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



The C-Class has proven to be one of the most popular, and therefore important models, which means an all-new one is big news

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If there was ever a sign to indicate that the world is slowly returning to normal, it might well be the announcement of a new Mercedes-Benz, and not just any model either. This month, the first details and pictures of the new C-Class were released, which is not only huge news for the motoring industry, but another landmark for Daimler-AG and Mercedes enthusiasts.

The C-Class has proven to be one of the most popular, and therefore important, models in the Mercedes-Benz arsenal, which means an all-new one is big news. So far, things, early indications are things are looking good, and quite literally in this case. The new model seems to have matured into a very handsome car and the accompanying engineering and specification details ensures it will stay ahead of its competitors. We hope to have our first driving impressions in time for the next issue, but there's still plenty of details to discover on story from page 22.



Elsewhere in the issue, we've got our Top 10 picks of the SL range, which includes some unusual specialties as well as the 'staple diet' models, plus there's a fantastic reader's project in the form of a modified W123. Together with our regular buying and technology features, there should be plenty to keep you occupied. Enjoy the issue.

Simon Holmes
Editor

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



Kyle Molyneux
This month, our man Kyle has been reflecting on one of the past greats of the modern-era: the epic, but often forgotten 216-series CL65 AMG. Powered by the mighty biturbo V12 that we will likely never see in a road car again, it certainly stirred some feelings. "Its power still blows off your socks and its ride comfort remains up there with the best in the business," he explains. "The CL65 still carries the unmistakable air of being a bit special." You can take up full story on page 34.



David Sutherland
It was our resident classic expert that had the chance to compare two rare and valuable cars in the pairing of a 1965 W100 Pullman and a 2015 Maybach S600. "Since the W100 600 was unveiled there has never been another car that has come near qualifying as its equal." David says. But the Maybach's luxury came close. "The sheer lavishness of the rear compartment is what would make the vast purchase price justifiable." The story starts on page 42.



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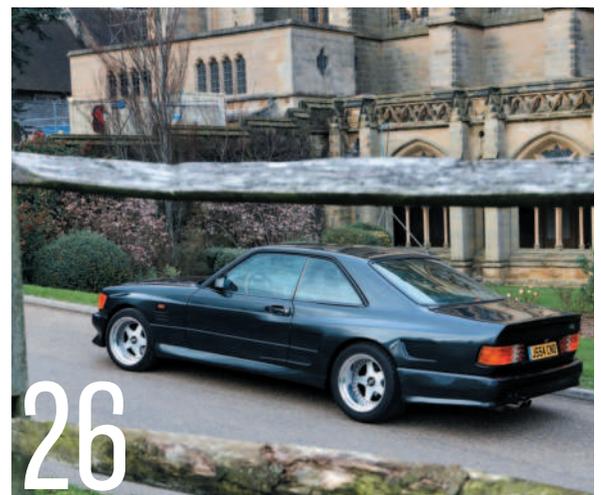
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▷ First gen CGI engine may struggle with E10.



The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

News

E10 petrol

A greener type of fuel arrives in the UK this year, but it's not for all cars

The UK government has confirmed E10 petrol, an eco-friendly blend of petrol and up to 10 per cent ethanol, will be available across the nation by September. This greener grade of fuel could cut carbon dioxide emissions by 750,000 tonnes per year, which is the equivalent of taking 350,000 cars off the road.

However, E10 is not suitable for all cars. According to the E10 compatibility checker on the UK government website, 2002 to 2005-built Mercedes-Benz C200 CGI (203-series) and CLK200 CGI (209-series) models with first generation direct injection cannot run this type of fuel. The same goes for models not equipped with three-way catalysts, models retrofitted with three-way catalysts, or those cars running a carburettor – most of which are older than 25 years.

Within an impact assessment published in February, which described measures supporting

the introduction of E10 petrol, the UK's Department for Transport stated, "There are no absolute rules for vehicle compatibility, but generally, cars produced since 2011 are approved for use with E10, with most from 2000 also listed as approved. However, some older vehicles from the mid-2000s and older cherished and classic cars are not approved. Ethanol can be corrosive to some rubbers and alloys used in engine and fuel systems."

▷ C200 CGI from 2002-2005 can't run on E10 fuel.

▽ Ethanol can corrode the fuel lines in older cars.

With all that said, we would advise owners of older Mercedes to continue using E5 petrol and the premium grade whenever possible. Olly Stoner at Hampshire-based Mercedes specialist, Prestige Car Service told us, "I always advise people to run premium fuel and stick to the big brands. I use Shell V-Power in all my cars. When I had a chauffeur company, we used Shell fuel only and had not one DPF or injector issue in 500,000 miles of mixed use."



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△ F100 concept reaches 30

Mercedes-Benz revealed a peak into the future when the F100 research vehicle was unveiled in January 1991. At the time, it was fitted with more pioneering technology than any research vehicle ever before it, including steering wheel phone control, electronic tyre pressure monitoring and xenon headlights. As we know now, it was an accurate representation of things to come and today the significant car is exhibited at the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart.

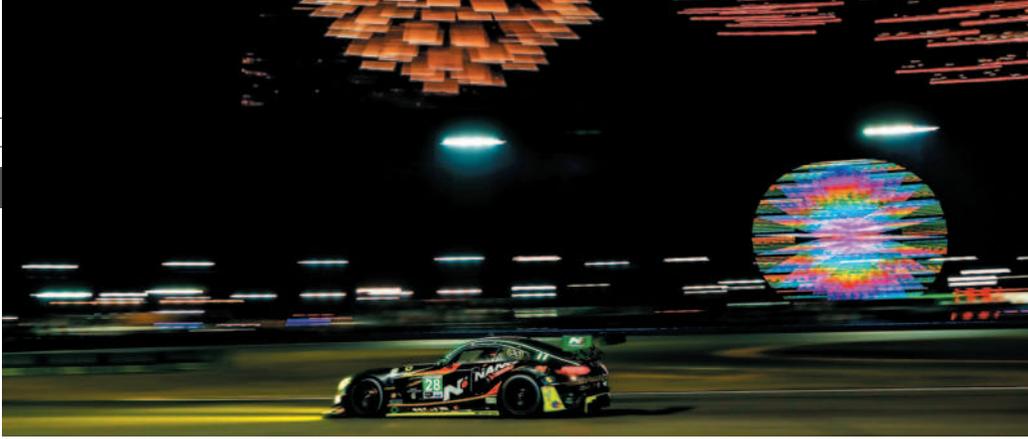


△ Daimler confident for 2021

Despite a difficult year for many, Daimler AG has announced that 2020 saw an increase in net profit and that 2021 will be positive for its brands. But in a challenging environment due to the pandemic, the group's total sales of all vehicles in 2020 decreased by 15 per cent to 2.8 million, as revenue decreased by 11 per cent.

▽ New EQC models

Mercedes has announced it is expanding the EQC range with the introduction of a base model, which is identically configured throughout Europe and therefore priced at £57,000. On the other end of the scale, a sports version has also been added to round off the existing line up, which features AMG Line exterior trim with sports seats in an AMG-specific pattern. Prices for the AMG Line start at £63,250 and both models can be ordered now and will be in dealer showrooms in May.



Victory at Daytona

The Mercedes-AMG Customer Racing Team celebrated a great start to the year with a first and second place at the Rolex 24-hour race at Daytona, which took place on January 30/31. In contrast to the rain-soaked track in qualifying a week earlier, the 59th running of the event was held in ideal weather conditions. As a result, all three Mercedes-AMG GT3s taking part had a good

start and as the race unfolded, each took turns in the lead of the 19-car field. The race finished with car number 57 of Winward Racing taking first and number 75 from SunEnergy1 Racing finishing second.

It comes as Mercedes-AMG Motorsport announced the exciting news it will be competing with customer teams in the German DTM race series this year.

AMG summer events

The AMG Driving Academy has announced plans for a summer event this year. Working together with the tour operator AMG Experiences, it will offer participants the chance to train their driving skills on legendary tracks such as the Nürburgring Grand Prix track, Nordschleife, Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps and Hockenheimring under the supervision of experienced instructors. There are also driving excursions on the most beautiful country roads across Europe with professional assistance from experienced AMG instructors and brand ambassadors on-hand. There's the option of taking your own AMG vehicle during selected training sessions, or the choice of vehicles available varies depending on the event, ranging from an A45 S to a GT R. For more information, visit: amg-experiences.com.



New Mercedes auction platform

The MB Market, a website focused on all-things Mercedes-Benz, has launched its own auction platform to "cut through the noise of all-encompassing auction sites". Founded by three like-minded partners, The MB Market has been developed to attract Mercedes-Benz collectors and enthusiasts through a focused knowledge base and more detailed brand understanding.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, more buyers, sellers and onlookers have participated in online collector car auctions than ever before and, as a result, the industry continues to be tested and pushed for comprehensive product knowledge.

The first Mercedes-Benz specific platform, The MB Market officially kicked off its auctions on March 1 with gems such as an 8,000-mile W210 E55 AMG, 28,000-mile 300CE-24 3.4 AMG Widebody, 300GE 3.6 Brabus and a 211-series E500 Estate with RennTech upgrades. Visit themarket.com for more info.



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GT73 hybrid, current F1 car and Project One pictured together.



A winning formula

Mercedes-AMG and Petronas F1 Team strengthen partnership with new technology sharing

Mercedes-AMG in Affalterbach and the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team in Brackley, England, have been linked together since 2012, when they first joined forces to return to Formula 1. But this month, it was announced that the two are now strengthening their ties further with a mutual agreement to share and transfer the development of future electrified technologies, for both racing and the road.

“For nine years now, we have been linked by a close partnership, which has given rise to a wide range of developments and countless successes,” said Philipp Schiemer, Chairman of the Board of Mercedes-AMG GmbH. “We are united by the same motorsport DNA and a strong spirit. Now is exactly the right time to take our cooperation to the next level.”



△ A new livery for the 2021 season emphasises AMG's influence.



△ Project One hypercar features a vast array of F1 technology.

The news comes as the Project One hypercar nears fruition, which is the first road car to employ Formula 1 electrified technology. “We will deliver the first cars of this highly exclusive series to our customers this year. With this unique project, we are heralding the performance-oriented electrification at AMG.”

In Affalterbach, Mercedes-AMG already has direct access to the winning technology of the

Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team in all relevant areas and the stepped up cooperation will speed up the transfer of knowledge and technologies between Brackley and Affalterbach. Since 2012, the partners have already worked closely together on many projects, the latest of which is the electric turbocharger, which is standing up to F1's extreme conditions and will soon be used in AMG production models. Further technology

developments from Formula 1 will follow, including the cell technology of the high performance batteries as well as their cooling requirements.

“We are looking forward to working together more closely in a range of areas,” said Toto Wolff, CEO of the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team. “Regardless of whether it is in our F1 team or at Mercedes-AMG in this fantastic team spirit can be felt.”



Electronically assisted turbos with F1 tech are already on the way.

Why do so many rare Mercedes-Benz come to Ireland?

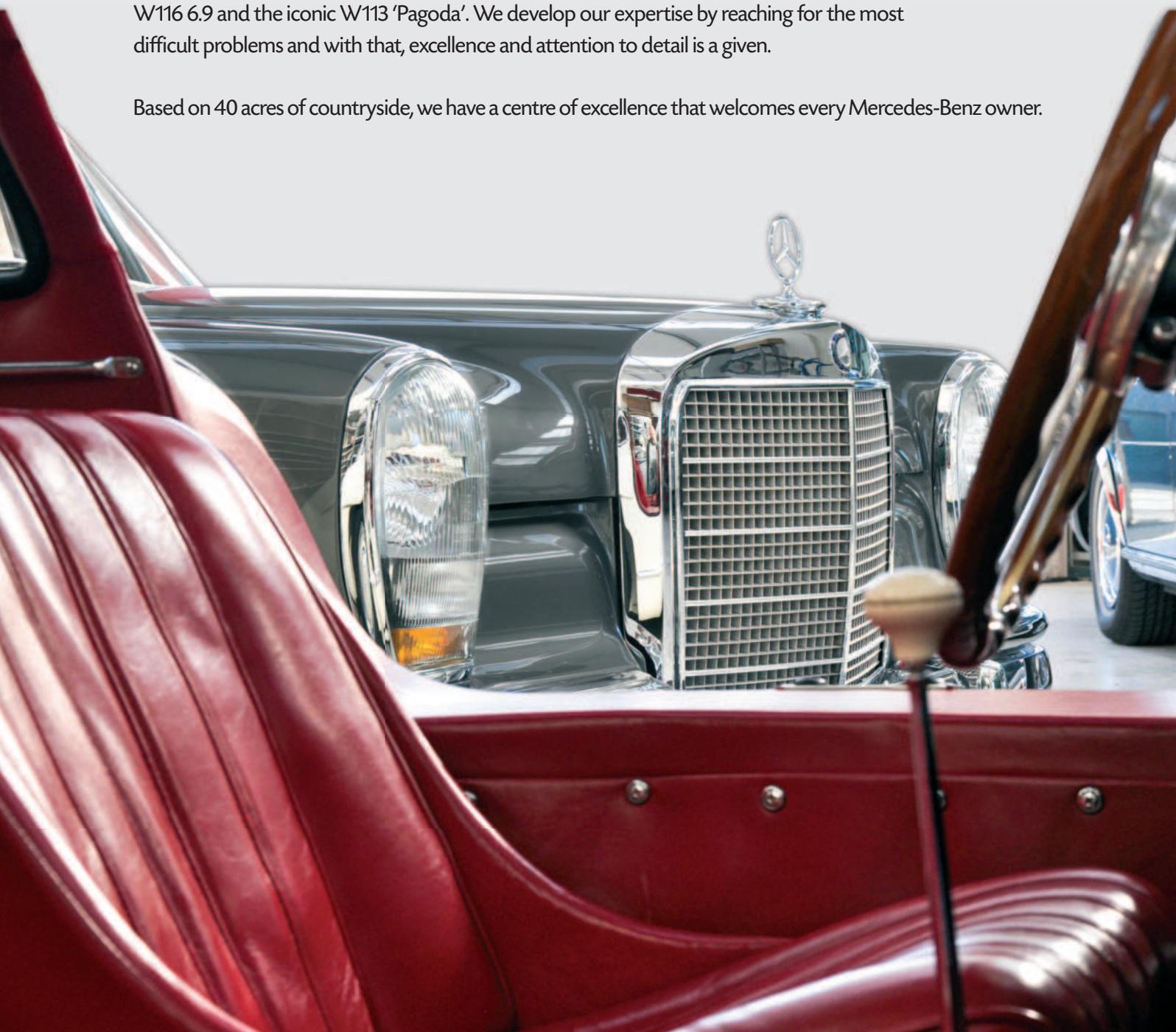


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IMAGE DAMIER AG



Mercedes reminds us that a W100 Pullman could be put to practical use.



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Expert analysis of recent events and trends in the Mercedes-Benz market

R170 SLK32 AMG

The first pumped up SLK from the AMG stables was a very special car and has often been overlooked by collectors, but that will change and it might well be sometime soon

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES KINGDOM SPECIALISTS CARS, CAMERON SPORTS CARS, CHILTERN MOTORS AND LANCASHIRE CLASSICS



Kingdom Specialist Cars had this 2002 model with just 38,000 miles priced at £18,000.

Margaret Thatcher, UK Prime Minister during the 1980s, memorably commented that “You can’t buck the market,” and her firm, timeless observation neatly sums up the place that the ultimate R170 series SLK model occupies in collectors’ thoughts. The SLK32 AMG, built from 2001 to 2004, is a high performance Mercedes roadster with genuine Affalterbach pedigree, is rare, great to look at and drive – yet presently the classic market is disinterested.

Mercedes Enthusiast has been writing about the 32 on-and-off since it was new – it was launched in the same year we were – and we’ve frequently said it can’t be long until values begin to harden up. But that hasn’t happened so far: by the end of the 2000s cars had depreciated from their £44,000 new price down to £15,000 and since then have drifted down to £10,000, with well used examples



advertised as low as £7,000.

We still think the SLK32 AMG, only 271 of which were officially imported to the UK, will work its way into classic enthusiasts’ affections before too long, and Dominic Hill of Kingdom Specialist Cars near Basingstoke in Hampshire agrees and indeed believes the moment has arrived. “There’s not enough of them around to be in people’s minds – people don’t know they exist,” he insists. “But the normal R170 SLK is moving up in value and that’s starting to pull the 32 up.”

It’s worth fleshing out details on the SLK32 AMG, because it truly was a special project. AMG took the SLK320’s 3.2-litre V6 and added a supercharger with a super-efficient charge cooling system and completely redesigned the exhaust system. Output stood at 354bhp and a huge 332lb ft torque, 62 and 45 per cent increases respectively over the SLK320. The transmission was a five-speed automatic.

The springs and dampers were



This 91,900-mile SLK32 recently sold at Chiltern Motors for £9,575.



Cameron Sports Cars has this 2003 example with 48,000 miles up at £13,990.



dealer, a rare sight on a near 20-year old Mercedes. Martin Traynor, of general used car dealer Chiltern Motors, near Reading and who recently sold an early, 2001 example, shared Dominic Hill's view that the SLK32 AMG simply isn't on the market's radar. "It's so rare, people don't know about it," he said of his silver, 91,900-mile car that had been advertised for £9,575. "It took an absolute age to sell, it must have been six months, and I had to sell it for a drink of beer."

Little to go on

The foregoing quartet sum up what dealers are offering, but you'll also see a few advertised privately; all five for sale on Auto Trader in the UK were of this nature. Without the prep and warranty/finance facilities of dealers, these are usually cheaper, and the lowest-priced SLK32 AMG we spotted was a red, four-owner car from 2002 and with 104,000 miles (which Auto Trader calculated was 17,500 miles above the average miles compared to other 32s it carried). Described as a "beautiful, original car maintained regardless of cost", the seller asked £6,950 which, if you were optimistic about mechanical condition, looked a bargain.

Other privately offered 32s on the same website were a 108,000-mile car advertised for £7,750, a 95,300 miler for £8,000 and a 70,000-miler car for £10,995. The highest private sale expectation was £12,495, which would have secured a two-owner, 2003 68,500-mile example with full history.

Much as owners and dealers would like, SLK32 AMG prices don't seem to be going anywhere just yet. So buy and enjoy for the vibrant characterful roadster it is, and leave investment calculations for another day.

stiffened, the front anti-roll bar enlarged, and the rear track widened, which apart from handling benefits gives the car a chunkier look at the back. The front and rear brake discs were enlarged, and 17-inch diameter AMG alloy wheels fitted (up one inch on the SLK320), a bigger rear contact patch adopted: 7.5-inch wide front rims run 225/45 tyres, 8.5-inch rears have 245/40s. In the cabin you got sports seats trimmed in two-tone leather, a beefier looking steering-wheel, and AMG markings on both the white-faced instruments and aluminum kick plates on the door sills.

Dominic, who loves, and

specialises, in Mercedes' modern classics was underlining his faith in SLK32 values by offering the most expensive example on sale in the UK: a 2002 Tanzanite Blue car priced at £18,000 but with just 38,000 miles, three owners, and a full service and maintenance history. "This is strong money, but it's the best one I've seen," he told us.

The next most expensive car was at Porsche specialist Cameron Sports Cars near Chippenham in

Wiltshire, a 2003 example in Brilliant Silver with 48,000 miles and a full history. Offered at £13,990, its last owner had bought it from SL Shop in 2016, which bodes well for overall condition.

We also liked the look of the 2002 Brilliant Silver example for £12,995 at Lancashire Classics in Leyland. It boasted a warranted 64,000 miles and not just a full maintenance history, but a service book with all but one of the 11 stamps from an official Mercedes

We think the SLK32 will work its way into classic enthusiasts' affections before too long



2002 model with 64,000 miles on the clock at Lancashire Classics was priced at £12,995.

Insight from a Mercedes-Benz tuning industry veteran

Unknown quantity



This month, our tuning house expert Ian Kuah recalls the tale of one of the lesser known brands associated with extracting power from Mercedes-Benz engines, as he covers Oettinger's approach



Oettinger's 3.6-litre greatly increased the 300E's output.



△ 2.6-litre engine for the W201.



△ Oettinger helped improve several models.

Say the word 'Oettinger' and car enthusiasts may well think of Germany's first and best known VW tuner, whose legend grew out of its ability to extract more power from the Beetle and was later consolidated with its bespoke 16-valve cylinder head for the first generation Golf GTi.

However, few know that between 1985 and 1990 Oettinger worked its magic on Mercedes engines, with a programme that developed larger displacement versions of the M102 four-cylinder and M103/M104 straight-six.

A mechanical engineer specialising in internal combustion motors, Gerhard Oettinger (1920-1997), was acknowledged as the founding father of the German tuning industry. He also had a fine sense of humour, and joked that OKRASA, the acronym for *Oettinger Kraftfahrtechnische Spezial Anstalt*, the company he founded in 1951 in his hometown of Friedrichsdorf, had the same effect on engines as the similar sounding OKASA, a famous health supplement, had on people.

When the W201 arrived in 1983, both the carburettor and fuel-injected versions of its 1,997cc four-cylinder didn't exactly set the world on fire. So in 1986, Oettinger presented its 2.3-litre conversion with a healthy 146bhp, and followed with a 157bhp 2,352cc (89.0 x 94.5mm bore and stroke) variant whose 155lb ft of torque at 3,800rpm gave it the pulling power to turn the tall top ratio of the

five-speed manual into a useable gear. By reducing the need for high revs in normal driving, the significantly better torque also improved fuel economy, in turn qualifying the bigger engine for a lower emissions rating.

Torque, or lack of it was also the bugbear of the rev-happy 190E 2.5-16. Oettinger overcame this with a 94.5mm stroke crankshaft in its 2700/16 KAT conversion, which was good for 212bhp and 203lb ft. Sans catalytic converter,

The Oettinger engines were undoubtedly the measure of anything made by AMG and Brabus at the time

the export version boasted 222bhp and 207lb ft.

The real jewel in the crown, however, was Oettinger's 3.6-litre version of the M103 straight-six. Debuting in 1987, it used a 94.5mm (OE 80.2mm) long stroke crankshaft mated to 90mm (88.5mm) diameter forged pistons by lightweight steel con-rods. Fitted with bigger intake valves, the 3,607cc motor also featured a bespoke high-lift camshaft. The Oettinger 300E 3.6 delivered 237bhp and a lusty 262lb ft of torque, an improvement over the standard 187bhp and 188lb ft. Top speed

was now 155mph, up from 140mph and both owners and the motoring press at the time commented that its smooth and effortless grunt was comparable to a five-litre V8. With just a 30mm lower ride height and 15-inch Ronal alloys, this Oettinger 300E was a Q-car compared to the crop of body-kitted cars that were becoming an increasingly common sight as the aftermarket tuning industry gathered steam. The final act of Oettinger's Mercedes play opened in 1989 with the 3600E/24v Kat based on the rather weak factory 24-valve motor. Oettinger was not impressed with the cylinder-head, which a Mercedes engineer at the time admitted was a hastily concocted response to the BMW 24-valve that debuted in the E34 5-Series.

Building on the same bottom end as the 12-valve version, Oettinger's engineers did the best job possible.

They gas-flowed the new cylinder-head, optimised the inlet valves and intake manifold, added a bespoke exhaust manifold and increased the compression ratio to 10.3:1. The resulting 271bhp at 6,300rpm, with 277lb ft of torque at 5,200rpm delivered a sub-seven second 0-62mph sprint, with 158mph flat out.

As drag increases with the square of speed, the 0.32 of the slippery Mercedes was a huge bonus on the autobahn. It certainly upset drivers of the E28 BMW M5, whose lusty 286bhp motorsport engine struggled against its 0.42 drag coefficient at high speed. However, the E34 M5 of 1989 also had a 0.32Cd, which evened things up.

The late Michael Lauer was another name from the early days of tuning that some do not associate with Mercedes.

Lauer was the marketing brains behind Oettinger's Mercedes tuning programme, and when he was head-hunted by Willi Kohl to grow the AC Schnitzer brand, Oettinger lost the impetus behind a niche that was far from its core business of VW tuning. And so ended the brief but fruitful flirtation with the Mercedes marque. The Oettinger engines were undoubtedly the measure of anything made by AMG and Brabus at the time. We would be very interested to hear from anyone who owns one of these very rare cars.

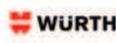
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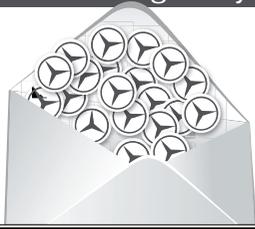


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Letters

Star letter

Star stuck

■ The Star Struck description on the cover of issue 226 describes me. I first spotted one of these beauties in a collection in South Africa two years ago, and since then have enquired about on a number of them for sale in

Europe. I've come to understand the car was not manufactured to the safety and emission standards allowing it to be sold in the US. People have told me there are DTMs in the US, but I have not found anyone who knows how it was imported without the required safety and emission certifications. Do you know if my understanding is correct?

Rodney Bahr, USA

Indeed, the CLK DTM did not pass American standards at the time and so Mercedes never directly sold any there. However, some were still imported under the 'Show or Display' rule that we understand allows cars to be privately imported. We don't know how many were imported but did find one that came up for sale in California for \$425,000 a few years ago.



will be available. When will you be publishing info on the EQ range? I have only occasionally purchased *Mercedes Enthusiast* in the past but may just start taking up a digital subscription soon if the EQ range continues to develop.

Bill Gilbert, via email

It appears the answer you were looking for arrived just a little late, as we covered a full and complete review of the entire EQ range to date in the last issue. Judging by the date of your email, you may not have seen it yet – but if you haven't done so already, you can purchase or download it via our website.

Find my feature

■ Many years ago, your magazine featured my 190E 2.5-16 and I would like to order a couple of copies again. The car is an F-reg the first owner was the King of Greece and it was a special order. It would of been circa 2009. Please let me know if I could order one.

Michael Vaughan, via email

The magazine you're looking for is the November 2009 issue. However, we wouldn't have back issues available to buy from that long ago, so would suggest sourcing one on eBay or a similar platform for used magazines, as there a few on the internet.

R-Class appreciation

■ In the Letters page of the Nov/Jan 2021 issue, Faisal Rafique suggests that perhaps it is time >



△ Water leaks in an A-Class are usually related to seals for vents behind the rear bumper.

Water feature

■ I recently bought a 2012 A-Class Mercedes-Benz and have noticed during recent bad weather that the car seems to leak rain water from somewhere, as every morning after heavy rain I find a puddle of water has collected in the passenger-side footwell.

I've already done the obvious investigation to see if there is a hole or tear in the rubber door

seal, but can't see anything that looks like it would cause such water ingress. Before I resort to taking the car to a dealer, is there anything else I can check?

