi-valve version of the straight-six, a motor first seen in the then new R129 SL. Over 1992 and 1993,

the C124 received a bodywork update, most notably a smaller grille and the star badge moved from the grille to the bonnet, plus new four- and six-cylinder engines.

This 300CE, sporting nearly 200,000km (125,000 miles), has an unusual history. First registered in Monaco, it spent its early life in northern Italy, around Milan and Turin, before coming to Kensington in London in about 2000 for a year or two before returning to Italy to spend many years in storage. It wasn't re-registered in Italy, and came back to London in 2019, and was even owned for a period by Mercedes Enthusiast contributor Martin Buckley before he sold it on to Edward, who did much to it including replacing the cylinder-head gasket and suspension ▶

▽ C124 with A-arm front suspension.

▽ Double wishbones up front on the SEC.



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280SE 2.8 Automatic 1974 W108 in 86,000 miles 4 owners, BEHR (MB) Aircon, Ewindow Sunroof Mid Blue DB350 with Ivory MBTex. Amazing condition, Every Extra virtually Not welded EPOA



280SL Auto Convertible W113 Pagoda 1970 99,000 miles, ALL MOTs, Service History In solid Mid blue DB 350 with Ivory, just had a full restoration at great expense. Massive folder with all manuals, Data Cards, service books etc New Blue Soft Top



250 CE Auto Coupe 1970 W114 81,000 Miles 2 owners In white with brown. E/ Sunroof NEVER WELDED original floors. Recent recommissioning, sub mounts, V clearances, Cold start etc EPOA



250 CE Auto Coupe 1973 W114 80,000 Miles Less than 3 owners. In white with blue interior and E/Sunroof NEVER WELDED original floors, stunning rust free example. Full Service History with all manuals, data cards. MOTs Service book, recent Gearbox overhaul, Valve clearances. FREE MOT and FREE. Drives superb. EPOA



280CE Auto Coupe 1978 W123 65,000 Miles 4 owners, Service History with old MOTs, service book data cards, In Blue with Caramel cloth, E/windows. Original floors and Rust Free, FREE ROAD TAX EPOA



CL420 Coupe W140 1998 W140 78,000 Miles Service History all manuals and service Books, 6 owners Absolutely stunning car EPOA



CL500 Coupe W140 1998 W140 67,000 Miles Service History 3 owners EPOA



190E Auto 2.0 1991 66,000 Miles Service History Silver with Blue Cloth, Sunroof, E Windows, Alloys 3 owners EPOA



E300 D Saloon 1995 80,000 Miles Service History, In grey with black Leather, Sunroof and Aircon Superb EPOA



E220 Auto Estate, 1996, 162,000 Miles, 7 seats. £3,795



S420 Saloon W140 1996 Facelift Model 43,000 Miles: 2 Owners Absolutely Immaculate like new EPOA



190E 2.0 Auto, Black with Black Leather 80,000 Miles Service History Sunroof, Windows Alloys, 2 owners EPOA



500SEC Coupe W126 80,000 miles Service History 3 Owners Metallic Blue Stunning grey Leather Ac EPOA



500SEC Coupe W125 83,000 Miles 3 Owners Smoke Silver Leather Ac Immaculate EPOA

▷ Just 3,680 420SECs were made by M-B.

▷ dampers in readiness for European travel. "I did 5,000km in it on one trip and it never missed a beat," he tells us.

The LHD will be inconvenient for some, but this is a nicely specced example. It has leather, air conditioning, a limited-slip differential (ASD) and the Sportline chassis package bringing lowered and stiffened springs, wider wheels, faster geared steering and a smaller steering wheel.

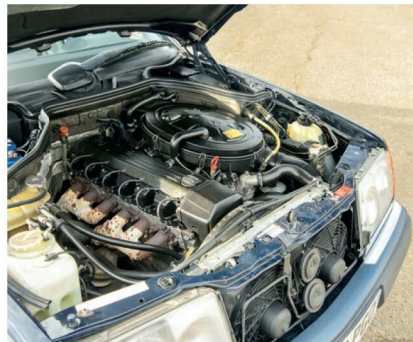
Driving

If you have never experienced a C126, you might expect it to be the lumbering barge that many big cars were 40 years ago, but you'll be pleasantly surprised. Of course, this Willow Green car in exceptional condition showcases the C126 at its best, but even with its relatively soft springs and not remotely sporty 205/65 tyres it handles crisply enough to belie its size. And the coupe rides in that lovely, relaxed way that Benzes did back then, compliant but still slightly firm.

The two-valve M116 is a beautifully smooth V8, and the four-speed automatic gearbox that every C126 used contributes to the impressive refinement. But there's no getting away from the fact that, for most drivers, this version is underpowered. The 500SEC, with its extra



The two-valve M116 is a beautifully smooth V8



◁ 90-degree, 4.2-litre V8 the 'entry level' unit.

◁< Straight-six with Bosch KE-Jetronic injection.

▽ 43,486 of the 300CE Coupe rolled off the line.

34bhp and 52lb ft, will sweep away into the distance while the 420SEC's driver squashes the accelerator pedal and waits for something to happen.

The SEC's interior furnishings probably represent the period when Mercedes were best made but most austere finished. Electrically adjusted leather seats are there to cosset you, the driving position finely tailored by an adjustable-for-reach steering wheel, but other than this and smart looking wood veneer, the theme is of restraint, with utility looking carpets and simple plastics.

Unsurprisingly, the 300CE lacks the SEC's limousine-like feel – this one even more than regular C124s due to the Sportline springs and half-inch wider 15-inch diameter wheels (on this car the 'eight-hole' rather than earlier '15-hole' design) on 205/50 tyres instead of the usual 195/65s. However, this firmer setup is more noticeable at low speed, and as the pace picks up the ride settles down to a good absorption capability.

When the M103 engine appeared in 1985, as the base unit for the SL and S-Class, and the top one for the 124, it was hailed as Mercedes' first six-cylinder motor that was a match for



Both cars are from the sweet spot of the modern classic era

▷ BMW's well regarded straight-six. It was certainly of astonishing refinement, but in common with the 420SEC's V8, needs more muscle. It will happily rev its heart out, but the 178bhp produced at 5,700rpm and 188lb ft torque at 4,400rpm are the clue to an engine designed according to the traditional German carmaker maxim of offering a machine that will cruise the autobahn close to maximum revs if asked to. The early, 24-valve version, the M104, was even more extreme in this respect.

Hence in normal driving the 300CE is almost painfully lacking in mid-range pull, and as in the SEC you're frequently forced to use a heavy right foot to make the required progress. Eliminating the problem is simple: buy the car with the bigger, 3.2-litre M104, which apart from a few cars badged 320CE is the July 1993-on E320 Coupe. It has much more usable mid-range torque.

But many who know the C124 well would be reluctant to do so, because that final M104 version is known to suffer more problems, not least the deteriorating top engine wiring loom, an expensive item to replace. The rustproofing is reportedly less effective – and some simply love the pre-facelift's more prominent grille and badge.

Where the later C124s do not differ is in the interior which, save for different cloth or leather trim patterns, was never updated and didn't need to be. It's the classic 1980s Mercedes cabin: half a

generation more modern than the SEC in instrument layout, and understatedly perfect. This 300CE doesn't have the electric seat adjustment that most do, but the seats can be manually adjusted in various directions. Being a left-hand drive car, the driving position is a little more natural than in RHDs in terms of pedal positioning.

Both the 420SEC and 300CE are from the sweet spot of the Mercedes-Benz modern classic era, and are a pleasure to sit in, to drive (even if they could both do with more grunt) and to look at. They'd be great to own too, provided you buy a good one. However, one aspect heavily weighs the scales of decision in one car's favour – the price. In recent years, the values of the best SECs have risen sharply (poor, rusted ones are still cheap) to the point that while 10 years ago Edward's £36,995 ask would have seemed preposterous, now it seems reasonable enough for what is one of the best around even if it is 'just' the 420.

In that same period, C124 prices have moved little, opening a massive value gap, so financially this choice is a no-brainer.

You're also getting a lovely pillarless coupe that is more manageably sized than the SEC, making parking, garaging and so forth easier. If you feel that having an SEC in your life is pre-destined, pay up and enjoy. But if not, search out a good six-cylinder C124, be it an early 300CE or a late E320 Coupe, because frankly it is a steal – for now, at least.

► Thank you to Edward Hall Classic Mercedes for the loan of the 420SEC and 300CE
Web edward-hall.co.uk Tel 01844 339666



▷ Entry to both pillarless coupes is straightforward.



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 300CE (C124)

ENGINE M103 2,960cc 6-cyl POWER 178bhp@5,700rpm TORQUE 188lb ft@4,400rpm
TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,420kg 0-62mph 8.5sec TOP SPEED 137mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 21.2mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1987-1992

Mercedes-Benz 420SEC (C126)

ENGINE M116 4,196cc V8 POWER 228bhp@5,400rpm TORQUE 247lb ft@4,000rpm
TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,620kg 0-62mph 8.2sec TOP SPEED 138mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 18.7mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1985-1991

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1988 420SEC and 1993-registered 300CE Coupe as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban

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Mercedes 560SL Sports 1988 LHD

£39,500

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-Benz 560SL Sports

£39,750

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



Mercedes Sports 1985 280SL

£27,750

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.

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It is one of the lesser produced C107-series models, but arguably the best. We track down a 500SLC outside Pretoria, South Africa, which has been owned by an enthusiastic collector for two highly enjoyable decades

WORDS WILHELM LUTJEHARMS IMAGES PEET MÖCKE





“

What some enthusiasts also forget is that the SLC was not simply an SL with a fixed roof

”

“When you pull away, put your foot flat,” said the 500SLC’s owner before he walked away and got into the photographer’s car.

He clearly wanted me to experience all the 107-series Coupe had to offer...

There are not many 500SLCs in South Africa – only three or four at most. These cars can trace their history back to when the SLC was unveiled at the 1971 Paris motor show, two months after the 280SE 3.5 Coupe ceased production. According to *Mercedes-Benz: Production Models Book – 1946-1995*, these last-off-the-line SLCs were produced from 1980 to 1981, with 816 made in the first year and 483 in the second year. This makes them some of the rarest series production Mercedes-Benz models from the 1980s. If you know your SLC history, you will know that a similar model appeared a little earlier; the 450SLC 5.0 arrived in 1978 with similar performance. It was quoted with a marginally slower time to 62mph, though (8.5 seconds).

In its element

One cannot step back and look at these cars without being immediately impressed by the beauty of their pillarless form. There is a very distinct sense of style and class about them. Once behind the wheel, lower all four side windows, and immediately you have a wind-in-your-hair experience that is not far removed from that of a convertible. Of course, such a car would have its roof down and windows up, whereas here it's the opposite.

▽ Marvellous velour upholstery matches exterior.

△ Four-speed auto; electric windows F&R.



What some enthusiasts also forget is that the SLC was not simply an SL with a fixed roof. The SLC was a whole 360mm longer, and within that additional length the wheelbase was also 360mm longer. The result is that not only is the ride quality very good, but it is also marginally more relaxing and evidently ideal for the open road with its longer footprint.

500SLCs sold rather well, finding homes at roughly the same rate as R107 500SLs.

The 500SLC was different in a number of ways compared to some of the other 107-series cars. For starters, it

had a new front spoiler, and a bonnet, bootlid and bumpers made of aluminium, plus lighter alloy wheels. The engine block was also manufactured from a light alloy, although it is not the only engine in the SLC range to feature this material.

The C107 suspension's double-wishbone front and rear semi-trailing axle with torque compensation was a particularly useful arrangement on this top-powered SLC.

A sentimental purchase

This Thistle Green SLC is one of eight Mercedes in its owner's collection. "It is really an enjoyable car to drive," he says. "A lot of classic Mercedes are fast once you get going, but this car is fast from the get-go. I purchased this car just over 20 years ago. Being left-hand drive in a right-hand drive country, I don't use it too often, but I've done a number of short trips in it, including runs to the old mining town of Cullinan, a 100-mile round trip.



◁ V8 in 298bhp form won Rally Bandama, 1980.

▽ Rear lights set off by gorgeous Thistle Green paint.

"It is also relatively affordable to keep the car going as it has needed little but general maintenance over the past 20 years," he continues. "I have fitted new parts here and there, one being a new bonnet sponge. I'm of the opinion that people collect cars for a couple of main reasons. People are sometimes sentimental about specific cars or models, or because

certain cars were on posters when they were kids. My godmother had a 350SLC, and I grew up being exposed to that car. So the SLC is something I remember from my youth; it is beautiful, and I have good memories of it. Thankfully, we also now have that specific car in the collection."

Full-bodied

Back behind the wheel of the SLC, and I do as the owner advised.

As I pull away, both wheels spin on the loose gravel with relative ease. The five-litre, all-aluminium V8 develops 237bhp and 297lb ft of torque, which is enough to overcome the grip level on anything other than a smooth stretch of tarmac. As the SLC pulls off, I can feel it is no lightweight, but at 1,515kg it is also not that heavy, especially compared to several modern derivatives in its class.

In the driver's seat, there is no mistaking it for any other era of Mercedes. The large steering wheel, the simplistic ventilation controls and steering column stalks, not to mention those side blinds when I turn around to look at the rear quarters. What is important is that the dashboard is not cracked, and generally, it is easy to note that the car is in good condition – even the carpets that cover the floor and sides of the footwell are in good condition. It might have over 260,000km (161,500 miles) on the odometer, but in most respects, it is not showing its true age and remains a cosy GT.

There is without a doubt some performance on offer here. Once we've cleared most of the traffic, I press the throttle pedal again with more intent – the transmission drops to a lower gear and the revs start to climb. As expected, it is a heavy car, but there is a clear eagerness from the engine, and as quickly as it changes into a higher gear, the SLC feels as planted on the road at these higher speeds as it does at lower speeds.

By moving the gear lever into the 'S' position, the transmission immediately switches to a lower gear. It retains a gear for a couple of seconds longer as the rev needle climbs closer to the redline and shifts to the next gear at around the 5,500rpm mark. From 3,000rpm onwards, the engine starts to pull with vigour, while at

△ SLC is a blissful steer: 3.3 turns lock-to-lock.

“
This Thistle Green SLC
is one of eight Mercedes in
its owner's collection
”





“As a long-distance cruiser or even just for a Sunday drive, there is a strong case for the SLC”

Market watch

At the time of writing, there were only a handful of 450SLC 5.0s and 500SLCs for sale in Europe and beyond. Italian dealer Ruote da Sogno was offering a 130,000km 450SLC 5.0 from 1978 for €60,000 (£53,000). If you're looking for 500SLCs, Germany appears your best bet, a 90,000-mile would cost £46,000, while a 50,000-mile example at Emilia Auto in Hamburg was listed at £58,800.

▷ the same time, at 2,000 to 3,000rpm, there is enough torque on offer to cruise comfortably. You are never left in doubt about the fact that there is a large-capacity engine under the bonnet. Mercedes-Benz claims a 0-62mph time of 7.8 seconds and a top speed of 140mph, which also gives a good idea about the acceleration potential.

When the autobox shifts gears, it is done relatively slowly, but fast enough to keep the momentum going. The heavy body with the plumb tyres and soft suspension provides a very absorbent and comfortable ride. Yes, there is body lean through turns, but the moment any straight section of road appears, the SLC resumes its supremely planted feeling.



◁ There's plenty of space for storing luggage.

Take in the view

The view through the large windscreen allows for a pleasant sight over the long bonnet, which has minor creases running its length towards the headlights. Sadly, there is no tri-star emblem on the front, just a neat and flat Mercedes-Benz badge.

The Thistle Green exterior ties in perfectly with the green velour of the cabin. On a hot summer's day, it might not be ideal, but neither would leather. Nevertheless, it is smart and classy. The interior also features a two-tone design together with the classic wood veneer. The owner also sourced the period-correct radio, although in my short drive I prefer to listen to the engine with the windows open.

Unlike today's powerful machines with engineered

exhaust tones, the aural experience from these earlier cars is dominated by their engine sounds, which in this case is an honest, old school V8 burble. There is also a practical side to the SLC, as there is a welcoming amount of additional space for small adult passengers in the rear, or of course children.

As a long-distance cruiser or even just for a Sunday drive, there is a strong case for the SLC. The pillarless side profile and those vertical window blinds are two elements that make it unique. Motorsport enthusiasts will also point you in the direction of rally victories the SLC achieved at the time, including the 1979 Rally Bandama in the Ivory Coast. A 450SLC 5.0, driven by team Mikkola/Hertz, won this 3,500-mile African event. And 500SLCs finished 1-2 a year later, with Waldegård/Thorszelius taking top spot.

