

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Mercedes-Benz meets Giorgio Armani in Paris 2004



**At the Paris Motor Show, Mercedes-Benz presented its exclusive special-edition CLK-Class Cabriolet personalized by the renowned Italian fashion designer Giorgio Armani.**

The colours and materials used give the successful four-seater Mercedes cabriolet a highly distinctive look. Thanks to the special designo magno paint in the warm sand tone “sabbia” and an interior of high-quality materials to match, the Giorgio Armani cabriolet exudes a luxurious, sporty and masculine air. Only 100 units of this elegant vehicle will be offered worldwide as part of the exclusive Mercedes-Benz designo program. The designo range allows discerning customers to personalise their Mercedes-Benz using a selection of exclusive material and paint finish options. Each of the 100 vehicles represents the common design philosophy of Mercedes-Benz and Giorgio Armani and will be issued with a certificate that confirms its special-edition status. From the 25th of September, the ‘Mercedes-Benz CLK 500 designo by Giorgio Armani’ will be on display in an exhibition entitled ‘Mercedes-Benz meets Giorgio Armani’ at the Mercedes showroom on the Champs Elysées in Paris. Armani redesigned the showroom especially for this exhibition event using his Armani Casa furnishing collection.

The idea for the collaboration between Mercedes-Benz and the Milan-based fashion designer arose following the automaker’s tour sponsoring of the Salomon R. Guggenheim’s ‘Giorgio Armani: Retrospective’ exhibition. A Mercedes-Benz CLK Design show car was then developed and unveiled during Milan Fashion Week in Autumn 2003.

Giorgio Armani worked closely with the Mercedes design studio in Como, northern Italy, on what was his first automotive design project. “We very quickly found a common language,” he says. “It was fascinating to see how Mercedes-Benz turned my design ideas into reality with such attention to detail. I think the result speaks for itself.”



### **Unique matte paint “designo magno sabbia” and high-quality materials**

Encouraged by the positive feedback to the show car, Mercedes-Benz decided to transfer its design characteristics to a special-edition version. The company called on the in-depth expertise and experience of its design specialists, who can satisfy even the highest demands when it comes to individual equipment. As part of the Mercedes designo programme, these selected design experts enhance almost any Mercedes-Benz model with choice materials and high-quality paint jobs in accordance with customers' wishes. Drawing on their outstanding craftsmanship, they produce limited editions or one-off products.

The entire exterior of the vehicle is painted in a matte sand colour named “sabbia” that's typical of Giorgio Armani, with discreet green shading. The unique matte paint was developed by Mercedes-Benz designo and translates the lines of the CLK-Class Cabriolet in a very effective way. Glossy black decorative elements in various places add an extra touch. The roof covering, the colour of which was carefully chosen to complement the vehicle body, was developed exclusively for this high-class special-edition series.

Inside, the seating fabric and a high-tech silk matte film harmonise with the colour of the exterior paint job. Giorgio Armani has achieved surprising effects, partly by removing materials from their traditional contexts and combining them in unusual ways to create something new. For example, he has taken a prized saddle leather often seen in the 1940s and 1950s yet rarely used today as well as high-tech sportswear textiles. Thanks to the three-dimensional textile structure, the seats and other parts of the vehicle are well ventilated.

In the special-edition cabriolet, all of the interior decorative elements, which would normally be made of wood, are covered with brown designo leather, quilted in parts. The anthracite-coloured multi-functional steering wheel is covered with finely perforated leather. To avoid disruptive reflections in the windscreen, the upper section of the instrument panel is also dark in colour. The lower section repeats the color “sabbia” of the exterior, creating an interesting contrast.

To keep reflections to a minimum, Giorgio Armani decided not to use shiny chrome inside the vehicle. Instead, all of the metal trim has a high-quality, matte “worn” look.

Deliveries of the exclusive automobile will start in spring 2005. The ‘Mercedes-Benz CLK 500 designo by Giorgio Armani’ is priced at €86,884 ex works.

*Text/Photos: DaimlerChrysler*

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