

# 2013 Mercedes-Benz CLS Shooting Brake REVIEW

Statement of the obvious warning: this is a practical car. It has a boot of many litres, can be had with a tow-bar, and has rear seats that do the split/fold thing and something called underfloor storage. But then so it should - it's an estate car.



Only it isn't, it's a shooting brake, and therefore it's different. Can't tell how exactly, because it has the right number of doors and the overall layout is uncannily similar to an E-Class's. And besides, if we're being pedantic, then strictly speaking isn't a shooting brake a two-door coupe with an estate back? Certainly the cars that Mercedes reference - Scimitar GTE, Volvo P1800, and Aston DB5 Shooting Brake - conform to that description.

But it's no good trying to split hairs in the brave new world of automotive niche-busting. You can see that Sindelfingen is trying to trendify the estate, so let's leave it at that - first pausing, of course, to recognise the headache the arrival of this car must be causing for Audi and BMW. With the A7 and 6-Series Gran Coupe, they've only recently caught up with the CLS ball that Merc started rolling back in 2004, and now they're on the back foot again.

It does change things, the CLS Shooting Brake. And not just because parents with three offspring won't be disappointed when they peer into the rear compartment. It's visually dramatic, a versatile car that actively tries to disguise the space inside, although that's hardly surprising, given that Mercedes freely admits that in the give-and-take tussle between designers and engineers, the designers were allowed to win. It's the reason your luggage has to be manoeuvred over a little lip before it drops into the boot.

But you won't care about that, because you'll have specked your car in Designo Magno Cashmere White matt paint, which makes the darker glass stand out and the window profile look like the cross section of a wing. That's pretty cool. Moreover, the Shooting Brake has a more resolved back end than the 'coupe'. The four-door's rear three-quarters can look rather heavy from some angles, but here the roof and window lines work harder to successfully draw your attention. It's a svelte thing, a marginal 16mm longer (but 95kg heavier) than its sibling.

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And it is genuinely big inside. The Shooting Brake has a 590-litre boot - roughly 30 litres bigger than either the Audi A6 Avant or BMW 5-Series Touring can muster, and they're 'proper' estates. OK, so it loses that advantage when you tug the little handles inside the tailgate to flop the seat-backs forward, but 1,550 litres is big enough for all but the most wardrobe-heavy Ikea runs. And if you spec the £4,030 American cherry wood floor, there's amusingly little friction for your loads to overcome, so they slide and crash entertainingly around. That feature is standard in China, although I'm not sure what, if anything, to read into that.

The solid console that divides the two rear seats in the saloon has been clad in leather and fitted with its own seatbelt, making the Shooting Brake a proper five-seater, but that's about the sum total of the interior changes. That's no bad thing, as the CLS is a blissfully easy car to get on with. Controls are where you expect to find them and work logically (with the exception of the deeply irritating foot-operated parking brake). The interior design is elegant, and quality is beyond criticism. It's a hushed, comfortable, relaxed ambience, the only detectable differences from the saloon being a faint sensation of more volume behind you and the arched roofline reflected in the rear-view mirror.

A pair of diesels will form the backbone of the UK engine range (you can read about the sole petrol version here. You'll want to, as it's more powerful than both oil-burners put together). These two are familiar from the standard CLS - a 201bhp 250 CDI and the 261bhp 350 CDI. If you can bring yourself to spend £49,360 on nothing grander than a four-cylinder diesel then fair enough, but we'd find the extra £3,640 needed for the added pair of cylinders. Mostly because we're a bit vain like that, but also because the bigger engine is markedly smoother, swifter and more in keeping with the CLS experience.

Which is something to relish? Despite the extra mass and a fraction more rear bias to the weight distribution, the Shooting Brake drives just as neatly and precisely as the saloon. You wouldn't call it sporting exactly - the whole tone of the car isn't sporty so much as... satisfying. It aims to be effortless, and it is. That's not to say it wafts and wallows around, as there's actually a hint of steel to the self-assurance with which it controls roll, and the natural electro-mechanical steering is little short of a delight to use.

Quick recommendation: if you can, spend £1,150 and upgrade to the full air suspension. As standard, the Shooting Brake features conventional spring/dampers up front and air suspension at the back and this causes a slight discrepancy in the ride - the front being a fraction harsher.