Flat-out driving will not bring out the best in the 500SLC road car, capable though it is. This star shines brightest at lesser speeds. It is a laid-back GT suited to a countryside cruise while packed with a weekend's worth of luggage. 📌

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 500SLC (c107)

ENGINE M117 4,973cc V8 POWER 237bhp @ 5,000rpm TORQUE 297lb ft @ 3,200rpm TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 1,515kg 0-62mph 7.8sec TOP SPEED 140mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 13.6mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1980-1991

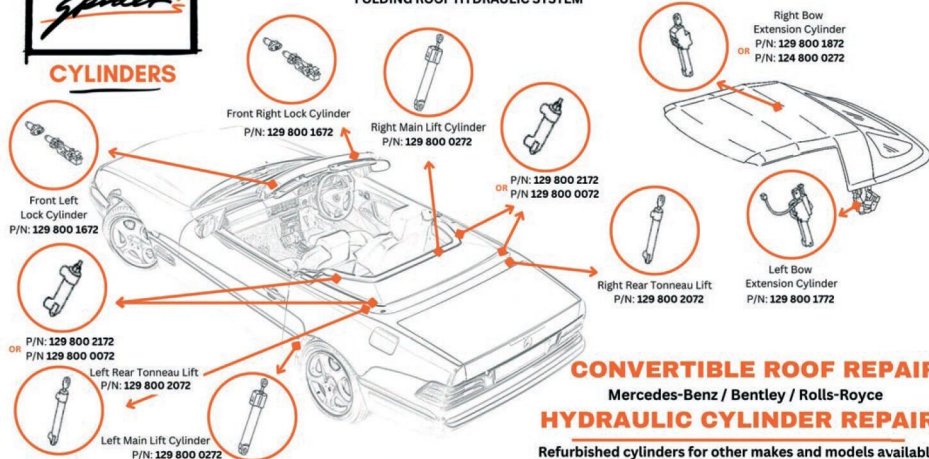
All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1981 car as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban



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“It feels classic but not in a
stodgy, old fashioned way”





Six and eight

Delving into a mesmerising Swiss collection, we compare two variations on the two-door Mercedes theme - a 123-series 280CE and 209-series CLK500

WORDS & IMAGES **ROBB PRITCHARD**



For the December/January 2023 issue, the esteemed Daniel Iseli granted *Mercedes Enthusiast* access to his amazing Swiss warehouse full of classic cars, which is thought to be one of the largest private collections of Mercedes in the world. In this issue, we take a closer look at two of his favourites...

After stepping through the warehouse doors, I stand dumbfounded at the long line of Mercedes, with no idea where to start. Keen to shoot a two-car comparison test, I let Iseli decide the pair to focus on and he does something quite unexpected. The stunning and legendary 500E stays where it is. We amble past the 190SL and the gorgeous W100 he's just bought, down a long line of gleaming chrome bumpers and grilles, then stand before a humble looking, 1977 280CE. It is one of the most nondescript models in an otherwise spectacular line-up, but like many Mercedes enthusiasts Iseli has a special place in his heart for the 123-series.

As you might expect for a car displayed in such a place, it isn't exactly your average C123. With a scant 83,000km (52,000 miles) on the clock, it is a low-mileage example and, as with any car Iseli owns, the 280CE is kept in excellent condition. If anything ever needs doing, from a simple touch-up of paint or trim repair, to anything with the engine, he has an ex-Mercedes-Benz engineer who visits a few days every month to do any work needed. To say this C123 is in better-than-average condition would be an understatement.

“I love this car,” Iseli says. “But to be honest with you, I think it’s more of a lady’s car.” This one was indeed owned by a lady who had it since new. The only reason she sold it after 40 years was that she was in her 80s and owned a few cars, so she started reducing the number as she didn't drive the 280CE so much anymore. Iseli wasn't particularly looking for another 123-series, as he has more than just a few; but when he saw how beautiful the condition was, he made a deal for it right there and then. That was five years ago, and the only work he's ever commissioned in that time is normal services.

Iseli's pleasure in his cars doesn't just come from owning them and looking at them; he loves driving them. Every single one of the 120 (ish) cars he owns is maintained in ready-to-drive condition, so he can just open the warehouse doors and, on a whim, drive away in any one that takes his fancy at that particular moment. And, on special occasions, he even allows select motoring journalists to take the wheel...

The 280CE has been standing for a few months, but when plugged into a trickle charger it starts on the button and the straight-six purrs into life. The 123 is, in this writer's opinion, along with the succeeding 124-series, one of the best cars ever made. It's also one of my all-time favourites, not just for its legendary engineering and build quality, but also because I've always admired designers Bruno Sacco and Friedrich Geiger for taking

▽ Elegant curves and rucked hide found within.

▷△ This 280CE has covered about 50,000 miles.





“Every ball joint, bush and bearing feels as good as new”

what is basically three boxes and creating such a timeless and elegant car. Despite writing for *Mercedes Enthusiast* for the better part of 10 years, a C123 was yet to be ticked off the list, until now...

Behind the oversized steering wheel it feels classic, but not in a stodgy, old fashioned way. Its rivals in the UK were Ford's Granada Ghia, the BMW 5-Series and Volvo 244. But regarding build quality, handling, reliability, and sheer survivability, after eight years of rigorous testing and pre-launch development to build the world's best saloon car, the 123-series Mercedes outclassed them in pretty much every way.

As I drive to the photoshoot location, every ball joint, bush and bearing feels as good as new. Only hesitant gear changes from the autobox reveal this Mercedes' true vintage. Over the 123's production run, 2.7m of all types were made in 10 years, with only a small percentage

– 99,884 – being the two-door, shorter-wheelbase C123 Coupe. Without hesitation, I can say that this example must be one of the finest surviving examples around.

Despite its ability to cover long distances, the 123 sat below the 116-series S-Class in the range, while the R107 SL outclassed it in performance terms, and the W100 600 was above just about everything else on the road. Yet, even so, the 123 exhibits a deep quality to its drive that remains incredibly impressive.



△ Large helm belies the 123's tidy handling.

△ Magnificent M110 straight-six engine.

Unlike the similarly aged Fiat that we only just managed to coax to life for Iseli's wife to take out for a spin, the 280CE feels as though it would just go on forever – as African and Middle Eastern taxi drivers continue to demonstrate. Long after the last litre of oil has been burned and the planet's ecosystem has collapsed, the cyborg warlords who rule over the apocalyptic wasteland will be chauffeured around in a fleet of 300Ds, pilfered from the museum a few hundred years earlier...

Iseli has much the same opinion about the 123-series. “I think they are the last cars Mercedes made that don't go wrong... apart from maybe the cruise control, but that's the only electronic part on them. I also really love the 123-series because it's a model that could be almost anything, from a normal sedan, coupe and limousine to a station wagon and ambulance. I know this because I own most of them! Companies like Brabus tuned them and they were even good rally cars!”

Winning the insanely long and rough London-Sydney rally in 1977 is a good example of that. “I can't name a model of car today that has anywhere near that level of diversity.” ➤





< Under 16,000 CLK500 Cabrios were made with M113 V8 engine.

▷ Spiritual successor

The intervening years between the two cars pictured here saw the equally over-engineered 124-series, which remained in production in Cabriolet form until 1997 (the Coupe was canned in March 1996) become the 208-series CLK. Although the 123 could probably last forever, it's far too nice and precious to be used as a daily driver. The 209-series CLK Cabriolet, launched 20 years ago this year, is certainly no spring chicken, yet apart from the lack of large infotainment displays inside feels like a perfectly modern car suited to everyday driving.

This CLK500 was also owned by a nice lady, Iseli explains. It was a present from her husband and she drove it for 10 years, but got a newer model as an upgrade, so she sold it. Iseli bought

it with just 28,000km (17,400 miles) on the clock and, like every car in his collection, this example is in extraordinary condition, even though it now has over 40,000km on the odo.

"My wife and I have done many trips in this CLK, down to the south of Italy, the Cote d'Azur, and to Bordeaux to visit my good friend Paul Brau – the designer of the Pagoda SL, W111 and 600. He is 89 years old now, so we drive to see him – not the other way around! We've covered almost 20,000km in five years and it's a very nice car to drive. To describe it in one word, I would say it is effortless."

Walking around it, trying to choose the best angle from which to shoot, the CLK500 – in

Elegance trim line and riding on 17-inch alloys – looks rather understated with almost no outward visual clues to differentiate it from a 200 Kompressor or 320 V6. In fact, much of the interior trim is shared with that of the 320 I bought for £600 a few years ago. The metallic blue with the grey interior is a combination Iseli loves and, with the electric roof down on a nice day in the foothills of the Alps, it's a really lovely car to drive. But put your foot down, wait for the

autobox to sort itself out, and it doesn't take long for the 302bhp V8 to affirm its performance credentials.

A 5.4-litre CLK55 AMG Cabrio (362bhp) was released in 2003 and a 6.2-litre CLK63 AMG (474bhp) in 2006, but this 500-badged eight-cylinder model, with its single exhaust pipe and modest wheels, has unique appeal

that its owner greatly appreciates. "I am not a boy racer and have no need for speed. I don't buy AMG or tuned cars – only originals. But with the five-litre V8 engine, the CLK has real power and can keep up with most cars on the autobahn, at least ones that aren't supercars," Iseli says.

"But at the same time, it has plenty of space for luggage, so I really like this car and probably spend more time driving this one than any other in the collection."

"It doesn't take long for the V8 to affirm its performance credentials"



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz CLK500 Cabriolet (A209)

ENGINE M113 4,966cc V8 POWER 302bhp@5,600rpm TORQUE 339lb ft@2,700-4,250rpm
TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,785kg 0-62mph 6.2sec TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 24.4mpg CO2 EMISSIONS 278g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2003-2005

Mercedes-Benz 280CE (C123)

ENGINE M110 2,748cc 6-cyl POWER 175bhp@6,000rpm TORQUE 173lb ft@4,500rpm
TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,460kg 0-62mph 10.8sec
TOP SPEED 121mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 16.5mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1977-1985

All figures from Mercedes-Benz for a 1977 280CE and a pre-facelift, 2004 CLK500 Cabriolet as pictured; fuel consumption for 280CE according to EEC urban and for CLK500 according to NEDC combined; top speed of CLK500 electronically limited



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KE 21 £28,000	C10 NOR £25,000	HA23 LLE £2,200	NRK 9 £6,500	SC55 LET £5,500	I XXB £32,000
KHA IN £35,000	CLS II £15,500	HNP 308 £3,300	O	SDM 4 £19,000	I XXF £28,000
LOT 22 £35,000	CSE 289 £2,500	HNS II £7,500	55 OFB £4,500	3500 SE £11,000	XX19 XXX £9,800
MAC 440 £10,500	D	J	I6 OLD £45,000	T121 SLV £750	Y
60 MG £25,000	DA17 REN £4,800	R100 JAG £2,300	L8 OOO £3,500	50 UND £95,000	YAP 461 £4,000
29 MK £19,500	900 DN £7,500	900 JJ £9,000	OUT IT £8,500	V6 SOP £2,500	X10 YYY £750
I2 NX £25,500	98 DS £18,000	J19 JJJ £2,500	OUT 81D £33,000	I60 SS £22,000	
OOO IX £12,800	E	526 JML £6,500	P	I5 STK £3,500	
222 P £28,000	E4 EGC £850	X23 KDA £750	9000 P £11,500	T	
786 PB £15,500	88 EJ £14,500	I KUK £15,500	PHC 9 £8,000	TEL 777 £10,500	
RRX I £55,000	80 EL £10,500	55 KXA £4,500	PIL 202 £950	I5 TON £16,000	
54 S £87,000			I02 PJ £15,000	U	
20 SB £55,000				X10 UUU £700	
I21 SB £35,000					
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EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE

AMG's cult Q-car receives extra punch from a Weistec supercharger courtesy of its adrenaline junkie owner

WORDS NEIL BRISCOE IMAGES JASON DODD





“ I just caught the bug – as soon as we made the car a bit quicker, we realised we could make it a lot quicker ”

Any fast-moving car brings with it some drama. The sheer spectacle of speed is undimmed even in the early 21st century, more than 100 years since humans first worked out how to make things go really, really quickly. That spectacle, though, can be amplified and extended by other elements. Sound is the key one. As we tentatively enter the silence of the electric age, it's the sound of engines – big and small – that car enthusiasts will miss.

Well, if we're going to have to say goodbye, then the sound being made by the black dot racing along the concrete runway at Elvington airfield in Yorkshire is a pretty good farewell anthem. The dot soon resolves into the familiar shape of a 204-series C-Class Estate, but the sound takes a millisecond or two to catch up. Like a 1950s fighter jet, the C-Class is moving so fast – just beyond the 200mph barrier – that the noise it makes is struggling to keep up. As the C-Class passes, so the noise hits. A booming barrage of bass, overlaid with a wicked crackle that sounds as if AC/DC's Angus Young is plucking the guitar of the gods. It's one part 1950s grand prix car, one part Rolls-Royce Merlin, shaken over the ice of pure mechanical insanity.

Wanting to join the 200mph club, Chris Sargeant didn't want to go down the obvious route of buying some mid- or rear-

engined piece of Italian or German exotica. He wanted to do things differently, and with a slight sense of cheekiness. These days, Chris is the landlord of The Chequers pub in Fowlmere, south Cambridgeshire. He's originally from Dunoon near Glasgow, and his starting point for this whole double-ton idea was a 2013 C63 AMG Estate.

"When I look at the spec and what we did, I think I must have had a bit of a funny turn" Chris tells *Mercedes Enthusiast*. "I just caught the bug, and as soon as we made the car a little bit quicker, we realised we could make it a lot quicker, and it was never quite quick enough."

The tradition is to call such massively rapid family cars 'Q-cars' – named for the wartime naval escort vessels called Q-ships, which while looking like humble fishing trawlers were armed to the teeth – but that description doesn't quite apply here. The C63 Estate looks humble enough at first, but it doesn't take long to twig the massively-inflated wheelarches, the big nostrils in the bonnet and the BC Forged Monoblock KL11 19-inch alloy wheels, finished in a fetching shade of dark bronze. The initial hit of the car – still a humble family estate, remember – and painted a standard Mercedes shade of Obsidian Black, is subtle enough, but once you clock the details you can quickly see the inherent menace.

▷ BC Forged's KL11 alloy wheels in size 19-inch.

▽ Driving modes and Race Start launch control.

▽ KW V3 coil-overs, and wide arch conversion by Gilding Barn Garage.





◀ Figure-hugging leather seats from Affalterbach.

◀ Sports steering wheel with paddles.

△ Nostrils inspired by 507 Edition version.

△ Peter Moore of Quick & Big is selling the C63.

Most would have felt that the 6.2-litre V8 AMG engine (M156) would have been sufficient, what with 451bhp and 442lb ft of torque, but if you want to join the magic 200mph club, you'll need more than that to take on the Lamborghinis and Porsches that proliferate at the end of runways. So, Chris got to work. The first thing was to install a Weistec 2.3L stage 2 supercharger, a job done by the guys at MSL Performance in Birmingham, while Golding Barn Garage in Henfield took care of the wheels and suspension upgrades.

DJM Motorsport did the cooling system – a system so extreme that it includes an icebox mounted under the boot floor, which can help to give some extra chill to the supercharger's breath, for that last nth of horsepower.

There's a Quaife limited-slip differential between the rear wheels, lowered and adjustable coil-over suspension, an extra large Sven oil cooler, a carbon fibre induction kit, IPE headers for the V8, and the exhausts have been de-cat'd and now run straight through.

The results are startling. "I had specific goals with it," says Chris. "I wanted to do 200mph, I wanted it to be a 10-second car for the quarter mile, and I wanted it to do a sub-four-second 0-60mph run." All missions accomplished – the C63 now pumps out a colossal 700bhp with 620lb ft of torque. Its top speed has not yet been recorded, but it'll hit 196mph at the 2,000m mark, and that's with an untidy getaway on a concrete runway surface. Its 0-60mph time stands at 3.68 seconds and again that's on a less-than-perfect surface. On a proper test track, it could properly compress your eyeballs.

“The C63 now pumps out a colossal 700bhp with 620lb ft of torque”

▷ “That first run was pretty daunting” says Chris. “The feeling of that power when you’re sticking your foot down and seeing the dial go past 150, 160, 170, 180... and things are happening just very, very quickly.”

Rebellious as it already is, pushing a road car to 200mph and beyond, for Chris there’s an extra sense of naughtiness in doing so in a family-friendly estate. “On that run at Elvington, we were up against a Lamborghini Huracán, but at the end of the day that’s getting loaded onto a trailer to go home whereas I just jumped in, put the dog in the back, and stopped off at Waitrose on the way home,” laughs Chris.

