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Editorial comment and the latest from the Mercedes Enthusiast team



We took a gamble and seemed to find the only three hours of dry weather left before Christmas

THE CHRISTMAS DEADLINE CRUNCH ISSUE IS ALWAYS A STRESSFUL MONTH FOR US. IF WE'RE A LITTLE unlucky, we end up finishing just before the festive period and we can enjoy ourselves over the following 10 days, except doing so leaves us a bit short when it comes to putting together the next issue having lost several days, so we start the year playing catch-up, which isn't ideal.

But if we're really unlucky, the deadline falls on the first week of January, which means effectively working through the Christmas festivities. This year fell on the latter, and was made slightly more stressful by the fact leading up to Christmas we simply could not seem to find a single rain-free day required for our cover photoshoot. It needed to be dry as you simply can't photograph a pillarless coupe without the windows being down and so the pair of C123s had been on standby everyday for the best part of two weeks as snapper Terry and I desperately tried to find a window of good weather. With less than four days left before breaking up for the holiday, and options running low, we took a gamble and seemed to find the only three hours of dry weather left before saying 'Merry Christmas'. Indeed, to solidify this it rained on the way home.

We hope the feature and the photographs were worthwhile for you readers. Elsewhere in the



issue, we also had a wet photoshoot on the R107 track car from SL Shop, a snowy shoot on the new GLE Coupe models and a sunny photoshoot on the Lorinser tuned A- and S-Class models. We hope you enjoy the issue.

Simon Holmes
Editor

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



William Terrington

Our latest contributor has been telling us how he came to love the Mercedes brand through a series of W201 models, and now he has a car he cherishes himself. "For me, this car is priceless. You could try offering me over the odds, or an SLS AMG, but I would refuse every time." It's not just the car he loves either, as William is part of the show scene too. "Owning a modern classic Mercedes is a unique experience. It brings you a lot of attention." You can read about it on page 60.



David Sutherland

This month, David is taking it to the track by trying out SL Shop's R107 track car on a wet and slippery Donington circuit. However, it didn't exactly go well. "Not wishing to have to dip into the Racing Driver's Book of Excuses to explain why I spun into the gravel on the first corner, I decided to take things easy," he explains. However, the car's abilities were highlighted later, when David was taken for a some demonstration hot laps. Read the full story on page 38.





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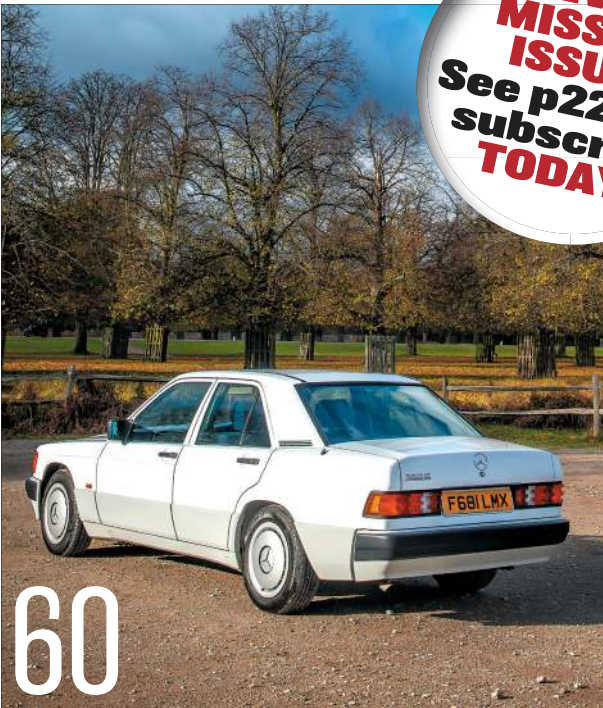


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▷ The interior has been built to mimic the racer's as well.



The latest Mercedes launches, news and motorsport

NEWS



ROASTING HOT

Immaculate Red Pig replica will be at RM Sotheby's Paris auction on February 5 2020

An incredible replica of the famous Red Pig racer from the 1970s is going up for auction in February 2020.

Due to go under the hammer at the RM Sotheby's event in Paris, the car is being sold without a reserve price attached to it, which could make it a potential bargain for a bidder that's looking for a very special Mercedes.

As the popular story goes, the original racer from the 1970s started from a damaged 300SEL that an early AMG team fitted with a 6.8-litre V8 producing around 420bhp. Together with lightweight alloy panels, a widened track and larger wheelarches to cover the wider tyres, the car surprised plenty of people, and fellow racers, when it won its class and came second overall at the 1971 Spa 24-hour race, which it began on the starting grid in fifth place.

However, its strange proportions gained

it the nickname of the 'Red Pig', and once its success had passed, it was sold on to an aircraft company for some kind of high speed tyre testing, and was then lost forever.

Since then, there have been a handful of faithful replicas built to honour its accomplishments, including one example by Mercedes-Benz itself. This particular example

started as an accident-free, 1969 model year 300SEL 6.3 and was restored to a Red Pig replica by the Mercedes-Benz specialist at Arthur Bechtel Classic Motors in Böblingen, Germany. The car was purchased by James Goo Kim, the CEO of D.Parts in South Korea, directly from Arthur Bechtel and it has covered less than 500 miles since the conversion.



The car's look seems perfect and will no doubt attract attention.

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LONG DISTANCE PAGODA

Harking back to the days of Eugen Böhringer's amazing long distance rallying feats of the 1960s, Kurt Infanger and his wife Susi recently repeated history by taking their 230SL on the New Silk Road Rally from Hamburg to Hong Kong,

which covered a staggering 8,800 miles in total in just 60 days. The Pagoda had been purchased just one year before the rally and was intentionally rebuilt to be almost identical to the one driven by Böhringer. It did feature some

upgrades though, including a five-speed gearbox conversion, which was needed to tackle the mountain roads of Kazakhstan and the Tibetan Plateau, as well as the China National Highway 219, which averages 4,000m above sea level.

NEW AMG GLA35

The range of compact 35-series models which offer an entry level into the world of Mercedes-AMG is now complete with the introduction of the GLA35. The seven member family extends from the A-Class, as a hatchback and saloon to the CLA Coupe, Shooting Brake and the seven-seater GLB and is now rounded off by the newest member. The technical basis is already well-proven thanks to the agile two-litre, four-cylinder turbo engine that delivers 303bhp and is variably distributed to all four wheels via an eight-speed, dual-clutch transmission.



GLE COUPE UK PRICING

Prices for the stylish new GLE Coupe in the UK have been announced, with a starting figure of £72,530 for the entry level GLE400d and ranging to £80,615 for the GLE53 edition. All models will come in one highly specified equipment line in the AMG Line Premium Plus, whilst the GLE350de plug-in hybrid will join the line up later in 2020. The optional towing package is available for £1,150 and increases towing capacity (up to 3,500 kg), while adding an electrically folding tow bar, electronic stability control and Trailer Manoeuvring Assist.



△ 1983 S123 200TE

- 185,000 miles
- MOT for nine months
- Manual gearbox
- Nothing to do mechanically

Price **£2,750**



△ 1979 V116 450SEL

- Lorinser kitted
- Mileage shows 5,400
- Floors and sills replaced at Mercedes-Benz
- Brown leather interior

Price **£19,995**



△ 1972 R107 350SL

- 82,500 miles
- Lots of paper work
- Spare parts with the car
- Five owners from new

Price **£3,495**



△ 1970 W113 280SL

- 25,000 miles
- Automatic gearbox
- Bench seat
- Removable hardtop

Price **£135,000**



△ 1992 C124 230CE

- 99,500 miles
- MOT for six months
- Service history
- Usable modern classic

Price **£3,500**



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The Mercedes scene in India is thriving, as we found out...



“Thankfully, the humidity wasn’t too harsh, which allowed the most beautiful Mercedes around to attend”

Stars of Mumbai

The 2019 Mercedes-Benz Classic Car Rally attracted plenty of shining stars of all types to descend upon Mumbai for a show and short drive through the city

WORDS & IMAGES PARANJAY DUTT

S at comfortably ahead of other Indian cities when it comes to being modern, Mumbai features an intriguing and eclectic car culture to accompany it.

However, the city’s manic roads and high humidity don’t allow the average classic car owner to venture out too regularly, but for Mercedes-Benz owners, there are days that are simply too hard to resist. In November 2019, the annual Mercedes-Benz Classic Car Rally took place and thankfully the humidity wasn’t too harsh, which allowed some of the most beautiful classic Mercedes around to attend.

Plenty of enthusiasts travel far and wide for this event and being

a rally in some sense of the word, a static show was followed by a 15-mile drive with plenty of spectators along the way.

With over 130 cars officially a part of the rally, it became an exemplary display of some of the rarest examples in the country collecting together, with every significant series and model

accounted for in some way, including the first Mercedes-Benz produced in India, the 124-series, which was built 25 years ago.

It was hard to pick a star of the show because there were quite a few. Those obsessed with ex-royal cars were intrigued by the 300SL, which has been owned by the Maharaja of Gondal since

new and the shimmering red car attracted plenty of attention from onlookers and other Mercedes owners. It was complemented by the presence of some pristine rarities such as the 500K, W08 Nürburg and a rare Adenauer. A few 190SLs, Pagodas, R107s (and a lone C107) were also present, together with a handful of more modern classics, like a 190E Evo II, numerous R170 SLKs and R129 SLs, together with a duo of SLS models. The more oddball rarities included a solitary Maybach 62, extended 123 limousine and a Benz Patent-Motorwagen replica.

Returning back to the start line, the day ended with a ceremony for all those that took part. We look forward to the next one.



V123 limo looked the most comfortable way to travel.



◁ 1929 W08 Nürburg is a stunning car.

▽ Rare 500K was one of the most valuable cars.

△ We really liked the colour combo of this clean 123.

▽ A variety of SL models from all years were there.



△ Immaculate 300SL is a one owner example.

◁ Cars were on display before the rally started.

▷ The bright SLK certainly stood out here.

▷ Large bumper R107 was a US import model.

▽ A rare Evo II was the modern classic highlight.

▽▷ Ponton complete with whitewall tyres.



▽ Tidy S123 out and about on the 15-mile route.

▽▽ This rare Adenauer drew in plenty of attention.





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

116-series S-Class

The big saloon has reached classic status in recent years, but during that time numbers have dropped and premiums for good ones have risen, as we find out

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES SILVAUTO, SL SHOP, HISTORICS AUCTIONEERS, GRAEME HUNT, THE HAIRPIN COMPANY



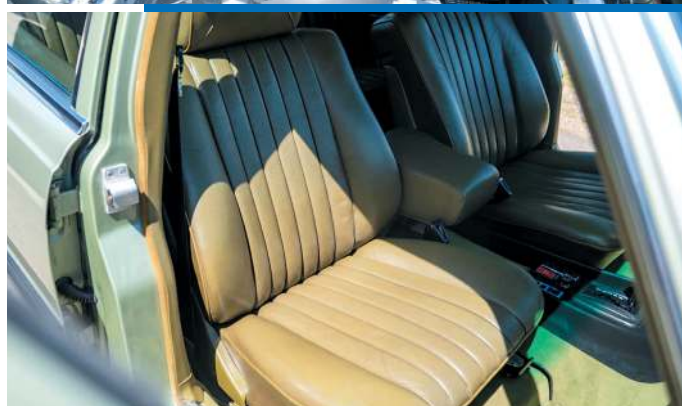
The Hairpin Company wanted £54,950 for its early, 1976 example with 87,000 miles.

The time taken for a big Mercedes-Benz saloon to go from old, unwanted car to desirable classic is usually considerable, and the 116-series S-Class, made from 1972 until 1980, perfectly illustrates that.

It's only in the last few years, four decades after the last of the 473,035 cars rolled off the Sindelfingen production line, that the mainstream models have garnered any collector's status – previously they were practically worthless, too big, thirsty and expensive to repair for most people. Plus, the arrival of the wonderful 126-series had instantly rendered it an outdated car.

We use the term 'mainstream' because there are two different categories of 116: the hitherto low value six-cylinder and 3.5/4.5-litre V8s, and the 450SEL 6.9 which became sought after much earlier. Hence, the price span is huge, from rusty rogues for under £5,000 to immaculately preserved or restored 6.9s commanding £60,000 to £70,000 and occasionally even more.

Let's briefly outline what



the 116-series is, and first, body length: 'SE' refers to the regular wheelbase, while 'SEL' is the 100mm stretched platform. For European markets the fuel-injected, 2.7-litre six-cylinder model was the 280SE/SEL (there was also a carburettored 280S), and the two V8s were the 3.5-

and 4.5-litre 350SE/SEL and 450SE/SEL. Three years after launch, in 1975, the 450SEL 6.9 with its 6.8-litre, dry sump engine and hydro-pneumatic was introduced and instantly became the F1 drivers' favourite, James Hunt and Niki Lauda among those helping establish its 'super saloon'

status. In 1978 North America alone got the first diesel S-Class model with the 300SD.

So what's out there for sale? Even five years ago we could have clicked on *Auto Trader* or eBay and seen a dozen 116s forlornly seeking a new home, but now you're more likely to see them at classic specialists. And owing to their scarcity, you'll have a better chance of finding one if you search European-wide, and indeed the cheapest we found was a left-hand drive 1972 280SE in Odense in Denmark, advertised privately for the euro equivalent of just £3,600. However getting this example back into shape would cost at least that much again, the seller revealing that it had not run for a long time and that there was rust to deal with.

The cheapest 116 at a car dealer was at Silvauto, east of Milan in Italy, which was offering a left-hand drive 1976 280SE with a most impressive 370,598km (231,620 miles) on the clock, for the euro equivalent of £7,700. In those days manual transmission tended to be more common in mainland Europe than in the UK, and this indeed had the five-speed gearbox with a clutch pedal.

Bruce Greetham of SL Shop in Stratford-upon-Avon reckons values started to increase three to four years ago. "They're essentially a big R107 SL, with many of the same parts, but the ones that are going to go up are low mileage, straight cars and they're very rare," he explains. The rest aren't going anywhere."

Condition is everything in 116s, that rather than model the main factor determining value. Although Bruce believes that a 450 would command a small premium over a 280 if the two cars were comparably rust-free and tidy. "People realise that the 4.5 V8 is the best engine for the car." The SL Shop was asking £19,995 for its



1980 450SEL didn't find a buyer at the Historics Auctioneers sale.

“eight and a half out of ten” 1976 450SEL in light ivory over black leather and with 53,000 miles.

It emphasises how depleted regular model 116s are that although the 7,380 450SEL 6.9s built represent under two per cent of all 116s, this is now the model most commonly seen for sale. And effectively it is a specialist market, according to Bruce: “It’s above and beyond, and it attracts a different type of customer, people who know what they are buying into.”

DOUBLE VALUE

Twenty years ago you could buy a shabby 450SEL 6.9 for £5,000, and double that figure is now needed for a project. One private seller was asking £14,750 for a right-hand drive 1980 car with 83,500 miles, which sounded appealing until you



Silvauto in Italy was offering a 1976 280SE with 231,620 miles for £7,700.



Owing to their scarcity, you'll have a better chance of finding one if you search European-wide

read the advertisement in full and learned that the trick suspension had been removed. The seller also entered the car in an Historics Auctioneers sale in late November with an £8,000-£12,000 pre-sale estimate, but it went unsold.

A truly good, sorted 6.9 is likely to be in the £45,000 to £55,000 range. Central London classic dealer Graeme Hunt was asking £45,000 for a RHD UK spec car with velour, 102,000 miles, a suspension rebuild and a solid service history, while top end dealer The Hairpin Company in Wiltshire wanted £54,950 for its early, 1976 example with 87,000 miles and leather upholstery.

Regardless of engine the 116-series is a great reminder of the 1970s, when big Mercedes saloons were of an imperious nature, but still quite simple mechanically. 450SEL 6.9 aside, they are still affordable, and a good investment. But only consider the best examples, because once you start spending money on restoration the financial case collapses and you'll not recoup it any time soon.



SL Shop had this pretty 1976 450SEL with 53,000 miles priced at £19,995.



Graeme Hunt was asking £45,000 for a UK spec car with 102,000 miles.



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Our man in the know tackles everything Mercedes-Benz - this month...

Cutting back



As all car manufacturers enter a time of uncertainty, Mercedes has stated it will be culling its workforce, but David Sutherland points out that cuts must be made in the right areas to avoid history repeating

Ola Källenius, the new boss of Daimler AG, the multinational corporation that builds Mercedes-Benz cars, has said that

against the backdrop of a slowing global car market, the group has to make big savings in order to afford its own future, in other words across-the-board electrification. Around 10 per cent of the 130,000 workforce will be axed.

A reduced headcount translates into a lower overall level of activity, and I hope he correctly prioritises the areas where cuts can be made.

It may well be that over the last two decades of prosperity the company has simply become bloated and inefficient, and that this that amounts to no more than a timely readjustment.

For example, Mercedes-Benz World at Brooklands in Surrey, opened in 2006, is a wonderful facility. I live quite near and frequently go there to see what's in stock at the Historic Auctioneers sales, to look at the new and classic cars on display, and occasionally to watch a grand prix in the cinema, admission being free of charge. I've eaten lunch there and the food is good and reasonably priced. But image-building apart, what does the vast Mercedes-Benz World actually contribute to Daimler's bottom line?

It would be sad if it wasn't there, but Mercedes cars would be just as good. The same applies to

the glorious pre- and post-war Silver Arrows grand prix cars that tour classic events and which must require huge expense in upkeep and logistics alone. And, dare I say it: is F1 itself still worth it? After seven years of dominance, not winning a race now probably has more impact than winning, and the GP budget alone would be a big chunk of the required savings. Other lavish sponsorships, like Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, could probably be knocked on the head too.

But my worry is that when costs have to be cut, high profile promotions – vanity projects some might say – will survive because cancelling them involves a huge loss of face. On the other hand, cutting engineering budgets has no immediate effect and can be done quietly.

That seems to be what happened in the early 1990s when Mercedes-Benz decided its cars were over-engineered and too long-lasting, and that they could be made a lot cheaper and in far higher volumes. That particular chicken came home to roost a decade later when it became clear that Mercedes-Benz quality had dropped

shockingly low quality – you found better in a regular Ford Escort of the time.

I can clearly remember reporting in this magazine the findings of the 2004 JD Power Customer Satisfaction Index, in which the 211-series E-Class had dropped from the previous year's 22nd place in a 120-car league table to a humiliating 41st, and then in 2005 writing that it had now crashed to 95th, beaten by various Citroëns and Renaults. And it was almost unbelievable that the ML came third from bottom. It pained me to observe this quite sudden deterioration of the once great

marque, and looking back it probably set in train the now widely held belief that Mercedes's older cars are in a quality league of their own.

The brand was lucky to survive this debacle as a premium car maker, because what is a Mercedes-Benz if it's not better than other cars, was the obvious question. Thanks

to a massive recall of E-Classes and a determination to right the wrong, and not a little of the company's excellent PR, Mercedes got through it, and once the improvements fed through it was clear that

Stuttgart was making reliable and solid feeling cars again. Ownership of a W169 A-Class and now a GLC has proved that to me.

Källenius, who has a financial, not the engineering background which was previously the norm at Daimler, has a five-year contract in which to make a difference. Delivering cuts is hard, but I hope that his bean counting rather than spannering past will not tempt him to pick 'soft targets' within the company for a quick result and maybe a bounce in the share price. I feel he's got to remember that the Mercedes-Benz core value is superior motorcars that people are glad to spend a lot of money on – when push comes to shove, tennis, fashion, experience centres and perhaps even motorsport are not the heartbeat of Stuttgart. ■



△ W201 range from the era of 'over-engineering'.

◁ 210-series saw the low point of build standards.

◁◁ By the time the GLA arrived, quality had been restored.

Thanks to a massive recall and a determination to right the wrong, Mercedes got through it

off badly. The cars' electrics were problematic, the bodywork rust prone and interior trim flimsy. In my book, the dashboards of the original ML and A-Class stood out for their

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The spotlight on Mercedes from within the motoring industry

Chinese whispers

As the market is changing for the Mercedes-Benz brand, our man in the know reminds us why China is so important for both Daimler and the customers all over the world

I talked about visiting car factories here last month, and how they can be interesting, but news these past weeks reminds me of another visit

to one. In China. The event was the Paris to Beijing drive, a massive drive in the facelifted W211 E-Class which, nobody was saying at the time, was to help promote, and improve, Mercedes-Benz's reputation for reliability.

I drove the final leg from Lanzhou to Beijing, grabbing all the glory from the TV crews that greeted us

when arriving at the final destination, my run a lot less gruelling than some colleagues who roughed it through some real wilds in Mongolia earlier in the epic journey.

China is, and remains, hugely important to Mercedes-Benz. I drove through it in 2006 in that W211, examples of which were to be built in China itself, the drive to Beijing celebrating the start of production, too. Unsurprisingly, then, I visited the Chinese factory producing the E-Class, which was owned by BAIC Motor Corp Limited, a company which Daimler had to work with if it wanted to sell cars in the rapidly expanding, and potentially hugely lucrative market.

Foreign car makers wanting to sell their cars in China can only do so by entering such

partnerships, where local firms build their products, the Daimler BAIC tie-up creating Beijing Benz Automotive Co. Ltd, which produced its first E-Class in December 2005. It now builds long-wheelbase E-Class and C-Class models for Chinese consumption. Indeed, some 485,000 units rolled out of Chinese factories in 2018, accounting for some 70 per cent of Mercedes-Benz's China sales. The number is growing too, Reuters stating that some 525,890 Mercedes-Benz sales have been sold in the first nine months of 2019, up some 5 per cent in an otherwise

China is and remains, hugely important to Mercedes-Benz



The drive from Paris to Beijing in an E-Class was to prove reliability.



△ The Chinese market is a huge one for Mercedes-Benz.

declining marketplace. China accounts for around 25 per cent of Daimler's overall sales, which in 2018 were 2.3 million cars.

It's obvious then why China's been so important to Mercedes-Benz, but the complexities of entry into the Chinese marketplace isn't without its difficulties, though trade barriers have eased slightly since 2018. Daimler is looking to capitalise on this, wanting more control of its local operations in China – raising its stake in BAIC from 49 per cent to 75 per cent, for obvious reasons, though BAIC is understandably reluctant to relinquish any more of what's been an incredibly lucrative business arrangement for the local firm.

Indeed, such as the machinations of international business, BAIC Group is looking to invest in Daimler, wanting a 10 per cent shareholding stake in the company, which, if happens would mean some 20 per cent of Daimler is owned by Chinese concerns, with Zhejiang Geely Holding Group having a 9.7 per cent of Daimler's shares. With 20 per cent of the company potentially Chinese owned they

would have the ability to be instrumental in key decision making, including company investments and appointing director's jobs.

All this is occurring, too, in an environment of increased tension between China and foreign countries, many of which are

bidding to block China's Huawei from providing 5G telephone networks. It's all rather volatile, with countries demanding that restrictive ownership terms be eased in China, while Chinese firms globally are being limited in certain areas due to security concerns. What's clear, is that in the period since 2006 China's own car makers have rapidly escalated, building cars to rival, and in some cases better, those of older, established foreign firms. With over 28 million cars sold in China in 2018 it's clear why Daimler and other car makers want a slice of the market, but the early rush to grab market share around 15 years ago is now having a knock-on effect that's more than just about selling cars, but instead is about geo-politics. If you've not done so previously, watch the business pages relating to Daimler, as things are really starting to get interesting, China a cash cow for the past 15 years or so, but it's now looking for payback. ▣



► Our insider is a globe-trotting road tester driving the latest machines from Mercedes-Benz and its fiercest rivals



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C63 AMG

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W205, 2016, 30k miles, FMBSH. Extensive specification. Superb in every way.

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C107. 1979, 71k miles, FMBSH. Restored to a very high standard.



420 SEC

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Models of interest:

R129, R107, W124,
C124, S124, W126,
C126, C123, S123

COMING SOON

500SL, R129, 1994, 13k miles



E55 AMG

£15,000

W210. 1998, 71k miles, FMBSH. Superb example.



230CE

£POA

C124. 1989. 48k miles, FMBSH. One owner from new. Outstanding.



Cars invited on consignment or outright purchase



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



LETTERS

STAR LETTER

KEEPING IN REACH

Mercedes Enthusiast dropped through the letterbox the other day and I rushed to tear off the wrapping, headed to the *Letters* page and two pages of letters, as you promised, and you even printed mine; excellent! In your comment below my letter, you encouraged further contributions, so here you go.

For those of us who 'creak', removal and replacement of the so-called lightweight aluminium wheels on modern cars is a job fraught with risk, particularly when suffering, as I do, from back problems.

As an avid fan of *How It's Made* and other TV documentaries, I was inspired to come up with a bit of kit to do the job the way the manufacturers do. The cradle shown in the photo was made from substantial base material, some surplus oak flooring, but ply or MDF would probably do, as long as its sufficiently thick not to flex. Attached to the base with screws, are four wheel chocks, obtained from a caravan accessory store.

Positioning of the wheel

chocks relative to the base is via trial and error, using your cars wheel and ensuring the tyre is a snug fit in the cradle, to prevent movement once the wheel is in place. Fit the castors on the extreme corners of the underside of the base to ensure maximum stability.

Having loosened the wheel studs, jack the car up high enough to position the cradle under the wheel so the tyre sits centrally between the chocks. Very gradually lower the jack so that the wheel is resting in the cradle, but not bearing the weight of the car.

Remove the studs the rest of the way and pull the wheel off the hub as you would normally. The wheel will come away, resting on the cradle and can be moved about, inspected or cleaned without your having to lift and strain something!

Replacing the wheel is where the cradle really does its job, but here is where a bit of 'exactitude' is necessary, to line up the wheel up with the stud holes in the hub.

On an SLK I had, Mercedes supplied an elongated pin that screwed into the hub and acted as a weight-bearing guide to slide



△ Reader Sinclair answered the call and sent us in a top tip: do you have one to offer others?

the wheel along onto the hub. My 207 E-Class isn't supplied with this essential tool. Nor does it have a spare, wheel brace or jack! Mercedes obviously feels that E-Class owners (being executive types?) wouldn't want to soil their hands engaging in a task as common as changing a wheel.

A suitable bolt with the head cut off will do the job, but my friend Ralph Coulson made me one, beautifully turned on his lathe, from stainless steel no less! The photo shows it in place.

Before replacing the wheel I'd suggest cleaning the hub and the socket on the wheel where they interface and smearing them with a film of copper grease, as this will ensure easier removal in the future

Having screwed the locating pin into a socket on the top of the hub, position the wheel on its cradle, roll it into position and squint through the relative stud hole in the wheel to ensure it lines up with the end of the locating pin. Then simply slide the wheel back, jockey it onto the hub and screw the wheel studs home. You'll have a stud left over to remind you to remove the locating pin!

