

2013 Mercedes-BENZ S350L BlueTEC 4-Door 7-GTronic REVIEW

The balance between looks, performance and economy make this sleek S-class the pick of the High-end range within the 4-Marques of Distinction



What is it? - It's the UK's most popular S-class model by far, scooping up more than 80 per cent of sales. And Mercedes-Benz is now giving buyers further reason to choose the S350 CDI, or S350 BlueTEC, to give it its new name. Changes to the 3.0-litre common-rail diesel engine – including improved injection efficiency, added turbocharger boost pressure and reduced compression ratio – boost power by 25bhp at 258bhp. Torque rises by 59lbft to 457lbft/620Nm, developed at 1600rpm.

What is she like? - The upshot is added off-the-line performance, even more impressive mid-range shove, relaxed cruising attributes and a level of mechanical refinement that encroaches on that of the high-end petrol S-class models.

Mercedes has also fitted its latest urea injection system. Concentrated within the catalytic converter, it turns up to 80 per cent of nitrogen oxides expelled by the engine into harmless nitrogen and water. A 25.7-litre tank for the urea solution is mounted in the spare wheel well and needs topping up every 15,500 miles. The engine changes are backed by a revised seven-speed automatic gearbox with stop-start. It helps make the S350 BlueTEC achieve a combined 41.5mpg and a CO2 rating of 177g/km. It also fires off shifts in a more determined way than before. With the introduction of the S350 BlueTEC, Mercedes is rolling out a number of innovative new options, including Active Lane Keeping Assist and Active Blind Spot Assist.

Should I buy one? Absolutely - Although not exactly cheap at £68,440 for the vanilla Long Wheel Base version without its expensive toys, the car represents excellent value when you consider the S350 BlueTEC's balance between good looks, performance and economy which continue to remain the pick from the range of High-End German Marques of distinction. If you're looking for a car that carries passengers in supreme comfort in magic-carpet class while being engaging to drive with relative efficiency, the Mercedes-Benz S-Class 350 L BlueTEC would definitely be the ideal choice.

2013 Mercedes-BENZ S350L BlueTEC 4-Door 7-GTronic REVIEW

Effectively a long-wheelbase version of this venerable [S-Class saloon](#) is powered by a 3.0-litre V6 diesel producing 258bhp and a substantial 620Nm of pulling power. Primarily thanks to the latter figure this two-tonne+ car can go from zero to 60mph in 6.8 seconds, while its top speed is electronically limited to 155mph. This car picks up speed in a linear and urgent fashion, helped by the excellent seven-speed twin-clutch gearbox. Gear changes are quick, effortless as well as seamless, which makes the car easy to drive yet also very versatile thanks to the paddle-shifters behind the steering wheel. To switch from automatic to manual mode you just flick one of the paddles and the car puts itself into manual configuration immediately. Despite its size, this [S-Class](#) is extremely agile on the road. The steering is particularly impressive, with a good turning circle making parking manoeuvres much easier than you'd expect. The ride quality is exceptional; as it effortlessly soaks up all bumps and divots on the road for an incredibly smooth drive. Furthermore, the large dimensions mean you'd usually expect fuel economy to suffer. However, there's a raft of 'BlueTEC' efficiency-boosting technology – like stop/start and brake energy regeneration - installed in an effort to cut down on fuel consumption while keeping CO2 emissions at a relatively moderate 164g/km. That means you'll only pay just £165 per year in [road tax](#), not bad for a two-tonne + car generating 258bhp.

[Mercedes-Benz](#) claims it'll manage an average of 45.6mpg on the combined cycle, but in the real world the trip computer indicates somewhere around 38-40mpg over a weekend of mixed driving. The fuel tank holds 90 litres of fuel, meaning our theoretical maximum range would have been nearly 700 miles, while if you managed to hit the company's claimed fuel economy figure you could expect 866 miles from a full tank.

As you might expect from a large, long-wheelbase car, one of its strengths is practicality. There's a 560-litre boot and a huge amount of head- and leg-room in the cabin for both front- and rear-seat passengers.

Mercedes-Benz's excellent COMAND multimedia system comes as standard, and includes an eight-inch colour display in the dash along with radio, a hard drive, 3D satellite navigation and 'Linguatronic' voice control. This is all operated using the rotary selector roughly placed where the gear lever is in other cars.

The car we tested had a list price of £75,005. You can pick up a BMW 7 Series diesel for around the same price, though an Audi A8 could cost around £5,000 less. An equivalent Jaguar XJ long-wheelbase weighs in at just under £70,000.

However, our car came with an eye-watering £42,570 worth of optional extras - pushing the overall price to £117,575. Some options were effective as well as incredible, others impressive and some were verging on fairy land. For instance, the white paintjob, although quite attractive, costs £3,395. The special leather upholstery costs £5,395 and the Maple Grain wood trim a further £1,895. The stereo system, with its 15 speakers and premium branding, costs another £6,700. You can see how all of this quickly snowballs into a very large on-the-road price.

Some of the more impressive options include Night View Assist (£1,690). Which at the flick of a switch replaces the dash with a screen showing what's in front of the car using infrared, making things easier to spot at night when there isn't much light around. The 'Driving Assistance' package (£2,065) is another option that comes in very useful. This includes a blind spot warning system, lane-keeping assist and Mercedes-Benz's excellent radar-

2013 Mercedes-BENZ S350L BlueTEC 4-Door 7-GTronic REVIEW

guided Distronic Plus - which keeps you at a pre-determined distance from the vehicle in front of you when the cruise control system is active. This means you always move at the speed of the traffic in front and lowers the risk of running into the back of people.