This mightiest of C63s is now for sale and is in the care of Kent-based Quick & Big. Peter Moore, Quick & Big’s director, reckons you could run it as a daily car. “At low revs, it just drives like a regular C63,” Peter tells *Mercedes Enthusiast*. “Unless provoked, you can just trickle along on the torque without any real dramas – as long as you keep it under 2,000rpm. After that it will struggle for traction a little...”

That traction limitation means that the car’s best performance is through the gears, not standing starts reckons Peter. “Even in standard form, that car was never all about 0-60mph. It was all about 50mph to 100mph. A normal C63 is pretty awesome at that, but this one is just devastating. It doesn’t have switchable engine maps either, so it’s literally everything everywhere, all at once.”

While the C63 might still be a useable, practical car, at least in terms of its passenger accommodation and boot, the noise this mighty V8 now makes might be a limiting factor. “On a cold



△ Icebox in boot part of this C63’s cooling system.

start? I don’t think you could buy this car and live with it on a housing estate,” says Peter. “When Chris dropped it off with me, I could hear him half a mile away. Sadly, I don’t think we’ll see many more cars like this.”

That is true, as AMG itself slowly but surely passes on V8s and focuses on four- and six-cylinders, and electric power. That in turn is making the 204-series C-Class, with its fabulous naturally aspirated V8 engine, ever more of a collector’s item. “The two engines that seem to be attracting the most attention in the used market, and which seem to be appreciating, are the

“Chris reckons he has spent more than £75,000 on this C63”



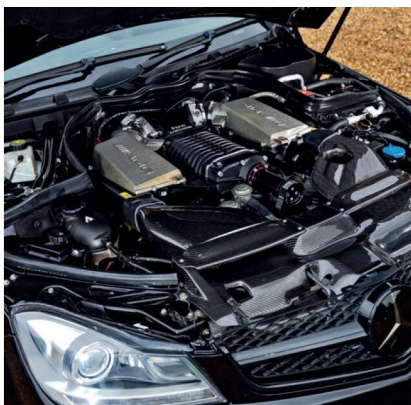
6.2 and the previous, supercharged 5.4-litre V8,” reckons Peter. “Obviously, the 6.2 is a bit special, what with it being AMG’s first in-house engine, rather than a modified Mercedes unit. It’s the European equivalent of an American muscle car engine, what with the power and the noise, but fitted to a car that can actually go around corners.”

Not that this black C63 Estate is especially brilliant at that, as even Chris Sargeant admits. “It’s not really a track car. I did track it once, but it didn’t blow me away. But in a straight line, it’s fantastic.” It’s still the noise that’ll hit you most and hit you hardest. “It sounds like a really, really big engine” says Chris. “It has that deep rumbling growl, and when it picks up speed it roars, it’s just unbelievably loud. It’s something like 105 decibels. It’s actually quite quiet in the car, though. I used to drive it with the back seats folded down, just to hear the exhaust properly. But then when you lift off the throttle, the thunder and pops and bangs and fire that come out that exhaust really is quite special.”

Special, and not that expensive. Chris reckons he has spent more than £75,000 on this C63, but it’s on sale at Quick & Big for £49,990 – making it surely the most cost-effective, and practical, way to go around embarrassing Lamborghini drivers. “If you buy this car, you will quite possibly be the most alpha person on the school run,” says its seller with a grin. “Other people would see it coming in and just climb into their SUVs and slowly slope away. I’ve actually got a numberplate here that spells ‘Big Limited’ so maybe I should put that on it...”

▷ 2.3L Weistec stage 2 kit was fitted by MSL Performance.

▷ 71,000 miles covered: seven-speed AMG auto.



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Estate with Weistec supercharger (S204)

ENGINE M156 6,208cc V8 POWER 700bhp TORQUE 620lb ft TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,795kg 0-60MPH 3.7sec TOP SPEED TBC YEARS PRODUCED 2011-2015

All figures from owner – kerb weight for standard, facelifted C63 AMG Estate

Thank you to Read's Restaurant, Faversham, for the photoshoot location Web www.reads.com Tel +44 (0)1795 535344



“One of Julian’s first commissions was a set of AMG dials for Ron Stratton”

BEYOND THE DIAL

Reap Automotive Design, based in Middlesex, specialises in the creation and restoration of gauges for Mercedes, Porsches and more. We speak exclusively to Julian Reap, the steady hand behind the operation

WORDS **IAN KUAH** IMAGES **IAN KUAH & JULIAN REAP**

▽ '67 dials for Skeets Auto Design's stillborn Mercedes project line.



The elegant analogue dials from the Bruno Sacco era of Mercedes-Benz models are some of the best to grace the dashboard of any car. They also readily lend themselves to customising to match the interior or exterior of the car. The 1980s is also when Julian Reap entered the picture, when the aftermarket personalisation of Mercedes, BMW and Porsche models in Germany, the UK and USA was really taking off.

Julian graduated in 1979 with a degree in Industrial Design from the Central School of Art and Design in London, whose distinguished alumni include Terence Conran and Lucian Freud. As a dyed-in-the-wool car enthusiast, Julian learned from the *Design Council* magazine that Ford had 12 vacancies in its design department. He applied and made it onto the shortlist, but unfortunately for the young hopefuls Ford's Dearborn HQ decided to send over designers from its US team to fill these posts in the UK and Germany.

Julian later did some freelance work for Wood & Pickett based up the road from him in Ruislip. In 1983, Julian had a lucky break when the Chameleon Car Company, which was founded in 1976 by financier Mike Lahav to serve super wealthy Middle Eastern clients, established a showroom in London's Park Lane. "Chameleon commissioned me to create

an illustration of its proposal for a client's car, and paid good money for it," Julian recalls. "The next thing I know, the company asked me if I would like to work for it full-time."

"The design chief was a wealthy young designer/entrepreneur from New York called Richard Sauter whom I assisted with exterior and interior designs," Julian continues. "Chameleon almost exclusively used the 126-series S-Class as the base car for all its conversions, and most were white or red – the favourite colours in the Middle East at this time. I was soon involved in client meetings as Richard helped them visualise the exterior and interior treatment of their dream cars," says Julian. "Most requests we received were straightforward, but when one Arab gentleman asked for a white leather dashboard we had to dissuade him because of the potentially dangerous reflections in the windscreen."

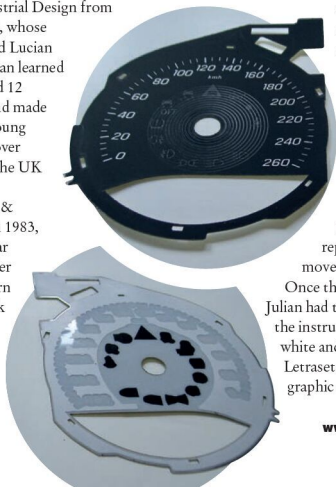
Almost anything is possible

The client then asked Richard if it was possible to have white instrument dials. Chameleon had never done this before, so Richard threw a questioning look at Julian who replied, "Yes, it is." The client was happy and they moved onto the next item on his wish list.

Once the workshop team began the build process, Julian had to figure out how to make the white dials for the instrument pack. He ended up air brushing the dials white and applying the numbers and letters with Letraset. A rub-down, dry transfer system used by graphic artists and architects at the time, Letraset

△ Custom look for dials of Styling Garage's SEC.

▷ Speedometer for 205-series C-Class cars.



▷ was very labour intensive to apply, and it took days to finish the bespoke instrument faces. Julian had learned screen printing during his foundation course at Ealing Technical and Art College and quickly introduced this as the staple method for creating new instrument faces to OE manufacturer quality.

Julian had been at Chameleon for about a year when the company folded, and at the age of 23 he made the decision to go freelance. One of his first commissions was a set of AMG dials for Ron Stratton, the UK's official AMG importer at the time. Located in Wilmslow, Cheshire, where many football players and successful businesspeople lived, Stratton sold prestige marques to a wealthy client base and Julian found himself making special Bentley instrument faces as Ron expanded his automotive haute couture personalisation service.

Julian's talent was also tapped by wealthy American F1 enthusiast and collector Colin Bach, who needed some design input for the Formo Forza Monoposto road car project he was working on with Auto Racing Technology in Bedford at the time. This was followed by bespoke gauges for Overfinch, whose Range Rover conversions were becoming popular.

Bespoke touches

By the early 90s, it was clear that Porsche owners were a potential steady source of demand for bespoke instrument dials, so Julian approached Porsche Cars GB who liked the idea and immediately asked for a set of dials in white with dark blue numbers for a 964 Carrera. The team were very pleased with the result and followed up with a commission for colour-coded dials to match their 968 Convertible Earl's Court Motor Show car, which turned heads with its extrovert Mint Green paintwork and TechArt body styling kit. "After that, I did the dials for all the PCGB special cars fitted with the factory Tequipment line that debuted in 1995," says Julian. "At one point, I was doing three sets of dials a week for PCGB, most of them in marble grey, speed yellow or white."

"In the mid-90s, I was approached by Middlehurst Garage, which wanted recalibrated 200mph speedometers for the Nissan Skyline R33 and R34 models it was importing and tuning," Julian explains. "The JDM [Japanese Domestic Market] speedometers only went to 180km/h [112mph] while the engine ECU physically limited the cars to this speed as well."

Julian was also called upon by Aston Martin to redo the Alfred Dunhill dials that were made in Holland. These were supposed to glow in the dark but the lighting effect was patchy and Julian had to figure out how to fix this so that the lighting effect was even. Success here led to him being asked to create new dials for the DB7 in Parchment, Forest Green and Maroon to match leather upholstery colours.

The story continues

With the advent of the Euro currency in 1999, the strong Sterling exchange rate saw a flood of LHD Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Porsches imported to the UK as they were 20 per cent cheaper in Germany. "Changing their speeds from km/h to mph was more bread and butter rather than creative work," Julian explains. "But the big numbers made it worth my while to invest in 0.35mm and 0.5mm thick, ready-to-use, laser cut aluminium blanks." UK-based, Porsche resto-modification companies, Theon Design and Paul Stephens Autoart have also beaten a path to Julian's door for bespoke coloured dials bearing their logos.

AMG and Brabus dials are now becoming more popular as the values of these apex predator tuner Mercedes from the 1980s and



▷▷ From the early days of Brabus autosport.

△△ Yellow on red cluster design for a Wald tuned Benz.

△△△ Julian was asked by Stratton to make AMG dials.

“Julian started his unique business using an air brush and sheets of Letraset”

90s continue to head skywards. Julian has restored the dials for a couple of Peter Qvortrup's Japanese-sourced AMG cars (Peter's Koenig SEC featured in our February/March 2023 issue), the latest being an AMG-fettled 190E 2.3-16. Another client recently sent along some faded AMG dials with a carbon fibre disc in the middle. These were specially done by VDO and Julian had to work out how the company did it. In the end, Julian recreated the pattern using matte and gloss varnish, which comes up looking like carbon fibre. "Apart from restoring the original dials of AMG and Brabus cars, I am receiving commissions for replica dials which add the finishing touch to tribute cars built from

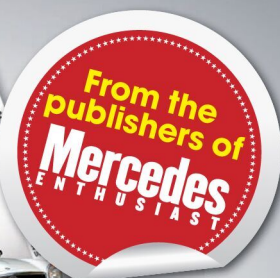
new-old-stock parts for enthusiasts and collectors," he reveals.

Julian started his unique business using an air brush and sheets of Letraset. Four decades on, his latest dials are created from scratch using aluminium or acrylic blanks and a very accurate screen-printing process with individual designs precisely set up on a computer screen. It is not easy finding artisans who can create these dials, and while we know of two such companies in the US and one in Germany, Reap Automotive Design of Middlesex is still the only company offering this service in the UK.

► Find out more at Web www.reapautomotivedesign.com

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*“You can
imagine a W108
looking utterly
at home passing
The White House
on Pennsylvania
Avenue”*

▷ This 4.5 was
shipped to the UK
back in 2018.

▷▷ Titus knew
of this W108
before buying it.





Once a regular in Washington, USA, this 4.5-litre W108 now lives in London and its owner has no intention to part with it

Capital to capital

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



“This particular 280SE is reckoned to be one of the last off the line at Sindelfingen”



If ever a car would have looked at home in Washington DC, surely it's the W108 Mercedes-Benz. Paul Bracq's successor to the classic W111 and W112 Fintail cleaned the somewhat fussy lines of its predecessors, but kept the Pretorian grille and slim, upright headlights. With that grille, and the understated authority of its lines, you can imagine a W108 looking utterly at home amid the marble of the National Mall, cruising past The White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, or parked outside a red brick Georgetown house. A professor? A diplomat? It doesn't really matter; the image works either way.

Actually, this particular 280SE 4.5 is now the property of Titus Johnson, a long-time Mercedes owner and a lover of classic Benz models. He works in the aviation industry, and for a time lived in Washington but regularly commuted to Chicago. To do that, he decided to buy a Mercedes. Not this one, though. “I bought myself a convertible version of the 124 E-Class. I would often drive that car through the night, leaving Washington in the evening and getting to Chicago in the morning. So, I got to know and understand Mercedes really

well, and that led me to joining the Mercedes-Benz Club. I made friends through the club, and they're still friends to this day.”

One such contact was David Van Duzer, a noted architect, based just across the river from Washington. To get from Titus' previous home in Georgetown to Van Duzer's, you'd have had to cross the Francis Scott Key bridge, named after the composer of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Titus regularly crossed that bridge. “I'd befriended David, who was

retired by then, and he was a long-term collector of classic Mercedes, and was very meticulous about how they were kept.

“This 280SE was part of his collection at the time, and he asked me to help him by driving it to the St Michael's concours, down on the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland,” says Titus. “David drove down in his 1959 220S Ponton Coupe, and subsequently he let me drive the W108 a few more times. I asked him if he'd give me first refusal on it, if he ever came to sell it, and that I wouldn't haggle with him as I knew



This particular 280SE is reckoned to be one of the last off the line at Sindelfingen, as it was built in 1972 and registered to its first owner – a Mr Bill Sherman of Butler, Pennsylvania – in 1973. It was made with the 4.5-litre M117 V8 engine, which was primarily aimed at the US and bored-out from the earlier 3.5-litre engine to compensate for the new emissions laws, not to mention the lower octane rating of American petrol. Originally rated at 182bhp, that M117 engine would end its life, many years later, in the R107 SL pumping out 296bhp. In the W108, though, it's hardly short of grunt. "It's very powerful, the 4.5," says Titus. "So it really was competitive in modern day traffic, and great for long, fast runs. After all, the car was made for the autobahn..."

In the hands of its original owner – and Titus has actually spoken to Mr Sherman about the car – this W108 didn't cover an awful lot of distance. In fact, 50 years on from its first registration, the odometer still reads only 80,000 miles. Mr Sherman covered only around 100 miles each year during his lengthy first ownership of the car, but in spite of that he brought it back to his local Mercedes dealer every year for a full check over and service. The car was 'fully loaded' on its first registration, with a Becker radio, a huge sunroof and

Thermo King air conditioning, not to mention the gorgeous dark blue leather upholstery to match the exterior paint.

"In Europe, it was more common to have a contrast between the exterior colour and the interior upholstery," says Titus. "Whereas in the US it was very common to have a similar colour for both the interior and the exterior." Whatever the societal differences between us and our American friends, I think we can all agree that this particular 280SE looks utterly fantastic. ▶



△△ 280SE 4.5 an export model for North America.

△ Air conditioner controls under the Becker Europa II.

◁ Titus Johnson and Mercedes cars go way back.

▽◁ Wide and welcoming seats in blue leather.

▽ 3.5L M116 V8 has similar power to this 4.5L M117.



he'd give me a fair price."

That day came to pass when Van Duzer needed to create some space in his collection, and so the W108 became Johnson's. Finished in '904' blue, with matching blue seats, the W108 became Titus' daily transport around Washington. "I didn't drive it very much, but it was a regularly used car, up and down Wisconsin Avenue, going to the shops and dropping the kids off at school. I shipped it back to the UK in 2018, and that's where it lives now," Titus explains.



◁ A single wing mirror – on the driver's side.

“The 4.5 V8 version of the W108 has something of an undiscovered greatness about it”

▷ That paintwork was protected, from the factory, by an optional preservation spray, and the paint is all original. “Even today, that Galsurit paint has a tiny orange peel effect and it picks up the sun beautifully,” says Titus.

▷ Imposing three-pointed star located on grille.

▷ Gearshifter situated on steering column.

The provenance of this car is truly exceptional. Quite apart from the fact that its second owner was a noted Mercedes collector, and Titus has spoken to its original owner, the paperwork that goes with the car is reckoned to be “three phone books thick”. It



has been invited along to the Hampton Park concours more than once by Mercedes as an exceptional example of the breed. Not that Titus is looking to sell.

