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When Karl Marx told the world's workers they had nothing to lose but their chains, he could have been talking about the original proletarian mode of transport: the bike. Coincidentally, cycling was the inspiration for the new C63 Sealander Elite chronometer. Not only does the smart pop-out crown stop it digging into your wrist when you're riding, but the super-light titanium case makes it effortless to wear. Though Karl would have surely loved these utilitarian features, we think its sleek design is more 'Wiggins' than 'Marx'.



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CRAIG PUSEY

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
Tom Pickford +44 (0)20 8639 4416

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

Contributing writers and photographers
Guy Baker, Noortje Blokland, Neil Briscoe, Casper Heij, Reed Hitchcock, Ian Kuah, Albert Mensinga, Jordan Molyneux, Terry Osborne, Shane O'Donoghue, Craig Pusey, Eric Richardson, Kaveh Sardari, David Sutherland and William Terrington

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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, Sculpins 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



Our very first magazine launched with a 'November 2001' label, meaning this edition marks our 20th anniversary

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This October/November 2021 issue of Mercedes Enthusiast is a significant one. Our very first magazine launched with a 'November 2001' label and R230 SL500 cover star, meaning the edition in your hands right now marks our 20th anniversary. Armed with readers in over 60 countries, including a fabulously loyal – and pleasingly vocal – number of subscribers, I hope we can continue satisfying your passion for three-pointed stars for many years to come!

With over 130 years of Mercedes-Benz history to cover, it's always tricky balancing classic and modern content. This issue has a sprinkling of the former with rather more of latter. We are the first magazine in the world to drive Monceau Automobiles' 107-series SLC with an electrified powertrain (page 56), and you can also read about characterful E50 and SL60 AMGs (page 42) hailing from a particularly interesting time at the tuner. If you're into 209-series CLKs then you won't want to miss our feature starting on page 50, this sleek two-door contrasting with a hugely imposing CL700 AMG (page 30), which is easily one of the rarest cars we have ever featured.

We also celebrate 30 years since the launch of the illustrious W124 500E (page 36) by getting the inside line on the car's development from a Porsche technical project manager who sheds new light on this popular topic – plus much more. I hope you enjoy this insightful story and the rest of the issue!

Kyle Molyneux
Executive Editor



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



David Sutherland
For this issue, David Sutherland was charged with investigating the merits of 220- and 221-series S-Classes packing 320 CDI diesel

engines. "The Mercedes S-Class represents the luxury car at its most sophisticated, so it's always fascinating to compare two generations side by side," says David. "And for me, the 221-series that replaced the 220 in 2005 is one of the best, thanks to its notably better build quality and great V6 diesel engine." Head over to page 22.



William Terrington
As soon as we spotted the CL700 AMG for sale at specialist Edward Hall's in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, we knew it had to feature in

our magazine. William Terrington was the lucky man sent to find out more about the car and its extensive restoration. "The CL700 AMG was a phenomenal car, the ultimate coupe with the ultimate engine. Those who dislike the 140-series should now think again," William says emphatically. The story begins on page 30.

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The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

News

C-Class in the UK

Standard features of the new 206-series C-Class Saloon and Estate include electric engine assistance and a nine-speed automatic transmission

The all-new, 206-series C-Class Saloon and Estate are now on sale, prices starting from £38,785 OTR and £40,420 OTR respectively. There's a wide choice of trim levels: Sport, (C200 and C220d only), AMG Line and AMG Line Premium. But for the ultimate specification, there's AMG Line Premium Plus, bringing 19-inch five-spoke AMG alloys, panoramic sunroof, and four-zone Thermotronic air conditioning. Wheel designs and interior trims are model line specific. Perhaps disappointing for some, the traditional grille with a bonnet-mounted star has been discontinued in all markets.

From just 1.5 litres, the C200 produces 201bhp and 221lb ft of torque, returning up to 44.1mpg in Saloon form. For those wanting more power, there's the C300 (Saloon only), which has a robust 254bhp and a high torque figure of 295lb ft thanks to its 2.0-litre engine. There are two diesels to choose from: the best-selling 220d continues, now with 197bhp and 324lb ft of torque, while emitting 124 to 131g/km CO₂. The supreme diesel is the C300d powered by a 3.0-litre four-cylinder engine producing 261bhp and 406lb ft torque, all while returning up to 55.4mpg.

The 48V Integrated Starter Generator (ISG) mild hybrid system found in all variants at launch provides an extra 20bhp and 147lb ft of torque, and can



The first 206-series C-Classes will arrive in the UK later this year.



△ Every new C-Class engine now features a 48V mild hybrid system.



△ Even base Sport trim line gets a 12.3-inch digital driver display.

allow the car to glide with the engine switched off to further save fuel. The 9G-Tronic nine-speed automatic gearbox is standard across the range. For the first time, a manual gearbox is unavailable.

The C-Class shares much technology with the S-Class. The centre console is a 11.9-inch touchscreen with the latest MBUX virtual assistant. The

digital light system is standard with AMG Line Premium, though projection of road symbols is not available in the UK. A head-up display featuring MBUX Augmented Reality that debuted with the new S-Class is available only with AMG Line Premium Plus. The Driving Assistance Package Plus is a £1,695 option for AMG Line Premium Plus spec

cars and comprises a full suite of safety technology including Active Evasive Steering Assist and Active Emergency Stop Assist.

Arriving later is the plug-in hybrid C300e with an all-electric range of 62 miles (WLTP). Despite the All-Terrain estate not coming to the UK, a diesel plug-in hybrid and the much anticipated AMG variants are in the pipeline.

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New SL interior

The cabin of the new R232 SL has been revealed. The SL now features a 2+2 layout for the first time since the R129 generation and ditches a folding metal roof in favour of a lightweight soft top.

Inspired by the W198 300SL Roadster, the interior boasts a special 'hyperanalogue' theme, blending digital and analogue features such as a fully digital, 12.3-inch LCD instrument cluster integrated into a three-dimensional visor. Upholstered in nappa leather

(or nappa/Dinamica microfibre) and complete with integrated headrests, the seats are more figure-hugging than before but retain a luxurious feel. Inside the new SL, you'll also find Merc's latest MBUX infotainment system with 11.9-inch touchscreen, plus four galvanised air vents. A head-up display is optional.

You will be able to read much more about the new, AMG-only R232 SL in the next edition of *Mercedes Enthusiast*, on sale November 19th.

Electric strategy

Mercedes-Benz is preparing to go all electric by the end of the decade - market conditions permitting. From 2025, all newly launched chassis will be electric only; between 2022 and 2030, Mercedes intends to invest over

€40 billion to facilitate the move away from conventionally powered cars. Also from 2025, there will be an all-electric version of every model the company offers.

The year 2025 gains even greater significance following news that Mercedes will also launch three new, electric-only modular architectures in the form of the MB.EA (medium to large sized cars), AMG.EA (a performance-oriented platform) and VAN.EA (for electric vans and light commercial vehicles).

Supporting this grand plan, Mercedes-Benz will establish eight new factories producing next-generation batteries with capacities of more than 200 gigawatt hours (even higher density 'solid state' batteries are in the works). The company also aims to improve vehicle recharging standards with its new, seamless 'Plug & Charge' system, while expanding the charging network in partnership with Shell; by 2025, there should be over 30,000 recharging points across Europe, China and North America. In our next issue (arriving November 19th), we will have the first details of the new EQE electric 'business saloon' from AMG.



SLK subframe rust

We have been made aware of rear subframe corrosion issues affecting R171 SLKs registered between 2005 and 2008. In some instances, vehicle subframes have collapsed, leaving owners stranded at the side of the road. It is reported that some Mercedes-Benz main dealers are replacing corroded subframes free of charge, with the proviso that the vehicle has a full Mercedes-Benz main dealer service record and that no previous welding work has been carried out.

If you own one of these cars, we advise having the rear subframe checked out by a main dealer. The SLK Owners Club (slkownersclub.co.uk) is a helpful resource on this topic. For reference, Merc specialist Prestige Car Service in Hampshire charges £1,358 to complete the 6.5-hour subframe replacement, with the cost of the subframe itself coming in at £812. Thank you to David Evans and Nik Hamilton for their assistance with this matter.



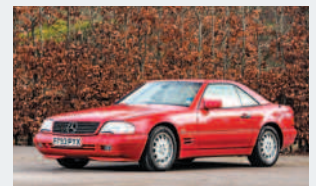
△ AMG at Spa

Half a century has now passed since AMG's famous class win in the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium, which put the company on the map. The 300SEL 6.8 'Red Pig' finished second overall in 1971 thanks to its 420bhp+ V8.



△ S-Class plug-in hybrid

The S580e L plug-in hybrid is now available in the UK, starting at £104,490 OTR. Its three-litre straight-six petrol engine produces 362bhp while an electric motor serves up a useful 148bhp. The car's electric range is quoted as 63 miles; fuel consumption is 353.1mpg with 18g/km CO2 emissions.



△ Low-mile roadster

An 89-mile (yes, you read that correctly) R129 SL500 manufactured in 1996 recently sold at auction for £50,000. Company Well Bought Well Sold presented the car in as new and unmarked condition. The SL was sold new by the Normand of Mayfair dealership in London.

▽ 300SLR on display

This year's Goodwood Festival of Speed featured a memorial to the late Sir Stirling Moss, who died in 2020. His legendary, 722-numbered 300SLR from the 1955 Mille Miglia was displayed in an impressive glass cube.



AMG has added an electric motor plus a high-density and super-cooled battery at the rear



First AMG hybrid

Affalterbach's first performance plug-in hybrid debuts in the form of the 831bhp GT63 S E, teaming a V8 twin-turbo engine with synchronous electric motor and battery pack

WORDS KYLE MOLYNEUX IMAGES DAIMLER AG

The new GT63 S E is Mercedes-AMG's first performance plug-in hybrid and calls on Formula 1 technology to boost output and efficiency.

Under the bonnet is an AMG four-litre V8 biturbo engine developing 630bhp at 5,500 to 6,500rpm, with 664lb ft torque available from 2,500 to 4,500rpm and linked to an AMG Speedshift MCT 9G automatic gearbox. That's enough grunt for most, but AMG has added an electric motor plus a high-density and super-cooled battery at the rear, providing an extra 201bhp/236lb ft torque and aiding weight distribution. Total system output


is quoted at a stonking 831bhp with up to 1,084lb ft of twisting force! So, from a standing start the GT63 S E will see off 62mph in 2.9 seconds, hit 124mph in under 10 seconds, and top out at 196mph.

The plug-in hybrid system provides an electric driving range of seven miles, which isn't much, but AMG says the 400V/6.1kWh battery and electric drive unit on the rear axle (housing the electric motor, a separate two-speed gearbox plus limited-slip differential) are there to increase performance above all else. For what it's worth, this four-wheel drive AMG achieves 32.8mpg (WLTP Combined) with 196g/km CO2 emissions.

Naturally, there are a bundle of driving modes to make best use of this plug-in hybrid, including Electric, Comfort, Sport, Sport+, Race and Individual settings found via the AMG Dynamic Select control in the cabin. Drivers can also choose between four levels of regenerative braking, which occurs when they step off the throttle pedal. Overarching AMG Dynamics modes tailor vehicle reactions and comprise Basic, Advanced, Pro, Master and Individual. And yes, there's also a Drift Mode for the hooligans out there.

The latest GT model boasts AMG Ride Control+ multi-chamber air suspension, which employs continuously variable

control valves for the first time, providing even finer tuning of damper compression and rebound settings. The monster braking system is made up of 420x40mm carbon-ceramic discs clamped by six-piston calipers up front, while one-piston floating calipers grab 380x32 carbon-ceramic brake discs at the rear.

Design features include an aggressively contoured front bumper with enormous intakes, plus 'E Performance' badges on the wings and trapezoidal tailpipes. Inside, you will find an MBUX infotainment system and an AMG twin-spoke steering wheel for hanging onto whilst you deploy all that power. The price is TBC. 



Seven-mile electric range; arrives in the UK in mid 2022.



Braking regeneration adjusted via control on steering wheel.

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Mercedes-Benz Classic arguably stole the show during August's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. To celebrate the imminent arrival of the new-generation R232 SL, the manufacturer presented six cars from its heritage collection. These included a W194 300SL (#5) racing sports car (far

left) which Rudolf Caracciola drove to fourth place in the 1952 Mille Miglia, and a stunning W198 300SL Roadster from 1957 (far right).

Our pick of the bunch was a one-off W194 300SL racing prototype (#11) developed for the 1953 sports car racing season by highly influential engineer



Rudolf Uhlenhaut, among several others, and given chassis number 11. The coupe is equipped with a 212bhp direct petrol injection engine and features a decreased track width that reduces aerodynamic drag. The rear axle and weight distribution are improved over the original W194, too.

With Daimler switching its attention to the 1954 Formula 1 championship, the manufacturer did not have the capacity to compete in sports car racing's 1953 season, so this 300SL design never had its moment on track, sadly.

IMAGE DAIMLER AG

Recalling trailblazing Mercedes-Benz cars of yesteryear

“When launched, the 500E slipped under the radar, especially in the UK where it was very expensive”



▷ M119 V8 a big improvement on the old M117 unit.

▷△ Non standard wheel; speedo reads in km/h.

500E

The first instalment of this new series looks back at the 124-series 500E, launched at the Paris motor show in October 1990. It set a new high watermark for four-door saloon performance and is fast becoming a favourite among collectors with its link to Porsche

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES TERRY OBORNE & DAIMLER AG

The expression, ‘an iron fist in a velvet glove’ could have been invented for the W124 500E, the four-door saloon’s suave but ultra low-key looks conceding almost no clues as to the huge (for the time) power and torque its high technology five-litre V8 harboured. Its unveiling in autumn 1990 came as German car makers embarked

on an output war but in the most discreet possible way, and the 500E, borrowing the R129 500SL’s powertrain, was Stuttgart’s answer to the BMW M5, which for the last four years had been hailed as the definitive high-performance saloon.

The 500E, badged E500 following the 124-series’ facelift of 1993, was a car that only

Mercedes-Benz could have built. Or not built, because Stuttgart neighbour Porsche did much of the development and assembly work. You could get close up to the 500E, or even inside it, without realising it was anything other than a well-specced 300E, hitherto the 124 range-topper.

The only visible exterior differences were the mildly bulbous wheelarches to accommodate the 16- instead of 15-inch alloy wheels, and the model badge on the boot, which customers could delete and often did. While it wasn’t available in beige, the 500E could have been mistaken for any 124 in a German airport taxi rank, hence those in the know christened it ‘Super Cab’.

Once seated inside, there was still no obvious sign that you were in the first production V8 124-series. The seats were special

▷ On the Mercedes-Benz stand at the Paris motor show in 1990.

Recaros but only a sticker hidden underneath noted that. The rear cabin featured what were effectively two separate seats, the usual bench seat replaced because more space was needed for the 500SL’s larger differential. Instruments were the regular, smart 124 design, devoid of extra dials as per the 190E 2.5-16.

The 300E was notable for the refinement of its super-sweet, three-litre straight-six. But it could never be called a quick car, and much the same applied to the 3.2-litre E320 successor. So, when the 500E arrived with its 322bhp and 354lb ft





◀ Some owners upgraded the braking system.

▽ With its flared arches, this saloon sits just perfectly.



torque – half as much power again and nearly twice the pulling power of the 300E-24 – it truly took the 124-series to the next level.

The 500E wasn't just unassuming in appearance, it even managed to conceal its performance potential from the driver until it was called upon. Twist the key and the astoundingly smooth M119 purrs into life, the only clear sign it has started being the rev counter needle lifting slightly. Engage 'D' on the autobox and you move off near silently; all very nice, but is this really the M5 killer?

Working the engine provides the answer. As mid revs are reached, an ocean of thrust becomes available, deployed perfectly by the four-speed gearbox even though it was near the end of its career, soon to give way to a generation of five-speeders. The silken wallop of torque put the six-cylinder M5 to shame, presumably one of the goals of the programme, and



This 1992 car has post-facelift indicators and Limited spec alloys.

makes the 500E feel one of the most effortless Benzes ever.

But that's not all you get: as revs rise the V8 assumes an urgent character that 500SL owners would not experience in full, because part of Porsche's

development work included a complete overhaul of the fuel induction and ignition system. Generally, Mercedes engines are set to operate unobtrusively, but this is one you want to work hard just to hear and feel it – and of course if you want to blister to 62mph from a standing start in

just over six seconds, which back in the 1990s was still noteworthy.

Mercedes did not want to impose a reduction in mechanical refinement in exchange for added performance, and the same thought was applied to the chassis. The suspension was heavily modified, and the 500E is more nimble than regular 124s, but little if any harshness is fed to occupants. The 500E's cossetting manner was in stark contrast to the various 'official' AMG Mercedes models that would appear in showrooms within two years of the 500E's debut, and which were very firmly sprung and, in the case of the W124 and W202 Class, noisier in the engine department.

When launched, the 500E slipped under the radar, especially in the UK where it was very expensive and unavailable in right-hand drive, hence fewer than 30 were delivered through Mercedes-Benz dealers. The 10,479 sold were enjoyed by people who wanted a very quick Mercedes but didn't want to shout, or even whisper, about it and thus this incredible, virtually hand-built star car managed to be almost invisible.

Thirty years on, it's a different story. The once near anonymous 'Q-car' has grown in classic status and the best examples are starting to make quite serious money on the international auction circuit. Mercedes-Benz now celebrates it as one of its choice 'modern classics', and even Porsche is now in on the act, for the first time wanting to highlight its considerable involvement in the project.

For some, the 500E/E500 was and perhaps still is the ideal motorcar: thoroughbred engineering, ample performance, high build standard, and quietly radiating the unmistakable Mercedes-Benz aura. That the rest of the world has no idea what it is only adds to the appeal. ■

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 500E (W124)

ENGINE **M119 4,973cc V8** POWER **322bhp@5,500rpm** TORQUE **354lb ft@3,900rpm** TRANSMISSION **4-speed automatic, RWD** WEIGHT **1,700kg**
0-62MPH **6.1sec** TOP SPEED **155mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **16.1mpg** YEARS PRODUCED **1991-1995** NUMBER BUILT **10,479 (including 500Es)**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; top speed electronically limited; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; post-October 1992 cars made 316bhp/347lb ft torque; E500 badging arrived July 1993

Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

Testing times



During the development of new technology, Mercedes often creates strange prototypes for testing purposes - Ian Kuah digs into his archives and recounts a few of the most memorable

Over the years, I have been privy to many of the revolutionary technical breakthroughs developed by M-B engineers to improve chassis control and safety. Two outstanding examples of these are Active Body Control suspension and Brake Assist. Mercedes-Benz began fitting Brake Assist as standard to all its cars in 1997, while ABC was derived from an abandoned system outlawed by F1 and made its production debut on the C215 CL in 1999.

In the autumn of 1994, I was at Malmshiem, a former military airfield near Stuttgart, to test pre-production versions of these systems. To prove the worth of this technology, the test engineers mapped out a twisty handling course with cones and provided an ABC-equipped C220 prototype for a back-to-back comparison against three C280 cars in Classic, Sport and AMG suspension specification.

The Classic handled well for a standard car, but the roll angles of its comfort-oriented suspension seriously compromised its turn-in response, grip and body control. The Sport was a much tauter machine, showing good body control and stability through the course. As you would expect, the car with the AMG suspension was quickest and most fun to punt between the cones. The fact that it cornered so much flatter also meant that you could use the throttle more effectively to adjust the car's attitude through the arc of each turn.

Last but not least, we were able to try the ABC-equipped car on the course and this proved to be a real eye-opener. Despite only having a four-cylinder motor, it was as quick through the course as the six-cylinder cars, combining the flat cornering of the AMG car with the ride comfort of the Classic. It was an uncanny feeling having the best qualities from both ends of the spectrum with no compromises.

To take things to the extreme, Mercedes also brought along a one-off C-Class prototype to show us just how precise a race-tuned chassis is compared to even a good road car. This particular test car had had its wheelarches pruned away to the point where even the DTM-sized wheels and tyres had plenty of space. Power came from a 3.2-litre AMG straight-six with unsilenced exhaust, while the roll cage, race seats and steering wheel

underlined that it was not meant to be driven slowly on the test track.

With loads of power to unstick the big tyres, this car was a real barrel of laughs through the handling course. The near non-existent roll

meant the saloon handled like a huge go-kart, and it was even more fun when the heavens opened briefly, turning the track into a veritable skidpan. Then the crisp throttle response allowed me to indulge in lurid power slides.

A handling course is one thing, real world road conditions quite another.

Thus, we were encouraged to

drive the 10km (6.2-mile) test course on the roads around Malmshiem in the Classic, Sport and AMG equipped C-Classes, and were then asked in the end-of-session debrief which one we liked best. I said that the Classic was comfortable on a straight road, but rolled too much in the bends, while the AMG car was great on the handling course but too stiff for daily use. On balance, the Sport version struck a fair balance and I gave that the thumbs up. The chief engineer just smiled and said, "I agree with your comments, so I drive a Sport myself!" Five years later, ABC debuted on the C215 CL Coupe and the rest, as the saying goes, is history.

Power came from a 3.2-litre AMG straight-six with unsilenced exhaust



▲ W202 C-Class with racing suspension set the bar very high.



In 1994, Ian tested Cs with different suspension set ups.

The 220-series S-Class that debuted in 1998 showcased the first-generation Airmatic air

suspension. At the press launch event, Mercedes had an Airmatic suspension test mule tucked away behind the hotel. At a casual glance, this appeared to be a dark metallic blue E500, but if you knew this Porsche-made Mercedes at all the unusual wheel offsets would have raised an eyebrow. It certainly piqued my interest and so I quizzed one of the engineers, who opened the bonnet to reveal an M113 V8 motor and ABC suspension test set up.

Such Frankenstein cars do exist in the Mercedes prototype test fleet, and unlike the pre-production cars that try to hide from the cameras they are not always distinguished by black tape and other forms of camouflage. ■

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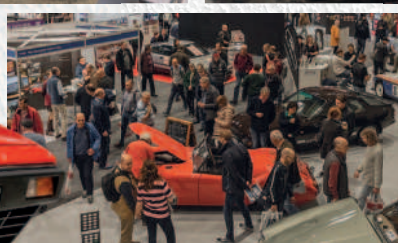
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The expert on all things Mercedes gives us his latest views...