If you don't have this 'wonder tool' of a locating pin (I'm told its still available from your Mercedes parts department - part No. 204 581 0074) the cradle will still make the relocation of the wheel considerably easier than struggling to lift it onto the hub.

Jack the car up sufficiently to remove the cradle, torque the studs and the task is accomplished, hopefully with your back in as sound condition as when you started.

Sinclair Rogerson, via email

A FEW ISSUES

I've been reading your magazine since 2011 and enjoy it each and every month. However, spurred on by other recent (and I've noticed larger) letters, I must say that I do have one small complaint, and that is your infliction to write facts and figures in the way you do. I notice in comparison to other magazines that you quote a 0-62mph figure, rather than the UK way of 60mph. Also, you choose to quote BHP, rather than HP; is there a difference?

Paul Henderson

We're glad you enjoy the

magazine, and yes, we quote 0-62mph largely as, unless tested by us, these are the figures released by Mercedes, which is obviously a German manufacturer. As for BHP and HP, yes the BHP is a calculation of the HP and usually very slightly lower.

YEARS LAID OUT

I have been reading your excellent December issue, and the *Letters* page. I enjoyed Mike Hagarty's thoughts on defining youngtimers in your last issue. The rule-of-thumb I've arrived at after 40 years as an enthusiast is this: Up to 10 years: New. 10-20 ▷

MERCSPOTTER



"I know this section is usually seems reserved for cars readers have spotted abroad, but I came across this whilst picking up some second hand car parts in Essex recently and couldn't resist taking a snap for the magazine." tells Sam Williams. "I'd love to be able to save it but suspect it's too far gone now."

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.

▷ years: Modern. 20-30 years: Youngtimer. 30-40 years: Classic. 40+ years: Historic. This, incidentally, ties in to the UK road tax exemption for cars over 40 years as 'Historic'.

Stephen Routledge, France

That does indeed seem to fit well with other's findings, although we would still suggest the lines to and from Modern to Youngtimer are more convoluted.

THE SL SPECIAL

■ Can you please tell me how I can purchase this issue of your magazine? I have just signed up for a one year subscription, but don't know if it includes this issue.



△ Even our one-off special bookazine can still be ordered on our website through the back issues.

Samuel Smith Jr, United States

This was actually a one-off special that we did a couple of years back, but it is still available to buy. It can be tricky to find on our website (www.mercedesenthusiast.co.uk) so try this shortcut that takes you to it: https://tinyurl.com/rg6ar7h

SURE THING?

■ I read with interest the feature in the January issue of your magazine regarding the M102 in your *Engine Masters* section. Whilst I know a bit about the famed Cosworth 190E models, I had no idea and had never heard of the monumental record breaking the car did – are those figures really correct? To me, it seems virtually impossible for any car to complete that task back in the 1980s

Alistair Johnson, via email

It is indeed all true and yes, it was quite an amazing achievement. We have covered this incredible feat before, but perhaps it is time to shine a new light on it soon.

CARAT CUT

■ Compelling read about the 500SEL given the Carat Duchalet treatment (*Mercedes Enthusiast*: October 2019). I must say I have only ever seen one Carat Duchalet variant on the roads. The subtle modifications are apparent and give a pleasing result, and show



△ Super rare Carat Duchalet 500SEL we featured in the October issue impressed readers.

that this is no ordinary Mercedes 500SEL, if there is such a thing.

The Mercedes in the article looked like it had just left the factory, with a chassis that can only be described as concours winning. It certainly has all the luxury elements and Carat by Duchalet are, rightly so, very rare automobiles which are to be savoured. Perhaps you could publish some more articles in future about their more recent offerings?

Faisal, via email

They are great cars but as we found out, it's hard to find one. If we come across another it will be put on these pages!

and whatever else from such an authoritative source to keep our cars in good shape over the inevitable lay ups that classic ownership involves.

Stephen, via email

That's a good idea for a future feature, leave it with us!

RED HOT HATCHES

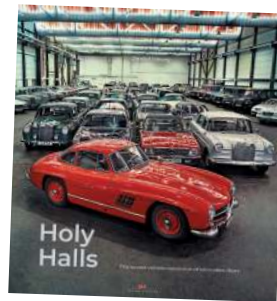
■ I think the letter brought up in the last issue about these

super-hot hatches is a good point. Whilst it's good to think the likes of Mercedes-Benz, Audi and VW are introducing these mega quick hatchbacks, I can't help thinking they're following the route us older readers might well

have experienced in the 1990s with the first hot hatches. It all came to a sorry end then, and mainly due to car crime and insurance costs!

Andrew Cowie, Essex

Unfortunately, you seem correct as whilst we're seeing a resurgence of hot hatches, car crime does indeed seem to be on the up as well. We hope insurance isn't next!



△ The Holy Halls book offers a unique insight into Mercedes' own collection.

THE HOLY HALLS BOOK

■ I can't wait to get a copy Christof Viewer's book about the Holy Halls, reported on in your December issue. But my question is this: as an owner of a number of classics (Mercedes a longterm favourite) what can the curators of this fabulous collection tell us about storing these cars? I'm sure many readers would hugely appreciate any advice, checklists



The A45 S AMG is part of the new movemnet, but what will happen?

MERCSPOTTER



"Considering its reputation for old cars in great condition, I was surprised how few old Mercedes I came across whilst on a recent holiday to the island of Malta."

tells reader James Franklin. "This 190E was one of the few I did see and seemed well cared for, but I only came across one other old Merc."

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

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TALKING POINT



This month's Talking Point...

"What have you got planned for your Mercedes this year?"

"I picked up my new to me GLE350d in November, it had the usual 'dealer prep', so I'm looking forward to spending a couple of days giving it a full DIY detail. It's a tow car so also looking forward to getting the caravan hitched to the back."

David Price

"I plan to replace the rear-axle to adopt disc brakes instead of drums on my G-Wagen. I also plan to prepare it for annual Ladoga Trophy."

Anton Karpov

"I've got some rust issues to attend to before they get out of control on faithful workhorse, which is a 124-series estate."

Brad Hinton

"All-terrain tyres for my ML500 (W164) and new bumper bar for my ML270CDI (W163)."

Donovan Croucamp

"Need to address a few rust corners underneath the car."

Tshepo Tirotsoane

"Simply drive and enjoy my SLK!"

Steven Homer

"To give it a few more siblings"

Jason MM

"My two daily drivers have some work I need to get done. The W124 needs a new timing chain and I suspect the W221 S600 would like new turbos. But most of all, I plan to put a LOT more miles on them."

Michael Strauss

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



Cheshire Classic Benz

The Finest Examples of Mercedes-Benz Cars from the 1960s to the 1990s

300SL Roadster 1988E

Nautic Blue met, matching hardtop, blue soft top, blue sport check interior, 4 speed auto, air conditioning, cruise control, electric windows, rear seats, original alloy wheels, FSH, 78,000m £32,950



300SL Roadster 1986C

Signal Red, matching hardtop, dark brown soft top, Saffron sport check interior, 4 speed auto, electric windows, rear seats, original alloy wheels, FSH, 51,000m £35,950

300SL Roadster 1988F

Astral Silver metallic, matching hardtop, blue soft top, blue sport check interior, 4 speed auto, ABS, electric windows, rear seats, original alloy wheels, FSH, 103,000m £28,950



320CE Cabriolet 1993L

Pearl Blue metallic with dark blue lower panels, blue soft top, grey leather, walnut wood, leather steering wheel and gearknob, 4 speed auto, airbags, original alloy wheels, FSH, 51,000m £19,450

E220 Sportline Cabrio 1994L

Almandine Red met, black leather, black soft top, 4 speed auto, climate, cruise, airbags, electric seats, electrically adjustable steering column, leather steering wheel, 8 hole alloys, FSH, 48,000m . £18,950



E320 Sportline Cabrio 1994L

Blue/Black metallic, grey leather, black soft top, 4 speed auto, cruise, airbag, electric seats, electrically adjustable steering column, leather steering wheel, original Sportline 15" alloys, FSH, 96,000m £15,950

230CE Coupe 1982Y

Astral Silver metallic, dark red MB Tex, auto gearbox, elec front windows, elec sunroof, front and rear headrests/armrests, orig alloy wheels, orig Blaupunkt radio/cassette, FSH, 3 owners, 48,000m . . £19,950



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Mercedes-Benz 280SL Sports Pagoda £129,500

1968/9, finished in unmarked gleaming silver with as new soft black hide interior, hard and soft tops, automatic, p/steering, stereo system, Mercedes overmats, only 73,000 miles £1000s spent to keep this garaged convert sports car in magnificent condition. Only 1 lady previous owner. Folder of invoices/old MOTs/ original handbook, all tools. A breathtaking example.

1987 finished in Nautic Blue with dove grey hide interior, head rests, rear seats, hard and soft tops, tinted glass, power windows, central locking, power steering, heated seats, abs brakes, alloys, cruise control, stereo system, long last owner ship, garaged from new, with impeccable service records, thousands, spent to keep this car in the fantastic condition it is in today, drives like new.



Mercedes-Benz 420SL Sports £38,750



Mercedes-Benz 350SL Sports £35,750

1980 finished in glacier white with tan hide interior, headrests, hard and soft tops, tinted glass, power windows, power steering, automatic, over mats, original stereo, factory alloys, only covered 45,000 miles from new, full Mercedes history, all old MOTs and invoices, complete with original tools, recent full service, garaged from new, one of the finest to be on offer.



Mercedes 300SL Sports £48,750

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



Mercedes 380SL Sports £37,500

1984 finished in Astral Silver with Navy Blue hide interior and Blue dashboard, walnut veneers, headrests, Blaupunkt stereo, hard top, soft top as new, alloys, tinted glass, p/mirror, rear seats, h/rests, automatic, p/steering, p/windows, only 61,000 miles, full service history and accompanied with a set of old MOT certificates, with original paperwork and invoices and original hand book in wallet. Garaged from new, drives like new.



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports £39,750

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



Mercedes-Benz 280SL Sports Pagoda £135,750

1968, brilliant Artic White, superb contrasting interior, hard and soft tops, auto, PAS, CD stereo system. One of the finest having had thousands spent through its life, and only used on summer days, only 58,000 miles, supplied with original handbook, etc. It would be very difficult to find another even come close to this.



Mercedes-Benz Sports 300 SL £55,750

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



Mercedes-Benz 230SL Sports £89,750

1966, Porcelain White with as new Black hide interior, auto, PAS, CD stereo system, hard and soft tops, known to us for many years, original service books etc. Entered in many events in UK and Europe. Fitted stainless exhaust system, recent overhaul. Over £10,000 spent in the last few years making this car one of the finest.



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports £38,500

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



CHOICE OF 4

Mercedes-Benz E240 £4,750

1998, 6-door limousine, finished in black with superb dark blue interior, three rows of seats, power glass divider, air-con, power windows, automatic, alloys, power steering, full Mercedes history, only two owners, drives like new, absolute gift.



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports £46,750

1987, left hand drive, gleaming Signal Red with Beige hide interior, headrests, centre arm rest, hard and soft tops, this flag ship SL has power windows, tinted glass, stereo system, light up vanity mirrors, cruise control, air-con, power mirrors, ABS, air-bags, alloys, over-mats, only 27,000 miles from new, with FSH, 1 owner, garaged and pampered.



Mercedes-Benz 420SL Sports £39,750

1989, one of the last of this model, finished in gleaming Signal Red with superb black hide interior, piped red, rear seats, hard and soft tops, tinted glass, power windows, auto, cd player, alloys, over mats, full service history, this car is just stunning probably one of the finest.



Mercedes-Benz 560SL Sports £49,750

1988, LHD, finished in gleaming Signal Red with tan hide interior, headrests, hard and tan soft tops, power windows, tinted glass, central locking, air-con, cruise control, stereo system, ABS, alloys, SRS, air bags, expensive Mercedes car cover, auto, power steering, only 19,000 miles from new, service history, one owner.

CLASSICS ALWAYS WANTED

FREE DELIVERY ON ALL CARS

NEW BLOOD



Now that it has confirmed demand for a GLE Coupe, Mercedes is launching a significantly slicker second generation. We tried the new C167 in diesel, hybrid and AMG flavours

WORDS SHANE O' DONOCHUE IMAGES DAIMLER AG

“The new model is tasked with even greater sales achievements and Mercedes has given it a design to help it reach its goal”



“The cabin of the GLE Coupe feels remarkably similar to that of its more upright sibling”



GLE53 COUPE

WHEN THE CAR MAKERS START messing with an established motoring word such as ‘coupe’, the traditionalists understandably get a little twitchy. Mercedes, however, isn’t afraid of taking a chance or two in the name of prosperity, and it seems there’s little as prosperous this decade as a company that’s selling SUVs of all shapes and sizes. The

new GLB and GLA are joining the existing range of GLC, GLE and GLS shortly, but here the focus is on the second-generation GLE Coupe, codenamed C167, and arguably the most divisive car in the entire Mercedes-Benz line-up.

Saying that and regardless of the bulbous, over-inflated styling of the first iteration of the GLE Coupe, it was a considerable sales success, despite the fact that there are more rivals in the sector than before. The new model is tasked with even greater sales achievements and, thankfully, Mercedes has given it a design to help it reach its goal. In fact, from a distance, you’d be hard pushed to tell whether you’re looking at the GLC Coupe or the GLE Coupe.

But get close and it’s obvious, as this is a large car. To get the right proportions, it’s actually 39mm longer than the first generation, and 7mm wider. However, the wheelbase is some 60mm shorter than that of the GLE SUV, to assist with the agility. And while the Coupe is clearly from the same SUV school of Mercedes design as the regular GLE, it has a more raked windscreen and, of course, the sloping rear end. That’s where it’s more attractive than before, thanks to the smooth transition from the bumper (which holds the numberplate) to the large tailgate, offset by the elongated tail lights.

It’s also worth noting that all versions of the GLE Coupe sold in the UK will ride on 22-inch alloys, as the only trim level offered will be the exceedingly well-equipped AMG

Line Premium Plus specification. That’s a relief, to be honest, as the base level cars sold in other parts of the world look a little weedy with their black plastic arches and smaller wheels. The AMG Line look, featuring Multibeam headlights and the ‘chromed pin’ radiator grille, has far more on the road presence, which is surely what you want if you’re choosing a car platform such as the GLE Coupe in the first place.

Speaking of which, UK pricing starts at £72,530 for the GLE400d Coupe, rising to £80,615 for the Mercedes-AMG GLE53 Coupe. That represents a premium over the equivalent GLE SUVs of £95 and £405 respectively, though of course there’s far more choice of engine and trim line in the regular car. We do know that the Coupe line up will expand to include the 350de plug-in hybrid variant (see separate panel) before the end of 2020, but it’s not yet clear if other versions will be offered. Of course, one major difference between the GLE SUV and Coupe is the lack of a seven-seat option in the latter. No surprise there given the shorter wheelbase and sloping rear window.

▷ Familiar M256 engine puts out nearly 430bhp.

▷▷ Huge brakes keep the SUV in check at all times.

▷▷▷ The car has plenty of ability off-road.



FIRST RIDE New GLE Coupes

JUST THE FACTS

GLE53 Coupe (C167)

ENGINE M256 2,999cc 6-cyl
plus electric motor

POWER 429bhp@6,100rpm

TORQUE 384lb ft@1,800-5,500rpm

TRANSMISSION 9-speed automatic, AWD

0-62MPH 5.3sec

TOP SPEED 155mph (limited)

FUEL CONSUMPTION 30.3mpg (NEDC)

GLE400d Coupe (C167)

ENGINE OM656 2,925cc 6-cyl

POWER 325bhp@3,600-4,200rpm

TORQUE 516lb ft@1,200-3,200rpm

TRANSMISSION 9-speed automatic, AWD

0-62MPH 5.7sec

TOP SPEED 149mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 38.2 (NEDC)

GLE350de Coupe (C167)

ENGINE OM654 1,950cc 4-cyl

plus electric motor

POWER 315bhp@3,800rpm

TORQUE 516lb ft@1,600-2,800rpm

TRANSMISSION 9-speed automatic, AWD

0-62MPH 6.9sec

TOP SPEED 130mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 256.8mpg (NEDC)

All figures from Mercedes-Benz

△ Centre grab handles hint it can handle the rough.

▷ GLE53 offers a good mix of sporty luxury.

▷▷ Extra badges remind other road users its an AMG.

▷▷▷ Styling is more aggressive with this model.

Nonetheless, the cabin of the GLE Coupe feels remarkably similar to that of its more upright sibling. And nobody will complain about that, as the GLE's interior is sublime. The widescreen MBUX dashboard initially dominates and while we're familiar with its appearance and how it works by now, it still impresses with its sharp graphics, high level of customisation and several modes of operation. Some would prefer to have a touchscreen interface, but we get on just fine with the touchpad in the centre console and the thumbpads on the steering wheel, not to mention the ever-improving 'Hey Mercedes!' voice-control software. Meanwhile, the GLE Coupe gets a new sports steering wheel as standard, trimmed in soft nappa leather, complementing the standard sports seats with more lateral support than those in the SUV. They're trimmed in Artico (a man-made leather substitute), which also adorns the top of the doors and dashboard, incidentally. The GLE's prominent grab handles either side of the centre console remain.

NEW DIMENSION

In terms of practicality, the rear door openings are larger than before (despite a 60mm drop in wheelbase in comparison to the SUV, it's still 20mm longer than the previous GLE Coupe) and while you do have to heft yourself up into the cabin, there's loads of space for adults in the outer two back seats. The middle rear seat occupant doesn't have as much room, but neither would you call that spot cramped. The rear seat backrests split and fold 40:20:40, increasing boot space from 655 litres to 1,790 litres. That's down from 690-2,055 litres in the GLE SUV, by the way. Mercedes has lowered the loading level by 59mm in comparison to the previous GLE Coupe and with the Airmatic air suspension (standard on all UK cars), it can be lowered another 50mm at the touch of a button.

Naturally, the interior of the AMG 53 variant is a little snazzier. It gets red stitching and red seat belts, while there are even sportier seats as standard, branded with the AMG logo and trimmed in a mix of Artico and Dinamica microfibre. There's ▶





GLE400d COUPE

▷ Rear seats can fold 40:20:40 to improve load area.

▷▷ With the seats up, there's a 655-litre capacity.

▷▷▷ The rear seats offer plenty of legroom.



▷ a specific AMG steering wheel, too, with beautifully tactile alloy gearchange paddles behind, and extra driving mode controls built in. Topping it off is stainless steel pedals with rubber studs, special door sill panels and floor mats and, of course, lacquered carbon fibre trim elements. Externally, the AMG model isn't as easy to spot as you might expect, though it does get its own design of alloy wheels and radiator grille, a modest bodykit and, most obvious of all, a quad exhaust system.

But as this is an AMG-developed model, there's much more to it than an aesthetic overhaul. It shares Airmatic air suspension and adaptive damping with its lesser siblings, but with AMG-specific tuning and the addition of AMG Active Ride Control, which actively manages body lean to give better control in the

corners coupled with better comfort on the straights. It's highly effective too, allowing you get into a good rhythm on a twisting road, making the most of the big brakes and variable ratio steering to keep a quick pace up with little effort. It's not an engaging or communicative sports coupe, obviously, but it certainly lives up to the 'sporty SUV' billing.

At the heart of it all is AMG's wonderful M256 straight-six. This uses a 48V electric auxiliary compressor, as well as a conventional exhaust turbocharger, to help extract 429bhp and 384lb ft of torque from this three-litre unit. Not to mention the extra 'EQ Boost' given at low speeds by the integrated starter-generator. And if you toggle into the Sport+ mode, it makes a particularly sporty set of sounds through the exhaust, working



◁ Smaller wheels aid the ride quality but look puny.

▷ Working with the electric motor, it makes 315bhp.

▷▷ Front seats are supportive on all of the models.

◁ Plug-in hybrid can be charged

▽ The GLE can manage 60 miles on one charge.





◀ The standard large displays suit the classy feel.

“Leave it in Comfort mode and it’s quiet and smooth and a perfectly reasonable everyday companion”



◀ Rear styling is in-line with current range.

Mercedes-Benz GLE 350de Coupe

An intriguing new powertrain option for the GLE Coupe arrives after the launch models, called the 350de. This is a plug-in hybrid using the OM654 two-litre turbodiesel engine, mated with a 134bhp electric motor and a sizeable lithium-ion battery pack. Its ‘system’ maximum outputs (when engine and motor are working hard in tandem) are rated at a chunky 315bhp and 516lb ft, but it’s a heavy car so it never feels as fast as those numbers suggest. What’s more, to extract such performance, you need to extend the engine, and the four-cylinder coarseness is

no match for the silky-smooth straight-six in the GLE400d. Nonetheless, it comes with very low emissions figures and the potential for great fuel economy. The thing is, to get anywhere near the official mpg, you’d need to charge up the car from an external source regularly. Still, for a future that may well include cities with zones that only allow cars with zero emissions in, the 350de’s ability to drive on battery power alone for over 60 miles could well be its making. And of course, it still has an efficient diesel engine for the longer journeys. One to watch.

next to the AMG model’s 429bhp (before the electric boost), it retaliates with considerably more torque (516lb ft plays 384lb ft), which explains the irrelevant 0.4-second difference between them in the benchmark 0-62mph sprint. In reality, while the 400d doesn’t sound as special and doesn’t produce aural fireworks in any of the driving settings, it’s as quick as anyone needs their big SUV to be. What’s more, its performance is delivered in an utterly effortless manner, whether you’re attacking a mountain road or trudging from one end of the country to the other on the motorway. It’s quiet, smooth, fast when you need it to be and, of course, considerably less expensive to run than the petrol-sporting AMG variant. The standard Airmatic suspension is more comfortable, too, if not quite as flat in the corners.

And actually, as impressive an achievement as the GLE53 is, it probably garners more dislike from the Mercedes diehards than the ostensibly more practical diesel variant. The thing is, the creation of the GLE Coupe, whether it’s a diesel or something from the AMG factory, doesn’t mean the end of the coupe as we know it; it’s just a sign of the times we live in, where car buyers have more choice than they’ve ever had. And that’s especially true for those in the market for an SUV. ■

in conjunction with the excellent nine-speed AMG SpeedShift transmission to encourage you to change down a gear or two for no reason other than hear the engine at work. Leave it in Comfort mode and it’s quiet and smooth, and a perfectly reasonable everyday companion.

SENSIBLE HEAD

This brings us to the rather more sensible diesel option. The thing is, the AMG Line spec GLE400d Coupe doesn’t look like the poor relation to the AMG 53. Sure, it does without some of the sportiest glitz, but ticking the right colour and trim options on the order form will remedy most of that. And, while the 400d’s straight-six turbodiesel’s peak output of 325bhp pales



GLE350de COUPE

Pillarless perfection

With a pair of 280CE models to concentrate on, we're celebrating the simplicity of the 123-series underpinnings with that incredibly stylish coupe body...

WORDS **KYLE MOLYNEUX**
IMAGES **TERRY OBORNE**

COVER
STORY





“ There’s a real honesty about the 123-series Coupé. It delivers exactly what its creator promised ”

JUST THE FACTS

280CE (C123)

ENGINE
M110 2,746cc 6-cyl

POWER
182bhp@5,800rpm

TORQUE
177lb ft@4,500rpm

TRANSMISSION 4-speed
auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,460kg

0-62MPH 10.8sec

TOP SPEED 121mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION
34.1mpg

YEARS PRODUCED
1976-1985

*Figures for post 1978
cars as pictured*

THE COUPES PRESENTED IN GENEVA ARE AIMED AT AUTOMOTIVE ENTHUSIASTS WHO VALUE OPTICAL INDIVIDUALITY AND VISIBLE VERVE IN THEIR VEHICLE," READS THE

MERCEDES-BENZ PRESS KIT, DATED MARCH 1977. "THE UNMISTAKEABLE CHARACTER... IS DOWN TO THE MORE STEEPLY RAKED FRONT AND REAR WINDOW PLUS THE FULLY RETRACTABLE SIDE WINDOWS WHICH ARE NOT SEPARATED BY A CENTRE POST. THE RESULT FOR THE OBSERVER IS A LONG AND MORE DYNAMIC-LOOKING PROFILE. FOR THE OCCUPANTS THIS MEANS OUTSTANDING VISIBILITY NOT HINDERED BY A THING."

So proud was Mercedes-Benz of its new 123-series Coupe, the company went the extra mile for the car's world premiere. Mercedes-Benz gave three versions – badged 230C, 280C and 280CE – their big reveal at a highly exclusive location next to Lake Geneva, before resuming normal procedure and displaying them at the Geneva Automobile Salon in the Palexpo trade fair centre on Thursday March 17 1977. Sporting gorgeous Fuchs alloy wheels, the cars at the waterside villa were presented to their audience (a throng of cravat-wearing journalists and guests of honour) with all side windows lowered to emphasise their pillarless design. It would have taken much to steer attention away from the snow-capped mountains surrounding the Lake Geneva venue, but the 123's sleek form managed it.

Inside the Palexpo centre, Mercedes-Benz had put the range-topping 280CE almost literally on a pedestal, parking the twin-cam six-cylinder model on a raised platform and surrounding it with spotlights, its lesser powered brethren fighting for their own portion of limelight on the carpeted areas below. Visitors to the motor show couldn't miss the 123s as their chrome trim sparkled away, and that was the point.



Colour coded hub caps were as good as it got before alloys arrived.





◁ The green car is so original that it looks like new...
△ ...and even includes this rare sunroof tool.

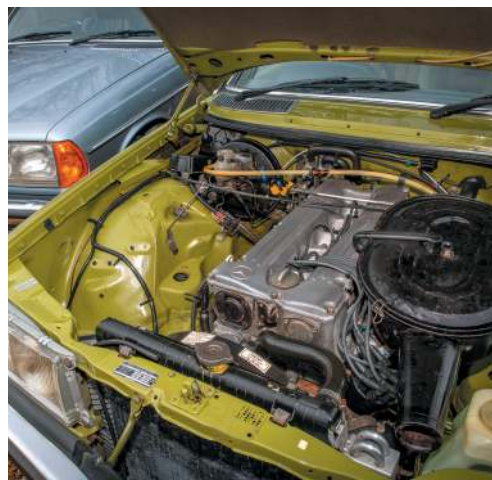
Key to the C123's appeal was its 43mm lower roofline (meaning a more raked windscreen), and 85mm shorter wheelbase than the W123 Saloon on which it was based, giving the two-door a far more, if still discreet sporting air. The Coupes shared the 280E Saloon's wideband halogen headlamps, as well as the Saloon range's chromed inlet grilles in front of the windscreen, and chrome trim beneath the rear lamps, but there were some other differences. The Coupe's shortened wheelbase impacted on leg and headroom for rear occupants, although it did feature wood trim (walnut root veneer and later Zebrano) on the centre console and dashboard as standard. Whether that luxury finish was consolation for adults cramped into the back isn't clear...

