

CLASSIC DRIVER

Mercedes E-Class Estate launched in Detroit

Leading-edge technology, captivating design, high-quality specification and intelligent interior practicality – the outstanding features of the new E-Class Estate that celebrates its world premiere at the North American International Motor Show in Detroit at the beginning of January 2003.



The dynamically elegant Estate version completes the new Mercedes-Benz E-Class model range. Scheduled for launch in March 2003, following the successful launch of the Saloon version in spring 2002, the new Estate will build on the success of the previous model which sold over 266,000 units during its seven-year reign, making it one of the best-selling cars in the estate class.

Like the Saloon before it, the new E-Class Estate represents technological exclusivity at the highest level. The standard specification for the Estate reads like a list of automotive technology milestones, including: Sensotronic Brake Control (SBC™) – the electrohydraulic brake system which now incorporates convenience functions such as Tailback Assist and Anti-stall Assist – as well as load-adaptive self-levelling rear suspension, adaptive front airbags, two-stage belt force limiters and large windowbags, to name just a handful of the 20-plus innovations that form part of the standard package.



Optional equipment available for the new Estate includes further high-tech systems such as AIRMATIC DC air suspension, COMAND control and display system with DVD player, THERMOTRONIC four-zone climate control and the dynamic multicontour seat which automatically adapts to the current driving situation.

Among the highlights making their debut in the new E-Class Estate are the bi-xenon headlamps with Active Light System – which follow the movements of the steering wheel and thus substantially enhance the driver's range of vision when cornering – as well as the new EASY-PACK tailgate, complete with hydraulic drive system for easy opening and closing at the touch of a button.

A new level of practicality and variability

The EASY-PACK system is the Mercedes-Benz answer to the need for intelligent load compartment management, comprising a whole host of detail solutions which substantially enhance variability, practicality and safety in the new Estate. Highlights of the EASY-PACK system include a newly developed, split-folding rear bench seat which can be folded forwards in its entirety in just a few simple steps, thus creating a large,

flat loading surface in the rear. The load compartment capacity is between 690 and 1950 litres (VDA measuring method), depending on how the rear seats are arranged. Assuming the stowage compartment in the spare wheel well is used, the new E-Class is capable of transporting up to 90 litres (15 percent) more than its predecessor.

Another new innovation for estate cars, the hydraulically operated EASY-PACK load compartment floor (optional), can be moved backwards by 400 mm at the push of a button, thus making it easier to load and unload heavy objects. Mercedes-Benz has also developed a special EASY-PACK load securing kit (Fixkit) which allows separation of the load compartment according to requirements as well as safe securing of the load. The kit includes telescopic bars, a retractable belt, four load securing rings and sliding fixing elements that lock into two aluminium rails.

Offering a generous amount of space that can be used in a variety of ways, as well as intelligent practicality, the new Estate can easily cope with a wide range of transport tasks, making it the ideal partner for work, travel, recreation, sport and shopping. It has a payload capacity of 575 kg. At 4850 mm in length, the E-Class Estate is 32 mm longer than the Saloon version, due to the increased rear overhang. The wheelbase length remains unchanged at 2854 mm. Compared to its predecessor, the new Estate is eleven millimetres longer and 23 mm wider whilst the wheelbase has been extended by 21 mm.

CDI diesel engines with more output and more torque

Three petrol engines and three CDI diesel engines will initially be available for the new Mercedes Estate, with outputs ranging from 110 kW/150 hp to 150 kW/204 hp. The power plants for the E 220 CDI, E 270 CDI and E 320 CDI models are from the second generation of sophisticated common-rail engines and deliver up to eight percent more torque and around five percent more output than the CDI engines fitted in the outgoing models. Fuel consumption has been reduced by up to 0.6 litres per 100 kilometres. The flagship diesel model – the E 320 CDI – develops an impressive 500 Newton metres of torque from just 1800 rpm.

The line-up of petrol engines offered by Mercedes-Benz features two six-cylinder models – for the E 240 and the E 320 – as well as a newly developed four-cylinder power plant incorporating the unique TWINPULSE system. The latter combines numerous technologies – such as a compressor supercharger, intercooler, four valves per cylinder, variable valve timing and a Lanchester balancer – to minimise fuel consumption and maximise driving pleasure and refinement. With an output of 120 kW/163 hp, the new E 200 KOMPRESSOR consumes a mere 9.1 litres of premium unleaded per 100 km in the NEDC combined cycle, 0.5 litres less than the preceding model.

Level control with additional air springs as standard

The chassis of the new Estate is based largely on the sophisticated axle systems that feature on the E-Class Saloon and ensure extremely high levels of safety, agility and comfort. The multi-link independent rear suspension is made entirely of aluminium and comes with level control fitted as standard. Unlike the previous hydropneumatic system, this self-levelling suspension is based on fully supporting air springs which allow load-dependent level control. In other words, the spring travel on the rear axle remains constant whatever the load, thus ensuring optimum ride comfort at all times.

Optional equipment available for the E-Class Estate includes the AIRMATIC DC air suspension system which constantly adapts the force of the shock absorbers and the spring rate to suit the current driving situation.

Three lines for individual design and equipment requirements

Three distinctive design and equipment lines – CLASSIC, ELEGANCE and AVANTGARDE – meet different customer requirements. Even the basic model, CLASSIC, comes with a standard package that includes a radio/CD player, automatic climate control, Sensotronic Brake Control, sidebags, windowbags, fine wood trim, light-alloy wheels and a host of other comfort and safety-related features. The ELEGANCE model does full justice to its name with discreet chrome trim on the bumpers, side rub strips and door handles, as well as a radiator grille with vanes painted in atlas grey, whilst the AVANTGARDE version distinguishes itself with line-specific, dynamically designed bumpers and side skirts, as well as cockpit instruments with white dials. Powerful bi-xenon headlamps and LED brake lights are also standard equipment on this model.

Text & Photos: DaimlerChrysler

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