Power games



As output figures are redefined for a new breed of Mercedes cars, David Sutherland recounts the evolving role of engine performance for the brand and its customers

The widespread electrification of cars in the next five to 10 years will alter the way we view output figures, as familiar power and torque give way to amps and kilowatts, measurements few of us understand currently (sorry, bad pun). Perhaps we'll soon be boasting about how far our particular car will go on one charge rather than quoting its horsepower rating, or how quickly its battery will fully charge. Or even, look at my amazing, carbon-trimmed, ergonomically optimised garage charger that uses F1 technology.

For me, it will be strange and sad to say farewell to the old ratings, partly because while I understand how the various iterations of the internal combustion engine work, I have no idea what goes on inside an electric motor. But mainly because it has been fascinating to observe how car makers have used power as a marketing tool over the decades – particularly Mercedes-Benz, because Stuttgart's attitude has been different to others, and sometimes contradictory.

Go back to 1953, to the launch of Mercedes' first modern post-war model, and you find the base 180's 1.8-litre petrol engine producing 51bhp.

Nearly 70 years later its present equivalent, the C200, finds 201bhp from its turbocharged 1.5-litre unit – four times as much. The modern car is of course heavier, but its power-to-weight ratio of 122bhp per tonne is still almost three times as high as the Ponton's. Take the diesel Ponton, the 180D, and you find its 74lb ft torque more than quadrupled in the C220d.

Clearly, technology has constantly developed, and car makers find engine power an easy and quantifiable message to get across to customers seeking the best. This arguably came to a head in the late 1980s when almost all manufacturers (though not Mercedes) offered a 'GTP' and were prepared



200D with a 54bhp diesel motor was the second best selling W123.



◁ 220SEb was a luxury coupe with 2.2 litres.

△ W109 300SEL 6.3 packed in a 247bhp M100 V8.

to throw anything at them to make them more powerful: 16-valve cylinder heads, turbos, superchargers, not to mention stripes and spoilers which for some buyers gave an illusory power lift.

In the case of Mercedes-Benz, we see both an enthusiasm for pushing out the power envelope and for a long time a reluctance to exploit it. In 1954, it stunned the world with the 300SL, whose many wonders included the three-litre engine that, thanks to fuel injection, produced 212bhp; equally extraordinary, though not something Mercedes-Benz publicised, was that the overhead-camshaft straight-six was developed from a truck motor.

Yet for its high-volume cars the firm was, until into the 1990s, of the view that engine power and performance didn't matter too much. It clearly felt that people bought Mercedes-Benzes because of their build quality, durability and prestige.

And this enabled Mercedes to get away with power outputs that would have been a hard sell for other marques. In the UK in 1984, as the 123-series neared the end of production, a

Mercedes 240D, with its 64bhp, 2.4-litre four was priced at £11,200 before any extras and with definitely no discounts available, an amount that would have secured a top-of-the-range Ford Granada Ghia. The Merc's metal-for-money quotient was poor, but that customers saw beyond that kept dealer order books full.

Indeed, for decades, Mercedes-Benzes were what you might call 'under-engined'. Partly due to European motor tax breaks, models such as the W111 Fintail and the W108 were restricted to relatively small six-cylinder engines. When the fabulous W111 Coupe and Cabriolet were launched in 1961, these 220SEb models had the staple M127

2.2-litre six producing just 118bhp, unremarkable power for such a luxurious and expensive car, even then.

It's one of the better-known Mercedes-Benz stories that while Stuttgart invented the 'super saloon' with the W109 300SEL 6.3 of late 1967, it would never have happened without the spare time development work of speed-obsessed senior engineer Erich Waxenberger. Top management were reluctant to sign off the car for fear its 'hot rod' character would offend conservatively-minded customers. Indeed, Mercedes only developed a series of smaller V8 engines in the late 1960s to appeal to the North American market.

It wasn't until the end of the 1990s that Mercedes gave up relying on low power models, perhaps concluding it couldn't defy demographics and had to appeal to a new, younger clientele, offering lots of horsepower and a sportier set up. But I still love that an expensive car with minuscule power and a half-minute 0-62mph time and 81mph maximum – the W123 200D, over 378,100 of which were built – was such a success. And that possibly makes me the modern Mercedes

marketing man's nightmare, although thankfully for him I'm probably now in the small minority.

“For me, it will be strange and a bit sad to say farewell to the old ratings”



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1970

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MERCEDES 220SE PONTON CABRIOLET

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MERCEDES 300SL

1989

Finished in Smoke silver metallic with mushroom check cloth. This 'G' registered 1989 300SL is in pristine condition throughout and known to us since 2008. Supported by a most comprehensive history file dating back to when new, this is a very special R107.

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MERCEDES 280SE/8

1971

Finished in Horizon Blue with parchment tex. Displaying only 25,612 miles from new this 280SE/8 is very much one of a kind. Rarely does a vehicle of this calibre come to market so viewing and inspection is highly recommended

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MERCEDES SL500

1998

Finished in 040 Black with black leather. The sought after 1998 model which includes a high specification from when ordered new. Displaying only 46,245 miles with a full service history and only 1 former keeper this is a fabulous example of an appreciating modern classic.

£29,995



MERCEDES SL500

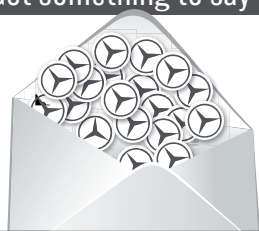
2004

Finished in Obsidian black metallic with anthracite leather. Displaying only 22,255 miles from new with full service history and one former keeper this SL500 also boasts an impressive specification. Best described as serious value for money in this condition.

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



Letters

Star letter

215-series CL

■ Is the magazine by any chance planning a feature about the 215-series

CL600? Mine is a 2002 example with 50,000 miles and goes like a train! It's a stunning looking coupe, a refreshing change from today's Mercedes, which look far too similar. I believe there are only 92 of this model on the road with the rare six-litre V12 biturbo engine. This one has a lavish specification including suede roof lining, Comand with television, and even a fridge for your champagne! Having driven many new Mercedes since 1986, this is surely the company's version of a Rolls-Royce?

J M Jamieson, via email

Good news! We have a feature on the 215-series CL in the next issue, on sale November 19th. In fact, we'll be in touch – we have an idea...



Crayford S-Class

■ Ian Kuah's piece about estate conversions of the S-Class ('Estate of the art', August/September 2021 issue) was interesting but incomplete. In the early 1970s, soon after the launch of the 116-series S-Class, Crayford Auto Development of Westerham, based in Kent, engineered an estate version. Fifteen were delivered, including one for Italian film star Sophia Loren to transport her five dogs. That surely deserves a mention!

Beretta Shellabarger, Fitzrovia, London.



△ Crayford made a 116 S-Class-based estate.



△ William David's gorgeous looking 500E.

and the CLK55 AMG was based on the 430 model; the CLK430 Cabriolet was built until March 2003. We'd suggest running the car's VIN through the system at a main dealer to see if any obscure AMG equipment codes come up.

Fan of the 124

■ I was lucky enough to be a custodian of a 500E whilst working in Germany – the 124 was undoubtedly an outstanding motorcar. In due course, I'd love to purchase an E320 Cabriolet. Pure quality!

William David, via Facebook

Young at heart

■ It's hard to believe that my SEC is almost 40 years old. Mine is a 1983 380SEC (US spec), with original drivetrain, original DB172 Anthracite paint, a black leather interior, and the odometer just rolled over 272,000 miles. I replaced the original Ronal Centra wheels after finding cracks on the inside diameter of two of them. The car was my dad's until he got his 2006 CLS500 and then I bought it from him. He keeps telling me that he wants it back!

Joel Archer, via Facebook



△ Joel Archer's 272,000-mile, US spec 380SEC.



△ E320 Sportline went down well with readers.

E-Class Cabriolet

■ Your article in the August/September 2021 issue about model anniversaries was of great interest. However, there are two points I feel need mentioning. Firstly, the pre-1994 cars were made of higher quality steel than the later cars because Mercedes changed the steel and the protection in 1994, particularly evident by the terrible reputation of the W210. Unfortunately, this also applies to late 124 cars. Secondly, the five-speed gearbox, though as smooth as the four-speed, is not as strong. Not surprisingly, the AMG cars were fitted with the robust four-speed.

What's more, I have been the proud owner of a 124-series, 1993

E320 Cabriolet Sportline for almost 20 years and have covered 52,000 miles. The car is now with me in Austria! There's one regret, though: an E36 AMG came up for sale, a tempting part exchange possible for little extra money, but I didn't go through with it. The reason being that the bonnet and bootlid were badly scratched. The previous owner had allowed his children to use them as tables!

The repairs wouldn't have cost much, and that car must now be worth significantly more than the Sportline. Running costs would have undoubtedly been much more expensive, but I am not sure that helps!

David Greenshields, via email



△ Rare CLK430 Cabriolet inherited by Anna C.

CLK430 AMG

■ I'm hoping that your team could assist me since you are experts when it comes to all things Mercedes. I have inherited a 208-series CLK430 Cabriolet AMG from 2001. It was a struggle to find other 430s equipped with the AMG pack, as they were all in standard specification.

I seem to recall an article that stated that the CLK55 AMG Cabriolet didn't officially release until 2002, and that in 2001 the CLK430 Cabriolet could be equipped with all the AMG options as a special order from the AMG factory with the full 55 AMG set up, including the engine, transmission, suspension and brakes, although very few were built. Is my car one of these rare vehicles, essentially a CLK55?

Anna Christodoulou, via email

The 208-series CLK55 AMG Cabriolet was produced from 1999 to June 2002. There doesn't appear to be evidence of such conversions on the CLK430, though the typical AMG sports package was offered

**GET IN TOUCH
WRITE
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Each month the writer of our Star Letter will receive a superb 1:24 scale model kit of a modern Mercedes-Benz from Revell! Revell model kits are available for purchase from all good toy and model retailers. For further information please visit www.revell.de/en

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Sundial Magazines, Sundial House,
17 Wickham Road, Beckenham,
Kent, BR3 5JS
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TALKING POINT



This month's Talking Point...

What do you think is the most significant AMG road car launched to date?

"The ML55. It signalled the beginning of the performance SUV. Compare that model to the current GLE63 and the DNA is still as strong as it was then." **Steve Holder**

"To me, it's the SEC 6.0. Just a wicked beast that set the tone. A timeless design as well." **Jasen Wilson**

"The SLS Black Series." **Xola Brian**

"Not the most impressive, but the W202 C36." **Philippe Haquette**

"The AMG GT - no other supercar from Mercedes is more well known to the general public, and decorates at least as many bedroom walls as the Evolution did." **Michael Strauss**

"The 1987 300E-based Hammer." **Christer Nilsson**

Take part in **Talking Point** every month on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. See the bottom of page 18 for our respective websites!

Merc spotter



Mercedes' W201 190 compact saloon did not compete directly with BMW's first 3-Series Compact, which appeared in 1994. Although this scene captured in Tenerife made an interesting comparison all the same, not least because both cars were finished in bright red, the modern classic Benz looking sharp on eight-hole alloys and shining that bit brighter to our eyes...

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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A 300SL Gullwing (restored by HK-Engineering) soaks up the sunshine next to Plansee lake in Austria whilst stealing admiring glances from classic car enthusiasts sailing by in their own vintage delights.



Adam Christodoulou



@adamchristo

It's race week! Wearing my new colours. Excited to be racing back in the UK with the @ramracingcom guys. Doing a seat fit with Kevin and @tomonslowcole.



3 Point Social Club LA



@3pointsocialclub

First 3 Point Lunar Cruise was a success! With just a couple days' notice we had a total of nine cars out to cruise the canyons, moon gaze and ask each other at the first meet up point, "So how'd yours do with the hills?" Fun had by all and more cruises are coming.



Autoclass MK



@Autoclass MK

The dreaded coil pack replacement on this V12 biturbo S600.

Reed Hitchcock



@reed.hitchcock

Sunday morning W108 280SEL 4.5 drive and pics. Happy car! You can find out more about Reed's classic saloon on page 87.



Lorinser North America



@lorinserna

Old school! The Lorinser 190E. The Lorinser Styling Package provides the discerning owner with elegant and sporty styling accents that help transform their Mercedes while taking the original styling into consideration.





Akash Singh



@ahemgee

Ruby Red twins meet for the first time. When you find an identical Ruben Pearl SL500 on @collectingcars and you send the auction link to your mate @ali.mendly... and the rest is history! These two got a lot of attention yesterday at @caffeineandmachine. There is only one exterior difference on the cars.



Nathan Chadwick



@nayf_cars

It's @goodwoodrevival this month and I can think of few better ways to get into the spirit of the weekend than with this Mercedes-Benz 220SE Ponton with matching trailer. Just €130,000 short.

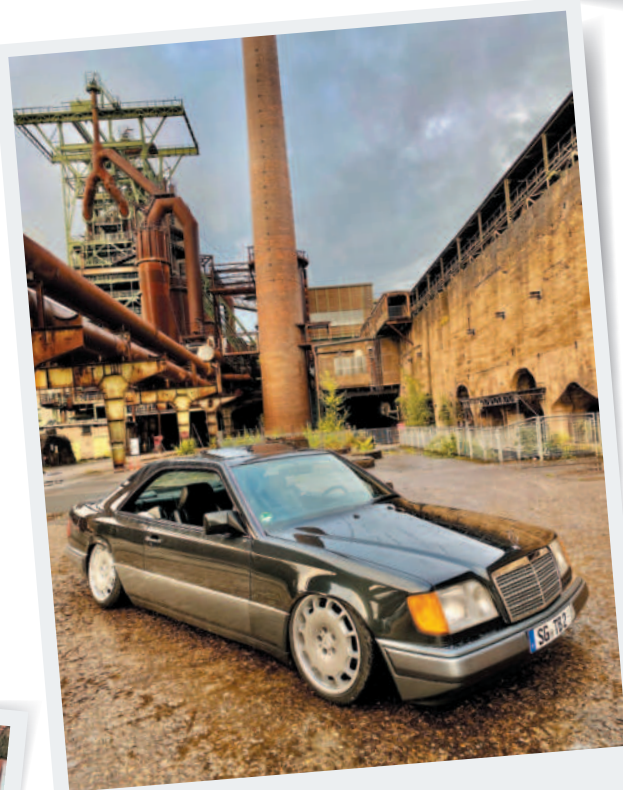


The MB Market

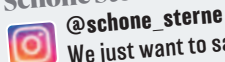


@thembmarket

This 1999 Mercedes-Benz SLK230 Kompressor was delivered new at Mercedes-Benz of Cincinnati in April 1999 and remained with its original owner for 17 years until being sold to a family friend. Finished in Yellowstone (685U) over Black leather (221), this R170 SLK is powered by a 2.3-litre supercharged four-cylinder powerplant mated to a five-speed automatic transmission. Features include AMG styling with sculpted bumpers and side skirts.



Schone Sterne



@schone_sterne

We just want to say thank you! Thank you very much for your participation in @schone_sterne! It is simply sensational that so many have come despite the moderate weather. Without you, an event like Schöne Sterne would not be possible. We wish you all a safe journey home and look forward to seeing you again in 2022!

Credit: E-Mags Media GmbH

Schöne Sterne is billed as Europe's biggest Mercedes-Benz festival, attracting all kinds of cars, and takes place at a former steel mill in Hattingen, Germany.



Kingdom Specialist Cars



@kingdomspecialistcars

Recently sold and delivered to its lucky new owner, this SLK32 AMG with 38K miles was superb throughout. The X-Class made light work of the delivery, almost too luxurious/refined to be a pick-up truck!

Cover
story

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND**
IMAGES **CRAIG PUSEY**

Wanderlust

They may be a few generations old, but the now highly affordable 220- and 221-series S-Classes remain hugely impressive drives, with space and performance to spare, and loads of on-board toys to master. Here we compare two versions of the big selling 'S320 CDI' equipped with very different engines



It doesn't take an in-depth knowledge of Mercedes-Benz cars to be aware of two things. First, that a premium model from the 2000s is now worth less than a tenth of its new price, which could have been into six figures, and is therefore spectacular value for money. Second, Mercedes-Benz motorcars don't get cheaper to run as the years pass, in fact they get more expensive, crippling so for some owners if complex parts like electronic suspension dampers fail.

But just for now, we're going to park reality and disregard the latter of these two facts. We're going to celebrate that for well under £10,000 you can have your name on the paperwork of what most agree is the best car in the world: a Mercedes-Benz S-Class. Maintaining them is for another day.

Here, we take examples of the two S-Classes spanning the 2000s, the 220-series that replaced the 140-series in 1998, and the 221-series that arrived in 2006 and departed in 2013 to make way for the 222-series. Think 'S-Class' and V8 power probably comes to mind, but actually the majority of these two S-Class generations sold in the UK didn't have big-capacity petrol motors – over 80 per cent of them used six-cylinder diesel power. And if you're wondering how this could cope with two tonnes of Stuttgart's finest, the answer is surprisingly well.

We're looking at a post-facelift 220 S320 CDI in regular- rather than long-wheelbase form, and an early 221-series, also SWB, bearing the same badge but with the next-generation oil burning engine; the former was made available to us by owner James Sanders, the latter by Joseph Hamill via independent Mercedes dealer, Kingdom Specialist Cars based in Hampshire. So, how do these saloons compare? ▷

“Think ‘S-Class’ and V8 power probably comes to mind, but the majority of these two generations sold in the UK didn’t have big-capacity petrol motors”



▷ Grille sensor of early Distronic cruise control.

▷ M-B has since returned to in-line sixes...



▷ The 220 feels big inside, but the 221 is even larger.



▷ 220-series

The sheer bulk and severity of the 140-series counted against it, so for its replacement Mercedes sought something smaller and more elegant. The 220-series was a little shorter in length than its predecessor, and also 16 per cent lighter thanks to the use of aluminium for some inner body panels, suspension components and the bonnet.

Every all-new Mercedes generation is expected to bristle with impressive technology and the 220 fulfilled that pledge. The spec included Airmatic suspension (an adaptive, pneumatically sprung system), Distronic cruise control to keep you safely clear of the car in front, keyless entry and even air conditioning that took account of sunlight levels.

The range included the four-litre turbodiesel S400 CDI, but this wasn't sold in the UK. The S320 CDI's four-valve, 3.2-litre OM613 motor was carried over, not from the 140 diesel, which was three litres, but from the last of the 210-series E-Classes. Output began at 194bhp and a healthy 347lb ft torque, the unit revised for the 2002 facelift with output rising to 201bhp/369lb ft, as in the car

photographed here. This point also saw a new grille and headlamps, redesigned seats and interior trim, and Pre-Safe, which optimised the seat belt if sensors predicted that, due to unusual body angles, a major accident was imminent.

The 220's cabin was criticised for lacking the 140's solidity, and your first impression of it may well be that it lacks the expected class of a big Benz. But some attractive polished wood veneer around the dash and doors helps, as do

big, comfortable seats trimmed in durable looking leather. Mercedes' usual excellent electric seat and steering column adjustment glides you to the perfect driving position.

In the centre there's the Comand screen which still looks neatly styled and presents the infotainment functions in a format that is arguably more user-friendly than some more modern Mercedes systems. Although you would probably want to use your smartphone



"Among the 220's most impressive aspects is its handling"



△ Comand display set low within the centre console.

△△ 220's dials are much like its successor's.

to navigate rather than the now very clunky Comand set up.

The torquey engine suits the 220 very well. It fires up quietly by older diesel standards and is clatter-free on tickover, although a slight vibration reminds you that this car fills up at the black pump. Out on the road, it's a likeable unit that picks up strongly and rows the S-Class along confidently, allowing the S320 CDI to be called a fast car, just.

Among the 220's most impressive aspects is its handling. The sophisticated suspension allows road manners agile enough to make you feel you're at the helm of a C-Class, the steering – rack and pinion, for the first time on an S-Class – quick and communicative, and body roll well checked. And gone is the firm ride and tyre noise than S-Class owners of old had to endure, the 220 offering an effortlessly smooth passage, no

doubt enhanced by tyres of a conservative, 60-series profile.

The sharper styling of the two subsequent S-Class generations has left the 220 looking like a well-proportioned if slightly bland large saloon car that at first glance could be mistaken for a 211-series E-Class. But don't let that fool you, as over 20 years on it still ranks as a great Mercedes that will bring great pleasure in whatever driving task you set it. ➤



▷ 221-series

After the 220-series' downsizing, the succeeding 221 increased in bulk again, slightly longer, taller and wider. Substantially more aggressive looking too, although the perspective of time has, in my view, revealed how well the shape works: distinctive but still with some of the understatement many expect in an S-Class.

As expected, the 221 packed in more tech, the Airmatic suspension enhanced and the

▽ Comand screen set neatly within the dashboard.

▷ The OM642 diesel motor is a real peach.

▷▽ The digital speedo was a novel feature.



wondrous Active Body Roll damping made optional, a more advanced Brake Assist and Distronic installed, and Night View Assist premiered. This and more took the new S-Class to a different level of electronic complexity.

It didn't make headlines but a significant aspect of the 221 was its adoption of Mercedes' all-new OM642 three-litre V6 turbodiesel to

“The wood and plastic fittings all look expensive and fit perfectly, even in the nooks and crannies”





◁ Driving a W221 S-Class is a very special feeling.

△ Great strides were made with the 221's lighting.

several leagues higher than the merely passable 220 interior. The wood and plastic fittings all look expensive and fit perfectly, even in the nooks and crannies, and with much of the car being directed from a single rotary control on the centre console, switchgear could be minimised to leave a cleaner, highly welcoming and most stylish look.

The 220 did not short-change on comfort but the 221 offers more of it, the front seats as supportive as you could wish for. The driving position is excellent, with clear all-round vision that is lacking in some present Mercedes models. And even without the long-wheelbase L's extra 130cm length, the rear seat does a pretty good job of cossetting those using it.

Even if most customers were buying the S320 CDI for financial reasons, it makes a strong case for itself as the 221 of choice. The engine delivers enough torque to make the S350 look inadequate, and almost as much as the 5.5-litre S500 while averaging around 35mpg compared to the two petrol models' mid-20s. And the OM642's output would increase during 221-series production. ▷

replace the straight-six in the 220. In early 221s, it produced 232bhp and 398lb ft torque which was 20 and 15 per cent more than the OM648 in the facelifted 220 gave, but the comparison is about far more than figures. It combined refinement, high torque and decent, mid-30s economy, and in that era of diesel dominance was one of Stuttgart's most impressive engines;

it's interesting that the car manufacturer has now reverted back to an in-line configuration for its big diesel.