As with the Saloon, the 123 Coupe was equipped with double-wishbone front suspension, a semi-trailing arm rear axle, recirculating ball power steering, disc brakes all round, and rear-wheel drive. The 123 Coupe also boasted an evolution of its W114 predecessor's 'safety passenger cell', adding a stiffer roof frame structure, tough roof pillars, reinforced doors, plus more effective front and rear crumple zones to the mix.

PERSONALLY LOVE DESCRIBING THE 123 RANGE BECAUSE IT'S SO BLISSFULLY SIMPLE, no matter whether you're discussing the Saloon, Coupe or Estate. At launch in 1977, the Coupe line up consisted of three models: the four-cylinder, 108bhp 230C (carburettor), the four-cylinder, 154bhp 280C (carburettor and not sold in the UK), and the six-cylinder, 175bhp 280CE (fuel injected; power increased to 182bhp from April 1978). The five-cylinder, 77bhp 300CD diesel joined the range in September 1977 (North America only; power increased to 83bhp two years later), before it was replaced by the five-cylinder, 119bhp 300CD Turbodiesel in August 1981 (also a North American model only; power increased to 123bhp from October 1982).

In between that revision, in June 1980 the carburettor

“ Mercedes-Benz had put the range-topping 280CE almost literally on a pedestal ”



◁ Rear interior space is small but comfortable.

△ M110 six-pot is a delightfully smooth engine.



The matching green trim is very of the time and has aged very well.

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Benz had made 99,884 examples of the C123, with 15,509 of them (around 15 per cent) being a diesel variant. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most popular model was the range-topping 280CE with 32,138 made, and the rarest was the 280C with just 3,704 produced.

Modern times

That was then, but what about now? How has time treated the two-door 123? Pretty well, I'd say. The Friedrich Geiger and Bruno Sacco design remains extraordinarily handsome, and the Coupé's lack of rear space is now of minimal concern. The two-door 123 is deemed more valuable than the Saloon, although isn't quite as sought-after as the magnificent

T-model Estate. A Coupé needing lots of work can be bought for around £6,000, while the very best, low mileage cars command closer to the 20 grand mark, or perhaps slightly more in some cases.

With that in mind, we've taken a closer look at what a solid £20,000 budget can get you when it comes to the most popular 280CE model, and two such examples are pictured here, currently for sale at Charles Ironside Classic Cars in Hampshire. Both are equipped with a four-speed automatic, the earlier 1980 Cactus Green 280CE displays just 68,900 miles on its odometer and is a very original, untouched car while the fabulous looking, silver metallic 280CE from 1983 has covered 139,500 miles and is up for the same price, having been treated to a recent overhaul and mild restoration.



▷ This later car features Mexican hat alloy wheels.

▷ equipped 230C was replaced by the four-cylinder, 134bhp 230CE with a then new M102 engine. As with the 280CE, the 'E' denoted 'Einspritzung' or injection/fuel injection. Transmissions comprised a four-speed manual, a five-speed manual (optional on some models from October 1981), and a four-speed automatic.

IN AUGUST 1980, THE 123-SERIES COULD BE EQUIPPED WITH ABS ANTI LOCK BRAKING

TECHNOLOGY, and a driver's airbag was added to the options list from January 1982; at the time, no other manufacturer offered such a life-saving feature. The 123 range was facelifted that September, although the only notable changes to the Coupé's exterior were the replacement of the chrome ventilation louvre in front of the windscreen with a black grille, and eight new paint colours to choose from. The cabin received more generous quantities of material on both the seats and door panels, and the front chair backs were redesigned in order to create more legroom for those seated behind.

By the time production ended in August 1985, Mercedes-

“ I personally love describing the 123 range because it's so blissfully simple ”

▽ Blue interior works well with the silver exterior.



“I’ve never found myself chasing apexes in a 123-series and that includes today”



▷ The 280CE is an evocative slice of modern classic Benz. Its 2.8-litre M110 engine is quieter, smoother and more punchy than the four-cylinder models. Peak power comes in later, so there’s incentive for working the six-cylinder harder than you would the four-cylinder, and indeed you are rewarded for your efforts with a delicious mechanical growl as the M110 closes in on its redline. Ease off again and the 280CE reassumes the role of cruiser with just a hint of ‘engagement’ thrown into the mix to retain the driver’s attention.

But I’ve never found myself chasing apexes in a 123-series and that includes today, the 280CE very happy at a canter in modern traffic and hardly feeling strained when asked to accelerate. The ride is a touch more fidgety than a Saloon or Estate’s, but that’s the trade-off for a slightly more involving drive; the C123 turns with a touch less hesitancy than its siblings, no doubt due to its smaller footprint and lower centre of gravity.

COMPARED WITH THAT OF A BRAND NEW CAR, THE 123’S CABIN IS TEEMING WITH AMAZING textures. The rubberised steering wheel rim is at once rough to the touch yet squidgy-soft; the fabric seat upholstery is almost granular in its finish yet grips you firmly and is soft under bum; the ventilation controls would serve well on a tank yet move with delicate precision; the electric window switches emit a subtle click when pressed and stir strong-sounding motors buried in the door cards. All of these sensory pleasures combine for an



△ The more basic car features a clock instead of...

△△ ...the rev counter found in the later example.

unmistakable Mercedes youngtimer experience. Sometimes I wonder why we would choose to buy anything else.

The later silver example appears the better equipped of the two cars here, boasting electric rear windows and leather trim, and I imagine its silver over blue colour scheme appeals to a wider audience than the period green-on-green combo of the earlier car. However, I think the latter’s Cactus paintwork, matching upholstery and colour-coded hub caps make it a more distinctive and memorable car. I even prefer the ticking clock in place of a rev counter. You approach this 280CE with a smile on your face, and your grin only increases when you drive it.

There’s a real honesty about the 123-series Coupe. It delivers exactly what its creator promised: being a Mercedes-Benz it’s superbly made, comfortable, predictable in the handling and braking departments even when tackling the undulating roads of Hampshire, and practical enough to serve as a weekend-getaway car. “No frills, no short-term fashions” was how Mercedes-Benz described it in 1977, and that approach to the car’s design has ensured it remains popular into 2020 and beyond.



◁ Leather and walnut trim was a high spec interior.

▷ The seats front and back are in great condition.

► Thank you to **Charles Ironside** for the loan of both 280CE examples
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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**

All on track

Although an R107 450SL doesn't seem like the obvious Mercedes track car, the guys at SL Shop have been working to change that theory, as we found out...

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND**
IMAGES **STEVE HALL**

“

It's a working ambassador for the company and is likely to be seen at classic events, and can even be hired out for certain races by suitably licensed drivers

”





The rules of the race series that the 450SL can enter obviously allow a lot of scope for modifications

THE ORIGINAL 1952 *SPORT LEICHT*, the 300SL, was a purpose-built sports racing car that would only ever be driven in competition, but the road-going SL generation made 20 years later is almost the last car you would choose as the basis for a circuit racer. Bulky, heavy, soft in the chassis and with six- and eight-cylinder engines that prefer to spin at mid rather than peak revs, you would be making life difficult for yourself. In its heyday the R107 was to be seen at race meetings, but in the paddock, not on track.

All of which was of absolutely no concern to SL Shop, which has spent the last few years developing and honing the 1978 R107 450SL seen here into a tool for events ranging from track days to various historic racing classes. The Stratford-upon-Avon based classic Mercedes specialist was not the first to build a racing R107, that honour going to one Ian Jacobs a decade ago when he prepared and entered his eye-catching bathroom suite turquoise painted 450SL in race series for 1970s cars, but since then SL Shop boss Sam Bailey is, as far we know, the only man brave enough to take on the challenge in the UK.

“We started building it four or five years ago, it was just one of Sam’s regular R107s,” says Dan Griffin, technical wizard at SL Shop. “It was a standard car and the plan was to send it off to be built into a race car.” That proved to be a false start, because what came back was not to Dan’s, Sam’s or anyone else’s liking at SL Shop, so it was decided to start again and now the only race item left from that time is the roll cage.

The engine that is now in the car is the third it has seen, and Dan says that it, with its adjustable rev limit (presently

6,500rpm), produces 270bhp at the wheels. There’s also a claimed 265lb ft torque, which as we’ll see later is at the heart of the car’s on-track character. At one stage a six-speed manual gearbox from a Toyota served, but that proved too fragile for the meaty M117 4.5-litre V8, the dent in the offside front wing made by fragments of exploding transmission evidence of that. It now has a six-speed manual box that SL Shop rustled up earlier.

RULED OUT

The rules of the race series that the 450SL can enter, such as the Advantage Motorsport Future Classics series for 1970s and 80s cars, obviously allow a lot of scope for modifications, because much about the R107 is bespoke. The engine has special manifolds, the wiring is almost completely re-done, while the thunderous engine note tells us that the one off exhaust makes very economical use of baffling (nonetheless it’s within track

▽ It’s unusual to see an SL as a devoted track car.



day decibel limits). A Quaife limited-slip differential is fitted and chassis-wise, all the suspension has been upgraded, and is fully adjustable, and although the brakes retain standard calipers they have drilled discs and use Mintex race pads.

Unsurprisingly the car is now a very different animal to the one that arrived at SL Shop with an engine burning plenty of oil. "It's so much better, and it's been very reliable," Dan comments. But he also admits that now the major work is all but done, at least for the moment, he doesn't really want to drive it to within an inch of its life, which is now its purpose. "I've got too much mechanical sympathy for that," he tells us.

The driving is mainly done by Sam Bailey and his son Jake, who have already entered a few races in the recently developed SL, the 19-year old in particular proving pretty effective in attacking the kerbs. But on a quite cold, wet Donington

Park track in early November it was time for me to take the wheel, and having known for several years that the car was being built, I was curious to say the least about how it would drive.

As is frequently the case with race cars, the first obstacle is actually gaining entry. The roll cage bars reduce access to a small slot, reduced further up by the huge, wraparound head protectors of the Sparco race seat, whose position is of course fixed in position. But after an embarrassing amount of grunting and contorting, and aided by the suede-rimmed Momo steering wheel being removable, I was squeezed in, after which the full, multi-point race harness was tightened up for me, leaving me able to breath lightly but no more.

The interior is most un-Mercedes like, stripped bare apart from the dashboard, which now houses competition instruments, a rev counter in the centre position where the



△ The big V8 provides good power on track.

◁ A team of people keep the car maintained.

◁◁ Access into the car is limited due to the cage.

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The SL Shop's Sam Bailey with his racing son Jake on the right.



The interiors were far removed from the production cars.

Rallying point: 107-series in competition

In the 1970s the sportiest Mercedes were the 107-series SL and SLC. That wasn't saying much, the car's bulk and weight hardly lending itself to motorsport. Nonetheless towards the end of the decade Mercedes, spurred on by legendary chief engineer Erich Waxenberger, decided to tackle top level rallying and made the 450SLC coupe its weapon of choice, entering first the standard 450SLC in 1978, and the specially built five-litre 450SLC 5.0 in 1979 and the similar 500SLC in 1979.

The results were mixed, but there were wins, aided by the sheer scale of Mercedes' resources. In 1978's 18,000-mile marathon Vuelta a la America del Sur, the factory fielded four cars, Andrew Cowan's the winner, while the following year the 450SLC 5.0 filled the first four places in the Ivory Coast's Bandama Rally. But by the end of 1980 Stuttgart mustered a mere fourth place in the World Rally Championship constructors' league, and for 1981, by which time SLC production was running down,

opted to switch to the R107 SL roadster with its shorter wheelbase and greater agility in search of improved results.

The 1980 WRC champion Walter Röhrl was signed to drive the 500SL, carrying over the SLC's M117 V8 in uprated form. And

that was the closest the R107 ever came to a factory entry. The plan had been to campaign the R107, named the 500SL Rallye and four of which were made, as an interim measure and later switch to the forthcoming 190E 2.3-16 whose more compact size suggested much greater potential.

But then the original, turbocharged Audi Quattro happened, instantly rendering two-wheel drive rally cars uncompetitive. This led to Mercedes-Benz cancelling its WRC programme and re-focusing the hot 190E as a touring car racer. The still born 500SL Rallye has re-emerged in a Mercedes publicity role, taken by Mercedes-Benz Classic to various historic events.



△ Mercedes proved the SL could compete.

▷ speedometer once was. There's a plain centre console with basic switches including a master power on/off switch. No indicators, incidentally, which in this environment are clearly for wimps. The pedals are now a floor-hinged competition fixture. But the most striking impressions are the long manual gearstick jutting up, and just how low you sit, eye level to the parked wipers.

I decided to take things easy. But this is a car you can build confidence in quickly

EXCUSES EXCUSES

Not wishing to have to dip into the *Racing Driver's Book of Excuses* to explain why I spun into the gravel on the first corner ("a rabbit ran on to the track" is quite handy for this occasion), I decided to take things easy. But this is a car you can build confidence in quickly, not least because of the overflowing bread basket of low down torque. When Jake said you'll only need third and fourth gears I couldn't

see how that would work, but it does, wheelspin probably possible in third in the wet. Donington Park near Derby is a fast, flowing circuit with no super tight hairpins, so third gear was fine for every corner, with fourth enough for the straights. The engine also sounds glorious in a way that only a V8 can when you feed in the power.

I am not a connoisseur of racing car chassis set up, but the 450SL, still on factory 14-inch 'Mexican hat' alloys, albeit one inch up in diameter from standard, seems very well balanced and also forgiving. The power steering felt normal and although my legs were folded and my feet not at the ideal angle in relation ▷

“
”

The interior is most un-Mercedes like, stripped bare apart from the dashboard



▷ to the pedals, the brakes and clutch felt smooth, and even on the damp surface not once did I sense the tail to be light or twitchy enough to tip me off the track, and the car even rides not too harshly. When Jake later took me out for some demonstration hot laps I could still sense the SL's forgiving nature from the passenger seat.

It's a tough old beast too. The engine didn't miss a beat essentially from nine to four on the track day, and nothing broke, even when a spin into the gravel (no names, no pack drill) necessitated the clearing out of the equivalent of a small garden rockery from the front lower wishbones.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

The 450SL, which is likely to be made road legal soon thus increasing its scope, looks marvellous even when standing still. It isn't simply a weekend indulgence for SL Shop father and son, it's a working ambassador for the company and is likely to be seen at classic events, and can even be hired out for certain races by suitably licensed drivers.

Hence great care has been taken over its appearance. The lustrous red paintwork is nicely enhanced by the broad silver strips on the bonnet

▽ The car is checked over but remained reliable.

▽ A trip into the gravel trap meant cleaning.

▽ Re-fuelling the car was an involving process.

and sides, and also by the contrasting white factory hardtop. The perfect condition, satin finish wheels, hunkering into the wheelarches thanks to the lowered springs look the business too. Overall it's a strangely stunning sight, the still demure R107 profile but with some carefully applied warpaint. This was definitely the queen of Donington Park that day, a glorious sight among the throng of lightly tuned hatchbacks, and attracting more attention than even the dayglo green Porsche 911 GT3 RS on track.

Mercedes-Benz never raced the R107 in period, and the sidebar in this feature explains why not. It would have been a wonderful sight mixing with the Jaguar XJs, Porsches, Ford Capris and big BMW coupes of the 1970s, and the SL Shop's project allows us a flavour of what might have been. ▀



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HOLY HALLS WORKSHOP

Part
2

We conclude our behind the scenes look at Mercedes-Benz Classic with a tour of the workshop and a visit to the secret vaults of the archives

WORDS & IMAGES **ROBB PRITCHARD**

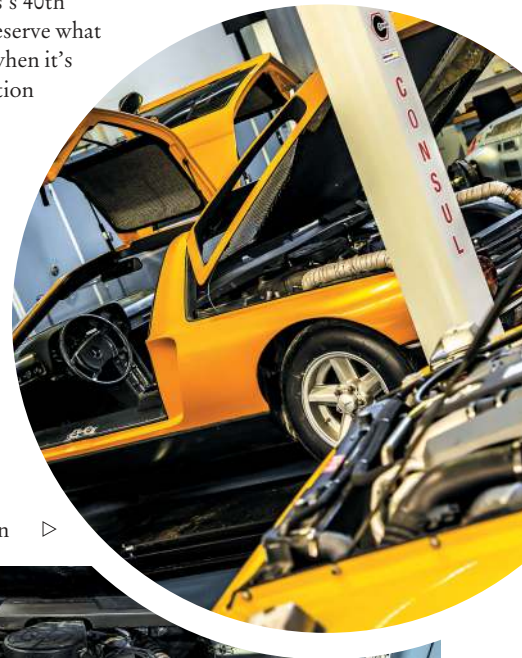


NEXT IN THE TOUR OF THE workshop was another iconic Mercedes, but one never put into production, so the C111 will be eternally famous as one of the best known prototypes. Sixteen were made, at first powered by specially designed Wankel rotary engines and later fitted with diesels, which took many endurance driving world records in the late 1970s when economy and reliability were key words for manufacturers. Despite being instantly popular with the public after it was displayed at the 1969 Frankfurt motor show, and the office receiving blank cheques from those who wanted to be at the head of the queue, Mercedes never put it into production and not a single one has ever had a private owner. "Personally, I think it's a pity," workshop director Klaus Reichert muses. "It would have been a real Supercar and was a decade ahead of Porsche's 959 and the Ferrari F40." The cobwebs were blown away at the Silveretta Classic in the Alps, so it was having a full check before taking its usual place back in the Holy Halls.

Perhaps the most unexpected car to see in the workshop

was the rather garishly painted 2014 G63 AMG. The bright yellow G-Wagen from the 'Crazy Colours' series had just been displayed as part of the G-Class's 40th anniversary. "We have the duty to preserve what was in production, so in the future, when it's the 75th anniversary the next generation running the Classic Centre will have vehicles like this for their displays."

There aren't many cars in the history of motorsport with such a legendary reputation as the 300SLR. Built for the Sportscar World Championship, which in the 1950s vied for popularity with the newly branded Formula 1, it's basically a contemporary F1 car covered with fully enclosed bodywork. Performance was on par with any Ferrari, Alfa, Jaguar or Porsche but that was complimented by unmatched reliability. Unbeaten in



△▷ C111 is a stillborn icon, but the workshop keeps it going strong.

▷ This example is a V8-powered version and was having a check-up.

◁ There's always an eclectic mix of cars to be found in the workshop.

▽ The C111 interior was very modern for 1969, when it was unveiled.



“ We have the duty to preserve what was in production, so in the future, the next generation will have vehicles like this ”





△ The colourful G-Wagen represents the modern era.

△▷ This rare SLR prototype doesn't get used much.

▷ every race it entered, it holds a unique record. Up on the ramps was chassis 0001/55. This prototype and testing mule was present at a few events in 1955 but was never raced. Now meticulously restored, it doesn't see much action and its last high-profile appearance was back in 2015 when all the surviving SLRs were brought together at Goodwood for the model's 60th anniversary.

INFORMATION BANK

This leads us to the lesser, but related, SL. Using the fabled SLR as a template it was developed as a sports car and was a combination of performance and luxury that no other manufacturer could match. Today, the 300SL Coupe and Roadster are among some of the most desirable classic cars in the world. And

“ Klaus's team are working with developing technologies such as 3D printing and robo-forming ”

when they are worth well over a million pounds, originality, and proof of it are all important. This is why Mercedes-Benz Classic instigated a programme to research and authenticate every single detail of the cars. Klaus explains. “We were at the

Techno Classica show in Essen, Germany with a few of our SL models and someone claimed one of the cars there wasn't original, as there were some differences which he pointed out. In researching this, we discovered that not every single detail of each car

was available in Mercedes-Benz Classic, which I didn't feel was correct. And so we began the project to rectify this.”

It didn't just go and collect a few old build sheets from the archives though, it became a full three-year study researching exactly what changes were made to the cars through the entire

production run. Sometimes new parts found their way into the cars on a weekly basis, as the SL was one of the top sports car of its day and the engineers were keen to improve. Now every single change is catalogued and can be verified in the database, an invaluable service when small details can be worth so much. The process is currently being continued for the later 113-series.

Obviously Klaus enjoys a challenge, as another issue he has set about rectifying more recently is the equally ambitious undertaking of remaking much of the SL's spare parts catalogue. "Many key pieces have been unavailable for a long time, so soon it will be possible to keep the car's originality, even with new parts," he says.

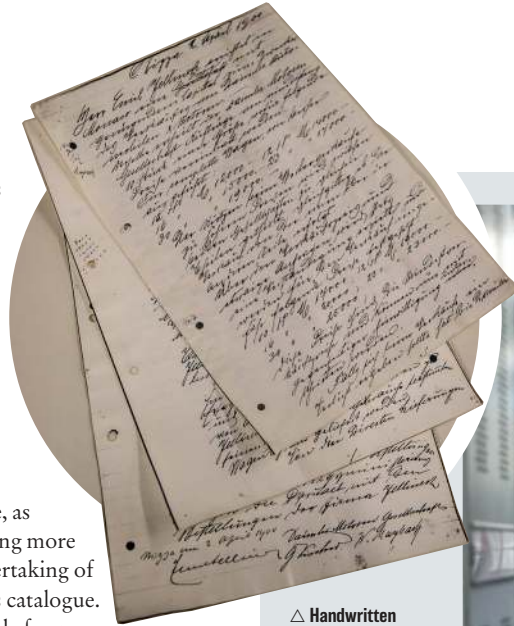
For this, a brand new engine block with a prototype crankshaft was clamped to the test bench for the engineers to fine tune the tooling machines. Spare parts are of course a necessarily big part of Mercedes Classic. "Fifteen years after a model has ended production we take over the responsibility of spare parts. Seven years ago we had a collection of 33,000 individual parts, but now it's up to 90,000. By 2025 it's projected that we will have 120,000 parts in stock, but they do run out, and that's another element we're working on."

Ordering 100 pieces from a supplier can be expensive, as small batch runs always incur a premium, so to counter that Klaus's team are working with developing technologies such as 3D printing and robo-forming. "The target is that a customer takes their car to a dealer, the dealer orders the part, which the machine makes and then sends out."

THE ARCHIVES

Together with the Museum and the Holy Halls collection of 1,100 cars, the third part of how Mercedes-Benz maintains their storied history is the huge archive building where everything significant, interesting or relevant to any model has been kept. The historical record was officially instigated way back in 1936, when it celebrated its 50th anniversary. Now under the careful oversight of Gerhard Heidbrink, the silent shelves are full of memorabilia of Mercedes milestones and Gerhard was happy to show us some highlights of the staggering nine miles of shelving.

Back to the very beginnings of the company at the end of the 19th century, there were four men who changed the world. Carl Benz, Gottlieb Daimler, Wilhelm Maybach and the very demanding motoring visionary Emil Jellinek. The story of how these forward-thinking Victorian-era gentlemen came to begin what we know as Mercedes-Benz has been told before, but opening a large book Gerhard shows logbook entries where Jellinek made some of his finicky requests. Dated December 22 1900, the spidery handwriting translates as, "For the first two cars the wheels should be made with the best quality hickory wood and so the hubs and drawings



△ Handwritten letters by Emil Jellinek from 1900.

▷ Gerhard pictured with just some of the huge archives.

▽ Some of the documents are over 130 years old!



From the archives



△ Advertising posters from the glory days.

▽ The archives are carefully labelled up.



PROFILE Mercedes' Workshop

▷ have to be sent. But if the wheels are late, just send the car and then get the company to finish the wheels in white paint with the thinnest red line and shipped quickly to Nice.”

Such attention to detail for the discerning owners is something that the company appears to have kept close to its core for all of that intervening time.

But it's not just Mercedes-Benz that considers itself to be a world changing company. The UNESCO Memories of the World Register is a catalogue of some of mankind's most important documents, such as the Beyeux Tapestry, Icelandic Sagas and archives mentioning William Shakespeare. It also includes the patent for the first ever car, 'Vehicle with gas engine operation' from 1886. Somewhere between 100 to

▽ Some of the more regular classics are still impressive.

150 copies were printed by the patent office, so although it's rare, it's not unique. Still, Gerhard handled the 133-year old document as reverentially as a religious relic. A letter discussing permission to use the cars on public roads and a catalogue from 1893 advertising early Benz cars were also included, and all are kept here.

A GIRL NAMED MERCEDES

In the same display case is the only known photo of Emil's daughter Mercédès, actually in a Mercedes-Benz. Part of a personal collection donated a few years ago, Gerhard says that Mercedes-Benz was thrilled to get this shot. In delicate gown and a fine hat perched on top of her hair-do, she looks rather

unamused at the crowd of men surrounding her Simplex. Their expressions are slightly easier to understand. A car was a rare sight in the very early 1900s, never mind one with a woman behind the wheel.

It's not all Museum-esque seriousness though. A three-pointed star from the hood of a normal saloon is set of a wooden plinth and is not something that would grab attention on its own, but with the sparkle in Gerhard's eyes it's obviously something special. The story goes that an American sales manager ended up on a bit of a drinking bender with some of the astronauts about to depart our home planet on the Apollo 14 mission. The next morning, he noticed that the star was missing off the hood but cursing the neighbourhood hoodlums didn't think too much of it, until he met the astronauts again, and they gave him the star back. As a joke, they'd apparently taken it to the moon.

Kept in several large storerooms that are progressively cooler and dryer are some 300,000 glass negatives, 10,000



▷ There were plenty of awe-inspiring engines to peruse.

▷▷ Ponton was having a once over before an event.



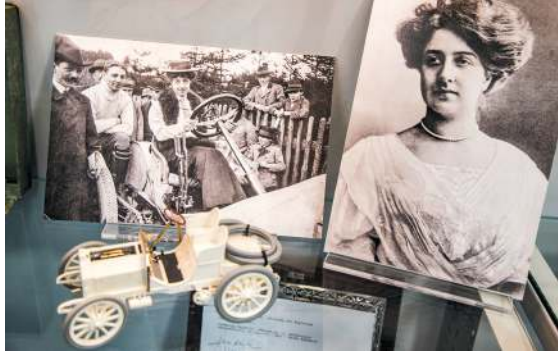
film reels, 15,000 books and 4.5 million photos. If there's a promotion for a new model that requires an historical quote for reference, it's here that Gerhard will come. Or maybe an owner wants to check the provenance of a classic car before selling it, as here Gerhard can check all the numbers of the engine, chassis and gearbox of any single car when it left the factory. Also, each month a copy of this very magazine finds its way into this vast collection.

But even here, where everything is of the past nothing stands still and Gerhard recently oversaw a huge project to digitalise the production line archives of almost every Mercedes-Benz made between 1945 and 1985. Scanning the microfilms with all the details was the easy part, as renaming the 10 million files is what took the years of tedious work. Almost as interesting as the items commemorating actual history are the things that represent what never happened.