Anne Hendy, via email

It appears this is actually a pretty common issue for A-Class owners and it's actually down to the seals for the vents that are located behind the rear bumper. These are out of sight, so the bumper needs to be removed to access them, but once they are resealed there should be no more ingress. However, you will have to dry the carpet out and sometimes water has been known to collect inside the floor.

Electric feel

■ I have driven Mercedes-Benz E-Class models for about 32 years and currently have an E350

Bluetec, which is probably the best one yet. I will shortly be looking to replace this and having test driven current competitor's electric cars (most notably a Tesla, which certainly had performance, but inside was very unexciting and certainly not worth the £60,000 price tag), I will be looking to move into an EQ Mercedes-Benz. However, only once I fully understand what model range it will be producing and when they

Merc Spotter



Reader Neil Davies came across this sorry looking R107 in an industrial estate in the depths of Essex. "It was a shame to see it like that, but I couldn't resist a picture," writes Neil. It's hard to tell what condition the car is in underneath, but safe to say it was parked up like that for a reason, as many of these cars have been in the past.

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.



Reader Bill Gilbert wants an EQ model but isn't sure on which one.

▷ for Mercedes to go back to the engineering design table and give the R-Class an update and I totally agree; maybe an electric or hybrid, as I currently have an R500.

In the late 1980s I had an E230 in South Africa, then an ML320 in NYC in the 90s, and now my R500. I became the second owner, purchasing it from a Mercedes dealer with 32,000 miles. Over 10 years later, my daily driver has 132,000 miles on the clock.

It is rather an enormous and cavernous beast, with six big seats, plenty of headroom, four-wheel drive and great acceleration. I get 19mpg (US) with easy, relaxed driving and fuel is cheap here. But to my eye, the R500 has one fundamental flaw: too much space is given to the second and third rows, so there is minimal luggage space.

I love the car dearly, even though it has cost me around \$14,000 so far for two sets of tyres, a new battery and general Mercedes-Benz service and repair costs. I find that everything made in Germany (mainly the engine and transmission) is superb, but many US components just do not last, hence big repair bills! The quality control on the US parts fitted to my 23-year old



△ Colin Frayne has covered 100,000 miles in his R500.

ML320 that I still own have been even worse!

Colin Frayne, USA

Good to hear you're enjoying your R-Class journey, we suspect there are a few enthusiasts who still have a soft spot for this unusual model.

Past issue

■ Could I please order a copy of November 2019 (number 217)? How can we proceed?

Sandy Damm, Sevenoaks

You can order from our website: www.mercedesenthusiast.co.uk

Known issue

■ I am after a copy of issue number two, which featured my relative's car (a silver Mercedes but not sure of the model), he is based in London and mentioned that he

was on the front cover and a full article was done on it. Please can you advise me on the cost and the process involved.

AJ Kahn, via email

We aren't able to supply back issues from that far back, which would mean the only way to get hold of one would be to look out on the likes of eBay, unless a reader is willing to sell one from their collection. We do hope you find it.

Spare copy

■ In your February/March 2021 issue a reader, Billy Linton from Scotland was enquiring about buying back issue 144 from October 2013. I have a duplicate copy of that issue that I would be willing to sell if he still requires it.

Sajid Mughal, via email

Thank you for the offer to help, we'll pass on your details to Billy.



△ Issue 217 can be ordered on our website.

Longtime reader

■ My lovely niece and nephew surprised me this Christmas with a 12-month subscription to your great magazine. Unbeknown to them, I was actually one of the original subscribers way back in 2001, still attaining issues two to 15, although I'm not sure where edition one is within my pile of mags I still have.

I just wanted to say, the magazine still hasn't lost its appeal, with great articles and up to date Merc news: great job to all the team. The best article for me in the last issue was the Brabus 190E 3.6S. I'm looking forward to my 2021 subscription.

Barry Hall, via email

Thanks for the kind words, we're glad you're still a fan of both the brand and our magazine after all these years. Enjoy the issues!

Merc spotter



"Does the 'S' stand for sinking?" asks reader Tracer Foster, in Florida. "This is in the parking garage of my condo

complex and has been there for years. It seems to sink a little more each year. This makes me just a little sad to see, so I thought I needed to share to see if other people would have a similar reaction."

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.



△ Barry Hall was one of our first subscribers when the magazine was launched 20 years ago.



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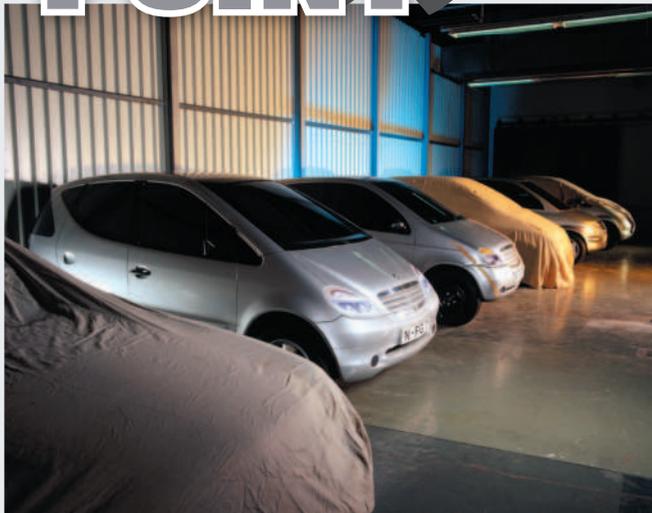
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TALKING POINT



This month's Talking Point...

“Which modern-era Mercedes would you say has aged gracefully?”

“The R129; it was a technological tour-de-force when it arrived in 1989. It doesn't look the 32 years old as it currently stands. Still amazingly beautiful.”

Steve Holder

“Not a W168! The 208-series has classic lines, so that's what I think will age the best and possibly the 215-series, but it's classic lines are ruined by its engineering.”

Merc Sparrow

“Time has been good to the 140-series. In the 1990s, it was hated for being ugly, but time has made it extremely beautiful. Talk about an ugly duckling, who has grown and aged gracefully!”

Michael Strauss

“I don't think Mercedes have built anything in the last 25 years that will be looked back on as ‘timeless’ or great looking, unless you count the G-Wagen of course, but they have too much plastic stuck on them these days as well.”

Martyn Ward

“The 215-series, in particular the facelift CL55/65.”

James Gormley

“Unfortunately relatively few from the past 25 years have done well, although I still have a soft spot for the C209, as well as a secret love of the original A-Class W168 for breaking the mould before becoming boringly mainstream again.”

William Hoof Roberts

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Electrified powertrains, new suspension and an advanced infotainment system for the 206-series C-Class Saloon and Estate – and that’s just for starters...

WORDS **KYLE MOLYNEUX**
IMAGES **DAIMLER AG**

The Mercedes-Benz C-Class is not what you’d call a ‘flash in the pan’. Since the first of its kind, the W201 190, launched in 1982, the brand’s compact executive saloon (and estate) have sold 10.5m times over, across five generations. And now there is a new generation – the 206-series C-Class Saloon and Estate unveiled at the end of February and going on sale at the end of March, followed by an All-Terrain wagon model with more ground clearance some time later.

Naturally, the 206-series is the most technologically advanced C-Class to date. We’d also argue it’s one of the most handsome, seemingly hewn from a single solid object and devoid of the garish flares seen on rival machines from Munich and Ingolstadt. To our eyes, the new C-Class is



a terrific blend of E-Class and CLA and sits most comfortably on the largest of its wheel sizes, which range from 17- to 19-inch diameter. The length, width and wheelbase measurements of the new C-Class have increased slightly, benefiting cabin and boot space, although the Saloon and Estate bodies are slightly lower than before.

There are a few surprises in the engine line up, comprising mild hybrids for now until plug-in hybrids arrive a little later. The four-cylinder diesel hybrid (known as the OM654 M) has undergone serious reworking and now boasts a second-generation starter-generator (ISG). There's a partial 48V on-board electrical system too, and an energy recovery function plus the ability to 'glide' with the engine switched off further boost efficiency.

You can see each model's spec data in the tech box on page 25, but it's worth noting the new diesel's EQ Boost function, which provides an extra 20bhp/147lb ft torque. The electrified four-pot oil burner has also been gifted a new crankshaft which increases the stroke from 92.3mm to 94.3mm, and in turn raises displacement to 1,992cc. Meanwhile, fuel pressure has raised from 2,500 bar to 2,700, and the two water-cooled turbochargers feature variable turbine geometry, which improves response. A sodium filled cooling duct in each of the steel pistons helps

dissipate heat spikes in the combustion cavity more effectively, and exhaust gas aftertreatment has become even more complex and efficient.

At first glance, the four-cylinder M254 petrol engine is less interesting than the new diesel, but appearances can be misleading. It also packs a second-gen ISG and boasts improved performance, with 20bhp and 147lb ft more torque on tap than before. A completely new feature is the engine's segment turbocharger – based on twin-scroll technology that delivers even faster response and was developed in cooperation with the Mercedes-AMG Formula 1 team.

Gearing up

In order to work with the ISG, Mercedes' 9G-Tronic transmission (fitted to all C-Classes) was redesigned. The electric motor, power electronics and transmission cooler have been cleverly repackaged so that the associated lines and fittings have been removed completely, freeing up space and reducing weight.

The C-Class range will expand soon after launch with the addition of petrol and diesel plug-in models in both Saloon and Estate forms. The petrol variant has an electric output of 127bhp (95kW) and an all-electric range of around 62 miles, the permanently excited synchronous motor with internal rotor also delivering 324lb ft of torque. The new high-voltage system is more compact and powerful than before, while the integration of the power electronics into the transmission housing reduces the installation space required and simplifies assembly at the factory. The full electric power is available up to 87mph (140km/h), at which point it is 'softly capped'.



Cover
story

“ Naturally, it is the most technologically advanced C-Class to date ”



The new interior is fresh and shares elements with the luxury S-Class.

▷ The high-voltage battery has been developed in-house by Mercedes-Benz AG. It consists of 96 cells in a so-called pouch configuration and has a total capacity of 25.4kWh. To account for the high energy density, the battery has an internal cooling system. The thermal management system can therefore control the operating temperature irrespective of the climate control in the vehicle interior. In addition to continuous operation in hot and cold regions, this also allows quick charging with direct current. Even when the battery is completely discharged, it can be fully charged in around 30 minutes with the optional 55kW DC charger. A standard-fit 11kW charger (depending on the market) is available for three-phase charging at a Wallbox connected to the domestic AC mains.

Levelled out

Clever battery packaging means there is no longer a step in the plug-in model's boot. This improvement is particularly noticeable in the Estate model, where the length of the luggage compartment floor has increased by 63mm to 1,043mm. Compared to the previous C-Class plug-in hybrid, the luggage capacity has increased by 45 litres to 360 litres; with the Estate model's rear seats folded down, capacity is up 40 litres to 1,375 litres.

The energy recovery function allows kinetic energy to be recuperated during deceleration or downhill driving. The energy

recovery output is now over 100kW and the driver can adjust the recovery rate in three stages (except when in Sport mode), influencing battery recharging and the rate of deceleration when lifting off the throttle.

The intelligent, route-based operating strategy activates the electric driving mode where this is most appropriate for the route. Two additional driving modes (Battery Hold and Electric) enable the driver to make best use of the plug-in powertrain. As before, the C-Class plug-in hybrids have a haptic accelerator pedal that provides more feedback when deploying the various power modes.

The 206-series C-Class features a new four-link front axle, and a multi-link rear axle mounted to a subframe for improved comfort. The new C-Class is available with continuously adjustable damping and sports suspension, while air suspension at the rear is standard for both the Saloon and Estate models of the plug-in hybrids.



Bigger news is the optional rear axle steering, reducing the C-Class's turning circle by 43cm to 10.64m. With this system, fewer turns of the steering wheel are required during dynamic manoeuvres and for full lock. At speeds below 37mph, the rear wheels steer in the opposite direction to the front wheels by up to 2.5 degrees, virtually shortening the wheelbase and making the car more agile. At speeds above 37mph, the rear wheels steer up to 2.5 degrees in the same direction as the front wheels, virtually increasing the wheelbase and improving stability.

The 4Matic drive system has also seen improvement. The new front-axle drive can take more torque than before, and friction losses have been reduced in a new transfer case. A closed oil circuit requiring no additional cooling is the icing on the cake.

Cabin fever

The new cabin design is dominated by the MBUX infotainment system's central touchscreen, offered in 9.5- or 11.9-inch. This screen's appearance (and that of the digital instrument cluster, available in 10.25- or 12.3-inch) can be tailored with Discreet, Sporty and Classic looks, while three modes – Navigation, Assistance, Service – prioritise function. The 'Hey Mercedes' voice assistant is now more intelligent and an MBUX Smart Home function takes vehicle connectivity to the next level, linking the C-Class to your home like never before. With the Online Music service, Mercedes-Benz has now fully integrated the major music streaming services into the MBUX infotainment system.

Elsewhere, the sweeping dashboard is exceptionally well trimmed, the new steering wheel design

is shared with the S-Class's, and the air vents are an eye-catching feature all on their own. Another highlight is the optional Augmented Video, which beams images captured by a camera on the vehicle's front to the central display, and then overlays virtual objects, information and markers, including traffic signs, directional arrows, lane-change recommendations and even house numbers. This can make navigation much easier, especially in urban areas. The C-Class can also be specified with the S-Class's Digital Light system comprising three powerful LEDs in each headlamp, plus 1.3 million micro mirrors for seriously impressive light distribution and other safety-enhancing functions.

▽ Estate looks sleek, as new model sits lower.



“ Bigger news is the optional rear axle steering, reducing the C-Class's turning circle by 43cm ”

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz C200 Saloon/ Estate (W/S206)
 ENGINE M254 1,496cc 4-cyl turbocharged + electric motor
 POWER 201bhp@5,800-6,100rpm + 20bhp
 TORQUE 221lb ft@1,800-4,000rpm + 147lb ft
 TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, RWD
 0-62MPH 7.3/7.5sec
 TOP SPEED 153/149mph
 FUEL CONSUMPTION 42.8-45.6/42.2-44.8mpg
 CO2 EMISSIONS 141-150/143-153g/km
 YEAR PRODUCED 2021-on

Mercedes-Benz C300 Saloon/ Estate (W/S206)
 ENGINE M254 1,999cc 4-cyl turbocharged + electric motor
 POWER 254bhp@5,800rpm + 20bhp
 TORQUE 295lb ft@2,000-3,200rpm + 147lb ft
 TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, RWD
 0-62MPH 6.0sec
 TOP SPEED 155mph
 FUEL CONSUMPTION 40.4-42.8mpg
 CO2 EMISSIONS 150-159g/km
 YEAR PRODUCED 2021-on

Mercedes-Benz C220d Saloon/ Estate (W/S206)
 ENGINE OM654 1,992cc 4-cyl biturbo
 POWER 197bhp@4,200rpm + 20bhp
 TORQUE 324lb ft@1,800-2,800rpm + 147lb ft
 TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, RWD
 0-62MPH 7.3/7.4sec
 TOP SPEED 152/150mph
 FUEL CONSUMPTION 54.3-56.5/53.3-56.5mpg
 CO2 EMISSIONS 131-138/133-140g/km
 YEAR PRODUCED 2021-on

Mercedes-Benz C300d Saloon/ Estate (W/S206)
 ENGINE OM654 1,992cc 4-cyl biturbo
 POWER 261bhp@4,200rpm + 20bhp
 TORQUE 406lb ft@1,800-2,200rpm + 147lb ft
 TRANSMISSION 9-speed auto, RWD
 0-62MPH 5.7/5.8sec
 TOP SPEED 155mph
 FUEL CONSUMPTION 53.3-56.5/53.3-55.4mpg
 CO2 EMISSIONS 132-139g/km/134-141g/km
 YEAR PRODUCED 2021-on

Figures by Mercedes-Benz

The Koenig and I

Back in the 1980s things didn't get much wilder than the Koenig Specials modified Mercs, and we've tracked down a survivor to remind ourselves why

WORDS & IMAGES IAN KUAH





The sheer head-turning
ability of a Koenig Specials
Mercedes gave instant
sky-high street cred





◁ The huge arch extensions were a lot of work to fit.

The 1980s was a decade of glorious excess. Fuelled by oil money, a burgeoning property money and the 'greed is good' mantra encapsulated by the 1987 movie *Wall Street*, the 80s left behind a culturally unique legacy across art, music, fashion, and the car industry.

The 80s gave rise to a phenomenon in the aftermarket tuning and custom car industry where many bespoke cars with avant-garde design, engineering and luxury features saw the light of day. Some of these unique vehicles quickly achieved cult status, while others stood out for their dubious aesthetics. While Uwe Gemballa undoubtedly created the wildest looking Porsche-based cars on the planet at the time, Willy Koenig stood head and shoulders above anyone else for the most visually impressive Mercedes-based creations.

Given that showroom Mercedes-Benz models were still suffering from a slightly stodgy image at the time compared to BMW and Porsche, the sheer head-turning ability of a Koenig Specials Mercedes gave instant sky-high street cred.

The Koenig Specials widebody style was the brainchild of Vittorio Strosek, who transformed the Ferrari 365BB that Willy Koenig was campaigning in local Ferrari Club races. A graduate of the Wuppertal automobile design school, Vittorio did his apprenticeship with the legendary automotive and industrial designer Luigi Colani, who passed away in September 2019, aged 91.

I first met Vittorio Strosek and Willy Koenig back in 1984 when Koenig Specials had just rolled out its widebody conversion for the R107 SL. The C126 conversion that followed soon afterwards really took the world by storm, and when movie star Sylvester Stallone bought one, it really put Koenig Specials on the map with the rich and famous.

Back in 1986, I photographed the first UK registered right-hand drive Koenig SEC, which had been commissioned by a customer in Essex. This was also the year I first met Peter

Qvortrup, a Danish national living in the UK who owned Audio Innovations, a Brighton-based company that designed and manufactured audiophile valve amplifiers.

Peter later went further up market with the Audio Note brand, which he still manufactures today at his factory in Partridge Green, West Sussex for export all over the world. Incidentally, the flagship models of these fine amplifiers cost as much as a new Mercedes-Benz S-Class!

Peter has been a Mercedes enthusiast as long as I have known him, and his first Mercedes was a 123-series 240 TD manual, which he bought in 1986 with 28,000 miles on the clock. He parted with this car five years later after racking up 285,000 miles all over Europe on company business.

An ardent fan of the simple, robust engineering of 1980's Mercedes, Peter feels that anything built after the mid-90s is too complex, with too many electronics. He also considers the S124 to be the best estate car ever built, so it is no surprise that the 'youngest' car in his small fleet of 26 Mercedes is an E36 AMG T-model. The only 'newer' Mercedes he owns is a 2001 Brabus G500 5.8.

To help keep that Mercedes collection growing, Peter has a good contact in Japan who looks out for interesting cars for him. The Japanese do not salt their roads in winter, so the cars there are in much better shape than

their average European counterparts. He even managed to find a really nice AMG 560SEC 6.0 for Peter, which he recently sold for a not inconsiderable sum. But his 1991 Koenig Specials 560SEC was the very first Mercedes that he imported from Japan. "Back in 2013, I was looking for rare AMG models and had never heard of Koenig Specials," he recalls. "My contact in Tokyo offered me this car, which I thought looked really cool, and the 2.4-million Yen price tag was only £18,000 at the time."

Once Peter had the car taxed and registered in the UK, he began to go through it with a fine-toothed comb, renewing anything that had suffered the ravages of time. For starters, the front suspension was completely rebuilt with new wishbone and anti-roll bar bushes, and spring pads. At the rear, all of the trailing arm bushes, subframe and differential mounts were renewed.

The Koenig Specials widebody styling kit was fitted by Koenig in Munich. Unbolting the standard front wings and replacing them with the one-piece wide-arch mouldings was the simplest part of the conversion. Fitting the rear arches was much more complex and labour intensive, requiring the metal around the arches to be surgically removed to accommodate the much larger wheels and tyres. The exposed bare metal was rust-proofed and new bespoke inner arches were fitted to keep out road dirt ▷

The C126 conversion took the world by storm and when Sylvester Stallone bought one it put Koenig on the map with the rich and famous



▽ Unusual wing mirrors were part of the package.

◁ The front wings are a one-piece design.





Owner Peter has a collection of modern classics.



< KS badging suited the outlandish look!

<< The Koenig Specials name became famous.

△ Understated colour hides how wide it really is.



Subtle rear lip spoiler is part of the rear arches.



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◁ M117 V8 was modified to produce 400bhp.

▽ Rare Albrex supercharger required a rebuild.



▷ and debris. Then the fibreglass extensions were bonded on, and many man hours of filling and sanding was required to prepare the surface for undercoating and painting.

The outer sections of the integrated rear spoiler also form part of the new rear wing panel mouldings. The centre section is bonded to the trailing edge of the bootlid and blended to create the neat extended look that also helps to reduce lift at speed. Deeper side skirts join the more purposeful and aerodynamic front bumper and matching rear valance.

However, the passage of time had taken its toll on the car since it was built, but Darko Greguras, Peter's Croatian technical manager at Audio Note UK is a serious car enthusiast, and took charge of obtaining all the necessary parts, as well as supervising the restoration work. For a start, as fibreglass and metal expand at different rates, it was no surprise that some cracks in the filler had appeared over time in the blue-black (199) metallic paintwork. The car also did not feel like it was producing the claimed power, and it was found that the Albrex supercharger conversion that takes the 5.6-litre M117 V8 motor to 400bhp was only producing 40 per cent of its boost pressure. So Darko got in touch with Conrad Gruber at Albrex, who assisted in getting the supercharger back to its normal health. The ECU also had issues, so a new one was

My contact in Tokyo offered me this car, which I thought looked really cool, and the 2.4-million Yen price tag was only £18,000 at the time

sourced from the US and reprogrammed to suit with the correct parameters. Finally, to cope with the demands of today's denser traffic, Peter commissioned a larger capacity radiator to cope with summer touring in Europe.

This supercharger conversion was designed over three decades ago to work with the primarily mechanical Bosch KE-Jetronic system and is governed by an ECU with very rudimentary control parameters by today's standards. Despite this, the result is impressive and the engine fires up instantly, idles steadily, and pulls away without a stutter. The old four-speed mechanical auto transmission is typically slow-witted and not the smoothest of shifters, but if you control the gears manually you can make it do your bidding with reasonable responsiveness. That said, the blown V8 has so much mid-range grunt that you only need to take control when pressing on. In terms of sheer straight-line performance, the supercharged Koenig Specials SEC is rapid even by today's standards. However, it is not the sheer

horsepower but rather the smooth and progressive mountain of torque produced by the 400bhp supercharged 5,547cc V8 that impresses. The mailed fist in a velvet glove character makes it an autobahn stormer par excellence, and Peter recalls how not many modern cars short of an Audi RS6 could get past him on the unlimited motorways of Germany. ▷

▷ On the country roads around Audio Note's HQ, I had the epiphany that while the SEC was considered a big car in its heyday, its compact size compared to its modern equivalent makes it easier to position on country roads, despite this example being left-hand drive. That is just as well since the recirculating ball steering shared with all Mercedes models of its era is not the last word in precision. If anything, the uprated chassis highlights the muted inputs of the tiller, which in typical period style has to be moved an inch or so away from the straight ahead before it shakes hands with the front wheels. But once committed to your chosen cornering line, the Koenig SEC is stable and confidence inspiring. Beyond the new rubber



The blown V8 has so much mid-range grunt that you only need to take control when pressing on



Rolling out

Those huge wheelarch extensions require big wheels to fill them, but here they're positively filled to the brim by bespoke, three-piece modular Koenig Specials wheels made by OZ Racing. They measure a wholesome 10 inches wide at the front and 12 inches at the rear, both 17-inch in diameter. These are shod with 255/40ZR17 and 335/35ZR17 Pirelli PZero rubber, and look twice as wide as the skinny 215/65R15 footwear of the standard 560SEC!



▷▷ Wood trim was the epitome of class and style.

▷ The 300kph speedo signified the car's ability.



bushes, the suspension was given a set of Koni Classic adjustable front struts and rear dampers, and the uprated Koenig H&R springs swapped for a set of modern H&R replacements to improve the ride on British roads. Our test drive confirmed that this combination makes for a comfortable ride, despite the huge steamroller wheels and tyres, but Peter has since had the original Koenig springs refitted and the Koni dampers recalibrated for softer rebound settings and is happy with the crisper handling.

And yet this does not really matter because you cannot legally extend a 400bhp car on today's crowded roads, so the real upside of the supercharged V8's fat torque curve is the waftability that lets you arrive at your destination totally unstressed. Along the way, the Koenig SEC turns heads, but more from curiosity than the envy sometimes stirred up by modern supercars. This attention might even make you feel like royalty as you rumble past, which would be quite appropriate given that Koenig is the German word for King!





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Brimming with power, poise and technology,
the 216-series CL65 AMG reminds us why it's still
one of the most desirable cars on the planet - even
if most have forgotten about its existence

Out of the shadows

WORDS **KYLE MOLYNEUX**
IMAGES **CRAIG PUSEY**



“The six-litre
engine bares its
canines and wallops
you through the air
with a 604bhp-sized
baseball bat”



“ The CL’s technological capabilities dwarfed that of anything else lower down the model hierarchy ”

It's a very long time since I've experienced old school turbo lag in a petrol-engined car. You know the sort: you press the throttle, wait for revs to slowly build and then bam! Suddenly, the engine takes off like a Catherine wheel and you're bolting down the road like a champion – usually, in the case of serious performance cars, whilst hanging onto the steering wheel for dear life.

This V12 biturbo-powered CL65 from 2009 has turbo lag of the sort long since engineered out of AMGs, the most recent tactic being via the 'hot V' idea, which places blowers directly inside the vee of the engine, significantly reducing the path of air heading back into the motor.

There's none of that clever tech here, though – the CL's turbos are bolted down low to each exhaust manifold in parallel, delivering a great swell of thrust in their own good time.

Look at the CL65's spec data and you'll see the full (and colossal) 737lb ft torque should arrive at 2,000rpm, although from where I'm sitting not much happens below 3,000. After that point though, all hell breaks loose and the six-litre engine bares its canines, walloping you through the air with a 604bhp-sized baseball bat. Without a top speed limiter, the CL65 could reach 212mph – along the way hitting 62mph in 4.4 seconds, and 124mph (200km/h) in just 13.3 seconds. Slow, this grand tourer is not.