“I don’t think I would sell it now, you know,” he tells me. “I’ll probably hand it down to my sons. I think I’ll keep it because it’s so special and it’s been so well looked after. And while I’m not saying that there’s not another one out there like that – there may well be – but because this one is so original, its provenance is so good, it’s a very special car for me. While I have a revolving collection of cars, some of which I renovate before selling on, I want to keep this Mercedes-Benz.”

There’s also a sense that the 4.5-litre V8 version of the W108 has something of an undiscovered greatness about

it. Mention the W108/9 saloons in conversation and most people’s thoughts instantly turn to the mighty 300SEL 6.3, with its proto-AMG performance and its legendary status. While the 6.3’s immensity is undeniable, Titus reckons the 4.5 is its equal, and he’s got some back-up material for his theory. “*Road & Track* magazine described the W108 4.5 as the best car ever built. They did a road test of it in 1974, and while they make reference to the 6.3 by saying, yes, you get more power, there’s very little difference other than the output in how the two cars drive. In terms of driving quality, *Road & Track* described the 4.5 as the ultimate engine for the W108.”

Titus’ love of Mercedes began when visiting his mother’s birthplace in Belgrade, in what was then Yugoslavia. “On the streets of Belgrade and on the coast in Istria and Croatia, I later found out why there’s so many Mercedes in what was then Yugoslavia,” he says. “It’s because when Germany was rebuilding after the war, the country needed manpower and it ended up that a huge number – maybe 25 per cent at one time – of people working in the Mercedes-Benz factories in Stuttgart were from Yugoslavia and Croatia and so on. And when they returned home, they brought Mercedes with them, so they were always seen as the best cars.”

When you see a Mercedes-Benz as stunningly gorgeous as Titus’ W108 pass by, you might think the same thing yourself. And who could blame you?

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 280SE 4.5 (W108)

ENGINE M117 4,520cc V8 POWER 195bhp @ 4,500rpm TORQUE 264lb ft @ 3,000rpm
TRANSMISSION 3-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,675kg 0-62MPH 10.1sec TOP SPEED 124mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 18.8mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1971-1972

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





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The sky's the limit

There would have been no Gullwing and no Stirling Moss win at the Mille Miglia without the militarisation of Germany in the early 1930s and without a handful of extremely talented engineers behind the creation of high-powered fuel injection engines

WORDS PIOTR R FRANKOWSKI IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

Despite grandiose propaganda, Germany's pre-war leaders were fully aware of the limited economic capabilities of their country and knew that a protracted conflict would end in disaster (and so it did). Therefore, they told their industries to focus on novel, revolutionary solutions which would introduce such performance advantages that these would negate a numerical superiority of an opposing military force. They needed to jump ahead of their competitors in huge leaps, skipping whole timelines of slow, evolutionary development.

Where aviation engine makers such as Rolls-Royce relentlessly pursued reliability and considered quantum leap innovation as detrimental to a stable income, the Germans were starting with an almost clean slate and were able to cherry-pick the best ideas. One of these dated back to 1902 and a corpulent Frenchman with a luxuriant beard: Monsieur Léon Levavasseur. This aviation pioneer patented the first V8 engine in the world, equipped with direct fuel injection and modern liquid cooling, and later zero-loss steam cooling.

His engines, built to tight tolerances, powered Antoinette planes also designed by him, which were very popular among well-known pilots (he also built V-16 and V-24 units). His direct-injection system was, by necessity, very rudimentary. The technology of the period did not permit accurate fuel metering and the engines ran rough at low revs. Due to the complexity of their manufacturing and the widespread use of cheap carburetted engines, Levavasseur's patents were largely forgotten.



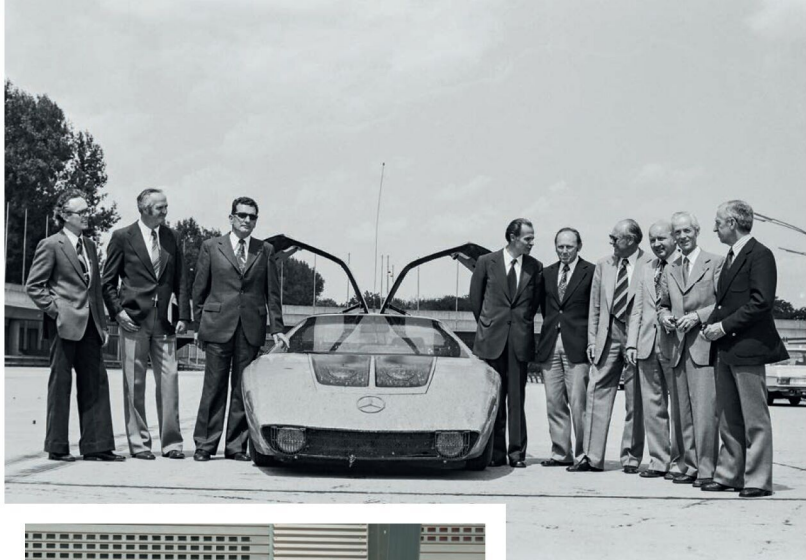
△ W198R racers being worked on at Reims in 1954.

▷ Mercedes' T80 record car of the late 1930s.

▷▷ The T80's monster DB603RS aero powerplant.

▷▷▷ Direct fuel injection engine of the W198 300SL.





◁ Karl-Heinz Cösel (fourth from right) with C111/II D at Nardo back in 1976.

◁ Fire engine red SL Gullwing needs no intro...

▽ Scherenberg in Schorndorf (1977). Daimler's birthplace.

But not in Germany. When Germany was secretly arming itself in the decade prior to the elections which put Hitler's NSDAP into power, several fields were deemed to be strategic priorities and were being researched by the best brains in the Weimar Republic. These included aerodynamics and aviation engine technology.

“The engines were growing in power and new materials were being tested”

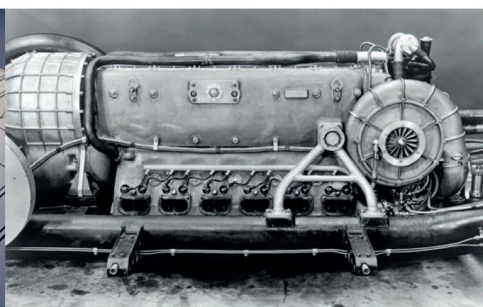
The Jumo engine division of Junkers developed extremely reliable and innovative two-stroke diesel engines (with a lot of help from Bosch), which powered a number of flying boats and transport aircraft that were actually thinly disguised bombers. These aviation diesels were so good that several countries paid handsomely for the license rights to manufacture them, among these Soviet Russia and Great

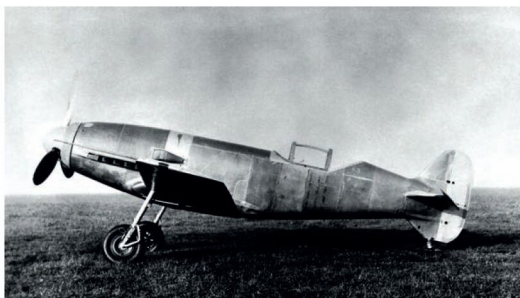
Britain. In 1933, Napier bought the rights to two Junkers aviation diesels, namely Jumo 204 (Napier Culverin) and Jumo 205 (Napier Cutlass). British prototypes of the Culverin were actually built. Later, Napier used Junkers technology in the design of its Deltic diesel engines, used in military marine craft and in locomotives.

Thinking outside the box

In a great example of lateral thinking, Jumo, working on a completely new gasoline-powered, inverted-vee aviation engine, came up with the idea of using proprietary diesel technology for it. This came about because a very clever man, a specialist in the field of combustion, Dr. Ing. August Lichte, was tasked with creating an automatic fuel metering system for the Junkers L 10 engine which later became the Jumo 210 (in order to reduce pilot workload). He created a fairly simple arrangement with piston pumps and injectors which would shoot a precisely timed amount of fuel into the combustion chamber of each cylinder. The fuel-air mixture was prepared automatically, without the pilot's intervention. Development of the engine began in 1931, and prototypes with direct gasoline injection ran successfully in 1935. The engine used less fuel, provided a bit more power at take-off, but even more importantly, it worked more efficiently at high altitudes, was immune to deadly carburettor icing and, because it had no float-type carbs, worked just as well under high-G loadings.

In Hitler's Germany, efforts were made to increase the efficiency of all the military branches of industry, and this was to be achieved by centrally distributing work according to available capacity: in this manner, companies which were





▷ normally fierce competitors would be forced to manufacture each other's products under licence. Thus, for example, at some point Mercedes built Opel Blitz trucks. In the same way, the newly created RLM (Reichsluftfahrtministerium – the Ministry of Aviation) coordinated research and development work. Thus, the work of the Junkers engine department was probably made available to Mercedes: both companies had inverted-vee gasoline engines in development and both could benefit from direct injection. Also, both had a lot of experience with diesels and diesel injection.



Proof of concept

Working on the DB600

33.9-litre, inverted-vee engine, the Mercedes-Benz 'Flugmotoren' department needed new people familiar with the technology endorsed by the RLM in Berlin's Wilhelmstrasse. It recruited two young engineers from the diesel car engine development section, namely a Dresdener named Hans Scherenberg and a Thuringian called Karl-Heinz Göschel. They first worked on creating the DB601G, the first modern direct-injection gasoline engine in the world, which was equipped to a number of significant German aircraft including the Messerschmitt Bf 109. Scherenberg and Göschel worked with great intensity on a whole new family of engines until 1945, and they routinely used technologies which most of us assume are a product of more modern times: sodium-filled valves, four valves per cylinder, variable inlet manifolds, variable valve timing, supercharging, turbocharging and, last but not least, direct gasoline injection.

The engines were growing in power and new materials were being investigated and tested. In April 1939, a prototype Messerschmitt Me 209 plane, equipped with an uprated DB601 engine, developing 1,750bhp, was flown by Fritz Wendel along the Augsburg-Buchloe railway line to a record speed of 755.1km/h (469mph). Scherenberg and Göschel must have been there too, overseeing a highly stressed motor which, in this case, used unreliable steam cooling. The record stood until 1969. A derivative of the DB603 engine, on the other hand, was installed in the T80 six-wheeled record-breaking Mercedes car, designed by Ferdinand Porsche, and expected to reach 600km/h on a public road (a specially built stretch of the Autobahn) in the hands of Hans Stuck. In the later stages of the war, Scherenberg and his team also worked on turbojet and turboprop engines.

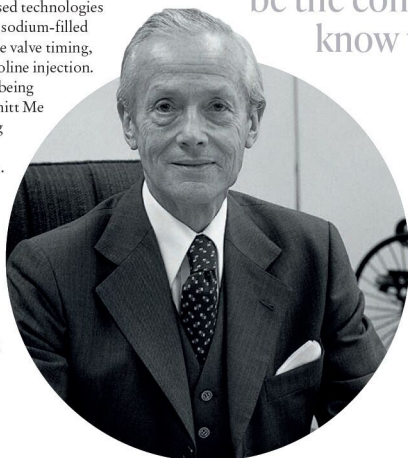
△△△ 469mph
Me 209 with
12-cyl DB601 unit.

△△ SL Roadster
racing on an
airfield in 1961.

△ 300 Adenauer
was Germany's
fastest car in 1951.

▽△ Prof. Dr Hans
Scherenberg
retired in 1977.

“Without Scherenberg,
Mercedes would not
be the company we
know today”



▷ "Mercedes-Benz aeroengines for the full range of large aircraft".

▽ Hans with ESF 22 vehicle in Tokyo, March '73.

▽ Aircraft engine production in Berlin in 1939.



Anewera

When the war ended, German engineers who had assisted the Nazi war effort were banned from working in West Germany's resurrected automotive industry, and the aviation industry practically ceased to exist. For the first few years, Scherenberg and Göschel probably found it very hard to make ends meet. Finally, the former found a job as a chief engineer with the small car manufacturer Gutbrod and brought along his colleague.

Together they designed and prepared for series production the first direct-injection car engine in the world, the 700cc, 26bhp two-stroke unit in the Gutbrod Superior and the Goliath 700. The 650kg car was shown publicly in 1951 and featured Bosch injection components, similar to the ones Bosch had manufactured earlier for Daimler-Benz and Juno gasoline direct-injection aircraft engines.

And then Scherenberg was permitted to rejoin Mercedes.

His expertise was desperately needed, because although Rudolf Uhlenhaut had received permission to design a sports

car which could take on the world's most grueling endurance races, there was a major problem. The revolutionary space frame with high sills and gullwing doors was born in Uhlenhaut's head and it was promising, however there was no money for a new engine. All that was available was the pedestrian unit from the Adenauer (300S), capable of 113bhp in normal trim and 148bhp with triple Solex carbs. Scherenberg, working with Göschel again, whom he had brought with him to Stuttgart, equipped the motor with direct injection and dry sump lubrication, and brought the power output up to more than 200bhp.

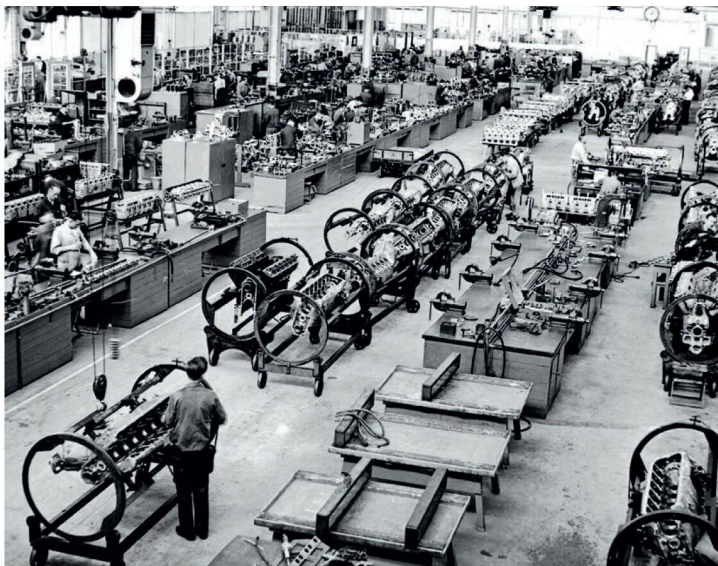
The 300SL Gullwing and its Roadster version did not end Scherenberg's involvement in engine development. Mercedes was going racing in a very serious way. The W196 cars built for grand prix and sports car racing needed an outstanding engine and Scherenberg's team delivered one: eight cylinders in line, a silemum block cast together with the heads, a two-piece crankshaft with Hirth joints and a central torque take-off, direct fuel injection and a desmodromic valvetrain. Scherenberg was often seen at races where the Mercedes racers dominated the field, including at the 1955 Mille Miglia when Stirling Moss drove the 300SLR to a crushing victory.

In later years, Hans Scherenberg rose in the company hierarchy, becoming the

chief design engineer of Mercedes-Benz and a member of the Board of Management.

From there he led the company into a new era, introducing the first five-cylinder passenger car engine in the world, the ESF series of safety car prototypes and the production application of ABS braking, among other groundbreaking developments. He retired in 1977 and died in the year 2000, having left behind a massive technological legacy which had contributed greatly to the global image of the company as well as to its profits.

Without Scherenberg, Mercedes would not be the company we know today. This means that without pre-1945 aviation engine production there would have been no such visionaries available when the German economy took off after WWII. There is more aviation heritage to be discovered, as both Hans Klenk (the famous racing driver) and Hans Liebold, the man responsible for the outstanding suspension tuning of all Mercedes cars until the 1970s, including the C111, had been pilots. In Klenk's case, a Bf 109 fighter pilot who had relied for years on Daimler-Benz direct-injection engines, designed by Scherenberg and Göschel. But that is a story for another time...



Electrification is the name of the game for the second-generation Mercedes GLC, launched without the usual fanfare surrounding such things just three years after the original model received a significant update in 2019. As before, there's a range of petrol, diesel and plug-in hybrid powertrains to choose from, all paired with 4Matic all-wheel drive, but now, every one of them features an electric motor of some description.

Using a new integrated starter-generator system and 48V power, the 'regular' petrol and diesel engines become mild hybrids, while the UK market gets a solitary PHEV in the shape of the GLC300e 4Matic tested here (the GLC300de – a diesel-fuelled PHEV – still was not available to order at the time of writing).

Under the shapely new bonnet and behind the sleek, star-studded radiator grille sits a longitudinally-mounted, turbocharged two-litre petrol engine that can produce up to 198bhp and 236lb ft of torque on its own. Bolted to the back is the latest iteration of the 9G-Tronic Plus, a nine-speed automatic gearbox. From the outside that transmission casing looks conventional enough, but it has been designed to accommodate

▽ Petrol engine supported by an electric motor.



“Mercedes quotes overall system maximums of 309bhp and 406lb ft”

Fresh

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



Mercedes has quietly launched a new generation of the popular GLC SUV with a stronger focus than ever on hybridisation – here's the petrol-electric PHEV model, the 300e

faced



◀◀ GLC gains over 400kg with electric tech.

