

Mercedes-Benz CL review



Range-topping Mercedes-BENZ coupe perfect for empty nester company directors wanting to drive rather than be driven

The Mercedes-Benz CL borrows its chassis, engine, most of its structure and the front half of its interior straight from the wonderful S-Class saloon; what is there left to tell? Well, quite a lot, as it happens. You could question the point of a less practical and more expensive car than the S-class, and we found plenty of people who reckon a Bentley Continental GT or Jaguar XKR are more desirable, but we defy anyone who has spent some time in the CL not to acknowledge that all that goes to making the S-class so fabulous – and a bit more besides – is present in abundance here too. The range only comprises three models. Above the 4.7-litre biturbo V8 engined CL500 sit two AMG models, the CL63 AMG with a 5.5-litre biturbo V8 and the CL65 AMG which boasts a 6.0-litre biturbo V12. The CL63 AMG delivers 536bhp and makes the CL feel heroic, the CL65 AMG's 621bhp and 737lb.ft of torque turning the CL into a monstrously rapid car. The AMG duo are the only CLs to have an obvious direct external competitor: matching them on price, function and performance is the Continental GT, with its V8 and W12 models respectively. At around £93k the 'entry' CL500 has some competition in the prestigious coupé market, though its rivals differ in character and appeal. The Porsche 911, Maserati GranTurismo and BMW M6 are rather more sporting and lack the CL500's comfort, while the Jaguar XKR and BMW 650i are cheaper.

Introduced in 2006 and given an effective makeover in 2010 the Mercedes CL still cuts it as a bold statement of wealth. If status is measured by scale then the CL is a winner in the coupé marketplace, as it's a sizeable car. At over five metres in length you'll need a large parking place. Muscularly styled without being overly sporting in standard CL500 guise the arcing roofline with its pillarless windows are a particularly neat feature, the lengthy rear and pronounced wheel arches at the back adding to its visual gravitas. A bold feature line runs from behind the front wheel right the rear lights, while the large front grille, LED driving lights and prominent badge leaves no doubt what's filling your rear-view mirror when a CL approaches. The AMG pairing wear their greater potential with more overt styling. There are fewer bars in the front grille, while the LED driving lights are housed in larger apertures for feeding air to the engine and brakes. AMG alloy wheels, less chrome and lower side skirts add visual menace without being too in your face. The exhausts are a more obvious quad set up on the AMG cars, while pick the AMG Exterior Carbon Package from the options list and you can turn your CL into an AMG F1 Safety Car lookalike. The CL65 AMG gains little visually over its CL63 AMG relation, all except those oh-so-important V12 badges on the front wings.

Mercedes-Benz CL review



Given its generous length it's hardly surprising to find that the Mercedes CL's interior is a spacious one. Inside the CL, there's very little that isn't S-class derived. The rear seats aren't, obviously, but although they're nowhere near as capacious as the saloon's, there is room for two large adults. The boot is only marginally smaller than the S-class's (at 490 rather than 560 litres) and is well shaped: long, wide and deep. In the front of the cabin, though, you'd be pushed to tell the S and CL apart, which, given the saloon's standard of fit and finish, is mostly a good thing. Mercedes is slowly repairing its tattered reputation for making bombproof interiors, and the CL will do its cause no harm at all. Hard plastics are difficult to find, but there are some foibles: the cover on the phone controller's pad hinges the wrong way for a right-hooker, the row of silvery switches on the dash is on the vulgar side, and some of the stitching could be more precise. But the biggest problem inside this car is a lack of visual flair. There is plenty that's well assembled, but the seat adjustment switches on the doors are a little clumsy and there's too little in the way of fine detailing. To put it bluntly, a Continental GT feels a lot more special. This is less of an issue in a saloon, but in an £90,000 coupé the subjective is at least as important as the objective, and here the CL falls rather short. That's even more apparent in the AMG models, with buyers dropping north of £160,000 on the range-topping CL65 AMG certain to feel rather short changed despite the addition of some AMG glitter inside.