Another particularly welcome aspect of the 221 was the reinstatement of Mercedes-Benz cabin quality, creating a space that you really love sitting in and is



“If you are tempted by a 220, the good news is that these are now among the cheapest Mercedes available”

▷ Joseph Hamill's 221 from Kingdom Specialist Cars.

▷▷ Those in the 221's rear aren't short of legroom.

▷ **A**t tickover, you would just about be able to tell that a diesel lay beneath the bonnet, but possibly not under acceleration and almost certainly not at a sustained cruising speed. Add taut handling and a sumptuous ride and you have a limousine that does a good impression of a sports car. The S320 CDI Dominic loaned us for photography was one of the first into the UK, but two owners had put just 60,000 miles on it. There are also some nice factory options including nappa leather, a heated steering wheel and glass sunroof, all of which made this car look a tempting £8,000 worth.

When the 221 was a current model, you might have sat in it and driven it and wondered what Mercedes-Benz could possibly do to improve the design. That was revealed in 2013 when the S-Class progressed on to the next generation.

Big bargains

By the time they're no longer required by captains of industry, and they're out of the Mercedes-Benz dealer network, S-Classes have depreciated massively and look astonishingly good value for money. This happens because



there is no real market for the cars, which are too big for most people's needs.

If you are tempted by a 220, the good news is that these are now among the cheapest Mercedes available. The 140-series was the 'throwaway' S-Class, but now that these are mostly gone, that particular torch has been passed on to the 220-series. Two thousand to £2,500 seems to be about the average price for a car without major issues, but if it's under 50,000 miles and has been carefully maintained, value can be £5,000 to £6,000. At this stage, whether it's a diesel, V6 or V8 doesn't make any difference to value, although the rare S600 V12 does have specialist appeal and is worth up to £10,000.

A 221-series is obviously going to cost more – but maybe not quite as much more as you thought. We spotted a 2008 S320 CDI at a dealer in Watford for £3,250, and several

between £3,000 and £4,000. But these were all very high mileage, very probably ex-chauffeur, and imposing an 80,000-mile limit raises the entry price to around £6,000.

Most 221s seen for sale are the S320 CDI and later S350 CDI/Bluetec, and you can pay up to £18,000 for a very late, 2013 car with 50,000 to 60,000 miles. Unsurprisingly, low mileage 221s are rare, because eating up the miles is what they are good at. If you do see such a car, it might be a V12 S65 AMG with a £30,000 price tag.

The sweet spot for the diesel is £8,000 to £10,000, this giving a wide choice of cars with 60,000 to 100,000 miles. Don't worry about options, as even without extras the spec is good, but consider the wheelbase: the stretched L cars have a luxurious rear cabin, but they're a bulkier car, which might not suit.

► Thank you to Kingdom Specialist Cars Tel 07577 575770 Web www.kingdomspecialistcars.com, and to W220 owner James Sanders and W221 owner Joseph Hamill for the loan of their S-Classes

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz S320 CDI (W220)

ENGINE **OM648 3,222cc 6-cyl** POWER **201bhp@4,200rpm** TORQUE **369lb ft@1,800-2,600rpm** TRANSMISSION **5-speed auto, RWD** WEIGHT **1,925kg**
0-62MPH **8.2sec** TOP SPEED **146mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **36.7mpg** CO2 EMISSIONS **204g/km** YEARS PRODUCED **1999-2005**

Mercedes-Benz S320 CDI (W221)

ENGINE **OM642 2,987cc V6** POWER **232bhp@3,800rpm** TORQUE **398lb ft@1,600-2,800rpm** TRANSMISSION **7-speed auto, RWD** WEIGHT **1,965kg**
0-62MPH **7.8sec** TOP SPEED **155mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **34.0mpg** CO2 EMISSIONS **220g/km** YEARS PRODUCED **2005-2009**

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; figures for a post-September 2002 facelifted W220 S320 CDI and a pre-August 2009 facelift W221 S320 CDI as pictured (this model was rebadged S350 CDI/Bluetec after the facelift); fuel consumption according to NEDC Combined; top speed of W221 electronically limited



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300 SL, 1987E, 4-speed auto, 79,000 miles, fmbsh, signal red, creme beige sports check cloth, black soft top, factory hard top, rear seats. An outstanding example.....**£39,950**



300 SL, 1987E, 4-speed auto, 41,000 miles, fmbsh, champagne metallic, brazil leather, dark brown soft top, factory hard top, rear seats. A truly superior low mileage example.**£49,950**



500 SL, 1986D, 4-speed auto, 94,000 miles, fmbsh, arctic white, navy leather, navy soft top, factory hard top, rear seats, cruise, headlamp wash/wipe. Only 2 owners and well a sorted example.**£29,950**



CL 500, 1998S, 5-speed auto, 66,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver metallic, grey nappa leather, every factory option incl electric rear sunblind and electric sunroof etc. Only 3 owners and last since 2004. Simply the best example.**£17,950**



500 SEC, 1987E, 4-speed auto, 137,000 miles, fmbsh, astral silver metallic, navy with grey striped inserts velour, factory zircon, cruise, electric steering column, electric sunroof, electric seats, otg etc. Beautiful original condition.**£17,950**



SL 320, 2000S, 5-speed auto, 45,000 miles, fmbsh, obsidian black metallic, grey nappa leather, electric black soft top, factory glass panoramic hard top, climate, cruise, electric steering column, electric memory seats, rear seats, ESP, retractable door mirrors, MB Becker radio/cassette etc. A gorgeous low mileage example.**£17,950**



SL 500, 1997R, 5-speed auto, 53,000 miles, fmbsh, black (040), mushroom leather, electric black soft top, factory glass panoramic hard top, climate, cruise, electric steering column, electric memory seats, rear seats, anti-dazzle rear view mirror, ASR, headlamp wash/wipe. A lovely low mileage example.**£22,950**



SL 500, 1999V, 5-speed auto, 57,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver metallic, black nappa leather, electric black soft top, factory glass panoramic hard top, climate, cruise, electric steering column, ESP, electric heated memory seats, rear seats, Xenon headlights & headlamp wash/wipe, anti-dazzle rear view mirror.....**£22,950**



SLK 320 Designo, 2000W, 6-speed manual, 50,000 miles, fmbsh, Designo purple metallic, black & purple Designo leather seats, electric retractable roof, factory aircon, cruise, adjustable steering column, semi-electric heated seats, Xenon headlights & headlamp wash/wipe. Great fun to drive!**£9,950**

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“

This 1998 CL700
has undergone a
serious mechanical
overhaul to bring it
back to best

”



Green supreme

Finished in striking designo paintwork and sporting period tuner styling, this seven-litre V12 engined CL700 AMG is an incredibly rare find in the UK

WORDS WILLIAM TERRINGTON
IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY





“The long doors shut with an aristocratic sophistication thanks to their weight and the soft closing”

◁ Two-tone designo leather; lumbar support.

Commissioned by the Sultan of Brunei for use around his residence in Berkshire, this 140-series CL is badged as a ‘700’, which is unusual for an AMG. And it wasn’t simply a case of gluing on an extra zero – it’s registered as such with Mercedes’ database, and has the documentation to back it up. Another right-hand drive CL with this V12 engine, badged as a ‘CL70’, is supposed to have been produced and brought to the UK, but its current whereabouts are unknown.

As for the engine itself, the M120 V12 is one of the finest engines produced not just in terms of Mercedes, but for the industry as a whole. Development started in 1988 in response to BMW launching its own V12 and the quad-cam motor was launched in 1991 in the 140-series 600SE/SEL before powering the 140-series 600SEC (later badged S600 Coupe and then CL600) and the R129 600SL the following year.

Output was initially 402bhp in the S-Class Saloon, though thanks to emission regulations this was reduced to 389bhp. AMG strongly approved of this engine: 7.0, 7.2 and 7.3 variants were produced on special order for the 140- and 129-series. In modified form, this engine saw use in the CLK-GTR road car and featured in various Pagani Zondas built from 1999 to 2019 thanks to Fangio putting Pagani in touch with AMG. So, a long and illustrious history, no doubt about that. The M120 V12 even saw service in the experimental Mercedes C112 of 1991.

Offered for sale by Aylesbury-based specialist Edward Hall for £89,995, this 1998 CL700 has undergone a serious mechanical overhaul to bring it back to best, with certain AMG-specific parts specially made for the restoration. The front springs were completely unobtainable and one had indeed cracked. The brakes were also a headache to sort out: Mercedes could provide the pads, but not the discs, which were made by SHW in Germany for AMG. This, however, prompted a request for €45,000 to start a

production run, which was understandably declined, so the old discs were used as templates and have been retained for future reference. Even the air filters from HWA are special order.

But none of this is really an inconvenience. It’s not the kind of car you’re going to take out very often, so renewing these items again is not going to happen for some time yet. To ensure a reliable and enjoyable future for this masterpiece of an engine, a top end rebuild has been carried out: valve guides and ignition components were renewed, along with new head gaskets. Once again, these are AMG specific and were made by Elring. Unfortunately, the manufacturer patterns had been lost, so the old ones were sent to Elring for use as templates.

When seeing this car for the first time, what first grabs your attention is its party piece designo LCP paint, morphing from blue to green. It suits the substantial nature of the CL with its deep, rich lustre. This paint has clearly ➤



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<| Headrest and window controls found in the rear.

> AMG springs do well to hide some of the CL's weight.

>> The AMG V12 is said to have almost 500bhp.



> had much thought and consideration: it looks genuinely expensive and exotic, any temptation to add more colours and extra fleck resisted. It's the paint equivalent of the most expensive fine wines, in this case perfectly matched with the dish. The AMG bodykit is not overbearing, projecting a mature, handsome image. No huge intakes or carbon fibre additions are to be found here, a refreshing change from the AMGs of today. It's enough to give a more purposeful and sporting stance without losing the presence and sophistication the standard car has in plentiful supply. A pair of perfectly placed V12 badges behind both rear side windows subtly lets onlookers know what's under the bonnet.

On opening the grand coupe doors, you are invited into a designo interior featuring green and anthracite nappa leather, bird's eye maple

wood trim, green stitching and plush, green lambswool carpets to round off the look. On paper, the interior seems a bit of a colour clash, but works very well. Surprisingly though, the wood trim is not from designo, but a standard offering. One can only speculate how it would have looked with one of the garish 'Magic Eyes' trims available at the time. At any rate, it's a better fit here than the usual brown walnut.

The long doors shut with an aristocratic sophistication thanks to their weight and the soft closing, and the double-glazed windows ensure a very quiet cabin indeed. As per Mercedes coupe tradition, your seat belt is handed to you as you get comfy in the generously proportioned nappa leather seat – electrically adjustable and heated, of course. Only the V12 badge on the gearshift lets you know something's a bit different.

Unusually, there are no AMG badges or equipment to be found inside.

It does unexpectedly feel rather modern in here. Features such as the electric headrests, the glass sunroof, not to mention the sheer refinement and silence give the latest Mercedes, with their complex driver assistance systems and touchscreen consoles, a run for their money. It's old school build quality with modern refinement, surely an unbeatable combination. The mileage is promising too, sitting at just shy of 64,000.

So what's such a car like on the road?
Many a classic Mercedes feel special and superior to other cars, but this one makes all others seem puny. Taking the hewn-from-granite quality the 140-series is renowned for and combining it with monstrous torque from





the naturally aspirated seven-litre AMG V12 means this car does not merely cover distances, but crushes them. Its power is estimated at just under 500bhp, which makes it substantially more powerful than most supercars of the time, and if you wanted the extra guarantee of winning a drag race, AMG could offer you the 7.3-litre version, with around 525bhp.


As for fuel economy, the CL700 has never heard of such a thing. Feasting on petrol, the standard economy gauge comes across as rather pointless, as it has difficulty improving on 15mpg and swings into the realm of single figures following a prod of the throttle pedal. The German sense of humour, perhaps?

As for the AMG suspension, bumps and road imperfections are subdued, though in a harder, more aggressive manner than you'd

expect. It keeps a strong, iron-clad stance on the road, though in the corners you are reminded of its sheer size and weight. The CL is surprisingly swift, but a little cumbersome.

Those uprated AMG uprated brakes with an early Brake Assist (BAS) are very powerful indeed, though require a strong shove. Such heavy feeling brakes and steering are reassuring and frankly, necessary here. On busier, narrower roads where you can't see too far ahead, it's a matter of planning your next move and taming that iron beast of torque. Is there another car within a mile of you? Is there even enough road? More generously proportioned tarmac is where this car is at home and is the ideal setting to unleash the ferocity within: kickdown is more like an entry point into hyperspace, the twin-pipe AMG exhaust letting

out a primeval roar across the land. The CL700 AMG is a Teutonic, savage machine.

What makes this car particularly remarkable is that although there are a handful of other Mercedes with this engine, and the design options seen here were available to order for other models too, for all that to come together in one car with effectively its own special model designation is unrepeatable. Many classics become unique because of a combination of depleting numbers, interesting histories, spec changes, or even simply a lack of mileage and extreme cossetting in a garage. However, this CL was unique from production and such cars come along once in a blue moon. 

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“
It keeps a strong,
iron-clad stance
on the road
”



“ The body framing station that saw a throughput of W124s, from the 200 to the 300E, could not accommodate the wider 500E ”



◁ All 500s were LHD; upholstery of a Limited spec car.

▷ M Hölscher (R) with Michael Mönig, Prototype Management.



Cometh the hour, cometh the neighbour

Michael Hölscher was Porsche's Technical Project Manager for the illustrious 500E – 30 years after it launched, he talks to Ian Kuah about his time working on Mercedes' super saloon

WORDS IAN KUAH IMAGES PORSCHE AG

While the 500E's 322bhp, five-litre V8 and its performance numbers were impressive, the standout statistic I vividly remember from the Friedrichsruhe-based press launch in October 1990 was the 1,100 modified or bespoke components that the Mercedes-Benz super saloon had compared to the 300E.

Dr Wolfgang Peter, Mercedes'

Chief Engineer at the time, told us that the idea for the 500E was born in 1987, but the development capacity at Mercedes was fully utilised so the company decided to approach Porsche to undertake the development work. This was three years before the Mercedes tie-up with AMG, which only had 200 staff anyway, while Porsche was a major engineering centre with over 2,000 workers.

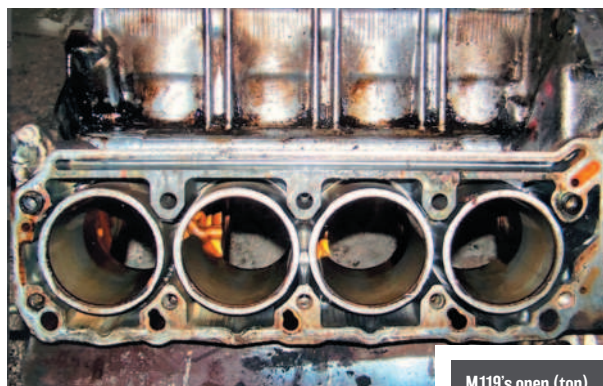
"We started the co-operative venture in February 1988 and this enabled us to work on the 500E as a niche model while our attention was focused on bringing the new W140 S-Class to market," Wolfgang explained.

I first met Michael Hölscher when I was writing a book on the Porsche 918 Spyder back in 2014. I knew that he was the Team Leader for the Carrera GT project and then Technical Project Manager and co-ordinator for the 918 Spyder project, but it was only much later that I discovered he had previously been Technical Project Manager for the 500E and Audi RS2 programmes.

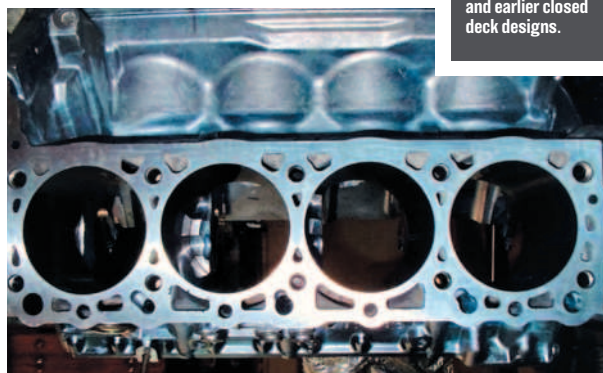
A question of capacity

"Mercedes had a very precise number of engineers with no reserve to do small volume projects like the 500E," Michael explained. "It was thus logical to use a smaller company like Porsche than to ramp up capacity, which would no longer be required afterwards."

"There was also a physical reason why the 500E could not be produced in Sindelfingen, which was running at full capacity turning out 1,400 cars a day," ▶



M119's open (top) and earlier closed deck designs.



▷ he continued. “The body framing station that saw a throughput of W124s, from the 200 to the 300E, could not accommodate the wider 500E, and it did not make sense to shut down the production line to carry out modifications for a model whose numbers would peak at 20 cars per day.

“Once we had the brief, we started to plan and build our prototypes,” Michael continued. “The first 15 test cars were modified from original W124s and we conducted our testing together with Mercedes engineers. They thought these cars drove well and their bosses green-lighted continuing development to the production stage. This was the point where Porsche switched the 500E development from a small external project run within the body-in-white department to a major project and my department took over,” said Michael. “We did not finish until E500 production ended in 1995.”

The timing of the 500E project was perfect, as Porsche was having financial difficulties at this time and had excess capacity. The old red brick Reutter building in Werk 2 was empty and Porsche offered Mercedes a production line that could produce between 10 and 20 cars a day. Michael’s team was responsible for the 500E during all the development and production years, including the small modifications for model year changes. In the follow up, during the first year of production, they looked after small changes required to solve some minor electrical issues.

“My team looked after all the body-in-white and engineering changes, while Mercedes controlled the styling and aerodynamics,” he recalled. “The target was to have a car with a sportier feeling and effortless performance with understatement. The big arches and wider bumpers and side sills were crafted by the Mercedes styling department, who made a model of a car that looked tough in a subtle way.” The 500E had a Cd of 0.31 versus 0.30 for the standard W124.

Pushing the envelope

“Of course, the styling, aerodynamic and engineering aspects frequently overlapped during development,” Michael explained. “For instance, because the big engine was a tight fit in the W124 engine bay, we had to look at ways of getting as much air as possible for both the engine intake and cooling. Initially, the Mercedes aerodynamicists tried intake louvres in the front wings as on the 300TD model, but their wind tunnel testing soon revealed these were in an area of under-pressure with next to no air flow. However, the area around the headlamps showed constant over-pressure, so we developed a ram intake system based on the Venturi effect from air rushing into the gap between the headlamp units and the bonnet edge.”

In the end, the 500E featured 1,100 new or modified parts, the major components being the bulkhead, floorpan modified to take the V8 engine, larger gearbox, bespoke exhaust system, larger rear differential, and 90-litre fuel tank. The V8 engine and the transmission were R129 SL, but with the production of the 500E about to begin Mercedes adopted the *Einheitsdeck-Motor* or common deck height engine philosophy to streamline the production process with the 400E that followed. While it is natural to think of the M119 V8 as being large and heavy, this alloy motor is only 30kg heavier than the alloy straight-six. And that weight difference is narrowed to 8kg because the Nippon Denso rotary compressor air conditioning system was standard on the 500E but an option on the 300E.

While the larger V8 ended up sitting 45mm further forwards, it was also 23mm lower in the car and safety values in frontal, rollover, side and diagonal impacts were the same as that of the 300E. The 1,710kg 500E was 60kg lighter than the 500SL and, as the battery was in the boot, the 500E had a near 50/50 weight distribution with a full fuel tank versus 52/48 for the 300E.

The business case for the 400E was confirmed once the 500E proved to be a success, and once again Porsche carried out the development work. While it shared the floorpan and bulkhead

▷ Twin-cat section of the 500E’s exhaust.

▷▷ 500E used diff from SL with shorter final drive.

▷▷▷ The brakes were once a bone of contention...



“Michael’s team was responsible for the 500E during all the development and production years”

▽▽ W124 floorpan gets 500E spec bits.

▽ Chassis assembly took place at Porsche.

▽▷ Weight distribution aided by battery in boot.





modifications required by the V8 motor and its exhaust system, the 400E utilised recalibrated 300E suspension and the normal width body. As its 275bhp V8 did not require the larger 500SL differential, the 400E retained the normal rear bench seat for three passengers. The need to streamline production of the 4,973cc (96.5x85mm bore and stroke) M119 E50 V8 engine block with the 4.2-litre (M119 E42, 4,196cc) version for the 400E required the deck height to be lowered a few millimetres. But while the external height was reduced, the internal stroke remained unaltered thanks to bespoke pistons and con rods.

The fuelling system was changed from Bosch-KH injection to LH injection, which featured air mass sensor measurement and electronic control, and the 500E was the first Mercedes to use a CAN bus system. Due to tightening emissions standards, later cars had 316bhp rather than the initial 322bhp at 5,700rpm, along with the 347lb ft torque that was produced by the M119 from October 1992 production (the original output was 354lb ft).

Built to be driven – hard

To manage the extra power, the 500E adopted the rear differential from the R129 SL, but with a slightly shorter 2.82:1 (500SL – 2.65:1) final drive ratio to underpin the car's sporting credentials. The suspension was largely a mix of W124 and R129 SL with a rear axle self-levelling function unique to the 500E. Michael confirmed that there was no change to the 500SL/SL500 brake hardware throughout the four years of production, only a recalibration of brake force distribution during the first year.

“Strong brakes are a highlight of all Porsche cars,” he explained. “Mercedes told us that its customers did not drive like Porsche customers and requested a more forward brake bias. However, the company soon discovered that its 500E customers drove really hard and overloaded the front brakes. So, Mercedes

▷



▷ relented and asked us to return the brake force distribution under lateral acceleration to our original setting and all was well.”

The final flourish

The idea of the paint and special wood and leather for the E500 Limited was all done by the Mercedes styling department, which wanted to refresh the car for the final run. When Mercedes announced that E500 production would cease with the 10,000th car, there were howls of protest from customers who had ordered a car but might not get one. In the end, 10,479 were made before Zuffenhausen Werk 2 was re-tooled for the Audi RS2. “You have to look at how many parts you have left with suppliers,” Michael explained. “If you want to exceed this number slightly, small batches become very expensive. So, the extra 479 cars were really on the limit as Mercedes-Benz still had to keep enough spare parts for 10 years.

