New AMG Roadsters

Mercedes has released further details of the SL 63 AMG, with its outstandingly powerful new V8 engine, which will be launched in left-hand drive markets in April. The SL 65 AMG – powered by the more familiar 604bhp V12 biturbo – will be launched alongside it, while right-hand drive versions of both models should be available later in the year.

The SL 63 AMG, with its 518bhp 6.3-litre, will be the most powerful naturally aspirated V8 on the market – not to mention its 630Nm of torque. Even more interesting, however, is the gearbox. The SL 63 AMG will be the first model to adopt the all-new AMG SPEEDSHIFT MCT 7-speed sports transmission.

Mercedes has released a wealth of technical detail about this new transmission, together with the strangely expressed claim that it will guarantee an 'extremely emotional' driving experience. This presumably relates to the almost instantaneous response to throttle pedal movements – giving the direct and agile feedback of a manual gearbox, together with the convenience of an automatic.

To summarise the technology, the heart of the new transmission is the wet start-up clutch, which runs in an oil bath and replaces the previous torque converter. It is this direct connection to the powertrain which gives that sporty response: that, together with the seven speeds, four drive modes, plus a double-declutching and Race Start function. (MCT, by the way, stands for Multi-Clutch Technology.)

The driver can change gears via the selector lever (with its AMG leather/carbonfibre finish) or by steering-wheel shift paddles. The V12 SL 65 AMG, also being launched in April, meanwhile uses the AMG SPEEDSHIFT five-speed automatic transmission.

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Photos: Mercedes-Benz

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