Gerhard showed us a design sketch of a 190 Ponton with the front on an SL grafted in place. It's a real period technical drawing, but the car never got put into production.

In a large draw was a poster with an art-nouveau rendering of Karl Kling's 300SL for the 1952 Carrera Panamericana, complete with cacti in the background. But there's another for the 1937 British Grand Prix held at Donington with no writing under the odd-looking Union Jack, as second and third for Manfred von Brauchitsch and Rudolf Caracciola in their W25s wasn't quite good enough to celebrate at the time, (one of these cars we saw in the workshop in the last issue). The unused poster has survived for over 80 years and will do for another 80 thanks to the archive team.

► Mercedes Enthusiast would like to thank **Frank Mühling** and **Ralph Wagenknecht** for arranging this special visit.



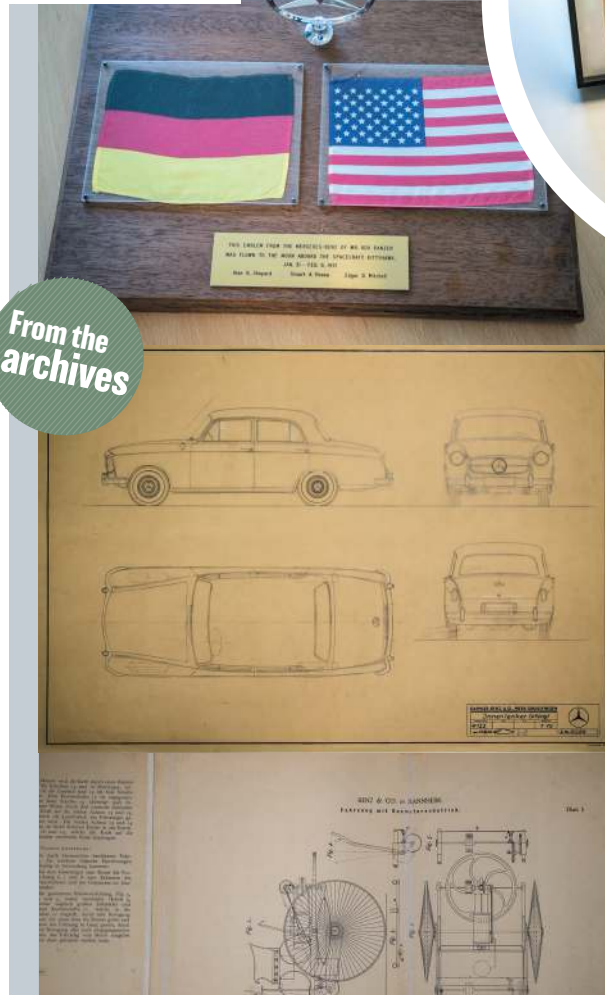
◀ The only photo of Mercedes actually in a Mercedes-Benz.



◀ Original patent dating from 1886.

◀◀ This badge apparently made it to the moon!

From the archives



◀ The 190SL fronted Ponton design sketch.

◀ A technical drawing from the late 1800s.

▼ 1937 poster from the British Grand Prix.



Top and tail

A taste of
Lorinser at
each end of the
Mercedes range
with the biggest
and smallest
offerings tested

WORDS & IMAGES IAN KUAH





To keep its wide and varied client base content, the company provides a huge range of modified models



TUNER CARS Lorinser A- & S-Class



EACH MERCEDES TUNER HAS A UNIQUE story to tell, but Sportservice Lorinser stands apart from the others in being the tuning arm of an official Mercedes-Benz dealer from day one. The Lorinser story began on March 1 1930 when master mechanic Erwin Lorinser opened his workshop in the town of Waiblingen, about half an hour's drive north of the Mercedes Sindelfingen plant. The success of his independent garage led to an approach by Daimler-Benz AG with the offer of a contract to sell and service its cars and commercial vehicles. Thus on November 15 1935, Erwin Lorinser became the Mercedes-Benz dealer for the Waiblingen area.

The company grew steadily over the years thanks to the very personal attention Erwin gave to his clients. In June 1955, the company was renamed Autohaus Lorinser GmbH & Co. KG, and six years later Erwin and his wife acquired a piece of land in a new industrial estate on which they constructed a bespoke building for their growing dealership. Erwin involved his son Manfred in the business, and he eventually succeeded his father as Managing Director in 1974. With his younger, more aggressive outlook, Manfred continued to increase his customer base through the 1980s and 90s. He freely admits that one of the secrets of the company's success is getting to know his clients' needs and doing his best to satisfy them. In fact, over the years many of these customers have become close personal friends. It was through his good customer relationships that the next step evolved. In the post oil crisis euphoria of the mid 1970s, the desire for more speed and individuality began to manifest itself once again, and clients began to express a longing for cars that would clearly show off their personalities.

With an eye on what AMG was doing at the time, Manfred consulted his chief engineer and in 1976 the first Lorinser-converted Mercedes 123 saloon underwent a transformation from staid and basic to something with a more sporting flavour. The conversion caught the eye of other clients looking for something different, and with the knowledge that his ideas were commercially viable, Lorinser went ahead with a complete tuning programme for the 123-series. All the work was carried

out in the workshop of the new car dealership facility that Lorinser had opened in nearby Winnenden that same year.

MOVING FORWARD

Spurred on by its success with the 123-series models, Manfred and his team started designing and testing parts for the rest of the Mercedes-Benz range. The 126-series S-Class, which had just gone on sale, and the 107-series SL and SLC were the next models to be honed to a sharper image. The fast growing aftermarket tuning activities led to Manfred incorporating a completely separate company to oversee these operations. And so, Sportservice Lorinser was officially born on December 28 1981. At first, the fledgling company had its head office in Waiblingen, but the rate of its growth demanded independent facilities where it could spread its wings.

Coincidentally, the growth of the Mercedes-Benz dealership necessitated another building, so it made sense to incorporate

△ A180d is tuned to 129bhp and 215lb ft...

△ ...whilst S500 is pushing 492bhp and 592lb ft.

▽ Lower aero flaps create an aggressive look.

▽ Tail pipes in the diffuser are part of the design.



The visual transformation is a combination of aerodynamic styling, larger wheels and a lower ride height



both operations into the brand new premises in the nearby town of Winnenden. Just as his father had done, Manfred in turn brought his son Marcus into the business. By 2006 Manfred was able to step back as Marcus took the helm at Sportservice Lorinser. Around this time, work began to redevelop the original 54,000sqm site in Waiblingen where a 10,000sqm three-storey, state-of-the-art steel and glass building was constructed to house the showroom, administration, workshop and warehouse. Today, Lorinser employs 200 people, with 144 of them based in Waiblingen. Sportservice Lorinser remains in Winnenden.

Over the years, Lorinser has attracted a number of well-known customers, from four-time Formula 1 World Champion Alain Prost and Formula 1 designer John Barnard to award-winning actors like Denzel Washington, Sharon Stone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. To keep its wide and varied client base content, the company provides a huge range of modified models, as we found out with two very different examples.

A-Class

The new W177 A-Class has been a smash hit with buyers, both those trading up from the previous model, and others who have made the successful jump over from other marques. However, some say that the smoother look of the latest model is a bit plain, a charge that certainly cannot be levelled at the Lorinser A-Class we tested. If anything its more purposeful appearance never failed to turn heads, even in Lorinser's hometown.

The visual transformation is a combination of aerodynamic styling, larger wheels and a lower ride height, but to match the improvements the engine has also received a boost from the popular Lorinser PowerModul conversion. The aero components consist of a prominent front splitter, aero flaps around the front bumper intakes, and a rear diffuser that neatly brackets a pair of stainless steel exhaust outlets either side. Built into the diffuser, these are purely for show and to improve the rear end look. ▸

△ On the road, the tweaked car feels sharper.

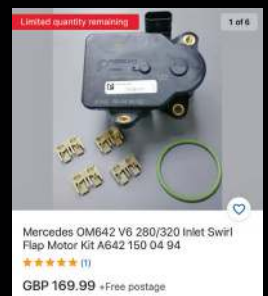
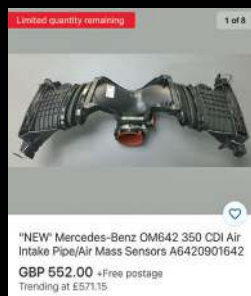
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▷ The wheels do of course make a big contribution to the perceived look and proportions of a car and the 8.5-inch wide and 19-inch diameter ET44 alloys found here are shod with 225/40ZR19 Continental SportContact 6 rubber to suit the A-Class perfectly. Together with 35mm lowering springs, they succeed in squeezing every bit of daylight from the wheelarches.

Lorinser offers 10 different alloy wheel styles across 19-, 20- and even 21-inch sizes for the A-Class, but it chose to use the classic RS8 turbine nine-spoke for this application. The design appears to take its inspiration from the Mercedes SLR McLaren wheel, but where the spokes on the SLR wheels are sided, the ones on the Lorinser RS8 are not.

The company also offered us the choice of a black or white car for our photoshoot, and choosing the latter was a no-brainer. We first saw the test car in the even light of the white-tiled showroom where its glossy black aero package stood out in stark contrast to the white paintwork. The side stripes are the same shade of dark olive green as the wheels, and our immediate reaction was that this unusual colour combination suited the car very well. We certainly appreciated the individualistic approach, which is what tuning and personalisation is all about.

This demo car started life as an entry level A180d, a popular model in Germany for those on a budget. Sitting between the factory ECU and the engine, Lorinser's plug-and-play PowerModul intercepts signals from the sensors, modifies them, and then sends the revised parameters to the engine. This results in an increase in peak power from 114bhp to 129bhp, with torque rising from 192lb ft to a healthier 215lb ft. That equates to around a 10 per cent increase in output and still leaves plenty

△ The white bodywork contrasts well.

△▷ Dark olive green wheels are SLR inspired.



The stylish Lorinser A-Class has a huge built-in dynamic safety margin, creating a usable package



of headroom for safety, but even so, the programming is also able to take into account high load and high temperature conditions to protect the mechanicals. If the factory set temperature limits were to be reached the unit can revert to the standard programme, allowing the safety protocols to kick in and reduce the power output. In action, the modified engine delivers discernibly improved full throttle performance, and because response is also sharpened, the engine feels more willing and alive. With the factory programming used on light throttle loads the overall fuel economy is unaffected in normal driving.

While the modest power boost transforms the subjective feel of the car, it is far from able to tax the inherent excellence of the standard car's handling, let alone once the uprated suspension and bigger wheels have been added. With chassis dynamics far in advance of the engine's capability, the stylish Lorinser A-Class has a huge built-in dynamic safety margin, creating a usable package.

S-Class

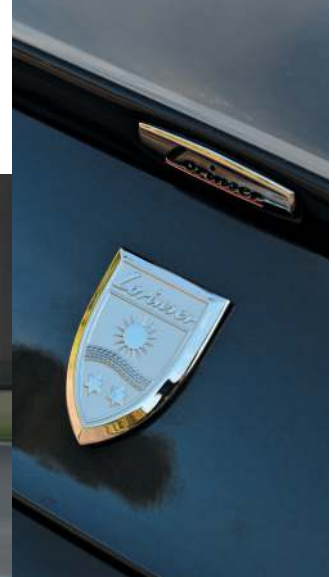
It may seem odd to long-standing S500 owners that there is no longer a five-litre V8 under the bonnet of their favoured model, but the silky smooth turbocharged in-line six introduced at the W222 S-Class facelift in the summer of 2017 undoubtedly has its own charm. The current three-litre M256 embodies all that is good about the latest crop of Mercedes-Benz engines. In a ▷



There's plenty of power on tap in the tuned S500 and it feels a lot faster.

TUNER CARS

Lorinser A- & S-Class



△ The S500 features different wheel designs...

◁ ...on either side to show off its range for the car.

◁◁ Stainless tips are part of the new system.

▷ nutshell, that seems to be a combination of turbocharging together with a 48v electrical system with integrated starter/generator that boosts low-end torque to help step off and overall efficiency. It's clearly works well, as the new six-cylinder is actually more powerful than the V8 it replaces, despite being down on both capacity and cylinder count. Best of all, it manages to do this while consuming significantly less fuel.

This cultured motor powered the Lorinser S500 we took out for our two-car soirée, but with an added twist in the form of a development prototype of its PowerModul that goes on sale in February 2020. Unlike the module for the A180d that increases fuel flow for extra power, a petrol engine ECU remap has to alter the fuel, spark and boost parameters. As a result the big numbers to pay attention to go up from 449bhp and 516lb ft of torque to a rousing 492bhp with 592lb ft.

TORQUE UP

The increased torque really makes a difference and even though the stock torque is impressive that extra 176lb ft significantly improves the 'waft-ability' of the six-cylinder S-Class. The remap also speeds up the response of the drive-by-wire throttle making pickup even better. In normal driving, the improved torque also allows you to reach cruising speed using less throttle and can thus potentially improve fuel economy.



The latest modifications are not as radical as some of its past creations, but that is a reflection of today's customers



Lorinser was keen to show off more than one of its wheel designs to cater for this model and so chose to mount a different style of wheel on each side of the car, although they measure the same 9-inch and 10.5-inch front and rear widths, with a 21-inch diameter. Beyond that, the Lorinser S500 has its front spoiler lip, trademark bolt-on front wings with air outlets, rear bumper valance insert, bootlid spoiler and sport exhaust system. This exhaust has two freer flowing rear silencers with sound valves that activate in Sport

mode. The four round exit pipes send spent gases out via the stainless steel quad tips, and when you drop a window in a tunnel when the valves are wide open, your reward is a more visceral six-cylinder snarl that belongs to an S500 model.

Lorinser's latest modifications for the top and entry level models in the Mercedes range are not as radical as some of its past creations, but that is a reflection of what today's customers want. As we noted in the beginning, constant dialogue with its customers has always been a key to Lorinser's success.

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Story time

Our contributor recites the story of how he came to love the Mercedes-Benz brand and how the 190E played a vital part in that from early on

WORDS WILLIAM TERRINGTON IMAGES TERRY OBORNE





William has loved the 190E model for many years.

“The car was definitely one of the best testaments to the legendary build quality of the time”



“Although it isn’t a sports car, cornering is more than respectable and carried out in a dignified and enjoyable way”



MY TALE OF MERCEDES-BENZ ownership starts with a 1991 190E in Midnight Blue with cream check fabric interior, which was purchased by my family with delivery miles on the clock. This car was with us for around 100,000 miles and made it until 2004, by which time I was seven years old. It was a fabulous car, in possibly the best colour combination possible for a 1990s W201 and I have many fond memories of this car, including holidays to Cornwall and Jersey. I also recall it was a reliable and dependable car, and never put a foot wrong. It was only in the last few thousand miles that it started to develop issues, involving differential and clutch.

Come 2004, a 2000-plate W203 C240 Avantgarde with rather low mileage was purchased to replace it, and this was a nice car. However, as I am sure many readers might expect, being from the 2000-era, it did develop some electrical issues as the mileage increased. But, if it hadn't been for those issues, the second 190E in this tale, a rather unusual 1989 190E 2.6, would not have played such a big part in the story. This 190E was the courtesy car for the local Mercedes specialist that was tasked with looking after our cars for many years. It was finished in Arctic White with burgundy leather trim, and also had a rear spoiler and alloy wheels. We enjoyed using this car a few times we had it and although when I first saw it parked on the drive I wasn't entirely sure about it, its charm soon won me over. The interior was simply fantastic and on the school run it was unlike any of the other parents' cars, and was quite frankly the coolest one there in my opinion. Certainly, being a school boy whose ride featured a rear spoiler and red leather trim was definitely a playground top trump. But one of the other curiosities about this car, was

that it had covered about a wholesome 250,000 miles, and not only did it drive like new, but it had a wonderful character. It always felt taut and sporty, and was always raring to go and seemed to love being driven. That car was definitely one of the best testaments to the legendary build quality of the time, and to Mercedes' motto at the time, 'Engineered Like No Other Car'.

STARTING YOUNG

At 17 years old, learning to drive became a top priority. In March 2014, after quite a while of going through many Auto Trader adverts, an Arctic White 190E with a blue cloth interior arrived thanks to my dad picking it up from a dealership in South Croydon, for the princely sum of £1,250. The car had slightly rusty front wings and not long after arriving it already started needing new parts. It was clearly going to be an on-going



▷ Original hub caps are part of the base trim.

**JUST
THE
FACTS**

190E (W201)

ENGINE
M102 1,997cc 4-cyl

POWER
116bhp @ 5,300rpm

TORQUE
127lb ft @ 3,500rpm

TRANSMISSION
4-speed automatic,
RWD

0-62MPH 11.0secs

TOP SPEED 118mph

WEIGHT 1,170kg

YEARS PRODUCED
1982-1993

*Figures for 1989 car
as pictured*



project, however the car clearly had a great character, which has been kept to this day. It is by no means a perfect concours winner, but a driver's car. Sure, there are a few bits of patina and wear if you look hard enough, but this is a car for driving for holidays, shows and much else besides.

Owning a modern classic Mercedes-Benz is definitely a unique experience. It brings you a lot of attention depending on which model you have. I have had thumbs up and flashing of lights from other classic Mercedes owners and one instance of this was in August 2019, on my way to Beaulieu, the day before the Simply Mercedes Day at Beaulieu Motor Museum. On a stretch of road in the New Forest, a 123-series Coupe coming the other way flashed its lights at the same time as I did. I gave the owner a thumbs up, and he waved back. Thank you to whoever that was, that really made my day.

OWNERSHIP

However, owning these cars definitely requires patience, and there are always more things on the 'to do' list than one might think, especially as higher mileages are reached and items begin to naturally deteriorate. Recently, my own car has had the windscreen replaced due to delamination, and I've noticed some of the paint has deteriorated and cracked, whilst plastic and rubber items have weathered, but replacing these really smartens up the car. Also, an appointment at an interior trimmer is booked next year to repair the driver's seat bolster and to re-trim and firm up the base of the seat. After 100,000 miles, these seats can get a bit saggy but it's always worth repairing.

I consider my car a running part restoration currently, however the list of jobs is thankfully now down to a shortlist, although the pile of invoices has become pretty sizeable. The car has come ▶

△ The 190E was William's first car when he was 17.

△△ M102 engine provides ample amounts of grunt.

▽ Although it's a cherished car, it's used regularly.



“Owning a modern classic Mercedes is a unique experience. It brings you a lot of attention”



▷ a long way since 2014 and the part restoration has also been an education, with far more knowledge gained than if I had bought a pristine, low mileage example destined for occasional use only, although that will undoubtedly happen for me with a different car.

With this car though, it is clear that it was looked after by the first two owners, however I don't think the previous owner treated it particularly well: the aerial was aftermarket, a bolt was missing from the alternator, there was a dent not properly remedied, and neither the paint nor the chrome had been polished for a quite a while. After the first owners, the history was also patchy to say the least. Hopefully, the part restoration will be complete next year, although there will still be little niggles to sort out after that and there is always room for improvement on any project like this.

The 190E is definitely an underrated driver's car. At speed, accelerating briskly, or on the motorway it hunkers down, feels solid, inspires confidence and munches up the miles. The M102 engine deserves more recognition I feel. It is essentially a shorter version of the six-cylinder M103 in the sought-after 2.6, and





Cosworth found it suitable to tune up. It's strong, with excellent distribution and quality of torque throughout the revs. Accelerating from 60 to 70mph is effortless and as for the corners, although it definitely isn't a sports car, cornering is more than respectable and carried out in a dignified and enjoyable way, thanks to the multi-link rear suspension. Gear changes are generally smooth and have never caused problems.

IN THE CLUB

Joining the Mercedes-Benz Owners Club back in August 2018 was a good move, and it helps make one more aware of events. Before any show, I always meticulously prepare the car and this process always takes a bare minimum of three days. Anything you can think of has been attended to and on arrival at the venue, I go over the entire car with Autoglym's Rapid Detailer, and re-dress the tyres, making sure that that the car is exactly as it was when preparation was completed. As I once said to someone, it's a car show, not a car park. This 190E looks, feels and smells like new every time I take it to such events.

△ Blue interior contrasts nicely with the white.

△△ With 149,000 miles the car is looking good.

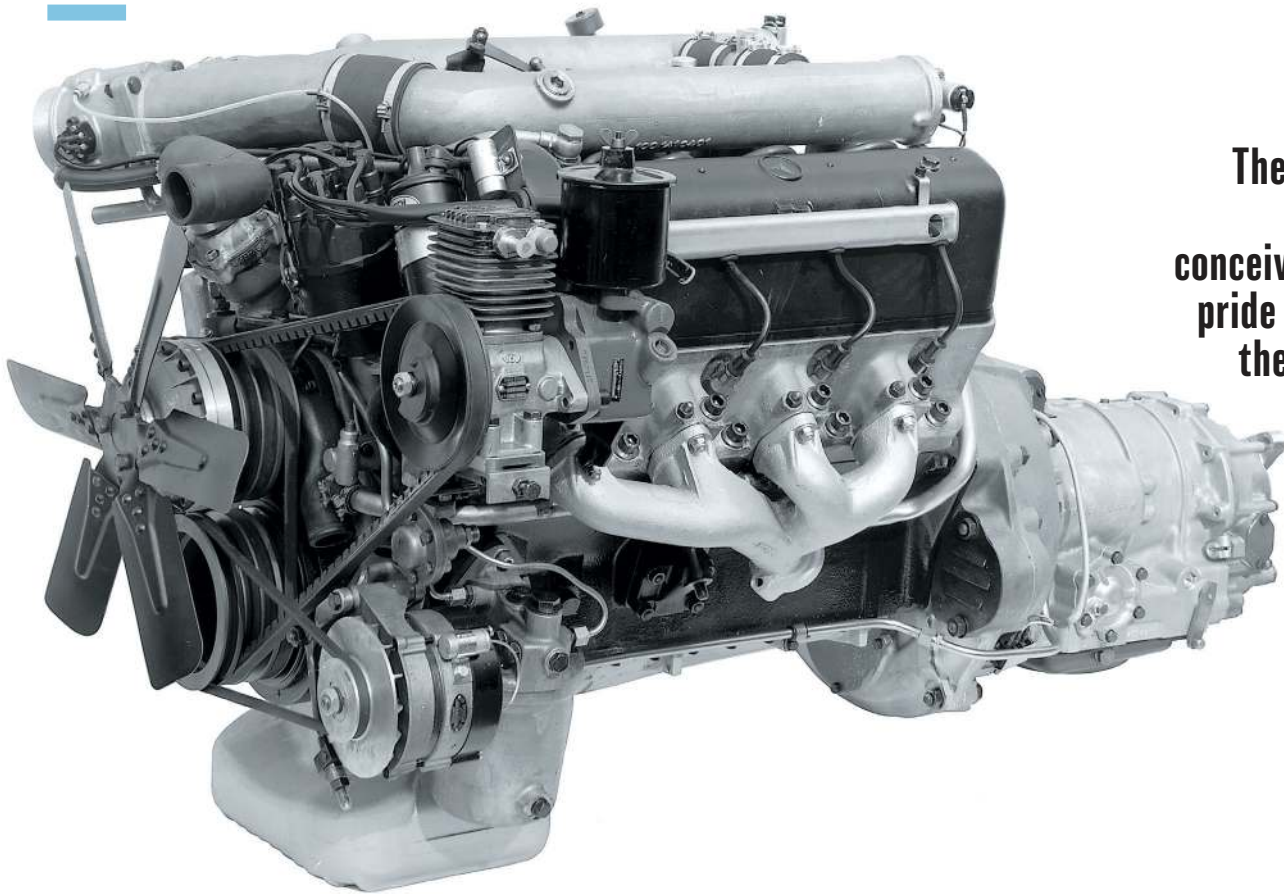
△△△ The sunroof would have been an optional extra.

◁ Luggage area has hardly been used is original.

Car shows are without a doubt some of the greatest days of the year. There is always an amazing and intriguing variety of people, sometimes with their own stories of ownership, or simply admirers or people who need advice. At one show, someone turned up who had just purchased a white 190E the previous day, and was readily given advice on various matters and the phone number of a specialist.

It is always important to have a hands-on approach. Being with the car most of the day, showing people around it and, given that the car is and will one day be used as a family car, letting children sit and play around inside (preferably with shoes off!) are all examples of this approach. I don't think that wandering around having not more than a quick glance is of much interest.

Hopefully what has been written here is proof that not only is the 190E one of the most superb cars made by Mercedes-Benz, but also that if you are willing to commit, can do anything you ask of it. For me, this car is priceless. You could try offering me over the odds of the market value, or even an SLS AMG as a swap, but I would refuse every time.



“
The M100 was originally conceived to take pride of place in the Mercedes 600
”

M100

▽ The big Mercedes V8 first found its way into the 600.

The M100 V8 got its 15 minutes of fame (and a lot more besides) in the nose of the ‘Red Pig’ racing car, kick-starting the legend that has become AMG...

WORDS SHANE O'DONOGHUE IMAGES DAIMLER AG

IT SOUNDS LIKE THE INTRODUCTION to a badly translated German joke, but what do the Pullman and the Red Pig have in common? Their M100 V8 petrol engine, of course, and this powerplant was no laughing matter. The Pullman in question was part of the W100 Mercedes 600 line-up, one of the most luxurious cars that Mercedes has ever produced. Launched in 1964, the 600 was designed to compete head-on with the most opulent cars that Rolls-Royce and Bentley of the day sold. Meanwhile, the Red Pig, or *die Rote Sau*, was the nickname affectionately given to the 300SEL race car of 1971, a briefly made racer using an enlarged version of the M100 engine, taking second place at the Spa 24H and a bigger share of the era's limelight than it had any right to.

But we're getting a little ahead of ourselves. The M100 was originally conceived to take pride of place in the Mercedes 600. It replaced the M189 straight-six, a three-litre unit, but the V8's technical make-up seriously overshadowed that



engine. It's said that the 600's advanced (for the day) hydraulic sub-system, which powered the windows, seats, sunroof, automatically closing doors and the bootlid, required the equivalent of 50bhp of the engine's output to operate, hence the move to a much larger powerplant. Initially a 6.3-litre unit, the M100 featured a single overhead camshaft per bank and a heavy mechanical fuel injection pump mounted within the vee. Officially, it produced 247bhp and 369lb ft of torque. The block was made of cast iron, but the pistons, crankshaft and connecting rods were forged items. Meanwhile, the cylinder heads were made of aluminium alloy with hardened valve seat inserts, while the valves themselves were sodium filled to manage heat transfer.

With a lazy four-speed automatic transmission, a dry weight the wrong side of 2,400kg (for the smallest variant of the 600 – the regular saloon) and an estimated fuel economy of no better than 16mpg, no wonder the 600 needed a 112-litre fuel tank. Apparently it managed nearly 130mph. Not that we imagine many of the six-door Pullman variants ever saw such a speed.