“The engineers at Mercedes were always very friendly and professional,” Michael confirmed. “We never had any of the competition or rivalry that we sometimes encountered with engineers from some other companies who resented the fact that their management had not given them the chance to do a project.”

The end result was a very satisfying joint venture for both companies and a car that still excites car enthusiasts to this day. “Hans-Georg Horn, the driving dynamics engineer and Project Manager on the Mercedes side [read more about him in our September 2016 issue], told us that we had done a very good job,” said Michael. “I met him again in 2020 when we were planning an event called ‘Time Witnesses’ that was to be held in the M-B Museum in Stuttgart. Unfortunately, the pandemic caused this event to be postponed and we are still in the process of establishing a new date for late 2021.”



△ Porsche's workers carry out quality checks.

△△ Milestone car for the Merc-Porsche alliance.

△△△ Racer Hans Hermann got the 10,000th example.

“Mercedes discovered that its 500E customers drove really hard and overloaded the front brakes”





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Silver bullets

The E50 and SL60 satisfied drivers looking for high performance without the shouty looks and hail from a curious time at AMG, when its cars were stepping on the toes of more expensive Mercedes – two owners give their verdict

WORDS **ALBERT MENSINGA** IMAGES **CASPER HEIJ**



“The SL60 is similarly understated, but it fails to contain its sheer road presence to the same degree as the E50”





△△ AMG built 2,960 E50 Saloons but no Estates.

△ Sculpted AMG steering wheel wrapped in hide.

▷ The equivalent of 160,000 miles on the odometer.



Today – and at least for now – the AMG badge signifies a loud car, both in terms of sound and appearance. How things have changed. Go back 25 years to the heyday of cars like this E50 and SL60, and you’d need to look very carefully to find the famous three-letter insignia.

This 1997 E50’s wheels are unmistakably AMG, but as they were an option for other W210 E-Classes they hardly tell the whole story. The front splitter holds an index finger-sized clue with its AMG badge, but only a connoisseur would spot it. The 1996 SL60 is similarly understated, but it fails to contain its sheer road presence to the same degree. Its boxy outline with long bonnet and bold 18-inchers leave passers-by in no doubt of its accelerative potential.

Both cars share Mercedes’ celebrated M119 powerplant, the E50 packing a five-litre version and the SL60 a six-litre motor. In 2019, SL60 owner Pepijn Steenbergen sold his daily E50 to friend Lies (pronounced ‘lease’) van de Wetering because he also runs a 2.8-litre BMW 7-series (E38) and needed some breathing space. To many Benz fans, the more modern, M113 V8-powered E55 has the more appealing engine, but to Lies and Pepijn, the 32-valve, DOHC M119 is the Holy Grail of 1990s engineering.





On paper, the SL60's V8 only has a few more horsepower than the E50: 376 versus 342. Back in the day, Mercedes-Benz did not allow AMG's six-litre V8 to overshadow the hugely expensive, 389bhp six-litre V12 found in the likes of the R129 SL600. Although it's now an open secret that Affalterbach's V8 produced more power – as much as 412bhp according to dark corners of the internet. Remember, these cars came along shortly before AMG was fully taken under Daimler's wing on January 1 1999, so bragging rights were still very much up for grabs.

△ Widened front and rear tracks improve handling.

◁ Splitter badge a small clue to the E50's potential.

Road warrior

The rare E50 is one of many AMG variations on the W210 medium-sized luxury saloon series. All were offered with potent engines, ranging from 3.6 to 6.3 litres, pumping out 276 to over 400 horses. The E50 of this test offers 342bhp and 354lb ft from the spicy 4,973cc unit. Today, it's hard to imagine that a set up like this offers more than enough entertainment to transform a saloon into an ultra potent GT-like road warrior. But the E50 AMG certainly does not lack pace, and to my eyes this is the perfect getaway car.

In the E50, you have a 1,750kg four-door with the potential to hit almost 170mph unlimited and sprint from zero to 62mph in 6.2 seconds in the process. Taxi, anyone? Well, maybe think again because only 2,960 examples of this hot E-Class were produced between January 1996 and August 1997. In the 90s, AMG was not yet a part of *Das Haus*, so every single car was specced individually with a whopping price tag to match; in September 1995, an E50 would cost the first buyers Dm148,350 before options, or roughly the same as a 140-series S500 long-wheelbase. Should you find one for sale today, it will set >



“The rare E50 is one of many AMG variations on the W210 medium-sized luxury saloon series”

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AMG friends

Both Pepijn and Lies are members of www.amgvrienden.nl which translates as Friends of AMG. The association was founded in 2014 and organises regular meetings and rides for Dutch AMG owners, with meetings attracting AMG jewellery from all over The Netherlands. When the time is right, there's a good chance The Friends will meet up with their buddies in the UK...

▷ The SL60's cabin has a very robust feel to it.



▷ you back around £10,000, but remember to keep aside some pocket money for large fuel bills and proper maintenance.

So, what about corrosion the W210 is notorious for? "Rust was the reason Pepijn sold his E50 to me," says Lies. "Although he thoroughly undersealed the whole car, I need to constantly combat tin worms. I inspect my car on a monthly basis and treat spots and sills when needed. It's one of the reasons there's a limited choice if you want your own E50 AMG. They just slowly fade away. As they're pretty affordable, folks buy and drive and avoid proper services. It's a shame to see these gems vanish from the market."

A moment of fate

Truck driver Lies comes from a spectacular Cobalt Blue C30 CDI AMG, but had to let his unique oil burning beast go. "I'm a regular visitor of German cities and older diesel cars are banned. My wife needed a practical daily, I love the V8 and Pepijn had his sorted E50 for sale. So, 18 months ago I bought it and I'm happy."

It's a keeper, of course. When you're an E50 custodian, it's practically impossible to imagine a replacement that offers more

rarity and bang for your buck. Am I mad to think the best cars ever were made in the 90s?

But there's rare and then there's *rare*. According to Dutch MOT details, about 30 E50 AMGs are registered for the road. For this story, Pepijn brought along an even lesser seen weapon of choice – his obscure and mighty R129 SL60. Although you won't find official confirmation in Mercedes' archives, it is believed just 633 of these V8s were made (including 49 in right-hand drive). Equipped with a smooth five-speed auto, this AMG is capable of covering a quarter-mile in 13.5 seconds and topping out at a rumoured 185mph without a limiter. Whoa.

And it's a roadster for crying out loud. "I will never sell this car. It has become a part of me. Imagine driving it in the Italian mountains. It can't get any better," Pepijn says with a grin. The SL60 sends an impressive 428lb ft torque to its 18-inch rear wheels and, although it weighs 180kg more ▷



“When you're an E50 custodian, it's practically impossible to imagine a replacement that offers more rarity and bang for your buck”



▷ than the E50, it can still crack 62mph in 5.8 seconds – four tenths of a second faster than the silver saloon.

Pace with grace

To sample both AMGs, I designed a route from my hometown to the 57-piece Benz cathedral of Mercedes collector Reinier Groenveld (featured in *Mercedes Enthusiast* August/September 2021) via a meeting point to collect Pepijn and Lies. For the journey to the 'Benz sanctuary', I jumped aboard Pepijn's SL60 and for the return leg I spent time in the E50. Oof, we had a delightful trip. Both cars are reminders of how very, very good 90s Benz tech was. No flashy screens and screaming LED lights. In the cabins, it's comfy leather and push-button heaven.


The smoothness of both cars is addictive and never dull, the lavish power at your disposal truly a thing to behold. We encounter every possible road surface and the AMGs don't

△ Not all SL60s came with AMG instruments.

△▷ 90-degree M119 V8 with two cams per bank.

flinch. And still these cars feel so sporty. Amazing.

Both engines are a delight at full chat. To get the record straight: AMG's M113 V8 is great but the M119 has the racing ingredients, and it shows. Furnished with variable valve timing on the intake side, the powerplant picks up from barely any revs to 6,000 in its spirited search for the horizon. Roundabouts and sharp curves barely register with these cars – the E50's body rolls but only slightly, while the SL60 feels sharper and points at every apex with even greater precision.

Phew! I am enjoying this. I expected these big cars to struggle with my roads of choice but no, they shrug those wonderfully squared-off shoulders and carry on as if they weren't a day over five years old, let alone 25. It's true the collectors' market has already woken up to these AMGs – good examples of the SL60 now sell for in excess of £50,000. And yet they still seem underappreciated by many. I hope that changes someday soon. 

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz E50 AMG (W210)

ENGINE M119 4,973cc V8 POWER 342bhp@5,750rpm TORQUE 354lb ft@3,750-5,750rpm TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,750kg
0-62MPH 6.2sec TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 17.1mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1996-1997

Mercedes-Benz SL60 AMG (R129)

ENGINE M119 5,956cc V8 POWER 376bhp@5,500rpm TORQUE 428lb ft@3,750rpm TRANSMISSION 5-speed auto, RWD WEIGHT 1,930kg
0-62MPH 5.8sec TOP SPEED 155mph FUEL CONSUMPTION 17.7mpg YEARS PRODUCED 1993-1998

All figures from Mercedes-Benz; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; top speeds electronically limited



“ The E50's body rolls but only slightly, while the SL60 feels sharper and points at every apex with even greater precision ”

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1988 Finished in Gleaming signal red, with as new beige interior, hard and soft tops, automatic, power steering, ABS brakes, alloys, stereo system, power windows, sundym glass, complete with original fire extinguisher and tools, every old MOT from new, original handbook and wallet, only 66,000 miles, magnificent full service history, garaged from new, this car is superb condition throughout having been pampered from new.

Mercedes 300SL Sports

£48,750



1987, finished in gleaming Signal Red, with soft black hide interior, hard & soft tops, headrests, stereo system, ABS brakes, auto, power steering, tinted glass, alloys, power windows, soft top never used. Garaged and stored for many years hence very low mileage of only 23,500, with service book and old MOTs. This Mercedes could easily be mistaken for new.

Mercedes-Benz Sports 300 SL

£55,750



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-Benz 560SL Sports

£39,7500



1988 left drive, finished in pajett red with parchment hide interior, centre armrest, over mats, headrests, hard and soft tops, light up vanity mirrors, first aid kit, complete with all tools, expensive stereo system, power mirrors, cruise control, air bag, air con, abs, power windows, tinted glass, power steering, automatic, only 49,000 miles with service book and history, always garaged, drives like new, superb.

Mercedes 560 SL sports

£POA



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

Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports

£38,500

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△ Traditional materials and elegant lines.

△▷ This M112 V6 was usurped by the M272 in 2005.

▷ 209-series CLK debuted at Geneva show in 2002.

With the 209-series CLK, Mercedes-Benz arguably found its elegance again. The C209 CLK Coupe was – to these eyes at any rate – a massive improvement on the previous, heavy-looking 208-series CLK. In fact, I'd stick my neck out and say that the C209 (the work of Gorden Wagener, who today of course is still in overall charge of Mercedes-Benz design; back then he was still junior to Peter Pfeiffer) was the best bit of Mercedes styling of the early 2000s.

To be fair, that's not a high bar over which to jump. In general, in 2002 when the C209 was launched, Mercedes was having something of a torrid time of things. This was the era when the accountants achieved supremacy over the engineers at the Stuttgart works and the quality of the cars being produced took an all too predictable dive. The W203 C-Class was hardly an oil painting in styling terms, and was pretty poor, at least in period, when it came to overall reliability.

So Wagener's work turning the W203's slightly pudgy look into the sleek CLK, with its nose and tail falling gracefully towards the road, two ends of a single elegant arc, was quite the achievement for the young Manager of Exterior and Interior Styling. Arguably, the C209 CLK marks the turning point in 21st century Benz design, as subsequent cars became ever more elegant and better resolved.

Enough about the styling, though, let's drive into the tech. The chassis from that W203 C-Class did indeed form the basis for the 209 CLK, and it borrowed that car's range of engines too — from the basic supercharged 1.8-litre 'Kompressor' unit in the CLK200, with just 161bhp in its most affordable form, all the way to the mighty CLK55 AMG with its 5.4-litre, 362bhp naturally aspirated V8. Doesn't sound like all that much now, at a time when you can buy an A-Class with more than 400bhp, but in period it was lots. The M113 motor would go without a supercharger in the CLK, however.

Between those two extremes, there were more powerful Kompressor four-cylinder units (the upgraded CLK200 of 2007 would have 180bhp at its beck and call), and some exceptionally smooth, petrol (M112) V6 engines: the 2.6-litre, 168bhp CLK240 and 3.2-litre 215bhp CLK320, which were supplanted by the rather superior 3.0-litre M272 V6, badged as a CLK280 in 228bhp trim and CLK350 with a rather more useful 268bhp.



“Arguably, the 209-series CLK marks the turning point in 21st century Benz design”



Modern classic

The 209-series CLK gained many admirers during its time on sale new, and today the Coupes and Cabriolets are among the most affordable Mercedes-Benz cars you can buy second hand. Here we look back on these multi-talented models and see what's out there in the market

WORDS NEIL BRISCOE IMAGES DAIMLER AG & ERIC RICHARDSON



▷ Above those, but sitting beneath the mighty AMG in the range, was the super-smooth CLK500, its 5.0-litre M113 V8 developing 302bhp. When the facelifted cars appeared in mid 2005, the CLK500 was sporting a new 5.4-litre M273 V8 with a CLK55-beating 383bhp. To rebalance the range, the AMG CLK received a major transplant in the form of the immortal, M156 V8 engine, as seen in the C-Class and E-Class. With it came the legendary 6.3 badge, although the quad-cam, 32-valve *powerhaus* actually displaced 6,208cc. In the CLK, the M156 would hit a peak of 474bhp. Like the other engines described above, this biblically powerful V8 also appeared in the A209 CLK Cabriolet, which went on sale in 2003.

There was, of course, one extra level to the CLK power hierarchy in the form of the CLK63 AMG Coupe Black Series, whose M156 V8 developed 500bhp. The Black Series featured bodywork distended by racing-car bulges (inspired by the DTM German Touring Car Championship CLKs), fully adjustable suspension, a limited-slip differential and several key components — including the rear spoiler, rear diffuser and those wide, sweeping wheelarches — made from lightweight carbon fibre. Only 25 right-hand-drive versions of the CLK AMG Black Series made it to the UK, one of which was famously snapped up by Jeremy Clarkson — his car-buying budget having been swollen by the early-2000s success of *Top Gear* meant that he could afford the £90,000 asking price in 2007. Eight years later, Clarkson sold his CLK, announcing on Twitter that it was a “Sad day. Just sold my AMG Black.” We feel his pain.

Oh, and we mustn’t forget the most exclusive, most powerful 209-series CLK of them all — the CLK DTM AMG. Built to celebrate Mercedes’ 2003 title win in the DTM, just 100 Coupes and 80

▽ Final design much sleeker than concept model.

▷ W203 C-Class rear axle adapted for the 209 CLK.

▷△ Twinpulse unit said to be an aural delight.



◁ Pre-facelift CLK320 V6; model refresh in 2005.

△ The 4-, 5- and 6-cyl CLK diesels were big sellers.

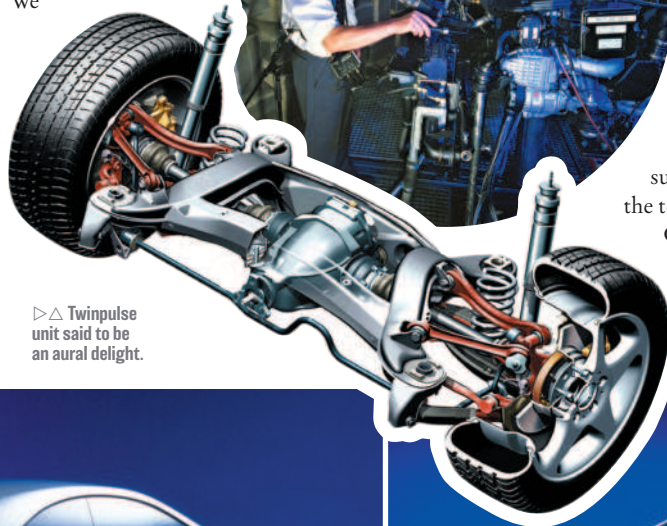
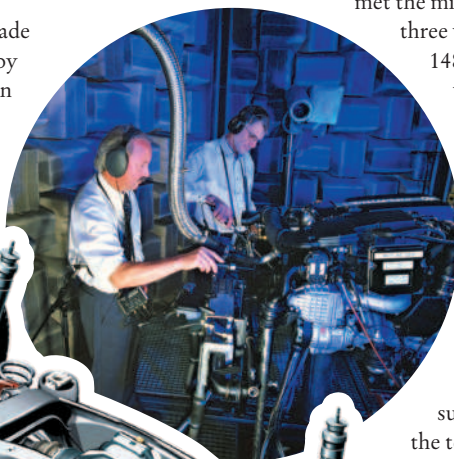
Cabriolets were built, and all got an incredibly special version of the 5.4-litre V8 engine with a massive 574bhp. This CLK — related, let’s not forget to the 161bhp CLK200 Kompressor — could hit a massive 199mph in a straight line. It made the Black Series look positively pedestrian.

The other end of the spectrum

Less AMG Black and more black pump, the 209-series CLK also met the mid-to-late 2000s demand for diesel coupes with three versions: the 2.1-litre CLK220 CDI with 148bhp, the CLK270 CDI in-line five-cylinder with 168bhp, and a CLK320 CDI 3.0-litre V6 with 221bhp which was the only oil burner to feature in the Cabriolet range. Diesel’s lustre has faded in the years since but, at the time, these CLKs had a compelling combination of mid-range performance and low running costs. No wonder they sold so well.

As did the 209-series CLK in general. More than 200,000 Coupes and 100,000 Cabriolets found homes, which wasn’t bad for supposed niche models. The 209-series followed the template of the old, 124-generation Coupe and Cabriolet by being reasonably practical. Their swoopy shape hid a really practical cabin with, if not quite full four-seat space, at least adequately useable rear seats.

The 209 CLK was also rather





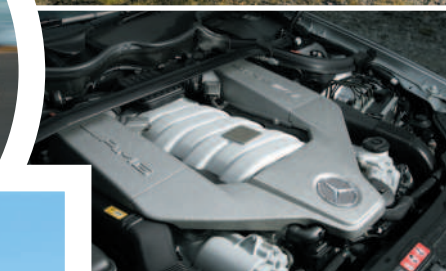
We are big fans of the 362bhp CLK55 Coupe and Cabrio.

Did you know?

A new generation of four-cylinder engines debuted with the 209-series CLK. The 200 Kompressor's 'Twinpulse' system featured balance shafts, compressor, charge air cooling, variably adjustable camshafts and four-valve technology, achieving six-cylinder levels of refinement and improved fuel consumption.

▽ Inside the Black Series you'll find bucket seats.

▽▽ CLK Black Series has gained a cult following.



◁△ 6.2-litre CLK63 replaced the CLK55 in '06.

△ Black's V8 had 26bhp more than regular CLK63's.

trim issues are also well known, and parts can be difficult to source, so make sure everything inside any CLK you're looking at is all up to scratch.

Engine wise, the CLK's power units are generally pretty robust and well-proven, although you do need to watch carefully for balancer-shaft failure on pre-2007 200 Kompressor

engines. Intake manifold issues are also quite common, leading to a loss of power or rough running, and keep an eye on the camshaft adjuster solenoids — they can leak oil, or even fail completely. The AMG engines are incredibly solid — the 5.4-litre V8 has almost no major reported problems, while the ▷

“Less AMG Black and more black pump, the 209-series CLK also met the mid-to-late 2000s demand for diesels”

wonderfully refined. It had the classic Mercedes pillarless layout, which meant frameless doors, but the sealing was good enough to keep the worst of the wind noise at bay. While the C-Class donor mechanical package may not have been Benz's best work, it was at least good enough to provide decent handling and roadholding, and the kind of gentle-on-the-back ride quality that's sadly become far too alien to too many modern cars. Ensconce yourself in the CLK's airy, open cockpit and you could breeze along happily for hours.

Well, for a while at any rate, as the 209 CLK came from that dark era when Mercedes quality was not all that it should have been. Electric faults are not uncommon — indeed they're far too common — and those gorgeous frameless doors need careful attention as the glass can fail to seat properly on the rubber seal, letting in wind noise and even rain leaks. Thankfully, the 209 CLK received good rust-protection — certainly much better than that of the older 208 CLK — and while crunchy wheelarches aren't unknown, these cars are generally rot-free.

To the classifieds!

The CLK may have some electrical niggles, but you must admire its technological ambition. It's not unusual to find 209-series cars equipped with adaptive cruise control, keyless entry, or ventilated (as well as heated) front seats. Try finding a contemporary BMW or Audi rival fitted with such items and you'll struggle. You certainly won't find one with the little extending 'butler' arm that pulls the front seat belts forward, making them easier to put on. Mind you, that little gadget can be a point of failure too, so make sure it's working if you're shopping second hand. Interior



△ CLK DTM Cabrio of 2006 with a colossal 574bhp.



Pricewise, the 209-series CLK has become remarkably affordable

▷ 6.2-litre V8 has the well-known issues with stretched or even broken cylinder-head bolts, but most if not all will have had this rectified by now. The diesel engines are also mostly very solid, not least because they pre-date the latest common-rail and turbo technology so, as my dad would say, there's less to go wrong.

The gearboxes — a choice of early five-speed automatics and later seven-speed units (there were manual options of course, but few customers failed to tick the box for an auto) are also both very solid, but just be aware that on pre-2003 models, engine coolant can leak into the five-speed gearbox, which basically ruins it and means getting a full replacement. The seven-speed gearbox needs regular oil changes if it's going to run without fault, but in general shouldn't give many problems.

Pricewise, the 209-series CLK has become remarkably affordable. Shop around and you could easily find an early CLK200 Kompressor for around £1,000, although it's unlikely to have an unblemished history for that sort of

money. With the reputation for unreliability at the time, and the complexity of equipment on offer, what you want to see more than anything when shopping for a used 209 CLK is a service book full of stamps and receipts, preferably from a Mercedes main dealer, or at the very least from an acknowledged marque specialist.

A lot of metal for the money

Somewhere between £5,000 and £10,000 is a reasonable area in which to be searching, and that will get you a nicely specified Kompressor or V6 petrol, or one of the diesels, with a full service record. Fancy an AMG? Well, you'll have to spend more

— at least £10,000 and preferably nudging up towards the £20,000 mark if you want one that's been properly cared for. And if you really must have an AMG Black Series? Well then, at that point we're up to the levels of zero depreciation — a CLK AMG Black Series will easily sell for the same £90,000 it cost Mr Clarkson all the way back in 2007.