Even so, the Shooting Brake is an estate that likes to be driven. It's one of those cars that makes progress - swift, even, unruffled progress - and, in 350 CDI trim, has punch enough to thrust itself out of corners. It's not fun as such, more that you get a deep sense of satisfaction that the car is doing its job better than you suspected it could.

Two trim levels are available, standard and AMG Sport, the latter a £3,000 uplift, but worth it for the full LED headlights, 19-inch AMG wheels and a subtly powerful body kit, plus upgraded suspension, brakes, steering wheel and pedals. So, £55,995 buys you the CLS Shooting Brake you actually want - a 350 CDI AMG Sport - and, if you've done your homework, you'll have realised that's the best part of a £15,000 mark-up over the equivalent E-Class wagon. If you're questioning the rationality of that, the Shooting Brake probably isn't the car for you.

## The numbers

2987cc, V6, RWD, 261bhp, 457lb ft, 46.3mpg, 162g/km CO2, 0-62 in 6.6secs, 155mph, 1910kg

**The verdict** - More spacious inside than you'd credit and as good-looking outside as you'd hope. Smooth, sophisticated and desirable.

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The Mercedes-Benz CLS Shooting Brake is a new breed of vehicle that fits firmly in the 'sporty estate' club that premium car manufacturers are now keen to exploit. There's clearly something appealing about a fast five-door. It's the classic 'you can have it all' model, offering practicality and performance in one slick package.

Mercedes-Benz isn't holding back on the hyperbole either, claiming that the CLS Shooting Brake is 'automotive independence at its most beautiful'. That's arguable since the concept of 'automotive independence' is as nebulous as it comes, and beauty, well... that's in the eye of the beholder. It's called a Shooting Brake which, to the person on the street, is essentially a coupe with a tailgate. A sort of jumped-up estate, if you will. Inside the CLS there are five seats but the middle seat is a token gesture and only fit for small people. It's not much more expensive than the Coupe and the go-faster AMG versions are only slightly more expensive than their four-door equivalents.

**Quality interior** - There's no doubting the CLS Shooting Brake is a classy piece of kit that'll appeal to the well-heeled. There's loads of hand-stitched leather, a luggage compartment lined with high-quality carpet and if you want to really set yourself even further apart from the proletariat you can fit optional designer aluminium loading rails or a curiously described 'Designo' wooden luggage compartment floor. Cherry tree wood has been harvested for the CLS and it combines with the inlaid smoked oak and aluminium rails in the boot. This is the sort of stuff you see on yachts, so if you're moderately loaded you'll feel positively Abramovich-esque if you buy one of these and feel satisfied that your boot looks like a boat deck.

The Shooting Brake offers five interior colours, five trim designs and three qualities of leather to choose from. Customers have a choice of three exclusive wood types: high-gloss brown burr walnut, high-gloss black ash and satin-finish light-brown poplar. A completely new addition comes in the form of porcelain interior detailing and that's alongside a mixture of satin and high-gloss finishes used on the metal surfaces.

**Practicality and performance** - In terms of practicality, it's pretty imperious. The boot offers 590 litres of stowage space with the rear seats up and 1,550 litres with them down. That's bigger than a standard C-Class Estate, but nowhere near an E-Class though. An optional trailer coupling is also available.

**Choice of engines** - The entry-level model is the CLS250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY which produces 201bhp. Combined fuel consumption is 53.3 mpg with CO2 emissions of 139g/km and a 0-62mph time of 7.8 seconds. There's also a six-cylinder model: the CLS 350 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY. It produces 261bhp, returns 47mpg, emits 161g/km of CO2 and accelerates from 0-62mph in 6.6 seconds. Then there's the rather more bonkers 5.5-litre petrol-engined 63 AMG version that goes like a bullet.

**Safety systems** - More than a dozen driving assistance systems to prevent traffic accidents and reduce the severity of a collision are included. Active Blind Spot Assist and Active Lane Keeping Assist are available as part of the Driving Assistance package, in combination with DISTRONIC Plus and the Pre-Safe system that preps the car if it thinks an accident is imminent. Both assistance systems are not only able to detect an unintentional lane-change or vehicles in the blind spot, but they can also correct the direction of travel by gentle brake intervention if the driver ignores the visual or audible danger warnings.

