
Mountains, Passes and Bends

28 September 2005 | Classic Driver



It's unlikely to have escaped your notice, but Mercedes-Benz have recently introduced a new S-Class. The European launch involved a journey from Milan to St Moritz and back - just the sort of travelling the car's designed for.



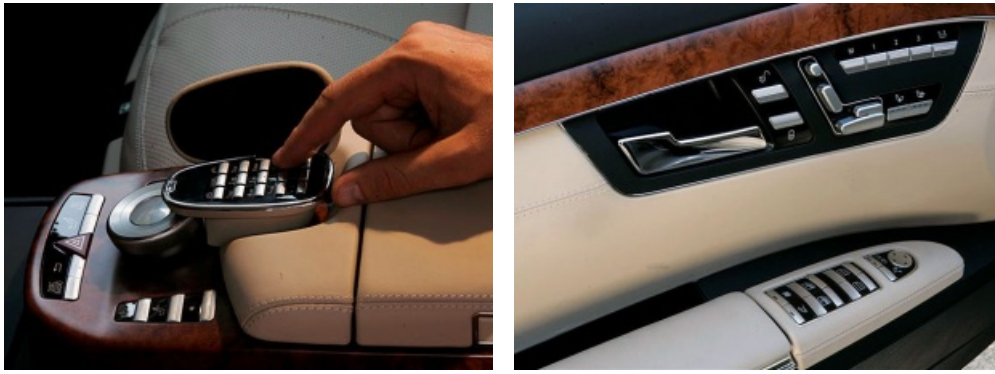
On first impression the car looks more dynamic and more imposing than its predecessor. It's bigger in almost all dimensions, and its muscular curves make it look a more imposing car - more like S-Classes of old. But you can't judge a car only by its exterior, it's time for a drive.



During the 250-kilometre scenic trip to St Moritz, my co-driver and I swap seats and who should we meet in the Swiss mountains? None other than Dr. Dieter Zetsche, who in 2006 will be the new chairman of the board of DaimlerChrysler. He's very enthusiastic about the new flagship model, and takes time out to talk through the individual changes on the latest S. He loves seeing his new flagship model driven by the world's press through the high passes into St Moritz.



While driving towards Engadin we experienced all the conditions a potential owner is likely to encounter in everyday driving, including a hold-up into the tunnel, and also the chance to use the DISTRONIC Plus distance-measuring system on the Autostrada. The combination of motorway driving, with some 'fun' in the winding mountain roads shows the latest S-Class to be better than ever.



The car is available with four engines. The top model (so far) is the S 500 with its 5.5 litre, 388 bhp petrol V8, but the S 350's 272bhp V6 should be enough for most people, and there's also the diesel S 320 CDI (with 540 Nm of torque, available from 1600 rpm) and from the first quarter 2006 real aficionados of luxury will be able to order the S 600 equipped with a 517 bhp V12.



For those of you obsessed with the minutiae of technical wizardry I can confirm the new climate control is the easiest to operate yet, and that features like the night view assist system mean night really does become day.



"Head and Heart" reads the Mercedes-Benz publicity material. The idea is that the car not only makes sense from a financial and safety point of view, but also has a 'soul' that rewards enthusiastic driving. I would not disagree with that.

Text: [Heinz Swoboda](#)

Photos: Heinz Swoboda / DaimlerChrysler

ClassicInside - The Classic Driver Newsletter
Free Subscription!

