

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## All-new Mercedes Benz C-Class



**18 Jan. 2007. Longer, wider, faster, safer and more economical is the direction Mercedes have gone with its fourth generation version of the best-selling C-Class saloon, launched tonight at Mercedes-Benz World in Stuttgart, the premiere beamed worldwide via an online broadcast.**

With the **Avantgarde**, **Elegance** and **Classic** models, Mercedes-Benz offers three individual specifications whose emphasis is on either comfort or sporting performance. All model variants share the latest, state-of-the-art technology that includes the newly developed **Agility Control** package with situation-responsive shock absorber control, the **Intelligent Light System** with five different lighting functions and the **Pre-Safe®** preventive occupant protection system. There is a choice of four and six-cylinder engines with up to 13 percent more power than the preceding model, accompanied by six percent lower fuel consumption.



The new saloon is 55 millimetres longer (4581 millimetres) than its predecessor. The body width has increased by 42 mm to 1770 millimetres, and the wheelbase by 45 mm to 2760 millimetres. These dimensions create the conditions for a generously sized interior, and therefore more comfort with front shoulder room increased by 40 millimetres, for example.

For the first time in a Mercedes saloon, the radiator grille is used as a distinguishing feature to position the model variants more clearly. Three extended, horizontal louvres and a big centrally positioned Mercedes star characterise the **Avantgarde** as a traditional sporting Mercedes design. This look, together with the revised, more performance-oriented, interior can be enhanced even further with the AMG sports package, which includes front and rear aprons plus side skirts.

In the **Elegance**, Mercedes-Benz employs a three-dimensional, louvred radiator grille with a high-gloss paint finish to accentuate its other brand-typical attributes such as comfort and luxury. The **Classic** model in the new C-Class is more restrained and traditional, but offers the same technical innovations as the other two model variants.

All the models offer the same driving experience so it's up to individual tastes and budgets as to which model buyers go for.



**Agility Control** is the term used by Mercedes-Benz for all new and further developments that improve both comfort and agility in equal measure. When driving normally with low shock absorber impulses, the damping forces are automatically reduced for a noticeable improvement in ride comfort - but without any compromise in handling safety. When driving more dynamically, the maximum damping forces are set and the car is effectively stabilised. The **Agility Control** steering of the new C-Class has a 14.5 ratio and is therefore six percent more direct than the steering of the preceding model.

Mercedes-Benz has also developed the **Advanced Agility** package with a more sporty driving characteristic, which will become available as an option from autumn 2007. This offers the driver a choice of two gearshift programmes: Sport and Comfort. Within these programmes the shock absorber for each wheel has infinitely variable electronic control. A newly developed speed-sensitive steering with a more direct ratio, variable centring and adaptation of the accelerator characteristics and automatic transmission shift points is also included in the package.



On the engine front there's a choice of uprated four- and six-cylinder petrol and diesel versions. Top of the range is the 272 Hp 3498 cc C 350 V6 that will propel the new car to 100 km/h (62 mph) in just 6.4 secs and on to a limited 250 km/h maximum. The oil-burning equivalent, the C320 CDi, has an identical top speed (0-100 km/h in 7.7 secs) but has to make do with only a six-speed automatic transmission as standard - the C350 has **7G-Tronic**, the world's only seven-speed automatic transmission, as standard equipment. This is an option on other six-cylinder cars in the range.

Inside the latest C-Class, Mercedes has utilised a dash comprising silver-coloured bezels, black dial faces, white markings and glowing orange needles combining form with function for easy legibility. The central colour display is part of the new control and display concept which the new C-Class has adopted from the luxury-class Mercedes models. Its major advantage is rapid access to frequently used functions.

The Audio 20, Audio 50 APS and COMAND APS systems are a range of newly developed, optional infotainment units for C-Class passengers. They all feature a keypad for entering telephone numbers and radio frequencies, as well as a Bluetooth interface which wirelessly connects the mobile phone to the hands-free system. In the Audio 50 APS, the route guidance information - some of it as a visually attractive automatic junction zoom display - is shown by means of arrows on the fixed colour display (4.9-inch) in the dashboard. An integral 6-CD changer and the LINGUATRONIC voice control system are available on request.



The multimedia system COMAND APS offers even more functions than before in the new C-Class. One new feature is a Europe-wide navigation system whose data are stored on a hard disc (30 gigabytes). The high-resolution maps are shown on a colour display (7-inch) which pivots away and disappears beneath a cover at the touch of a button. Other functions of COMAND APS include a music server with a four-gigabyte memory, a DVD-player for video and audio, and the LINGUATRONIC voice control system, which Mercedes-Benz has likewise improved further: the driver no longer needs to spell out the names of countries, towns or roads, but is able to speak them as whole words.

In Germany the gross entry-level price for the new C-Class is still below 30,000 euros, which means that, adjusted for inflation, the price level of the new C-Class is the same as for its predecessor, over two million units of which have been sold around the world since its market launch in 2000.

Expect more variations to be launched in 2007, and the new cars will be coming to European dealers at the end of March.

*Text: Classic Driver*  
*Photos: DaimlerChrysler*

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