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**2014 updates** - At the tail end of 2014 the CLS Shooting Brake had a series of updates applied, inside, outside and under the bonnet. Most notable is the addition of a new entry-level 220 BlueTEC diesel model, which is economical and refined, but not particularly fast.

Refinement is further helped by the new 9G-Tronic nine-speed automatic gearbox, which is available on the 220, 250 and 350 BlueTEC diesels as well as the 500 petrol. Still operated off the column stalk, it offers even lower rpm at cruising speeds to help with economy and efficiency.

Inside there's a new steering wheel, familiar from the firm's other models and a new 8-inch colour screen sat on top of the dashboard, though it's still controlled by the company's Comand rotary dial rather than the new touchpad seen on the S-Class and C-Class. Outside new lights at the front make it look more aggressive, while the lower bumper design is more in-keeping with the family face.

The CLS Shooting Brake delivers sleek styling and estate car practicality in one handsome package. There are some fine engines on offer and, on optional air suspension at least, it's brilliant to drive. The driving position is low, and dropping your backside down into it takes a little more care than in most executive wagons on account of the proximity of the pillars. But once you're in, you'll find that this is a cabin with so much else going for it. The high fascia and equally high waistline of the car act to cocoon you in what's a very lavish, luxurious, immaculately hewn cockpit. Quality levels are excellent. And it's beautifully lit. The optional ambient lighting adds real class after dark, and the foot well lamps for the back seats make it easy to spot items that have tumbled from pockets or bags.

## OUR CAR

**2012[62] Mercedes-BENZ CLS350 CDI AMG SPORT Blue-EFFICIENCY Turbo-DIESEL 265-BHP 620-Nm FaceLIFT [2013 Model YEAR] 5Door Shooting Brake 7-G TRONIC** One Owner. F/MB/S/H. 20000 warranted miles. Finished in BRIGHT Silver Metallic with lavishly sumptuous complementing Black Anthracite soft NAPPA Leather with white stitching and lashings of ASH black wood trim pieces and complementing AMG floor-mats.. This brutal yet beautiful, lively and sybaritic phantom-in-motion with a unique style with elegance is the true and undisputed Sindelfingen stealthy shooting break of all time. It has a distinct image of exclusiveness that goes far beyond the imagination. Socrates once said; "Opinion is nothing more than ignorance masquerading as knowledge". How right he was. This Mercedes-Benz CLS350 CDI AMG Sport Turbo-DIESEL Shooting Brake is such an impressive vehicle with sleek looks of a hatchback coupled with the practicality of a five-door estate that even cynical motoring journalists start reaching for their Advanced Superlatives Handbook. When it was new, this magnificent piece of engineering creation with its 3.0 litre Turbo diesel and built-in extras believed to have cost well over £68K with its high end options and is arguably one of the most luxurious estates - bar none. It combines awesome power with velvet-like refinement, provides ride comfort that is in the magic carpet class and offers more standard equipment than you would find in a top 7 star hotel. It seems almost churlish to mention such standard fitments as air-conditioning, automatic transmission and remote central locking when it has creature comforts that extend to seats with heating and three memory settings together with steering wheel and the mirrors all automatically moving to your pre-set requirements as soon as you sit in your driving seat. Find an open stretch of motorway, floor the throttle-pedal of this sleek torquey Turbo-DIESEL and you'll soon know what it means to 'TURBO-BOOST' the time/space continuum. There's a miniscule pause and a gentle jerking sensation as the seven-speed gearbox kicks down and the turbo spools up of this powerful and torquey prime red meat as she roars like the Minotaur gargling rocks. And then this gorgeous coupé launches itself at the horizon with a single, seamless blast of forward thrust. Any doubt that this sleek and elegant design flamboyance can obliterate time with acceleration dissipates the moment you watch the speedo arc gracefully past 150 mph, it would send the CLS on to speeds beyond imagination.... I guess that's what happens when Sindelfingen decide to stuff a V6-OM642 DIESEL Power Plant with Turbo-CHARGER and Inter-COOLER developing 265 horses and 620 Nm of brutal torque under the bonnet of such a car. Even in these horsepower mad times, it's enough shove to put Mercedes' 3.0-litre