NEW LIFE

However, it's the engine that grabbed the attention of one Erich Waxenberger. A Daimler-Benz Passenger Car Testing Division engineer since 1953, Waxenberger had already been involved in the development of icons such as the W198 300SL Gullwing and W113 Pagoda SL of the 1960s. However, Mercedes was being criticised by the media for being boring. A test by the magazine *Auto Motor und Sport* in 1967 was damning: "Unlike Opel, Daimler-Benz does not have a big brother in the USA who builds eight cylinders in mass production and who can therefore supply accordingly. Daimler-Benz does have a state of the art eight-cylinder design which leads a respectable life in the 600, behind closed doors as it were, but it is hard to understand why a smaller-displacement version of this engine has not long since been installed in the intermediate range saloon. The three-litre six-cylinder is only one desperate step on the way to creating more flexible and quieter engines. There is reason to expect the eight-cylinder will soon be making its appearance. This should not be asking too much of Germany's most renowned automobile manufacturers at a time when Ford comes home victorious from Le Mans using simple, mass-produced eight-cylinder engines."

The story is that Waxenberger was incensed by criticisms of the performance and appeal of contemporary Mercedes saloons and decided to change the situation. The first thing he did was install the 6.3 V8 in a discarded SEL body and set about testing it. Seemingly his boss, Rudolf Uhlenhaut, the head of Passenger Car Development, heard the test car going past his office window and demanded a turn at the wheel. A few short months later, the W109 Mercedes 300SEL 6.3 made its public debut at the 1968 Geneva motor show, kick-starting a whole new niche for the car world. I say niche, but Mercedes discovered considerable demand for such a thing, and more than 6,500 examples of the 300SEL 6.3 were manufactured. ▷

FACT SHEET

Engine
M100

Configuration
V8, double overhead cam

Capacity
6,332cc, 6,834cc

Years produced
1963 to 1981

▽ Although wide, the engine fitted into the smaller 109.

▽▽ Huge Pullmans relied on the M100 V8 to move its mass.



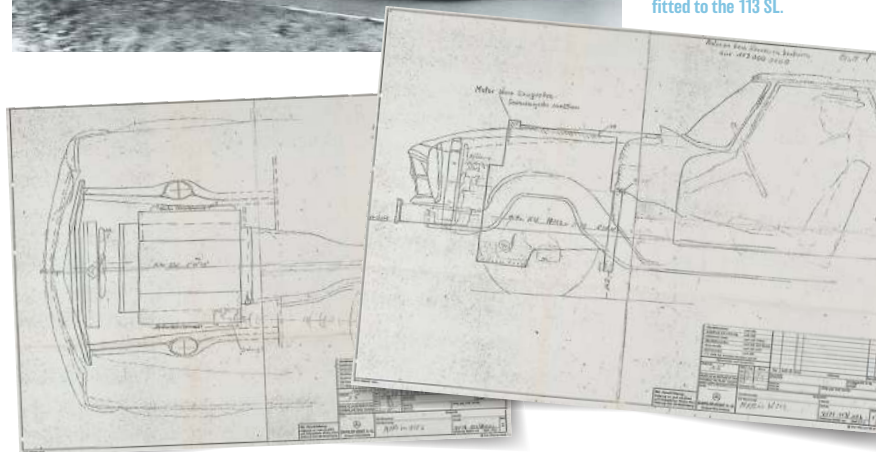
◁ The 6.3 went on to become a good seller worldwide.



△ Waxenberger was provoked into building the model.

◁ Large torque made the 300SEL great for towing!

▽ Plans showed how the M100 was fitted to the 113 SL.

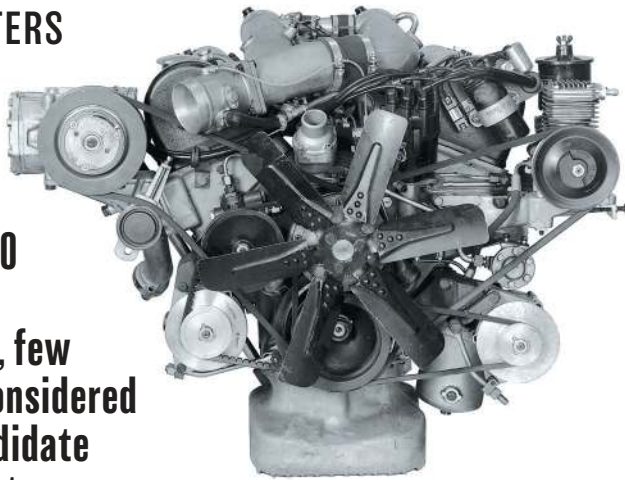


ENGINE MASTERS

M100



While the M100 shone in the Mercedes 300, few would have considered it a likely candidate for motorsport



△ Ancillaries made the M100 a large engine to package.

▷ The original Red Pig racer that put AMG on the map.



▷ While the M100 shone in the lighter frame of the Mercedes 300, few would have considered it a likely candidate for motorsport. Indeed, as Mercedes had ceased all involvement in motorsport after the 1955 Le Mans disaster (over 80 dead, 180 injured), there was no intention for such a thing. Until that decision had been made, two engineers, Hans Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher, were working on a racing engine in the Development Department at Daimler-Benz. They continued to develop it in their own time, and it went on to win many races. That's not important here, but what came next is, as Aufrecht and Melcher formed *Aufrecht Melcher Großaspach Ingenieurbüro, Konstruktion und Versuch zur Entwicklung von Rennmotoren* (Aufrecht Melcher Großaspach engineering firm, design and testing for the development of racing engines) in 1967 or, known as AMG.

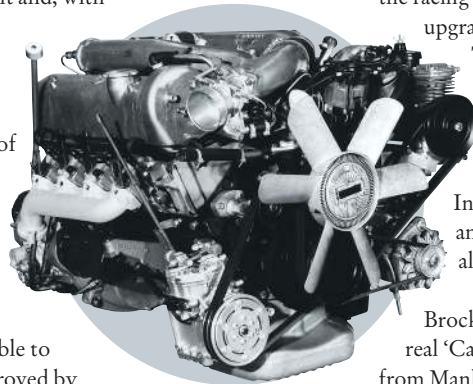


△ A single air intake fed both of the V8's inlet manifolds.

△▷ This is the replica of the Red Pig built by M-B.

▽ Later versions featured a smaller dry sump instead.

Waxenberger soon heard about the new outfit and, with a desire to go racing, he masterminded a version of the Mercedes 300SEL 6.3, the famous Red Pig, powered by an AMG-development of the M100 engine. This was bored out to 6.8 litres, but that wasn't the end of the upgrades. AMG also developed high-precision camshafts and modified rocker arms, lighter connecting rods, new Mahle pistons, larger intake valves, modified combustion chambers, polished intake and exhaust ports, a new intake tract with two throttle flaps and a racing exhaust system. The engine was hence able to run at higher speeds, while endurance was improved by installing an additional oil cooler and finely balancing the crankshaft. Mercedes reckons that this car's engine produced 422bhp at 5,500rpm and 448lb ft of torque.



▽ The M100 powered one of the 116-series models.

the racer to the French Matra group for testing aircraft tyres and it was never seen again. Any more modern images you see of that car are of a replica Mercedes-AMG built in 2006.

That wasn't entirely the end of the story for the M100 engine, however. Waxenberger actually shoehorned it under the bonnet of an unsuspecting 113 230SL and did some preliminary testing before it came to nothing. Additionally, it soldiered on in the Mercedes 600 until 1981 and it's likely that the racing version developed by AMG laid the path for an upgrade to the production engine to 6.8 litres in 1975.

This was used in the Mercedes 450SEL 6.9 (confusing name), producing 282bhp and 405lb ft of torque. Interestingly, a dry sump lubrication system featured in this car, meaning a lower bonnet line and longer intervals between oil changes.

Indeed, thanks to the fitment of special head gaskets and hydraulic valve lifters, this engine was said to be almost maintenance-free for 50,000 miles from new.

Underlining the engine's reliability and robustness, Brock Yates (a motoring journalist and originator of the real 'Cannonball Run' in the States), drove a 450SEL 6.9 from Manhattan to the Road Atlanta track in Georgia (over 800 miles), checked the tyre pressures, then did 40 laps of the circuit. He averaged 72mph for the whole test and there were no issues with the engine or car. Impressive stuff.

WEIGHT REDUCTION

While some 200kg of weight was trimmed from the bulk of the 300SEL's large body, it still weighed in at 1,635kg, and the large luxury car looked a little incongruous on the start line of the 1971 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, going up against supposedly more nimble and lighter sports coupes. Nonetheless, the Mercedes was very fast in a straight line, and reliable. In fact, it placed second overall, first in class, launching AMG onto the world stage. The Red Pig had other successes, but its time was short-lived as the FIA soon limited European Touring Car Championship races to cars with engines of under five litres in size. Bizarrely, AMG sold



HERMANN LANG

The German racing driver that started from simple beginnings went on to become one of the most successful winners of his time with Mercedes

WORDS **DAVID SUTHERLAND** IMAGES **DAIMLER AG**

IN GRAND PRIX RACING SOME of the most memorable and significant moments are born out of upset. For example when the young Alain Prost joined McLaren in 1984 and was quicker than the team's seasoned senior, Niki Lauda, or when in 2007 Lewis Hamilton joined the same outfit and upstaged triple-champion Fernando Alonso. More recently the teenage Max Verstappen has scared the horses with his edgy driving style, adding a very watchable tension to races as well as marking himself out as a future champion.

And so it was eight decades ago when a mechanic for Mercedes' Silver Arrows team, Hermann Lang, packed away his spanners and took to the wheel of the car he'd previously worked on, thereby giving established star driver Rudolf Caracciola a major headache. Caracciola, without question the best grand prix driver of the 1930s, resented the presence of the upstart as his team mate, while Luigi Fagioli, who had joined from Alfa Romeo, developed a hatred of Lang during his transition from mechanic to driver.

Promoted to works grand prix driver in 1937, and at the wheel of the newly developed W125 with its massively powerful supercharged 5.7-litre, straight-eight engine, Lang won that year's Tripoli Grand Prix in Libya in May, a race he would win three years in a row.

▽ July 1937, Lang in a W125 at a pit stop during the German GP.

△ Lang's gloves and goggles from the 1930 season were basic!



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◀ May 1937, Lang pictured winning the Tripoli GP in a W125.

▽ Lang leads at the 1937 German GP but Caracciola won.



△ Line-up for the start of the International Eifel Race in 1937.

▷ August 1938, on the Coppa Ciano as Lang wins in a W154.

“Promoted to works grand prix driver in 1937, Lang won that year’s Tripoli Grand Prix in Libya”

He was particularly impressive on high speed circuits, Libya’s Mellaha Lake track reckoned to be the fastest in the world at the time.

Having been a mechanic proved a major asset as his technical knowledge allowed him to provide excellent technical feedback to the man who designed the cars, Silver Arrows chief engineer Rudolf Uhlenhaut. It helped make him skilled at car set up too, which gave him extra speed over other competitors.

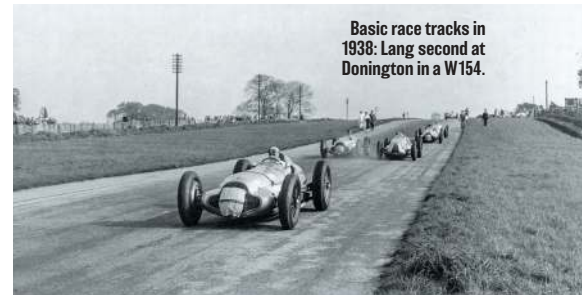
OUT OF PLACE

In an era when grand prix drivers were largely wealthy aristocrats, the former mechanic was looked down upon and found himself an outsider. And his discomfiture with the grand prix lifestyle showed: while his first win was a consummate and confident drive, he refused to attend the grand event which was the prize giving because he felt he would be out of place, and in any case did not possess a suit. He and his wife Lydia stayed in their hotel room until team manager Alfred Neubauer came to extract them from it.

Lang was born on April 6 1909 in



▽ 1938, Tripoli GP, receiving a prize from Governor of Libya.



Basic race tracks in 1938: Lang second at Donington in a W154.

Cannstatt near Stuttgart in Germany, and by the age of 14 was working as an apprentice motorcycle mechanic to help support his family following the death of his father. This led him into motorcycle racing, and a win in the first race he entered, at the Solitude circuit near Stuttgart in 1927, on a Norton.

He switched to sidecars and was a works rider for the motorcycle manufacturer Standard, winning the German Hill Climb championship in 1931.

In 1933 Lang joined Daimler-Benz AG as a mechanic in the racing department, and his driving prowess saw him gravitate to the cockpit, for example sometimes asked to warm up the brakes on grand prix cars, at that time the first 750kg formula car, the W25. His talent secured him a place in a junior driver’s trial, and in 1935 made his debut as a Mercedes-Benz driver, participating in the Eifel Race in a W25 and finishing fifth.

After his maiden win in Tripoli – only his seventh motor race – Lang became a hero in Germany, this of course in Hitler’s Germany. Later in the same month he won the AVUS road circuit race, and in 1938 took two more victories, Tripoli again and the Coppa Ciano race at Livorno in Italy. By this time Manfred von Brauchitsch had replaced Fagioli and Brit Dick ▶

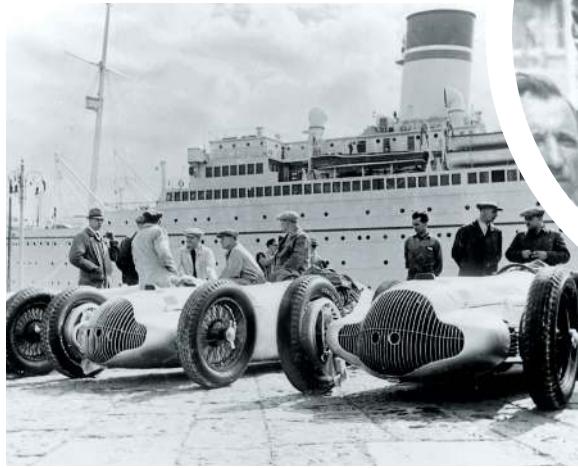


HISTORY

Mercedes Heroes

Hermann Lang: A RACING LIFE

Born April 6 1909,
Bad Cannstatt, Stuttgart, Germany
Died October 19 1987, Bad Cannstatt
Family background Farming
Early career Took up a motorcycle
mechanic apprenticeship in 1923
First race
1927, Norton motorcycle, Solitude
circuit near Stuttgart. Won the race
Mercedes-Benz career
Joined the Mercedes-Benz racing
department in 1933, signed as
Silver Arrows driver in 1937
First race
1935: For Mercedes-Benz, International
Eifel Race, Nürburgring, came fifth
Last grand prix
1954 Grand Prix of Europe
Race starts/wins 31/11
High point Winning the 1939 Tripoli
grand prix against all expectations,
and with a three-minute lead
Low point Crashing out of the 1937
Czechoslovakian
Grand Prix, causing
the deaths of two
spectators



△ Eifelrennen, May 1939,
Lang looks triumphant
as he takes the win.

◁ At Tripoli in 1938,
as Lang leads a 1-2-3
performance in a W154.



Lang's 1939 Tripoli
winning W154, in the
Mercedes-Benz Museum.

▷ Seaman had also been signed up as a reserve for the squad, who in their three-litre W154s were the major force in grand prix racing; Caracciola won the championship, with Brauchitsch, Lang and Seaman second, third and fourth.

WINNING STREAK

However 1939, by which time the 38-year old Caracciola's career was beginning to fade despite the previous year's garlands, was Lang's peak year. He won five races: Spa Francorchamps in Belgium, Bremgarten in Switzerland, Pau in France, the Nürburgring in Germany, and his third Tripoli. And it is Tripoli in 1939 that is Lang's most celebrated win.

Held in the year that war clouds were gathering, racing interests, especially in France and Italy were by now most resentful of the Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union dominance

“In an era when grand prix drivers were largely wealthy aristocrats, the former mechanic was looked down upon”

of top level motorsport, hence in 1939 the Italian authorities announced that the grand prix in Tripoli, effectively an Italian colony, would be run under 'voiturette' rules, with supercharged 1.5-litre engines and would form part of Italy's

national championship. Italy, which had not excelled in grand prix cars in this decade, did have had many good drivers and cars in this series, perhaps the equivalent of today's Formula 2; Mercedes-Benz had none.

The decision was clearly taken to the exclude the Silver Arrows, but the plan failed because the talented Uhlenhaut set to work secretly designing a voiturette compliant car in just eight short months. Based on the W154, the W165 featured an all new 1.5-litre V8 that breathed through twin carburettors and twin superchargers, and in doing so produced 250bhp at a high revving 7,900rpm.

The mountain race in Germany, 1939, which Lang won in a W125.



◁ Lang congratulated at the 1939 Vienna street race which he also won.

▽ Crossing the finish line to take victory at the 1939 Tripoli race.

▽ In Buenos Aires, February 1951, with his mechanic Erwin Grupp.



To the racing world's surprise, Mercedes-Benz pitched up in Tripoli with two W165s, to be driven by Caracciola and Lang. In order to preserve the untested cars, Neubauer at first opted to run in only one of the two days of practise, which yielded a pole for Lang and third on the grid for his team mate. But on the second day Emilio Villoresi put his Maserati streamliner on pole prompting Neubauer to send Caracciola out to displace him. He managed second, until Lang took to the track and relieved him of his second place, but Villoresi remained fastest.

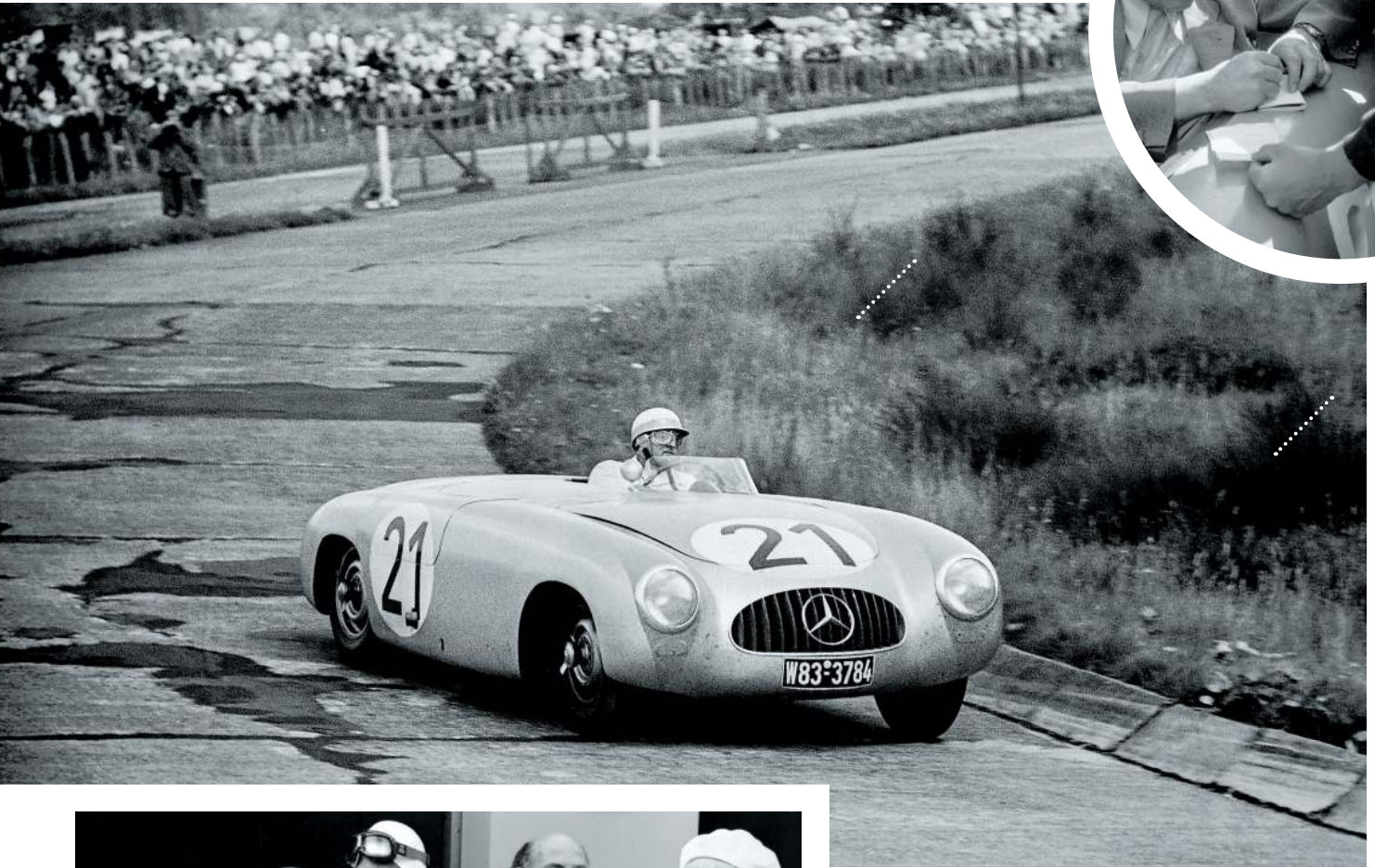
NATURAL LEADER

As team leader, Caracciola insisted on being given the W165 with the gearbox ratios that practise had shown more suitable for Mellaha Lake. Nonetheless Lang shot off into the distance, Villoresi falling by the wayside in under a lap due to gearbox problems, and in two hours of searing heat won the race without a pit stop. He crossed the finishing line

well over three minutes ahead of Caracciola, who was almost a lap down. Lang was thus a key part of one of the most extraordinary achievements in motorsport history: two quickly developed, brand new cars running faultlessly and trouncing the opposition. Ironically, the only two W165s built would never race again.

Lang was the dominant grand prix driver of 1939, but due to the outbreak of World War Two, plus indecision as to which points scoring system should be used, he was never declared European Champion by the racing body in Paris. However he was named champion by racing authorities in Germany and the press also proclaimed him a hero. ▷

▷ Signing autographs from the 300SL during the 1952 season.



“In 1952 Lang was recalled by Neubauer for the reformed Mercedes race team and successfully drove the 300SL”

racers. He went on to win Le Mans, a Nürburgring race, and the notoriously dangerous Carrera Panamericana across Mexico. Caracciola was also in the team but crashed heavily in a race in Berne in Switzerland, sustaining another set of injuries that finally ended his racing days.

Having dipped a toe back into motorsport, Mercedes sat out the next season and a half while preparing its grand prix comeback with the W196. At the age of 45, and 15 years after he had last driven a Silver Arrows (although he had one start in a works Maserati in 1953 for the Swiss grand prix), Lang was brought back into the team in 1954, but it was not a

particularly successful return and after the Grand Prix of Europe in August 1954 he hung up his helmet for good.

He remained employed by Mercedes-Benz, working as a customer services engineer until retirement. He died on October 19 1987 in his hometown of Bad Cannstatt in Stuttgart. While not able to claim an undisputed grand prix championship, Hermann Lang was an incontestable hero of his time, not only taming the wild and dangerous beasts that were the race cars, but bringing them across the line first.

◁ Lang pictured during a veteran race in 1973.

△ A celebration with Herrmann, Lang, Henne, Moss, and Ewy.

▽ Herrmann posing with a Gullwing that he drove with great success.

▷ WAR TIME

Lang's racing career was cut off in its prime by WW2, during which he served in a publicity/propaganda role, Hitler's administration regarding its sports hero as too valuable to risk in frontline duty. But when motor racing resumed at the end of the war

Lang as a German citizen was barred from international racing until 1950. Former team mate Caracciola, having taken out Swiss citizenship, did not face the same restriction, although he crashed and was badly injured in qualifying for the 1946 Indianapolis race.

In 1952 Lang was recalled by Neubauer for the reformed Mercedes-Benz race team and successfully drove the 300SL sports racing car (the forerunner of the production 300SL Gullwing of 1954) in a series of long distance international



FORGOTTEN HERO

There's never been a better time to bag a bargain Mercedes ML, which seem to have become a forgotten model in the current secondhand market, as our used car expert reveals this month...

WORDS GUY BAKER IMAGES USED CARS IN WARRINGTON, LEVINT CARS LTD, RYKAR TRADE SALES



NEW CAR BUYERS CAN be a fickle bunch, as today's must-have motoring tool invariably becomes tomorrow's automotive cast-off. And if a particular model ceases to exist, then for the next few years at least it seems to disappear completely from many buyers' radars. It happened to the CLK when the E-Class Coupe returned from the dead, and now it's happening to Mercedes' ML.

Originally a ground-breaking, premium SUV, it became a stalwart of the Mercedes-Benz range for many years, but from the 2015 W166 facelift the ML moniker was no more, replaced by the more politically correct GLE model which has seen good success. But ever since, values of Mercedes' mighty ML have trundled slowly downwards, to the point that you can now pick up a great looking W164 ML for the price of a one-week family holiday in Devon.

Why more buyers haven't cottoned on to the fantastic value offered by many W164 models isn't clear – maybe some are worried by the potential running costs of an older SUV, or the older based road tax bill? One thing's for sure: if you're about to splash the cash on an expensive new GLA or GLE then you'd be a fool to not check out the alternative option of an infinitely better value W164 ML first.

And if you're looking to maximise your Mercedes metal for your money, then a 2005 on ML320 CDI might be just the ticket. Just five grand could put you behind the wheel of a 2006 example with less than 100,000 miles, like this tidy looking 56-plate black ML320 CDI Sport we spotted at Used Cars in Warrington (www.usedcarsinwarrington.co.uk). With 376lb ft of



△ Levint Cars Ltd was selling this tidy ML350 CDI for £8,290.



△ ML320 CDI Sport was at Used Cars in Warrington for £4,995.

torque you won't lack for pulling power even when fully laden or towing, and with 30mpg+ possible on longer journeys the fuel bills are more than manageable. This car came with a comprehensive spec that included chrome exhaust tailpipes, tinted rear lights, Downhill Speed Regulation, electric folding and heated door mirrors, electric front sports seats and the Interior Light Pack, all for just £4,995.

Mercedes replaced its much-loved ML320 CDI with the ML350 CDI in 2009, and these

models offer just as good value, with cars like this 93,000-mile 59-plate we found at Levint Cars in Middlesex (www.levintcarsltd.co.uk) going for less than nine grand. The BlueEfficiency Sport model was up for just £8,290 and boasted a typically plump spec including climate control, Alcantara/leather seats, Comand sat nav, heated electric seats, cruise control, the full smorgasbord of off-road driving aids and sports suspension.

