

CLASSIC DRIVER

Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG



Back in the Spring came a startling announcement from Mercedes-Benz: there would be a new gullwing sports car, fully developed ‘in-house’ by Mercedes’ performance brand AMG. The initial design sketches were followed a few weeks later by some close-up shots of the interior.

But we’ve had to wait till now for the first official photographs, along with full technical details of the evocative new supercar which will appear in the metal at Frankfurt.

We already knew about the 563bhp AMG 6.3-litre V8 front-mid-mounted engine, seven-speed dual-clutch transmission and claim of 0-62mph in 3.8 seconds. What leaps out at us now is not so much the full technical rundown (though a top speed electronically limited to 197mph is fairly attention-grabbing) but the photographs – for here is a car which really does seem to fuse past and present remarkably well.



The SLS AMG exhibits elements of 300 SL styling right through its body, reflecting details of that classic design icon in far more than just its gullwing doors – dramatic as they are. As soon as you glimpse the wide radiator grille with the dominating Mercedes-Benz star, you know this car is paying homage to the glorious ‘Gullwing’ – but the manufacturer is quick to point out that its new supercar also ‘reflects the teachings of modern sports car design’. It cites the almost two-metre-long bonnet, the low cabin set far back in the chassis, the long wheelbase, wide track and large wheels (19in front and 20in rear), with the short overhangs of a current supercar.



From the side, it's the 'pronounced shoulder' of the SLS which grabs the eye, reaching from front to rear 'like a taut muscle'. And at the rear, a boot-integrated spoiler extends automatically at a speed of 75mph – imparting both high-speed stability and a striking stylistic touch.



The SLS AMG, the reinterpretation of the legendary 'Gullwing', is scheduled for launch in spring 2010. The European sale price is expected to be 177,310 euros (incl. 19% VAT).





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