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V6-powered mental coupé with engine increased performance[MO14] with Exhaust Gas cleaning with Euro-5 Technology, resulting in a sprint from 0 to 60mph in around 6.0 seconds. The list of high cost extras in this car is so extensive and includes **RADAR** controlled **HandsFree Active Park Assist Parking Aid System** with **Side SENSORS/ SAT-NAV Pro** on **NTG4.5/ Reverse Colour Camera/ Front Colour Camera/ DIGI-TV/ Harmon-Kardon Logic-7 Surround Sound system with MultiMedia interface with Digi-DAB Radio / Designo Chrome side airvent-flutings on front wings/ DVD movie player/ Front & Rear parking sensors with colour displays/ Park speed sensitive power assisted steering/ Bluetooth GSM Phone controlled via COMAND interface/ Full AMG BodyPACK with Side-SKIRTS and Front Spoiler/ SPORTS Suspension/ CD/DVD player with MP3 facility and music register memory card slot/ ABS+ BAS+SBC/ Full Climate Control/ Auto-dimming interior & exterior mirrors/ Bi-XENON lights with Cornering/Bending Light Function + Wash + Dynamic Range adjustment/ AMG Sports Package [950]/ New Designo 5-Spoke 18" Diamond-Cut Highly Polished AMG Alloys with Hi-Performance tyres/ 5-Seat Pack/ Tinted glass/ Interior Motion Sensors/ Electric Heated front seats height + lumbar adjustment/ Electric windows with 1-touch facility/ Traffic Speed Limit Recognition System/ 6-CD/DVD multi-changer/ ESP + Sport SpeedTRONIC Tempomat/ Rain Sensing wipers/ 7-G Tronic Auto-transmission with F-1 Type Paddles/ Adaptive brake lights/ Tyre pressure sensors/ Height + Reach + Rake adjustment steering column/ Luxury Multi-Function steering wheel. Heated SEATS, LED daytime running Lights, Extras list on this car goes on & on. With superior build integrity, masses of airbags, features such as traction control, anti-lock brakes and Mercedes-Benz' own Brake Assist system it is hard to imagine being in any safer form of transport. In driving terms, this Mercedes-Benz is absolutely impeccable. This crescent-shaped, warp-drive-enabled übercraft from the 25th century is a technological masterpiece pure and simple. With her aggressively sneering bending headlights and a shark-like lower grille she portrays such an aggressive stance that she is impossible to ignore by anyone especially as they see her approach them at speed in their rear view mirror..The interior ambience is exclusive and is further enhanced with 4-Seat Pack in lavishly sumptuous soft perforated with multi electronic control and memory settings, well laid-out controls and a generally imperious air. With the use of choice wood trim and top grade supple leather trim, Mercedes-Benz has successfully created a drawing-room feel like no other. This, when coupled to impeccable German efficiency and pure functionality, is the creation of the superlative CLS350 CDI AMG Sport Blue-EFFICIENCY Turbo-DIESEL 5 Door Shooting Brake. An incredible car with an unbeatable value. That is the ingenious of SINDELINGEN in living form, which is what makes an everyday reality of this Beauty with Driving Excellence. Why not be part of this incredibly enjoyable driving experience, and be part of Mercedes-Benz's world of luxury.**

## **SPECIFICATION**

<b>MAKE:</b>	Mercedes-BENZ
<b>MODEL:</b>	CLS350CDI AMG Sport B/E TurboDIESEL, Shooting Brake, 7-GTronic Auto.
<b>Registration NUMBER:</b>	GX62 PPZ
<b>Chassis (Vin) No.</b>	WDD2189232A076821
<b>Date of First Registration:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2012 / 2013 Model YEAR
<b>COLOUR [Body / Interior]:</b>	BRIGHT Silver Metallic [775U] / Black Anthracite NAPPA Leather [211A]
<b>Number of Cylinders &amp; TYPE:</b>	v6 24 Valve, DOHC Turbo Diesel [OM642]
<b>Cylinder CAPACITY:</b>	2987 cc
<b>Horse POWER / Torque:</b>	265 BHP [198Kw] / 457 Lbf-Ft [620Nm]
<b>Engine NUMBER:</b>	642853 41 377250
<b>Fuel TYPE: DIESEL</b>	Fuel OIL [SHELL v-Power Diesel ONLY]
<b>Oil TYPE:</b>	CASTROL Edge TurboDiesel [SAE OW-30; MB229.31/ MB229.51]

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