The V8 fitted to the Mercedes CL500 feels as refined and smooth as any eight-cylinder petrol engine on the market, and a 0-60mph time of 4.9sec is more than acceptable. The spread of power from the 4.7-litre biturbo V8 is outstanding, too. Maximum shove is developed at 6000rpm but peak torque – all 516lb ft of it – arrives at 1800rpm and keeps delivering right through to 3,500rpm. A flex of the right foot is enough to haul the CL convincingly past slower traffic without triggering multiple downshifts and, although there's a manual override for the gearbox, choosing to shift gears via the steering wheel's buttons is something you do for enjoyment, not out of necessity. The CL63 AMG turns the intensity up a notch, with the 5.5-litre biturbo V8 delivering a 4.5 second 0-62mph time and sounding fantastic. The throttle response is quick, the secret would seem to be not more turbo pressure, but less. Because the engine is large, Mercedes can afford to blow only moderate amounts of boost through it, which means the engine can run a compression ratio of 10.0:1, a number you'd normally associate with a normally aspirated car. So there's no off-boost lethargy at all, nor any sudden uncontrollable bang in the back when it kicks in. Any revs in any gear and the thing just flies. Much the same is true with the CL65 AMG, its 6.0-litre V12 - again with biturbos - adding even more muscle to Mercedes-Benz's biggest coupe. Its 543lb.ft of torque tests the traction control system if you choose to be brutal with the accelerator, the way the CL65 AMG accelerates is quite breathtaking for such a weighty, comfortable car.

Mercedes-Benz CL review



Unlike the S-class, the Mercedes CL is suspended on coil, not air springs and is fitted with standard hydraulic ABC active body control (available only on S500s and above), the latest generation of which allows the CL to corner with 60 per cent less body roll than the previous car. It hardly rolls at all. It's an unusual but not unsettling phenomenon and allows the CL to corner with a composure you'd scarcely credit a car this large and comfortable. There is a minor delay between turning the steering wheel in faster corners and the suspension applying some muscle to the outside pair of springs to flatten body movements, and the steering is as positive as you could expect. It's happy to turn its nose towards a corner and resists understeer strongly – right up to a lateral cornering force of 0.91g. ESP quickly reins in proceedings when the CL starts to slide, and although it can be switched off, it refuses to relinquish control completely. Around our wet handling circuit the CL could be coaxed into an adjustable, playful slide until it reached 15 degrees or so off the straight-ahead, at which point both the ESP and Pre-Safe systems intervened. The AMG pairing naturally feature suspension that's been fettled to better suit their greater performance. So they're stiffer, with even the comfort setting on the suspension giving a fairly brittle ride. That's fine for top speed Autobahn runs, but on the broken tarmac of our island it's all a bit busy, upsetting the car's composure. If genuine, supple Grand Touring comfort is what you're after you need the CL500.

Even if you pick this most basic of Mercedes CLs, you won't be wanting for equipment. You can take it as read that you'll get heated leather, electrically operated seats, rain-sensing lights and wipers, an electrically adjustable steering column and doors that latch closed automatically. You might be more surprised to learn that the CL also comes with the likes of a remote electric opening/closing bootlid, doors that will electronically hold themselves at whichever point they're opened to and headlights that illuminate further as you go faster. The quota of CD/DVD/navigation and other telematics systems is just as good – even down to a PC multi-media flash card reader. The COMAND system that controls it has the measure of BMW's iDrive system, but isn't a patch on Audi's MMI interface or Jaguar's touch-screen controller (though this controls fewer systems). There's also a comprehensive list of optional equipment, but you really won't need a great deal from it. As you might expect in a range of cars with no engine with less than eight cylinders and near supercar levels of performance running costs will be fearsome. The CL500 just about makes some sense to buy and run, it's 4.7-litre biturbo V8 returning 29.4mpg and emissions of 227g/km on the official combined cycle. The CL63 AMG's 26.0 and 244g/km