▽ CLK320 CDI V6 turbodiesel was a big deal for Merc.



Just the facts

CLK Coupe (C209)

LAUNCHED Spring 2002 SERIES PRODUCTION 2002 to 2010 FACELIFT DEBUT Summer 2005

NUMBER BUILT 200,000+ MODELS PRE-FACELIFT 270 CDI, 200 CGI (not sold in UK), 200 Kompressor, 240, 320, 500, 55 AMG, DTM AMG

POST-FACELIFT 220 CDI, 320 CDI, 200 Kompressor, 280, 350, 500 (M113), 500 (M273), 55 AMG, 63 AMG, 63 Black Series TRIM LINES Elegance, Avantgarde, Sport, AMG

IN THE CLASSIFIEDS 2006 CLK220 CDI Coupe Elegance, 59,000 miles, black metallic with beige leather, £4,750, trade seller

CLK Cabriolet (A209)

LAUNCHED Spring 2003 SERIES PRODUCTION 2003 to 2010 FACELIFT DEBUT Summer 2005

NUMBER BUILT 100,000+ MODELS PRE-FACELIFT 200 CGI (not sold in UK), 200 Kompressor, 240, 320, 500, 55 AMG

POST-FACELIFT 200 Kompressor, 280, 350, 320 CDI, 500 (M113), 500 (M273), 55 AMG, 63 AMG, DTM AMG TRIM LINES Elegance, Avantgarde, Sport, AMG

IN THE CLASSIFIEDS 2006 CLK350 Cabriolet Sport, 36,000 miles, silver metallic with black leather, £7,495, trade seller

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Monceau Automobiles is reimagining classic Mercedes for a brave new world in which sustainability and eco-friendliness are paramount. The eSLC is the first fruit of this labour and we've driven it before anyone else

WORDS **ALBERT MENSINGA**
IMAGES **NOORTJE BLOKLAND**



A few months ago, I met Roel Pollen of Monceau Automobiles in Genk, Belgium. In my search for quality electrified classics, there's enough to be found but few are to my liking. As we speak, dozens are building them and thousands are thinking about it. In my world, a solid plan is a solid basis for success and Roel's creation demonstrates how a classic car could work well without a petrol engine.

His choice for SL and SLC is smart: the 107-series Roadster and Coupe are built like tanks and already have much of the inherent smoothness associated with electric propulsion. Cruising 50 to 100 miles to an easy lunch then filling up and driving home again, in typical detour style, is what you do in a 107, right? If you agree, then Roel's modern take on Mercedes-Benz's finest could be right up your street.

At first glance

Readers tend to look at pictures first before deciding to read an article, and I am without any doubt that the appearance of this *Magnetitblau* metallic SLC is convincing enough to pull in everyone. What a glorious sight! Of course, both the weather and location complemented today's subject like ice cubes in a gin and tonic.

The Monceau eSLC chassis #001 is insanely attractive from the outside and 24-year young snapper Noortje Blokland instantly fell in love with said car: "The colour, the shapes, just look at it begging to be loved!" She went to work like a lunatic and attacked like a hungry wolf. Both doors invite to keep the love going, if your heart is big enough. I must say it's all a bit overwhelming because the level of quality inside is as high as it is on the outside.

“With a 40kg electric motor up front producing the equivalent of 200bhp/442lb ft torque, performance is up to V8 standards”

Here's the deal: a carefully sourced donor car is fully restored before being fully converted to contemporary EV standards. The new instrument cluster incorporating a subtle OLED screen is the only giveaway that this SLC is actually an eSLC.

There is no leather upholstery, instead a fantastic reference to 300SL Gullwing heritage. I'm happy because I'm a Pullman interior and cloth seat fan. The steering wheel is huge and historically correct. To me, the cabin feels very much like home, as an SLC should. My legs and feet rest OK and I'm ready to go. The dials look period but are very contemporary without being overstated. I turn the key, the dash says 'Keep your foot on the brake', I hear a woosh and a click, the dials wave at me and we're ready for take-off in utter silence. ▷

MD Roel Pollen (left)
with Technical Director
Klaas De Craemer.





▷ The drive

With a 40kg electric motor up front producing the equivalent of 200bhp/442lb ft torque, performance is up to V8 standards. I slide the transmission into D (the only other options are Neutral or Reverse) and squeeze the throttle. We're on a deserted US airbase and there are open routes to explore. The Monceau eSLC is not yet road legal but it's not far off; by the time you read this, the car should have launched.

Mercedes Enthusiast is the first magazine to get its hands on chassis #001 and it was worth the wait. On the move, there's no engine burble, just a subdued thrum from shiny Michelin e.Primacy 205/60R16 rubber on a very rough surface. Bliss. The level of comfort is amazing given what lies beneath.

Is this really a battery-powered SLC? After a handful of sharp corners, my conclusion is that this 50/50 weight distributed coupe is a 1,580kg jewel that respects its heritage and legacy whilst offering a highly successful and alternative take on the classic formula. The acceleration is velvet-like, the steering has

△ Good weight distribution aids the e's handling.

△△ Upholstery inspired by the 300SL Gullwing's.

familiar playfulness and body roll is comparable with a very well sorted V8. I recently drove a 450 model and the eSLC feels entirely more capable than that car. Need I say more?

Roel's story

After an exciting afternoon at the airbase, entrepreneur and Monceau Automobiles' Managing Director Roel Pollen and Technical Director Klaas De Craemer invite me to their workshop. "Back in 2018, I sold my two companies and met Klaas via the internet," Roel explains. "I had the idea to start up an EV company. Klaas had just finished his EV Mazda MX-5 which worked well and got some media attention. Back in the day, I did economic environmental studies and now 20 years later I had the urge to finally put that knowledge into practice.

"Sustainability and business can go hand-in-hand," Roel continues. "It often makes more sense to be sustainable because many old practices can be viewed as flawed thanks to current insights and technology. Try to imagine the change from electric



“On the move, there’s no engine burble, just a subdued thrum from shiny Michelin rubber. Bliss”



cars to petrol engined cars. That would be pretty insane! In my mind, in the near future more people will drive less. And when they drive a car, it will be electric. Classic cars can’t be the odd ones out. It would be a shame if classics became artefacts presented in museums and magazines. In the near future, I can see classic cars being treated like steamrollers at a farm and country fair. The horror!

“There are enough models out there begging for conversion to meet contemporary standards,” Roel explains. “Think of Volvo, Citroën DS and Mercedes-Benz. The 107-series is a perfect base for sustainable transportation. And since just over 300,000 were produced, no one should cry over US-conversions going electric.

“To complete the picture at Monceau Automobiles, our third partner is Tom Van de Cruys, a very experienced CEO linked to the international energy business, and an electric car fan pur sang with Mercedes-Benz family roots,” Roel continues. “The three of us developed and created the eSLC you drove today. This car

is a result of intense development and the very first customer-ready Monceau Automobile.”

So why Mercedes-Benz? “I’ve been a petrolhead since I was a young boy. Things were getting out of control when my brother and I rallied our [one of 244] De Tomaso Deauville. We then picked a less rare 350SL and enjoyed that without any perils,” Roel smiles. “I left my Italian car habit, switched to *Das Haus* and I never looked back, as you can see with my daily, 209-series CLK200 Kompressor Cabrio.

“In 2018, I had my hands free, so I sourced cars in the US, shipped them to my garage, improved them and sold a few.” Including 107-series Mercedes? “Yes, an Oregon, ex-Wieden + Kennedy Orient Rot 280SL, an Alaskan time ▷

△ Liquid cooled battery packs up front and out back.

△◁ Two charger options available; standard is 22kW.

▽ Roel’s 350SL replaced a De Tomaso rally toy.



▷ capsule, and a 1971, 4.5-litre 350SL – number 26 from new,” Roel answers. “Americans are huge fans, maybe thanks to Bobby Ewing. After I met Klaas, I saw a great market opportunity. Restoring a car up to spec and removing the V8 is basically a ‘cradle-to-cradle’ approach. Isn’t it a waste to ditch a 1,600kg car just because 300kg of it is considered obsolete?”

So tell us more about the eSLC’s specification and development. “In 2019, we made a full 3D scan of an SLC and planned the process from there – full mechanical and software simulation and all that. We use Dutch battery technology, plus a Swiss motor and charger mixed with high-tech components from the US,” Roel reveals. “Batteries and components are liquid cooled, hence the dual temperature dial inside. The power is mainly limited and controlled by the electric motor’s temperature, so cooling is important. Batteries are distributed between front and rear to get that 50/50 balance, creating a fantastic driving experience. Automotive engineering company TeKshift is part of our alliance.



△ Dial set with dual temp gauges and OLED display.

△△ Dashboard is wrapped in high quality leather.

On the home stretch

“Prior to the official launch in September, we’re in the process of finetuning the software which is crucial for optimal performance and reliability. The hardware is near perfect, as you may expect from a ground-up restoration. If we sophisticate the car any further – which is an option – it will lose the typical 107-series feel. At this moment, we use professional references and expert drivers to finalise the car.”

So, what’s next for Belgium-based Monceau Automobiles? “Well, as you can see in the workshop, there’s a W111 and R107 ready for full restoration. After the press launch of #001, I expect these two to follow – maybe even this year,” reckons Roel. “We collaborate with restoration specialist SL Classics in Germany and are on course for six cars in 2022 – our first full year in operation – and then grow from there. We are focusing on the 107-series initially, but any iconic Mercedes-Benz model from between 1950 and 1985 is a possible Monceau product. We only focus on Mercedes classics.”

“Isn’t it a waste to ditch a 1,600kg car just because 300kg of it is considered obsolete?”



Just the facts

Monceau Automobiles eSLC (C107)

DRIVELINE Permanent magnet axial flux electric motor COMBINED BATTERY CAPACITY 51.8kWh POWER 200bhp TORQUE 442lb ft TRANSMISSION Direct drive with original 3.92 differential, RWD

WEIGHT 1,580kg 0-62MPH 7.8sec TOP SPEED 105mph CHARGER 22kW (standard) RANGE 174 miles PRICE €169,000 (excluding VAT)

Figures supplied by Monceau Automobiles; range according to WLTP

Find out more at Web monceau-automobiles.com



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222 P £25,000
4 RR £75,000
RRX I £55,000
1 RX £29,500
133 S £28,000
88 SH £32,500
15 TON £16,000
2 VOL £11,000
1 VVL £17,000
530 W £11,000
X 300 £35,000
XRB I £38,500
XS 7 £60,000

A
29 A £80,000
A 158 £33,000
A 166 £35,000
A 363 £33,000
200 A £35,000
AB 787 £17,000
AJ 9 £150,000
AJ 52 £33,000
ALX 2S £8,500
GA55 ALX £1,500
AM 256 £18,000
S1 ARC £3,000
102 AS £12,000
AXT 8N £4,900
B
200 B £30,000
BAD 6E £10,500
350 BD £7,500
10 BG £19,000
21 BG £15,000
333 BH £12,000
155 BM £7,500
6 BMH £15,000
C
M111 CCX £1,300
CC64 CCC £900
CDS 2 £18,000
CDS I2 £11,000
2 CFG £8,800
CLS II £10,500
III CLS £8,500
1975 CS £6,500
CSE 289 £2,500
D
DA17 REN £4,800

DEC III £35,000
DBH 5 £16,000
F20 DMB £1,500
900 DN £7,500
98 DS £18,000
DS 7938 £2,300
DW 21 £35,000
E
EB 935 £4,800
EE20 EEE £1,500
88 EJ £14,500
ETM 800 £2,200
206 ELY £1,800
2 ESJ £8,500
EYO I £22,000
F
211 FBB £1,500
862 FDT £1,800
FDZ 483 £900
FFF 293 £2,800
FFI9 FFF £3,500
FJ 10 £30,000
FP 23 £8,500
850 FXK £1,500
G
17 G £125,000
999 G £35,000
4 GAK £8,000
GBG 5 £7,500
M9 GEF £1,300
GIL 2 £27,000
GJH 8W £2,800
III GK £12,000
227 GMO £2,000
S10 GMX £300
212 GR £7,500

GRX I £25,000
GTC 100P £3,500
GUI 90 £3,600
H
HAZ 650 £950
I HEJ £23,000
HGA III £5,500
HNP 308 £3,300
HNS II £7,500
J
R100 JAG £5,500
JAM IR £10,800
JAY 993 £5,500
JB 9 £120,000
2 JCK £19,500
13 JER £6,000
624 JGC £1,495
7 JLL £8,500
900 JJ £10,000
JJ19 JJJ £2,500
JLT 93 £9,800
526 JML £6,800
J18 HNS £15,000
45 JT £21,000
888 JT £14,000
J2 JXE £500
K
466 K £15,000
777 KA £20,000
KER 557Y £2,000
F488 KEV £2,500
323 KMT £4,500
998 KPO £2,800
55 KXA £4,500
II KXO £3,500
KXS 4 £5,000

L
956 LAC £6,000
I LBO £14,500
S9 LCW £900
LEE 782 £3,500
L7 LGX £800
1981 LM £6,500
LOT 22 £35,000
550 LP £6,000
LLR 946 £1,300
222 LR £7,800
LYN 81M £3,800
M
818 M £22,000
V6 MAX £8,500
X33 MCO £450
60 MG £25,000
MGL 644 £1,700
X7 MHB £950
R00 MJA £650
727 MJS £8,000
MXI 52 £1,500
N
S330 NCK £700
NDL 222 £1,950
NED 5N £2,500
438 NEV £3,300
L77 NGL £500
R6 NOW £2,000
NN60 NNN £850
P111 NYA £2,000
12 NX £9,000
77 NXG £2,000
O
2 OBO £10,000
55 OFB £4,500

I6 OLD £45,000
L8 OOO £3,500
OOO IX £12,800
10 OU £17,000
OUT IT £8,500
P
PHC 9 £8,000
I PJX £19,500
PIL 2001 £950
I PJX £19,500
X6 PPD £600
1996 PS £4,800
PUR 415 £3,000
WT03 PUT £850
R
R 3 £485,000
R80 RAK £1,200
RAW 777 £8,500
B3 RCC £1,000
REJ 3 £10,800
550 RG £9,000
RGC 943 £1,800
18 RMS £12,500
ROB 32T £18,000
72 ROD £4,500
T22 RPB £400
1965 RR £18,000
RR20 RRR £2,800
G9 RSR £1,300
33 RWJ £6,500
500 RXR £3,800
S
M11 SBB £700
SBJ 156 £3,400
SC55 LET £5,500
SC20 LND £1,200

T8 SCS £1,500
I3 SLK £5,500
SMJ 6 £15,000
50 UND £95,000
V6 SOP £2,500
SOP 853 £3,200
79 SP £21,000
I5 STK £3,500
S2 SXA £750
X20 SXY £750
T
TAR 41S £12,000
TED IB £12,000
TKJ 46 £3,500
888TM £10,800
TRI3 MPH £7,500
2 TSF £7,500
TSY 397 £1,300
X
X10 UUU £700
X20 UUU £700
V
VFW 2 £7,800
VIA 92 £5,000
VOL IE £4,500
935 VPD £1,500
G6 VTN £500
VVC 2 £10,000
925 W £10,500
900 WH £7,500
W
WH11 NGE £4,500
HR11 WLM £9,800
400 WM £7,500
WON 2G £4,000
I6 WR £15,000

110 WR £7,500
S88 WRC £1,300
WSV 441 £950
C10 WTS £1,500
WWK 92 £5,600
10 WWW £15,000
X
X 28 £55,000
34 X £40,500
1000 X £35,000
I XBC £25,000
I XD £95,000
II XGH £8,500
100 XS £7,500
I XXG £25,000
XOO I £32,000
XXX IG £10,800
XXX IP £9,800
XX19 XXX £4,000
Y
YAP 461 £1,800
2 YML £5,500
YRV I £15,500
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X10 YYY £750
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“

I love the hunt,
but the truth is
that condition
is subjective”



The Mercedes *whisperer*

**Finding great classic and modern classic Mercedes
to sell on for profit is not as easy as you'd think, but
Dean Laumbach has turned it into an art form**

WORDS REED HITCHCOCK IMAGES KAVEH SARDARI





Dean Laumbach got his start in the car business in the 1990s providing detailing and ancillary services for local car dealerships after doing some time in a suit on Wall Street. Among his dealer clients was a collector car dealer, which is where he developed an appetite for taking good to excellent cars and making them as close to perfect as possible and reasonable. It was at about that same time that he started trading in interesting, classic and special interest cars – and he’s got a knack for finding the cream of the crop.

“I loathe restorations – that is not the business I am in. I love the hunt, but the truth is that condition is subjective and just because a car has a low mileage doesn’t mean it is worth the premium, and just because it has a high mileage doesn’t mean it’s not close to perfect.” Dean’s definition of a “perfect” car is frequently a world apart from a seller’s definition.

As he prepares a car for the market, Dean focuses on the “eyesore parts” of a classic car. It’s these fine points that Dean says complete the package and enhance a buyer’s confidence in a car. This includes minutiae as miniscule the proper aluminium wipers on an R107, a rotten bonnet pad, aged rubber bits, and even dull console wood. Dean ensures every last trim piece is present and perfect, and then bringing the finishes inside and out to new. Dean admits, however, that he outsources major mechanical and bodywork,



△ Dean and son Laurance have sold over 240 cars.

Dean's top buying tips

Start your search with every possible source for prospects (auction websites, online classified adverts, social media and so on).

Establish direct communication with the seller.

Ask the most pertinent questions regarding the vehicle's mechanical and cosmetic condition; be cautiously optimistic regarding the seller's responses to your queries.

Request service history and any additional receipts or documentation; obtain a vehicle history report if available.

See the car in person whenever possible.

Inspect the car thoroughly and consider the environment from which the car came. For example, thoroughly check the engine bay and underside of cars that may have seen winter usage, or are from areas near the ocean where salt and moisture in the air accelerates rust.

Where in-person inspection is not an option, consider third-party inspection by a trusted individual. Mercedes club members local to prospective purchases are an invaluable resource! Worst case: request a live video inspection by smartphone – not ideal. But I have successfully purchased great cars this way!

Start all inspections by looking underneath the car.

Consider pre-purchase inspection by a Mercedes-Benz main dealer or well-respected independent shop at your expense.

On a test drive, pay close attention to the suspension and brakes, and the responsiveness of the engine and transmission.

Examine the car for previous body and paintwork. Use of a professional paint metre is recommended.

Review service history to determine if known problems have been addressed. For example, a biodegradable wiring harness on 1992 to 1995 models; convertible top hydraulics; AC evaporators on early 1990s models; head gaskets on M104 motors.

Bring cash to encourage negotiation and easy transaction. Good cars won't stay around for long!

“I think the 124 Coupe is a sleeper at the moment and will have its day”

but to “the best in the business”.

I first met Dean about five years ago when we road tripped from our Washington, DC metro area base to the semi-rural suburbs just outside New York City to visit Phillip Richter's Turtle Garage and specifically his barely-above-delivery-mileage R129 SL600 (*Mercedes Enthusiast* November 2017). Dean was instrumental in helping Phillip locate the essentially brand new youngtimer and, as it turns out, most of the other cars in his impressive collection including a 124-series 500E, C126 560SEC, BMW M3 and M6, and Porsche 964 and 928.

Over the next few years, Dean and I loosely

kept in touch and, as he tried to keep folks like me safe from ourselves, he engaged more and more as a commenter and a seller on BringaTrailer – which has become, here in the States anyway, a prime internet auction venue for shifting very good cars. BaT, as it is frequently referenced, and similar sites have cropped up following a similar model: an online auction that, unlike more static auction sites, encourages and even thrives on engagement of users in the dialogue about a particular auction that becomes part of the listing. For sellers on

these sites, it pays to be honest, thorough, responsive and thick-skinned, as the comments can be equal parts gushing and nit-picking.

Having amassed an impressive expertise over the years, Dean established

himself as a knowledgeable participant fairly early on. He also started selling cars on BaT in earnest around the same time as we first met. These days, Dean shares his passion and his business with his son Laurance, who joined his dad in the business a few years back. At the ▶



△ Laurance has joined his dad's car business.

▷ time of writing, between Dean and Laurance they had sold over 240 cars on BaT, in addition to private sales and other online or in-person venues. The majority of the cars he trades in are Mercedes, but he's also a sucker for the rare and unusual.

Eclectic mix

Upon arrival we found Laurance hard at work on a factory fresh silver R129 SL600 in preparation for a car show the next day. Father and son both get their hands plenty dirty during their workdays, but the results speak for themselves. During our visit, we found cars ranging from a W111 300SE Coupe to a fleet of



R107s, a C124 300CE-24 five-speed manual (never sold in the States), another R129, and a gorgeous V126 420SEL awaiting the truck to take it to its new home across the country. Dean's cars have sold to buyers across the US and Europe, and as far away as the Middle East.



◁ When it comes to top Mercedes, the details matter.

△ Dean Laumbach (left) talks to our man Reed.

Looking forward, Dean's money is on the continuing rise of the youngtimers. "Look for the next generation to want the best 129s and 126s in addition to the 107s and the 123 diesels that are already selling like crazy, but I think the 124 Coupe is a sleeper at the moment and will have its day." He also speculates that three-pedal Mercedes, especially here in the States where so few were sold new, will attract collector dollars going forward.

► For more information see Instagram @deanlaumbachconsulting and YouTube 'Dean Laumbach'



“Dean's cars have sold to buyers across the US and Europe”



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High. Society

In the latest instalment of our buying-focused series, we reveal our top six £20,000 Mercedes steals for a range of tastes and needs

WORDS **GUY BAKER** IMAGES **STRATSTONE, CASTLE MOTORS, JCT600, PRO MOTORS, AUTO 2000 PRESTIGE CARS & AUTO STRASSE**

With thousands upon thousands of used Mercs advertised for sale in the UK, including nearly 30 distinct models with hundreds of individual variants, the sheer range of options for buyers in the £15,000 to £20,000 price range can seem a little

bewildering – and not all Mercedes make equally good buys.

So, we've scoured the marketplace to select six of the finest used stars on a £20,000 budget. And with everything from a rare classic to a contemporary hybrid represented here, there's bound to be something that floats your boat.



Saloon

combined economy figure is a heady 78.5mpg.