◀ Floating 12.3-inch display in front of the driver.

the extra electric motor and power electronics, saving space and enhancing efficiency. For the 300e, the electric motor is rated at 100kW – or 134bhp – with 324lb ft of torque available from rest.

Combined thrust

Due to the different characteristics of a petrol engine and an electric motor, you don't just add the figures; Mercedes quotes overall system maximums of 309bhp and 406lb ft, which are attention grabbing figures by any measure and, even though the 300e weighs a portly 2,355kg (over 400kg heavier than the GLC300 mild hybrid), it still manages the 0-62mph sprint in an impressive 6.7 seconds. You'll believe that figure after you pin the accelerator to the carpet and feel the full force of the hybrid system, but it's more impressive for its mid-range effortlessness, which comes to the fore when you use the accelerator pedal more

sensibly. Such restrained behaviour is rewarded by a notably quieter experience too, though the engine never sounds strained.

A significant portion of the extra weight that the PHEV carries over and above the mild hybrid model is accounted for by the lithium-ion battery pack mounted under the boot floor. It's a 31.2kWh unit that, according to official figures, enables the GLC to cover up to 80 miles on electric power, a significant improvement on the range of most PHEVs on the market today. Unsurprisingly, you'd have to drive in a saintly fashion to achieve that distance without rousing the petrol engine, but it goes some way to explaining why Mercedes quotes a ludicrous WLTP fuel economy figure of 565mpg – most of the WLTP test can be carried out without the engine running at all.

Obviously, the further you drive without plugging the car in to charge it up, the less likely you'll be able to replicate the official ➤

▷ number. For reference, the test car's long-term fuel economy average was 48.7mpg, while we recorded an average of 36mpg on a full day of driving where there was no time to charge up the car. The GLC300e gets an on-board AC charger rated at 11kW, which might be of use if you can find a public kerbside charger when out and about as it allows a 10 to 100 per cent charge in a theoretical 2.5 hours. Most home chargers are rated at 7kW, so it'll be considerably slower there, though still easy to fully recharge the battery overnight.

And while all PHEVs are more efficient the more diligent you are about keeping the battery charged up, they do offer flexibility that pure electric cars cannot, in that you can spend all day on the road when needs be, topping up the fuel tank in a matter of minutes rather than waiting around for battery recharging.

The new GLC makes for an excellent motorway car. It's even smoother and quieter than its predecessor, and it lopes along quite happily at a cruise with barely a whisper of wind noise. The 300e has some clever hybrid-specific features you'll discover on a long drive too, such as its adaptive brake energy regeneration function. This prompts you to take your foot off the accelerator pedal in

certain situations, such as on the approach to a slower moving vehicle, lower speed limit or junction. The car then judges how much it needs to slow down and alters the brake energy regeneration to suit, maximising efficiency by recovering the kinetic energy to charge up the battery pack. Once you become accustomed to its operation you realise you can drive with hardly any use of the brake pedal.

The one to own?

Admittedly, when you do press it, there's occasionally an abrupt transition between the two systems that's not quite in keeping with the otherwise smooth demeanour of the car. And if you go looking for chinks in its armour, you'll also discover that, while the GLC300e is excellent around town and on the motorway, its weight compromises its ability on curvier back roads. The suspension deals with poor surfaces admirably, but you're constantly aware of the extra weight as the body settles on the springs entering a tighter corner or after a crest. It's not quite unnerving, but it's a sensation that we doubt exists in the much lighter petrol model.

“The new GLC makes for an excellent motorway car – it's even smoother and quieter than its predecessor”



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz GLC300e 4Matic (x254)

POWERTRAIN M254 1.99cc 4-cyl turbocharged + electric motor and 31.2kWh lithium-ion battery SYSTEM POWER 309bhp
SYSTEM TORQUE 406lb ft TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, 4WD WEIGHT 2,355kg 0-62mph 6.7sec TOP SPEED 135mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 565mpg
ELECTRIC RANGE 80 miles CO2 EMISSIONS 12g/km YEARS PRODUCED 2023-on

All figures from Mercedes-Benz, fuel consumption according to WLTP; top speed in electric mode is 87mph



▽ High powered LED headlights are standard fitment.

▽▽ Fantastically stylish cabin with sweeping console.



△ Four-link front and multi-link rear suspension setup.

▽ Boot shrinks 200L to 400L for plug-in model.

▷▽ Three adults will fit in the back relatively easily.



The standard GLC300 4Matic is much more affordable too, starting at £53,755 in AMG Line specification versus £62,210 for the equivalent GLC300e 4Matic. Diesel is going out of vogue, but don't rule it out for the GLC, especially if you spend a lot of time on the motorway, as it's the cheapest way into the SUV at £51,855 for the GLC220d 4Matic. The significantly more powerful GLC300d 4Matic starts at £60,395 and all the diesels have a towing capability advantage over the 300e model, managing up to 2,500kg of a braked load versus 2,000kg for the plug-in hybrid.

On the subject of downsides, the GLC300e's boot is compromised by the need to package the large battery pack underneath. That's obvious when you open the tailgate as the floor is raised, and the official data shows that there's 200 litres less luggage space in comparison to non-PHEV GLCs, though at 400 to 1,497 litres it's not exactly titchy.

Elsewhere inside the GLC, regardless of what's under the bonnet, the car deserves high praise. And that's even in comparison to the original, which was a star of the Mercedes line-up. The new model features the same sloped portrait-aspect touchscreen as the W206 C-Class, beautifully integrated with the centre console. The rest of the high-quality dashboard is also carried over, including the wonderfully tactile air vents and the new generation of steering

wheels with double spokes. The touch-sensitive controls on the wheel take a little getting used to, but there are no complaints with the sense of quality and luxury throughout.

Class and style

Rear seat passengers get similar air vents to those in the front and passengers in the outer two back seats are well catered for in terms of legroom, space under the seats for foot and generous headroom. There are Isofix child seat mounting points as well, though the centre seat is probably too narrow for a third – and thanks to a tall transmission tunnel, not particularly comfortable for adults, either.

Nonetheless, the 'X254' GLC clearly moves on the game for Mercedes-Benz in the SUV class, putting fresh air between itself and most of its rivals with a tangible increase in the level of luxury, notably so inside the car. While it also looks suitably high-class, it's not a brashly styled vehicle, which most buyers will be happy to see. They will also reap the benefits of the enhanced electrification across the line-up. The PHEVs are compromised in a bid for a long electric range, though for those with a suitable driving profile or specific tax needs, they could well be the choice of the line-up.

Fantastic four-doors

Aiming to satisfy all budgets, we pick five Merc saloons making waves in the used market and advise on what you should be looking out for

WORDS ALAN ANDERSON IMAGES TERRY OBORNE & ERIC RICHARDSON

It's because most attention and affection is showered on SLs and other drophead Mercedes that the German manufacturer's saloons get unfairly overlooked. The irony is that Mercedes' tin-tops are not only just as desirable as the droptops but some convertibles are saloon derived anyway, as in the case of the SLK. Due to their comparative lack of popularity, values are appreciably lower and you certainly get more metal for your money in more ways than one, plus you gain practicality, versatility and extra seats so family and friends can join in the fun.

Here we have assembled what we consider the best saloon buys wearing the three-pointed star across five categories. No matter whether you pay £1,000 or £100,000, you must study the market, drive as many examples as possible to set a reliable datum, and be prepared to bust the budget for best buys. And if you don't know how to check a used car, seek help from a specialist.



Best starter

W202 C-Class

- ♦ Wide choice
- ♦ Old school virtues
- ♦ Easy to maintain

For those entering into Mercedes-Benz ownership for the first time and on a tight budget, you can't do better than a first-generation C-Class (W202). For a start, it's a modern classic and so values are already stabilising or rising for the best ones. Secondly, it looks and feels like an old school Mercedes, something which its successors lack. And finally, the car's relatively straightforward make up and wide spread of specialists ensures containable running costs.

Launched in 1993, the range ran until 2000 with a mid-range refresh in 1997 which also involved a new range of CDI diesels, V6 petrols to replace the old 2.3 and 2.8-litre units, and five-speed autoboxes. Trim levels are the austere Classic, Elegance, Esprit and Sport, with the last two aimed at the more sporting driver. With a range stemming back 30 years the condition of a C-Class counts for more than the engine and trim specs, but nevertheless there's still plenty on the market and the favourites are the mid-rangers such as the 148bhp C220, the delightful 190bhp, 24-valve straight-six C280 (pre-facelift), and any of the three (2.4-, 2.6- and 2.8-litre) V6s.

Those with an eye on owning a future classic should look for the rare C230 Kompressor, the C36 AMG six-pot and C43 AMG V8, while those with more of an eye on economy should seek a post-1996 C200 or C220 with their cleaner CDI engines.

As a driver's car, the C-Class plays second fiddle to

an equivalent BMW 3-Series, although there's not much in it, the Bavarian scoring with sweeter engines and slicker manual transmissions; in typical Mercedes fashion you are better served by an automatic which the vast majority come equipped with. While Teutonic tough, standards were starting to slip with the first C-Class, manifesting in rust which can be quite severe despite the shell being galvanised and backed by the Mobilo 30-year warranty.

Other maladies include electronics (engine management and autoboxes on post-1996 cars), failing head gaskets on the M111 engine, cats which have run out of lives, diesel injector seals, and check that the single wiper works properly or it can lead to bills close to four figures. Prices start at less than £1,000 but £2,000 provides a better starting point for a much classier C-Class.



△ Classic, Elegance, Esprit and Sport trim lines were offered by M-B.



△ The W202 offers a relaxed and comfortable drive; watch for rust.

“The 116-series was justifiably hailed as ‘the best car in the world’ during the 1970s”



Best budget classic

116-series S-Class

- ◆ Great value for money
- ◆ Peerless engineering
- ◆ Appreciating asset

The choice of directors and heads of State, the 116-series was justifiably hailed as ‘the best car in the world’ during the 1970s, and you can easily enjoy first class travel on an economy ticket. As satisfying as any Rolls-Royce and superbly engineered, the S-Class also panders to the driver thanks to a range of superbly crafted engines and excellent handling, the latter which belies the 116-series’ size and girth. Launched in 1972 and running up until 1980 when the grander 126-series succeeded it, at less than £10,000 you won’t find such majestic metal for your money anywhere else.

There’s a wide choice of models and while consensus says the V8s (spanning from a 200bhp 3.5-litre up to a 282bhp/405lb ft 6.8-litre) are S club heaven, don’t dismiss the smooth if somewhat sedate 280SE; the fuel injected, 2.8-litre, twin-cam straight-six has around 180bhp/175lbft torque, is fine for quiet cruising, good more than 20mpg and is simple to maintain.

The W/V116 (standard/long-wheelbase) is a true old school Mercedes, which means this prestige saloon is functional as opposed to flashy, but you can’t carp about the comfort and refinement levels. And of course, it’s built to last for an eternity. That’s not to say that you can buy any old 116-series with impunity. As the youngest is almost 43

△ If you love chrome trim then buy a 116-series!

▷ Plenty of rear legroom in both SE and SEL models.



△ Minimalist interior has its own charm.

years old, rust needs to be watched as repairs will be expensive although parts supply is good. Mechanically, there’s no real concerns if the car is serviced regularly by a specialist, although head gaskets on sixes can weep and V8 timing chains need a watch, plus check that the self-levelling suspension and anti-lock brake systems still work properly.

Buy the best you can find, even if it means paying over the odds as it’s usually the cheapest, least stressful option in the end. Mercedes-Benz called this S-Class the “ultimate in attainable perfection” and if you buy a good one, you’ll find it hard to disagree with such an audacious claim, even half a century on.



“Over 30 years on, the 500E/E500 remains a serious piece of kit”



Best future classic **W124 500E/E500**

- ◆ Underrated classic
- ◆ Understated appearance
- ◆ Undeniable pedigree

The term ‘sports saloon’ is often overused, but that’s hardly the case with the 500E – a Mercedes masterpiece that Porsche co-developed and co-built. Introduced in 1990, at the heart of the transformation from luxury limo to super saloon was the fitment of the 322bhp, five-litre V8 taken from the 500SL.

Of course, the already over-engineered W124 was heavily uprated to cater for the 354lb ft of torque, but the beauty is that you’d hardly notice the many changes with only a meaner stance, wider wheels and more bulbous wheelarches being the giveaways. Discreet is an understatement – perhaps too much for some – but it makes the 500E (badged E500 and with 316bhp/347lb ft from July 1993 production) one of the best Q-cars ever. Few can match its pedigree, or the thoroughness Porsche put into the 18 days building every single car.

Over 30 years on, the 500E/E500 remains a serious piece of kit, sling-shooting to 62mph in 6.1 seconds before maxing out at 155mph, those figures putting this mighty Mercedes firmly in (E34) BMW M5 and Lotus Carlton territory. AMG’s even faster version, the E60 (made between 1994 and 1995) uses a six-litre, 376bhp version of

△ Orange lenses of early cars went clear later on.

▷ Endless torque and a lovely, deep eight-cyl sound.



△ All of these V8 124s were left-hand drive.

Mercedes’ M119 V8, plus special AMG suspension. Also around this time, the E500 Limited was produced, boasting dedicated trim touches and Evo wheels.

Mercedes built 10,479 500E/E500 (including E60s), and all were left-hand drive; less than 10 are believed to have been officially sold in the UK. At launch, the 500E was ticketed at just over £57,000 and some can nudge £50,000 today. *Autocar* called the 500E, “The best Mercedes you’ve (probably) never heard of” and as such it will always remain a cult classic.



Best daily driver W212 E-Class

- ✦ Fine value
- ✦ Great driver
- ✦ Wide choice

A car used 24/7 must be all things to all owners, and the E-Class has been the byword for dependability, longevity and owner satisfaction ever since it broke cover almost 40 years ago. Which is why we have no hesitation in picking the handsome, fourth-generation W212 as the best daily driving saloon around. Made between 2009 and 2016, the W212 remains young enough to satisfy buyers seeking modern advances in comfort, conveniences and safety, yet is mature enough to offer spectacular value in the used car market.

To drive, you couldn't wish for much better; performance, handling and feel-good factor all earn high marks, although unless you're a particular driving enthusiast it's wiser to give anything with sporty overtones a miss as the harder, harsher chassis and bigger tyres upset the ride and tranquillity you'd expect from this civilised cruiser. The massive range of CGI, diesel and hybrid engines is too big to cover in great detail here; it's best to decide how much performance you want before deciding, but apart from the colourless entry-level 1.8 petrol, the rest are all good, although if you are buying a diesel and thinking long-term, don't overlook research into clean air zones restrictions.

The column gear change of the automatic transmission

△ Diesels were the big sellers in this generation.

▷ Early W212s had twin-headlamps; updated design.



△ Impressive solid feeling to the interior.

(seven to nine speeds) is amusing and takes some getting used to but is entirely logical. The interior is as roomy as it is inviting, ditto boot space although not all versions come with split-fold rear seats so check. The facelifted version arrived in 2013, bringing among styling updates a new, two-litre turbocharged petrol engine that replaced the 1.8.

The typical price of a second-hand car stands at around £17,000, yet you can pick up a cracking 2009/2010 E-Class for a third of this amount. Why settle for a normal car on your drive?



Best retirement model

222-series S-Class

- ◆ Off-the-scale quality
- ◆ Gadgets galore
- ◆ Long term ownership

By definition, a car for retirement purposes can mean it's the final purchase you intend to make – so why not go out in style and on a high with an S-Class? The W/V222 is the sixth generation, made from 2013 to 2020, and among its many technological advances was Magic Body Control, which scanned the road and prepared the air suspension accordingly. Other wizardry included crosswind correction and further steps to autonomous driving.

With a broad array of petrol and diesel engines, and a trio of hybrids providing anything from V12 supercar performance or nearly 100mpg economy, you need to consider your needs first, but all versions are magnificent. German *Auto Bild* magazine rated this Mercedes as the quietest car in the world. If the rear seat isn't comfy enough, the 'Executive Rear' option replaces the regular bench with two separate powered chairs that are also ventilated. Another option is 'Rear Seat Comfort' which included a massage option! The midlife 2017 revision brought more than 6,000 improvements, the most significant being the reintroduction of a straight-six turbodiesel engine.

△ Airmatic air suspension on all 222 S-Classes.

▷ Reclining rear seats and TVs sold on request.



△ High tech cabin remains the place to be.

For what is hailed as the best car in the world, there's been some surprising in-service issues, from water ingress into the headlights to transmission lockups. Many glitches are software-related and some became recalls, but hybrids have problems of their own so be sure to have good warranty back-up.

A well bought S-Class is something that will last for years, and thanks to its arsenal of technical advancements will deliver near-unbeatable driving pleasure for the foreseeable. Best of all, with prices for these 222-series cars starting at under £20,000, you don't have to break the bank.