AIMING HIGHER

Two great-value MLs but maybe not the kind of Mercedes to set your pulses racing. This last ML however, most certainly would. Once the fastest V8 SUV in the world, the W164 ML63 AMG is definitely not for the faint-hearted. A 503bhp beast of a 4x4, it can devour fields and motorways with equal aplomb and packs a 465lb ft punch of torque, propelling this sumptuously-specced luxury SUV to 62mph in just 4.4 seconds. Delimited, over 170mph is possible but we wouldn't recommend trying this.

Just £12,995 could have bought this silver 2007 example from Rykar Trade Sales in London (www.rykartradesales.co.uk) with just 80,000 miles. And it was kitted out with exclusive heated and cooled leather interior trim, a full AMG body styling including some impressive 20-inch alloys, Airmatic suspension, a sunroof, Comand sat nav, cruise control, a CD player, all-round parking sensors and, of course, that sense of on-road superiority that only a big AMG can truly deliver!

► *Fancy something more stylish? Then check out our top three £20,000 Mercedes coupes on page 78*

FORECOURT FIND

300SL (R107)

As we alluded a couple of months ago, values of the best Mercedes R107 SLs are increasing steadily at the moment and offer attractive long term investment potential. And this stunning, rust-free example from 1989 and finished in a fetching shade of white with a black roof was spotted for sale at Duke of London.

With just 50,729 original miles showing on the odometer, the car would make an ideal choice as investment piece that could still be enjoyed. It had only recently been treated to an extensive mechanical restoration, carried out by DVB Automotive in Kent and was in great condition, complete with a removable hardtop so the car can be enjoyed throughout the year. Priced at £35,500 the car was originally sold by Sparshatt Jones Limited and has had all of past services performed there too, which adds to the history.

► **Duke of London**
Tel 07545 430813
Web www.dukeoflondon.co.uk



△ This clean-cut example looked good finished in white.

▷ Interior was tidy and the car had covered just 50,000.

▽ There was a full and comprehensive service history too.



TOP TIPS

**QUICK
CAR CHECK**

Don't waste your valuable time looking at poorly-maintained Mercedes, evaluate a potential used buy in under a minute with our top buying tips

- ⊗ Make sure you view the car on a dry day, not when it's dark or raining. Take a friend with you to help, as it will save time and reduce the chance of you missing something important.
- ⊗ Some stone chip damage is unavoidable, so if the bonnet and mirrors are chip-free the car has almost certainly had a respray. Check the windscreen closely for chips or cracks.
- ⊗ Scour the bodywork for ripples, dents or uneven panel gaps. Corners usually suffer the greatest damage. If you spot any bubbling paint, rust or overspray, walk away.
- ⊗ Inspect the top of the suspension turrets for any signs of rust, and look under the inner wings and underbody too. It always helps to take a small torch with you for this reason.
- ⊗ Are the alloys free of damage or corrosion? Slight scrapes and small chips can actually be a good thing, as they can easily be refurbished and enable you to negotiate a better discount.
- ⊗ All the tyres should be of the same brand and show even wear. Eyeball the locking nut key, and tool kit. Check the brake discs, hubs or callipers aren't rusty.
- ⊗ A well-treated boot area invariably means the car's been well looked-after too. Check that the VIN number on the V5C document matches that on the car, located under the bonnet or at the base of the windscreen.



AUCTION SPOTLIGHT

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

- **C180 K SE Coupe**
1.8-litre petrol, auto, 2004/54-plate, 96,000 miles **£1,350**
- **SLK200**
2.0-litre petrol, auto, 2003/03-plate, 57,000 miles, **£1,700**
- **CLS320 CDI**
3.0-litre diesel, 2006/56-plate, 115,000 miles, **£4,200**
- **CLK320 CDI Sport Coupe**
3.0-litre diesel, 2007/57-plate, 47,000 miles, **£5,500**
- **ML420 CDI Sport**
4.0-litre diesel, 2007/57-plate, 120,000 miles, **£6,550**
- **B180 CDI Sport**
1.5-litre diesel, auto, 2014/14, 54,000 miles, **£7,500**
- **C220 CDI BlueEfficiency Coupe**
2.1-litre diesel, 2013/63-plate, 73,000 miles, **£7,600**
- **E220CDI BlueEfficiency Cabriolet**
2.1-litre diesel, 2012/12-plate, 69,000 miles, **£7,950**
- **SLK200 BlueEfficiency**
1.8-litre petrol, auto, 2013/13-plate, 25,000 miles, **£9,700**
- **CLS250 CDI Coupe**
2.1 diesel, 2013/13-plate, 59,000 miles, **£10,400**
- **ML250 CDI Bluetec Sport**
2.1-litre diesel, 2012/62-plate, 92,000 miles, **£12,000**
- **GLA200 CDI AMG Line Premium**
2.1-litre diesel, auto, 2014/14-plate, 41,000 miles, **£14,000**
- **CLA45 AMG**
2.0-litre petrol, 2014/64-plate, 55,000 miles, **£21,450**
- **A45 AMG**
2.0-litre petrol, 2015/65-plate, 33,000 miles, **£23,800**
- **S500 L AMG Line Executive**
4.7-litre petrol, 2014/14-plate, 60,000 miles, **£24,000**

AUCTION ADVICE

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

£20,000 MERCEDES COUPES

To really cut the mustard a Mercedes-Benz coupe must possess good looks together with strong performance and an upmarket, luxury interior. Also, in used guise it should offer commendable value for money too. And all three of this month's £20,000 contenders possess plenty of appeal, but probably to different kinds of buyers, because

everyone has their own personal take on the coupe theme.

So, whether you're seeking an efficient contemporary model, an affordable classic that will stand the test of time or a fire-breathing AMG model to enjoy, there's a Mercedes-Benz coupe here for you as the generous budget covers every want and need.



CLA220D (C117)

Cool, modern and stylish in AMG Line guise, our twenty grand budget bags a 2016 175bhp CLA220d with just 16,000 miles and a great spec. Much sought after at the moment this CLA makes a great all-rounder, offering spritely 144mph performance, 60mpg+ fuel economy and £20 a year road tax. Peace of mind is guaranteed with a full Mercedes-Benz extendable warranty and you will find quite a few advertised at both main dealers and car supermarkets. Make sure yours is well specced to maximise future residuals.



CLS63 AMG (W218)

At the opposite end of the coupe spectrum we have the awesome C218 CLS63 AMG. A rare beast offering mad performance, a snarling soundtrack and lottery winning car park kudos, a 2011 example of this 549bhp monster can now be bought for less than £20,000 and that's with a lowly 50,000 miles on the clock. Leggier examples are even cheaper. Only consider cars sporting a full Mercedes history, no more than two owners and the optional Driver Assistance Pack. Then simply add a private plate and enjoy!



320CE (C124)

Not everyone yearns to tear it up in their Mercedes coupe, and the ownership experience provided by the rare classic C124 320CE is as rewarding, only at a slightly more relaxing pace. Our budget bags a concours example with a full M-B history, less than 35,000 miles and a whole host of optional extras. And still leaves a bit spare for future maintenance. Cars like this are appreciating steadily yet can still hold their own against more modern machinery on the road.

LATEST PRODUCTS AND ACCESSORIES



LORINSER RS10 ALLOYS FOR MERCEDES GLE-CLASS

If you're looking for some tasty new lightweight alloys to really set off your GLS then German tuner Lorinser may well have the answer in the form of its latest RS10 alloy wheel. With a stunning look, it comes in a 21-inch size, yet these one-piece alloys are surprisingly light. With five dynamically-styled double spokes which bisect halfway to the narrow rim flange, and finished in Himalaya Grey, these cast aluminium wheels certainly look the business and cost around £800 each. For more information on the wheels, visit www.sportservice.lorinser.com

POWEFLEX TROLLEY JACK & RAMP PAD

The UK-based suspension bush guru Powerflex has expanded its operation by introducing a range of bushes suitable for a standard flat trolley jack or a two-poster ramp. These polyurethane pads protect the car's sill when lifting on the jacking point in order to save any damage. The pads cost £13 and can be ordered from pfsparts.com.

LUMMA DESIGN FOR MERCEDES G-CLASS

Lumma Design has just launched its extensive range of retrofit parts for the current Mercedes-Benz G-Class, including the CLR G770 widebody kit with lashings of carbon fibre, a six-tailpipe sports exhaust system in chrome or black, a complete interior customisation with carbon fibre, alcantara and premium leather, and 22- or 23-inch forged alloy wheels. All components



can be used with standard vehicles or in conjunction with the Lumma CLR G770 widebody kit. Find out more information about the exclusive Lumma refinement programme at www.lumma-design.com.



IN FOCUS **CL500** (C216)

Little claims more grandeur than a V8-powered Mercedes CL. And the sophisticated, 2007-2014 C216 CL500 is now a bona-fide bargain. You can buy a good, pre-facelift example from just over £9,000 and there are around 40 examples for sale in the UK with 85 per cent of those having covered less than 100,000 miles. The most popular colours were black and silver, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of cars sold.

60-SECOND BUYING GUIDE

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

WALK AROUND

Most have been lovingly cared for but still scour the bodywork for signs of repairs, or rare rust issues, which can prove expensive. Don't worry about minor scuffs to the wheels or front end stone chips as these are easily resolved. Its body is long and low so double check the underside and corners for damage.

GET INSIDE

Originally priced at £88,325, the C216 CL500 boasts a regal spec, with

the list of on-board goodies still trumping most contemporary luxury GTs. But the electrics can play up, so check that all Comand functions, Distronic Plus, Dynamic multi-contour seats, Linguatronic, TV reception and Parktronic all work as they should. Also watch for damaged leather, side windows that de-laminate and misbehaving key fobs.

START HER UP

The CL's bespoke 5,461cc V8 pumps out 383bhp, and

should whisk you seamlessly through the gears. Any hesitation from the throttle or gearbox should be a worry. Keep your eyes peeled for oil leaks, and ABS pumps and alternators can fail.

CHECK THE PAPERWORK

Your CL500 must possess a good service record. All cars claim Active Body Control, Intelligent cornering headlights and Adaptive brakes, but check which other options are fitted via the diagnostics port and confirm the service record by calling some of the dealers.



CL500 is a mix of elegant style and luxury, but be sure to pick a good one.



WEISTEC DOWNPIPES FOR M177 AMG V8

Ace tuner Weistec is now selling freer-flowing replacement downpipes for the M177 V8 engine fitted to many AMG models, from the C63 to the G63. The pipes replace the restrictive factory downpipes and in doing so deliver significant gains in power, throttle response and exhaust tone. Engineered and designed with the most sophisticated Computer Aided Design tools ensures excellent fitment and the highest performance possible is guaranteed while also providing an aggressive exhaust note during high load and cold start situations. The cost starts from £2,150 plus shipping and you can find out more at www.weistec.com.

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. Here's what to know this month...

THE TOP 10 BEST-SELLING USED MERCEDES

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

- 1 **C-Class** (27.6%)
- 2 **E-Class** (16.9%)
- 3 **A-Class** (16.9%)
- 4 **GLC-Class** (4.4%)
- 5 **GLA-Class** (4.4%)
- 6 **GLE/M-Class** (4.3%)
- 7 **CLA-Class** (4.2%)
- 8 **SLC/SLK-Class** (3.8%)
- 9 **B-Class** (3.7%)
- 10 **S-Class** (2.7%)



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** (30.1%)
- 2 **Silver** (25.5%)
- 3 **White** (17.5%)
- 4 **Grey** (16.7%)
- 5 **Blue** (12.4%)



MILES AHEAD

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

Less than 50,000 miles **69.2%**

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

More than 80,000 miles **14.7%**

FUEL WATCH

How are used Mercedes powered?

DIESEL	PETROL	HYBRID	FULL ELECTRIC
65.5%	32.2%	2.27%	0.03%



MIGHTY MINI

The SLK is a small platform to house a big V8 engine, but AMG made it work with the SLK55 and even now it's model that can still flex its muscles, which makes it a great buy on the used market

WORDS DAVID SUTHERLAND IMAGES TERRY OBORNE

THE ORIGINAL R170 SLK, based on a C-Class platform, and whose styling was overseen by legendary Mercedes designer Bruno Sacco in his final years at Mercedes-Benz, was notable for its short overhang front and clipped tail – and the fact that it looked absolutely right from every angle. Inside was an appealing combination of a modern design but with some old world detailing such as sunken instrument dials.

The R170's most stunning technical feature is of course its marvellous metal folding 'Vario-roof' system. Designed and supplied by a specialist company set up jointly by Mercedes and Porsche, it was the first of its kind in the modern era and which collapsed into the boot in 25 seconds, turning a cosy

coupe into a full, no compromise open roadster, and with pop-up rollover protectors.

The newcomer opened up a profitable new niche for the car maker – the perfect compromise for those who did not seek the grandeur of the SL – which Stuttgart would exploit for over two decades before concluding that the present model should be the last of the line. But despite its early success the SLK also got stuck with a 'hairdresser' image, so for the second generation model introduced in 2004, Mercedes sought to change that and produced a roadster that could look the Porsche Boxster in the eye.

The R171 was longer, more aggressively bulging, with a SLR inspired snout that was pure testosterone, while the comfortably traditional look of the cabin was ousted in favour

of more racy fittings. And for the first time the SLK could be had with V8 power in the SLK55.

A hot R170 had been available since 2001 in the form of the SLK32 AMG, a supercharged and chassis-stiffened reworking of the attractive but mild SLK320 model. The 'full fat' 55 took that concept to the next level.

One day surely, this miniature but muscular Roadster is going to be a classic sports car that changes hands for big money. But for now, this muscular sports car offers amazing value for money, advertised for as little as £9,000. So if you fancy the only compact V8 roadster you'll find at this money, what should you be looking for?

DESIGN, EVOLUTION

In place of its predecessor's 3.2-litre V6, the SLK55 AMG – available from the beginning of

sales in March 2004 – used the M113 5.4-litre V8 which by then had become the staple AMG unit across various model series. Normally aspirated, it produced 355bhp, which was only a small increase over the SLK32 AMG, but torque of 376lb ft was a 13 per cent hike. That's a lot of power in a small car – even without forced induction the SLK55's power to weight ratio of 231bhp/tonne wasn't far behind that of the SL55 AMG of the time with its V8 Kompressor.

Besides the new body, the R171's key new features comprised the 7G-Tronic automatic gearbox, rack and pinion steering to replace the previous recirculating ball system, and the optional Airscarf, which supplied temperature controlled air at neck level. Refinements included a faster dropping

SPOTTED
FOR SALEPRIVATE SELLER
SLK55 AMG2005/05, silver, black leather,
four owners, 53,000 miles,
£13,499, Dereham,
Norfolk

“This miniature but muscular roadster is going to be a classic sports car that changes hands for big money”

metal roof that took up less stowage space in the boot, and Thematic climate control, able to set head level heating to suit the outside temperature.

The SLK55 AMG, the first V8-engined car in its class, was certainly not short on performance, capable of 0-62mph in 4.9 seconds and pushing against an electronically limited 155mph maximum. But the efficiency of the V8 engine allows it a 23.5mpg combined, so fuel consumption can be reasonable if not thrifty. Chassis upgrades over other SLKs included sports suspension and composite brake discs.

There were two extremely tempting options: the AMG Driver's package and the AMG Performance Package. The first, priced at £1,600, was the increase of the 155mph limited top speed, while the second, costing £3,600 saw the fitments of various extras.

A 'floating' brake disc set up was installed, this reducing the heat soak from the discs (which were increased in size at the front) to other braking componentry. Wheel diameter remained at 18-inch, but they were now a five-spoke design. The

suspension was made even more sporty, while inside the cabin gained an AMG ergonomic steering wheel and carbon trim parts to improve the look and feel.

The R171 was facelifted in late 2007, the cars in UK showrooms from April the following year. Exterior changes to the SLK55 AMG were slight, visual updates restricted to a new front spoiler with a black painted cross bar and side air outlets, while the headlamps were darkened. As with other SLKs, its interior was made over, with a new style of three-spoke steering wheel (paddle gearshifters had been introduced a year earlier), updated instruments, switchgear, audio system (now with Bluetooth as standard) and cabin trimmings. Under the skin, a newly developed 'direct steer' system with speed sensitive, variable-rate power steering assistance was standard on the SLK55. The V8 remained unchanged, running in this form until the R171 range was discontinued in early 2011.

DRIVING THE SLK55 AMG

This is simply a marvellous little car with huge performance. At any revs the three-valves per-cylinder

M113 delivers as much torque as you'll need, and it will spin smoothly to its rev peak too. The seven-speed automatic gearbox is its perfect partner.

So much power in a rear drive chassis requires care and restraint, but the suspension and steering are well set up – there's the usual AMG stiffness, but the car has perfect poise, and of course the Affalterbach stoppers brake the 55 super efficiently. The car is also eminently usable as a daily driver: comfortable, quiet and very practical, provided you don't need much space.

WHAT YOU'LL PAY

Considering this is a Mercedes with supercar performance, prices are incredibly low! Price analyst Glass lists the R171 SLK55 AMG as far back as 2008, quoting a 'trade' price of just under £10,000 and a 'retail' of £12,000. But looking in the likes of *Auto Trader* reveals earlier cars on used car dealer forecourts for as low as £9,000 – though at this price watch out for Category S and N insurance write-offs.

Despite its £50,000 new price the 55 is relatively plentiful on the market, with *Auto Trader* alone

JUST THE FACTS

Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG (R171)

ENGINE M113 5,439cc V8

POWER 355bhp@5,750rpm

TORQUE 376lb ft@4,000rpm

TRANSMISSION 7-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,540kg

0-62MPH 4.9sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION 23.5mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS 288g/km

SOLD IN UK 2004-2011

Fuel consumption according to NEDC combined; top speed electronically limited

showing over 20 when checked. You are unlikely to see one at an official Mercedes dealer, as they are now too old for that, but the 55 is a car that owners will advertise privately.

Raising your budget to £15,000 should secure a 2010 car with 70,000 miles, but we've noticed that mileage and condition influences price more than age, some 2004 cars seen at close to this price. The very most you should pay is £18,000 to £19,000, for an example with under 50,000 miles and Parktronic and telephone pre-wiring, these not only good to have but, likely to make the car easier to sell on. ▶

SLK55 AMG INSIDE AND OUT



Mercedes Specialist

Sam Bates at SPR Autos in Stockport is our technical consultant for this month's Buyer's Guide.

POWERTRAIN

The SLK55 AMG's engine has an excellent reputation among Mercedes specialists. "In my opinion it's the best V8 Mercedes has produced," says Sam Bates of Mercedes specialist SPR Autos in Stockport in Greater Manchester. "The M113 is tried and tested, has been proven to be bullet proof and has stood the test of time."

There is however one common fault, which is failure of the crankshaft sensor. This causes the engine to cut out when hot and it will not restart until it has cooled down. "If there is no paperwork containing reference to this part

being replaced, I would recommend it to be replaced at the next service to avoid future trouble," Sam tells us.

Drive the car from cold and hot to see if there is a smooth gear change. Gearbox problems are often rooted in skimped maintenance, so check the history for gearbox servicing; Sam recommends this every 40,000 miles. The most common issue is the speed plates failing, causing 'limp mode' to kick in. "This can be a costly fix, however Mercedes now supplies a reconditioned unit where it takes your old one back as an exchange," Sam explains.



The M113 V8 has proven to be very reliable but there are gearbox issues to be aware of.

SUSPENSION, STEERING AND BRAKING SYSTEM

Listen out for any knocks and bangs, as the front suspension is a multi-link suspension and there are lots of ball joints at the front end. It's worth checking in wheel arches for broken coil springs, as these commonly snap, and should be replaced in pairs. "Check the MOT history for any suspension advisories, as you may be picking up the bill for them next time around," Sam suggests.

The rack and pinion power steering is usually trouble-free, but listen for groans when lock is applied, and look for fluid leaks. Neither are brakes generally troublesome, but should be given a proper trial. "Look through the



wheel spokes to see the condition of the discs, and test the brakes at a reasonable speed if possible," Sam says. "If there's any vibration through the brake pedal and steering wheel, you could have warped discs."

It's important to listen out for odd noises as these can indicate a variety of issues on the car.

**SPOTTED
FOR SALE**

**USED CAR DEALER
SLK55 AMG 55**
2006/06, black, red/black leather,
Comand, 143,000 miles,
£8,989, Leeds



Folding roof brings no problems, but due to the nature of the car it is worth checking carefully for signs of crash repairs.

BODYWORK AND WHEELS

The metal roof, despite its complex folding system, has proved trouble-free, but check it does go up and down in 20 seconds. And check the condition of the plastic triangular strips that fit next to what are the C-pillars once the roof is raised, as these can become discoloured.

This SLK is quick, so be on the lookout for accident damage, the most obvious

signs being panel gap lines that do not look right, and rust from poor previous repairs. Actual corrosion is not usually seen on the R171, at least on the bodywork. "As on all Mercedes, wheels become crusty around the centre caps," Sam points out. "Wheels can be refurbished, so it's not the end of the world if they're in bad condition."

“This is simply a marvellous little car with huge performance”



INTERIOR AND ELECTRICS

A common issue with all R171s is the water drain by the battery blocking up and filling up the tray and then entering into the car. "This soaks the heater blower motor and resistor, so check the passenger carpets carefully for damp, and ensure that the blower motor works correctly," Sam advises. Water ingress of another kind can happen in the cabin; look behind the triangular base of the exterior mirror for signs of it.

Problems are also known with the Airscarf. The system takes a heavy drain on the electrics and can burn out a connector that located under the seat. All the electrical kit should be checked: electric seats, Comand, folding and heated mirrors and so on. Also note if there are two keys, as replacements are costly, at around £250 each.



The R171 model suffers from water ingress, so check for signs of water or damp as it can play havoc with the car's electrics. There are plenty to check too, so make sure you go through each of them if possible, from heated mirrors to the Airscarf system.

SLK55 AMG | INSIDE AND OUT

VERDICT

The SLK truly became a 'proper' sports car with the launch of the SLK55 model, while remaining undoubtedly the most practical compact roadster on the planet. Such is its all round talent that if you can live with its strict two-seater configuration there's probably no need to spend out on the larger and more expensive SL model.

It's also terrific value for money in terms of bang for buck. But we'd advise against buying the cheapest examples out there, as these can become a false economy over time – it's wise to spend as much as you can, to get the best you can.

SLK55 AMG
BLACK SERIES

While the SLK55 AMG was the range topper, in 2006 AMG built a small batch of 55s for a one-off race series and a further small number for sale, badged as the SLK55 AMG Black Series. This model had a healthy power hike to 395bhp, some carbon bodywork additions, a fixed hardtop made from carbon fibre in place of the folding Vario-roof, and weighed around 45kg less than the standard car.

The chassis and brakes were also uprated, and 19-inch wheels fitted, while inside there were Recaro bucket seats and a few other upgrades. The price was £92,500 which at the time converted to around £108,000; it's a rarely-seen sports car.

SPOTTED
FOR SALEUSED CAR DEALER
SLK55 AMG2008/57, black, black leather, full
Mercedes-Benz history, 70,000
miles, £15,489, Chelmsford,
EssexTypical basic servicing costs
(A/B services including VAT)

MODEL	OIL SERVICE	MAJOR SERVICE
SLK55 AMG	£205	£385

Quotes from SPR Autos

Recalls and non-routine servicing costs

There have been two recalls, concerning incorrect software that could affect the engine emergency shut off, the on board diagnosis or the fuel tank or speedometer signal, and a possibility of a leaking fuel tank (numbers R2008/147 and R2013/031)

- ★ Replace the crankshaft sensor unit **£165**
- ★ Fit an exchange gearbox speed plate unit **£1,080**
- ★ Fit a pair of new front road springs **£315**
- ★ Replace the front brake discs and pads **£1,680**
- ★ Four premium brand tyres (size 235/40 R18 front, 255/35 R18 rear) **£460**

Buyer's checks

- ✓ The 7G-Tronic gearbox conductor plate can fail, sending the car into limp home mode
- ✓ Look for signs of oil leaks where the rocker covers meet the cylinder heads
- ✓ Check that the gearbox has had the recommended oil change every 40,000 miles
- ✓ Front lower suspension ball joints commonly wear out, so listen for a knocking noise
- ✓ Check the brake discs for wear, as AMG brake parts are very expensive to replace
- ✓ If the Airscarf's output is too hot, it is likely due to a failed connector under the seat
- ✓ Look out for water leaks into the cabin by checking the carpets and trim for signs of damp

What you'll pay

£8,000-£10,000 Early SLK55 AMGs with 150,000 miles or more and patchy history

£10,000-£15,000 2005 to 2007 cars, pre facelift, with full history but expect 100,000 miles or more.

Non-Comand cars drop £1,000

£15,000-£20,000 Last of the pre-facelift cars, with good spec and under 50,000 miles

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NEW TERRITORY

A change of scenery for the cars as their new home takes them out of the city and into quieter territories, which has highlighted what they're good at

WORDS & IMAGES DAVID SUTHERLAND

FACTSHEET

CARS 2017 GLC220d AMG Line/2007 CLK63 AMG

OWNER David Sutherland

LOCATION London, UK

PURCHASED September 2017/April 2016

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT The CLK is still leaking a little oil on the floor when left and the GLC has been serviced, more on both of those next time



THERE HAS BEEN a big change recently in my motoring life. It's nothing to do with our two cars, the GLC220d or CLK63 AMG, but with where they now are and the use they are being put to. After many years of living in London we moved to a village in Surrey, and all of a sudden driving is a different – and much more enjoyable – undertaking.

London life entails spending much time on the road waiting as patiently as possible in a series of busy traffic queues, and steering the car as it moves between these obstructions. It can barely be called driving in reality.

Forty miles from the centre of the capital is a very different matter. I can actually drive the cars at a sustained speed along quiet roads, I can feel the interaction between the car and the road, I can see more than 2,000rpm on their rev counters. I tell anyone who'll listen that I never want to take a car to London again and I think I mean it.

Of course, the two very different characters of our pair of black Benzes are revealed in full on my new roads, and the GLC feels marvellous on them. Writing in late November, there had been no cold snap, but there had been a lot of rain, and this and decaying leaves can make the surface very slippery; the added traction that 4Matic delivers – although you don't know when it has actually engaged the front wheel – allows

the car to sweep over such surfaces without any wobbles or twitches.


In this respect the CLK is almost the exact opposite. It has traction control, and I have not yet slid the car, but knowing there is 476bhp and 465lb ft torque transmitted through the rear wheels, and that if my right foot unleashes too much of it I'll be in trouble, makes me drive it with caution.

SEEING CLEARLY

But it does offer one significant advantage in this respect: the CLK belongs to the generation of smaller cars with bigger glasswork, and is much easier to see out of and place accurately on the road. The GLC, on the other hand, is a typical bulbous, thick-pillared modern SUV whose body extremities can't be seen, so when I pass another car on the narrow lanes round here – where the locals don't seem to want to slow down

for the manoeuvre – I frequently find myself aiming at the gap and hoping that I'll get through without making contact with the oncoming car or emerging with foliage on the Merc's nearside.