Mercedes-Benz CL review

CO2 isn't too horrendous given the performance on offer, though you might find it difficult to justify the 19.8mpg and 334g/km the V12 engined CL65 AMG delivers. Depreciation hits all hard, the flagship CL65 AMG harder than most, it likely to be worth only a fraction of its eye-watering £160,595 list price after a few years. It is hard not to be seduced by the performance on offer by the AMG pairing. The CL63 over delivers, its biturbo 5.5-litre V8 offering incredible performance - so much so that the CL65 AMG looks like a hugely and ultimately unnecessary indulgence at over £50,000 more than its lesser cylindered relation.



SPECIFICATION & PRICE when NEW with STANDARD Equipment (Excluding cost of OPTIONAL EXTRAS)

| <u>Name</u> | <u>0-62mph</u> | <u>Top speed</u> | <u>CO₂</u> | <u>MPG</u> | <u>Price</u> |
|--|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------|
| Mercedes-Benz CL CL 500 5.5 2dr Auto | 4.9secs | 155mph | 227g/km | 29.4mpg | £94,015 |
| Mercedes-Benz CL CL 63 Bi-Turbo 2dr Auto | 4.5secs | 155mph | 244g/km | 26.9mpg | £117,355 |
| Mercedes-Benz CL CL 65 Bi-Turbo 2dr Auto | 4.4secs | 155mph | 334g/km | 19.8mpg | £163,080 |