Our 20 grand budget would buy this immaculate black 2017 C300h AMG Line Premium automatic from Mercedes-Benz of Ayr (www.stratstone.com). Advertised for £19,797, it had covered just 26,490 miles and came with the Premium Package, a Panoramic glass sunroof, Garmin Map Pilot satellite navigation, 18-inch AMG alloys, a reversing camera and heated seats, plus the Mirror, Anti-Theft Protection, Memory and Interior Lighting packages.



Just the facts

ENGINE 2,143cc 4-cyl turbocharged + electric motor

POWER 201bhp@3,800rpm

TORQUE 369lb ft@1,600-1,800rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD

0-62MPH 6.4sec

TOP SPEED 152mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 78.5 mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 104g/km

£20,000 BUYS 2017 Mercedes-Benz C300h AMG Line with 26,000 miles

C300h AMG Line Saloon (W205)

Quicker than an equivalent diesel model and more fuel efficient on paper – and there are plenty of well-maintained examples to choose from

Compared to a traditional four-cylinder diesel C-Class, Merc's W205 diesel-hybrid C300h offers smoother performance and significantly enhanced economy. It's a slightly more relaxing driving experience too, and both the Premium and Premium Plus seven-speed auto models are well equipped.

Quick and super frugal, there are quite a few examples around at the moment, with £20,000 bagging a 2017 C300h AMG Line with just 26,000 miles. The 0-62mph dash takes 6.4 seconds, whilst top speed is 152mph and the official

Buying tips

Your C300h must come with a full service history, including Mercedes stamps for the first three years. Check who owned it previously, as many were fleet cars – and avoid any cars with misbehaving electrics, leaking door seals, a rattling sunroof or loose trim. Some recalls were required – ensure that these have been addressed – and check that the front wheels don't judder on full lock.

Just the facts

ENGINE 2,143cc 4-cyl
turbocharged
POWER 175bhp@3,600-
3,800rpm
TORQUE 258lb ft@1,400-
3,400rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed
auto, FWD
0-62MPH 7.7sec
TOP SPEED 144mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 68.9mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 106g/km
£20,000 BUYS 2016
CLA220d Coupe AMG Line
with 21,000 miles

CLA220d Coupe AMG Line (C117)

Classy Coupe looks more expensive than it really is – and offers wallet-friendly fuel economy

Bringing some of Mercedes' top-end glamour to the lower end of the manufacturer's model range, the 118-series CLA220d Coupe AMG Line also delivers class-leading fuel economy alongside persuasive performance and four-door practicality.

Wherever you go, you're guaranteed plenty of admiring looks, whilst the CLA's 2,143cc four-cylinder turbodiesel engine produces 175bhp from 3,600 and boasts 258lb ft of torque at just 1,400rpm, so overtaking is never an issue. And the official combined fuel consumption is an impressive 68.9mpg.

You'll find quite a few £20,000 examples with less than

30,000 miles, such as this 2016, Cosmos Black, two-owner CLA220d AMG Line automatic at M-B York (www.jct600.co.uk). Advertised for £19,970, it came with a comprehensive spec that included a panoramic sliding sunroof, Comand Online sat nav, heated front seats, 18-inch AMG alloys, the AMG Exclusive and Night packages – and a Mercedes-Benz warranty.

Buying tips

Your CLA220d should have had no more than two owners and must come with spotless service history. Watch out for paint peeling around the rear wheelarches and any electrical glitches, and listen for any strange noises from the electric seats or sunroof. Put the automatic transmission through its paces – a few owners have had issues – and check that all recalls have been addressed.



Coupe



SL350 Sport (R230)

Better value and cheaper to run than a V8, the V6-engined SL350 is also lighter on its feet

Elegantly stylish, quick and fun to drive, the smooth six-cylinder SL350 Sport is nimbler than an equivalent V8 R230 and won't guzzle as much fuel. Most examples have been lovingly cherished and covered relatively low mileages.

The 3,498cc V6 powerplant is good for 312bhp at 6,500rpm and mated to Mercedes' durable seven-speed auto delivers seamless power throughout the rev range. The benchmark 0-62mph dash takes 6.2 seconds, with top speed limited to the usual 155mph. Our budget buys a one- or two-owner, 2008 example with less than 20,000 miles.

All cars boast 17-inch alloys, tinted glass, xenon headlamps, Comand sat nav, electric leather seats with heating and memory, climate and cruise control, and an electric hydraulic roof. This

one-owner, Obsidian Black metallic, 2008 example for sale at www.promotors.co.uk in Bournemouth for £19,995 also had 19-inch alloys, full service history and just 16,300 miles.

Buying tips

All SLs require regular fettling and yours must possess a complete service history and no signs of rust or bodywork damage – repairs can be very pricey. You'll need to spend a little bit each year aside from servicing to keep your SL350 in rude health, and watch out for water leaks into the boot, failed fuel pumps and alternators, excessive oil consumption and misbehaving roof mechanisms.

Just the facts

ENGINE 3,498cc V6
POWER 312bhp@6,500rpm
TORQUE 266lb ft@4,900rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed
auto, RWD
0-62MPH 6.2sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 28.5mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 246g/km
£20,000 BUYS 2008
SL350 Sport with
16,000 miles

Roadster





Just the facts

ENGINE 1,950cc 4-cyl turbocharged
POWER 191bhp@3,800rpm
TORQUE 295lb ft@1,600-2,800rpm
TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, RWD
0-62MPH 7.7sec
TOP SPEED 146mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 67.3mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 120g/km
£20,000 BUYS 2017 E220d Estate AMG Line Premium with 65,000 miles

E220d Estate AMG Line Premium (S213)

Practical and parsimonious, the perky E220d Estate AMG Line makes a comfortable companion

Capacious, classy and frugal, Mercedes' 213-series E220d Estate AMG Line has been a mainstay of UK business fleets for years. And that means there are always plenty of fully serviced used examples for sale. Our £20,000 budget will put you behind the wheel of a highly-specced, one- or two-owner example from 2017 with around 65,000 miles.

Capable of lugging heavy loads, the nine-speed automatic equipped AMG Line Estate claims punchy performance - with a 7.7-second 0-62mph time - yet returns over 60mpg on longer motorway journeys. And the comfortable ride means you always arrive at your destination feeling relaxed.

This black metallic, 2017/66-plater for sale at Castle motors (www.castlemotors.com) in Cornwall is typical of what you could buy, with 19-inch AMG alloys, a panoramic sunroof and just 60,599 miles on the clock. Advertised for £20,999, the impressive spec included matching Artico leather, Parktronic plus a reversing camera, heated electric memory seats and Comand sat nav.

Buying tips

Stick to cars packing a complete service history and make sure that the boot is in good condition with no stains or tears. We would avoid cars with the tow pack unless you actually need it, and any electrical problems can prove tricky to diagnose. Watch out for diesel particulate filter warnings.

Diesel estate



“Few 190Es will have covered less miles than this 1.8”

GLC250d 4Matic Sport Premium Plus (X253)

Crossover

Mercedes' mid-sized SUV/Crossover delivers affordable luxury whilst being a practical and frugal all-rounder

Safe, extremely comfortable and well specced, Mercedes' X253 GLC is best enjoyed in 250d 4Matic Sport Premium Plus guise. Handsome from almost all angles, the cabin exudes a premium feel, and the torquey turbocharged motor is surprisingly frugal, with a combined consumption figure of 46mpg. Our 20 grand budget buys a 2016 nine-speed automatic model with plenty of optional extras.

Performance is lively, with a 139mph top speed, and the GLC250d 4Matic can hold its own off-road too, but if you intend on doing this regularly then buy a car fitted with the optional Off-Road Engineering Package.

This smart looking, 2016 GLC250d 4Matic Sport Premium Plus would make an ideal buy. It had covered 99,000 miles but was in immaculate condition, came with a full service history and cost just £130 a year to tax. Advertised at Auto2000 Prestige Cars (www.auto2000prestigecars.com) in Essex,



it was stickered at £19,995 and had contrasting cream leather upholstery and chrome/silver exterior trim, plus 18-inch Vanadium Silver alloys.

Buying tips

Whatever the colour/trim options you opt for, your GLC must also possess a full service history, have no signs whatsoever of off-road damage, and if a tow bar is fitted make sure it works properly. Adjustable suspensions are expensive to fix and beware any untoward noises from the front tyres on full lock, any hint of water in the headlights and badly worn boot linings.

Just the facts

ENGINE 2,143cc 4-cyl turbocharged
POWER 201bhp@3,800rpm
TORQUE 369lb ft@1,600-1,800rpm
TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, 4WD
0-62MPH 7.6sec
TOP SPEED 139mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 46.0mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 129g/km
£20,000 buys 2016 GLC250d 4Matic Sport Premium Plus with 99,000 miles

Just the facts

ENGINE 1,797cc 4-cyl
POWER 108bhp@5,500rpm
TORQUE 111lb ft@3,700rpm
TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD
0-60MPH 12.7sec
TOP SPEED 115mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 32.0mpg
£20,000 buys 1992 190E 1.8 Saloon with 25,000 miles

190E 1.8 (W201)

Low-profile 190E model can still be enjoyed and is an appreciating classic, but buy the best example you can

Whilst more illustrious 190Es grab the majority of the headlines, good examples of this less sought-after model also offer investment potential, as well as providing a rewarding classic car ownership experience. And our budget buys a concours, low-mileage example of the rare 190E 1.8-litre Saloon.

The factory SOHC 1.8-litre engine develops 108bhp at 5,500rpm, with 111lb ft of torque at 3,700rpm. Mercedes-Benz fitted a four-speed manual transmission as standard, but quite a few first buyers opted for the optional four-speed automatic transmission instead.

Few will have covered less miles than this Signal Red, 1992 automatic we spotted advertised for sale at

Autostrasse (www.autostrasse.co.uk) in Leeds. With an immaculate grey check fabric interior and just 29,000 miles, it was advertised for £15,000 and packed a full service history. This fantastic-looking example came with 12 months MOT and a strong spec that included a mechanical sliding sunroof, electric front windows, a heated rear window and ABS brakes.

Buying tips

Ensure there are no hidden rust problems (the jacking points are a good place to check for corrosion) and stick to cherished examples with complete service records. These must be backed up by verifiable documents like old MOTs and service receipts. Avoid any 190E that has changed hands more than once in the last few years and watch out for worn transmissions, timing chain wear, power steering leaks, knocks from the suspension and uneven tyre wear.

Modern classic



Fuel preparation

Fuel preparation stayed with carburettors for a long time in the automotive world, but Mercedes-Benz was at the forefront of its replacement technology - direct fuel injection

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



Carburettors lasted a remarkably long time in car engines. Indeed, their invention predates the car and they're still in use today in some industries. It is an ingenious mechanical invention to control the amount and vaporise petrol entering an engine, mixing it with incoming air. Although petrol is a volatile liquid, it needs to be mixed with air in the right proportion to ignite at all. That's at the heart of all fuel preparation systems.

Mercedes-Benz was at the forefront of improving the method of getting fuel into an engine from the start and we must look to its diesel technology for signs of inspiration that spread to its more famous petrol engines. The OM138 engine, a naturally aspirated 2.5-litre, four-cylinder unit, is claimed to be the first ever diesel engine made for passenger car use, making its debut in the 1936 Mercedes 260D. This used a mechanical injection pump into pre-combustion chambers.

Straight to the action

While others looked at using a mechanical injection pump for indirect petrol injection, Mercedes designed and developed the world's first production-ready direct petrol injection system for a four-stroke engine, under the leadership of Michael May. The idea had proven a success in a 1939 Messerschmitt Me 209 powered by a Mercedes DB 601 aircraft engine and in the legendary Mercedes 300SLR.

Taking the M186 engine, a three-litre straight-six, as a starting point, May and his engineering team replaced the Solex carburettors with a Bosch

mechanical injection pump feeding petrol straight to nozzles within the six cylinders. The resulting powerplant, codenamed the M198, produced considerably more power than the source material, with 212bhp in standard format or 236bhp with the 'sport' camshaft fitted. This engine powered the iconic 300SL Gullwing and the 300SL Roadster, while it was detuned to M199 guise for the less-well-known W188 Mercedes 300SC of the same mid-1950s era.

△ Direct petrol injection featured in the CLS350 CGI's V6 engine of 2006.

▷ Bosch D-Jetronic control unit first used in the W114 250CE of 1968.

▷△ 1936 260D had the first diesel unit designed for passenger car use.

▷ Fuel-injected 300SLR with Rudolf Uhlenhaut at the wheel in 1955.

▷▷ 114-series 280 engines offered with a carb or fuel injection.

As powerful as this engine was, the direct fuel injection caused significant reliability issues, mostly relating to the 'bore washing' effect of the injected fuel, removing the oil film from the cylinder bores and diluting the oil. Along with that, it was incredibly expensive to manufacture, bearing in mind the tight machining tolerances that would have been required. Indirect injection into the inlet manifold of petrol engines became the norm soon after, though Mercedes-Benz stuck with Bosch to provide its multi-plunger mechanical fuel injection pumps.

The dawn of electronics

As with many other car makers, Merc began switching over to electronic fuel injection once Bosch launched its D-Jetronic system at the end of the 1960s. The control unit for the injection system was rudimentary by today's microprocessor standards, relying on 'analogue' circuitry and expensive and unreliable sensors for its input signals.

Its logic was based on the mathematical speed-density air mass flow model, which calculates the air mass flow rate into an engine using various inputs including the inlet manifold pressure. The intake air temperature is measured because air density increases as its temperature decreases and the engine speed is critical to the calculation, too. Bosch continued to improve electronic fuel injection for the next few decades, helping Mercedes reduce emissions and fuel consumption while enhancing output.

Mercedes returned to direct injection in 1994, when it began investigating 'spray-guided' combustion. The technology needed to produce the high-pressure injectors was not available



△ Early mechanical fuel injection seen in the 300SL's M198 engine.

until that time. As the name suggests, the combustion in the cylinder is controlled by the structure of the fuel spray as it is injected. M-B christened this technology Stratified-Charged Gasoline Injection (CGI), and it debuted in the C200 CGI's 1.8-litre engine with mixed success.

To improve the system further, Mercedes needed a completely new type of injector, and piezo-electric technology was employed. This is based on special ceramics and metal alloys that change their shape rapidly when subjected to an electrical impulse – allowing for incredibly accurate fuel flow metering and consistent spray formation within the cylinder.



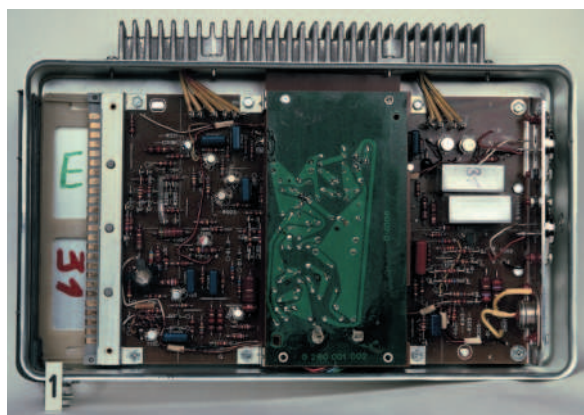
Mercedes began switching over to electronic fuel injection once Bosch launched its D-Jetronic system at the end of the 1960s



End of an era?

Stable combustion is achieved even in 'stratified' charge, where there are layers of different air-fuel mixes with a much higher proportion of air than usual. This is called lean-burn and the high-pressure piezo-electric injectors have allowed this combustion to be used across a much wider window of operating conditions than before, significantly reducing emissions and fuel consumption. It made its debut on the 2006 CLS350 CGI's (M272) V6 engine, the world's first with piezo-electric direct injection and spray-guided combustion, allowing for a claimed 10 per cent reduction in emissions and fuel consumption, alongside increased performance.

Since then, the piezo-electric direct injection system has become the benchmark fuel preparation technology, with a gentle evolution to enhance and improve its operation resulting in significant gains in terms of smoothness and efficiency. Given the proliferation of electrification, you wouldn't gamble on it having as long a life as carburetion has had, but it is no less innovative.



The inbetweeners

Now is a great time to buy a used Mercedes-Benz SLK or SLC Roadster, as our UK market expert reveals

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES SCC LEEDS, NORTHOVER CARS AND NORTON CAR SALES



Obsidian Black SLC300 with 54,000 miles stickered at £21,990.



The old songs are often the best, and so it is with Mercedes convertibles. But whilst classic SLs have had a massive following for decades, the less illustrious SLK has yet to hit anything like the same heights. And Mercedes' baffling decision to remove itself from the affordable roadster scene has taken the SLK (and its final SLC incarnation) off the radar for many buyers.

The earliest R170 model is already a modern classic and building a following, whilst the R171 is about to follow suit. But the 2011-on R172 – arguably the best of the bunch – is already disappearing into oblivion. Caught between two stools, it's neither contemporary nor classic. However, that makes it an ideal target for canny buyers, seeking the best value in premium roadsters.

Quite why Mercedes decided to dilute its brilliantly developed SLK brand by changing it to the unknown SLC moniker is anybody's guess. The SLC continued on until 2020, by which time Mercedes had sold close to half a million examples. That means there are plenty of good examples around for buyers to choose from, particularly R172 models.

It's some of the newest that arguably offer the greatest metal for money, with the late-plate SLC300 AMG Line well worth a closer look. Prices start at around £24,000, with £28,000 putting you behind the wheel of a mint, low-mileage, high-spec example, such as this stunning 2018, Diamond White AMG Night Edition for sale at SCC in Leeds (www.sccleeds.co.uk).



△ Diamond White SLC300 with 9,750 miles offered at £28,000.



△ Just £9,215 would bag this 107K-mile SLK250 CDI AMG Sport.

It had covered just 9,750 miles and with 242bhp/273lb ft of torque, plus a 5.8-second 0-62mph time it offers all the performance you ever need in an eye-catching, luxury package. Complete with Merc's legendary folding metal

roof, it boasted black leather upholstery, all-round parking sensors, LED running lights, a nine-speed automatic transmission, the full AMG Line styling and sports suspension pack, 18-inch AMG alloys and the AMG Night pack.

172-series Roadster

However, if you're prepared to look at a slightly older, higher mileage example then you can get even more for your money. This 54,000-mile Obsidian Black metallic 2017 SLC300 AMG Line was stickered at just £21,990 at Northover Cars (www.northovercars.co.uk) in Whitstable. It's a one-owner car with a full Mercedes service history and a plush spec that included a panoramic glass sunroof, Porcelain leather, Garmin sat nav, driver and passenger heated seats, Aircarf, 18-inch AMG alloys and AMG body styling, Bluetooth, DAB radio, climate control, cruise control and a year's MOT.

The finest R172 value, however, is reserved for older SLK models, especially those in diesel guise. You could pick up a 152mph, 2013 SLK250 CDI BlueEfficiency AMG Sport with 7G-Tronic Plus automatic gearbox for less than 10 grand. Capable of bettering 50mpg on longer journeys, this Diamond Silver car at Norton Car Sales in Manchester (www.nortoncarsalesltd.co.uk) had covered 107,000 miles but came with an excellent specification. The asking price was a mere £9,215.

► **Fancy something more practical and economical? Then check out our top three £10,000 Mercedes-Benz diesels on page 76!**

Forecourt find

E220
Cabriolet
(A124)

The 124-series Cabriolets are always in demand, as long as they are in great condition. New examples don't appear for sale that often, so we were delighted to discover this delightfully presented, 1996, 95,000-mile Tourmaline Green metallic car at Cheshire Classic Benz.

Advertised for £13,950, this fine looking Mercedes came with a black power-operated soft top with a heated glass rear screen, mushroom leather, a four-speed automatic gearbox, heated electric front seats, a leather steering wheel, driver and passenger airbags, mint-condition (and original) eight-hole alloy wheels, a Clarion radio/CD player, all the original tools and manuals and a full service history. You probably won't find a better example with this mileage.

Dealer information: Cheshire Classic Benz

Tel: 07980 241177 or 01625 260913

Web: www.ccbenz.co.uk



△ Supplied new to a British Army Garrison member in Germany.

▷ This UK spec car includes black soft top and alloy wheels.

▽ Reliable four-speed auto a plus point; wheel with airbag.



Top tips

Wheel
refurbishment

Transform the look of your Mercedes and potentially add to its value with a quick wheel refurbishment

- ⊕ A proper refurbishment of your existing alloys can be quicker and cheaper than replacing them. Almost all alloys can be refurbished.
- ⊕ An experienced refurbisher should be able to remove the wheels and tyres, refurbish your alloys, refit the tyres and re-balance the wheels in one day.
- ⊕ Mercedes refurbishing typically costs from around £75 per wheel for simple 17-inch alloys, right up to £2,000 per wheel for complicated 21-inch multi-piece alloys requiring diamond cutting.
- ⊕ Refurbishers don't only do cosmetic repairs to kerbed, scratched or faded alloys, they can also fix quite a lot of other alloy wheel problems - using sanding, turning down and welding then can often repair pothole damage for example.
- ⊕ Shop around for quotes beforehand - there are plenty of good refurbishing companies across the whole of the UK.
- ⊕ If your Mercedes-Benz has expensive multi-piece alloys or diamond cut rims, an expert refurbishing company should have the right equipment to deal with them - but it's wise to check beforehand.
- ⊕ Consider a mobile smart wheel repainer if you just want to sell your car quickly at the best possible price. They're used by car dealers to quickly prep cars prior to sale.