While it may be stating the obvious, given that one car has a 2.1-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel and the other a naturally aspirated 6.2-litre V8, the chalk and cheese natures of the engines can be felt in full. The GLC's engine is a highly efficient unit: not much character, quiet and smooth, and with a most useful turbo punch. On local roads it's delivering high 30s mpg.

Of course little can compare with the 63's V8, and I can now really enjoy the stirring mechanical and soulful soundtrack much more. And out of town, fuel consumption is much better, even bettering 20mpg sometimes! I love our star twins, whose different virtues complement each other perfectly. 

△ The pair of Mercs pictured together at their new home.

▽ GLC swallowed the rubbish that needed moving from the house.

◁ CLK now has its own designated oil tray to avoid leaving stains.



GETTING BETTER

With the modern classic showing its age in a few places, Reed has been on the case to make the list of issues smaller, with good success so far

WORDS & IMAGES REED HITCHCOCK

FACTSHEET

CARS 2011 S212/2002 ML320/1990 300SE

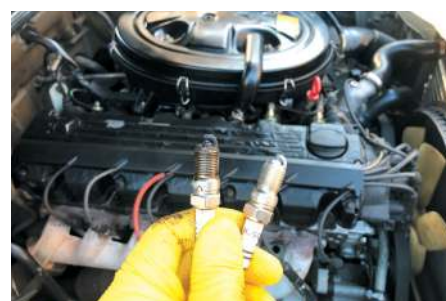
OWNER Reed Hitchcock

LOCATION Virginia, USA

PURCHASED July 2017/September 2018/October 2019

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT Plenty of the smaller issues have been tackled and most of them have proven a simple fix, if a little costly at times

I was floored by how well it drove. It felt so good that it was easy to ignore a few little faults



NEARLY 30 YEARS after the last one rolled off the assembly line, a good W126 S-Class saloon is among the greatest road cars in the world. Interestingly, even fair to good ones can drive deceptively well, despite having needs, such as life as I recommission my 1990 300SE. When I first got the car, I was floored by how well it drove. Sure, it pulled a little to the left and took a little longer than I'd like to start, but it felt so good – so regal – that it was easy to ignore a few little faults.

It came with a short list of known issues: a strange dent on the rear quarter panel near the bootlid, a small tear in the driver's seat leather and an aerial that only went up about one third of the way. Sadly, the list seemed to grow exponentially as I got acquainted and put some actual miles on the car. It was readily apparent that the shifter bushes needed doing, and I was somewhat surprised to find that every time I switched on the high beams, all of the dashboard and interior lights went dark.

I set about fixing what I could, and lining-up specialists to do the rest. I read that at around 100,000 miles (mine has 93,000) things like fuel injectors,

EHA valves, and fuel accumulators can result in poor starting – hot or cold. All were such straightforward jobs that I felt like I must have missed some important step – a testament to the relative simplicity of these old school, inline-sixes without all the plastic cladding! With those done, the car started noticeably better when warm, but still takes a little longer than I'd like to fire up when cold. I changed the (original looking) spark plugs for good measure, but next up will be the cold start injector, distributor cap and rotor.

THE PROFESSIONALS

The rest of the work required expert help. I found a local fellow who repairs small leather rips and did a bang-on job. He even matched the patina colour of my Palomino leather. Score! Likewise, the repair of the quarter panel dent (and painting the faded bumpers) required professional help. The bumpers came out factory new, while the colour match on the panel is serviceable, but not perfect.

The mechanical bits were where the next surprises came in. I took the car to my favourite M-B experts at Silver Star Motors in Vienna, Virginia for shift bushes and alignment. I came

out with a completely rebuilt front end, differential mount as well as the aforementioned shift bushes but also a car that now drives like brand new. It was costly, at about \$2,500 (£1,900), but in the long run I consider this money well spent for the return.

The issue with the high beams requires a new multifunction (turn signal, wipers, high beams) switch, which I have on order and plan to install myself. Otherwise, all seems right with the world – for now. This car was used very sparingly for many years, and I'm paying for that, but fingers crossed the results are proving worth the expense. 🏁

△◁ Overall the car is looking great when you consider it's 30 years old.

△ Simple service items were nice and easy to fit and certainly helped.

△△ The dent on the rear quarter panel was nasty but now repaired.

▽ Seat repair was perfect and even matched the patina.



WRITTEN OFF

With the damage from water ingress in the last report becoming worse, the car's fate has been sealed but there's more to be getting on with

WORDS & IMAGES MARTIN BUCKLEY

FACTSHEET

CAR 1994 E300 Diesel/1997 E300 Turbodiesel/2000 CLK230 Convertible

OWNER Martin Buckley

LOCATION Gloucestershire, UK

PURCHASED August 2017/December 2018/October 2019

UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT One has been written off whilst a new one arrives but its temporary



anyway) and there are various marks on the bumpers that will need attention; overall though it does look fairly smart. There was talk of buying another 320 Estate from Gus with the fancy leather and air conditioning combination that is lacking in the 300 diesel, but I'm enjoying using my trusty Range Rover at the moment, which fulfils the same need, so maybe the 124 Estate moment has passed, at least for the moment.

The CLK is going well and just needs a few bulbs replacing, although I noted with amusement that my wife, who claims to be the world's champion

The car is now a write-off with a very mouldy and smelly interior

parker, has managed to put a nice scuff on the front bumper. Other than that, we've only had a small issue with the hood, but that simply turned out to be the tray in the boot that tells the hood mechanism there is something in its way.

A new temporary arrival is the 300CE 124 Coupe, a left hooker from Italy on UK plates but originally sold in France in 1989. My friend sent it to me as a potential car for him to use in the UK, but I'm free to sell it for him if anyone fancies it. Had it been a right hooker I might have used it for a while as it's a pretty car and in some ways the best looking of all the pillarless Mercedes coupes, with a sweet engine and a solid feel that is lacking in the CLK. There's no particular rust but it appears someone has set about one of the front wings with a bat and there are a variety of deep vindictive scratches in the dark blue paint; very much the marks of a scorned woman, I dare say...

WE ENDED UP writing off the S124 300 estate as the water damage was worse than expected, requiring the front seats to be taken out and the 'comfort' module located in the centre console to be extracted. Hiscox and Hagerty did an efficient job of establishing that the car's future was marginal after getting an estimate to undertake repairs and I opted to take the money and retain the salvage. The car is now a Category N write-off with a very mouldy and smelly interior that you could convince yourself a rat had died in. The blower motor died, the electric windows blew fuses and there was a near continual buzz from under the dashboard.

However, all is not lost and hopefully the car will make a comeback as my daughter's first classic, although I have pointed out that I have already bought her two cars and therefore this one is just a longterm loan and not a free gift she can flog at will. Indeed, she can either buy the estate off me (at trade value) or pass it over to her brother should he ever feel the need to start taking driving lessons.

Before any of that, I need to swap the wheels over with Gus Meyer's S124 320 estate that's nearby, as the offset of the wheel centres is different and diesel wheels don't fit the hubs of the petrol estate, which is why it will hardly move even with the wheel nuts only semi tightened up. Gus would also like his wooden steering wheel back off my car which, as I write, is sitting outside my shed with a room heater blowing away inside it, sodden front carpets removed and centre console innards exposed.

WORKS REQUIRED

At some point I seem to have scratched the offside rear wing on the garden wall of our house (parking is very tight where I live, which is my excuse

△ Unfortunately, leaving the sunroof open during a rain shower killed the car.

▽ Left hooker C124 300CE is a pretty car but needs a little attention.

▽ The poor estate is currently drying out with a room heater inside it.



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This well-known phrase was one of several used by the industry to ensure the little pellets weren’t taken seriously by motorists & were ignored. It’s been happening ever since. Today millions of cars, vans & lorries will slowly start to produce increasing levels of CO, NOx & VOCs emissions, simply because their engines gradually become less & less efficient. All as a result of hidden deposits building-up. Dirty engines don’t happen where fuel catalysts are used, because they keep engines permanently clean.

Clean engines have better performance, lower emissions & better fuel economy than dirty ones. They last longer too. As carbon deposits gradually build-up in a new engine, they slowly begin to reduce its performance, fuel economy & increase emissions. Eventually, its larger engine deposits that will cause the cars, vans & 4x4s we see every day, to pump out all those thick clouds of filthy black smoke, every time they pull away.

Nearly 20,000,000 plastic bottles of fuel system cleaner are sold in the UK each year, as motorists deal with the problems caused by deposits. With fuel catalysts, most of the excess traffic pollution we needlessly suffer wouldn’t exist, but those millions of plastic bottles of chemicals wouldn’t get sold.

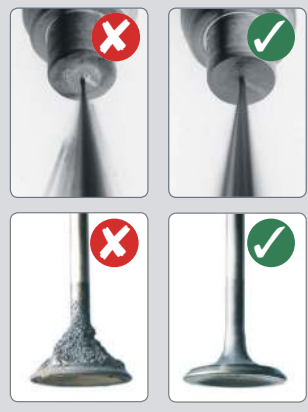


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Given the huge impact that excess traffic pollution has on our health, environment & economy, it’s high time fuel catalysts were in widespread use. The public should no longer be mis-lead with dubious tests or dishonest slogans. The ability of fuel catalysts to both remove & prevent carbon deposits continues to demand their urgent use. Our health & the environment remain vastly more important than the huge profits being generated from needlessly dirty engines.

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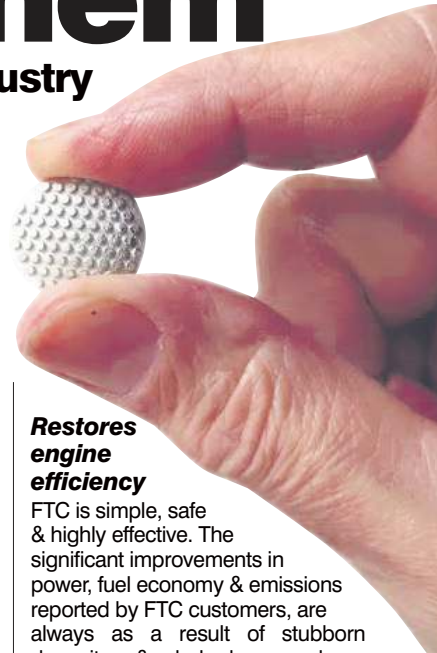
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E220 T, automatic, estate, 7 seat, one of the last year of its production. Probably the best, super low mileage example on the market today. This car is stunning inside and out with all MOTs and service history. Finished in Tourmaline Metallic with cream upholstery. This collectible seven seat automatic has unmarked flawless paintwork throughout. Both front wings are brand new and in perfect condition. MOT on Dec 2012 showed 85,000 and corrected the same day to 95,000 by the MOT station. Having only covered a mere 106,000 miles from new with documented history mots etc. This car is factory fresh and drives superbly, it has certainly been cherished. It's definitely a good investment as W124 estate prices continue to rise. The car drives as well as it looks and comes with 4 electric windows, electric mirrors, top tint screen, walnut centre console, door trims and centre compartment, roof luggage strips and rails and electric tilt slide sunroof, £6,995. Tel: 01388 810064. Email: maycar@tiscali.co.uk. Durham **[BCW8]**



SLK 200 Kompressor, 2001, 6-speed manual, metallic silver, black leather upholstery, 81,000 miles, MOT one year, excellent condition, £1,650 ONO. Tel: 01333 312016. Fife **[BCW5]**



500 SEL limo, stretched 8-seater, excellent condition, no rust, always garaged, the stretch was done professionally by Coleman Milne Ltd, at the cost of £33,000 in 1988, invoices are in the car along with all MOT's and photos, inside boot wells, floor and under the inside rear screen are in perfect condition, nice glass cabinet, cool box, chauffer telephone, privacy glass, a very rare car, immaculate condition inside and out, lovely drive, have your own business or a very useable classic car increasing in value, this car has been a wedding car for many years and highly maintained, £8,995. Tel: 07908 942110. Stockport **[BCW4]**



500SEL 126, 1983, auto, dark blue, black leather, VGC, left hand drive, MOT until 2nd June 2020, original radio tape, 154,000 miles, oil pressure spot on, all new tyres and battery, all round excellent, drivers perfect, open to viewings, £5,000. Tel: 07933 108280. Morton by Bourne **[BCP2]**



300SL-24, 1991, FSH, 63,000 miles, 12 months MOT, all 26 MOT's, immaculate condition, £8,500. Tel: 01643 862322. Somerset **[ABP3]**



320CLK Avantgarde, 2003, V6, petrol, automatic transmission, 97,000 miles, cruise control, power windows all around, air conditioning, right hand drive, vinyl seats, low profile wide tyres, centre console, dual climate control, fold down rear seats, electric memory both front seats, 5-disc CD player, excellent sound, adjustable steering wheel, spare tyre, fold away mirrors, new battery, heated rear window defrost, sizeable boot, just serviced and MOT to August 2020, in good condition, regularly achieved 32mpg, sporty performance when necessary, brilliant silver paintwork (no rust), light tone grey interior, nearly complete service history, new Pirelli 16" tyres on rear, £2,900. Tel: 07919 337802. Buckinghamshire **[BCW6]**



E220 CDI Avantgarde 2004, automatic, seven seater estate, silver, grey black half leather interior, Xenon lights, rear air suspension, pre wired integrated telephone kit, converts to Bluetooth, tow bar, two owners present from 2006, full Mercedes-Benz service history, all records, only 112,775 miles, recent service at a Mercedes-Benz service centre, new Bosch battery, £4,495 ONO. Tel: 028 66341 988 or +353 86255 3232. Enniskillen, Northern Ireland **[LAW9]**



R129 300SL, 24V, 1992, finished in beautiful blue metallic with a huge service history and all books present. This collectable SL- 24v has just completed a full front to back re-commission with totally unmarked flawless paintwork. Comes with an excellent blue leather and an electric roof that operates as it should. This car is a stunning example of the collectable - 24 valve SL. Having only covered a mere 81,000 miles from new with documents. A service will be carried out before delivery, along with a full 12 months MOT. The winter hardtop is present with the car. The private plate goes with the car or you can have the original Reg number if preferred. A full set of hi-res pictures are available on request, £6,995. Tel: 01388 810064. Email: maycar@tiscali.co.uk. Durham **[BCW7]**



CL500, auto, paddle shift, 09/59, silver, black hide, 7 Mercedes stamps, only 43,000 miles, Sat Nav, Xenon headlamps, wood leather steering wheel, reversing camera, folding mirrors, 20" AMG alloys, heated memory seats, cruise control, factory sunroof, soft close doors, 2 keys, MOT 1 year, can include private 500 number plate at extra cost, £13,494. Tel: 02084 590005. Email: hassopsales@hotmail.co.uk. Website: www.hassop.net. London **[ABW2]**



E300D T, estate, diesel, automatic, finished in beautiful silver metallic (722) with a huge service history. This very collectible 1994 W124 has just completed a full front to back re-commission with totally unmarked paintwork. The interior is in superb original condition with original carpets protected from new. Everything works correctly as it should. This car is a stunning example of the collectible rare E300D-T Wagen. Only covering a mere 120,000 miles from new with documented history. An extremely low mileage rare find for a Mercedes diesel of this vintage. Specifications include alloy road wheel, stop tint, screen centre arm, rest roll up dog guard, load cover, self-closing tail gate, electric sun roof, roof luggage rails, cruise control, 4 electric windows, walnut trims console and split rear seats, £7,995. Tel: 01388 810064. Email: maycar@tiscali.co.uk. Durham **[BCW9]**



250SE W108, saloon, white/red, 48,000 miles, FSH, original service book and manuals, almost concours, June 1966, fully maintained, no expense spared, original spare unused, 6 former owners, original Blaupunkt, £24,950. Tel: 07818 420620. Chichester **[ABW1]**



CL500 Designo Edition, 69,000 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, £POA. Tel: 07887 700174. Ipswich **[ABW3]**



ML320 CDI Sport, AMG style package, new tyres, MOT and service, Tanzanite Blue, black artico/dinamica interior, 93,000 miles, full service history, £POA. Tel: 07887 700174. Ipswich **[ABW4]**



300SL, auto, 1987, white, 188,000 miles, hard top, new soft top, new stainless steel bumpers, new battery, replaced seals owned, 16 years, driven regularly, always garaged, recently failed MOT, lots of paperwork, £11,000. Tel: 01626 863622. Dawlish **[ABW5]**



190E, automatic, 1797cc, petrol, blue, August 1993, 101,000 miles, one owner, full service records, current MOT, slight deterioration of nearside front paintwork and internal rear doors trim. £1,150. Tel: 01444 482916. West Sussex **[ABW9]**



E320 CDI, Elegance, auto, diesel, estate, 7 seats, 71,145 miles, 2000 year, 1 owner, MOT 17.9.19, Travertine Beige/Java Beige leather interior, full Merc service history, tow bar, many extras, excellent condition throughout, always garaged, SORNed 1.11.16, £4,995. Tel: 01225 704424. Wiltshire **[ABW6]**



300SE, 1988, a great old lady, just flew through her MOT, drove her 269 miles to Brighton and Back on under £50, body is what needs some attention, chrome on back has a hole and some chips, hence offering a cheaper price, £POA. Tel: 07881 626404. Bourton on the Water **[ABW8]**



260E W124, automatic, Arctic White, 1988, 73,000 miles, FSH, first owner, owned for 24 years, recent suspension overhaul, new valve stem seals, all fluids changed, original condition, near perfect bodywork and interior, everything works as Mercedes-Benz intended, very smooth drive, 30mpg, new tyres, £5250. Tel: 07483 149808. North Yorkshire **[ABW7]**

CL5 250, sport, 14 plate, all black, ash wood interior, dash board and doors, leather steering wheel, £450. Tel: 07985 374367. Essex **[BC]**



220CE W124, Pillarless, coupe, metallic bronze, unmarked mushroom leather, 124,000 miles, MOT until May 2020, immaculate rust free exterior, electric sunroof and windows, ABS, history files, £8,000. Tel: 01244 881682. Chester **[ABP1]**



W123 230TE, 1985, 121,000 miles, metallic silver, blue cloth interior, auto, manual sunroof and windows, service history, refurbished original alloys, original Becker Grand Prix radio, £7,500. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk **[ABW21]**



W123 240TD, 1984, 138,000 miles, manual, metallic champagne gold, bamboo cloth interior, manual sunroof and windows, service history, some surface rust, but basically sound, original Becker Europa radio, £7,500. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk **[ABW22]**



300SL, 24-valve, 1992, 93,000 miles, complete history files including receipts, MOT history, book pack, fully stamped maintenance book with 23 vouchers, MOT until October 2020, no advisories, hard and soft top, stunning car, excellent condition, alarmed, £7,500. Tel: 07950 436272. West Yorkshire. **[LKP1]**

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W123 280CE, 1983, 80,000 miles, auto, beige, olive cloth interior, Air Con, refurbished original alloys, service history, original Becker Europa radio, a well above average example. EPOA. Tel: 07737 447556. Suffolk [ABW23]



C180 Esprit, 1998, manual, 60,000 miles, fantastic engine, reversing sensors, new CD radio added, MOT until end Jan 2020, brand new battery, 2 keys, spare wheel, a few marks on bumpers, bodywork otherwise good, rust free, fabulous runner, £1,100 ONO. Tel: 07771 928886. Southend-on-Sea [LKW8]



SL500, 1995, superb condition, 2 previous owners, the best colour combination, Azurite Blue (366), black soft top, Mushroom leather (275), registered 01/1995, 88,000 miles, MOT until 02/2020, last serviced on 28/02/2019 at 87,712 miles, matching hardtop, original manuals, 2 keys, Becker radio, Bluetooth, electric memory seats, cruise control, £12,250. Email: sylvain.haman@gmail.com. [CM30W6]

300E W124, saloon, 1989, auto, black metallic, grey leather, owned 18 years, MOT until 2020, EPOA. Tel: 01516 390149. Wallasey [AB]



190E, 1987, only 40,000 miles, 3 previous owners, a lot of history and paperwork, rust free, very good condition, new MOT, EPOA. Tel: 07528 666160. Manchester [LKW14]



E270 CDI, 2005, MOT, FMBSH, 92,000 miles, very good condition, only 2 owners, for further details call Steve, £5,000 no offers. Tel: 07956 267968. London [LKW2]



C180K, 2008, automatic, only 18,500 documented miles, bright silver metallic, light grey Artico interior, MOT at 18,450 miles, until 07/10/20, can send full specification upon request, prefer email as hearing impairment. £7,785. Tel: 07473 984243. Email: thecanon0941@gmail. Croydon [LKW1]



W201 190D, 1985, 2-litre, diesel, manual, 83,000 miles, new MOT, father & son owned for 32 years, always garaged, seat covers from new, central locking, manual sunroof/windows, power assisted steering, lots of documentation, history, receipts, immaculate beige interior, recent service, plate VGU 190 included, VGC £4,995. Tel: 07714 068326. Brighton [LKW3]



280CE, 1977, automatic, exceptional condition throughout, only 102,500 miles, MOT to July 2020, recent service, private plate included, £7,950. Tel: 07836 251000. Brighton [LKW16]



E350 AMG, sport, Bluetech, estate, B Service & MOT on the 27th of June 2019, 2 new rear tyres fitted, 3rd owners, main family car but selling now due to new car arriving, £16,000 ONO. Tel: 07771 935572. Wokingham [LKW5]



320SL R129, automatic, convertible, detachable aluminium hardtop, 93,000 miles, 6 owners from new, Azurite Blue, interior cream leather, matching carpets, roll tool kit, warning triangle, jack & brace, MOT expires 7th May 2020, last of the face lift model, V6 cylinder engine giving better torque and economy, electric operated soft top in blue canvas, good condition, service history (10x Stamps in book) & includes MOT recorded mileage, drives very well & bodywork in good condition with no rot, please call or email for more information & photos, grab yourself a rare find and a bargain, £6,995. Tel: 01614 764654. Cheshire [LKW4]



C200 Kompressor, coupe, unusual colour, 2001, manual, full service history, 1 years MOT, 80,266 miles, panoramic working sunroof, excellent car, alloys, no longer utilised due to practicality with a toddler, body work in good condition, some rust spots, recently refurbished, £1,000 ONO. Tel: 07940 510713. Walton-on-Thames [LKW9]



420 SEL, 1995, long-wheel base, only done 47,300 miles, FMBSH and MOT's, very good condition inside and out, only 2 previous owners, metallic blue, navy blue leather, full specification, electric heated rear seats, electric front memory seats and heated, cruise control, climate control aircon, electric sunroof and windows, just had full major service, MOT September 2019, ex-chairman's car, has been very well maintained, runs smooth, £5,690. Tel: 07711 358218. Email: alkhaja11@googlemail.com. Croydon [JKW28]



W116 450SEL, silver, excellent condition, no rust, 4 new tyres, full major service, undersealed, wheels refurbed, interior exemplary, lambswool mats, 109,000 miles, 1980 model, Not much work needed to make concourse, £9,995. Tel: 07866 123786. Kings Langley [LKW6]



A140, January 2000, V-Reg, manual, Ocean Blue metallic, one owner from new (yes, one owner all 19 years), all old MOTs/Tax discs, extensive service history, all invoices, incredibly good condition for age, only 77,400 miles, £950. Tel: 01322 387051. Mob: 07704 981703. Dartford **[LKW7]**



CLK 230 W208, Kompressor, 2001, excellent condition throughout, recently had an extensive bodywork restoration, 97,700 miles, 1 previous owner, large folder of receipts, serviced every 6,000 miles, owned by a Mercedes-Benz Club member, MOT until February 2020, £2,200 ONO. Tel: 07901 546788. Livingston. Scotland **[LKW11]**



SLK 230, compressor, auto, 59,000 miles, full mot, full service history, black leather interior, AMG wheels skirts and exhaust, plus private plate K666 SLK, £2,900. Tel: 01736 810033. Cornwall **[LKW12]**



SL320 R129, 2000, silver, black hide, glass panoramic hardtop, heated seats, cruise, rear seats, power soft top, 103,000 miles, very clean, full history, 2 keys, £5,995. Tel: 07961 808060. London **[LKW17]**



CL63 AMG, 2007, Graphite Grey, 2-door, coupe, black leather interior, extra low mileage 35,400, only 5,000 within the past 4 years, superb condition, only one previous owner, excellent spec including Harman Kardon sound system, Offers over £20,000. Tel: 01519 293676. Liverpool **[JKW25]**



E240, 2003, new MOT, good condition, £POA. Tel: 07961 495155. London **[JKW2]**



300SE W126, saloon, Pearl Blue, blue cloth, 1988, auto, only 52,000 miles from new, two owners, first retired owner mainly used on weekends hence low miles, electric sunroof and windows, flat faced alloys, recent £4,000 spent, total service history by main dealer until 9 years ago, then a specialist after that, bargain at £6,995. Tel: 07961 808069. London **[JKW32]**



E240, Elegance, first Reg 10th December 2002, full service history, 1 previous owner, my ownership from 11th October 2003, 50,188 miles, about 1,000 miles per year in the last few years, garaged between MOT and service, excellent condition, petrol, auto, speed limiter, air con, 6 CD changer, electric adjustment on front seats, MOT until May 2020, £6,000. Tel: 01384 443005. Stourbridge **[KLP6]**



123, 200, saloon, five-speed manual gearbox, concours car, Cypress Green, matching interior, Becker radio/CD, lots of history, MOT till March 2020, Mercedes-Benz Club member, £POA. Tel: 07970 872765. Lancashire **[JKW1]**



CLK 230, red top, Kompressor, very low miles, 50,000 original miles from new, original documented miles from new, has recently been fully serviced to include automatic transmission & air con service, been a member of the Mercedes-Benz Owners Club for a number of years, always been a garaged kept car, £4,490. Tel: 01353 482011. Buckinghamshire **[JKW7]**



R129 SL500, 1995, immaculate condition, FSH included, all books/codes, dark blue, grey leather interior, 5 previous careful owners, barely run in, 100,500 miles, hard Top, Stand & Wind Deflector. Recently overhauled Soft Top with new windows. Runs beautifully. Ice cold a/c. £10450. Tel: 07790 016214. Cambridge **[JKW4]**



450SL, 1973, convertible, auto, 54,000 miles, hard top, must see to fully appreciate, £12,500 ONO. Tel: 07860 292923. Bexhill-on-Sea **[JKW3]**



E280E W124, 1995, estate, LHD, Sportline edition, leather, manual, FMBSH, 150,000 miles, 3 owners, same owner since 2004, all original including alloys and Becker radio, on SORN since 2015, MOT until July 2020, £4,500. Tel: 07702 230563. Bristol **[JKW6]**