All the while you're surrounded by what was the ultimate in Mercedes-Benz luxury during the period of 2007 to 2014, when the 216-series CL was the manufacturer's flagship coupe. The front cabin architecture is pure of form and shares much with the 221-series S-Class on which this car is based, including a steering column-mounted shifter for the five-speed automatic transmission, and an elegant, sweeping dashboard cloaked in leather with eight-inch Comand screen at its centre. This example features optional carbon fibre trim throughout, injecting the cabin with an added sense of sportiness, and how refreshing it is to see an interior without today's massive and somewhat sterile touchscreens! Great too, is the AMG-specific font for the part-digital/part-analogue instrument cluster that displays your gear selection in unmistakable fashion within the arcing speedometer.

Room to manoeuvre

The CL is a four-seat GT, but don't assume rear occupants are tight for room – they have plenty in those individually contoured chairs, which are so deliciously shaped they wouldn't look out of place next to a roaring fire. The three-valve M275 V12 under the bonnet keeps me rooted firmly in the driver's seat, however. The hand assembled, light-alloy blocked, 60-degree motor is an evolution of the M137 engine, which powered 600- and 65-badged S-Classes and CL-Classes during the late 1990s and early 2000s. It also appeared in a rare, 6.3-litre CL63 ▷



△ Extra badging proved M-B was proud of the V12.

◁ Each engine was hand crafted and signed.

▽ Luxurious leather featured in abundance.

▽▽ Diamond pattern oozed luxury feel.





“ The CL65 still carries the unmistakable air of being special ”

Facelift

What did Mercedes-AMG have in store for the CL65 at the 2010 update?

- Subtly revised exterior styling including swept back headlights and a larger grille
- V12 power increased to 621bhp thanks to new turbos with a larger housing and exhaust gas ducts; 0-62mph time unchanged
- New Torque Vectoring Brake, crosswind stabilisation and loading adjustment system for the Active Body Control suspension
- Forged AMG wheels finished in titanium grey
- Exclusive Passion nappa leather upholstery with unique diamond pattern
- New Active Lane Keeping Assist and Active Blind Spot Assist added to the options list

▽ A true four seater, there's plenty of space.



▷ AMG model (from the CL's 215-series generation) in 2001 to 2002, before Affalterbach took the '63' name and applied it to its M156-engined 6.2-litre V8 hot rods. Going a little further down the rabbit hole, the naturally aspirated M137 V12 succeeded Mercedes' M120 V12, launched in the early 1990s with cars such as the 140-series S-Class and CL.

Compared with the standard M275 V12 seen in 600-badged cars like the CL (216) and SL (R230), the AMG version boasts larger fuel injectors, stronger pistons, higher intake valve lift, longer valve opening durations, and larger turbochargers boosting at 1.5bar. How far could AMG take the M275? Well, in 2008 the company fitted even larger turbos for the SL65 Black Series and achieved 661bhp – torque remaining unchanged. As with 'our' CL65, the M275 generates so much twisting force (885lb ft when running without a limiter) that only AMG's robust, five-speed Speedshift automatic was deemed a suitable companion at the time. The gearbox can be controlled by specially-equipped paddleshifters located behind the CL65's sculpted steering wheel, but now feeling 'relaxed' in response and without an auto blip function on downshifts, I settle for letting the transmission's brain work out the best gear to make progress.

Full support

From its near-infinitely adjustable, dynamic front seats with active side support, to its intelligent bi-xenon headlamps, radar-assisted cruise control and night vision camera, the CL remains an extraordinarily well-equipped car. At the time, its technological capabilities dwarfed that of anything else lower down the model hierarchy – and so it should with a starting price of around £150,000! For reference, in 2007 the base CL500 V8 (383bhp) cost UK buyers £79,652, the CL600 V12 (510bhp) £107,097 and the CL63 AMG V8 (518bhp) £103,552.

Arguably the CL's most notable feature, aside from the dirty dozen under the bonnet, is its Active Body Control suspension, pioneered on the C215 generation, which uses 13 sensors to detect body movement and virtually eliminates body roll, pitch and dive during cornering, accelerating and braking by tailoring the hydraulic servomechanisms in the car's active suspension. In practice, what this means is a GT car that's as comfortable on the straights as it is precise through a bend. Literally, the best of both worlds.

If you want to stiffen things further still and unlock every last ounce of performance from the chassis, whilst reducing the auto's shift times by 30 per cent, then the ABC's Sport mode obliges. If you thought the CL65's body control was excellent before, this stiffer setting takes stability to the next level, locking the 2.2-tonne coupe into corners in a fashion that brings a wry smirk to your face out of sheer disbelief more than anything else.

Pulling up

Keeping all that potential on a tight leash are immensely powerful, internally

ventilated and perforated composite brake discs (390mm front/365mm rear) combined with floating brake calipers up front and sliding frame-type calipers at the rear. Why such a nifty, fade-resistant set up? Well, have you ever tried stopping 2,200kg of leather and metal travelling at 155mph?

I had wondered if the CL65's ESP and Acceleration Skid Control (ASR) systems would be overwhelmed by the V12 biturbo, but on these dry roads the big AMG is silky smooth in its delivery, with not a hint of tyre squeal to speak of when launched with full throttle from a standing start. On wet roads and with those safety nets removed, however, I imagine things would be quite different.

Standing back and drinking in the CL's five-metre profile, the pillarless coupe remains a sensational looking motorcar, its AMG bumpers and skirts adding a hint of aggression without detracting from what is surely one of Peter Pfeiffer and Gorden Wagener's most attractive designs. Just 1,132 CL65 AMGs were made in total (split 80 per cent pre-facelift and 20 per cent post-facelift), which compares favourably – depending on how you look at it – with the previous 215-series generation that sold 777 times over. It's no surprise then, that both eras of CL65 are rare finds in the classifieds. At the time of writing, just one CL65 was offered for sale in the UK, a 2009 example with 39,000 miles and a price tag of £45,000.

Since our CL65's time in office, much has changed at Mercedes-Benz. In 2021, only the Maybach S560 is enriched with V12 power, and there's a strong rumour the company won't make a replacement for the current S-Class Coupe that the old CL turned into. You'd be forgiven for thinking then, that the CL65 I drove would feel like a living relic from a bygone automotive era. And yet it didn't. Yes, there was turbo lag and the Comand infotainment system is generations old now, but it's power still blows off your socks, its ride comfort remains up there with the best in the business, and the CL65 still carries the unmistakable air of being a bit special. Given how few were made, I don't see that last point ever changing...



△ Biturbo V12 produces a colossal 737lb ft.

▷ Just 1,132 of these rare models were produced.



Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz CL65 AMG (c216)

ENGINE **M275 5,980cc V12 biturbo** POWER **604bhp@4,800-5,100rpm** TORQUE **737lb ft@2,000-4,000rpm** TRANSMISSION **5-speed auto, RWD**

WEIGHT **2,240kg** 0-62MPH **4.4sec** TOP SPEED **155mph** YEARS PRODUCED **2007-2010** Figures for a pre-facelift 2009 car as pictured

Thank you to Mercedes-Benz Museum for the loan of the car Web www.mercedes-benz.com



Clash of the Titans



“Although made decades apart they have one aspect in common: customers would be the world’s wealthiest and most powerful people”

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND
IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY

With 50 years separating them, can a Maybach S600 come close to rivalling the W100 Pullman? We compare the two to find out...



ncredible as it may sound, in the near six decades since the W100 600 was sensationally unveiled at the Frankfurt motor show, there has never been another car that has come near qualifying as its equal. The Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow launched two years later in 1965, the Crewe car maker's first monocoque-bodied design, had the exclusivity and luxury but not the technology, while across the Atlantic the iconic Lincoln Continental limousine coachbuilt by Lehmann-Peterson had presidential prestige, yet in engineering terms was also unremarkable.

Even Mercedes-Benz itself showed no interest in replacing it at the end of its 17-year production in 1981, by which time 2,677 had been built. Until the late 1990s, that is, when Stuttgart began to drip feed photos and details of a forthcoming limousine that would adopt the nameplate of an opulent German car brand last made in 1941: Maybach. Following its astonishing reveal at the 1997 Tokyo motor show – the covers were pulled off by Wilhelm Maybach's granddaughter, Irmgard – the 240-series Maybach went into production in mid-2002.

The two initial models, the Maybach 57 and 62, denoting body lengths, were intended to be chauffeur-driven and were enormously expensive, starting at over £240,000. But they were not the engineering showcase the 600 – all-new 6.3-litre V8 engine, a sophisticated, aeronautical hydraulic system and razor-sharp Paul Bracq bodywork – had been four decades earlier. The model was partly based on the 1990s 140-series S-Class chassis that by then was obsolete, and used Mercedes' existing 5.5-litre biturbo V12, later taken to six litres.

Why did the company, about to embark on its German-American DaimlerChrysler adventure, feel the need to revisit the top end of the luxury car market, which at the time was tiny, reckoned to be only about 2,000 units a year worldwide? It seems likely that after losing out to rival BMW to secure the rights to Rolls-Royce when long-standing but declining British engineering corporation Vickers opted to sell it off, Stuttgart resolved to establish its own equivalent.

But Maybach counts as a rare Mercedes flop. The nameplate couldn't gain traction in the Rolls-Royce market, potential customers unconvinced it was worth £100,000 more than a top-line S-Class. The introduction of the more powerful and better handling 57S in late 2005, and the soft-topped Landaulet in 2008 made no difference, and by the time of the 2010 facelift, the writing was on the wall. Production ceased in late 2012, an estimated 3,000 built.

In late 2014 Daimler relaunched Maybach, but this time as a sub-brand based on the 222-series S-Class introduced the previous year, and with the Stuttgart star on the bonnet of the X222-coded car, along with other Mercedes-Benz badging inside.



△ It took a big V12 to propel the heavyweight car.

△▷ Mercedes were keen to limit Maybach badging.

▷ A stretched S-Class chassis provided the base.



The sheer lavishness of the Maybach's rear compartment is what would make the vast purchase price justifiable for some



△△ Front cabin space is still a nice place to be.

△ Seats can be adjusted to suit any taste.

◁ Screens are a luxury for passengers.

'Maybach' being relegated to the bootlid was a clear sign that it was Mercedes brand values, and not a select, but long forgotten name that would be selling the product.

Here, thanks to classic car specialist DD Classics in west London, we draw together current and past Benz flagship models, an early example of the latest Maybach and the original super-limo. Although made decades apart, they have one fundamental aspect in common: the only customers would be the world's wealthiest and most powerful people.

Mercedes-Maybach S600

It'll take an understanding of the nuances of prestige brand car marketing to appreciate why 'Benz' was dropped from the title, but what is clear is that the Mercedes-Maybach S600 is more than merely a very well appointed 222. The 200mm wheelbase stretch, accompanied by significant reinforcing of the B-pillars, was applied to give that much extra legroom over the long-wheelbase V222 and ensure even the longest-legged billionaire would be able to fully luxuriate in one of the two wonderfully comfortable and beautifully trimmed rear seats. Moved back beyond the door cut-out for an enhanced feeling of privacy, they feature every-way electric adjustment, including a movable foot/leg rest and are part of the First Class Cabin option that also includes two foldable tables, temperature-controlled cup holders, silver-plated champagne flutes and a fridge.

A normal three-seat arrangement could be ordered, as could even more luxury, such as the Rear Seat Comfort package including energising massage, while Air Balance allowed a choice of cabin fragrances. A total of 1,549W of sound are pumped through 26 speakers. Huge attention was paid to making the Mercedes' rear seat the quietest in the world, and this may well be the highest quality car interior you'll see, as even the most prickly plutocrat would find little about it to fault.

When it premiered in late 2014, it did so simultaneously at the Los Angeles and Auto Guangzhou in China, which gives more than an inkling of where the major sales were expected.

The Mercedes-Maybach S600 presented by DD Classics is an early, 2015 example, but the 65-registered car having covered just 13,100 miles since then looks and feels brand new. The asking price was £79,000, which incidentally is just under half its 2015 price new, underlining that an exclusive badge doesn't hedge against the natural laws of depreciation.

I felt that stepping into the front seat does not deliver an experience markedly different to the regular S-Class, but it's still a very special place to be. The driving position, almost infinitely tailorable, is perfect: just high enough in relation to the window base to be commanding. The seats are magnificently comfortable and supportive, and your fingers long to caress the deep lustre wood on the dash and steering wheel.

The sheer lavishness of the Maybach's rear compartment, however, is what would make the vast purchase price ▷



◁ Rear cabin is sensational and unlike any other.

▷ The Maybach is dwarfed by the huge Pullman.



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▷ justifiable for some. You're in a car but it almost doesn't feel it, the sensation more akin to being in the lounge of the world's most exclusive hotel. The only disappointment are the picnic tables, which fold out of a centre storage box rather like they do on an economy flight seat.

From the outside the Maybach drew, from me at least, mixed emotions. It has the broad outline and enormous presence of a normal 222 S-Class but the added length, the 20-inch wheels and possibly this particular car's Obsidian Black paintwork add something more oligarchical.

But driving the big Mercedes is a treat almost beyond imagination. The engine runs almost inaudibly and with jewel-like refinement, and wafts the car along so smoothly you might wonder where all the bumps in the road have gone. But it's not a completely remote experience, the well-weighted steering and crisp handling pointing to more than a few afternoons off for the chauffeur.

The present Maybach formula might be seen as a diminished approach compared to the heady ambitions of the late 1990s. But if creating an additional luxury division was a bridge too far, what Mercedes is offering is a route that enough of the seriously moneyed will happily take.

Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman

Historically, Mercedes-Benz had the reputation of prioritising engineering excellence ahead of profit, and no model of the post-war era embodied that mindset more than the W100 600 Grosse. Introduced to replace the 300-series 'Adenauer' limousines that had served since 1951, the W100 was designed from the ground up and utilised state-of-the-art componentry barely shared with any other contemporary Mercedes, and was only made in small numbers, well under 200 per year on average. It was an engineer's dream and an accountant's nightmare.

Powering the 600 was Mercedes' first V8, which grew in capacity during its development until legendary engineer Rudolf Uhlenhaut was happy that it would give the 2.5-tonner sports car pace. The M100 engine ended up at 6.3 litres, producing 247bhp and 369lb ft torque, and it was also notable for its overhead camshaft configuration at a time when V8s were pushrod. The one engineering aspect that wasn't bespoke for the W100 was the adjustable air suspension that was introduced



△△ Unlike the Maybach, front space is cramped.

△ Many famous names have sat in the back of a 600.

△▷ Drinks cabinet was a popular option.

in 1961 for the range-topping Fintail, the 300SE, the system's pump also allowing for powered brakes.

At the time, Rolls-Royce famously boasted that the loudest sound in its cars was the clock ticking, but arguably Mercedes went one better with its complex hydraulic system providing silent power to functions that would normally work with an electric whirr: front and seat adjustment, windows, mirrors, front/rear glass divider and sunroof, if fitted, while door and bootlid shutting was also included. Two separate air conditioning systems served. The 600's launch arguably ▷

Even Mercedes-Benz itself showed no interest in replacing the W100 at the end of its 17-year production in 1981, by which time 2,677 had been built



The SWB 600 is a surprisingly agile drive, but it has to be said that Pullman is more of a duty than a pleasure

▷ made 1963 the high water mark for Mercedes engineering, especially as the year also introduced the W113 SL Pagoda.

The majority of W100s, 2,190 of them, were the regular wheelbase, four-doored 600 built on a 3,200mm wheelbase. Photographed here is the 600 Pullman in four-door form, the next most numerous model at 304 deliveries, its 700mm platform stretch taking it to some 2m short of a Routemaster London bus. Among the body and equipment variations that left no two 600s exactly the same was the choice of six doors for the Pullman and Landulet.

DD Classic's Pullman is a 1965 left-hand drive that came to the UK in 2014 and was sent to Cardock Classics of Kildare in the Republic of Ireland, where some €300,000 (about £270,600) was spent on restoration. DD had it for sale for £320,000.

The Pullman was not built as a driver's car, that much is obvious on stepping into the front seat. The divider apportions the chauffeur a cramped driving position, very close to the huge steering wheel and the column selector for the four-speed auto,



△ Vents fed the air con in the boot.



△ Huge 6.3 was Mercedes' first V8 engine and ahead of its time.

The legend continued...

It's not common knowledge that in 1995, Mercedes-Benz unveiled a new production Pullman. Based upon the 140-series S-Class, the stretched car was initially developed as an armoured state limousine. The wheelbase measured 4,140mm, which is impressively longer than that of the original Pullman's 3,900mm. In 2001, a 220-series S-Class-based replacement was introduced for a similar role, with a wheelbase of 4,085mm. The model ran until 2002, by which time the Maybach brand was taking shape.



the seat having very limited adjustment. This particular car's bulky console on the transmission tunnel further erodes space.

In the rear, it is of course an entirely different matter, with plenty of head and legroom, the big glass area and slim pillars adding an airy feel. But while the Mercedes-Maybach rear seat is the last word in luxury, the 600's interior has an austerity that not even lovely, freshly re-trimmed leather can conceal. The seats are the same slightly springy form you find in all Mercedes of the 1960s, 70s and 80s, and the carpets are hard wearing.

The one luxury touch is something many W100s have; a drinks cabinet, here mounted between the two rear facing seats. Yet merely sitting in the rear of a 600 is sufficient to make you feel special, imagining what it feels like waving to adoring crowds lining the road.

The SWB 600 is a surprisingly agile drive, but it has to be said that the Pullman is more of a duty than a pleasure, simply due to the vehicle's sheer bulk. The V8, with a hint of US rumble, pulls the extra bulk strongly but other considerations weigh, for example having to carefully judge the exit space at yellow boxes, and knowing that three-point turns are out of the question.

We said at the beginning that no car has matched the W100 and I don't think one ever will. And that such a high proportion are still serving on exclusive fleets is testament to this, surely. ▀

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman (W100)

ENGINE **M100 6,332cc V8** POWER **247bhp@4,000rpm**

TORQUE **369lb ft@2,800rpm** TRANSMISSION **4-speed auto, RWD** WEIGHT **2,660kg**

0-62MPH **9.7sec** TOP SPEED **128mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **15.9mpg**

YEARS PRODUCED **1964-1981**

Fuel consumption determined at 3/4 of top speed (not more than 69mph), plus 10 per cent

Mercedes-Maybach S600 (X222)

ENGINE **M277 5,989cc biturbo V8** POWER **523bhp@4,900-5,300rpm**

TORQUE **612lb ft@1,900-4,000rpm** TRANSMISSION **9-speed auto, RWD** WEIGHT **2,185kg**

0-62MPH **5.0sec** TOP SPEED **155mph** FUEL CONSUMPTION **24.1mpg** CO2 EMISSIONS **268g/km**

YEARS PRODUCED **2014 on**

Fuel consumption according to the NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited

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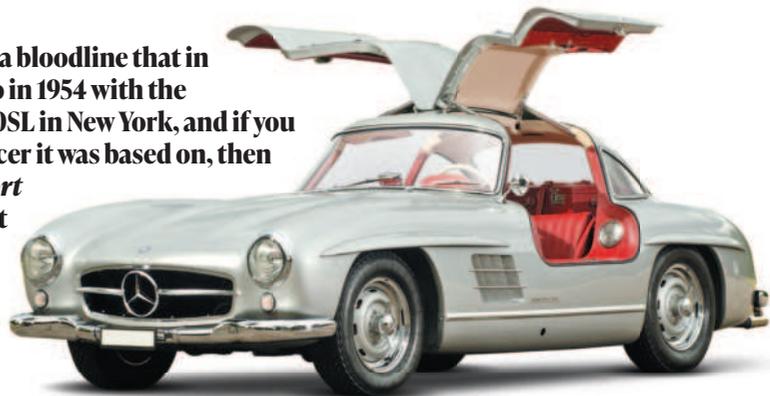
Generation game

The SL has been the pride of the Mercedes' fleet for almost seven decades and there are plenty of models for buyers to consider

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND**

IMAGES **ADL, TIM ANDREW, DAIMLER AG, TERRY OBORNE, ERIC RICHARDSON, RM SOTHEBY'S AND RICHARD TRUESDELL**

This year is a notable one for the SL, a bloodline that in road going form began 67 years ago in 1954 with the launch of the truly sensational 300SL in New York, and if you take into account the sports car racer it was based on, then two years prior to that. The big *Sport Leicht* (Sport Light) news of 2021 is that the next – the eighth – generation will appear later this year, said to be quite a radical departure from the current theme, reverting to a canvas roof



and possibly a car closer to the SL's sports car roots but with electric tech.

“The big SL news of 2021 is that the next generation will appear later in this year”

The year also marks the 50th anniversary of the R107, the SL with the longest production run (18 years) and highest sales (nearly 237,300) to date. Mercedes-Benz will be holding birthday events such as it can under present restrictions, as will Mercedes clubs and enthusiasts no doubt.

Hence in this selection of 10 SLs to make a fuss about we've included two R107s, the first version, the 350SL and the final, export-only 560SL. All other SL model generations get a shout too.

One of the many extraordinary things about the SL is that you can pay almost what you like for one. As little as £3,000 picks up an early 2000s R230, but should there be £5m in your bank account with nothing to do, it could be invested in one of the 29 mid-1950s alloy-bodied 300SLs. Assuming you could find one for sale, that is.

In our choice of SL series to include, we've mostly focused on a single model from each, one we particularly like. But whatever the engine under the bonnet, an SL comes sprinkled with Stuttgart's finest star dust, and is a very special motorcar.





W198 300SL Gullwing (alloy bodied) (1954-1957)

Built around a light alloy, tubular space frame clothed in low slung aerodynamic bodywork featuring top-hinged doors, and the first full production car with a fuel-injected engine, the 300SL was the decade's most stunning car when unveiled in early 1954 in New York. Yet there was something more exotic still to come: a special version with all alloy bodywork and increased engine power.

Just 29 out of the 1,400 300SL Gullwings built were in this lightweight specification, equipped with the *Sondererteile* (special parts) engine which had a sportier camshaft and higher compression, boosting power by 15bhp to around 230bhp. These upgrades had been developed for the 300SLs Mercedes entered in the production classes in international racing and rallying.

You won't need to be told that the Gullwing - the 'father' of the road-going SL - is an immensely valuable,

million dollar-plus motorcar, but the alloy construction cars are in a league of their own. However, their market value is signposted only infrequently and they are rarely offered for sale. In 2012, auctioneer Gooding & Company sold one in Arizona for \$4.62m, but at its London sale later that year RM Sotheby's could not raise bids for an alloy car beyond £2.4m, and at Monterey in 2015 the same car offered by the same auction house with a £5.5m to \$6.5m pre-sale estimate didn't sell. Values aside, the 300SL, steel or alloy, still rates as one of the most extraordinary sports cars ever made.



Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M198
2,996cc/6/227bhp
STYLE ★★★★★
DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★
COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY
★★★★★
INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★
PRICE RANGE £3m-£5m

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Finding the car itself is the major challenge, given their rarity; originality is vital, 'matching numbers' cars always fetching a premium
SUM UP The sports car that not only shook the world, but transformed the image of post-war Mercedes from staid marque to engineering pathfinder

Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M121
1,897cc/4/104bhp

STYLE ★★★★★

DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★

COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY
★★★★★

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★

PRICE RANGE £50,000-£120,000

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Unless rebuilt, the twin Solex carburettors will be worn, causing misfires; the main floorpans and boot floor will be rusty on unrestored cars

SUM UP Performance does not match its mini SL looks, but it's a fraction of the 300SL's price and as a comfortable touring roadster does the job well

W121 190SL (1955-1963)

A year after launching the Gullwing in 1954, Mercedes added what was effectively a budget alternative - but that didn't make it cheap, because although half the price of a 300SL it was double that of a basic Ponton saloon. It was in fact based on a shortened, four-cylinder Ponton platform and has that car's 1.9-litre engine, albeit it with twin carburettors.

Compared to the 1,885 300SL Roadsters made, the 190SL, which was discontinued in 1963 at the same time as the 300SL, was mass produced at nearly 26,000. The modernity of the Pagoda which



replaced it showed up how old fashioned it had become both in looks and performance; drive a 190SL today and it feels ponderous and slow. In fairness, Mercedes never billed it as a sports rather, rather a comfortable and well-appointed tourer, which in its day it was, and it's no less charming for its lack of pace.

But one major advantage the 190SL does have over its more focused big brother is the price: while £50,000 to £60,000 even for a project quality example is hardly cheap, values are approximately a tenth of what 300SLs usually collect. Bar improved brakes and better engine mounts early on, and minor updates including new door locks, numberplate lights and a larger screen for the optional hardtop, 190SLs were the same from start to finish so there is no 'best' period.





W198 300SL Roadster (1957-1963)

The 300SL Roadster that replaced the Gullwing in 1957 did not have the same hard-edged sports car character, and that has always been reflected in values which trail the original coupe. But, as was the intention, the Roadster was a more practical car, thanks to conventional doors cut into the carried-over featherweight frame, less nervous handling (due to a low-pivot rear axle reining in the transverse spring's camber change) and a more inviting interior.

Mercedes' US importer Max Hoffman had wanted to broaden the 300SL's appeal by offering it as a convertible, and the Roadster's easier to live with nature helped it become the darling of the Hollywood set and other prominent celebrities. This helped the Stuttgart car maker revive its pre-war reputation as the purveyor of super glamorous sports convertibles.

But those lucky enough to experience a drive in a 300SL

Roadster will nonetheless enjoy a car that, despite its hedonistic image, is still engaging and thrilling. No 300SL had factory power steering, so getting round corners is a muscle-building effort, and the brakes are poor (unless it's one of the late, disc-braked examples), but the engine has a fantastic, eager mechanical note and the shift on the manual four-speed gearbox

(automatic wasn't offered) has a satisfying movement once you're used to it. The Roadster engine incorporated the Gullwing competition engine option and so is more powerful.



Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M198
2,996cc/6/237bhp

STYLE ★★★★★

DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★

COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY

★★★★★

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★

PRICE RANGE £700,000 - £1.5m

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Most have been restored either fully or partially, so the quality of the rebuild is paramount; original, unrestored examples are most in demand

SUM UP If you can't afford both a Gullwing and a Roadster then this makes sense: a softened, more practical version of the Gullwing but still an epic drive

Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M130
2,778cc/6/168bhp

STYLE ★★★★★

DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★

COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY

★★★★★

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★

PRICE RANGE £40,000 - £150,000

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Poor previous rebuilds concealing body corrosion, tricky to set twin carb engine out of tune; worn suspension springs ride at the incorrect height

SUM UP So ahead of its time in styling and dynamics, it hasn't dated like contemporary sports cars. Were it not for its value, a W113s could be a daily driver

W113 280SL Pagoda (1968-1971)

By common consent, the SL Pagoda is a gorgeous, lithe, sexy and perfectly proportioned shape - and just think how amazing it must have looked back in 1963, when lots of cars on the road had running boards! It was launched at that year's Geneva motor show, the Pagoda nickname collected due to the inverted shape of its hardtop. The striking looks are essentially

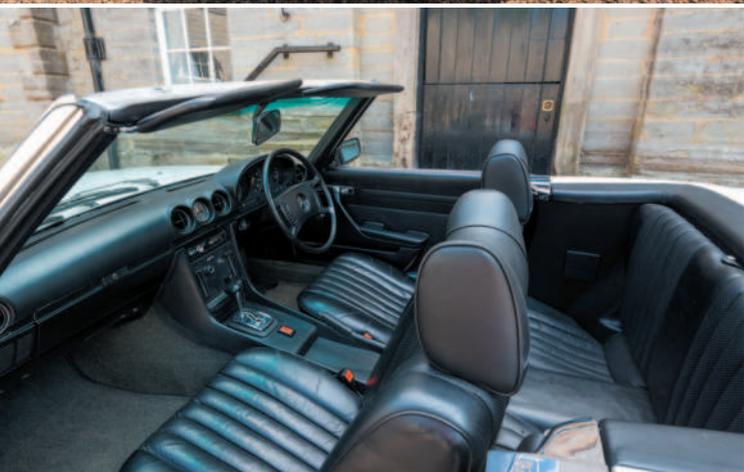
a result of the vertical headlamp clusters, the tall wheels and tyres, and the large glass area in the relation to the low height of the bodywork.



But it was clever as well as pretty, with pioneering safety features such as crash deformation zones and a padded steering wheel. That may seem simple by today's standards but remember those were the days when some doubters still thought seat belts a strange, or even dangerous device.

The Roadster began life as the 2.3-litre 230SL, then three years later became the 2.5-litre 250SL, this iteration including a model built with sunny California in mind in the 250SL 'Coupe' (option 'Code 471'), which came with a hardtop but no hood, and thus a slightly enlarged space behind the rear seats. All Pagoda variants are much the same to drive - their performance, handling and refinement is remarkable by 1960s standards - but the most sought-after is the 280SL made from 1968 until the end of W113 production in 1971.





R107 560SL (1985-1989)

Four years from the end of the R107's 18 years in production, a flurry of development occurred, the range almost completely re-engined. The flagship model became the new, 560SL using a new and longer-stroked version of the 500SL's V8, the M117 5.5-litre. But in a move that seemed odd then and still does now, Mercedes-Benz sold that model only in North America, Australia and Japan, despite the same engine going into the Euro market 126-series saloon and coupe.

Adding to the bewilderment was that the 560SL's V8, due to its extra emissions equipment, produced a mere 227bhp compared to the Euro-spec SL500's 242bhp and the 560SEL/SEC's 268bhp. The picture is further complicated in that of the comparative high number of 560SLs delivered - just over 49,300, a fifth of all R107s. A substantial number have since been imported back to the UK and Europe, and may have been 'de-smogged' (and their 'federal' bumpers discarded), now having an unspecified output.

But setting this aspect aside, the 560SL is a glorious SL to drive with lazy torque and a quiet but discernible woof the other Benz V8s lacked. Plus, being primarily a US export package it has almost all the spec possible to have, with leather, climate control and so on. It might be assumed that the 560SL is the most highly valued R107, but at the top level of the market, European 500SLs go for more.



Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M117 5,547cc/
V8/227bhp

STYLE ★★★★★

DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★

COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY
★★★★★

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★

PRICE RANGE £15,000-£50,000

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Structural rust on the engine bulkhead, the jacking points and sills; west coast US cars can have sun damaged trim, others can have a damp cabin

SUM UP Big V8 engines and the R107 Roadster always go well together and this version has effortless performance, even if it doesn't boast the ultimate horsepower



R107 350SL (1971-1980)

When engineers tried the 600's 6.3-litre V8 in a Pagoda they couldn't make it handle correctly, but the R107 SL which arrived in 1971 was purpose-built for eight cylinders from the start, which was now deemed essential if the new generation car was to fully exploit the North American market. V8s gave the W113's replacement a whole new character, that of a laid-back cruiser rather than a vibrant sports car.

The first R107 was the 350SL, with the M116 3.5-litre in European cars but the M117 4.5-litre derivative for America; there wasn't a big difference in output, due to the extra emissions equipment fitted to the latter. In 1973, US 350SLs were rebadged as 450SL models and the bigger-engined model was made available in Europe.

The Euro-spec 350SL does not have performance to spare and is further hindered by having only three forward ratios in its gearbox. The

six-cylinder 280SL introduced three years later was if anything slightly livelier, but the R107 in its earliest guise has its own particular charm as a result of different detailing, such as steel wheels with colour-matched hub caps and a plainer interior.

With so many R107s delivered - over 237,000, making it the best-selling SL so far - the early cars and the 350SL in particular have tended to be overlooked as collectors went for post-1985 facelifts. But now that the best R107s are heading beyond most people's price

range, the still-affordable original is gaining favour.

Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M116 3,499cc/
V8/197, 192bhp

STYLE ★★★★★

DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★

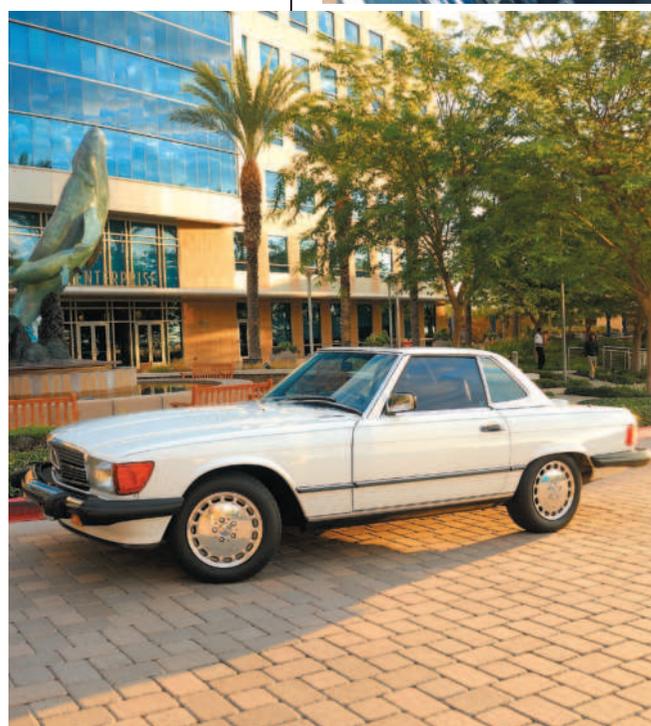
COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY
★★★★★

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★

PRICE RANGE £15,000-£40,000

WHAT TO LOOK FOR The major worry is the front bulkhead, which rusts terminally; engines are likely to have a rattling camshaft; the exhaust manifolds may be cracked

SUM UP The 350SL is one of the least expensive ways to enjoy the classic, relaxed R107 experience, and with prices still relatively modest could be a canny investment





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R107. 1981. 91k miles.
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SLK32 AMG

£18,000

R170. 2002. 38k miles.
High spec. Superb condition



300SL-24

£19,500

1992. R129. 46k miles.
Comprehensive history file.



SLK320

£POA

R170. 2003. 32k miles.
High spec. Superb condition.



SL320

£16,000

R129. 1999. 71k miles. High spec.
Comprehensive s/history.



500SL

£48,000

R107. 1981. 59k miles.
Superb original example.



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Just the facts
ENGINE/CYL/POWER M119 5,956cc/
 V8/376bhp
STYLE ★★★★★
DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★
COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY
 ★★★★★
INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★
PRICE RANGE £25,000-£40,000
WHAT TO LOOK FOR A failed gearbox
 speed sensor affects the auto
 shift; the hardtop can rust, so
 check for bubbling paint; ensure
 it's not a rebadged SL500
SUM UP Of the 'old school'
 Mercedes roadsters, this
 beautifully engineered model is
 one of the best, despite its
 underwhelming exterior styling



R129 SL60 AMG (1993-1998)

Everything about the Affalterbach-fettled R129, introduced in 1993, is discreet: exterior trim, badging, interior and even Mercedes' associated output claims. Power from the six-litre V8 was officially claimed at 376bhp but it's an open secret that it was actually over 400bhp, the modest claim made to avoid the flagship model, the V12-engined SL600, look embarrassingly short on power.

The six-litre adaptation of the 32-valve M119 makes for a magnificent motor: silky sweet but with an intoxicating sharpness to its note when revved hard. The chassis is subtly tightened up over a regular R129, and thanks to the omission of the V12's electronic chassis aids it feels communicative. However, even in AMG guise the R129 stops short of being an out-and-out sports car, with the emphasis set to comfort.

It's a rare car; as with most AMGs of that period, production figures were not released but it's reliably estimated that 55 were imported to the UK in five years of production until 1998. Its replacement was something of an anti-climax, the R129 SL55 AMG having less engine capacity and lower power, although Mercedes did top the SL60 AMG by building small numbers of the 7.3-litre SL73. Apart from this rarely seen V12 version, the SL60 is presently the highest value R129, although prices are perhaps not as high as some dealers would hope for, with £30,000 securing an average condition example.

R230 SL350 (2003-2008)

While lacking the ultimate grunt of the V8-engined R230, the V6 SL350 makes a convincing case for itself, with plenty of performance and - crucially for an SL at least a dozen years old - less complex technology to give trouble. We refer to the SL350's lack of the electronic Active Body Control suspension as standard equipment (all SL500s had it), although it was an optional extra; the roadster handles perfectly well on its mechanical springing.



In the original twin-headlamp R230 body, made from 2002 until 2008, there are two engine choices for the SL350: the M112 3.7-litre V6 with 242bhp and 339lb ft torque, offered from 2003 until the early 2006 facelift, after which the smaller, 3.5-litre M272 unit arrived, boasting 11 per cent more power at

Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M112 3,724cc/
 V6/242bhp, M272 3,498cc/
 V6/268bhp
STYLE ★★★★★
DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★
COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY
 ★★★★★
INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★
PRICE RANGE £5,000-£13,000
WHAT TO LOOK FOR Sensotronic
 Brake Control 'brake by wire'
 troublesome and expensive
 to fix; if the gearbox's electronic
 speed plate sensor fails, the box
 could stick in one gear
SUM UP It might lack the kudos of
 the bigger engined R230s, but the
 V6 is a cracking good drive and, if
 you choose with care, a good
 ownership prospect

268bhp, though torque was unchanged. At this point, the 7G-Tronic gearbox was fitted to the SL350, and an optional Sport transmission package added steering wheel paddleshifters.

There's everything to love in this entry-level R230: quick-witted steering and a high level of road grip which give a tactile feel, grippy seats in the quite tight fitting cabin and looks that still arrest nearly two decades on. If you're lucky, you'll get one with the glass-topped Panoramic roof option. The SL350 can also be an outstanding bargain, with lots on the market and from as little as £5,000, but obviously at this price you need to take care when buying.





R230 SL55 AMG F1 Performance Package (2004-2005)

A brilliant design and a tremendous drive it may be, but insufficient venerability and sheer numbers on the market have so far blocked the R230 SL's path to classic status. But we may now be seeing an exception to that: the SL55 AMG, which is stabilising in price, and within that model one particular option signifies more serious money.

We're talking about the AMG F1 Performance Package, a single box on the order form that awaited the tick to turn the 'ordinary' Affalterbach machine into a collector's special. The enhancement, based around the early SL55 AMG that served as the 2002 F1 safety car, included wheels an inch bigger than standard at 19-inch (with 255/35 front and 285/30 rear tyres) and in a twin-spoke style, while behind them lurked larger brake discs, with the Sensotronic brake system itself optimised. The

suspension was firmed up, and a different front spoiler section fitted, containing an additional engine oil cooler.

The presence of this factory upgrade has approximately doubled the value of these SL55 AMGs, but of course does not fundamentally alter the Merc's character. But they didn't need to because the unadorned 55 is for many the best R230 by a country mile, thanks to its wonderful supercharged V8 performance and sensational handling, overlaid with luxury car refinement. This model was arguably the peak of R230 development, the subsequent normally aspirated SL63 still an exciting motorcar but bereft of the unique appeal of a Stuttgart kompressor.



Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M113 5,439cc V8/510bhp

STYLE ★★★★★

DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★

COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY

★★★★★

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★

PRICE RANGE £35,000-£50,000

WHAT TO LOOK FOR As on all early R230s, the Sensotronic Brake Control can be an issue; the ABC suspension pump may fail; water leaks into the boot are common

SUM UP Its complex engineering needs maintaining, but spend the money to do that and you have the ultimate driver's car from the R230 range, surpassing even the V12 SL65

Just the facts

ENGINE/CYL/POWER M276 2,996cc/V6/328bhp

STYLE ★★★★★

DRIVER APPEAL ★★★★★

COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY

★★★★★

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL ★★★★★

PRICE RANGE £25,000-£30,000

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Front suspension joints can wear; needs to have a full service history and make sure it's free of the seller's finance obligations

SUM UP Six decades of refining the SL concept produced a car that is faultless in every department, and will be remembered as one of the best R231 models

R231 SL400 (2014-2016)

Mercedes-Benz has enthusiastically embraced engine downsizing and one notably good result of that was the SL400 launched in mid-2014 to replace the SL350. Although higher in badge lettering, the new model dropped half a litre to a three-litre version of the M276 V6. Fitted with twin turbos, it offered 26bhp and 81lb ft rises over the outgoing engine to give 328bhp and 354lb ft torque; for perspective, these figures comfortably exceed the output of an early R230 SL500 with its five-litre V8.

The resulting performance would, for many, render the V8 engine redundant: 0-62mph in 5.2 seconds, but economy in the high 30s and emissions low enough to avoid punitive UK road tax. The three-litre SL400 was sold in the UK in Sport guise, thus coming with 19-inch AMG alloy wheels, sports suspension, and AMG bodywork



comprising front and rear aprons, side skirts and a bootlid spoiler. The AMG treatment extended into the cabin, where you find a flat-bottom steering wheel, an instrument cluster with a chequered flag design, brushed aluminium trim and AMG floor mats. The days of the discreet SL were gone.

By this stage, Mercedes was stoking SL deliveries in the UK with discounts and hard-to-ignore PCP deals, so they're not hard to find, priced from £25,000. It's a brilliant all-rounder, and a car that proves less really can be more; if you want an SL from the last six years then this is arguably the one to go for.



SLSHOP HEALTH CHECKS

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



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Rocket missile

The Brabus Rocket 900 has been tuned to produce an incredible 888bhp and 737lb ft of torque, ensuring this four-door offers performance to rival any supercar on the market

WORDS & IMAGES **IAN KUAH**





“The new Rocket 900 boasts nearly 100bhp more from an engine with two litres less displacement and four fewer cylinders than its predecessor”

▷ Biturbo V8 has been heavily re-worked.

▷ Wheel discs improve both cooling and aero.



▷ Interior has been retrimmed in Brabus fashion.

It was the Brabus E V12 of 1996 that started the race to 200+mph for the world's largest Mercedes tuner. It was a race that saw its accomplishment cemented as the Fastest Production Saloon of its era by the *Guinness Book of Records*. In the new millennium, Brabus began assigning evocative names to its V12-powered record breakers, and the hand-built, limited edition Brabus Bullit and Rocket models, based on the C-Class and CLS platforms respectively, soon became legends in their own time.

But with ever-tightening emission laws curtailing the lifespan of the mighty M275 V12 biturbo motor, the baton has been passed to AMG's M177 and M178 biturbo four-litre V8. The inherent potential of this engine family is now being exploited to take the latest line of Brabus autobahn stormers to the next level and almost exactly nine years since we drove the ridiculously fast Brabus Rocket 800, based on the second generation CLS, we are back in Germany to experience its spiritual successor.



“The new Rocket had to justify its lineage and be a brutal, aggressive looking car”

The natural environment for the Brabus Rocket 900 is the unrestricted autobahn, where it can really stretch its legs, but that will have to wait for another day in more normal times. For today, the pandemic has meant Brabus opted for the closed environment of the Racepark Meppen, about 90 miles from its Bottrop HQ.

The most striking thing about this model is the significance of its engine specification on

paper, which stands out like a beacon in the darkness. The new Rocket 900 boasts nearly 100bhp more from an engine with two litres less displacement and four fewer cylinders than its predecessor. Given that the Brabus Rocket 800 of 2011 had 6.5 litres under its carbon fibre bonnet, this means the 2020 car has ‘just’ 4.5 litres, but the potent V8 engine had the brand’s attention early on.

“The spark of the idea for the Rocket 900

was born during a brainstorming session in February 2019,” explained Jörn Gander, Brabus’ Deputy Head of Development. “However, we had already begun preliminary work on the 4.5-litre V8 biturbo engine project during the last quarter of 2018.”

We took the advanced study to the Board in June 2019, and the car was immediately given the ‘Rocket 2020’ moniker,” he continued. “In our minds, the new Rocket had to justify its lineage and be a brutal, aggressive looking car along the lines of our Widestar SUVs.”

Aggressive looks

The Rocket 900 is the first major model that Brabus has developed since Bodo Buschmann passed away in April 2018, and the reaction from the Board was interesting. Constantin, who took over as CEO, loved the car at first sight, while his sister Theresa thought it was too aggressive. The upshot of the meeting was a development mandate for the Rocket 2020 project, with work beginning in earnest in September with the arrival of the base car. The first step for the engineers was investigating the proposed wider tracks and new body components.

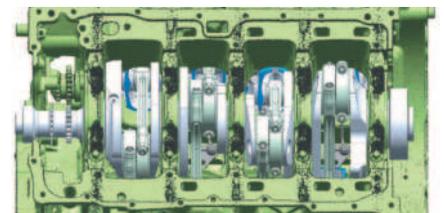
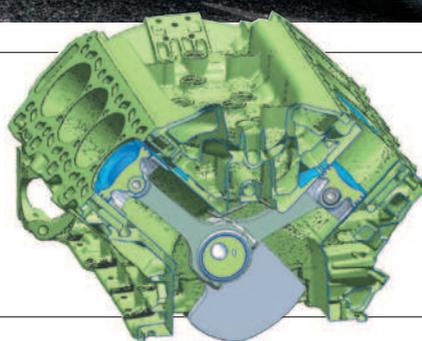
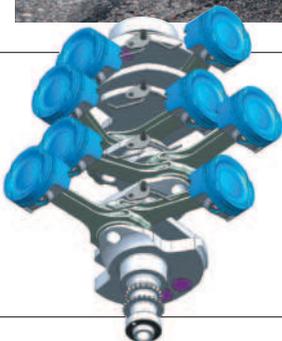
“The engine is unquestionably the core and the largest part of this conversion,” Jörn explained. “The first major obstacle we

▷ Rear wing helps to reduce lift at speed.



Out of sight

Extensive modifications include a new rotating assembly.





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E220 Cabriolet, 1996P, 2 owners, 4-speed auto, 70,000 miles, FMBSH, Azurite blue metallic, mushroom leather, electric navy soft top, electric heated seats, cruise control, factory wind deflector, otg, infrared locking..... **£15,950**



280 SLC, 1981W, 4-speed auto, 70,000 miles, FMBSH, midnight blue, grey velour, electric sunroof, front & rear electric windows, Becker Europa radio **£29,950**



280 CE, 1982X, Left hand drive, 1982X, 4-speed auto, 87,000 miles, silver blue metallic, navy vinyl/cloth, factory air conditioning, headlamp wash/wipe, front & rear electric windows **£16,950**



190E 2.0 litre, 1992J, 4-speed auto, 102,000 miles, FMBSH, nautic blue metallic, grey check cloth, electric sunroof, rear headrests, centre armrest, front & rear electric windows **£6,950**



500 SL, 1986D, 3 owners, 4-speed auto, 94,000 miles, FMBSH, arctic white, navy leather, navy soft top, factory hard top, aircon, cruise, rear seats, headlamp wash/wipe **£27,950**



500 SL, 1993K, 4-speed auto, 94,000 miles, fmbsh, almandine red metallic, mushroom leather, electric black soft top, factory fitted hardtop, climate, cruise, electric steering column, electric heated memory seats, electrically adjustable anti-dazzle rear view mirror, rear seats, ASR, headlamp wash/wipe **£12,950**



300 SL, 1989F, 4-speed auto, 78,000 miles, fmbsh, nautic blue metallic, grey check sports cloth, navy soft top, factory fitted hard top, cruise control, heated seats, rear seats, otg, illuminated vanity mirrors, headlamp wash/wipe **£39,950**



SL 500, 1996P, 4 owners, 5-speed auto, 56,000 miles, fmbsh, aquamarine blue metallic, mushroom leather, electric navy soft top, factory fitted glass panoramic hard top, climate, cruise, electric steering column, electric memory seats, ASR, front & side airbags **£22,950**



280 SL Pagoda, 1970H, 4-speed auto, 99,000 miles, fmbsh, dark green, bamboo mb-tex, Becker radio, power steering, ivory steering wheel & gear knob, wind deflector!..... **£149,950**



230E, 1984B, 4-speed auto, 142,000 miles, fmbsh, smoke silver metallic, black leather, factory aircon, electric sunroof, heated seats, cruise control, ABS, headlamp wash/wipe, front & rear electric windows, rear sun Lind, illuminated vanity mirrors, Europa radio **£9,950**

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▷ encountered when we started work on the enlarged displacement engine in late 2018 was the cylinder bore finishing process. The bores of the standard four-litre motor are reinforced by an arc spraying process called ‘Nanoslide’, which confers low friction and long-term wear resistance. As this is applied to the engine block on a Heller MC20 machining centre that is set up for volume production, we could not use this option for our very low volume, hand-built engines and so had to explore alternatives.”

Happy to help

Jörn is a dyed-in-the-wool Porsche enthusiast, and was a technical team member for Patrick Dempsey’s Porsche Le Mans efforts in his spare time. He remembered the Nikasil cylinder bore coating that Porsche used to good effect for many years and contacted Mahle Motorsport in Fellbach. “Mahle were happy to help with a Nikasil coating for our 4.5-litre engine, so it was game on!”

The standard M177 and M178 V8 family displaces 3,982cc from a bore and stroke of 83.0 by 92mm. Brabus uses its computer-controlled five-axis machine to modify the stock crankcases before dispatching them to Mahle where the bores are honed to 83.75mm and Nikasil coated. Back at Brabus, a set of forged pistons are married to the bespoke, billet steel crankshaft with tungsten in its counterbalance weights, by billet connecting-rods from Arrow Precision in the UK. This combination determines an 8.6:1 compression ratio, with a stroke of 100mm for an under-square arrangement, with a swept displacement of 4,407cc. In typical Mercedes tradition, this is rounded up to 4.5 litres for marketing.

In comparison, the base C63 S motor with IHI turbochargers has a 10.5:1 compression,

“This bigger capacity motor makes a headline 888bhp with the 922lb ft of torque”

while the more powerful versions in the G63 and GT4 63 use larger BorgWarner turbos with an 8.8:1 ratio. The lower compression ratio here is required because the Brabus motor runs bigger turbochargers and higher boost levels.

Engines of this power and heat output require more cooling, and while Brabus usually modifies the factory oil system, this engine has a bespoke spray system for the underside of the pistons. “The biggest challenge here was the sheer lack of space,” says Gander.

The turbochargers that sit between the vee

of the cylinder heads came in for some serious reworking, with larger compressor wheels fitted in modified housings. The turbine wheel geometry is altered for greater efficiency, but as they are not any larger, their housings and manifolds remain untouched.

It might come as a surprise to learn that the stock air intake, boxes and filters are well up to the job and did not need to be modified. In fact, even the stock intercooler system was deemed adequate at this level of tune.

As this is the latest generation AMG engine designed to meet EU6 WLTM regulations, a particle filter makes up part of the factory exhaust system. This also means that the days of 200-cell, high-flow metal catalysts is over when tuning the latest cars. Thus, the Rocket 2020 uses a high-flow 400-cell catalyst and a high-performance particulate filter that help to reduce back-pressure. This feeds 75mm diameter downpipes into the Brabus valve-control sports exhaust system that eventually terminates in four 76mm tailpipes, complete with carbon fibre covers.

Big figures

With remapped engine and gearbox ECUs, the bigger capacity motor makes a headline 888bhp (900hp) at 6,200rpm, with 922lb ft of torque at 2,900rpm shown on the engine dyno, which is electronically limited to 737lb ft in the car to preserve the transmission. The Rocket 900 is not a light car, tipping the scales at an S-Class-like 2,120kg. But the earth-moving grunt from this bombastic engine and four-wheel drive helps it to defy physics with a supercar killing 2.8-second 0-62mph sprint, followed by the 124mph (200kph) and 186mph (300kph) intervals in 9.7 seconds and 23.9 seconds.

“We electronically capped top speed at 205mph due to the speed and weight limitations of the tyres,” explained Gander. “The tyres are speed limited to 211mph, which we attained in testing, but Pirelli does not ▷



▷ Brabus hasn’t modified the transmission.



▷ Tailpipe trims finish the Brabus exhaust system.



▷ make these anymore so the existing supply will soon run out.” We asked Jörn what the car would do totally unfettered if the right tyres were available? “Our calculations say 228mph,” he replied.

△ Interior trim design looks suitably unique.



Looking tough

The stance and look of the Rocket 900 is greatly toughened up by the pre-preg carbon fibre front end, which includes the front bumper, bonnet and front wings. These are matched with arch extensions front and rear that boost the car’s overall width by 780mm in total. The bodywork modifications to allow the wider wheels to fit is hidden behind the huge rear arches. They have been fabricated in metal and the carbon fibre add-ons are placed over them. Their design extends onto the rear doors and rear bumper, to create a balanced look to the huge additions. To complete the read end package, the rear wing is placed on the bootlid to help reduce lift at speed. The arch extensions cover the 10.5x21-inch and 12.0x22-inch Brabus Monoblock Z Platinum Edition 10-spoke forged alloys, shod with 275/35ZR21 and 335/25ZR22 Pirelli PZero rubber. These wheels carry unique carbon fibre disc covers designed to extract air from the wheel housings and brakes, as well as smoothing the airflow along the sides of the car. The ride

“Aiming such a big, heavy car into the curves of this small circuit made it feel like a racehorse locked in a small pasture”

height of the Rocket 900 is reduced by 25mm, via the ECU.

All limited edition Brabus cars have bespoke interiors and the Rocket 900 is no exception. Trimmed in exquisite Brabus leather with Alcantara inserts on the seat squabs and bolsters, the grey Rocket 900 features light grey stitching and piping highlights against black leather.

Just as the 5.4-litre AMG version of the old M113 V8 had a deeper, more purposeful soundtrack than the five-litre M113 Mercedes engine, the Brabus 4.5-litre motor has a more Basso Profondo singing voice that you notice from start-up to shut-down. If you have driven the stock AMG GT4 or even the Brabus 800,

which retains the factory four-litre displacement, you will immediately notice the difference at tickover. Yet that thought does not linger long, because the car lives up to its name and overloads your senses by rocketing away with a relentless wave of torque that keeps you pinned into your plush sports seat.