Auction spotlight

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

● S320 CDI

3.2-litre, diesel, auto, 2002/02 plate, 87,000 miles, **£1,750**

● CLK320 CDI Coupe Avantgarde

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2006/06 plate, 71,000 miles, **£3,400**

● E320 CDI Estate Avantgarde

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/07 plate, 103,000 miles, **£4,300**

● SLK200 Kompressor

1.8-litre, petrol, auto, 2006/06 plate, 63,000 miles, **£4,750**

● CLS320 CDI

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 51,000 miles, 2007/07 plate, **£5,550**

● ML280 CDI Sport

3.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2007/07 plate, 74,000 miles, **£6,500**

● GL420 CDI

4.0-litre, diesel, auto, 2008/08 plate, 114,000 miles, **£8,400**

● SL350

3.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2007/07 plate, 49,000 miles, **£9,500**

● A200d AMG Line

2.1-litre, diesel, manual, 2016/66 plate, 38,000 miles, **£13,550**

● CL500 CGI BlueEfficiency Coupe

4.7-litre, petrol, auto, 2014/14 plate, 48,000 miles, **£19,300**

● GLA200 AMG Line Premium

1.6-litre, petrol, manual, 2019/19 plate, 16,000 miles, **£24,200**

● AMG A35 4Matic Executive

2.0-litre, petrol auto, 2019/19 plate, 24,000 miles, **£28,200**

● AMG C43 4Matic Coupe Premium

Plus 3.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2018/18 plate, 17,000 miles, **£41,300**

● AMG C63 S Cabriolet Premium

4.0-litre, petrol, auto, 2017/17 plate, 25,000 miles, **£47,500**

● AMG GLE63 S 4Matic Premium

5.5-litre, petrol, auto, 2016/66 plate, 22,000 miles, **£48,500**

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



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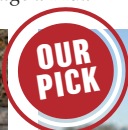
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TOP THREE

£10,000 diesels

With a few notable exceptions (mainly SUVs and larger estate cars), Mercedes-Benz buyers are gradually falling out of love with diesel fuelled cars. But this situation does mean that those prospective purchasers of a less squeamish disposition can secure seriously good deals on used oil burners. For those who cover a larger than average annual mileage, the

advantages over a petrol-powered equivalent can be substantial. In this issue of *Mercedes Enthusiast*, we've selected three of the finest current choices for those readers on a 10 grand budget. That amount of money will secure a previous-generation A-Class, a seriously capacious wagon and even a super stylish four-door coupe!



A200 CDI (W176)

Quicker than an A180 CDI and just as frugal in the real world, the 176-series A200 CDI makes a great used buy. Try to find one with full M-B service history, excellent bodywork and a few tasty options, such as leather upholstery, Speedtronic cruise control and AMG alloys. £10,000 will put you behind the wheel of a one-owner, 2015 example with around 65,000 miles. Fuel economy is excellent - the official combined figure is 64.2mpg and the A200 CDI will set you back just £30 a year in road tax.

E250 CDI BlueEfficiency Estate (S212)

If you want a proper load lugger, then the 212-series E250 CDI BlueEfficiency Estate Sport is a fine choice. There are quite a few 2011 and 2012 examples around at the moment, with our 10 grand budget bagging an 85,000-miler with a complete service history and a high spec. Capable of hitting 62mph in 7.8 seconds and topping out at 144mph, the E250 CDI packs a torquey motor that will deliver 50mpg economy when treated with respect.

CLS350 BlueEfficiency Coupe (C218)

Little carries more on-road panache than a 218-series CLS, especially in 350 BlueEfficiency AMG Sport guise. Ten big ones buy a 2012, 261bhp car with a lower than average 100,000 miles and a comprehensive spec that includes heated/electric front seats, an electric glass sunroof, Airmatic semi-active air suspension, full leather, Comand, 19-inch AMG alloys, Parktronic with Active Park Assist and a whopping 457lb ft of torque. Expect to better 40mpg on longer runs.

Latest products and accessories

Pilot's Watch Chronograph Edition AMG

WC Schaffhausen and Mercedes-AMG have launched a performance engineering inspired chronograph - the Pilot's Watch Chronograph Edition AMG. The latest product to celebrate the partnership that has linked the Swiss luxury watchmaker and the German car manufacturer since 2004, it's powered by the IWC-manufactured 69385 calibre movement and features a carbon fibre dial, with a case made of extremely light and scratch-resistant titanium - inspired by AMG's signature Selenite Grey Magno paint finish. Available online at IWC.com, through IWC boutiques and authorised retail partners, the watch is water resistant to 6bar.



Pioneer MVH-130DAB head unit

Pioneer's new highly affordable new MVH-130DAB single-DIN 'mechafree' head unit is designed for modern digital audio formats and offers USB connectivity, intuitive control and superb sound quality within a short chassis design. With built-in DAB and a digital radio tuner, and a USB input for charging and connectivity, it supports MP3, WMA, WAV, AAC and lossless FLAC audio files. Visit www.pioneer-car.eu for more information and stockists. At the time of writing, the unit was priced at £79.99.



Autoglym Instant Ceramic Coating

Autoglym's new Instant Ceramic Coating offers a deep shine, excellent detergent resistance and durability and is simple to apply. The ceramic hybrid formula quickly bonds to the paintwork with a simple spray and microfibre buff, offering up to three months of durable hydrophobic protection. And it can be applied in all weather conditions - even to a wet car as a final level of gloss protection during a deep clean. Because of its longevity, you need only apply it every three months. Find out more at autoglym.com.

Signature Tune **E55 AMG**

So you've bought a 211-series E55 AMG, but how do you make it even better to drive?



Built between 2003 and 2006, 211-series E55 AMGs start at around £13,000, with all cars packing two-tone leather trim, a Harman Kardon sound system, electric seats with heating/memory, AMG body styling, Airmatic sports suspension, AMG brakes and AMG alloys.

The W211 E55's V8 pumps out 476bhp, plus an epic 516lbs ft of torque from just 2650 revs. And that enables the E55 to match modern AMG machinery, despite its substantial 1,835kg mass. An AMG-tweaked Speedshift five-speed automatic transmission helps deliver as much output as possible to the road, with the official 4.4-second 0-62mph time decidedly conservative. And that's before you look at tuning the engine. Even factory cars with the limiter removed can hit 180mph, but what else could you do to make your E55 even better?

Our top tuning tips

The main things to watch out for on these E55s are rust and accident damage, with a full service history an essential requirement. Buyers should also look out for broken infotainment screens (expensive to fix), crankshaft position sensor failures (suggested by poor hot starting), oil leaks, failing

intercooler pumps and corroded gearbox cooler pipes. Any Airmatic suspension problems could prove pricey to resolve, too.

Engine

Even a simple ECU remap can add 25bhp and around 40lb ft of torque. This costs £336 plus VAT at CKS Performance, whilst Angel Tuning, JR Tuning and Ecotech Performance typically charge between £300 and £550. The rev limiter can also be raised slightly, and the top speed limiter removed. Add a full exhaust system, a supercharger pulley kit, an air filter, an uprated charge cooler pump (£162) and NGK Iridium plugs, however, and a remap could see your E55 AMG producing 600bhp.

Transmission

CKS Performance offers a TCU upgrade for £399, which will provide faster gear shifts, reduced slippage and enhance the torque limits permitted by Mercedes' original programming. Owners report that this can make a significant difference to overall performance, especially when carried out in conjunction with an engine remap. MSL Performance and JR Tuning also offer remaps.

Suspension

Over time, the OE bushes will inevitably need replacing, with replacement poly bushes available from Powerflex. Some owners upgrade the anti-roll bars too, although the OE AMG ones are pretty good. If you're thinking of lowering your E55 then coil-overs are your best bet - if you want to retain the W211's comfortable ride. Popular choices are Bilstein's B14 kit (typically £699) or BC Racing's BR Series at £899.

Brakes

Uprated brake pads available from a number of suppliers, including Brembo, Pagid and EBC, whilst braided brake hoses from Goodridge, Tarox or EBC will enhance brake performance feel. Brembo and Kleemann offer a complete big brake upgrade, however the OE calipers are easily good enough for road use. Colour-coded calipers looks cool too, but make sure you use proper paint.

Wheels and bodywork

19-inch AMG alloys are a popular choice with E55 owners keen to retain an OE look, but you can fit any suitable 19-inch alloys as long as they're not heavier than the OE wheels and don't require spacers. Some owners have fitted subtle roof and bootlid spoilers (CKS sells these for between £122 and £154), whilst all manner of chrome exterior trim can also be fitted.

Interior

Chrome and carbon fibre are popular choices for interior trim upgrades, whilst Android Comand upgrades are available too, as well as brighter comfort lighting for the interior footwells and doors. Bespoke colour-coded mats can really lift the dark interior, and Apple CarPlay head units are also popular.

Useful contacts

www.ckspperformance.com
www.mslperformance.co.uk
www.gadtuning.co.uk
www.amdtuning.com
www.jrtuning.co.uk
www.angeltuning.co.uk
www.celtictuning.co.uk
www.forgemotorsport.co.uk
www.ebcbreaks.com
www.goodridge.co.uk
www.eibachshop.co.uk
www.bilstein.com



Mansory upgrades for S-Class

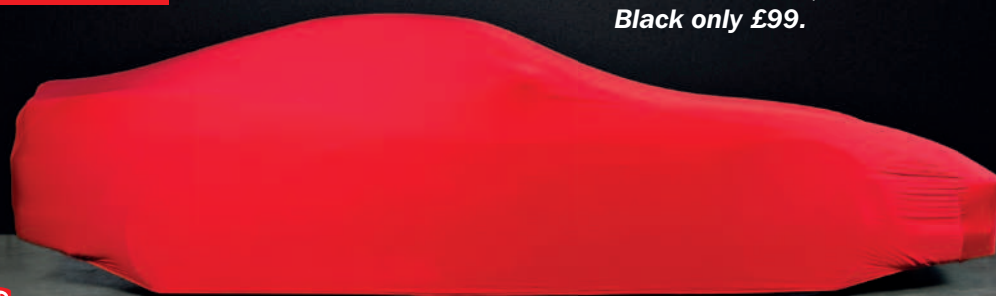
Mansory has released a comprehensive customisation programme for the 223-series S-Class. With numerous exterior carbon parts and exhaust choices, the front apron can be ordered with or without daytime running lights. Mansory's 22-inch wheel options certainly look striking, and all manner of personalised interior cabin upgrade options are available. A PowerBox ECU programme can take your S400d to 395bhp/617lb ft and the S500 to 526bhp/463lb ft. Full details can be found at www.mansory.com.



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NEXT ISSUE



EXTREME RACER

Time capsule Evolution II in period DTM configuration



PLUS

MASTERCLASS

Worth another look - Merc's sensational 215-series CL



C63 by Arkham Performance ♦ Stunning condition C55 AMG
AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Mercedes
ENTHUSIAST

December/January 2022 issue
ON SALE November 19th



Bargain roadster

When new, the first generation SLK mesmerised with its seductive looks, vario-roof arrangement and sporty handling, and now you can pick one up for just a few thousand pounds

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES TERRY OBORNE & DAIMLER AG

With its super stylish, compact body, amazing folding metal roof system and a price that was affordable by Mercedes-Benz roadster standards, the original R170 SLK was no less than a sensation when launched in late 1996. The 'junior' SL instantly hit the spot, dealers needing to do little more than sit back as orders poured in and delivery queues lengthened; in the early months of production, cars in the UK changed hands for over the list price of £29,000, even against a quite generous supply from Stuttgart, some 2,400

delivered in the UK in its first full year on sale (twice the SL volume), sufficient for it to out-sell the Porsche Boxster and Toyota MR2 combined.

For its vario-roof alone, the SLK ('K' for 'kurz', or 'short') was an engineering marvel. The roof was the first of its kind in the modern era and collapsed into the boot in 25 seconds, turning a cosy coupe into a full, no compromise open roadster, and with pop-up rollover protectors. A joint venture company, Stuttgart-based CTS GmbH (Car Top Systems) had even been established to make the roof. And inside, the SLK was a

delight: well-built and an appealing combination of a modern design but with some retro detailing such as sunken instrument dials.

Yet it arguably did have one weakness – the engine. Mercedes offered only four-cylinder units, the principal model the SLK230 Kompressor using the then new M111 supercharged 2.3-litre four-cylinder unit producing 190bhp, and 207lb ft torque. This, in five-speed automatic form was the sole model for the UK, and the powerplant was the R170's least likeable aspect; powerful enough but unrefined and gruff sounding.

Mercedes management claimed

a six-cylinder model was not necessary as customers would be happy with the four-cylinder engine. However, that mindset changed when at the facelift the normally aspirated 3.2-litre V6 SLK320 was added to the range.

Production of the R170 ceased 17 years ago, to make way for the more aggressively styled R171, and while the series is showing a glimmer of collectability, this is still a cheap Mercedes roadster. There are still quite a few SLK320s around for sale, prices ranging from £2,000 to £10,000, so how does it differ as an ownership prospect to the SLK230 K?

Spotted
for salePRIVATE SELLER
SLK3202003/03, automatic, silver, black
leather, 17-inch alloys, 78,000
miles, £3,995, Colchester,
Essex

Design & engineering

The SLK was based on a C-Class platform, its styling overseen by legendary Mercedes designer Bruno Sacco in his final years at Mercedes-Benz, and was notable for its short overhang and clipped tail. It was not intended to be a 'proper' sports car, more a tourer and hence with quite soft chassis settings including Mercedes' traditional recirculating ball steering that prioritised shock absorption over feedback.

For the four years from launch to the February 2000 facelift, the SLK ran unchanged, save a few specification tweaks. Aesthetically, the revamp saw Mercedes' usual type of mid-term updates, including restyled front and rear bumpers, new sill trims, painted radiator grille and stainless steel exhaust tips, while the side indicators were moved from the wings to the door mirrors.

Inside, the original carbon look gave way to aluminium style trim, the steering wheel was redesigned

and wood trim became an option for the first time on the SLK.

However, the standout aspect of the mid-term revamp was the arrival of the SL320 using the M112 three-valves-per-cylinder V6 already in other models, and giving 215bhp at 5,700rpm and 227lb ft torque at between 3,000 and 4,000rpm.

A six-speed manual gearbox was offered for the first time on UK-bound SLKs, including on the V6 car. Wheels were 16-inch alloy with 205/55 front and 225/50 rear tyres; 17s were optional and many 320s have them.

From then until the end of production there were no engineering or aesthetic changes, but – perhaps with customer demand not quite as hot as it had been at first – there were two limited editions of the SLK320 (and also the 230) released in that period. The first came in June 2002, the SLK320 Limited Edition which was equipped with 7.5Jx17-inch Evolution alloy

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz SLK320 (R170)

ENGINE M112 3,199cc V6

POWER 215bhp@5,700rpm

TORQUE 227lb ft@3,000-4,800rpm

TRANSMISSION 6-speed manual/
5-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,405kg

0-62MPH 6.9sec

TOP SPEED 152/150mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 25.5/27.1mpg

YEARS PRODUCED 2000-2004

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

wheels, black nappa leather, brushed aluminium interior trim and a silver instrument panel with white dials.

The second came as the R170 was in its run-out stage, in January 2004. The SLK320 Special Edition featured a chrome grille and bootlid handle plus bright polished exterior trim strips, and again nappa leather trim, including on the rollover bars; these cars are identified by the 'SLK Special Edition' badges on the wings.

Driving the SLK320

The SLK320 brought a new dimension to the R170 range. It's not much quicker than the SLK230, but the normally aspirated V6 is so much sweeter and smoother than the four-cylinder, and is well suited to the manual six-speed gearbox, its shift a big improvement over previous manual Benz 'boxes. Handling is comfort, not sports oriented, with shock-free but largely uncommunicative steering, and soft springing that aids ride comfort but allows the Mercedes to roll somewhat through corners.

The cabin is a tight fit for occupants and with a high door line you can feel closed in. But the driving position is perfect and the seats supportive, and oddment space is good, including a decent glovebox despite the presence of a passenger airbag. The fascia was an interesting design given the blandness of many late 1990s Merc interiors, and the switchgear feels solid, the SLK cabin thus retaining the quality feel that some Mercedes models were about to lose. Most SLK320s have leather, which adds to the ambience.

What you'll pay

The SLK320 appears to command a small price premium over the 230, but you will still see cars for £2,000 or less. But the usual rules regarding false economy apply and we recommend regarding £4,000 as the sensible entry point for a car free, or largely free, of problems. The most common price for 320s is between £4,000 and £5,000, this bracket offering cars from both private sellers and used car dealers.

An SLK in exceptional condition and with low mileage is going to cost up to £10,000. We saw one such example, a 2003 car with 32,000 miles in silver over red leather offered by Kingdom Specialist Cars in Hampshire, asking price £9,500.

It's not a car that tended to rack up high mileage, often a second one in the household, so you'll see plenty with moderate mileage, between 50,000 and 70,000. When looking for an SLK320, it's worth noting that all but the very earliest examples are EU4 rated emissions, thus avoiding the extra charge for London's Congestion Zone and others to come. ▶

R170 SLK320 Inside and out



Specialist overview

Steve Dickens, Autoclass Garage, Milton Keynes

"Good news - the M112 V6 has proved to be bulletproof. It's very reliable, much more so than the four-cylinder Kompressor engines and we don't do very much to them. The M272 V6 that was installed in the 2004-on R171 equivalent, the SLK350, is far more powerful but not nearly as reliable."

"The main requirement on the SLK320 is to keep on top of oil changes, so look for a full service history. Most cars are automatics, the manual being very rare - I've only ever worked on a couple of them."

Powertrain

- If you see oil on the ground underneath the car, it will almost certainly be from the engine rocker covers or the oil filter housing. In both cases the cure is a simple gasket/seal change.

- The water pump can eventually give trouble. You'll hear it becoming noisy and it will leak out some fluid, and eventually the engine coolant level will fall and cause overheating.

- A failed engine crank position sensor will make the engine difficult or impossible to start when hot. This is a relatively cheap fix and can almost be considered preventative maintenance; it's a very common fault on Mercs with this V6.

- The automatic gearbox sensor plate can fail, trapping the transmission in 'limp home' mode. However, the five-speed's plate is less complex than that in the later, seven-speed 'box and at around £500 replaced is a much cheaper fix too.



V6 trumps the four-cylinder for smoothness and sounds fantastic: SLK320 offered with a two-mode auto or manual.

Suspension, steering and braking system

- There are no chassis electronics, so little to go wrong. However, mileage and sheer age can take their toll on the suspension, so ideally get the car on a ramp for checks on ball joints, bushes and related components. Particular attention should be paid to the subframe bushes, because if these require changing, it's at least a day's work for a garage to replace all four.

- A 'wandering' or vibration in the steering usually means the steering damper is worn out. Dampers normally require replacing at around 100,000 miles or 10 years and are relatively cheap and return some steering feel.

- Brakes should feel powerful and free of vibration through the pedal. Make the usual checks for the remaining life of the brake discs; the bigger the lip on the outer edge of the disc, the less time it has left.



Mercedes made 33,416 examples of the SLK320 between 2000 and 2004.

Spotted
for saleUSED CAR DEALER
SLK3202002/02, automatic, silver, black
leather, three months warranty,
40,000 miles, £5,995,
Peterborough

During development, the R170 was tested in Death Valley and around the Pico Veleta in Spain; roof opens and closes in 25 seconds.

A failed engine crank position sensor will make the engine difficult or impossible to start when hot

Bodywork and wheels

● R170s can be quite rusty, especially around the wheelarches. Corrosion also attacks the underbody, but you will have to raise the car on a ramp to spot this. By now, some SLK320s will have body filler concealing rust.

● Even though the roof is complex, with many switches and sensors, it has proved remarkably reliable. Nonetheless, it's crucial to check it

operates correctly: it should lower and raise smoothly and quietly in 25 seconds, and if it lets water in this could require the replacement of seals, which are not cheap.

● Some models wear alloy wheels with a high gloss, 'diamond cut' finish. The lacquer peels off all too easily, so budget for refurbishment back to the same finish if this is the case.



Interior and electrics

● The pump which supplies vacuum power to operate the door locking can be problematic. This is due to its location deep in the spare wheel recess, water in this area causing the pump to fail, and the electrics to fail. But it's easy enough to check if the pump is in good order – if the door locking works, it is.

● If a rear light bulb has failed, a new bulb holder or even a complete new lamp may be needed.

● Although the SLK's interior was made to a superior standard than some other Mercs of the same years, the interior can now look worn. The trim plastics have a coating which can peel off, and broken indicator stalks are common.

New seat suspension was developed for the R170; ASR and ABS fitted as standard; ivory coloured dials a nod to SSK and SSKL.

R170 SLK320 Inside and out

Verdict

The R170 SLK was the most practical 'small' roadster of its day, and even now remains a car that is fun and useful in equal measure provided you need only two seats. It also has its own charm among the three model generations, many liking it for it being the most pure and simple in appearance.

Is the SLK320 better than the 230 Kompressor? Its on-paper performance is little different, and it lacks the supercharged four's mid-range punch. But it brings the six-cylinder refinement many seek in a Mercedes. Auto or manual? The majority are the former, so if you want to swap gears yourself you won't have such a wide choice.

However, the most important consideration is the car's overall condition, given that the early ones are now over two decades old. As we've said, rust is now a major problem and isn't always easy to spot. So, we would recommend paying more for a better car, especially as when these Mercedes eventually become viewed as classics, the best examples will be in most demand.



Thank you, MX-5!

Mercedes' inspiration for the original SLK came from an unlikely source – the Mazda MX-5. The affordable Japanese two-seater, launched in 1989 as a Lotus Elan for the modern world, had been a major hit, finding 70,000 homes per year by 1991, proving that the market for such a model had not died with 60s sports cars. Mercedes planners had in fact been considering a small and civilised roadster since the late 1980s – but the popularity of the Mazda hastened Stuttgart's re-entry to the niche it had all but created with the 1955 190SL, but then gradually let go of as subsequent SLs grew in size.

There were understandable questions over whether such a roadster would steal sales from the R129 SL, and could be built cheaply enough to still yield a profit given that it would have to be priced much lower than the SL. But the car maker took a chance and scored a major success, the SLK a popular model for the next 25 years. ■



Spotted
for sale

CLASSIC MERCEDES SPECIALIST
SLK320

2000/W, manual, designo purple,
black/purple leather, AMG alloys
50,100 miles, £9,950,
Hampshire

Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE
SLK320	£180	£800

Quotes from Autoclass Garage

Non routine servicing costs

- ★ Replace leaking gaskets on engine rocker covers **£185**
- ★ Replace engine water pump **£425**
- ★ Renew failed automatic gearbox sensor plate **£495**
- ★ Fit new engine crankshaft position sensor **£225**
- ★ Fit new front brake discs and brake pads **£280**
- ★ Install replacement folding roof seals **£1,200**
- ★ 4x premium tyres, 225/45R17 (F), 245/40R17 (R) **£400**

SLK320 timeline

● January 2000

The R170 received its mid-term facelift, at which point the SLK320 was added to the range and offered with a five-speed automatic or six-speed manual gearbox

● June 2002

SLK320 Limited Edition with 7.5Jx17-inch wheels and special trim was introduced

● January 2004

The run-out SLK320 Special Edition arrived at dealers, with nappa leather upholstery and special trim

● June 2004

R170 production ceased, replaced by the R171 SLK series

What you'll pay

£1,000-£2,000 Early SLK320 cars, with rust and mechanical issues, best avoided

£2,000-£3,000 Probably a good runner but in need of quite a lot of tender loving care!