Mercedes-Benz CL review

2008 Mercedes-BENZ CL500 5.5 Litre v8i DOHC- 388BHP / 530Nm, 2 Dr Coupé, 7-GTronic-Auto. 1-Lady owner from new with documented F/MB/S/H and 82000 warranted miles. Finished in Flint Grey Metallic with supple Beige NAPPA leather interior. From any angle the CL500 5.5 is one of the most beautiful coupés to ever prowl the blacktop. She has been rightfully dubbed as the finest luxury coupé of all time artfully blending blistering performance with innovative technology in an amazing package of top grade leather, walnut finishing and sleek sheet-metal. She is elegant and classy with fluid and graceful lines and an aggressive stance that suggests an iron fist in a velvet glove. She oozes with breeding from every line of her curvaceous body. The fact that she can embarrass the majority of sports cars on the road today is a fringe benefit. As you step on the throttle of this magnificent Benz, she will catapult herself on a wave of torque seemingly accelerating just as fast and effortlessly from 30 to 90mph as she does from 0 to 60mph in a mere 4.7 seconds. Find an open stretch of motorway, floor the gas-pedal of this CL-Klasse and you'll soon know what it means to 'kompress' the time/space continuum. There's a miniscule pause and a gentle jerking sensation as the seven-speed gearbox kicks down and the brilliant coupe comes alive and launches itself at the horizon with a single, seamless blast of forward thrust. Any doubt that this sleek beauty can obliterate time with acceleration dissipates the moment you watch the speedo arc gracefully past 140mph, and keep on going until it stops at the computer controlled max speed of 155mph. I guess that's what happens when Sindelfingen decide to stuff nearly 400 horses and 530Nm of brutal torque under the bonnet of the worlds most graceful coupé. Even in these horsepower mad times, it's enough shove to put Mercedes' 5.5-litre V8-powered leviathan on a par with a Porsche 911 Turbo-S (both sprint from 0 to 60mph in around 5 seconds.) She is fitted with brand new **5-Spoke Designo 19inch Diamond-Cut Anthracite AMG exclusive Alloy Wheels** with **highly polished Rims** and premium **low-profile tyres**. The list of high cost extras also include the infamous **NIGHT VIEW ASSIST Front vision NIGHT camera**. Satellite **NAVIGATION System with COMAND NTG-3**, Complete **DiGi-Television System**, **REVERSING CAMERA**, **AUTONOMOUS radar controlled CRUISE CONTROL PLUS with DISTRONIC PLUS**, Fully integrated **Bluetooth Telephone System**. **ParkTRONIC System** with Front, Rear & Side Sensors and displays, **PARKING GUIDANCE control**, Dual Stainless Steel Exhaust Pipes, **TIRE PRESSURE MONITOR (TPM) HIGH LINE/MID LINE**. Multi-Function Steering Wheel with Tiptronic Gear Shifting, Electronic Stability Programme (ESP) with ASR. Trim pieces in wood **BURRED WALNUT Veneer**. Closing AIDS to all doors, **ADAPTIVE STOP LIGHT FLASHING**. Electric Glass Sun-Roof, Infra-Red glass, Interior Motion Sensors. Lumbar Support in front seat backrests. SpeedTRONIC Cruise Control, **PEDESTRIAN PROTECTION with ACTIVE ENGINE HOOD**, so the list goes on and on. Her exquisite interior has been enhanced with supple Beige leather, crisply lighted electro-luminescent gauges anchoring her sweeping instrument panel. 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 three memory settings together with steering wheel and the mirrors all automatically moving to your pre-set requirements. With superior build integrity, masses of airbags, features such as traction control, anti-lock brakes and Mercedes-Benz' own Brake Assist Control systems, it is hard to imagine being in any safer form of transport. In driving terms, this Mercedes-Benz is absolutely impeccable. At the centre of the dash is a walnut trimmed stack that includes the COMAND display which manages the navigation system and Hi-fi systems. With her multi-function steering wheel and centre display unit she keeps you fully informed of all her vital functions as she offers sharp and precise handling on twisty country lanes. The lack of body roll in corners is uncanny and inspires total confidence and pleasure in tight situations as her anti-lock brakes, traction control and electronic stability control system all work unobtrusively. Her active suspension system with automatic Body Control System is an active air suspension system that keeps the car level under acceleration, braking and cornering. The BCS helps keep all of that immense power and torque under total control. It would be most undignified to drive this car like a boy racer, but it will respond to rough treatment with rapid, smooth acceleration - hardly its raison d'être though. The CL 5.5's ride is downright plush and her handling is excellent. Switch to sport mode and she hones the edge on her handling and the ride quality suffers so little that no enthusiast is going to care. In this mode there is less body roll and the car feels more responsive on turn-ins. All in-all she is an AWESOMELY fabulous car through and through; to drive as well as to own.

SPECIFICATION

| | |
|--|--|
| MAKE & MODEL: | Mercedes-BENZ, CL500 5.5 2Dr Coupé 7-GTronic |
| Registration NUMBER: | LB57 SYJ |
| Date of First Registration: | 16th January 2008 |
| Colour Exterior / Interior: | FLINT Grey Metallic [368U] / Beige NAPPALeather [805A] |
| Number of Cylinders & TYPE: | 5.5L v8i, Naturally Aspirated, DOHC |
| Cylinder CAPACITY: | 5462 cc |
| Horse POWER: | 388 BHP @ 6000 rpm / 530 Nm @ 2800 rpm |
| Chassis/Frame NUMBER: | WDD2163712A015606 |
| Engine NUMBER: | 273961 30 219696 |
| Fuel TYPE: | PETROL Unleaded (V-Power ONLY) |
| Oil TYPE: | CASTROL [TWS MotorSPORT 10W-60, [API S]/CF, ACEA A3/B3] ONLY] |

The "HiCalibreCars.Com" Equipment Guide is presented as an additional aid for our Clients. We endeavour to maintain accurate information, however cannot guarantee the details as detailed above and request that you carefully check for yourself the accuracy of information as presented. HiCalibreCars.Com accepts no liability whatsoever for any misrepresentation, omissions and/or any miss-entry and strongly recommends that each individual item is verified physically on the car therefore confirming the exact specification of this vehicle.

DISCLAIMER