Thanks to the four-wheel drive system, there are no wheelspin histrionics in sight, just a mighty shove towards the first corner. As with the standard GT4, you have to respect the car’s weight, and the slow-in, fast-out method works best. Better still, you can settle the nose by trail braking to rotate the nose into the corner, use the grip to balance the car and then go into the throttle progressively past the apex.

Pulling up

The big hit of torque seems to neutralise the wholesome weight of the GT4 with a mighty V8 growl, as you are hurled down the straight section towards the next corner. This is when the massive 402x39mm and 360x32mm vented carbon-ceramic discs do their best work at slowing the charge of this wheeled bull elephant.

Aiming such a big, heavy car into the curves of this small circuit made it feel like a racehorse locked in a small pasture. Thus we barely scratched the surface of the car’s capabilities at the real task it was designed for: blitzing the autobahn in supreme comfort.

While only six of each first generation Rockets were made, this time there will be 10 on offer, with a price tag of £379,000 plus tax, and a build time of three months. Significantly larger than the previous CLS-based Rocket 800 in cabin and luggage room, and with less weight in its nose and four-wheel drive to deploy the grunt of this mental engine, this Rocket is the best we have seen.

Signed up

For this project, Brabus has taken the step to train four of its engine builders to assemble this very special motor. We are used to solely seeing Uli Gafre’s signature on Brabus engine plaques, so this test car is very significant as it is the first Brabus motor to feature Jörn Gander’s signature. Having been with Brabus practically from its start back in 1977, it’s good timing for the company, as it has been announced that Uli is retiring this year and Jörn, a Brabus veteran will take over as Chief of Development. Safe to say, they’re in good hands.



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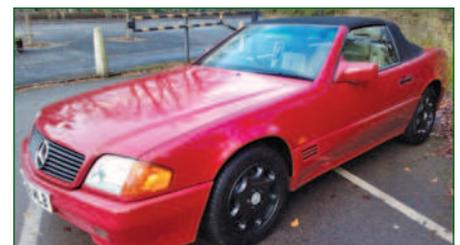
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1992 Mercedes 300SL Sports (W129). Alpine white with full tan leather. Flat face alloys, full electric pack, power hood, hard-top, CD, plus very good spec. 71,000 miles with Mercedes-Benz history. This car is in mint original condition and must not be compared with the normal auction house offerings **£16,950**



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1994 Mercedes 280 SL W129 Sports. Monza red with Champagne leather. Hard and soft tops, power hood, windows, seats, mirrors, ABS, cruise, OTG. Two previous owners, last lady owner 20 years. Full Mercedes service history. Diamond black alloys. Stunning and original..... **£10,950**

Strictly '80s

**Taking inspiration
from the 1980s, this
home-built W123
features modern air
ride suspension and a
host of retro parts**

WORDS DAN BEVIS
IMAGES ROBB PRITCHARD





This is Daniel's first Mercedes-Benz.

Everyone from around Stuttgart knows that Mercedes-Benz are the best cars in the world





It is often said that formative childhood memories stay with us through our lives, and this is quite probably true for long time Mercedes-Benz fan Daniel Hussong. As we sit in the rolling hills somewhere outside of Stuttgart, his W123 on air ride suspension sits alongside us, resting its belly firmly down into the grass. We look on together as he fondly recalls how his grandfather's first job in 1932 was at Daimler-Benz, and he drove a 190 for many years. A generation later, his uncle indulged and enjoyed several big S-Class models, from a W116 to a W140, although he now drives a B-Class, which strikes me as a reflection of how good new cars can be. "But my dad was a teacher," Daniel tells with a shrug and a slight look of disappointment. "And he chose to drive a Nissan."

Now in his 40s, Daniel was at the age of wanting a man-sized toy to play with and

looked to buy a classic Mercedes. "Everyone from around Stuttgart knows that Mercedes-Benz are the best cars in the world," he smiles. But there was one slight obstacle to his ownership aspirations, at least at first. "My wife thought that everything with a three-pointed star on it was for pensioners, so really didn't want one."

But it was a handsome 124-series that changed her mind. Daniel found a 300TE for sale at such a good price he couldn't say no and managed to make a compromise that they'd use it for one trip, and if she still hated it, he would sell it again. With a roof box on top, big dog in the back, the pair went on holiday for a week. It was a cunning plan with a good result, as she thought it was perfect and the car was retained.

A couple of years ago, he came across a very nice 1982 W123 that was in such good condition, and again at a good price, that Daniel decided it was another Mercedes ownership

“My wife thought that everything with a three-pointed star on it was for pensioners, so really didn't want one”



▷ Although it's not an AMG, it has a similar look.



▽ Daniel loves the W123 and uses it often.

▽▽ Larger wheels help bring a modern look.



opportunity that was just too good to pass up. At first, the intention was for it to serve as a classic family car to enjoy driving around the local countryside on sunny days. But it wasn't too long before Daniel's innocent thoughts of modifications turned into internet perusals and then the clink of spanners.

Back to life

First on the list of jobs to-do was renewing the age-affected paint with a fresh application of Arctic White, and so a respray was carried out. The next stage was to get a nicer stance by getting the car to sit lower to the ground. "I'm not the type of person to give a project to a workshop and just pay the bill at the end of it," Daniel explains. "I like to work on my own cars and so first I tried to do it all myself."

His best friend made the pump and tank system for the air ride suspension while Daniel himself worked on the mounting points for ▷





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Mainstream is
really not
my kind
of thing

▷ the repositioned shock absorbers. It wasn't an easy job, and although their system worked, they knew it wasn't as good as it could be, and so Daniel began looking for companies which offered a specific kit.

A popular air ride suspension kit provider in Germany is TA Technix, but a couple of years ago the brand did not cater for the 123-series. "The company told me that in theory, it would be possible to make a system for the model, but it didn't have a car to test the parts. So I suggested that it use mine as its prototype." He didn't really expect them to say yes, but the company sent out the bags and dampers and Daniel and his friend worked out how to install it themselves.

"One of the really great things about TA Technix kit is that it's a very simple system. The only real difference to the original suspension set up is the rear shock absorbers are angled away, so that the bag has more space to compress. Three years ago, modified W123s were very rare and this was one of the first at the Essen Motor Show and Wörthersee. It's quite cool to think that every time I see a W123 on air, mine could have been the very first."

Getting the look

Lowering the car was only a part of the make over though. The beefy bodywork is what makes it really stand out. Daniel wanted it to look authentically like it is from the 1980s, as his favourite modified cars were the AMG models. But with the prices AMG parts command these days, a cut price alternative was BBS. Famous for wheels, along with many companies such as Zender, Kamei and Lorinser, it also made bodykits for the 123-series. The front valance is squarer than the AMG version,

▽ The car has covered just 83,000 miles.

▽▽ Suspension allows the ride height to change.

▽ Cassette player remains to tie in with the theme.



and arguably suits the angular lines of the 123 better. With the rear spoiler helping to create the aggressive appearance, Daniel thinks it's almost perfect, but it's not quite complete yet, as he is still waiting to find some reasonably priced side skirt extensions to finish the look.

The authentic looking AMG decals along the sides were created by a friend who has a graphic

design company, although he only had a small scale model car to hand for dimensions, so Daniel is hugely impressed that he managed to do such a good job.

As on every custom build, the wheels were an important detail to get right and Daniel spent a long time pondering the right choice. "I really don't like BBS wheels," he reveals.

"Not because they make bad wheels or anything, just that it seems everyone has them on every car, and you just see them everywhere. Mainstream is really not my kind of thing."

Spending more than a few evenings on the internet searching for a suitable alternative that was unusual, yet still in keeping with the strictly 1980s feel of the car, he eventually settled on a set by a French company called Tramont. "Honestly, they ▷



“Although I hear about the legendary build quality, it still seems incredible that the engine and transmission feel like new”

▷ look a little bit tacky and over the top 80s, which is exactly why I bought them.” At first, he painted them gold but that ended up looking a bit too gaudy and so he settled on black to better suit the spoiler and AMG stripe.

Keep it simple

Most of Daniel’s attention has gone into the appearance of the car, but initially he planned a big mechanical upgrade with a five-litre V8 engine transplant from a 126-series. However, using the car as a daily driver, and without too

much attention paid to general maintenance, Daniel was expecting the engine to fail, at which point he’d have the impetus to undertake the big conversion. But only recently Daniel has realised that a W123 200 with a scant 83,000 miles on the clock is barely broken in. “It’s 40 years old, the same as me, and although I hear about the legendary build quality of the W123, it still seems incredible that the engine and transmission feel as good as new!”

The interior, in a rather dated shade of olive, is the one thing that shows the car’s age and the

subsequent changes in taste. Daniel’s English fails him when attempting to describe the current seat upholstery, so he simply states “Bleurgh!” The plan for the near future is to change everything to black leather, possibly with the addition of some period-correct Recaro seats. As with the sills, it’s a case of waiting for something reasonably priced to turn up. The A-Ha cassette is another throwback. The radio isn’t a sought-after Becker unit, but has sentimental value as it came out of his grandmother’s car. “We have a Bluetooth cassette so that we can play music from our phones, but if we forget to charge the battery we have to listen to A-Ha. And that really reminds us to charge the battery!”

Personalised, much-loved, ultra reliable and a head turner to boot, this is one fantastic and well-enjoyed W123.

What is air ride?

As the name suggests, air ride suspension replaces a regular coil spring set up with an air bag. This allows a smoother and more consistent ride compared to a compressed steel coil-spring, and also has further advantages in that its pressure can be controlled. Regulated via an on-board compressor and air tank system, increasing or decreasing the pressure of the air bag works like a car tyre, so reducing pressure will deflate it and therefore lower the vehicle’s ride height. Increasing pressure will allow it to gain height, offering the best of both worlds for those looking to lower their car for the appearance but ensure it’s still usable.



◁ The 300TE engine is barely run in.

▽ Contrasting trim very much of the era.



Fuel cell



With 30 years of vehicle fuel cell development under its belt, Mercedes is ready to make it a reality

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

In February 2021, Mercedes celebrated 30 years developing the concept of fuel cell technology to power road vehicles. Its commercial vehicle equivalent will be the first to market the technology, as trials are already under way in buses, while customer trials of fuel cell powered trucks begin in 2023. Daimler Truck AG has committed to series production of fuel cell vehicles by the second half of this decade, but will such a futuristic technology ever find its way to a Mercedes showroom near you?

Fuel cell tech is, quite literally, rocket science. Back in 1991, Daimler-Benz AG had united several disparate fields of research under the 'Integrated Technology Group' banner. One such was Dornier GmbH, at the time developing a fuel cell for manned space travel. Following a step change in fuel cell technology in the 1980s, allowing relatively normal temperatures, Dornier came up with the idea of using it to power electric vehicles. Prof Hartmut Weule, head of the research division of Daimler-Benz, gave the project the go ahead at the end of 1991, along with funding committed to construct a demonstration vehicle.

By 1993, the engineers had succeeded in their goal, using a Mercedes-Benz MB 100 van as the basis for the 'NECar' (New Electric Car) prototype. The whole cargo volume was taken up by the 12 fuel cell stacks from Ballard Power Systems, a hydrogen tank, electronic controls, compressor, cooling system and instrumentation. It all added some 800kg to the van and, given the paltry 40bhp output of the electric motor, it was hardly fast, though Mercedes says it could hit 56mph. With 150 litres of compressed hydrogen on board, the NECar could travel up to 80 miles. Today, these figures seem laughably inadequate, but given the short development time on such a new technology, they were seen to be quite



△ The NECar 1 from 1993 was the first working prototype to feature fuel cell technology, with the system filling the entire load area of the van.

encouraging, leading to continual improvement ever since.

Only three years later, Mercedes unveiled the NECar 2 in 1996, based on the as yet to go on sale Mercedes V-Class people carrier. It is claimed to be the world's first passenger car with fuel cell drive. The evolution of the drivetrain in such a short period of time was dramatic. Its weight dropped to 270kg and it was far more compact and efficient. Where the system in the original NECar had 12 stacks to produce 50kW, the NECar 2's used just two stacks for the same output. A 60bhp electric motor enabled speeds up nearly 70mph, while the range was over 150 miles. That, admittedly, was thanks to the two 140-litre hydrogen tanks mounted under an aerodynamic cover on the roof. Nonetheless, the interior of the V-Class still managed to seat six adults and hence it was hailed a massive success.

Quick development

A Mercedes A-Class was planned to be the basis of the NECar 3 for 1997 and, central to the use of a relatively small car, it was to feature a methanol reformer. As you can gather from the above, sufficient hydrogen gas to enable a realistic range takes up a lot of space. The reformer theoretically solved that, as it used a tank of methanol. That is subsequently converted into hydrogen gas as it was needed. The reformer, developed in-house, was far from optimised, but Dr Dieter Zetsche, head of Development at the time, is said to have insisted that it was included in the prototype regardless, allowing Mercedes to claim that it made the world's first fuel cell system incorporating the on-board production of hydrogen. While the fuel cell itself (virtually the same as that in the NECar 2), was mostly



accommodated in the sandwich floor of the A-Class, the reformer took over the back of the interior. Nonetheless, the concept was proven, as the NECar 3 could travel 186 miles on a 38-litre tank of methanol. Its top speed was limited to 75mph.

The next evolution of the NECar, unveiled in 1999 as the NECar 4 (still an A-Class), ditched the idea of a reformer and aimed to be a pure 'Zero Emissions Vehicle', with hydrogen as the fuel once again. This time, a special 100-litre tank under the boot floor held cold liquid hydrogen at -253 C. Thanks to considerable improvements to the two fuel cell stacks, now putting out 70kW, it was possible to cover 280 miles on a single 5kg hydrogen tank fill. And this A-Class could manage an impressive 90mph top speed thanks to its new electric system, featuring a 74bhp motor.



“ Fuel cell tech is, quite literally, rocket science ”

▽ NECar 2 arrived in 1996 and was based on a V-Class.



△ The technology reduced in size and now fitted in the floor.

▽ NECar 3 was the first to produce its own hydrogen.

▽△ The next model saw an improvement in performance.



△ The NECar 5 from 2000 featured 'reformer' technology that was half the size of the original.



△ A fleet of 60 F-Cell test cars were sent all over the world to provide real world test results.

▷ This prototype evolved into the NECar 4a the next year, designed for testing in California until 2003 under everyday conditions in the California Fuel Cell Partnership. Mercedes, in conjunction with Ballard, managed to reduce the volume of the fuel cell (now a single stack) by half and its weight by a third, while increasing its output to 75kW. However, to simplify filling and storage, this vehicle used compressed hydrogen instead of the cold liquid, stored in three 140-litre tanks under the floor, the range said to be 120 miles.

Natural evolution

A significant step forward was introduced later in 2000, in the shape of the NECar 5. This too used the A-Class as its basis, though it showcased the new Mercedes reformer, which was

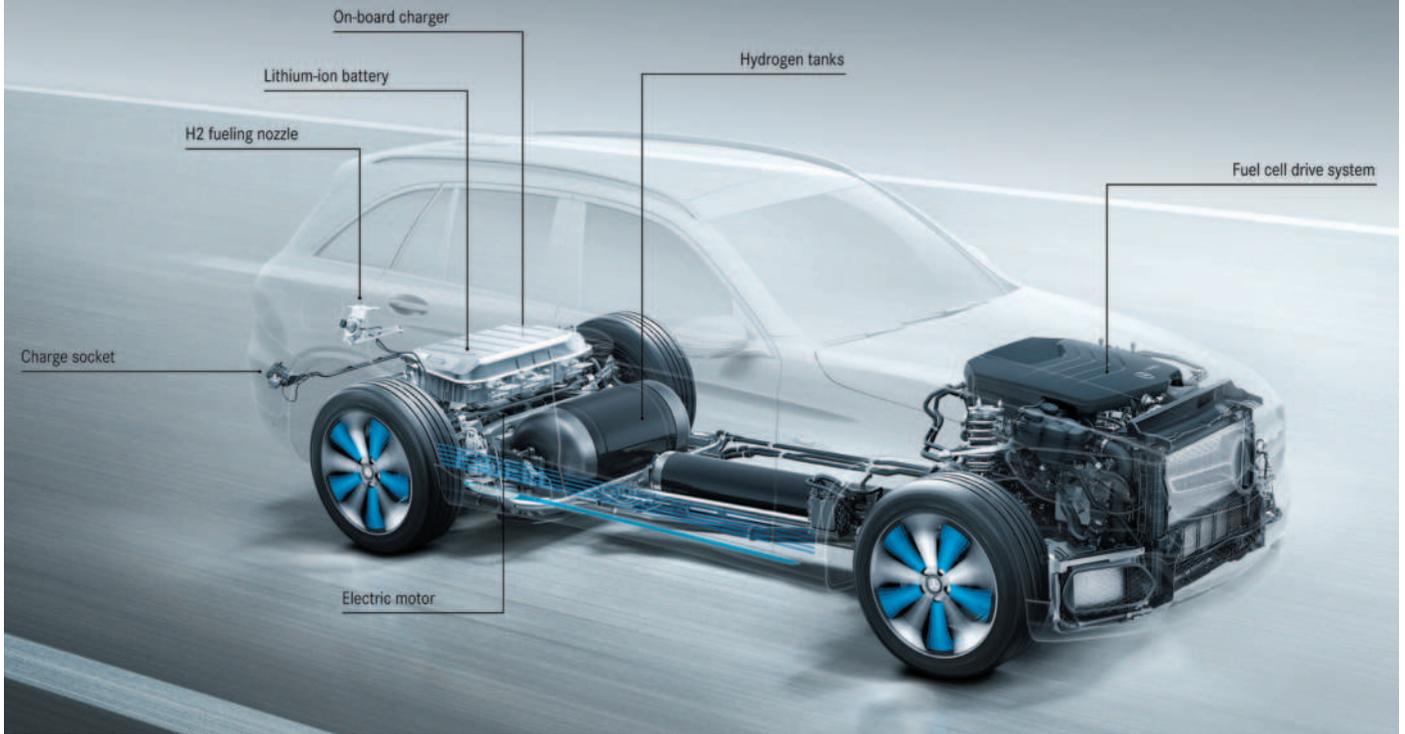
half the size of the original item. It fitted in the sandwich floor with the fuel cell stack and weighed much less than before, too. A range of 250 miles was possible on a 45-litre tank of fuel. Other subtle enhancements were introduced by Ballard on the fuel cell stack, which was declared ready for large-scale production. Thanks to a new coolant, for example, it was also frost-resistant for the first time.

The A-Class and B-Class F-Cell cars that followed on from the NECars were used to develop the fuel cell system further, with a significant amount of road testing. In 2006, Mercedes announced that its fuel cell vehicles had covered over two million kilometres (1.24 million miles), a third of that in 60 A-Class F-Cells.



- ▽ The NECars soon made way for the F-Cell prototypes.
- ▷ Enough hydrogen was stored to offer a 250-mile range.





< Latest GLC F-Cell appears to look normal under the bonnet.

△ The F-Cell hides all of its clever technology well.

“ It sounds like an idyllic future, as hydrogen is so abundant and refilling takes considerably less time than charging a battery pack ”

More recently, Mercedes took the wraps off the GLC F-Cell at the 2017 Frankfurt motor show, a plug-in hybrid that uses a fuel cell instead of a petrol or diesel engine. The fuel cell system itself was brand new, about 30 per cent more compact for a start than that employed by the 2010 B-Class F-Cell. That reduction in size enabled Mercedes to locate it under the GLC's bonnet using the standard mounting points of the conventional engines that would usually occupy that space. On top of that, the use of platinum in the fuel cell stack was reduced by a considerable 90 per cent, bringing the cost per unit down. Meanwhile, developments in hydrogen storage and distribution saw the GLC F-Cell uses two carbon fibre encased tanks to hold about 4.4kg of hydrogen, pressurised to 700 bar. These could be filled in about three minutes and the total range of the car, using that hydrogen and the 13.8kWh lithium-ion battery pack, was quoted as over 300 miles. The battery can be charged up from an external source just as in any other plug-in hybrid.

The GLC F-Cell produces nearly 200bhp and can do an electronically limited 100mph, all while emitting nothing other than water.

An ideal concept

It sounds like an idyllic future, even more so than one powered solely by electricity, as hydrogen is so abundant in the world and refilling takes considerably less time than charging up a large and heavy battery pack. Nonetheless, there are still many challenges to overcome, not least the extraction, storage and distribution of hydrogen in sufficient volumes to satisfy global transport demands. From the point of view of Mercedes, it all started with a commercial vehicle, and series production will be pioneered by the truck and bus arm of the company, but given the level of expertise already garnered by the firm, you can confidently bet that we've not heard the last of hydrogen fuel cell power for Mercedes road cars. ▣

< F-Cell from 2010 was a huge leap forward.



Small but mighty

There are some great deals to be had on smaller Mercedes models at the moment, as our UK market expert reveals

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES BEST PRICE CAR SALES, MERCEDES-BENZ OF LOUGHBOROUGH AND SPARSHATTS



CLA220d with a great spec and 49,000 miles was priced at £14,999.



Events over the last year have had a profound effect on car buying habits, with more and more buyers not only questioning the environmental credentials of their vehicles, but also the cost. And many have come to the conclusion that downsizing is the way to go over the next few years.

It may be no surprise then that nearly a quarter of all used Mercedes now sold in the UK are A-Class models. Add in the CLA and GLA as well, and together they make up more than a third of all used Mercedes sales. But with plenty to go round, that means that if you know where to look there are some great deals to be unearthed on baby Mercs, especially with the 2013 to 2018 W176 A-Class.

Some of the most appealing deals can be gleaned on the popular A180d hatchback, with less than £10,000 putting you behind the wheel of a tidy, but high mileage 2016 example. Something like this Jupiter Red 65-plater could have made a great buy, with just over 100,000 miles on the clock it was great value at just £9,739, and came with a tidy specification. Advertised for sale at Best Price Car Sales in Southampton (www.bestpricecarsales.co.uk), it came with the seven-speed automatic transmission, plus 16-inch alloys, Mercedes' seven-inch tablet-style display, Mercedes Me connect, a reversing camera, black leather upholstery, Bluetooth, cruise control and a leather-trimmed steering wheel.

Despite falling new car sales, diesels are still popular on the used market, with diesel A-Classes outnumbering petrols by two to one.

But if you'd prefer to stick to petrol power then the feisty A250 hatchback provides great value right now. Sitting somewhere between the more frugal A180 and A200 models, and the lusty A45 AMG, it offers hot hatch rivalling performance from just £13,000. This immaculate Cirrus White 2014 A250 BlueEfficiency AMG Sport at Mercedes-Benz of Loughborough (www.inchcape.co.uk) was just £11,720 and had just one owner from new.



△ This A180d with just over 100,000 miles was up at £9,739.



△ 2014 A250 looked a good bet, priced for sale at £11,720.

The mileage was above average at 92,714, but the car came with the reassurance of a full M-B service history, one year's Mercedes warranty and 12 months' roadside assistance.

It also boasted the AMG Exclusive Pack, the Mirror Pack, the seat Comfort Pack, a reversing camera, 18-inch AMG alloys, a Panoramic sliding sunroof and Speedtronic cruise control.

Small surprise

Looking at other smaller Mercedes-Benz models, the GLA is still a bit too pricey for bargain hunters at the moment, but the CLA is starting to offer far better value, especially in popular 220d guise. And most examples seem to be very well equipped, like this 2016 metallic Mountain Grey CLA220d Sport example we saw for sale at Sparshatts in Hampshire (www.sparshattsgroup.co.uk).

With a below average 49,634 miles showing on the clock, it was priced at a sensible £14,999 and packed a whopping specification that would leave you wanting for nothing. As well as optional 4Matic four-wheel drive, it also claimed Garmin Map Pilot satellite navigation, heated seats, cruise control, a reversing camera with parking pilot, front and rear parking sensors, privacy glass, folding mirrors, a black leather interior, 18-inch Himalaya Grey alloys and a seven-inch tablet-style colour display. You'll struggle to find a better-specified example for the money, we reckon.

► **Fancy something with a bit more carrying capacity? Then check out our top three £10,000 fast Mercedes estates on page 80**

Forecourt find

560SEC (C126)

A perennial favourite with both enthusiasts and collectors, the big V8-powered Mercedes-Benz 560SEC is appreciating in value, which is helped by the relatively few cars that seem to be coming up for sale. With that in mind, we were delighted to discover this 1988 Arctic White example that looked to be a rare find, thanks to the very low mileage, as it was showing just 54,901 showing on the clock.

It was advertised for sale at specialist Peter Vardy Heritage, based in Edinburgh. The bright white paintwork was matched inside with a cream leather interior and the vehicle appeared to be in superb condition both inside and out. In this guise, it would make an ideal investment we felt. Priced at a sensible £24,000, there was some scope for negotiation and coupled with a good specification, this SEC could be worth quite a bit more in a few years' time.

► **Peter Vardy Heritage**

Tel: 0131 322 6712

Web: www.petervardy.com/heritage



△ This tidy 560SEC had just 54,901 miles showing on the clock.

▷ Arctic White paintwork looked to be in great condition.

▽ Inside there was matching cream leather trim.



Top tips

Car finance choices

There are many ways to finance your next Mercedes, but before you decide how best to do it, read our top tips.

- ⊕ Hire Purchase (HP) means you pay an initial deposit followed by fixed monthly payments. The car is owned by the finance company until your final payment, so if you need to sell the car earlier, you'll have to repay the outstanding debt first.
- ⊕ Always keep loan terms as short as possible. Note that HP and some personal loans can incur early repayment fees.
- ⊕ Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) is like HP except that at the end of the contract you can either return the car, buy the car (by paying a substantial balloon payment that's agreed at the start) or trade the car in against a replacement. Monthly repayments are cheaper than HP.
- ⊕ You could buy using a credit card and many offer 0 per cent on balance transfers, with fees of just 3-4 per cent APR. Rotate your balance between two or more cards and you could potentially pay the equivalent of less than 4 per cent APR.
- ⊕ Personal leasing or Personal Contract Hire (PCH) means you have the car for one, two or three years, with an agreed mileage limit. At the end of the contract period you hand back the car.
- ⊕ You are responsible for maintaining any car bought on PCH, PCP or HP. Only use PCH if you must have the latest model.