CLK AMG, 55-plate, convertible, silver, black interior, very good condition, been garaged for most of its life, second owner, 2004 model, folding mirrors, parking sensors front and rear, Xenon lights, Bose sound system, 6 CD auto changer, heated and electric seats, auto wipers, auto head lights, £POA. Tel: 07971 573707. Hertfordshire **[JKW5]**



E320 Sportline, a much loved elegant example, rare genuine Mercedes-Benz, 5 speed auto, 4 seater, convertible, '94 Facelift model, the best combination of blue-black metallic, cream leather interior, extensive service history, current owner for the past 13 years, garaged, £POA. Tel: 07770 640620. Bristol **[JKW17]**

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SL350, 3.7-litre V6, stunning metallic black, convertible, full service history, MOT until June 2020, fully loaded, great condition, much loved, super smooth drive, the V6 will not let you down, £8,200. Tel: 07807 026515. London [JKW11]



CL63 AMG, 2007, Graphite Grey, 2-door, coupe, black leather interior, extra low mileage 35,400, only 5,000 within the past 4 years, superb condition, only one previous owner, excellent spec including Harman Kardon sound system, Offers over £20,000. Tel: 01519 293676. Liverpool [JKW25]



W126 500SE, 1984, B-reg, just 45,000 miles, full service history, every conceivable extra except sunroof, fully functioning air conditioning and cruise control, beautiful unspoilt leather interior, offers invited in excess of £10,000. Tel: 07867 500132. London [JKW10]



E220, 1996, N-reg, E-Class, 2.2, 5-door, British Racing Green, cream interior, good condition inside and out, MOT until December 2019, 104,000 miles, 5+ owners, £3,495. Tel: 01516 773470. Wirral [JKW22]



E350 CDI, Blue Efficiency Sport, estate, diesel, 7G-Tronic, Mercedes-Benz main dealer service history, MOT, 88,500 miles, 2010, one previous owner from new, (private plate not included), £9,495 ONO. Tel: 07946 548054 or 01425 650840. Fordingbridge [JKW16]



S600 L, first registered in 2000, 106,000 miles, keyless start/stop, Bose sound system, soft closure doors, parking sensors front and rear, two tone painted gold over black, tyres in good condition, Alcantara suede interior roof lining, full Nappa grey leather interior, heated/chilled pulsating seats, owned this car for 14 years and under my custodianship it has been pampered, with no expenses spared to keep it maintained, recent MOT test (no advisories) until September 2020, FSH back to March 2003 from independent specialist, original owner manual with a dust cover, £2,900 ONO. Tel: 07860 633081. Ramsbottom [JKW13]



E200, Azurite Blue, beige cloth, 1995, 78,000 miles, full service history both Mercedes and specialist, owned this car from new, been garaged all its life, no rust, hardly used in recent years, was going to keep it but need the space, £2,495. Tel: 07570 278925. London [JKW23]



E320D, 2003, damage to front end, engine runs, approximately 100,000 miles, leather interior, open to offers. Tel: 07977 629478. N. Yorkshire [JKW15]



W123 280CE, 1986 registration, 185,000 miles, automatic, electric sunroof, windows and passenger mirror, central locking, in fair unrestored condition, my daily drive for 4 years, a lot of money spent in that time. MOT until March 2020, exhaust is blowing, £4,250 for a quick sale. Tel: 01244 880958. Email: rck991@aol.com. Chester [JKW20]



C36, 68,000 miles, owned for 10 years, covering approximately 3,000 miles per year, very good condition, has been featured in this magazine twice (I have both editions), an outstanding example of the model, serviced annually by Mercedes-Benz specialists, on the anniversary of the MOT which will occur prior to the sale, has an AMG number plate which will accompany the car, £7,750 ONO. Tel: 07786 344909. Tyne & Wear [JKW12]



CL500, 2007, black, cream interior, FSH, immaculate condition, Distronic Plus cruise control, Linguatronic voice control, stamped service book, all manuals, 3 former owners, 2 sets of keys, HPI clear, 113,000 miles, glass electric sunroof, £7,750. Tel: 07866 345345. Motherwell [JKW24]



E280, 4-door, saloon, silver, automatic, M-registration, 176,000 miles, full service history, MOT until August 2020, excellent condition mechanically, inside and out, £3,750 ONO. Tel: 07887 634088. Northampton [JKW19]



190E Zender, 170,000 miles, MOT February, a lot of money spent on the vehicle, receipts to show all works carried out including new battery, full major service, distributor, rotor arm, spark plugs, rocker cover gasket, thermostat, gear stick, HT leads, major welding underneath the car as per MOT Advisory, £3750. Email: amin.7388@yahoo.co.uk. London [JKW26]



300 SE W126, saloon, Pearl Blue, blue cloth, 1988, auto, only 52,000 miles from new, two owners, first retired owner mainly used on weekends hence low miles, electric sunroof and windows, flat faced alloys, recent £4,000 spent, total service history by main dealer until 9 years ago, then a specialist after that, bargain at £8,995. Tel: 07961 808069. London [JKW32]

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420 SEL, 1995, long-wheel base, only done 47,300 miles, FMBSH and MOT's, very good condition inside and out, only 2 previous owners, metallic blue, navy blue leather, full specification, electric heated rear seats, electric front memory seats and heated, cruise control, climate control aircon, electric sunroof and windows, just had full major service, MOT September 2019, ex-chairman's car, has been very well maintained, runs smooth, £5,690. Tel: 07711 358218.

Email: alkhaja11@googlemail.com. Croydon **[JKW28]**



300 SL W107, classic, 1988, red, cream cloth, only 81,000 miles, rear seats, Bluetooth stereo, DAB radio, total service history, stunning condition, had over £11,000 spent at SL shop (expensive outfit), eye watering receipts, new roof, heater, radiator, battery and the list goes on, full service record from new, sold by Bentley main dealer 12 years ago, receipt attached, all keys and books, stunning car, best value you will see, £24,995, also have another identical car done 133,000, stunning one, couple owner till two years ago, £21,995. Tel: 07961 808069. London **[JKW31]**



S500, long AMG body styling, AMG wheels, one owner from new, 54,000 miles, full Mercedes-Benz main dealer service, dry stored for over 5 years, just been recommissioned, drives lovely, sun roof, coms pack, electric rear seats, £POA. Tel: 07802 793000. Cheltenham **[IJW4]**



SL55 AMG Komp, last of the proper ones, only 37,000 miles, full MB service record, massive spec, panoramic glass roof, extended leather, alcantara roof lining, very luxurious indeed, Sat Nav, TV, Bose, electric memory foam heated seats with cooling, massage and heating, just had a health check at Mercedes, ball joints replaced, stunning collectable car, FMBSH, all keys, complete book packs, £24,995. Tel: 07961 808069. London **[JKW29]**



W211 E55, E-Class, 2004, immaculate, FMBSH, 43,500 miles, last serviced in May 2019, MOT until May 2020, no dents, rust, scratches or material marks anywhere, 2 previous owners, owned for 4 years, £16,500. Tel: 07958 311550. Beaconsfield **[JKW27]**



SL320, 105,000 miles, stainless steel exhaust, leather re-coloured, excellent paint, body, wheels, just spent £1,000s, new fabric hood, comes with hard top, £8,750 ONO. Tel: 07836 321353. Basildon **[EFW12]**



W123, estate, 2,000cc, manual, transmission, one owner, full service history from main dealer & specialist, 120,000 miles, factory sun roof, £2,500. Tel: 07802 793000. Cheltenham **[IJW3]**



190, diesel, 2.5-litre, 1991, saloon, ESR, EW x 4, ABS, 330,000 miles, full history, 2 previous owners, Pearl Blue metallic, DK blue cloth, superb engine, MOT until March 2020, no faults, bargain at £950. Tel: 01516 390149. Wirral **[IJP2]**



W124 230E, 1992, automatic, 59,000 miles, only 2 owners since new, Signal Red, cloth interior, electric sunroof, windows, aerial, immobiliser, Sony stereo, power assisted steering, original first aid kit, manuals etc. MOT pending (August 2020), £2,495. Tel: 07801 099299. South Yorkshire. **[IJW8]**



C180, petrol, manual, 5-speed, MOT March 2020, 1993, original perfect alloy wheels, sunroof, owned for 7 years, Signal Red, drives as Mercedes-Benz would expect, real head turner, immaculate inside and out, £4,200. Tel: 07933 108280. Bourne **[IJP3]**



300TE, 1989, in beautiful condition throughout, total mileage 305,000, regular servicing with full history from new, £2,950 or reasonable offer. Tel: 07876 500527. Email: tonymotture@icloud.com. West Somerset **[IJW7]**



SLK320, V6, auto, 2004, only 62,000 miles on the clock, lovingly cared for by present lady owner since 2011, 2 previous owners, final edition of this model, all extras, air-con, wooden steering wheel, 2 tone leather seats, never smoked in, all electric seats, front & rear park sensors, AMG wheels, £5,000. Tel: 07958 677410. Hornchurch **[IJW10]**



C32 AMG W203, V6 supercharged, 53-plate, beautiful car in original unmolested condition, 133,000 miles, drives like new, full service history (main dealer history up to 100,000 miles), this car is featured in *Mercedes Enthusiast* magazine in January 2019 in the buyer's guide feature, Xenon lights, Sat Nav, Etc., phone for further details and ask for Peter, £7,500 ONO. Tel: 07885 078338. Rustington **[IJW9]**



300SL, 1992, 93,000 miles, substantial history files MOT history, book pack, fully stamped maintenance book with 23 stamped vouchers, MOT until October 2019, no advisories, hard and soft top, £7,500 ONO. Tel: 07950 436272. West Yorkshire **[JJP1]**

G Wagon 230 GE 1985, manual, 103,000 miles, excellent original condition, well cared for by motor mechanic owner, owned since 1988, Light Ivory, £7,500. Tel: 01727 840214. St. Albans, Hertfordshire **[AB]**

INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



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, EPOA. Tel: +61 397 001 770. Melbourne. Australia **[BCW2]**



ML320, 2009, Bluetec, 119,500 miles, OM642 engine, very good running condition, very clean interior, \$10,000. Tel: 0012134 538376. Los Angeles. California. **[BCW3]**



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]**



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



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, EPOA. Tel: 0061 411 188334. Sydney. Australia **[ABW18]**



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]**



SL500, starts, runs, shift nice and smooth, hydraulic pump for the tops has been rebuilt and works like new, new starter put on a few days ago, receipt to prove, everything works, almost 25 years old so it's not perfect, could use a detail, EPOA. Tel: 16032 641094. New Hampshire. USA **[CM30W2]**



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]**



280SE, 1969, coupe, hard top, grey, Black Interior, automatic, 6 cylinder, currently under Restoration, \$90,000 when complete. Tel: +001 56149 85600 or +001 56143 63131. Email: swolf@brooksiderealty.com. Florida **[HIW4]**



190 W201, 2.3-16v, historic Mercedes-Benz 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, registered in January 1984, model went for sale in September 1984, after the race the car went back to road trim, 1 of 20, EPOA. Tel: +49 15111 130018. Barcelona, Spain **[IJW5]**



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



W124 AMG, cabriolet, auto, 1995, 1 of 14 right-hand drive AMG built car, immaculate condition, UK registered car, £61,000. Tel: +0065 65683 66817. Email: grace_nlb@yahoo.com. Singapore **[HIW14]**



250SL Pagoda, 1967, delivered new to Mercedes-Benz Toronto, Horizon Blue (304), navy blue top, manual transmission, original and factory fresh, always registered on the road, previously owned by M.M (figure skating champion) for 47 years, lady driven, very well preserved, 67K original miles (with ministry papers), service stamped until 43k miles, stamped from the first service at 769 miles, original keys, spare tire and tool set, engine bay parts remains 95% factory original, everything works except the power antenna, zero rust and bondo, bubbles you see are 100% paint bubbles, resprayed when it was keyed some years ago, done rather poorly through insurance, only needs new paint, tires and antenna, two piece hub-caps, white wall tires from factory (641), brand new seats and carpets were done professionally, brand new top in the exact navy blue (723), numbers match for everything including the engine, transmission, axles, and steering box, optioned with hardtop garnish molding (600), EPOA. Tel: 001 (647) 937-9498. Canada **[LKW18]**

450 SL, 1977, yellow/tan, 151,000 miles, wooden Nardi wheel, wood shift knob, built-in radar detector, both tops pristine, all maintenance records, garage kept, non-smoking female owner, \$15,000. Tel: +001 8569835457 **[GHW]**

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220 Fintail, 1963, engine from 230S, around 70,000 miles after overhaul, disk brakes all around, long final drive ratio, needs suspension overhaul, paintjob in very good condition, minor paintwork needed, £POA. Tel: +0030 69772 08559. Email: kpaiaoa@yahoo.gr. Athens, Greece **[HIW13]**



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]**



220 S, 1957, 64,000 miles, cabriolet, white, original red leather interior, black top, stored in climate controlled garage, purchased in Germany, shipped to the US in the 80s, all original paperwork, freight and other documentation, a truly beautiful example, drives very well, \$100,000 USD (serious offers only). Tel: +001 30387 71578. Email: Danbu208@gmail.com. Colorado, USA **[GHW18]**



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]**



220 CB, 1952, black, tan leather, restored, original overhauled engine (3,000 miles), correct top material, leather carpeted boot, original Telefunken radio, new SS exhaust, showroom condition, \$115,000. Email: mailto:syuber@gmail.com. United States **[GHW7]**



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



280SL, 1984, convertible, auto, gold, 80,000 miles, hard/soft top new, very well maintained, MOT, two keys, some service history, runs smoothly, €25,000. Tel: 003534296 67632. Ireland **[EFP2]**



320E, 1994, cabriolet, last hand-made E Class Mercedes, 102,000 miles, wonderful condition, no scratches or dents, starts right up & runs smoothly, garage-kept, new roof runs smoothly, new radio (Mercedes radio included too), upholstery in perfect condition, \$17,300. Tel: +001 72087 85018. Email: ma_brown@me.com. Colorado, United States **[GHW23]**



280SE AMG, 1983, Classicweiss (737), anthracite cloth (051), saloon, 64,949 miles, beautifully preserved Pre-Merger AMG, documented back to new delivery at the Werk Sindelfingen Mercedes-Benz plant on August 5th of 1983, never sold in the USA with factory 5-speed manual transmission, unused Oris tow package with original built sheet (included), performance and convenience AMG modifications done when new, mechanically perfect with no accidents and zero rust, \$25,850 OBO. Tel: +001 23920 47434. Florida, USA **[GHW8]**



W108 280S 1971, 33,614 carefully driven original miles, no accidents, dents or scratches, car starts and runs perfectly, automatic transmission, aircon, original unrestored condition, has a few rust spots which are typical for this year, \$9,000 ONO. Tel: +1 404 435 3004 or Email: mns0613@gmail.com. Hialeah, Miami **[EFW3]**



280SE, 1971, 3.5, dark blue exterior, blue interior, coupe, 38,000 miles, show condition US model, DOT-mandated side marker lights removed when car repainted several years ago, originally 903 blue, now 904 dark (Midnight) blue, original blue leather & French walnut, original 38,000 miles, everything works, a truly stunning example, \$125,000 OBO. Tel: +001 41551 70573. California, USA **[GHW10]**



280CE W123, rally model, 1979, 16 cyls, double overhead camshafts, fuel injection, M110 engine, 182hp, automatic, c123, coupe, racing label #789, vehicle designed by Friedrich Geiger and Bruno Sacco, 2-rear wheel drive, 2-doors, MFD by Daimler-Benz ag Stuttgart, 6-cylinders inline, double overhead camshafts, torque 235 nm (173lbf) @ 4,500 rpm, all-wheel disk brakes, MB SLK r17 alloy wheels 8j front, 9j rear, staggered, new Sumitomo rally tires 235x50r17 tyres front and 275x45r17 rear, 4x Hella rally 500 lights special series 500w, CB radio, new front 2 x 5-point 3" red racing belts, wheelbase 106.7 inch, engine and transmission glacial protective plate, 4-speed automatic transmission 722.1, radio, cv band, a/c installed, the Mercedes-Benzenes rally Paris-Dakar 1980, Acropolis rally, Greece, 1980, up to 238 km/h, tested 120 km/h, \$19,950. Tel: +001 954777 88543. Florida. United States **[GHW16]**



280 SL 180 G, 1970, red leather, black soft top with hard top, Air Con, manual transmission, original Becker radio, approx. 2,500 sorting miles since restoration by marque expert in 2013, build date "8/1969" titled as 1970, 150 photos available upon request, before during and after restoration. Please contact: Dave Tobin at Tobin Motor Works NY USA call +1 607-215-0707 or dave@tobinmotorworks.com New York, USA **CM27W19]**

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PARTS, MISC & ACCESSORIES



Set of genuine Mercedes seats, W203 C-Class, full black leather interior, VGC front seats, working electrics for reclining and height adjustment, rear seat backrest VGC, missing a button on the middle headrest, base seat has some damage, looks like a burnt mark which was there when I got the car, out of a 2000 C240 Advantgarde, collection only, £POA. Tel: 01749 840862. Radstock **[BCW1]**



8-hole alloys, set of 4, in reasonable condition, suites 124 series E class and 129 SL or similar, size 8Jx16 H2 ET34, no. 124 401 14 02, £160 ONO. Tel: 01323 504532. Eastbourne **[ABW1]**



5 spoke wheels, black and silver, original Mercedes Benz fitment, factory TPMS, fits a 2016 AMG C43 4Matic, larger size to cover the larger discs on this vehicle, Vredestein Quatrac 5 all-weather tyres, tyres are 4-5 mm tread, front 18x7.5 225/45/18, Rear: 18x8.5 245/40/18, would be compatible with most C-Class with 18 or 19 wheels, £600. Tel: 07900 215457. Hertfordshire **[ABW17]**



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]**



Inner seat plastic trim, 1 pair, W116, seat belt stalk side, R/H and L/H, part numbers 116 918 02 30 / 116 918 01 30, colour code Blue (5045), new, unused. £50 ONO plus P&P. Tel: 01723 864918. Scarborough. **[ABW13]**



Speaker grille covers, rear parcel shelf, 1 pair, W126, part number 126 820 21 12 / 126 820 22 12, L/H and R/H, colour code blue (5076), new, unused, £50 plus P&P. Tel: 01723 864918. Scarborough **[ABW14]**



OE Seat base cover, grey cloth, suit W124 series pre 1989, part number 124 910 0147, colour code grey (7135), new, unused, £150 ONO plus P&P. Tel: 01723 864918. Scarborough **[ABW15]**



OE Castor bush repair kits, 1 pair, W126, part number 126 330 1335, suit 89/90 560SEL/ SEC and other W126 models, no longer available from MB, £100 plus P&P ONO. Tel: 01723 864918. Scarborough **[ABW16]**



Becker Mexico Stereo Autoradio 374, new, never been used, warranty ticket serial number Q2108970, includes sound filter plus connecting wires package, manufacturer documents, instruction packet, brochure showing Becker's previous Autoradios, in original box, £1,000 ONO. Tel: 0208 2951643. London **[ABP1]**



W230E 123 series car seats, front and rear, they are from an early 1980s Mercedes 200, the car had only done 27,000 miles, Mercedes say "a seat needs re-springing at 100,000 miles", virtually new, bedroom stored for the last 12 years, Tel: 01283 568988. Burton-On-Trent **[CM30W1]**



17-Inch Alloy Wheel, Mercedes A-Class W176, B-Class W246, 225/45R17 tyre, part number: A2464011400, £120 ONO. Tel: 07936 151814. **[CM30W3]**



Exhaust, manifold, Mercedes MB track 1000, excellent condition, £POA. Tel: 07831 804009. Doagh **[CM30W7]**



8 suppressor plugs, part number: A0001565610, for a Mercedes v8 engine, new parts never used, £250 plus postage. Tel: 003 538 724 57174. Email: tbmanagement@yahoo.com. County Meath **[LKW10]**



Set of Mercedes-Benz roof bars, to fit W140 S-Class, £50. Tel: 07711 327852. Saint Margaret's at Cliffe **[KLP3]**



Winter tyres and alloy wheels, set of 4, Mercedes Benz 17" 235/65/R17 108 V, from an M Class, great for winter/snow, £POA. Tel: 07956 805798. Caterham **[LKW13]**



4 x 16-inch alloy wheels, 7 1/2 Jx16 H2, part number 140401102, suits W140 S-Class, comes with tyres 2 of which are good winter/snow tyres, £140. Tel: 07711 327852. Saint Margaret's at Cliffe **[KLP1]**



5 x Mexican hat alloys, Intra 6.5 Jx14, £200. Tel: 07711 327852. Saint Margaret's at Cliffe [KLP2]



E-Class alloys, genuine Mercedes, excellent condition, full matching set of Continental winter contact tyres, fitted with 6mm tread, 235/40/r 18 95v, centre caps included, £650 OVNO. Tel: 07989 961039. Leicester [IJW17]



Complete engine/gearbox and front and back axles, from a 1966 SEL Fintail, £1,500 Tel: 07711 327852. Saint Margaret's at Cliffe [KLP4 & KLP5]

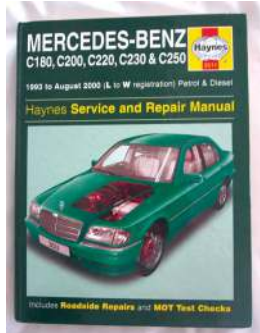


W211, E-Class, sports grill (black & chrome), fits pre-facelift cars from 2002-2006, brand new, with original fittings, £60 ONO. Tel: 07721 999642. Nottingham. [KLW3]

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Mercedes baseball cap, leather. £10 Tel: 07975 822643. Bedfordshire [KLW18]



Haynes workshop manual, C-Class, 1993 to 2000, petrol & diesel, hardback, unmarked pages, like new condition, £3.95 post UK only. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [KLW13]



W211 E320 differential, original, estate. £250. Tel: 07975 822643. Bedfordshire [KLW17]



Mexican hat alloys, 280SL R107, 1982, excellent condition, including long bolts, £60 each or £250 for 5. Tel: 07818 420620. West Sussex [JKW9]



R230 panoramic roof, removed from a SL 2004 Mercedes, very good condition, black, 03 - 09 models, £500 ONO. Tel: 07828 279875. West Yorkshire [FGW9]



W125 estate roof bars, genuine Mercedes Brand new (old stock), in original packaging, part number (124 840 0218), two sets available, bargain £100 per set. Tel: 07930 009666. Stoke On Trent [HIW18]



17" Homan wheels with tyres, set of 4, wheels in very good order, no kerbing, tyres good, plenty of tread, 1 nearly new, removed from my 2005 R230 SL350, no centre caps, buyer collect, £295 ONO. Tel: 07708 481776. Hampshire [HIW8]



G-Wagen Gold Portfolio, 1981 - 2005, 160 unmarked pages, great photos, excellent condition, only £6. Tel: 0739 9359072. Canterbury [GHW11]



CL55 AMG leather steering wheel, Never used price, £750 Ono. Tel: 07925 551590. Basingstoke [EFW6]



Mercedes-Benz cufflinks, enamel finish, free postage and packaging £30. Tel: 0208 3997541. Surrey [ABP3]

Winter tyres, set of four unused Dunlop SP Winter Sports 205/55R16 tyres, fitted on black steel rims, purchased for installation on a B-Class for £600, buyer collects, money will be donated to St. Winfrids Hospice for Children, offered for £350. Tel: 01323 478539. Eastbourne [BC]

NO. PLATES

MBZ 320I

MBZ320I, great dateless plate, perfect for any Mercedes, would fit a 320 best, on retention, £750 ONO. Tel: 07712 893062. Glasgow [BC]

DA63 AMG

DA63AMG, the ideal fast 63 AMG number plate for sale, on retention, all the supporting DVLA documents, £1,000 ONO. Tel: 07710 587402. Hampshire [BC]

300 JB

300 JB, personal plate, purchased from DVLA auction, on retention, offers over £12,000 invited. Tel: 02087 074781. Feltham [BC]

WANTED



W124, saloon / estate, 1986 - 1990, for my own collection, prefer MOT on vehicle, diesel, 250D or 300D, will consider auto or manual, private buyer, will travel. Tel: 01516 390149. Wallasey [BCP1]

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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 36076. East Sussex [LKW42]

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]

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 still...

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, new set...

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“ I remember having low expectations when I jumped in. However, things took a leap forward in the cabin ”

STRAIGHT-A STUDENT

With the current A-Class nearly two years old, it's easy to forget that for once, the baby Benz, which represented entry level Mercedes ownership, shared something special with its S-Class big brother...

WORDS SIMON HOLMES IMAGES DAIMLER AG

The first time I drove the new A-Class was a revelation and for more than one reason. Having come from another car magazine, I'd had limited experience in a brand new Mercedes-Benz for a couple of years, but I was thrown headfirst into the latest model when it came to test driving the new A-Class on a press launch in the Cotswolds.

I had driven a very early version of the previous generation A45 AMG, but was largely unimpressed with its driving position, although the performance and ability were certainly potent to say the least. Plus, and perhaps most importantly was the interior, particularly the dashboard, that looked very much like an afterthought. It certainly appeared that a Mercedes technician had suddenly remembered that the car would need a large display screen and so plonked the nearest android tablet to hand on top of the dash. It left a very unfinished look, I recall.


With that in mind, I wasn't exactly expecting big things with the new rendition of the base model that we were set to drive around the country roads of the picturesque location. First impressions when approaching the car were average at best: its exterior look although modern was not exactly jaw-dropping. In fact, it looked quite similar to many rivals of the time. Based on this, I remember having low expectations to match when I opened the door and jumped in. However, as it turned out, things took a rather huge leap forward when seated in the cabin.

It was that twin-screen display. There were no dials, clocks, or even switches. The large and rather dominating twin-display screens centred towards the driver were simply another level of modern design. It felt like a time machine compared to the 15-year old Mercedes C-Class I had arrived at the event in.

This feature has since, of course become commonplace, known as MBUX, but at that time only had the luxurious S-Class model received

△ The new A-Class is sleek and modern, but it's the interior that really shines.

this dashboard display before, and whilst it blended in the huge luxury saloon, in the baby A-Class it stood out as a feature to genuinely admire and set the tone of the whole car. I knew that these screens would be the future, and sure enough they have become just that for every Mercedes model since, whilst leaving other car manufacturers to play a game of catch up.

The rest of the car was very pleasant too. After all, it was the early days of small capacity, turbocharged engines replacing larger, naturally aspirated engines and with good success. Even a year later when I had a base-spec, manual A-Class on test for a couple of weeks, I still fell for its modern take on a simplistic charm. I'll admit that I do love the new A-Class. 

▽ Inside, the dash and twin-display was simply revolutionary for a small car..



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