£3,000-£4,000 Sound example, but will most likely have covered near or over 100,000 miles

£4,000-£5,000 This is the main price bracket for an SLK320 with under 100,000 miles

£5,000-£6,000 Late examples, above average condition, with under 70,000 miles

£6,000-£10,000 For this money, it must be pristine and with low mileage and a comprehensive history

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The 190E is set for a thorough clean after successful mechanical restoration work before its debut at classic concours events

WORDS & IMAGES WILLIAM TERRINGTON

▷ The 190 is settling nicely onto its brand new suspension parts.



FACTSHEET

CARS 1989 190E/2011 E250 Coupe

OWNER William Terrington

LOCATION Surrey, UK

PURCHASED March 2014/March 2017

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Now handling with greater security, the two-litre 190E is treated to rust repair work on its rear assembly

As Beaulieu and the Hampton Court Concours draw nearer (at the time of writing), it's time to get cracking with the 190E's preparation, a level of which will surpass all previous shows put together. It's not a formal concours, the interest being in the ownership, however this is no reason to take it easy.

After an extensive clay bar treatment, there will be two machine polishes, one with T-Cut, the other with Autoglym Resin Polish, followed by two coats of Autoglym UHD wax. The same polishing process will be repeated before the concours. Even the grille will receive a two-stage polish with the emblem removed, not to mention polishing the glass too. Plastics, wheel trims and the 'Sacco boards' must not be forgotten either. The underside and wheelarches will also receive attention, and the exhaust box will be smartened up in the process. I look forward to reporting on the events themselves next time!

The recent suspension works on my 190 at TM Motors were a great result. The car is transformed in the way it drives. It now feels like new, holding the road in such a way that inspires confidence, as a W201 should. Bumps in the road are ironed out far more effectively, and undulations are dealt with in a more composed fashion. On collecting the car, it was sitting rather high. However, the new springs and shock absorbers on all four corners have been bedding in nicely, though it's still a little higher than before.

Going the extra mile

Not surprisingly though, it ended up being a restoration of that area – the whole rear assembly was removed from the car. Firstly, extra underside protection was added, then the subframe

differential, driveshafts and hubs were cleaned up and coated in heavy duty Raptor paint, which is mainly intended for extreme pick-up trucks and other off-road vehicles. It's a much more durable alternative to the usual gloss black, given a replacement subframe is no longer available from Mercedes-Benz.

Not done yet, all new arms and wishbones were fitted too. The brake back plates and handbrake cables were disintegrating, so new ones were installed. Hopefully none of this should ever need work again. Worst case scenario is new springs and dampers many years down the line.

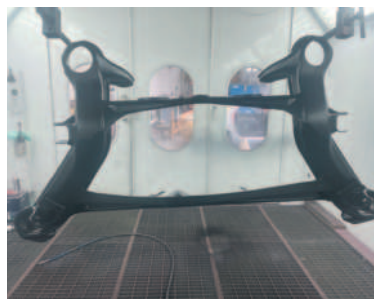
It's actually a pleasure to look underneath the car now! It's good though that the work was not put off any longer, as it took a whole day to clean up the rust on the subframe. And although parts prices are still reasonable in most cases, it was only going to become more expensive the longer these jobs were put off.

As for the E250 Coupe, attention will shift to this car after the 190's big events. There are a few niggles, such as old wiper blades and a couple of other items will need replacing at some point, though nothing serious. I'll be finding the time to give it a clay bar treatment and polish, along with a thorough engine bay clean before the winter.

“It took a whole day to clean up the rust on the subframe”

▽ Protective Raptor paint was applied to the rear assembly.

▽ An unexpected visit to the spraying booth for the 190's rear subframe.



Wheels of fortune

Sporting freshly restored wheels plus a new auxiliary air valve, the W108 saloon is now ready for an autumnal road trip

WORDS & IMAGES REED HITCHCOCK

FACTSHEET

CARS 1972 280SEL 4.5/2011 E350 4Matic Estate/ 2002 ML320

OWNER Reed Hitchcock

LOCATION Virginia, USA

PURCHASED Sept 2020/June 2018/April 2020

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Attention turns to the 280SEL 4.5 and its wheels, whilst the other cars in Reed's garage keep ticking along nicely



When I purchased the W108, it came wearing pitted chrome 14-inch 'Bundt' alloy wheels

I always look forward to the autumn. I love the changing leaves, crisp morning air, and to me it's the best season for motoring around in a classic car – and I'm getting ready. Having sold the E55, the W212 E350 4Matic Estate not commanding its regular monthly influx of cash, and the W163 ML320 still just plodding along, I've been spending some long overdue time with the W108 280SEL 4.5.

When I purchased the W108, it came wearing pitted chrome 14-inch 'Bundt' (or 'Mexican Hat' or 'Barock' – depending on where you're from) alloy wheels. I've always liked this style of alloy, but in factory silver, not in gaudy-on-a-good-day chrome, and generally on W123s, R107s, and early W126s. Chrome wheels were a big thing on Mercedes in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in sunny states, but to purists like me they rank up there with gold badges and chrome wheelarch trim. Fortunately, among the boxes of goodies that came with the car were its original painted hub caps. Less fortunately, the corresponding wheels did not convey.

Through various sources one can find new or used wheels in good condition that will work with the original hub caps, but the prices for

either are remarkably similar and eye-watering: about \$1,400 (£1,100) for a set of four at my last check. Looking around, I found that a set of good quality replica alloys can be had in 14- or 15-inch diameters for about \$800 (£580) and I very nearly went that route, but I just think there is something so right about the classic hub caps on these cars, so I hesitated.

Footwear matters

I finally found a set of what looked like decent used wheels on eBay for \$500 (£360) that would work with my hub caps. Upon arrival, it became clear that their condition had been greatly exaggerated, so I angrily put them in my garden shed and procrastinated some more. After a few months of hemming and hawing, I took the eBay wheels to a local wheel refinisher. Long story short: for \$100 per wheel the company guaranteed that it could powder coat them in the original black and they'd be indistinguishable from new. Add another \$25 each and they'd mount my tyres and put them on the car. All in, for \$1,000 (£725) my car looks

△ Rims sourced on eBay treated and given refreshed hub caps.

▷ Chromed Mexican Hat alloy wheels were not to Reed's taste.

▽ Rebuilt auxiliary air valve has calmed the eight-cylinder's idle.



like the designers intended. If nothing else, it looks a far sight better than it did.

I also checked-off another lingering issue: the auxiliary air valve. This little bugger, mounted near the distributor,

can wreak havoc with idle and fuel mixture if it's not right – and mine wasn't. New old stock units can be had for exorbitant amounts of cash, but there are other options. I found a good rebuilt valve – again on eBay – for \$270 (almost £200) and it took all of 20 minutes to install. The new valve has not only solved my hunting idle, but also appears to have sorted my hot start issue. Time will tell. Meanwhile, I'm planning my first major road trip in the W108 – a 600-mile round trip. Wish me luck!



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



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



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

A140 2001, owned from March 2011, second owner, air con, CD player, two new tyres, MOT until May, low mileage, 112,906 miles, very clean, drives smoothly, welcome to inspect, priced to sell £950. Tel: 07702 128052. Manchester **[CM36]**



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



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



E320 Coupe Auto, silver, grey leather, slide and tilt electric sunroof, electric mirrors and windows, 10 months MOT, four new tyres, two owners since new, reasonable condition for year, 180,000 miles, £3,200. Tel: 07903 030474. Iverheath **[CM36W4]**



C270 CDI Elegance SE Saloon, automatic/Tiptronic, showroom condition, brilliant silver, unmarked Pacific Blue interior, one driver from new, 52 Reg, 34,892 miles, no short runs of less than 30 miles, garaged from new, fitted with a heated/dehumidifier, usual MB refinements: electric seats, cruise, heated mirrors etc., serviced and MOT'd exclusively by Mercedes main dealer from new, full records, original handbook/documents, full set of keys, well cared for, showroom condition, smells like new, £7,500. Email: Bazhylda1.11@outlook.com. Buckinghamshire **[CM36W6]**



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



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

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



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



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



560SEL Diamond Blue metallic, navy velour, carefully stored all its life, in the last five years has had over £15,000 spent on it bodywork etc., pristine condition, £17,995. Tel: 07908 942110. Stockport [EFW7]



300SL-24 1993, 61,000 miles, March 2022 MOT, a treat to drive, effortlessly capable whilst remaining enormously comfortable, Imola Red, pebble leather, equipped with factory hardtop, power hood (black), £15,990. Tel: 07812 013963. North Yorkshire [EFW4]



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



E320 Cabriolet 1993, FSH, blue, cream upholstery, good condition, 192,000 miles, in the past two years it has had new fuel pumps, rear shocks, hood, MOT until 30 June 2022, £8,995. Tel: 07734 106885. West Midlands [EFW10]



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



300CE 1992, 24V, silver, black leather, 143,000 miles, five-speed automatic, Sportline suspension, air con, electric sunroof, windows and seats, full history, owned since 1999, £4,500. Tel: 07776 842312. Worcestershire [EFW21]



S500 Facelift, very low miles 49,000, great history, great spec, factory AMG kit and wheels, black, black leather, wood trim/steering, memory pack, xenon lights, Parktronic, soft close, six-CD, new tyres, sunroof, UV reflecting double glazed, beautiful car in great condition, MB club member, £POA. Tel: 07870 963662. Leicester [EFW22]



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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



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



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



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

190D 2.5 Manual, dark red, 156,00 miles, FSH, MOT until October 2021, ERS, factory alloys, good condition, call for photos, £POA. Tel: 01516 390149. Wirral [CD]



SL500 1998/S reg, facelift, finished in a stunning Tourmaline Green Metallic with contrasting Helios, soft nappa leather interior, removable matching panoramic hardtop, fitted with many factory options, ice cold air con, £13,995. Tel: 07860 211645. Winchester [DEW21]



450SLC 1978, badged 500SLC, LHD, totally original, rust free, silver bodywork, £15,000 spent in last two years alone, very reliable daily driver, e/sunroof, blue leather, automatic, cruise, e/windows, e/aerial, DAB and much more, large file of receipts, £18,000 ONO. Tel: 07760 166166. Bournemouth [DEW22]



C240 Estate Elegance 1999 reg, one owner since new, bespoke order from M-B factory in Bremen, Germany, 79,200 miles, V6 engine, auto, leather and many other extras, service and MOT history available, well looked after, good condition, a beautiful car to drive, £3,750 ONO. Tel: 07836 273700. London [CM35W1]



C240 Estate 11 months MOT, great car, call for more information, £POA. Tel: 07711 080336. Leeds [CM35W3]



W123 230 1982, saloon, 200,000 miles, petrol, one owner from new, excellent condition, am selling as the car has failed its MOT, small hole in chassis and bush/pin on subframe worn hence the sale, still good car, open to offers. Tel: 01380 812807. Devizes [CM35W5]



C124 E220 Coupe 1995, Azurite Blue, mushroom leather, 171,000, S/H, MOT until February 2022, drives well, regularly used but sparingly, good condition but not perfect, priced accordingly, recent work, paperwork, MOTs and history show that the car has been well looked after, £3,995. Email: cjknot65@icloud.com. Bournemouth [CM35W9]



E220 Coupe Auto, silver, grey leather, 102,000 miles, electric windows, sunroof, mirrors, steering column and aerial, cruise, new air con system, AMG monoblocks, recent Falken tyres, expensive stereo installation, full history, runs like a Swiss watch, £6,995. Tel: 07981 062374. Coulsdon [CM35W10]



SLK32 AMG 2002, MOT until April 2022, 105,000 miles, owned seven years, 12 stamps main dealer/specialist garages, just serviced with new front discs and pads front and rear, new front wings, Waxoyl underside, dry stored in winter months, rare, very quick, excellent condition, £8,000 ONO. Tel: 07914 614694. Northampton [CM35W11]

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C215 CL55 AMG 2002, low mileage, 74,000 miles, FSR, MOT until November 2021, auto, fully loaded, double glazed, heated/cooled seats, bi-xenon headlights, keyless entry/ignition, first to see will buy, loss of storage forces sale, £9,500. Tel: 07584 020272. Surrey [CM35W12]



CLK320 Cabriolet AMG Sport Special edition, 2003, 90,000 miles, well maintained, no rust, clean, FSH, full documentation and provenance, Sport pack includes AMG alloy rims, lowered suspension, six-disc CD autochanger, Bose rear seat mounted subwoofer, front and rear bumpers, £5,495. Tel: 07902 941397. Northants [CDW1]



SL500 04 plate, 77,000 miles, three previous owners, owned since 2014, many extras, wooden steering wheel and dashboard, CD autochanger, sat nav, serviced by Mercedes upon purchase to ensure it was perfect (cost £2,000), detailed cost £800, happy to chat about it, £POA. Tel: 07827 282204. North Hampshire [CDW2]



E200 CDI Blueefficiency Avangarde Four-door, auto, 2010 reg, 47,500 very low miles, full M-B history, metallic grey, full black leather seats, sat nav, gorgeous condition, two keys, two-owner, £8,200. Tel: 01708 457440. Hornchurch [CDW3]



CL500 4.7L V8, biturbo, 2011 (11 plate), 83,300 miles, Obsidian Black, Aubergine exclusive passion leather, purchased from M-B main dealer in 2017, FSH, all receipts, 20-inch AMG alloys, recent work includes new front pads and discs, lower wishbone arm, too many options to list, £13,900 ONO. Tel: 07887 051657. Bedfordshire [CDW4]



SLK380 Six months warranty, amazing interior, polished aluminium, blue interior to match the exterior blue metallic, electric seat controls, amongst the host of other extras, engine compartment like new, video can be sent to view for seriously inquiries, ring for demo, £4,500 ONO. Tel: 07715 584001. Portsmouth [CDW7]

SL320 Absolutely stunning, 1999, metallic Amber Red, saffron leather interior, burr walnut trim, three owners from new, last owner since 2010, the soft top functions correctly, wind deflector, nice wheels, service history, MOT until October 2021, Mercedes Pagoda forces sale, £8,890. Tel: 07958 431991. Esher [CD] **W123 280E** 1982, 127,000 miles, runs and drives, needs a little love and care, please call for more information, £1,500. Tel: 07470 168102. Surrey [CM34]

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C180 1996, 83,713 original miles, full MOT, future classic investment, big file history, £1,400 in 2018, original first aid kit, radio, three owners, £2,200 ONO. Email: paulcoates59@gmail.com. Marton [CDW9]



CLS55 AMG 2006, Mystic Blue, designo Porcelain leather, cheaper tax bracket, 72,000 miles, Comand, digital TV tuner, Bluetooth, Keyless-Go, Linguatronic voice control, electric glass sunroof, Parktronic front and rear parking sensors, remote boot closing, £15,000 ONO. Tel: 07859 056445. Dartford [CDW8]

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



500SL 1993, black, black leather, 8,800km, serviced by M-B, one of the best, €47,500. Tel: +49 15163 275890, Email: kaymel@web.de. Bremen. Germany [EFW15]



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



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



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



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



SLK320 Roadster 2003, red, two-door, convertible, 30,116 miles, automatic transmission, traction control, slip control, RWD, power steering, telescoping wheel, leather seats, alloy wheel package, accident free, smoke free, \$12,500 ONO. Tel: 001 51326 49684. Email: lstewart1@cinci.rr.com. Ohio. USA [HIW16]

OTHER MERCEDES



U1500 425 series, approximately 74/75, Vs present, L/H drive, taxed as agricultural, no MOT required, 24-inch wheels, tyres approximately 90 per cent – high speed tyres, complete with snow plough bracket, hydraulic pick U-hitch and draw bar, three-way tipping body, £POA. Tel: 07811 914359 (after 6pm or weekends) [EFW7]



Mercedes 1834 1996, much sought-after model, unfinished project, 176,000 miles, mechanically ready for the road. £POA. Tel: 07977 460341. Lancashire. [FGW54]

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PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



W212 E-Class SE parts 2013 – 2014, facelift model, two headlights, original Mercedes OEM, will fit from March 2013 and 2014 models, includes control units fitted, £1,290. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen [EFW11]



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



E-Class facelift grille Centre for E-Class facelift model 2013 to 2016, star logo not included £100. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen [EFW13]



Carlsson staggered alloy wheels Stunning titanium edition, 1/16RS, bolts, locks, centre caps & hubcentric spacers all included in the sale, 8.5x19 part number: 36 19 0850 400 and 9.5x19 part number: 36 19 0950 400, £1,450 ONO. Tel: 07818 812184. London [EFW24]



W212 E-Class facelift engine undertray Sump protector, facelift E-Class models 2013 to 2016, £130. Tel: 02866 341988. Enniskillen [EFW14]



AMG hardback book Dealer supplied, dated 2004, 14 models, great photos, specs, unmarked pages, good as new, £12.50. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [DEW1]



100-year calendar 1886-1986, large type, £35. Tel: 02083 997541. Surbiton [CM34P2]

SLK rigid boot liner Black, good condition, buyer collect, £25. Tel: 07771 567426. Tamworth [EF]

NO. PLATES

MIBCY

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

E19 MKM

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

A19 OEM

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

RAF 668

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

SMI4RTS

SMI4RTS Cherished numberplate, looks like 'SMARTS', would fit any car well, £5,250. Tel: 07583 613521. Tamworth [CM34]

12 RTP

12 RTP Private numberplate for sale, open to offers. Tel: 07858 264064. Malpas [BC]

MB 44

MB 44 Private numberplate for sale, £22,000 ONO. Email: annabella.blc@gmail.com. Lancs [BC]

WANTED

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

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

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

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

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

280SL 2000, red with cream interior, excellent condition, fully loaded, 45,000 miles, full service history, £13,750. Tel: 07808 365076. East Sussex [JKW24]

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

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

190D 1987, manual, five-cylinder 2.5, diesel, MOT has 11 months left, 65,000 miles, good condition, blue cloth interior, sunroof, radio/cassette player, car has been owned and garaged for the last four years, £2,500. Tel: 07791 651436. Glasgow [JKW44]

CLK430 Cabriolet 2001, good condition, well looked after, example of this model, dark blue metallic, good tyres, blue roof replaced two years ago, grey leather interior all good, the driver really well, 113,000 miles, serviced regularly and runs well, MOT until October 2017, new battery in June 2017, xenon conversion, Bose base boost system for music.

124 E200 Estate 1994, great low mileage wagon, all MOTs, three owners, lovely condition inside and out, steel slide/tilt roof, mats and mud flaps, no issues, MOT until January 2018, serviced and brakes done, coil packs renewed, a really nice, honest car.

650B 2002, factory original, LHD, imported from Germany in 2002, 47,000 miles from new, finished in rare, Tekite Grey metallic, full black nappa leather interior, complete service history, original fully stamped service book, every MOT certificate since 2005, air conditioning, Command sat nav, electric sunroof, a truly outstanding example, unmolested and extra.

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

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From the archives > Turbo Technics 300TE-24

300TE-24 biturbo

Manufactured in 1992, this 124-series 300TE-24 was gifted a twin-turbo set up by Hughes of Beaconsfield, agent of Turbo Technics, after two years on the road - we took it for a blast in 2009

WORDS KYLE MOLYNEUX IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY



The Q-car. A cocktail of profuse performance shaken over ice with a cool and introverted appearance to distract from what truly lies beneath.

With that in mind, the Anthracite Grey 300TE-24 gently idling on owner Robert Sehota's driveway surely adheres to the Q-car code. Apart from the aftermarket, yet still tastefully discreet, five-spoke alloys, and side and rear sills – all from Carat Duchatelet – few would guess this old Benz had something up its sleeve. However, I have it on good authority that Hughes of Beaconsfield, a Mercedes-Benz dealer and once exclusive fitting agent of Turbo Technics conversions – a reputable UK tuning outfit throughout the 1980s and 1990s (and today a turbocharger and supercharger design specialist that has just celebrated its 40th birthday) – has breathed its magic on it. Sure, this particular 1992 300TE-24 has the Sportline spec so it rides 31mm lower, and oh, there's a new exhaust protruding from the rear, but for the most part it looks like any other ordinary 124-series Estate car. Until you lift the bonnet, that is.

Residing alongside the six-cylinder, 24-valve M104 unit, two Garrett T2 turbos complete with blue silicone hoses sit ominously on top of the

Turbo Technics-designed cast iron exhaust manifolds. A new Turbo Technics air filter and an intercooler system fed with air channelled from behind the front spoiler are yet more alien objects in the sea of German engineering ingenuity.

The M104's head gasket remains untouched, but Turbo

Technics lowered the compression ratio by shortening the con rods, whilst machining the piston crowns and modifying the throttle body at the firm's Northampton HQ in order to accommodate two extra fuel injectors to cope with the added demands of the turbos. The car's standard Mercedes-Benz fuel system has been retained, with an additional fuel pressure regulator and Turbo Technics' own piggyback Digital Control

△ Carat Duchatelet styling made this 124-series Estate even more mouth-watering.

Unit (DCU), which works together with a MAP sensor to feed extra fuel when the engine is running on boost. A safety fuel cut-out has been incorporated into the ignition system to safeguard against an 'overboost' situation which could damage the engine.

A standard 300TE-24 produces 217bhp with 195lb ft of torque and sees off 0-62mph in 8.2 seconds (with a five-speed auto as pictured). Not slow, but not awe inspiring either. Equipped with TT's £5,995 (plus VAT) conversion, however, this 124 generates up to 335bhp plus 325lb ft of torque!

Finding a nearby dual carriageway and planting my right foot flat, the 300TE-24 squares its shoulders and lunges forward, perceptibly gaining a second wind at 4,000rpm, all but confirming an unofficial

0-60mph time of around seven seconds, and clocking 50-70mph in well under four seconds, by our estimations. Off the straights, the stiffer Sportline springs and shocks do a good job of keeping the seven-seater in check around the bends, although the car does feel more at ease with a point-and-shoot approach to driving with intent.

With Turbo Technics recommending the use of super unleaded fuel, the 300TE-24 is not cheap to run. However, the tuner did say that with sensible driving, fuel economy (18.6mpg EEC urban cycle in standard guise) is hardly affected by the conversion at all, and with the standard Mercedes-Benz servicing intervals remaining the same, you can understand why the twin-turbo kit appealed. And still does.

▽ A pair of Garrett T2 turbochargers nestle next to the M104 straight-six.

Equipped with TT's £5,995 conversion, this 124 generates up to 335bhp plus 325lb ft of torque!



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