Auction spotlight

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

● **SLK230**

2.3-litre, manual, 2003/03-plate, 117,000 miles, **£1,050**

● **ML270 CDI**

2.7-litre, 2003/03-plate, 111,000 miles, **£1,500**

● **E320 CDI Saloon**

3.2-litre 2003/03-plate, 79,000 miles, **£2,000**

● **CLK220 CDI Sport**

2.1-litre, 2007/57-plate, 123,000 miles, **£2,775**

● **SL500**

5-litre, 2003/03-plate, 115,000 miles, **£4,550**

● **SLK200**

1.8-litre, auto, 2005/05-plate, 59,000 miles, **£4,600**

● **S320 CDI**

3-litre, 2007/07-plate, 58,000 miles, **£6,400**

● **SL500**

5-litre, 2003/03-plate, 43,000 miles, **£6,625**

● **A180 CDI Sport**

1.5-litre, manual, 2015/15-plate, 40,000 miles, **£8,900**

● **B180 SE**

1.6-litre, auto, 2015/15-plate, 14,000 miles, **£10,300**

● **E350 AMG Sport Estate**

3-litre, 2014/14-plate, 76,000 miles, **£10,300**

● **GLA200d AMG Line**

2.1-litre, manual, 2016/66-plate, 37,000 miles, **£12,900**

● **C300h AMG Line**

2.1-litre diesel/electric, 2016/65-plate, 69,000 miles, **£13,900**

● **C200 AMG Line Coupe**

2-litre, 2016/16-plate, 55,000 miles, **£17,000**

● **GLS350d AMG Line**

3-litre, 2016/66, 92,000 miles, **£26,500**

And remember...

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

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



TOP THREE

£10,000 fast estates

Fast, affordable and practical, there are many performance Mercedes estates in the used market that currently make great used buys. In fact, a £10,000 budget can bag you a range of cars to fit the bill. And if you were to opt for diesel power over petrol, then you can also add a form of frugality to the list of attributes, too.

Offering that little bit more class than other rivals, Sport or AMG-specification Stuttgart estates tend to deliver a rewarding blend of handling prowess and ride comfort. So, you can travel rapidly but still arrive unruffled and relaxed. These are three of our favourite 10 grand Mercedes estates.



C250 CDI AMG Sport (S204)

Good looking in AMG Sport guise and economical too, the 204-series C250 CDI Estate is a great combo. Overtaking and lugging heavy loads is a breeze thanks to huge torque on tap and annual road tax is cheap too. Official combined economy is well into the 50s, and most are admirably-specced, with things like Comand and leather upholstery, 18-inch alloys, heated front seats, and front and rear Parktronic likely to be included. Our budget could bag a facelifted example with around 60,000 miles.



E350 CDI Sport (S212)

Offering a similar blend of performance and economy, only on a larger scale, the S212 E350 CDI Sport makes an ideal family car. And with £10,000 buying a 2011 example with around 80,000 miles, the C-Class's bigger brother is just as good value too. It's quick off the mark and, once again, a welter of low-down torque ensures you're never left wanting when you need to press on. All cars are well kitted out, with alloys, leather, Comand, heated electric front seats, Bluetooth and an MP3/CD player as standard.



E55 AMG (S211)

At the opposite end of the sensible scale sits the S211 E55 AMG. If fuel economy isn't a priority, then you could be sitting behind the wheel of a 120,000-mile 2004 or 2005 Mercedes estate with supercar performance for just 10 grand. The M113 V8 lump boasts huge torque, enabling the E55 to blast past 62mph in less than five seconds and all whilst sitting comfortably in the lap of luxury. The standard specification also includes almost everything Mercedes had in its options cupboard at the time.

Latest products and accessories

Lorinser LM2R alloys for S-Class

German vehicle tuner Sportservice Lorinser has released a new one-piece, 21-inch, cast LM2R alloy wheel for the 223 S-Class. Available in three colours (chrome, hyper-silver and black), the unique design pays homage to popular wheels from the 1990s, yet looks completely contemporary. With an arch in the centre which makes it appear to be suspended from mock spokes and a recessed rim flange, the wheels are £870 each. Find out more at sportservice.lorinser.com.



Autoglym Super Clean Sanitiser

Autoglym has introduced its new Super Clean Sanitiser, suitable for most car interior and exterior surfaces. Meeting EN1276 anti-bacterial and EN14476 anti-viral standards, it is an ideal one-stop solution for those working in the motor trade, or for personal use at home. Unlike some other products, it has the scent and feel of a premium quality car valeting product. Available in 500ml, five-litre and 25-litre measures, it is available through Autoglym's franchise network, as well as online. A five-litre container costs £21. Full details can be found at www.autoglym.com.

MOMO Mod.3 steering wheel

If you ever use your Mercedes for competition, then the MOMO Mod.03 steering wheel might appeal to you. The deep dish offers the driver maximum control and the yellow leather marker on the top provides a quick reference to the position of the steering. Finished in either black suede or black leather, with two black or blue aluminium spokes, the racing wheels are produced in Italy with aluminium frames. List price is £221, with more information available at www.momo-uk.co.uk.



In Focus E350 CDI/Bluetec AMG Sport (W212)

Offering great value, the E350 CDI/Bluetec AMG Sport looks classy, offers impressive performance and is economical. There are over 80 examples offered for sale from £10,800, with 80 per cent having covered less than 70,000 miles. The most popular colours are black and white, making up nearly a half of all available.

60-second buying guide

Follow our top tips to quickly sort the good examples from the bad

Walk around

Inspect the alloys and tyres carefully, and budget for a refurb or new rubber if they're less than perfect. Same brand tyres all round is always a good sign and a full service history is essential. Spec should include Comand navigation, electric heated seats, leather upholstery, 18- or 19-inch alloys, folding mirrors, cruise control and Bluetooth.

Get inside

Check that the seats and general trim are undamaged and in good

condition. Also check that all electrics work as they should. Cup holder covers can become stuck if the auto close function fails and the air conditioning needs refreshing every year or two. Brake fluid changes are every two years and if a window auto-close doesn't work, it's either the motor or a fuse, which can be a common issue.

Start it up

Any hesitation or juddering from the engine suggests that injectors may have failed. Watch out

for signs of turbo leaks or cracked hoses. Has it ever been tuned? Some have and it may cause an issue. If you notice any steering wheel vibration the engine mounts are probably starting to wear out.

Check the paperwork

Contact your local Mercedes dealer to see if a car you're looking at (or have bought) is affected by any recalls (there were quite a few on this model) and consult the DVLA's online recall checker for more information. An accompanying folder with old receipts and paperwork to back up the service history bodes well.



Be sure to inspect the alloy wheels in case they need refurbishing.



Pioneer VREC- DZ600 dash cam

Pioneer has revealed a new high-performance VREC-DZ600 full HD dash camera. Product features include a wide 160-degree recording angle, a rotating camera head to record inside or outside, a 1.5-inch full colour LCD screen, full HD recording, GPS data tagging, smartphone connectivity, continuous, event, manual and parking modes, a 16GB microSD card and a hardware kit available for 24/7 surveillance. All recordings are overlaid with GPS data, including vehicle position, speed, direction of travel and time. The retail price is £169.99 and you can visit www.pioneer-car.eu.

Top Mercs

Knowing the Mercedes marketplace means you can make the best buying decisions. But that requires up-to-date market information, which is why we generate fresh Mercedes market data every couple of months, to give you, the Mercedes enthusiast, the best information possible

The top 10 best-selling used Mercedes

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

- 1 **C-Class** (24.8%)
- 2 **A-Class** (24.8%)
- 3 **E-Class** (14.5%)
- 4 **GLA-Class** (4.7%)
- 5 **CLA-Class** (4.8%)
- 6 **GLE/M-Class** (3.9%)
- 7 **SLC/SLK-Class** (2.6%)
- 8 **B-Class** (3.6%)
- 9 **GLC-Class** (4.2%)
- 10 **S-Class** (2.2%)



What's in a colour?

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

- 1 **Black** (28.2%)
- 2 **Silver** (21.0%)
- 3 **White** (16.6%)
- 4 **Grey** (16.7%)
- 5 **Blue** (10.1%)



Miles ahead

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

Less than 50,000 miles **71.7%**

Between 50,000 and 80,000 miles **16.1%**

More than 80,000 miles **12.2%**

Fuel watch

How are used Mercedes powered?

Diesel	Petrol	Hybrid	Full electric
66.0%	30.2%	3.55%	0.25%



Just the spot

Launched in 2012, the R231 was the most advanced SL to date, combining style with performance and prestige, and its the early models that are proving to be great value in the current market

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES TERRY OBORNE

The ethos of the original Mercedes-Benz 300SL of 1954 was the pursuit of lightness, and 57 years later that goal was reaffirmed for the new generation of the glamorous roadster. While the R231 model SL unveiled in late 2011 might have passed for a second facelift of its predecessor, it was all new and built almost entirely from aluminium, the bodysell alone some 110kg less than that of the R230. "Rather as if a heavyweight passenger had got out of the car," commented the man responsible for its design, Dr Thomas Rudlaff.

There was other impressive tech too, as would be expected from a new iteration of Stuttgart's most prestigious roadster, including

higher efficiency engines, evolved safety systems like Pre-Safe, Neck-Pro, Attention Assist and Adaptive Brake. Three variations on the still astonishing, retractable Vario-roof were offered (metal, glass or Magic Sky Control), while Magic Vision control regulated the amount of water sent to the screen wipers and the sound system was claimed to give concert hall acoustics with the roof open or closed. Waving a foot under the car to open the boot is common now – but the R231 was the first car to have that feature.

All seriously impressive stuff, and sufficient to fend off challengers, and it came at the customary SL cost, prices starting at £72,500 when the R231 went on sale in the UK in June 2012. But big prices mean heavy depreciation,

and now early examples are to be seen advertised for a shade under £20,000. On the face of it that represents fantastic value for money, but the question must be asked: is this the best bargain luxury roadster, or does the huge technology under the skin mark it out as a maintenance prospect only for the deep pocketed?

Design, evolution

The only non-aluminium parts in the R231's construction were the magnesium sections of the rear floor, and steel implants to boost the strength of the front body pillars; nonetheless the new roadster shape was a clear evolution of the original, twin-headlamped R230 of 2002. The names for the two models that initially made up the UK range

were also carried over from the R231: SL350 and SL500.

The former used the new BlueDirect normally aspirated 3.5-litre V6 engine, with power and emissions improved by 30 per cent over the previous V6, giving 302bhp at an enthusiastic 6,500rpm and 273lb ft from 3,500rpm. The latter's motor, a 4.7-litre V8 biturbo, was also new and labelled BlueDirect, and produced 429bhp at 5,250rpm and a hefty 516lb ft torque from not much more than tickover, 1,800rpm.

Both models used the seven-speed 7G-Tronic Plus automatic gearbox, further optimised for the new models. Standard suspension on both models was semi-adaptive, with Active Body Control (ABC) an option on both. Steering was the Direct Steer speed-sensitive set up.

Spotted
for salePRIVATE SELLER
SL5002013/62, white, black leather,
glass roof, 28,000 miles,
£26,000,
North London

“The engines,
whether the V6
or the V12, are
super smooth”

The SL500 cost £83,500, around £11,000 more than the SL350.

By the end of 2012 the R231 range had doubled to include two Affalterbach models, the SL63 AMG and SL65 AMG, at £110,000 and £167,000 respectively. The SL63, which arrived in late summer 2012, used the M157 5.5-litre biturbo already seen in other upscale models and producing 530bhp at 5,500rpm, and 590lb ft from 2,000rpm; output rose if the AMG Performance pack was specified (see page 84). Power was transmitted through the multi-mode, seven-speed AMG Speedshift MCT auto gearbox. The M279 six-litre V12 in the SL65 AMG, which went on sale in autumn 2012, kicked out 621bhp and an enormous 737lb ft torque (1,000Nm), an AMG Performance pack option not deemed necessary. This was mated to the seven-speed AMG Speedshift Plus 7G-Tronic auto gearbox. Both AMGs had ABC suspension as standard together with a special, firmer AMG spring rating. All four cars ran 19-inch five-spoke AMG rims with 255/35 front and 285/30 rear tyres, with 20-inch rear rims optionally available.

July 2014 saw the line-up

tweaked, principally the SL350 replaced by the SL400 with its three-litre V6 engine. Two turbos meant that despite the capacity drop, power increased by 26bhp and torque by nearly a third to 254lb ft. It wore AMG front/rear aprons and side-skirts, and featured a flat-bottomed steering wheel and special interior trim. The SL63's power rose to 576bhp and 664lb ft torque and it gained a limited-slip diff. The specs thereafter continued unchanged until early 2016 when the facelifted R231 was introduced; for this Buyer's Guide we'll stick to the pre-facelift cars.

Driving the R231

You don't spend nearly six decades refining a car without seeing some impressive results, and the R231 probably as close to perfection as is possible. The engines, whether the smallest V6 or the V12, are super smooth and even the SL400 will scorch to 62mph in 5.2 seconds (the SL65 does it only one second quicker). Handling has come a long way since the staid R129 formula, the ABC giving wonderous, roll-free cornering, although the cars without it are superbly balanced too.

For all the R230's high tech, it brought with it a mediocre level of interior build quality. This improved through that model's facelifts, and the R231 finally buried the worry over cheap trim. The seats are great to look at and equally fine to sit in, and the steering wheel and dash are well made. If there are criticisms, these are that some of minor switchgear is too small to easily use on the move, and that the dash in its entirety doesn't look much different from lower series Mercedes models.

What you'll pay

The sizeable discounts Mercedes gave on R231s and the consequent brisk sales only added to the usual big car depreciation, with the result that some 2012 and 2013 SL350s have now dipped under £20,000. But a rock bottom price doesn't have to mean six-figure miles, because SLs of all generations are usually special occasion cars, not daily drivers. Broadly, the price range for SL350s is between £20,000 and £25,000, and if you want the SL500 the negotiations start at £25,000.

The SL400 with its sport

Just the facts

Mercedes-Benz SL350 (R231)

ENGINE M276 3,498cc V6
POWER 302bhp@6,500rpm
TORQUE 273lb ft@3,500-5,250rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 1,685kg
0-62MPH 5.9sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 39.2mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 169g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2012-2014

Mercedes-Benz SL400 (R231)

ENGINE M276 2,996cc V6 biturbo
POWER 328bhp@5,250-6,000rpm
TORQUE 354lb ft@1,600-4,000rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 1,735kg
0-62MPH 5.2sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 36.7mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 178g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2014-2016

Mercedes-Benz SL500 (R231)

ENGINE M278 4,663cc V8 biturbo
POWER 429bhp@5,250rpm
TORQUE 516lb ft@1,800-3,500rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 1,785kg
0-62MPH 4.6sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 31.0mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 212g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2012-2021

Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG (R231)

ENGINE M157 5,461cc V8 biturbo
POWER 530bhp@5,500rpm
TORQUE 590lb ft@2,000-4,500rpm
TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD
WEIGHT 1,845kg
0-62MPH 4.3sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 28.5mpg
CO2 EMISSIONS 231g/km
YEARS PRODUCED 2012-2016

Fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; maximum speed electronically governed.

equipment and road tax friendly 178g/km CO2 rating is a popular choice, prices starting from just over £25,000. Pre-facelift R231s are young enough, just, to feature on franchised Mercedes-Benz dealer forecourts, but there won't be many and their prices are likely to be towards the top of the band, £23,000 to £24,000 for an SL350.

The SL63 AMG isn't as scarce as you might think, Auto Trader alone offering 13 when we checked. This is going to cost you £30,000 minimum, but you'll get a nice low sub 50,000 miler for that; the top price is £45,000, with 20,000 miles. By contrast, SL65 AMGs really are as rare as hens' teeth, and you're unlikely to see anything below £40,000. ▶

R231 SL Inside and out



Mercedes Specialist
Autoclass Garage's Steve Dickens is our technical consultant for this Buyer's Guide

Powertrain

In terms of build quality and reliability, the R231 is a typical Mercedes of its time: a thoughtful and thorough evolution of what went before, with problems ironed out, and according to Steve Dickens of Mercedes specialist Autoclass Garage in Milton Keynes, there are few, if any problems to deal with. "They're good cars based on proven systems from the C-Class and E-Class, and with none of the problems of the R230," he says.

The sole engine issue he raises is the timing chain tensioner, if indeed it can be described as an issue. "The M276, M278 and M157 engines, six- and eight-cylinder, are all based around the same design, and sometimes the timing chain tensioners on each cylinder-head rattle on

start-up," he explains. "This is because the oil drains away overnight but it is more annoying than it is serious." Mercedes-Benz issued a technical document detailing the cure, which is to install a check valve in the cylinder-head to prevent oil draining - this fix was carried out free of charge under warranty, but is now chargeable.

The 7G-Tronic gearbox (and the MCT version for the AMGs) should be a trouble-free transmission, as long as it's regularly serviced. "It's been used for donkey's years and gives good service, but can suffer from gearbox speed sensor issues, which makes it stick in third," Steve tells us. "Replacement of the electronic control unit will rectify this."

Both the engines and gearboxes are tried and tested combos that rarely develop issues.



Suspension, steering and braking system

This was the department of nightmares on R230s, the ill-fated 'drive-by-wire' Sensotronic Brake Control system (SBC) requiring an expensive overhaul at a certain mileage, and the first generation ABC suspension giving problems. On the R231's braking, Steve sets buyers' minds at rest: "This is a normal set up, SBC has gone," he says. "But check for judders when braking, which could be a sign of the warped discs."

The R230's suspension problems have been largely banished, although Steve does recommend the R231's ABC system (if fitted) be examined to ensure it operates correctly. "These cars' suspension is normally reliable, but on the road test make sure to check the ride, and also the ABC's functionality and Comfort/Sport settings."

Similarly, the steering should be trouble free, but given its



complexity it needs to be checked out. "I'm not aware of any issues with these systems," says Steve. "However, the power-assistance is electronic, so it's worth checking for correct operation, and listen for odd noises as the steering moves from lock-to-lock."

The problems of its predecessor have all been ironed out here.

Spotted
for sale

USED CAR DEALER
SL63 AMG

2013/13, metallic black,
red leather, 42,000 miles,
£30,995, Surrey



The body is made from composite or galvanised panels, so rust is no issue.

Big prices mean heavy depreciation, and now early examples are seen advertised for a shade under £20,000

Bodywork and wheels

Steve has yet to see corrosion anywhere on an R231: "All panels are galvanised or composite, so rust shouldn't be present," he stresses, "but you should check the paintwork and panel gaps, as anything untoward would signify serious accident damage and would be expensive to rectify."

The incredible Vario-roof has, despite its immense complexity, proved remarkably

reliable on all SLKs and SLs using it over the last 25 years. Nonetheless, it's an aspect that needs inspection, Steve believes: "It's a good system and proven on other models - I've not seen any issues. But check the operation and smoothness of the system as it goes up and down. You don't want to hear knocks and bangs as the parts move."



Interior and electronics

The numerous electrical glitches that many Mercedes models suffered in the early 2000s as the cars switched from analogue to more complex systems were mostly gone by the time of the late R230s, and the R231 boasts even better reliability on this front. But it's not a perfect record, as Steve has found.

"The auxiliary battery warning light may come on, and if so the auxiliary battery under the rear bench where a seat would be will probably have to be replaced - they often go faulty," he warns. "Also check the operation of all switches and that everything works - seats, air conditioning and so on." Regardless of model, the R231 has a gorgeous leather interior, which is a key part of the roadster's appeal, so don't buy a car with any damage as repair will not be cost effective.

Electronics are another strong point for the R231, but it's worth checking over all of the systems to be on the safe side. Check carefully for signs of interior damage, as repairs are often costly.



R231 SL Inside and out

Verdict

This is a big year for the SL: the eighth model is due to appear in the autumn, and the R107 model celebrates its 50th birthday. So why not join in the celebrations by purchasing an R231? It's hardly cheap at £20,000 to £30,000 but in relative terms it is fantastic value, especially if you go for the SL400, which in some ways is the best model even though it's not wearing an AMG badge.

The cars are likely to be in good shape usually with quite low mileage, and are such good roadsters to drive. But the usual caveats apply: although impressively reliable, it was once a very expensive Mercedes and is going to need expensive upkeep to stay in shape, so make sure your pocket's are deep enough for that.



AMG Performance Package

Just in case the SL63 AMG didn't feel quick enough, customers were offered the AMG Performance Package priced at around £12,500, cars so equipped marked out by red brake calipers (unless they were specifically deselected to be finished in grey). This boosted power by 27bhp to 557bhp and torque 74lb ft to 664lb ft, shaving the 0-62mph time by a tenth of a second to just 4.2 seconds. The speed limiter was also raised, increasing top speed from 155mph to 186mph.

The price also included a limited-slip differential, carbon fibre bootlid spoiler, carbon fibre engine cover and a special AMG steering wheel. While reviewing extras, customers might also have wanted to add the ceramic brakes at £8,400 and further developed AMG suspension, which was two-stage adjustable. Some of the package's features could be ordered individually.

Spotted
for saleOFFICIAL MERCEDES RETAILER
SL3502014/14, metallic black, black
leather, 38,200 miles, £23,500,
Mercedes-Benz of Sheffield

Typical basic servicing costs

(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE
SL350/SL400/SL500	£225	£335
SL63 AMG	£245	£335

Quotes from Autoclass Garage

Non routine servicing costs

- ★ Install the oil check valve in the cylinder-head to prevent oil starvation of the timing chain tensioners **£535**
- ★ Replace a failed speed sensor electronic plate in the seven-speed transmission **£795**
- ★ Fit new front brake discs and brake pads (SL400/SL63 AMG) **£460/£1,395**
- ★ Replace the auxiliary battery **£153**
- ★ Four premium brand tyres (255/35R19 front, 285/30R19 rear) **£680**

Buyer's checks

- ✓ On all engines the secondary chain tensioners can rattle when cold, due to oil starvation; an M-B recommended fix is available
- ✓ As on all Mercedes auto gearboxes of that time, a failed speed sensor can make it stick in one gear
- ✓ Check for judder under braking, caused by warped discs
- ✓ The ABC suspension has proved reliable by now but still check the car rides smoothly
- ✓ Bodywork should not be rusting this soon - if corrosion is present this suggests sub-standard accident repair
- ✓ If the battery light comes on the auxiliary battery needs to be replaced, located under the rear seat base

What you'll pay

- £18,000 - £20,000** Rock bottom price, which will get an early 2012/2013 SL350
- £20,000 - £25,000** Main price range for SL350 models with under 60,000 miles
- £25,000 - £30,000** Most pre-facelift SL500s are in this range, £25,000 is the SL400's starting price
- £30,000 - £35,000** Early SL63 AMG's models with under 50,000 miles on the clock

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June/July 2021 issue
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Exit strategy

Having enjoyed the CLK hot rod but stung by the maintenance and fuel bills, it was decided the time had come to pass on the Affalterbach torch

WORDS & IMAGES DAVID SUTHERLAND

FACT SHEET

CARS 2017 X253 GLC220d/2007 C209 CLK63 AMG

OWNER David Sutherland

LOCATION Surrey, UK

PURCHASED September 2017/April 2016

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT The GLC passed its first MOT, and the CLK63 AMG has now left the Mercedes Enthusiast fleet with a new owner



△ After a challenging ownership, the CLK departs David's life.

▷ Inside proved to be a huge step up from the A-Class it replaced.

▷△ In recent months, the car had sat tucked away in the garage.

“I was both saddened and relieved to see it disappear down the road with clouds of vapour from the cold V8's quad exhausts”

▽ The pillarless C209 still cut a great looking shape by any standard.

After four and a half years, the CLK63 AMG was driven away from my house and out of my life, sold on to its fifth owner keen to experience AMG life, which I can promise will be one of extremes. I was both saddened and relieved to see it disappear down the road with clouds of vapour pouring from the cold V8's quad exhausts, because it rates as the best Mercedes-Benz I have owned but also the worst.

I bought it in April 2016, having just sold the diesel A-Class I had owned for nine years. So I was going to a car with three times the engine capacity and four-and-a-half times the power, and from a power to weight ratio of 80bhp per tonne to 270bhp per tonne. And from a basically-equipped hatchback to a comprehensive spec, right down to cooled as well as heated seats.



M156 bark into life under enhanced fuelling, and summer driving was wonderful with all of the windows down, yet with hardly any wind buffeting. And to me, the pillarless C209 is the prettiest Merc of its time.

I wasn't expecting an AMG

I had originally wanted a late CLK55 AMG, feeling that the 63 was overkill, but 2005-on facelifted 55s (with uprated braking, better dashboard and Bluetooth connectivity) were very rare. After spotting this 63 advertised online, I went to view it, didn't immediately want to buy it but a few weeks later did so.

German thoroughbreds

When launched, the CLK63 AMG cost £65,000, much the same price as a basic Porsche 911. By 2016 the Porsche still commanded at least £25,000 but the Mercedes was £15,000 and too cheap to resist. Being based on the 209-series, the 63 isn't the sporting thoroughbred the Zuffenhausen machine is, but AMG did a fantastic job, producing a car that is epic to drive and with great poise, when 6.2-litre power and weight could so easily have overwhelmed the chassis.

There was no such thing as a mundane trip in the 63, even driving four miles to the supermarket on a dim February lifted my day. I particularly loved hearing it start from cold in mid-winter, hearing the incredible

to cost the same to run as an A-Class, but was taken aback at how much corrective maintenance (it never broke down) was required, from a failed individual coil pack to replacement cylinder-head gaskets. It leaked oil from various places all the time I had it.

The amount I spent has been detailed in past Running Reports, and while some would have cut and run at an early stage, I decided to make this one of the best of the 65 examples (half of which are the Black Series) sold new in the UK. But eventually I ran out of commitment, and once I was spending more time wondering what four-figure job would be next (such as the composite front brake discs and their pads at £2,000) I realised it was the right time to say farewell.

If the new owner is really hard on brakes, he must do that job fairly soon, but he got a car in much better shape than when I took it on. The CLK63 AMG, when new and now, is an expensive indulgence to be enjoyed. The new owner's text to me, "this is so fast!", suggests he will.



Lockdown blues

With current restrictions in place, the E55 AMG has seen limited miles, but it's the regular daily driver that's caused the issues this month

WORDS & IMAGES REED HITCHCOCK

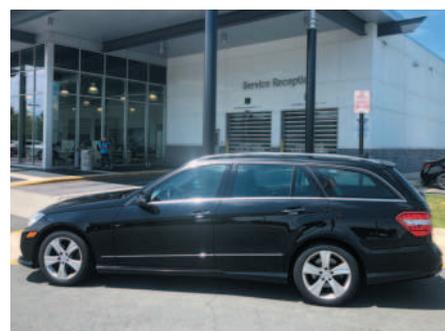
FACTSHEET

CARS 2011 S212 E350/2002 W163 ML320/1979 W108 280SEL/2001 E55 AMG

OWNER Reed Hitchcock LOCATION Virginia, USA

PURCHASED July 2017/September 2018/July 2020/September 2020

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Slowly putting miles on the E55 and finding faults on the S212



In these days of lockdowns, social distancing and remote working, the term 'daily driver' doesn't really mean what it does when things were more, well, normal. To wit, I tell people that the W210 E55 is my daily driver, but in truth I've been using it about two or three times per week since I first bought it. In total, I have added less than 2,000 miles to it in the seven months I've owned it. Not bad if you want to keep the miles down, but I wish my insurance cost reflected the lack of use.

