

CLASSIC DRIVER

The New Mercedes-Benz CLC



Following the introduction of the new C-Class saloon and estate last year, the Stuttgart manufacturer has announced a three-door hatchback to replace the old Sports Coupé, a model considered to be “one of the most successful models in the Mercedes strategic product initiative”.

What Mercedes means by this is that the small car in the ‘super Golf’ class (that includes the A3 and BMW 1-Series) is likely to appeal to a more youthful market that can then be converted to long-term Mercedes ownership. The company proudly states that “over 40 per cent of buyers opted for a larger Mercedes model after the Sports Coupé and are currently driving an E-Class, CLK or an SLK”.

While retaining the old car’s running platform, roof, rear wings and doors, the CLC nonetheless features 1100 component changes, including a new ‘direct-steer system’ of speed-sensitive power steering, with a variable rack ratio which changes as a function of the steering angle.

There’s also a state-of-the-art 'infotainment' system featuring a colour display, Europe-wide DVD or hard-disc navigation and media interface, as well as an uprated four-cylinder engine that now develops 181bhp.



The full engine line-up is four four-cylinder and two six-cylinder engines with power outputs ranging from 120bhp to 268bhp. Fuel consumption has been reduced by up to 10.8 per cent compared with the outgoing model.

A six-speed manual transmission is standard while Mercedes-Benz can also supply a five-speed automatic for the four-cylinder units, and the 7G-TRONIC seven-speed automatic for the V6s.

Visually, the revised car has the front grille and bumper treatment from the latest C-Class (with overtones of CL), while at the rear a redesigned large tailgate, new tail-lights, a long row of LEDs which make up the third brake light unit, and a new rear bumper give the car a different stance from the outgoing model.



As always, an extensive options list offers extras such as 18-inch light-alloy wheels, wider tyres, headlamps with black inner surrounds, sports and lowered suspension, leather sports steering wheel and dark, brushed aluminium trim.

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