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Open air motoring

Warmer weather is upon us, which means it's high time to jump into a convertible Mercedes – here are a few Benzes that caught our expert's eye...

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES STAR CARS, JS PRESTIGE AND PERFORMANCE & TARGA FLORIO CARS



It may be hard to believe, but the UK is still one of the biggest markets for convertibles, with droptops making up 9.5 per cent of all used Mercedes currently advertised for sale. And that means plenty of choice plus competitive prices, with a whole array of attractive Mercedes convertibles to suit all budgets – from a 124-series E220 Cabriolet right up to an SLS AMG Roadster.

Spring and early summer are considered the peak convertible buying periods, and increased demand at this time can sometimes lead to slightly higher prices, but not always. Many used buyers deliberately target the late autumn and early winter believing that convertible prices will be lower then – but many dealers know this only too well and keep their prices up. So in many cases buying a cabriolet in the spring/summer won't cost you a penny more. And let's be honest, if you want to really enjoy your new Mercedes droptop then a wet and icy UK winter is far from the ideal backdrop.

So, which models should you be looking at? If it's sheer value you're after, then the 181bhp CLK200 takes some beating. Spend a little time searching and you'll come across a few well-maintained, low-mileage examples at surprisingly low prices. Like this silver blue, 2007 CLK200 Kompressor Cabriolet Avantgarde advertised for just £4,500 at Star Cars in London (www.starcarslondon.co.uk). An automatic, it had covered a lower-than-average 79,000 miles and came with a



▲ 79,000-mile CLK200 K priced at £4.5K by Star Cars London.



▲ E350 CDI Cabriolet Sport going for £8,950 at JS in Enfield.

comprehensive spec, a full service history and looked to be in very good condition.

Need something more frugal? Then take a look at the 207-series E350 CDI Cabriolet in BlueEfficiency Sport guise. Stylish yet thrifty,

a 2013 example with 100,000 miles – like this well-specced black car we spotted at JS Prestige and Performance in Enfield (www.jsprestigeandperformance.co.uk) – would provide plenty of performance and set you back just £8,950. This particular automatic packed full service history, Comand multimedia with sat nav, heated memory electric seats, front and rear parking sensors, 19-inch AMG twin-spoke alloys and black Artico leather upholstery.

Both these older droptops represent excellent value, but if you have a bit extra to spend then you could get behind the wheel of something more exotic. Those in the fortunate position of having as much as £25,000 could bag a contemporary AMG Convertible – such as this immaculate Obsidian Black, 2017 AMG C43 4Matic Cabriolet for sale at Targa Florio Cars (www.targafloriocars.com) in West Sussex. Stickered at £26,490, it had black leather upholstery, a full service history record, 18-inch AMG alloys, Comand satellite navigation and both the Parking and Mirror packages.

With 59,300 miles, this C43 also benefited from an EST Performance stage 1 ECU remap boosting output to 429bhp and 456lb ft. This work came complete with a full dyno printout and associated paperwork. If you're ever thinking of buying any remapped Mercedes, it should always come with full details like this.

► **Fancy a Coupe instead? Then check out our top three £20,000 Mercedes on page 76**

Forecourt find

600SEL
(V140)

They really don't make them like this anymore. The 140-series S-Class is among the best built Mercedes ever - throw a six-litre M120 V12 into the mix and you really do have something special. This 1992 example was listed among Warwickshire dealer SLShop's 'Appraised' stock and certainly stood out with its vibrant paintwork, which has been ceramic coated for added protection from the elements. The seller (based in Batley, West Yorkshire) also details five owners from new, a mileage of 59,000 and wanted £15,000.

So what can drivers expect from this long-wheelbase S-Class? Impeccable road manners, an eerily quiet cabin thanks to double glazed windows, and effortless thrust from that six-litre powerplant.

Dealer information: SLShop
Tel: +44 (0) 1789 337070
Web: www.theshop.com



△ £15,000 gets you a V12 long-wheelbase S with 59,000 miles.

▷ Red paintwork has been ceramic coated for extra protection.

▽ Double-glazed windows and a four-speed auto.

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** (21.8%)
- 2 **C-Class** (21.7%)
- 3 **E-Class** (14.4%)
- 4 **CLA-Class** (5.6%)
- 5 **GLA-Class** (5.6%)
- 6 **GLC-Class** (5.1%)

What's in a colour?

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

- 1 **Black** (28.2%)
- 2 **Silver** (19.4%)
- 3 **White** (17.8%)
- 4 **Grey** (17.1%)
- 5 **Blue** (9.4%)

Miles ahead

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

Less than 50,000 miles
58.0%

Between 50,000 and 80,000 miles **22.8%**
More than 80,000 miles
19.2%

Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

Diesel **56.4%**

Petrol **37.7%**

Hybrid **4.0%**

Full electric **1.9%**

Drivetrain

Four-wheel drive Mercedes usually offer greater traction, but can be less economical. Rear-wheel drive Mercedes can be fun to drive, but trickier at the limit than front-wheel drive models

Four-wheel drive **20.2%**

Front-wheel drive **32.3%**

Rear-wheel drive **47.5%**



Auction spotlight

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

● **\$320 CDI**

3.2-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/06-plate, 133,000 miles, £2,750

● **£280 CDI Sport**

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/56-plate, 95,000 miles, £3,900

● **SLK350**

3.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2005/05-plate, 86,000 miles, £5,400

● **CLK350 Cabriolet Sport**

3.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2007/07-plate, 87k miles, £5,600

● **CLA180 Coupe AMG Line Edition**

1.6-litre, petrol, manual, 2018/68-plate, 61,000 miles, £15,100

● **C250d Estate AMG Line Premium Plus**

2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2016/16-plate, 68,000 miles, £15,800

● **GLA180 Urban Edition**

1.6-litre, petrol, manual, 2019/19-plate, 30,000 miles, £19,400

● **\$350d AMG Line Executive**

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2016/16-plate, 77,000 miles, £22,700

● **C200 Estate AMG Line Premium**

1.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19-plate, 40,000 miles, £23,200

● **C300 Coupe AMG Line**

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2020/20-plate, 41,000 miles, £24,600

● **SLC300 AMG Line**

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2020/69-plate, 16,000 miles, £25,100

● **GLC 220d 4Matic AMG Line**

Premium 2.1-litre, diesel, auto, 2018/18-plate, 35,000 miles, £26,400

● **AMG A35 4Matic Premium Plus**

2.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/69-plate, 24,000 miles, £30,283

● **\$500 LAMG Line Executive**

Premium Plus 3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2019/19-plate, 92,000 miles, £37,100

● **AMG SLS3**

5.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2016/66-plate, 24,000 miles, £48,700

And remember...

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

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

TOP THREE

£20,000 coupes

Search the classified adverts for used cars and you'll soon discover a whole host of attractively priced Mercedes-Benz coupes to tempt the willing buyer. These are cars with bags of style and which are also more practical than you might think. However, it's important that you consider not only what sort of mileage you are likely to cover each year,

but also the probable maintenance costs before taking the plunge. Fuel costs can rack up quickly with higher powered models. We've selected three of the best options currently available on a £20,000 budget – including a contemporary diesel, a fire-breathing AMG and a neo-classic that's set to appreciate. So, which one is your favourite?



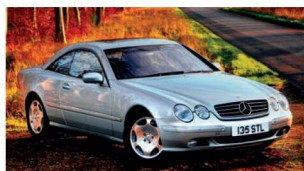
C63 AMG Coupe (C204)

The C63 AMG needs no introduction. A ready supply of good examples on the market plus plenty of bangs for your buck has made it irresistible – and 20 grand will put you behind the wheel of a 451bhp, 2012 Coupe with around 70,000 miles and a full service history record. The 0-62mph dash takes a mere 4.4 seconds whilst the Coupe can better 180mph if derestricted; the standard top speed is 155mph while the Driver's Package increased the electronic speed limiter to a hefty 174mph.



E350d Coupe (C238)

Not every coupe buyer is seeking the ultimate performance drive, and if you value economy every bit as much as style and panache then an E350d Coupe could be the ideal two-door for you. Our budget bags a 2017 E350d AMG Line Edition with a lowly 35,000 miles and a high spec that includes appealing options like 19-inch AMG alloys, Active Parking Assist, Comand Online with Apple CarPlay, and a panoramic roof. Over 450lb ft of torque ensures rapid progress whilst the official combined economy figure is 44.8mpg.



CL600 (C215)

When it comes to timeless opulence then nothing beats a V12 Mercedes CL. This 215-series cost well over £100,000 nearly a quarter of a century ago and if you can find a well-maintained 2001 or 2002 example then it could be yours for £20,000. Fitted with almost every optional extra available to Mercedes at the time plus a super-smooth five-speed automatic transmission the driver and passengers are cosseted in palatial comfort, making every drive a special occasion. Just make sure you can afford the running costs!

Latest products and accessories

Mansory Widebody for Mercedes-AMG SL (R232)

Mansory has released a carbon fibre widebody kit for all variants of the R232 Mercedes SL. The tuner has also released striking 21- and 22-inch alloys, entire interior redesigns and performance upgrades including a tuning box, exhaust headers and larger turbochargers. Power upgrades scale 700bhp and 850bhp. Go to www.mansory.com to find out more.



ESR HaloLock Car charger

ESR has launched a new HaloLock MagSafe phone charger to use in your car. The HaloLock Car Charger with CryoBoost claims to be the fastest MagSafe charging choice while navigating – with a combination of a phone cooling fan and heat-dissipating components keeping the phone cooler whilst wirelessly charging. Powerful magnets keeping the phone securely in place even when driving on bumpy roads, and an adjustable ball joint allowing users to ensure the most comfortable view. Available for £41.99 from Amazon, you can find out more at www.esrgear.com.



Mercedes-Benz Collection Wall Clock

If you're looking for a house gift to give to a friend who really loves Mercedes-Benz then this silver-coloured wall-mounted clock could be just what you're after. Sporting an aluminium dial and case with black numerals, a quartz movement, and both thermometer and hygrometer functions, it's approximately 30cm in diameter and as part of the Mercedes-Benz Collection can be purchased through your local Mercedes dealership. The part number is B67870476 and the recommended retail price is just £26 including VAT.



Signature Tune **AMG A35**

Already a blast on back roads, AMG's A35 4Matic can become even more fun with a few straightforward upgrades suitable for both hatchback and saloon versions

Out of the box, AMG's A35 will hit 62mph in 4.8sec.



Suspension

The OE suspension setup works well for fast road use but if you're keen to enhance things then you essentially have two options - either fit some lowering springs with the OE dampers or go for a full-blown coil-over system instead. Eibach, KW and H&R are the most popular brands. You can also buy uprated anti-roll bars and front strut braces, but whatever modifications you make get a full geometry alignment carried out afterwards.

Brakes

If you want to maximise your A35's performance potential then making sure you can stop as swiftly as possible is vital - and there are brake pad, disc and big brake kit options available from a number of suppliers including Ferodo, Brembo, EBC, WilWood and V-Maxx. It's also a wise idea to have braided brake hoses fitted with any brake upgrade - Goodridge, HEL and EBC can supply these products.

Wheels and bodywork

A number of styling houses produce individual customised body parts and full body kits for the W177, including Lorinser, Brabus, Maxton Design and Mansory. And quite a few owners have fitted larger 19-inch alloys. If you're tempted to do this, we'd recommend keeping the multi-spoke factory look if possible, as A35 buyers really seem to like it.

Interior

A35 cabin modifications tend to be a very personal thing and the good news is that plenty of companies can help you with this. Upgrades to the factory stereo, Wi-Fi and sat nav systems are all possible, allowing you to connect to install a variety of apps from the Google Play Store and Apple CarPlay, play DVDs and even access the car's diagnostic fault codes for problem solving.

Mercedes-AMG's A35 4Matic is pretty feisty even in standard factory spec - with four-wheel drive, a 302bhp turbocharged four-pot motor, an impressive seven-speed automatic AMG Speedshift DCT transmission and a 4.8-second 0-62mph time. But that doesn't mean it can't be improved. Many owners have sought to enhance the car's performance and suspension whilst others have chosen to style the exterior and interior to suit their own particular personal requirements.

However, before you start to draw up a long shopping list of potential modifications to your A35 it might be wise to check out what's available - we've summarised the options for you here. And we'd also recommend you get a full service with a diagnostic check to ensure that everything is working just as it should before you commence any modifications. AMG A35 prices start at around £25,000.

Engine

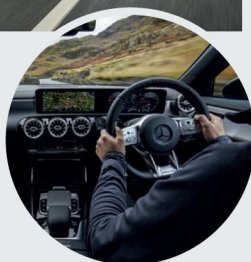
Many owners go for a simple stage one ECU remap, which for around £600 should take your A35's output



close to 370bhp and 370lb ft. Popular tuning houses include MSL Performance, Celtic Tuning, DMS Automotive and CAD Tuning. Derestricted, the car can easily top 170mph and cover the 0-62mph dash in around 4.4 seconds. And there are lots of custom air intakes and uprated air filters for sale, with headers and sports exhaust options also available - but fit all of these before you get your A35 ECU remapped.

Transmission

Mercedes' impressive seven-speed automatic AMG Speedshift DCT transmission seems very reliable but any increased torque with a



remap should be kept below 380lb ft to preserve transmission longevity. The gearbox itself can also be remapped for quicker smoother changes if you feel it's really needed - a couple of tuning houses offer this option.



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**Values are around
20 per cent higher
than those of
comparable
condition 500s**

Delightful dozen

Sporting Mercedes' awesome six-litre V12, the 600-badged R129 SL models take some beating as grand touring roadsters – but they're not cheap to run. Here's what you should know before buying...

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES TERRY OBORNE

The R129 SLs unveiling at the Geneva motor show in March 1989 brought the career of the preceding R107 to an end after an extraordinarily long, 18-year production run. It should, therefore, have been no surprise that the newcomer was breathtakingly modern and sophisticated by comparison. The Mercedes-Benz 500SL in particular was the era's definitive, flawless luxury roadster, a highlight being its M119 five-litre, four-valves-per-cylinder V8 that married performance and refinement, and was, for its size,

reasonably economical too.

Nothing else on the market could be called an R129 rival, so looking back, you might wonder why Mercedes-Benz management thought it necessary to go to the considerable trouble and expense of building an all-new V12 engine to install in a small number of SLs and S-Classes. Cost effective it surely could not be, given the extensive component sharing the motor industry has always relied on.

But that's not how things were done at Stuttgart three to four decades ago, in that fabled time when engineers still held sway over accountants. In the late 1980s,

Mercedes decided to build a V12 simply because arch rival BMW had done so, the prospect of Munich enjoying technical superiority over Mercedes-Benz unthinkable. Said to have been rushed from the drawing board into production in four years (quick by the more leisurely pace of development back then), the six-litre M120 was Mercedes' first V12 and most powerful road car engine to date, its 389bhp/420lb ft torque in the 600SL eclipsing BMW's 12-cylinder; the 600SE's version made even more grunt – 402bhp and 428lb ft.

Launched in the UK in late 1992, the 600SL came with a price tag

close to £90,000, over £20,000 more than the 500SL. A total of 11,089 were built until the end of R129 production in 2001, just five per cent of R129 production, with a tiny number imported to the UK. Once the R230 SL replaced it, the R129 sank in desirability and value, the 600 included. And although values of all good R129s have risen of late, it's still possible to buy the V12 flagship for £20,000 to £30,000. But given its huge complexity, and also that it doesn't look different to a 500, is this a sensible idea?

Design and engineering

By the time the 48-valve V12 found

Spotted
for salePRIVATE SELLER
1993/K 600SLMetallic red, mushroom leather,
AMG bodykit and wheels,
suspension needs attention,
£25,000, Bedfordshire

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 600SL/SL600 (R129)

ENGINE M120 5.987cc V12

POWER 389bhp@5,200rpm

TORQUE 420lb ft@3,800rpm

TRANSMISSION 4-/5-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,880/2,050kg

0-62MPH 6.1sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 14.0/14.3mpg

YEARS PRODUCED 1992-2001

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; model name change occurred June 1993; 5-speed automatic standard from September 1995 production; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; top speed electronically limited

its way into the R129 SL in mid-1992 to create the 600SL, emissions adjustments had seen power and torque drop to 389bhp and 420lb ft, but that was still around 20 per cent more than the 500SL gave. The 600SL did, however, have an extra 180kg more than the 500SL to haul.

It's said that the V12 was never designed to fit the R129, the extraordinarily tight fit in the engine bay backing up that theory. But it's certainly a lovely looking motor, its six alloy intakes on top of each cylinder bank having an almost Italianate style, and an antidote to the ubiquitous black shroud underbonnet treatment.