I actually do drive every day:

my routine is an early morning trip to McDonalds (weekends included) to buy a coffee and a Diet Coke to sustain me through the day. Sure, I could brew coffee at home (and I often do on those days requiring just a little bit more caffeine), but I'm sure everyone can attest to the fact that it's just nice to get out of the house – even if it is just to cruise the neighbourhood and hit the Drive-thru. The thing is, I don't generally use the E55 for my morning run because unless I have a passenger to

hold it, there is no good place to put a tray of drinks. The S212 E350 4Matic, however, has a terrific little shelf (where a shifter really should live) that holds a tray of McDrinks perfectly, thank you very much.

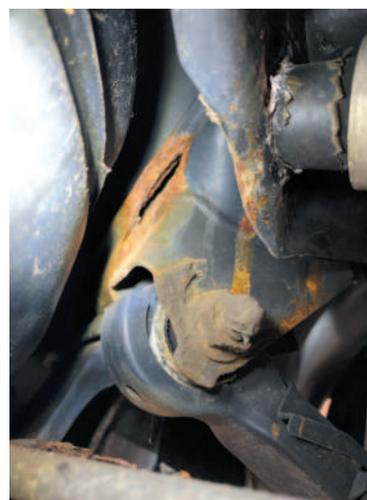
Hard to ignore

So given that I have spent more wheel time in the E350 Estate of late, I found it particularly irritating when the service reminders started triggering. First it warned me that an 'A' service was forthcoming, then it was imminent, and before I knew it I'd missed it by one, two, three days and so on. In the bitter cold, I had less than no interest in

crawling around underneath the car, draining the oil and fiddling with the air filters, so I made an appointment to have it done by my friends at Silver Star Motors in Vienna, Virginia. Having been so pleased with the same work previously on the E55, I also asked them to replace the pitted windshield. Finally, I asked them to check what seemed to be a squeaky belt or pulley and to give the car a good once-over.

The pulley noise turned out to be a combination of the serpentine belt,

then it was imminent, and before I knew it I'd missed it by one, two, three days and so on. In the bitter cold, I had less than no interest in



△△ There hasn't been much chance to get out and properly use the E55.

△△ Reed has only managed 2,000 miles in the car since buying it.

△ The faithful E350 was treated to a service and some small repairs.

△ Rusted subframe was apparently a common issue on the 212-series.

tensioner and both idler pulleys. All told, the visit cost me \$1,631 (about £1,180), but the story didn't end there. As part of the requested once-over, the technician found that the rear subframe has rusted through on both sides, sharing photos to prove it. Apparently this is a known issue on 212s of a certain age, but that didn't soften the \$3,000 (£2,150) estimate to repair. Since it takes some time to get the parts, I'll be squirrelling away my pennies to pay for that work sometime in the spring. Meanwhile, I'm thinking maybe the E55 needs more road time.

To wit, I tell people that the W210 E55 is my daily driver



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Tinkering time

With little to do during lockdown, it's served as a useful period to find potential issues on both cars, and sure enough there were a few to cover

WORDS & IMAGES WILLIAM TERRINGTON

FACTSHEET

CARS 1989 W201 190E/2011 C207 E250

OWNER William Terrington

LOCATION Staines, Surrey

PURCHASED March 2014/March 2017

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT A few replacement parts have found their way onto the 190E and the E250 has had a service carried out



At the moment, I have to admit that things are rather quiet due to current circumstances, however this has not stopped me enjoying the cars and making future plans. The 190E has proven healthy, the only recent issue being the cooling fan. In slow moving or stationary traffic, I noticed the temperature slowly climbing, so I replaced the fan switch, as it does not have an electric fan but an electromagnetic coupling.

This seems to have solved the issue and was thankfully not expensive. But with that in mind, as I've haven't been driving the car so much lately, it's given me the opportunity to check over and look out for any other things that might require attention before they cause an issue. For instance, when the next brake renewal is due, the calipers will need refurbishing, along with new back plates. But thinking long term, it's probably a good idea to fit some new hubs and bearings at the same time.

The battery did go flat recently due to the combination of less regular use and the snow. Admittedly, I didn't have a

battery charger, simply because I have never needed one. So I had to call the AA out to help and as it turned out, the mechanic who came round used to work on these cars many years ago and we ended up having a chat about it. In addition to confirming that nothing was draining the battery, which was a relief, he also told me that the engine was the smoothest M102 he had seen in quite a while. I purchased a battery charger soon afterwards.

Wiper woes

Also, I noticed lately that the wiper motor had been running rather slow, but after taking the car out for a long drive to properly charge the battery, it

was soon working at speed again. It did get me thinking again though, as if I had needed to replace the motor, to access it I would need to remove the plastic scuttle panel trim at the base of the windscreen.

Given that this trim is a little weathered, I thought I might as well replace it anyway, as new plastics really do smarten a car up.

As for the E250, it has had an 'A' service and new wiper blades at our local

specialist, and I carried out its usual spring clean of the interior and engine bay. The lack of activity means that it is only covering around 1,000 miles per year at present, however that did prove helpful balancing the extra miles I added to it when the 190E had its problems.

The spare time I've found myself with recently is also being used to clear the garage and paint the walls and floor, ready for when I can get the roof professionally replaced. This involved removing some interesting examples of DIY, courtesy of previous owners. The plan is to garage the E-Class in the future, although there is space for two in the large area and I find myself craving a Mercedes from the 1970s. Hopefully I can save up for one sometime soon.

△ Keeping up with the 190E's maintenance has been time consuming.

△ The 190E still lives outside, which means it suffered in the snow.

△△ Recent cold weather was a factor in the battery going flat.

▽ E250 has had a spring clean and a service at a specialist.

“The mechanic told me that the engine was the smoothest M102 he had seen in quite a while”



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C240, 1998, 122,000 miles, black, auto, MOT until June 2021, cruise control, drives great, central locking, front electric windows, owned for 6 years, good condition, £600. Tel: 07880 698564. Stanford-le-Hope **[CM34P1]**



CLK 230, Tiptronic, 2002, silver, two-tone grey leather, FSH, M-B specialist last 9 years, two owners from new, potential classic, dry storage, 151,000 miles, AMG alloys, no expense spared, in need of attention to wheel arches, will be sold with full MOT, private plate NOT Included, £2,000. Tel: 07710 198665. Halifax **[CM34W2]**



W126 420SE, 1991, 94,082 miles, Almandine, ivory leather upholstery, MOT until Dec 21, FSH, all MOTs since I have had it back in 2003, new front and rear chrome bumpers from Mercedes dealership, bumpers and front wings done late last year (2020), 2 previous owners, £POA. Tel: 01457 239872. Mob: 07943 514391. Oldham **[BCW1]**



CL500 AMG, 1998, this car is the last of the fantastic 140 body S-Class coupe, so far as I can tell one of the last 10 on the road from 1998, solid engine means it is a joy to drive, but I need a new owner who will love it as it deserves. £2,500 ONO. Tel: 07900 908854. Northamptonshire **[BCW2]**



190D, runs well, been dry stored for 18 months, no tax or MOT, a few small patches of rust, for more pictures please call me, £POA. Tel: 07870 514757. Merseyside **[BCW3]**



SL320, convertible, 1996, 44,700 miles, ruby, light leather upholstery, children's seats, excellent condition throughout, one owner, summer use only, always garaged, comes with hard top and private Reg, only for sale as we are downsizing and will not have garage space, £17,950 ONO. Tel: 07715 856174. Glasgow **[BCW4]**

280E W123, 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]**



C180, 1999, classic estate, manual, petrol, requires ignition reprogramming (immobile), battery, indicator lens, £1,000 spent, receipts, documents, history, excellent mechanics, 150,000 miles, small blemishes, £1,950 OVNO or part exchange for combo van. Email: jameskiddbrown@hotmail.com, Dorset **[BCW5]**



W123 230CE, 1982, saloon, 200,000 miles, petrol, one owner from new, excellent condition, selling as it has failed its MOT and I am too old to deal with it, small hole in chassis, bush/pin on subframe badly worn, still good car, just needs to be put right, £POA. Tel: 01380 812807. Devizes **[BCW6]**



V220 AMG, E-Class, Bluetec, convertible, 2016, 17,000 miles, like new throughout, white, navy blue top, cream and navy leather trim, cream carpets, headlining AMG over mats, unmarked AMG alloys with four new tyres, £20,000 ONO. Tel: 07944 732666. Essex **[BCW7]**



SL350, auto, 2003, one lady owner from new, only 20,100 miles, FMBSH, garaged from new, two door, convertible, fully electric hard top, black leather interior, petrol, totally original, for more information call, £9,850 ONO. Tel: 07790 92833. Lancaster **[BCW8]**



SLK 230, 2001, 59,000 miles, MOT until July 2021, apart from a few rust spots the car is in very good condition, mechanically sound, all windows, wing mirrors and roof function correctly, £900. Tel: 01323736996. Eastbourne **[BCW9]**



280 SLC, 1975, rare pillarless coupe, factory air con, very stunning, excellent condition, white, dark navy leather interior, alloy wheels, good tyres, been restored as its in immaculate condition, original interior & carpets, runs very well, Mercedes service history & bills from SL Shop, a good appreciating asset, priced very sensible at £14,990. Tel: 07958 431991. Croydon **[ABW1]**

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SL500 R129, 96 N-Reg, 108,000 miles, 320bhp, 5.0L, V8, 12 months MOT until November 2021, service history from main dealer and specialists, great runner, everything works, hard-top included, free hard-top stand and Richbrook breathable cover, new distributor caps and rotors, 4 good tyres, £8,250 ONO. Tel: 07976 939572. Worcester **[ABW3]**



E320 A124, left-hand drive, imported from USA (Texas) in 2017 after owning for 4 years, 92,000 miles, runs beautifully, roof inoperative, leak from rear bow lock cylinder, service history from ownership, including \$6,000 service at Houston Mercedes-Benz in 2015 (less than 10k miles ago), £POA. Tel: 07522 978741. Banchory **[ABW5]**



A209 CLK, 2003, Designo, 95,000, full service history, 4 former owners, MOT until 20/07/21, Mocca Black, nappa leather, Alcantara windscreen pillars, new price was £48,750, £10,500 in options, in good order for any trial/inspection, £4,995 ONO. Tel: 01423 526842. Mob: 07946 837529. England **[ABW6]**



SLK32, 2002, black exterior, black leather, 60,000 miles, Xenons, full Mercedes-Benz service history, £11,950. Tel: 07818 420620. Goodwood **[ABW10]**



190E, 1993, 165,000 miles, still runs like a dream, pleasure to drive, fantastic original finish in Almandine Red, 1.8 ohv engine with Bosch fuel injection ignition, automatic dual mode gearbox, power steering, 5 classic alloys, electric sun-roof - tilt and full opening, electric windows x 4, reversing sensors, original Blaupunkt radio, alarm system, recent new brake pads and discs front and rear, new blower motor fan, new thermostat controls, workshop manual, MOT until November, enjoyed for 20 years, £1,850 ONO. Tel: 01614 371407. Manchester **[CM33W2]**



C220 Elegance, 1999, low mileage of 89,250, immaculate condition, genuine one family owner, 220 CDI turbodiesel engine, very well specked car, garaged for most of its life, silver exterior paint in good order, immaculate interior, boot spoiler, more pictures available, £2,800. Tel: 07583 613521. Tamworth **[ABW8]**



CL500, 2000, 2 door, coupe, petrol, automatic, 110,000 miles, maroon, beige leather interior, fully loaded, MOT until July 2021, a couple of minor issues, £2,995 ONO. Tel: 07749 606030. Ipswich **[CM33W1]**



E320cdi, estate, rare petrol V6, Mercedes Piccadilly plus one owner, 48,000 miles, very special car, comes with heated electric memory seats, upgraded oval cut alloys, electric glass panoramic roof, heated seats, folding mirrors, CD stereo hi-fi, stunning condition, seven seats so great family car, future classic, £5,995. Tel: 07961 808069. London **[ABW11]**



R129 SL500, 1995, blue, black, 109,000, full service history, well maintained, ready to enjoy, owned by an enthusiast which is the reason for a lot of the preventative maintenance, comes with 2 original keys, hardtop stand, service book and a load of receipts, £POA. Tel: 07525 437205. Leicester **[CM33W4]**



E240 T, avantgard, automatic, 7 seater, always cared for by local specialist, 12 months mot, drives superb, recent tyres brakes all round, numerous oil filter changes, handbooks, medical kit, spare wheel, tools all unused, an extra headrests for the extra seat, £1,595. Tel: 07398 516702. Leicestershire **[CM33W6]**



500SL R107, 1985, V8, auto, petrol, blue, 108,000 miles, great condition, taxed to April 2021, MOT, original hard top, soft top, rear seats & belts, wind deflector, radio, extensive history, owner's manual, original tools and service book, £16,500 ONO. Tel: 07956 116016. Middlesex **[CM33W10]**



W210 E55 AMG, 1998, only 96,000 miles, MOT with no advisories, major works and major service completed at MB, confident you will not find a better mechanical example, alloys/tyres all perfect, lovely for age, amazing example, FSH, serious offers considered, call for more info, £POA. Tel: 07870 963662. Leicestershire **[CM33W14]**

300 CE, 1990, G Reg, 33,000 from new, 2 previous owners (same family), full leather, electric sunroof, unused: spare wheel, first aid kit, ashtray, cigarette lighter, fire extinguisher, all electric seats etc., over mats original from new, everything working, a wonderful car, £POA. Tel: 07796 183851. London **[CM33]**

S202 C280, sport, estate, auto, 1997, silver, grey leather, rare low mileage example, MB history, MOT'D and running well, £995. Tel: 01747 824018. Gillingham **[CM33]**

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S500L, 2007, 17,000 miles from new, 2 owners, full service history, Obsidian Black, black leather, comprehensive spec Inc. TV, recent major service, excellent in every way, £11,000. Tel: 07725 240000. Hertfordshire **[IJW2]**



E220, Reg No. M988AGO, mileage 103,139, convertible, silver, black soft top, heated front seats, tracker, well looked after and loved, very good condition, service history, £10,000. Tel: 01268 725128. Mob: 07812 947310. Basildon **[CM33W12]**



SLK55 AMG, 2008, facelift, great condition, 82,000 miles, full MB service history, stamped book and receipts, 2 keys, completely rust and blemish free, only 3 owners, always stored in heated garage, never seen a salty road, faultless. £9,950, Tel: 07570 278925. Wimbledon. **[CM33]**

SLK 32 AMG, silver, navy blue leather, 64,000 miles, full MB service history, stamped book and receipts, 2 keys, completely rust and blemish free, only 3 owners, always stored in heated garage, never seen a salty road, faultless. £9,950, Tel: 07570 278925. Wimbledon. **[CM33]**



SL55 AMG, 2006, rare F1 performance pack, with pano glass roof, 126,000 miles, future classic collectors model, the last of the supercharged AMGs, including sought after Mercedes Benz personalised licence plate worth approx. £1,700, £20,200 ONO. Tel: 07740 102169. Stirling **[IJW3]**



300SL, 1992, auto, amazing 29,500 miles, one Dr owner, full history, leather rear seat, cruise, air con, full leather, electric seats, 2 keys, great example, £16,995. Tel: 07961 808069. London **[IJW4]**



300CE W124, 1992/K, 65,500 miles, full history, air con, electric roof, windows, electric seats, superb car, £6,995 no offers. Tel: 07961 808069. London **[IJW5]**



E220, coupe, 1994, green, beige cloth, 150,000 miles, bought 2007, 2 previous owners, massive service history to 143,000 miles, little use from 2008, always garaged, stainless exhaust, slight rust on front wing, driver's seat worn, a basic E220 coupe but a good car and service history, £1,295. Tel: 01274 879433. Mob: 07984 463994. West Yorkshire **[IJP2]**



C180, petrol, manual, 5-speed, MOT until April 2021, 1993, original perfect alloy wheels, sunroof, owned for 7 years, Signal Red, 4 new tyres, radio cassette, 4 over mats, electric airo, heated mirrors, drives as Mercedes-Benz would expect, real head turner, immaculate inside and out, £2,400. Tel: 07933 108280. Bourne **[EFW18]**



240 CLK Avantgarde, automatic, 05 Reg, convertible, 2597cc, petrol, 104,000 miles, full service history, immaculate condition inside and out, just had an MOT, £3,250. Tel: 07811 893913. Essex **[DEW11]**



S320, 1999, Aqua Marine Blue, just 40,000 miles from new, incredible full Mercedes service history, fantastic condition, unmarked interior, must be seen, £5,750 OVNO. Tel: 07539 040074. Kent **[HIW8]**

G Wagon 463, 1993, 300, GDS, diesel, manual, 5 speed, beautiful Barolo Red, grey cloth, 184,000 miles, just serviced, full history, excellent condition inside & out, slight update to front & rear lights, turns heads everywhere, £POA. Tel: 07949 331978. Stowmarket **[IJ]**

500SL, 1991, metallic black, cream interior, 90,000 miles, good condition, runs extremely well, 3 owners, £10,950. Tel: 07957 364751. Surrey **[IJ]**



320CE, Cabriolet, 1994, 79,000 miles, almandine over claret, black leather, wood interior, major service at 76,000, EW, HS, PS with period mobile and stereo, very clean condition, ready to enjoy, service history, new MOT, £8,950. Tel: 07932 649999. Bristol **[HIW3]**



R129 SL500, 47,500 miles, FSH, Obsidian Black, panoramic hardtop, Helios nappa leather, automatic, airbags, cruise, Mercedes-Benz radio/cassette/CD changer, electric heated seats, registered 1998 by the 'Black' family of Black & Lizars, beautiful cherished example, £21,995. Tel: 07702 087915. Edinburgh **[HIW5]**



280 SLC, only 57,000 miles, 1981, full Mercedes service book stamped history, all the old MOT certificates & invoices to support work done, MOT until October 2020, very rare car, air conditioning, manual gearbox, good Condition, excellent soft navy leather seats, last owner had car for 8 years, hence the condition, original interior & carpets, runs very well, stereo, Cobra Alarm, alloys, good tyres, well maintained, £14,990. Tel: 07494 869469. Croydon **[HIW6]**

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230E, 1983, A reg, 167,000 mls, 12 months MOT, daily runner for the last 2.5 years, sunroof, p/steering, electric windows, aerial, automatic, 2 new tyres, battery, back exhaust, has some age-related issues, bargain at £1,750 ONO. Tel: 07974 252137. Preston **[HIW1]**



420 SEL, 1995, long-wheelbase, only done 47,800 miles, full Mercedes service history and MOT's, very good condition inside and out, only 2 previous owners, metallic blue, navy blue leather interior, full specification, electric heated rear seats, electric front memory seats and heated, cruise control, climate control A/C, electric sunroof/ windows, Just had full major service, MOT September 2019, ex chairman's car, very well maintained, runs smooth, £4,990. Tel: 07494 869469. Croydon **[HIW7]**



280SE W126, 1984, 146,000 miles, petrol, five-speed manual, leather, one owner, MOT March 2021, £2,300. Tel: 01473 624458. Suffolk **[HIW9]**



300 SE Fin Tail, auto, 1965, dark maroon, grey leather, air suspension, rare model, good original condition, more photos available, £12,000. Tel: 07711 327852. St Margaret's at Cliffe **[HIP1]**



280 SL, 1983, a much loved car, full history from new, guaranteed 33,900 miles, 2 owners, we have owned since 1985, purchased from Bramley Motors, looked after by John Haynes, lovely cream colour, beige check inserts in cream MBTEX seats, always garaged, £31,000. Tel: 01243 545469. Chichester **[HIW10]**



SE Avantgarde C Class, estate, two-litre, Kompressor, automatic, silver, 2007, very low mileage 21,000, one fastidious owner, annual main dealer service and MOT, full service history, leather upholstery heated seats, Parktronic, show room condition, £4,395. Tel: 07751 560818. Hertfordshire **[HIW12]**



SLK 320, special edition, 2004, 30,000 miles, auto, metallic silver, heated electric leather seats, radio, CD, HID / Xenon headlights, cruise, serviced MOT, very rare special edition with upgraded factory features inc split rim alloy wheels, full service history, comprehensive docs, £10,995. Tel: 07831 236666. Bedfordshire **[HIW13]**



SLK300, 2011, last of the R171, excellent condition & spec, full Mercedes service history, sports package, £8,250. Tel: 07969 768598. Herts **[HIW17]**



C36 AMG, rare, 120,000 miles, FSH, 12 month's MOT, very good condition inside & out, zero rust, very high specification including factory rear two seat configuration, electric & heated front seats, rear blind, electric sunroof, electric folding mirrors, climate control, original fire extinguisher, £POA. Tel: 07765 230873. Manchester **[HIW19]**



280SE, 1971, 3.5, coupe, V8, RHD, UK car, beautiful colour, 100,000 miles, my car for the last 5 years, wonderful to drive, great patina, never restored, no rust, lovingly cared for, column shift auto, blue leather interior, few owners, £68,000. Tel: 07866 361695. Email: dave@nospin.co.uk. Cornwall **[HIW20]**



E240 Elegance, S-reg, genuine 40,000 miles from new, silver, 3 owners, M-B history and book pack, two working remote keys, recent serviced, MOT until June 2021, excellent condition for year, very spacious, comfortable to drive, quick sale, no time wasters, just genuine offers, open to inspection and sensible queries, future classic, totally original and genuine example, £2,100. Tel: 07753 910491. London **[HIW14]**



190E, 1993, 165,000 miles, runs like a dream, pleasure to drive, fantastic original finish in Almandine Red, 1.8 ohv engine, Bosch fuel injection ignition, automatic dual mode gearbox, power steering, 5 classic alloys, electric sunroof - tilt and full opening, electric windows x 4, rev sensors, original Blaupunkt radio, alarm system, recent new brake pads and discs front and rear, new blower motor fan, new thermostat controls, including workshop manual, MOT until November, current owner for 20 years, reluctant sale, £1,850 ONO. Tel: 01614 371407. Manchester **[HIW24]**



320CE, convertible, rare five-speed manual version, Midnight Blue, only 131,000 miles, mushroom leather, blue piping, hydraulic soft top, dry use only for last 12 years, regularly undersealed, new clutch and exhaust fitted in last 12 months, £12,500. Tel: 01348 874495. Pembrokeshire **[HIW15]**



230s Fin Tail, 1965, stacked headlight model, six-cylinder column change, starts runs and drives, body is bare metal with all welding done, good interior, would make a great car with an easy project option, call for more info, £POA. Tel: 01754 830035. Skegness **[HIW21]**



SLK 230 Kompressor, 2001, 51-reg, petrol, automatic, in very good condition, only 110,000 miles, FSH, recent MOT and service just completed, including a set of four Mercedes alloys with all-weather tyres, £3,950 ONO. Tel: 07850 764536. Email: tedhutchin@gmail.com. Leicestershire **[HIW22]**



SL500 M119, 5.0, 32-valve, DOHC, V8, 109,000, FSH, beige leather interior, no tears, blue black metallic exterior, electric seats with memory, eight-hole alloys, hardtop included, lots of work done including engine mounts replaced, suspension top mounts replaced, steering arms replaced, tie rod ends replaced, light bulbs upgraded, wheel alignment, fuel filter replaced, power steering fluid changed, brake fluid changed, brake pads changed, spark plugs - Bosch fr8dc+, centre prop shaft bearing replaced, roof main lift hydraulic cylinders refurbished, new Bosch rotor arms and distributor cap, in good condition overall, does have a few odd marks/stone chips as you would expect of the mileage but nothing excessive, great condition hard top, comes with 2 original keys, hardtop stand, service book and a load of receipts, £10,950 OVNO. Tel: 07525 437205. Leicester **[HIW23]**



280SL, 1999, metallic black, grey leather, 40,000 miles, FSH, MOT until September 2020, second owner for the last 17 years, black hard and soft top, Becker radio cassette CD, full electric baby back seats, alloy wheels, excellent condition, £11,499 ONO. Tel: 07946 156964. Pinner **[HIP3]**



S63L, 2013, last of W221 Series, SS twin-turbo, only 42,000 miles, Java Tan interior, outstanding in every way, £39,950. Tel: 01483 282830. Surrey **[HIP2]**



SLK 200 Look Edition, 2009, 64,730 miles, Designo Mystic White, Designo two tone (White/Black) nappa leather upholstery, limited to 150 in UK, Goodyear Eagle F1 tyres, very good cond, real head turner, body, alloys and upholstery was refurbished in Sept 2018, £POA. Tel: 07908 092518. Knebworth **[GHW5]**

E320 Sportline, cabriolet, 1993, Bornite, light brown leather, five-speed, auto, same owner for 10 years, stored last 3 years, FSH, lots of bills, good condition, 12 months MOT, call for further details, £12,000. Tel: 07565 006735. Norfolk **[HI]**

300SL, 1990, beautiful example, 152,000 miles, reluctant sale after 3 cherished years, almost faultless bodywork, a lot of dealership history, major £4,000 service a couple of years ago, drives like a dream, Mother Of Pearl Grey coachwork, black leather interior, £6,495. Tel: 07831 259768. Chertsey **[HI]**



420 SEL, 1995, long-wheel base, rare, only done 46,900 miles, full Mercedes service history and MOTs, last of the great Mercedes, in very good condition inside and out, only 2 previous owners, navy blue, blue leather interior, full specification: electric heated & electric rear seats, electric front seats and heated, cruise control, climate control A/C, electric sunroof/ windows, alloys, just had a full major service, MOT till September 2020, £5,490. Tel: 07494 869469. Croydon **[GHW6]**



SL350, 2006, desirable facelift, more powerful, economical 3.5-litre V6 M272 engine, 7G-Tronic transmission, factory upgraded AMG body kit, 19-inch AMG alloys, 85,000 miles, full service history, pre-loved with all common faults remedied regardless of cost (boot seals, ECU, balance shaft etc.). Tel: 07810 308997. Suffolk **[GHW7]**



300CE, 1989, number plate included in sale (G3 OCE), car bought 18 months ago, excellent condition, previous owner had for 27 years, 112,000 miles, every MOT and receipts of all work ever done, including original purchase receipt, a great investment car, £7,495. Tel: 07595 906525. Surrey **[GHW8]**

R129 SL280, 2000, 75,000 miles, 3 owners, silver, grey leather, panoramic roof with blind, FSH, long MOT, lots of paperwork, open to sensible offers. Tel: 01643 224128. Minehead **[EF]**