So, if you're budgeting for a large, safe and comfortable saloon with sports car pace and an impressive list of high-end extras, you could not better the Mercedes-Benz S-Class 350 CDI BlueTEC. You cannot but love this 2012 Mercedes-Benz S350 BlueTEC. The S-class is our favourite of the big German luxury cars, followed closely by the Audi A8 and the BMW 7-series. We like the S because it offers, to me, the best overall combination of looks, quality and smoothness. Adding this nifty little six-cylinder diesel enhances the package. The engine might want a little for horsepower, but not torque--there's plenty of that, more than enough to haul this baby around town and up the motorway. Except, under heavy acceleration, there was nothing to indicate that we were driving a diesel, all quiet and smooth--really smooth. And returning mid-40s mpg on the way home and back to work, plus noodling around town last night, is awesome. Refined is the word we kept thinking of. The interior is your typical S: beautiful materials, unreal build quality and tons of cool gadgets with which to play.

One drive in this car and it could convince even the most avid diesel hater to change their tune. This car is smooth, and quiet, and yes, extremely fuel-efficient. This is the pinnacle of the German luxury cars. The 620Nm of torque is sweet to have underfoot, and the 42 mpg is superb. Cruising at 80 mph up the motorway there is no hint of engine noise. And you get all of the beautiful, comfortable, and, yes, luxurious interior of the S-class. The 2012 Mercedes-Benz S350 BlueTEC diesel--is a true winner - without doubt. Having just spent part of a day driving the similarly diesel-powered ML350 BlueTEC SUV earlier in the week, we were surprised at how much stronger the engine felt in the full-size saloon. The S-class checks in at some 400 pounds lighter than the M-class, and the weight savings makes a huge difference. We found the S350 BlueTEC strong not only off the line, but also in that key 50- to 80-mph range, where a lot of motorway driving takes place. Punching up power at speed in the S350 BlueTEC was promptly rewarded with instant response and action. This thing flies, and seemingly without effort.

CONCLUSION. A car of choice by any standard of the modern CEO and for those who enjoy their toys. A tremendous value for money - well recommended. *****

Options CODE

Options Description

[218] - REAR-VIEW CAMERA

[218R] - FRONT-VIEW CAMERA

[218R] - FRONT-VIEW CAMERA

[211A] - LEATHER - Black Anthracite

[230] - SENSOR CONTROLLED PARKING GUIDANCE SYSTEM

[236] - DAY DRIVING LIGHT

[249] - INSIDE AND OUTSIDE MIRROR AUTOMATIC DIMMING

[255B] - MB MOBILO WITH DSB AND GGD

[477] - TIRE PRESSURE LOSS WARNER

[502] - 3 YEARS OF MAP UPDATES FREE OF CHARGE

[513] - TRAFFIC SIGN RECOGNITION

[518] - UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS INTERFACE (UCI)

[5RFT] - DIGI TV

[5RFR] - DIGI DAB Radio

2013 Mercedes-BENZ S350L BlueTEC 4-Door 7-GTronic REVIEW

- [527] - COMAND DVD APS WITH HDD NAVIGATION
- [538] - ATTENTION ASSIST (FATIGUE/DROWSINESS DETECTION SYSTEM)
- [551] - ANTI-THEFT/ANTI-BREAK-IN WARNING SYSTEM
- [581] - AUTOMATIC CLIMATE CONTROL
- [600] - HEADLAMPS - CLEANING EQUIPMENT
- [608] - AUTOMATIC HIGH BEAM SWITCH (IHC)
- [736] - TRIM PIECES - WOOD ASH BLACK
- [770] - AMG 19" SPOKED WHEELS WITH MIXED TIRES
- [772] - AMG STYLING PACKAGE-FRONT SPOILER, SIDE SKIRT
- [814] - DVD CHANGER
- [81P] - COMAND WITH NAVIGATION with 2014 UPDATES
- [873] - SEAT HEATER FOR LEFT AND RIGHT FRONT SEATS
- [885] - HIGHTEN THEFT PROTECTION
- [910] - DYNAMO WITH HIGHER CAPACITY (FFO)
- [927] - EURO 6 TECHNOLOGY EXHAUST GAS CLEANING
- [950] - AMG SPORTS PACKAGE
- [A20] - DIRECT START
- [B03] - DIRECT START / ECO START/STOP FUNCTION
- [F221] - SERIES W221 S-Klasse
- [FW] - LIMOUSINE
- [GA] - AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION
- [K11] - ADAPTIVE STOP LIGHT FLASHING
- [M014] - ENGINE INCREASED PERFORMANCE
- [M020] - BLUETEC
- [M30] - DI SPLACEMENT 3.0 LITER
- [M642] - V6 DIESEL ENGINE OM642
- [P35] - LIGHT PACKAGE (FFO)
- [P54] - THEFT PROTECTION PACKAGE
- [P70] - INFOTAINMENT PACKAGE
- [P70R] - iPod + iPad + iPhone Audio/VIDEO Playback connections
- [U42] - DIESEL EXHAUST TREATMENT BLUETEC SCR GENERATION 1
- [U60] - PEDESTRIAN PROTECTION - ACTIVE ENGINE HOOD
- [U72] - DVD PLAYER WITH REGIONAL CODE 2, EUROPE, JAPAN