Transmission in the early cars is a four-speed automatic, and the suspension featured the adaptive damping that was optional on most other R129s. But on the outside, the 600SL could not have been lower key, different 16-inch alloy wheels and badging the only visible differences between it and the V8-engined car. Inside, you'll see standard R129 leather trim.

The SL flagship received the updates applied to the R129 range as a whole. First, in June 1993, in line with the new Mercedes-Benz badging, and after just a few deliveries, the 600SL became the SL600. After that, development came in two phases. In September 1995, a five-speed automatic gearbox (lighter and more compact than the four-speed, Mercedes said), Brake Assist and ESP traction control were introduced as standard equipment. At the same time, modifications were made to the M120's ignition and electronic engine management systems, this and the improved gearbox efficiency bringing a 10 per cent drop in fuel consumption with no loss of performance. Subsequently, the V12 ran unchanged until the end of production.

The second and final update came in April 1998, announced at the Turin motor show. Although all the engineering changes concerned other models, the SL600 received the same cosmetic tweaks: new bumpers, mirrors, tail lamps,

colour-coded door handles, all measures to refresh the near decade-old body shape. The wheels, redesigned, went up from 8Jx16-inch with 225/55 tyres to 8.25Jx17-inch and 245/45s.

Driving the 600SL/SL600

The V12 engine is astonishingly smooth and quiet – at tickover unless you look at the rev counter or listen hard you would not think it was running. Even when it is revved it is almost inaudible, to the point where arguably it is less characterful than the V8. One thing you do notice if standing beside it is the amount of heat it gives off.

Performance is exactly what you'd expect, this roadster responding effortlessly to the throttle, and with instant and massive pull in the mid-range despite its two-tonne kerb weight. R129s retained the traditional Benz recirculating ball steering – the last SL generation to do so – and this is free of road shocks, but communicates little to the driver despite being well weighted and

quite quickly geared. Cornering grip is nonetheless excellent, thanks to the multi-linked rear suspension, while the chassis aids ensure impressive traction under power.

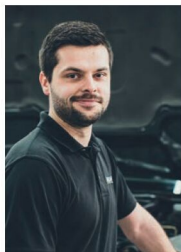
The cabin has a lovely, high quality feel, with beautifully trimmed leather, while the heavy solidity of the controls and switchgear is something not seen in any Mercedes model since the R129. However, despite its motorised sophistication, the hood looks surprisingly basic inside with its exposed metal stays.

What you'll pay

A few years ago, 600SL/SL600s, along with V12 S-Classes, sank to £5,000 or less, buyers scared off by the V12's potentially nightmarish maintenance costs, and also the mid-teens thirst. Now, though, the range-topping R129 is seen as a car worth paying for, and £20,000 is the realistic starting point – values are now around 20 per cent higher than those of comparable condition 500s. Unlike with higher volume models, you will see few if any scruffy 600s, as all will have had a lot of money spent on them, at least up to a certain point in time.

Because there are so few around, the choice is restricted, but you will nonetheless usually see a handful offered for sale. A £25,000 budget gets you a privately owned example which may harbour some trouble, so if you want the protection of a used car warranty (check the policy's payout limit is realistic for a V12 Mercedes!) you can expect to pay between £30,000 to £40,000. Dealers are likely to steer clear of troublesome cars, knowing they can be a major post-sale headache. At the very top of the scale, we see dealers asking £40,000 to £45,000 for clean, low mileage cars. ▶

600SL/SL600 Inside and out



Specialist overview

Callum Harkness, Master Tech at SLShop near Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

"The SL600 is supersmooth, but you can feel the extra weight in corners. The engine is bulletproof, however I would say it's for people who really do want a 12-cylinder R129 because you need very deep pockets to run one. Best to avoid 600s that have done over 100,000 miles - but most of them are quite low mileage and have been well maintained."

www.theshop.com

Powertrain

● On post-September 1995 cars with a coil pack for each cylinder instead of the traditional ignition distributor and HT leads, the coil packs are prone to failing. A single coil might fail, other times multiple coils drop out; it's recommended that all 12 are replaced together. The symptoms are misfires or a lack of performance.

● The M120 engine has a number of ECUs, which can become problematic, causing the engine to run badly or not at all. Earlier cars are harder to diagnose, as they can't be hooked up to the Mercedes-Benz Star diagnostic computer.

● The notorious, biodegradable wiring loom is frequently problematic, as most will by now be in a delicate state. The issue is aggravated by the loom having to be disturbed

slightly during spark plug removal. The engine will misfire, and by looking closely at the connections you might see the degradation.

● Timing chains can fail, usually on cars over 100,000 miles. The 600 is more prone to this failure than the V8 500s, hence check the car's maintenance history for any related documentation.

● The M120 is essentially two M104 straight-sixes, and suffers the oil leaks of that engine. The most likely leakage point is from between the cylinder-heads and the block, at the back of the engine.

● Both the four- and five-speed transmissions are tough and reliable, so as long as they change smoothly and there are no oil leaks, no issues should be imminent.



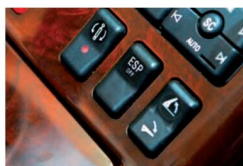
Suspension, steering and braking system

● Outside the engine bay, the most common problem you'll encounter on a 600SL/SL600 is faulty adaptive damping. This, and the hydro-pneumatic springing and self-levelling system, relies on a sphere at each wheel, which is a sealed, pressurised unit, and it's common for the hydraulic fluid to permeate the spheres. When this happens, the ride becomes rock hard.

● The suspension's hydraulic fluid circulates around a long and complex pipe network, some of it almost inaccessible. When sections corrode and fluid leaks out, the suspension fails.

● The R129's steering feels vague, but it should not have any free play in it. If there is, around the straight-ahead position, it may be the steering box, but more likely the bushes in the idler arm, which steadies the steering from side to side.

● Because many R129s don't get used often, the discs become covered in surface rust, and the rear ones in particular suffer in this respect due to there being less braking force to clear it.



The SL600 AMG feels remarkably pleasant and rides well enough.

**Spotted
for sale**
CLASSIC SPORTS CAR DEALER
1993/L SL600
Silver, black leather, 18-inch AMG
wheels, 37,000 miles, £42,850,
Macclesfield, Cheshire



“Outside the engine bay, the most common problem is faulty adaptive damping”

Bodywork and wheels

- The R129 can look rust-free but have some unseen corrosion. Examine the front valance, the front wings and also check for bubbling around the bootlid lock.
- Corrosion can appear at the top of the suspension mounts, which will be visible in the V12 engine's bay.
- Check not only that the factory hardtop is present but that it is in good condition, looking

for rust spots or bubbles at the bottom of the rear pillars where they meet the bodywork.

- Ensure the hood operates properly, and that it isn't damaged where it folds down into the bodywork, and that the plastic rear screen isn't cracked.

- Look to see that the wheels have not been kerbed, especially the later, 17-inch alloys and optional 18-inch rims.



Interior and electrics

- The air conditioning should be checked for efficient operation; normally a non-functioning system means a leak, usually from the condenser.
- Sometimes due to jump-starting the car, the resulting electrical surge blows the roof control unit, which is under the back seat, leaving the hood unable to be lowered or raised. At this age the hood's many sensors and micro switches can play up, again rendering it immovable.
- The rollover bar, which can be raised by a switch on the dash, should go up and down smoothly.
- Electric memory seats are a common failure. The cure is to replace the control modules under the seat.
- These are not usually hard-used Mercedes and should have well preserved interior trim. You're unlikely to come across a shabby one but avoid if you do.

600SL/SL600 Inside and out

Spotted
for saleCLASSIC CAR DEALER
1994 SL600Silver, black leather, left-hand drive
Japanese spec, 53,611km
(33,500 miles), £39,700 ONO
(£35,000), Langeskov,
Denmark

Verdict

Even though prices have risen significantly, the 600SL/SL600 remains a heck of a lot of Mercedes for the money. It has one of the most wondrous engines Mercedes-Benz has ever built, and for many its appeal is enhanced by it being a normally aspirated unit, unlike the 5.5-litre M275 twin-turbo V12 the R230 SL600 used. It's also super exclusive, and if you pay the right price for the right car, you should always get your money back, perhaps more, when the time comes to sell on.

But... this is an immensely complex car and needs to be looked after with no eye to the cost, which will be considerable. You cannot buy a 'cheap' 600-badged SL and expect it to run on an occasional oil and filter change. But for those who understand what they're potentially letting themselves in for – what an incredible Mercedes!

Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE
600SL/SL600	£215	£1,480

Quotes from SLShop

Non-routine servicing costs

- ★ Replace all 12 ignition coil packs **£2,100**
- ★ Fit refurbished engine wiring loom **£3,150**
- ★ Replace front brake discs and brake pads **£780**
- ★ Fit refurbished engine ECU **£650**
- ★ Replace all four adaptive damping spheres **£1,920**
- ★ Set of four premium brand tyres (245/45R17) **£600**

What you'll pay

£15,000–£20,000 This entry level budget now buys only high mileage examples of the 600SL/SL600, probably with an incomplete history

£20,000–£30,000 This is the likely price range for privately offered cars, possibly with hidden issues

£30,000–£40,000 Most classic dealers will price 600s in this bracket, which should be well prepared and with no problems waiting to bite new owners

£40,000–£50,000 Presently the maximum for a 600SL or SL600. Must be lower mileage and in generally excellent condition



SL600 vs SL60 AMG

An interesting aside from the SL600's early days concerns the SL60 AMG launched the following year, also six litres, but a V8. In price and prestige terms, the Affalterbach car was pitched one step down from the SL600, obliging Mercedes-Benz to quote a lesser power output for the AMG, of 376bhp, however enthusiasts researching the matter said that the true output was likely over 400bhp. Mercedes' 0-62mph times of 6.1 seconds for the SL600 and 5.8 for the SL60 AMG does support their assertion.

Of course, the SL60 AMG was also intended as a sportier car than the 600, even if it looked almost identical. It did not have the electronic suspension which improved the ride but robbed chassis feel, and the 32-valve M119 V8 is far more vibrant than the V12. Which was the better SL? It's ultimate luxury cruiser versus driving machine (or as tactile as an R129 can be), but presently the market favours the SL60 AMG, its values being higher.

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Classic project

Martin Buckley updates readers on his Mercedes, including a 1970s saloon with excellent interior that he couldn't resist owning, albeit briefly

WORDS & IMAGES MARTIN BUCKLEY

FACTSHEET

CARS 1996 SL280/1972 280E

OWNER Martin Buckley

LOCATION Cirencester, UK

PURCHASED November 2021/January 2023

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT R129 Roadster is prepared for a return to the road. Stroke 8 a fleeing member of the Buckley line-up

The damage was a small chunk taken out of the bumper and some dents to the grille



△ 1972 straight-six model with MB-Tex and 42,000 miles covered.

We are gearing up to get the SL280 back onto the road now the weather is improving, but I've not quite got myself together to go online and tax it, probably because it feels wrong lobbing out money when all your other cars are 'historic' and thus freebies in the road fund licence department.

So only two things to report: the battery is flat (it dies if I don't fire up the car at least every couple of weeks) and I have refitted the hardtop, if only to keep it safe. It's one of those annoying things that always seems to be in the way when it lives on its stand, and it only seemed a matter of time before it got damaged.

Meanwhile, I spiced up my life with a barn find W114 280E of 1972 vintage in the new year. A friend acquired this car some years ago from its second owner with just 42,000 miles on the meter and

a virtually perfect MB-Tex interior. Plans were afoot to restore it, but said pal got a reality check at some point last year (too many cars, not enough time)



and offered it to me around Christmas 2022 as a running (but not roadworthy) project. It's a lovely thing in a way with its cream steering wheel, original 8-track and staid battleship grey (actually Ascot Grey) paintwork. That said it was the sort of car, for all its charm and patina, that really needed almost everything sorting – other than the engine and interior.

Yabba dabba do!

That was never going to be me, frankly. So I tidied up the paint, fitted the hubcaps and got the twin-cam engine running fairly well once my engineer Mike Connor had sorted the fuel pump. In fact, the only thing stopping me driving it was the brakes, which only really needed bleeding. However, the 280E will need sills and some repairs to the driver's side front floor to make it into a car that can be used on the road with confidence, unless your MOT tester is called Fred Flintstone.

Another friend spotted it sitting in my Dutch barn and made me an offer I couldn't refuse, so it turned out to be a short-lived liaison. I sweetened the deal by filling the boot with old tat for the Vintage car boot sale this particular mate likes doing and got a nice Jaguar XJ6 Series III in return, which can't be a bad thing.

▷ Two very different Mercedes receive Martin's attention.

▷△ Splendid cabin won over Buckley but not for too long...



A family affair

A regular sufferer of a 'new car itch', Reed Hitchcock finds himself flirting with replacements for the E-Class - but will he give in to temptation?

WORDS & IMAGES REED HITCHCOCK

FACTSHEET

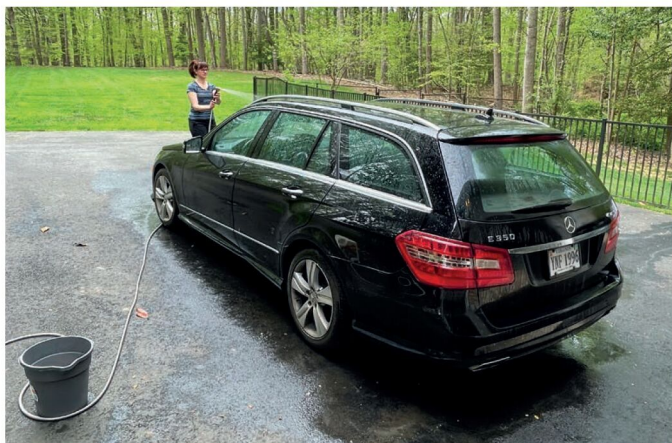
CARS 2011 E350 4Matic Estate

OWNER Reed Hitchcock

LOCATION Virginia, USA

PURCHASED May 2014

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT The high-mile 560SL has gone to a good home, leaving the dependable 212-series to hold the fort



My wife Heather and I have officially owned our 2011 E350 4Matic Estate longer than any other car since we married in 1996 – nine years next month! For those who have followed my short automotive attention span, this is about eight years longer than most other cars we've owned, and at this writing it's the only Merc in the fleet – although that is always subject to change. The secret? She says I'm not allowed to sell it.

It's not for lack of trying, mind you. Over the past few years, normally around the time of a massive cash infusion, I have attempted to make the case for something newer, more modern, more bells and whistles. "I love my car!" is always the response. "But," I say, "don't you want something with CarPlay? We're getting older – perhaps it's time for an SUV that would be easier to get in and out of?" But alas: "I love my car."

This past winter she started to give. Between pressure from me and the kids,

a sore leg, and probably something in the air, we went to look at a new Merc estate – the E450 4Matic All-Terrain wagon (the only non-hyper-priced AMG estate available here). It's a lovely car, but we both had a hard time getting past the Subaru Outback-esque black cladding. And we already have this car, but in analogue. Besides, specced out with the critical options for us (read: multi-contour front seats), it was over US\$80,000.

Big bucks

Then we looked at a new GLE450 4Matic. Although we did enjoy an old M-Class for several years, I've always been a little skittish about Alabama-built Mercedes.

I mean, I want my Mercedes to scream "Achtung!" and live on a diet of petrol and sauerkraut, not "Yee-haw!" and barbecued ribs and potato salad. That's what they make Corvettes for! Honestly, it's total snobbery. The new US-built Mercs are truly lovely vehicles, and loaded with all we wanted we'd have been out the door for more than \$10,000 less than the wagon. We were serious. We printed out the spec sheet, brought it home and looked it over repeatedly. We

△ The E350 could do with professional paint correction.

△△ Rear seat belt retainer clip has snapped clean off.

▽ The multi-contour seats with dynamic adjustment are a boon.

“There are buttons and switches to control a lot of what is done through menus on new cars”

knew the build dates, delivery dates, and even started pondering disposition of the E350. Perhaps it would be a good car for number 1 daughter?

And then reality set in. "But... I still love my car!" Heather said, a little sadly. And in truth, so do I. First off, it's paid for. Does it cost us money? Sure, once in a while. It still cleans up very nicely, although it could use a professional paint correction and detail. I personally like that there are buttons and switches to control a lot of what is done through menus on new cars. I really like that I can (when I want to) do a lot of the work on it myself. Honestly, if we were in the market for a used car, I'd seek this one out. So with all that in mind, it got a wash and a stay of execution. Now I just need to figure out the part number and order those pesky rear seat belt retainers that have snapped off.