E320, coupe, five-speed auto, 1994, brilliant silver, grey leather, sports design steering wheel, sporting chassis and other options, original book pack, spare keys, stored for a number of years, some rust, engine currently turns over but not running, Sensible offers considered. Tel: 07871 206702. Devon **[GHW15]**



CL 600, 2 previous owners (Dr Surgeon had it most of its life), services receipts to the value of around £70,000, maintained by Mercedes Benz FSH all its life, in immaculate condition throughout, last of the great dinosaurs hand built V12 6.0-litre engines, never to be built again, absolutely full specification with every extra you can imagine, £6,670. Tel: 07958 431991. Hounslow West **[GHW10]**



300TE, 1992, just four previous owners, good condition, 199,600 genuine miles, full service history, £2,595. Tel: 01373 301428. Email: wingspan55@aol.com. Wiltshire **[GHW19]**

500SEL, 1992, black, saloon, magnificent vehicle, very good condition except probably brake master cylinder, owner needs to sell due to age, open to any reasonable offer and good home, grey leather interior, front end recently re-chromed, MOT in Dec 19. 114,000 miles, same owner since 2006, service history, £POA. Tel: 07787 770321. Email: rodney@bomford.eclipse.co.uk. Near Plymouth **[GH]**

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230CE, 1991, pillarless, coupe, Diamond Blue, 156,000, very solid car, drives nicely, auto gearbox is smooth, a nice C124 coupe but not perfect, a few areas where it could be improved cosmetically as you would expect being 30 years old, sunroof needs attention as it will not open, EPOA. Tel: 07877 895775. York **[GHW17]**



E240 Avantgarde, estate, auto, 2.4, 2000 reg, 155,000 miles, immaculate cream leather interior, all electrics working, no faults, very solid reliable car, owned for 6 years and 70,000 miles, gold badges, new gold emblem, concealed DAB radio, car kit, original cd/radio, 2 previous owners, photos on request, £995. Tel: 07740 355555. **[EFW4]**



E500, ultra-rare, sport, convertible, believed to be the only one currently available in the UK, 39,750 miles, FMDSH, truly exceptional condition both inside and out, call for further info, £13,995. Tel: 01227 368993. Mob: 07801 638882. Herne Bay **[GHW11]**



CL600, super coupe, V12 flagship, never to be built again, sheer appreciating classic, 6.0-litre, pristine condition inside and out, Mercedes service bills approx over £60,000, maintained regardless of cost, every conceivable extras, keyless go, cruise control, glass tilt & retracting electric sunroof with blind, adjustable suspension, climate control, massage seats, heated and cooled seats, Sat Nav, parking sensors, Mercedes lingatronic system, 6 DVD system, electric rear blind, immaculate leather seats, alloy wheels, tyres, clean carpets, nice walnut trim, walnut & leather steering wheel, light grey suede leather roof lining, double glazed pillar less windows, self-closing doors, energy management for economy, dynamic drive, traction control, Triptronic, peddle shift, smooth automatic, full Mercedes service history, original car brochure booklet, 2 previous owners, MOT till 25-October 2020, always kept in storage, never used in winter, hence the top condition, fully stamped history, no dents or scratches, sold to quality owners who will preserve such a rare beast! £6,690. Tel: 07958 431991. Croydon **[GHW18]**



E350 CDI, saloon, June 2010, one careful owner from new, full service history, 51,000 miles, excellent condition, finished in Indigolite metallic paint, alpaca grey leather, Comand audio system, memory package, lane tracking, comfort ventilated and heated front seats, £8,500. Tel: 02083 981605. Surrey **[GHW21]**



300CE, 24 valve, Sportline, coupe, 1991, automatic five-speed trans, full spec: Nautic Blue Metallic, grey leather interior, heated front memory seats, alloy wheels, electric sunroof, Air-Con, cruise control, wooden console, illuminated vanity mirrors, rear roller blind, outside temp gauge, 113,000 miles, MOT (4,000 miles since original family owner passed away 9 years ago), rare model, would suit an enthusiast, call or email for more information and photos, offers invited. Tel: 07968 005879. Email: mike@elephantseye.co.uk. Chelmsford **[GHW22]**



SLK32 AMG, 76,000 miles, FMBSH, Sat Nav, black interior and out, immaculate, 5 previous owners, £12,950. Tel: 07712 084684. Chichester **[GHW27]**



CL500 Designo Edition, 70,000 miles, just serviced and MOT'd, designo Mystic Blue Metallic, designo Anthracite/Blue Nappa leather interior, Distronic radar assisted cruise control, multi-contour seats (left and right), analogue TV tuner, remote boot open and close, £5,900. Tel: 07887 700174. Suffolk **[GHW24]**



R107 SL280, 1981, red, beige MB-Tex interior, 79,000 miles, MOT to June 2021, owner for 14 years, hard and soft top, £15,995 ONO. Tel: 07816 831828. Nottingham **[GHW30]**



SL500, 1995, facelift, M119 engine, 81,000 miles, Ruby Pearl, no rust, unmarked cream leather, rear seats, drives beautifully, new suspension, new interior door panels and trim etc., new Pirelli tyres, everything works as it should although central locking only manually (not remote), all books, FSH, EPOA. Tel: 07770 765554. Gerrards Cross **[GHW25]**



300 CE, 24V, Sportline, 1991, 127,000, Signal Red, cream leather, wax oiled, ABS, sunroof, rebuilt gearbox, new Kleber tyres, starter motor, fuel pumps, distributor cap, spark plugs, new brake flexi hoses all round and brake pipes, clear MOT 20/06/2021, appreciating rare modern classic, £6,950 ONO. Tel: 01480 470478, St. Neots Cambs **[GHW26]**



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, EPOA. Tel: 01932 787178. Middlesex **[GHW28]**

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CLK 280, convertible, 2008, silver, blue hood, auto, petrol, only 29,000 miles, detailed service history (A4 file), full spec, heated memory seats, cruise control, Sat Nav, etc., excellent condition, £6,350 OVNO. Tel: 07932 525418. Derbyshire **[CDW1]**



A140, classic, Jan 2000, V-Reg, manual, Ocean Blue Metallic, one owner from new, all old mot's/tax discs, extensive service history, all invoices, incredibly good condition for age, only 77,500 miles, £800. Tel: 01322 387051. Mob: 07704 981703. Dartford **[GHW34]**



SL370 R230, auto, 2003, black, grey leather interior, grey burr wood surround, keyless go, Brabus 19-inch style staggered wheels, good rubber all round, boot lip spoiler, just turned 70,000 miles, a lot of history, receipts, performance back boxes which give a throaty roar but can be returned to stock if needed, rear window seal has been replaced in last year, new consumer battery in last few months, 2 keys, wind buffer, £6,200 ONO. Tel: 07817 474044. Bishopton **[GHW36]**



500SL R129, 1993, 93,000 miles, very substantial documented history with MOTs going back 20 years, excellent body, paint and mechanics, drives beautifully, good interior, new engine bay loom, dizzy caps and leads, Almandine Black original hood, mushroom interior, bought an R230 so need to reduce the number of cars I own, currently on SORN, new MOT, £8,500. Tel: 01704 893251. Lancs **[EFW2]**



230E, 1981, automatic, Champagne Gold, terracotta trim, UK supplied RHD, unrestored, genuine 49,000 miles, full service history (including recent full service), one owner for 30 years, electric factory fitted sunroof, collectors car, show quality, part of a private collection. £POA. Tel: 07867 797374. Southampton **[GHW29]**



SL500, 1986, 117,000 miles, immaculate, body completely renovated, photo record, new roof, resprayed Arctic White 2019, FSH, all service stamps, all MOTs, blue leather interior, original carpets, unmarked under rugs, woodwork renovated, LSD, alarm and immobiliser fitted, huge history file with receipts, a beautiful car, valued for insurance by SL Shop at £35,000 in 2019, £28,000 OVNO. Tel: 01902 759785. Email: jcbill@outlook.com. West Midlands **[GHW32]**



190, 1991, diesel, Smoke Silver, astonishing condition, only 44,000 miles, collected new from Mercedes plant in Germany, used only in summer, garaged over winter due to having Spanish residents, car would grace any collection, drives superbly, all books, two keys, £POA. Tel: 07928 619015. Southport **[GHW33]**

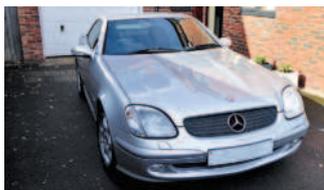
INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



280E 123 Limo, one of the best, dream condition, classic data 1, 07/1982, Velour Black, 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]**



320 W140, LWB, 60,000 miles, metallic blue, beige leather, FMBSH, years MOT, 2 owners, excellent condition, Air-Con, electric seats, sunroof, automatic, £5,000. Tel: 07968 003613. High Wycombe **[GHW31]**



SLK 230 Kompressor, automatic, 2004, silver, only 33,000 miles, garaged, beautiful condition, new MOT, FSH. £4,000. Tel: 01392 420077. Mob: 07800 978035. Email: coolfred@btinternet.com. Exeter **[EFW5]**



R107, 1989, Signal Red, one of the very last SLs to leave the production line, used weekly and garaged, original book, stamped with full set of receipts, company car lease, company car director sold to wife, only 80,700 miles, majority of miles in dry weather, electric windows, original carpets throughout, 2 sets of keys, MOT March 2020, black leather, lovely condition, no time wasters, some cosmetics could be sorted relatively easily, engine is Sound, all electrics great, comes with hardtop, these cars are appreciating fast. £36,750 ONO. Tel: 07847 774663. London **[CDW16]**



USA Spec W114 280C, 1975, 69,000 original miles, with a shifter in the column, 4-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]**



280SE W111, 3.5, coupe, 1971, 20,000 miles, SH, 4 owners, 38 years book pack, BEHR a/c, e/ windows & sunroof, £120,000. Tel: 02034 883769. Mob: 07493 292621. London **[EFW16]**



E320, auto, coupe, 1996 N-reg, burgundy, 56,000 miles, leather, a/c, £11,495 ONO. Tel: 02034 883769. Mob: 07493 292621. London **[EFW17]**

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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]**



320 SLK 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]**



250SEC, 1968, automatic, perfect bodywork and mechanics, first to see will buy, visible in south of France with possibility of testing and accommodation in a well-known and appreciated Maison d'hôtes, €120,000. Tel: +33 11 (0) 676488580. Email: alsegers@gmail.com. www.lecedre-provence.com. France **[GHW13]**



280SL, 1976, orange, black interior, \$22,000. Tel: +001 56149 85600 or +001 56143 63131. Email: swolf@brooksiderealty.com. Florida **[HIW5]**



560SL, 1989, excellent condition, 100 per cent original, white, blue interior, drives perfectly, 2 owners, left-hand drive, only driven in the summer, serviced by Mercedes dealers, more recently serviced privately by head mechanic at Baltimore Mercedes dealership, £29,500 OVNO. Tel: 001 4436 606080. Maryland. USA **[EFW7]**



450 SLC, 1976, beautiful example, approximately 35,000 miles on completely rebuilt motor (all original MB parts), all new suspension, interior completely refurbished in red leather, quality paint job (car taken down to metal), this is a 100% California car, turns heads everywhere I go, not many this nice, a few cosmetic details have been added to the car's appeal: 15" MB wheels and a 560 air dam, both of which are easily reversible if the buyer chooses to keep it stock, always garaged, the car runs like a dream, all records available, have to see to appreciate, \$15,000. Email: mailto:backjacker007@gmail.com. Corona **[EFW8]**



SL500 AMG, 1991, 6.0, rare, pre-merger, AMG from Japan, 147,000 km, third owner, original paint, black, beige leather interior, white AMG gauge package, dual AMG exhausts, custom burl walnut interior AMG ground-effects package, etc. dozens more pictures and documentation details, \$69,000 CAD. Tel: +1 9058 526287. Email: shabrya@sympatico.ca. Ontario. Canada **[GHW14]**



C63 P30 AMG, like new, 2 owners, 17,800 miles, 2009, Tenorite (steel) Grey, premium grey leather, H73 carbon fibre, P02 premium pkg, 318 AMG premium leather, 320 multimedia pkg. NEVER seen rain or snow, clean CarFax, for more info and picture just call, £POA. Tel: +1-505 980 5895. Email: kawroadie@yahoo.com. New Mexico. USA **[EFW11]**



560SL, totally original, 1989, white, blue interior, incredible condition, 2 owners, left hand drive, originally from Florida, spent last 15 years in Maryland, only driven in the summer, serviced by Mercedes, more recently serviced privately by head Mercedes mechanic, international Shipping included, £30,000 ONO. Tel: +1 443 660 6080. Baltimore. USA **[ABW10]**



350SL R107, 1979, excellent condition, drives well, now on Irish plates, can be returned to UK, some time spent in storage, can be delivered anywhere, unmarked coachwork, €POA. Tel: 003 53861 518285. Ireland **[DEP4]**



190SL 1959, great colour combination, older restoration, matching numbers, original Solex carburetors, Becker Europa radio, with a hardtop and soft top, \$92,500. Tel: +1 561 637 2333. Florida **[EFW12]**



600 Grosser, 1972, LHD, Ex-USA now in Australia, very good condition, lots of recent refurbishment done including chrome, suspension and interior, drives superbly, shipping arranged, call for more information and photos, £POA. Tel: +61397 001770. Melbourne. Australia **[BCW2]**



280SE, auto, 1972, Mozelle Green, right-hand drive, 108,473 km's, excellent condition, original documentation available, Johannesburg based, private sale, make an offer, Tel: +27 (0)83 6474729. Johannesburg. South Africa **[CM31W4]**



600 Grosser, 1972, silver, black leather interior, sunroof, new chrome front and rear bumpers, recent mechanical work done on front end, excellent condition, great to drive, hydraulics and air suspension all in first class condition, shipping can be arranged, £60,000. Tel: +61 3 9700 1770. Melbourne. Australia **[CDW19]**



W128, 1959, owned since 1983, lovingly restored back to original condition, paying great attention to detail, a rare fuel injector model, only 1,974 were ever produced from 1958 to 1959, has won many awards, drives beautifully, £POA. Tel: 0061 411 188334. Sydney. Australia **[ABW18]**



420SEL, 1987, very good condition, beautiful car, garaged, only 120,000 miles, \$6,600. Tel: 001 8182 486315. California, USA [DEW15]



220SE, 1961, cabriolet, yellow (DB608), dark brown leather interior, tan canvas top, 68,000 miles, excellent condition, owned the car for over 40 years, always garaged, stored during winter months, POA. Tel: 51947 27863. Canada [GHW9]



W121, 1960, Australian delivery, meticulously rebuilt back to its original condition, won numerous awards including best engine bay out of 120 competitors, beautifully restored, \$57,000. Tel: 0061 411 188334. Sydney, Australia [ABW19]



E200K, estate, 2002, Avantgarde, last of W210 model, fantastic colour, full leather, automatic, soft close tail gate, tow bar, 170,000 miles, 2 key, national car test January 2020, complete service history, all switches operational, Tel: +00 353871 785355. Donal, Dublin [IJW1]



190 W201, 2.3-16v, historic M-B driven by John Watson in the 1984 Nürburgring race, the car is the prototype #10 built by hand ordered by Mercedes-Benz in October 1983, reg'd in January 1984, model went for sale in September 1984, after the race the car went back to road trim, 1 of 20, £POA. Tel: +49 15111 130018. Barcelona, Spain [IJW5]

PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



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



17-inch Alloy Wheel, A-Class, W176, B-Class W246, part number: A2464011400 with 225/45R17 tyre, £120 ONO. Tel: 07936 151814. Merseyside [CM34W1]

W110 Fintail parts, wings, doors, bonnet, boot, all rust free, also windscreen, rear glass, lights, tow bars, wheels, bumpers plus loads more. Tel: 07957 935405. Worcester Park [CM34]

Specialist car cover for W124 E220, coupe (94 M-plate), blue, complete with free holdall, originally cost £350, £95 buyer collects. Tel: 07495 966086. Sutton Coldfield [CM34]
SLK Boot liner, excellent condition, £25. Tel: 07771 567426. Tamworth [CM34]



5 x 16" wheels, originally fitted to a 1996 Mercedes E320 Sportline Cabriolet (W124), now surplus to requirements, some have good Michelin tyres, £120 buyer collect. Tel: 07443 409694. Cornwall [CM34W3]



Mercedes Front Grille, part no 1248880223M, excellent condition, £200. Tel: 07598 054620. Wrexham [ABW4]



Winter Tyres, unused Dunlop SP Winter Sports 205/55/R16, mounted on black steel rims, buyer collects, £300. Tel: 01323 478539. Eastbourne [ABW7]



AMG Hardback Book, dealer supplied, dated 2004, 14 models, great photos and specs, unmarked pages, good as new at £12.50. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [ABW9]

Mercedes Enthusiast Magazine, from edition 8 (June 2002) to 2020 (editions 219 to 225 - all that were published), excellent condition, buyer collects, looking for best offer. Tel: 07780 640420. Guildford [BC]



Mercedes Alloy Wheels, set of 4, Ref: MQ44013121220E, fitted with Dunlop SP Winter Sport 3D R17 tyres, one tyre damaged (not usable), used for only 3 months, original invoiced price £1,195, bought Sept 2012 for 62 Reg Merc C class estate, wheels stored by Mercedes dealer, good condition, buyer collects. £400 ONO. Tel: 07412 779917. Warwickshire [ABW12]



Original photo archive, many makes and models, old and new, including road, race cars, rally cars, press, publicity, factory and private photos, please contact me with any wants and I will see what I have, £POA. Tel: 07809 221500. Peacehaven [CM33W13]



Maisto 1/24th scale model, 1996, SLK 230, still in box, opening doors, bonnet and boot, very good condition, £20 ONO (plus carriage). Tel: 07730 437219. West Sussex [GHW1]

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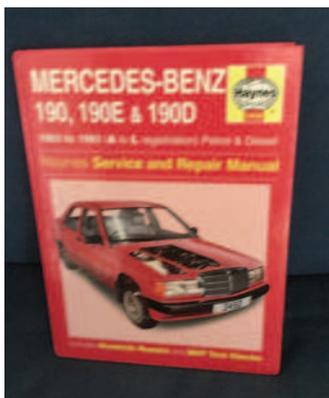
Mercedes Benz badge, 100,000 KM, MNF in West Germany, 3 inches in diameter, £45 free post. Tel: 02083 997541. Surrey [IJP1]



Mercedes-Benz Haynes manual, covers 200d, 240d, 240td, 300d & 300td, 123 series, 1976 to 1985, good second hand condition, £4.95. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [CM33W15]



4 x 15 inch alloy wheels, near new Avon ZV7 205/65/R15 tyres, £380. Tel: 07757 365632. Notts [HIW1]



Haynes workshop manual, 190E & 190D, 1983 - 1993, unused, excellent condition, £6.75. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [HIW18]

Mercedes Enthusiast magazines, complete set, every back issue from day one, excellent condition, buyer collects, £250. Tel: 01784 473839. Surrey [CM33]



Owner manuals, first aid kits and grilles, I have parts for W210, W123, W116, W126, W163, 124 and more, prices vary on model. Tel/Text: (224) 577 6676. Email: chrisszarek@yahoo.com. Chicago [GHW3]



2 x front wings for type 124, 300 series, second hand, ventilated off side, see page 24 of the July/August issue for car, these wings are both rusty, but the area around the ventilator may be cut out and welded into a standard wing, very rare, I purchased a s/h one in reserve before a new delivery came through, a varying degree of rust, the one shown is priced at £100 and my old one for £50. Tel: 01638 665673. Suffolk/Cambridgeshire [HIW26]



CLK engine cover, new, collection from Barnet or additional courier cost on enquiry, £15. Tel: 07831 715003. Barnet [IJW6]



Passenger side Hella lamp, CLK, second hand, A209 820 2561, LHD, bulbs not included, buyer to arrange collection and postage if over £20, make me a sensible offer above £50. Tel/Text: 07957 619097. Leicestershire [GHW2]



Seats and door cards, blue fabric, S124 E220, estate, 1994, the door cards are complete with cappings and fitments, the five seats are mostly unmarked except for the usual wear on the driver's offside bolster cushion, £400 ONO. Tel: 01239 820390. Email: i.angus849@btinternet.com. Newport Pembrokeshire [GHW9]



Rare Brabus alloy wheels, set of 4, 17" by 7.25j ET54, wheels come with matching set of Pirelli Tyres, 215 55 R17, complete set, includes set of 20 correct wheel bolts, very good original conditional, £600. Tel: 07796 615176. Colchester [DEW18]



Winding handle, backrest sides, 1 Pair, R107 SL, Plastichrome seat trims, part number 107 913 06 28 / 107 913 05 28, new, unused, some very slight pickling on Plastichrome, hence £20 plus P&P. Tel: 01723 864918. Scarborough [ABW12]



Promotional hardback book, S-Class, published by Mercedes-Benz on 01/11/99, covers: design, technical, equipment, service, great colour photos, 82 unmarked pages, in excellent condition, £9.75. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [GHW20]

NO. PLATES

SMI4RTS

SMI4RTS, cherished number plate, looks like "SMARTS", would fit any car well, £5,250. Tel: 07583 613521. Tamworth [CM34]

12 RTP

12 RTP, private number plate for sale, open to offers. Tel: 07858 264064. Malpas [BC]

MB 44

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

W005HSL

W005HSL, (WOOSH.SL), number plate for sale, £4,995. Tel: 07811 155010. Brighton [AB]

W005SSH

W005SSH, (WOOSSSH), number plate for sale, £4,995. Tel: 07811 155010. Brighton [AB]

B 4 SLC

B 4 SLC, number plate for sale, on retention, £POS. Tel: 07768 454724. Oakham [AB]

WANTED

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

190E, automatic, something nice and honest, no lowered suspension or racer spoilers. Tel: 01392 255836. Exeter [BC]

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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 [LKW47]

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

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. Southampton [LKW45]

280SL 2000, red with cream interior, excellent condition, fully loaded, 45,000 miles, full service history, £13,750. Tel: 07800 360705. East Sussex [LKW24]

230E 1984, two lady owners from new, cherished and meticulously maintained, 112,000 miles from birth, genuine, cylinder head off with brand new set of tyres, will be sold with 12 months MOT nearest office, £15,000. Tel: 01225 425096. Bath [LKW43]

190D 1987, manual, five-cylinder 2.5, diesel, MOT has 11 months left, 65,000 miles, good condition, blue cloth interior, sunroof, radio/cassette player, car has been owned and garaged for the last four years, £2,500. Tel: 07791 661436. Glasgow [LKW44]

206E 1984, two lady owners from new, cherished and meticulously maintained, 112,000 miles from birth, genuine, cylinder head off with brand new set of tyres, will be sold with 12 months MOT nearest office, £15,000. Tel: 01225 425096. Bath [LKW43]

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.

W124 E200 Estate 1994, great low mileage wagon, all MOTs, three owners, lovely condition roof, mats and mud flaps, no issues, MOT until January 2018, serviced and brakes done, coil packs renewed, a really nice, honest car.

123-service 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 [LKW40]

R129 280SL 1994, Brilliant Silver metallic, black leather trim, 58,222 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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You want to sell your Mercedes but are convinced no one will want it because it has a few problems? For every car there is a buyer, says David Sutherland, who gives tips on connecting with that person



There comes a time when you need to sell your car. It could be after 30 years if it's been a particularly loyal servant, or 30 minutes if you've quickly realised the purchase was a big mistake and the partnership's doomed.

That time might be now, but with Covid and all its implications, it's surely the worst time to sell a car? Wrong. Contrary to what might be expected, the used car market did well during 2020 and after its customary Christmas lull got off to a flying start in January and February 2021.

We had leading UK sales website Auto Trader tell us that customer confidence had measurably increased and it was getting 1.6 million more hits than last year, concluding that demand for used cars had increased partly because people were less inclined to use public transport during the pandemic. Another survey, from warranty operator Händler Protect, concluded that in January used car prices rose, averaging £7,530.

Granted, these findings largely related to cars bought from independent dealers, but it's almost certain that the same optimism will be seen in the private market. I recently sold my CLK63 AMG privately (see Running Report, page 88) and the whole process, including the number of enquiries seemed much the same as in previous times except that we were all wearing blue face masks and gloves, and a mutual nod, not a handshake, marked the striking of the deal.

Now you may be looking at the Mercedes you once loved but now want out of your life and thinking that an upturn in the market is all very well if you have something decent to sell, but who will want this excuse for a star car when all the others of its type for sale appear to be shinier, with fewer dents and less mileage. Well park that thought, because for every car, regardless of state of repair, there is an appreciative buyer – you've just got to do your best to make sure that person sees the car.

Choose the most appropriate sales platform. If it's a classic or modern classic, then use one of the collectors cars sites, such as Car & Classic in the UK, or, for our US readers, BringaTrailer.com or CarsandBids.com. If the



Merc is a modern, Auto Trader and eBay are proven on both sides of the pond. And you can also pop your Merc into our own free classifieds.

I don't believe in spending out on pre-sale prep beyond cleaning and cheap fixes like bulbs. The cash spent won't be reflected in the selling price, the best you can hope for is that it'll make the car easier to shift. What is important is to describe the car and all aspects of its condition, good and bad, fully and honestly. Full disclosure more accurately targets suitable buyers, and cuts out those who would never buy had they viewed and found it over-ambitiously described.

Realistic pricing is equally important. Some sellers proceed on the basis of pricing at the highest level and letting the price drift down until somebody bites, ensuring it isn't accidentally sold for below market value.

But this is usually a lengthy process and can also leave the car 'blighted', its continued unsold status triggering the natural reaction that if no one else wants this car then I don't either.

Selling cars over the years has convinced me it's unlikely for a private seller to unload a car for more than it should have gone for, and that for every £1,000 less you ask, the sale time is quickened. As someone with very little patience selling cars – if it's not sold within a week, I begin to despair – this approach suits me well.

My aim is to make the car stand out on price "Cheapest on sale in the UK" is a boast in an advert that guarantees attention, and raises the likelihood of a quick sale. However, buyers almost always want money off, so you have to build in a discount no matter how low the price.

Once I've decided to get rid of a car, I'd rather sell it for a poor price than not sell at all. And no matter how disappointing the price was, I feel a great sense of freedom once payment has been made and my once, but no longer precious Mercedes is driven off into the distance. The money's burning a hole in my pocket, there's free space in the garage – the whole buying and selling cycle can once more proceed!

△ No matter how far gone, someone will want it – but only at the right price.

“Full disclosure more accurately targets suitable buyers”

▽ Colour might not be for everyone but there will be a buyer who's looking for it.

▽▷ If it's rusty, it'll waste everyone's time if you don't fully disclose it to buyers.

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