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W109 300SEL 6.3 1969, 106,000 miles, LHD, auto, blue metallic, mechanically excellent, no rust or rot anywhere, drives superbly, ivory leather, interior and carpets, FSH, only one previous owner, £40,000. Tel: 07818 471980. Canterbury **[DEW1]**



R107 420SL 1987, in immaculate concours condition, except for serviceable parts it is as it left the dealers showroom, has won numerous concours events, this car must be seen to be appreciated, £49,950. Tel: 07770 784690. Leeds **[DEW5]**



190E 2.5-16 Cosworth 1990, 160,000 miles, H registration, full black leather interior, AMG rear window spoiler, MOMO steering wheel, Getrag dog leg gearbox, AMG 18-inch alloys, Brands Hatch 2017 Deutcheftest award winner, £26,500. Tel: 07771 511433. West Sussex **[DEW6]**



S124 300TE Estate 1990, 117,000 miles, automatic, Artic White, sunroof, leather interior, air con, service history, MOT December, owned for 16 years, superb original condition, drives really well, Mercedes Club concours winner, £POA. Tel: 01932 787178. Middlesex **[DEW10]**



280SL 1985, 143,380 miles, auto, I have owned this wonderful car for 20 years and has been remarkably trouble free, age is now catching up, hence sale, always garaged, black leather with walnut dash, hardtop and wind deflector, new mohair soft top 4 years ago, regular servicing, MOT Feb 2024, pioneer radio/cassette, £26,250. Tel: 07834 708255. Devon **[DEW2]**



SLK230 Kompressor 1999, four excellent continental tyres, engine and auto gearbox oil and filters renewed, two-tone blue-black leather interior, heated seats and door mirrors, DAB CD/radio with USB and Bluetooth, M-B owners club and SadCase member for the past four years of ownership, part service history with John Haynes, MOT until July 2023, beautiful fast drive, includes mesh wind break, first aid kit, warning triangle, space saver tyre and electric compressor, £2,995. Tel: 07730 437219. West Sussex **[CDW1]**



CLK230 Kompressor Avantgarde 2002, Tiptronic, silver, only two owners in 20 years, FSH, Merc specialist last 10 years, MOT March 2024, no advisories, AMG alloys, two-tone leather, potential classic, sensible price, £1,350. Tel: 07710 198665. Halifax **[EFW16]**



C220 CDI AMG 2011, 92,000 miles, Blue Efficiency, 2x remotes, excellent M-B history/ invoices inc. 7G transmission service, runs and sounds exactly as it should, covered approx. 10,000 miles since 2019, rare (option 237A) flamen red, premium nappa leather, Comand/DAB/USB/SD, electric seats and mirrors, LED/DRLs, full owners pack, £7,390. Tel: 07958 629090. Woodford Green **[DEW11]**



S210 E430 Estate 2000, facelift model, extremely well preserved, she is by far one of the cleanest S210s I have ever seen, the car has been well looked after with all receipts including original sales receipt, £6,000. Tel: 07859 974141. Penkridge **[DEW4]**



W202 C200 AMG 2000, 128,000 miles, one owner, grey leather seats and interior all in excellent condition, bodywork very good, full servicing records held, MOT until March 2023, all in good running order, viewing available at any time, £3,250. Tel: 07974 381315. Monmouthshire **[FGW2]**



CL63 AMG 2011, 64,000 miles, pearlescent white with black interior, factory carbon fibre interior and exterior, sunroof, massage heated and cooled seats, FSH, two keys, a brilliant example inside and out, reluctantly selling due to house purchase, first to see will buy, £POA. Tel: 07789 513517. Surrey **[DEW8]**



190E 1.8, auto, Almandine Metallic Red, 117,000 miles, owned for 4 years, serviced by MB specialist, lots of history, bodywork and interior are very presentable, ventilation fan no longer works, oil in the coolant - head-gasket needs attention soon, £POA. Tel: 07807 484984. Cardiff **[EFW1]**



R129 280SL 1995, 110,000 miles, three former owners, Nautic Blue with mushroom leather, MOT August, very well-maintained example, hardtop stand and bespoke dust cover included, not being used as often as it should and space required for new vehicle, £12,500 ONO. Tel: 0131 557 9246. Edinburgh [DEW12]



280SL 26,500 miles, soft top, currently owned and always garaged for last 13 years, excellent condition and genuine, comes with hardtop, inspections welcome, £12,000 ONO. Tel: 07831 833389. Staffordshire [DEW14]



SL350 3.7 litres, 2004, 47,000 miles, four owners, MOT 05/23, exceptional condition – everything works, agreed value warranty with breakdown cover until 10/23, too old to enjoy, history pdf available, £9,750 ONO. Tel: 07854 136628. Aberdeen [DEW17]



SL500 84,000 miles, stunning and totally rust-free example, FSH, high spec, new MOT, sold with interesting registration number, looks great and drives very well, AA/RAC inspection welcome, £7,750. Tel: 07860 444422. Essex [DEW18]



S600 L AMG 2003, 106,000 miles, biturbo, full options, fridge, dynamic seats, rear table, steering wheel heater, ABC and sport system, looked after very well, stunning condition, FSH, £7,500. Tel: 07550 400000. London [DEW17]



380SL 1984, 85,508 miles, auto, RHD, MOT May 2024, anthracite grey, black leather, walnut rear seat, extensive history, three previous owners, current (club member) 22 years, recent respray, £12,000+ bills excl. servicing, original handbook/documents, garaged with dehumidifier, £23,750. Tel: 07876 744320. Romford [DEW13]



CLK350 AMG V6, AMG, 84,000 miles since 2009, Obsidian Black metallic with full black leather interior, 18-inch alloy wheels, FSH, recent B and A services during my ownership, £2,600 spent on services and improvements, can list out known future work, £5,500 ONO. Tel: 07714 772310. Brighton and Hove [DEW16]

A150 Five-door, rare blue colour, petrol, always kept in excellent condition with no bumps or scrapes it really is a very clean low mileage example, only two owners since new, part service history always with Mercedes, £POA. Tel: 07427 487019. Newhaven [DE]

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SL350 2003, 110,000 miles, Tellurite Silver, MOT Feb 2023, partial service history but latterly self-serviced, few marks and scrapes on bodywork would need attending to, effectively a good start for a running project, £3,000 ONO. Tel: 07767 453132. Winchester [CDW2]



190E 2.6 1990, with full Cosworth bodykit, automatic, air conditioning (fitted by Mercedes Benz), full cream leather, electric tilt/slide sunroof, front central arm rest, electric windows, service history, MOT March, alloy wheels, electric windows, alarm, Becker stereo, £POA. Tel: 01889 502630. Milwich [DEW3]



R129 SL320 1999, 65,000 miles, two previous owners, I have owned since 2015, FSH and MOT, panoramic, silver with light grey leather and rear seats, heated electric seats, AMG wheels together with original alloys and tyres, new stainless steel exhaust, beautiful example garaged and only driven in dry since 2015, £18,500. Tel: 07715 497555. Hertfordshire [CDW3]



E220 Cabriolet 1996, 109,000 miles, auto, dark blue with cream leather, comprehensive service history, blue fabric electric soft top, walnut wood, leather steering wheel and gear selector, heated front seats, eight-hole polished alloys, two keys, superb condition throughout, £11,995. Tel: 01353 665360. Ely [CDW4]



230CE 1992, 119,132 miles, Almandine Red metallic with cream fabric interior, FSH, comprehensive history file spanning the last 27 years including the original sales brochure, equipment includes electric front and rear windows, electric passenger door mirror, radio/CD with electric aerial, electric tilt/slide sunroof, electric seat belt extenders, front and rear armrests, rear head restraints, walnut wood trim, leather steering wheel and gear selector, ribbed carpet mats, deep-dish eight-hole alloy wheels, matching Michelin tyres all round, complete toolkit in original bag, two keys, document wallet including complete book pack with service booklet, present owner for last 15 years, stunning immaculate condition, £10,995. Tel: 07506 797921. Ely [CDW5]



C280 Sport 1997, 100,000 miles, black, long MOT and service history, second owner since 2012, immaculate condition, reluctant sale, space needed, £2,500. Tel: 07799 500978. Clapham [CDW17]



W116 350SE 1979, 88,000 miles, rare dark blue cream interior, runs and drives very well and looks lovely, out of long-term storage in 2018 and fully recommissioned with lots of work done by Edward Hall Classic Mercedes in the last 12 months, low miles, low owners, £12,500. Tel: 07909 718026. Henley on Thames [CDW9]



E242 Avantgarde 2002, 118,000 miles, two owners, silver, recent MOT, new shock absorbers, serviced regularly, smooth runner, glass tinted roof and sunroof, personalised numberplate, £1,500 ONO. Tel: 07970 128889. Maidenhead [EFW2]



190Db Ponton 1961, recent engine overhaul at 17,000, brake overhaul, new tyres and tubes, bright cream paintwork, gleaming chrome, good interior with bench seat, column gear change, one of four or five Ponton 190Db diesel in UK, £14,950 ONO. Tel: 07979 694188. Horley [CDW16]



C200 CDI Estate SE 2011, outstanding vehicle with a full M-B service history, 10 main dealer stamps, all invoices, new tyres, detachable M-B tow bar never fitted, only 6,000 miles in six years, MOT 10/23, any trial or inspection welcome, £5,250. Tel: 07389 718333. West Sussex [CDW14]



W126 SE 1990, 69,000 miles, a truly exceptional example, superb unmarked original body, every panel perfect, zero rust, immaculate green velour interior, M-B Club enthusiast owned, M-B owners club valuation certificate, service and maintenance history with invoices, £12,250. Tel: 01934 624986. Weston Super Mare [CDW15]



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



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



300SL 1991, 132,000 miles, automatic, convertible, good condition, new soft top, new starter motor and new distributor, new MOT, £6,995. Tel: 01273 306768. Brighton [CDW18]



W202 C36 AMG 1996, 78,000 miles, very good condition for year, I've owned the car for 12 plus years, it's serviced every year (every 4,000 miles) by local Mercedes specialist, sold with AMG numberplate, £11,750 ONO. Tel: 01915 848135. Sunderland [CDW19]



C230 Coupe Sport Edition V6, 2005, 59,000 miles, six-speed manual, FSH, main dealer and specialist panoramic roof, two-tone black and grey unmarked leather interior, 12 months MOT, owned since 2018, maintained regardless of cost, spare set of AMG alloys and tyres, always garaged, superb condition, £2,950 ONO. Tel: 07737 83726. Stockton on Tees [CDW20]



SL55 AMG 2005, 69,285 miles, black with red interior, new MOT (has never failed one), serviced by Mercedes in February this year, excellent condition with a new three-year ceramic coating, £19,500. Tel: 01983 730911. Isle of Wight [CDW21]



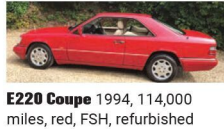
500SL 1993, 46,135 miles, originally a Jersey car with three former keepers (one of them being me), silver with tan interior, immaculate condition, I had it serviced by Mercedes in February this year and had a three-year ceramic coating professionally applied at a cost of £1,150 only a month ago, 22 stamps in service book, next MOT 10/23, £21,000. Tel: 01983 730911. Isle of Wight [CDW22]



AMG GTC Roadster 2017, 14,473 miles, full and regular service history, extras include AMG Performance seats, AMG Silver Chrome Exterior Package, Magnetite Black, exclusive nappa Leather style macchiato beige/black, £86,000. Tel: 01983 730911. Isle of Wight [CDW23]



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



E220 Coupe 1994, 114,000 miles, red, FSH, refurbished alloys, reconditioned Cream leather with red piping, new front/rear windcreens, new tyres, bought during lockdown as a project and is now immaculate and now ready to go, MOT to March 2023, £7,000 ONO. Tel: 07714 471014. Dorking [BCW1]

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



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



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



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



C140 GL600 V12, 1998, 90,000 miles, very rare, silver metallic, two-tone grey nappa leather, fully loaded spec, FSH, £££s spent over the past three years to bring this magnificent car to immaculate condition, drives perfectly, MOT to August 2023, £20,000 ONO. Tel: 07714 471014. Dorking [BCW13]



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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



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

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Mercedes replica Fully rebuilt, new running gear, new brakes and lines, new hood, on the button, ready to go, UK plates but located in Dublin, EPOA. Tel: 0035 3868 276666. County Meath **[CDW12]**



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



560SL 1989, 96,500 miles, PS, PB, electric windows and door locks, 2 USB ports, new soft top, hardtop, very good condition, all new carpeting, \$30,000. Tel: +1 714 299 9264. California **[EFW1]**



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



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



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



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



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



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

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Complete cloth interior
For Mercedes 124-series CE coupe, cream colour, all door cards, headrests and armrests included, in very good condition with no wear marks, front seats will also fit saloon model but not sure about the rears, £200. Tel: 07752 532516. Chichester [DEW9]



R129 SL AMG 3-piece split rim wheels 8.5x17 and 10x17, these wheels are very rare, the wheels have polished outer rims and centres, front wheels are 8.5x17 H2 ET18 with 235/40x17 Dunlop tyres, rear wheels are 10x17 H2 ET17 with 285/40x17 Michelin tyres, £3,250. Tel: 07860 211645. Hampshire [DEW15]



17-inch Mercedes wheels
Recently powder coated and not used since, W211 fitment or similar, 1 x 245 45 17 Continental as well, £275. Tel: 07951 406205. UK [CDW8]



Hardtop For 1997 SL320, excellent condition, £495. Tel: 07753 739102. South Wales [CDW7]

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Five alloy wheels As new, with decals, from 1998 E430, 215/55R16 tyres, one unused and four have 5-6mm tread depth, £550. Tel: 01483 222689. Surrey [CDW13]



W108 280SE bumpers
Complete set, front and rear, including irons and brackets, in excellent condition, more photos available, please ask, quite happy to deliver, please call any time, £500. Tel: 07548 170829. London [CDW10]



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



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



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



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

NO. PLATES

N33 AMG

N33 AMG personal plate, currently on retention certificate, ready to transfer, £1,800. Email: phillippo@live.co.uk. Wiltshire [CDW6]

MER 5L

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

WANTED

190D or 250D Diesel saloon, auto preferred, or five-speed manual, any year 1990 to 1993, any colour, with or without MOT, cash waiting, will travel anywhere in the UK. Tel: 0151 639 0149. Wirral [DE]



SLC300

Packing 242bhp and sitting just below the AMG V6 twin-turbo, could the SLC300 make a convincing case for itself when new?

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG

When Mercedes-Benz launched the SLK in 1996, there were nine body shapes in the Stuttgart stable. These days there are three times that, which might explain why when, in 2015, the carmaker decided a 'new' name was required for its compact roadster. Rather than a hitherto unused letter combination, Mercedes revived the 1970s 'SLC' badge, explaining that the 'C' in the title is due to the car being derived from C-Class underpinnings.

Not that it fundamentally changes anything. The SLC is in effect a facelifted version of the third-generation, R172 SLK that was launched in 2010. The days of badge numbers relating to engine size are long gone at Mercedes-Benz, hence the '300' tells us that the car is the more powerful of the two models using the four-cylinder, two-litre turbocharged M274 engine. In this form, it gives 242bhp and 273lb ft torque, a third and a quarter more respectively than the SLC200 (for those interested in historical comparisons, it took five litres of 500SLC to produce a similar output nearly 50 years ago). The list price of the SLC300, the sole trim level being AMG Line, is £39,385 OTR, £3,405 more than an equivalently equipped SLC200.

“There’s a bonus too, in the form of a ride that is remarkably absorbent”

Mercedes has had two decades to hone this formula, and that much is evident the moment you slide into the wonderfully supportive, electrically adjustable seats, handle the chunky steering wheel and look around at the cabin trim and fittings. There is absolutely no trace of the build quality problems that were beginning to surface at Mercedes-Benz when the SLK first arrived.

Modern four-cylinder turbo engines rarely sound great, and this unit is no exception – flat and uninspiring, and not one you’d rev just to hear it sing. But in terms of what it delivers on the road, this powertrain comes close to perfection: the turbo is so lag free it’s almost hard to tell that

△ The SLC is a facelifted version of the R172 SLK and was launched late in 2015.

forced induction is occurring, and the thrust that is available from little more than tickover gives this little car a big-hearted character.

The same high standard is seen in the chassis. There’s not a great deal of detail fed through the electro-mechanical steering, but the SLC has a delightfully nimble feel that encourages you to exploit its handling talent. There’s a bonus too, in the form of a ride that is remarkably absorbent for a car on 18-inch wheels and 40- and 35-series tyres front and rear, and with 10mm lowered suspension over the Sport versions.

All this may or may not be kit you want or need, but it doesn’t alter the fundamental nature of this Mercedes – one that started off in 1996 as the perfect compact roadster and then was continually made better.

▷ The rounded rump houses the fabulous folding metal roof; twin-exhaust system.

▽ Red stitching sets off the smart interior; paddles linked to a nine-speed automatic.



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Frank Staud

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