

CLASSIC DRIVER

New Mercedes-Benz G-Class: Now with 604bhp V12

Lead

It's time for another facelift for the 33-year-old Mercedes off-roader. In addition to fairly mild cosmetic alterations, largely to the interior, the big news is that – for the first time – the 'G' is being offered with a 6.0-litre twin-turbo AMG V12 engine. And that means 604bhp. In an off-roader.

As well as the record-breakingly powerful (not forgetting 1000Nm of torque) G 65 AMG, there's also a new G 63 AMG version, with a V8 bi-turbo promising 536bhp – but the range-topping V12 AMG won't be available in the UK. However, UK residents might not cry too many tears over that, when they hear that the base price is an eye-watering 264,180 euros, making it the most expensive model in the entire Mercedes portfolio. Apparently, a 'G' with similar performance levels was made by Bodo Buschmann and his team at Brabus, and the reaction of customers was so positive that AMG rolled into action.





These customers – presumably largely from the Middle and Far East – are unlikely to be too disturbed by fuel consumption of around 16.6mpg (and 397g/km of CO₂) for the G 65. In contrast, the G 63 AMG seems almost economical: the twin-turbo V8 manages 20.4mpg, while pumping out 322g/km of CO₂ and costing a mere 137,504 euros.

In addition to the AMG versions, there is also the G500 (not available in the UK), plus the V6 diesel G 350 BlueTEC with 208bhp – and, for a G-Class, a snip at 85,301 euros.





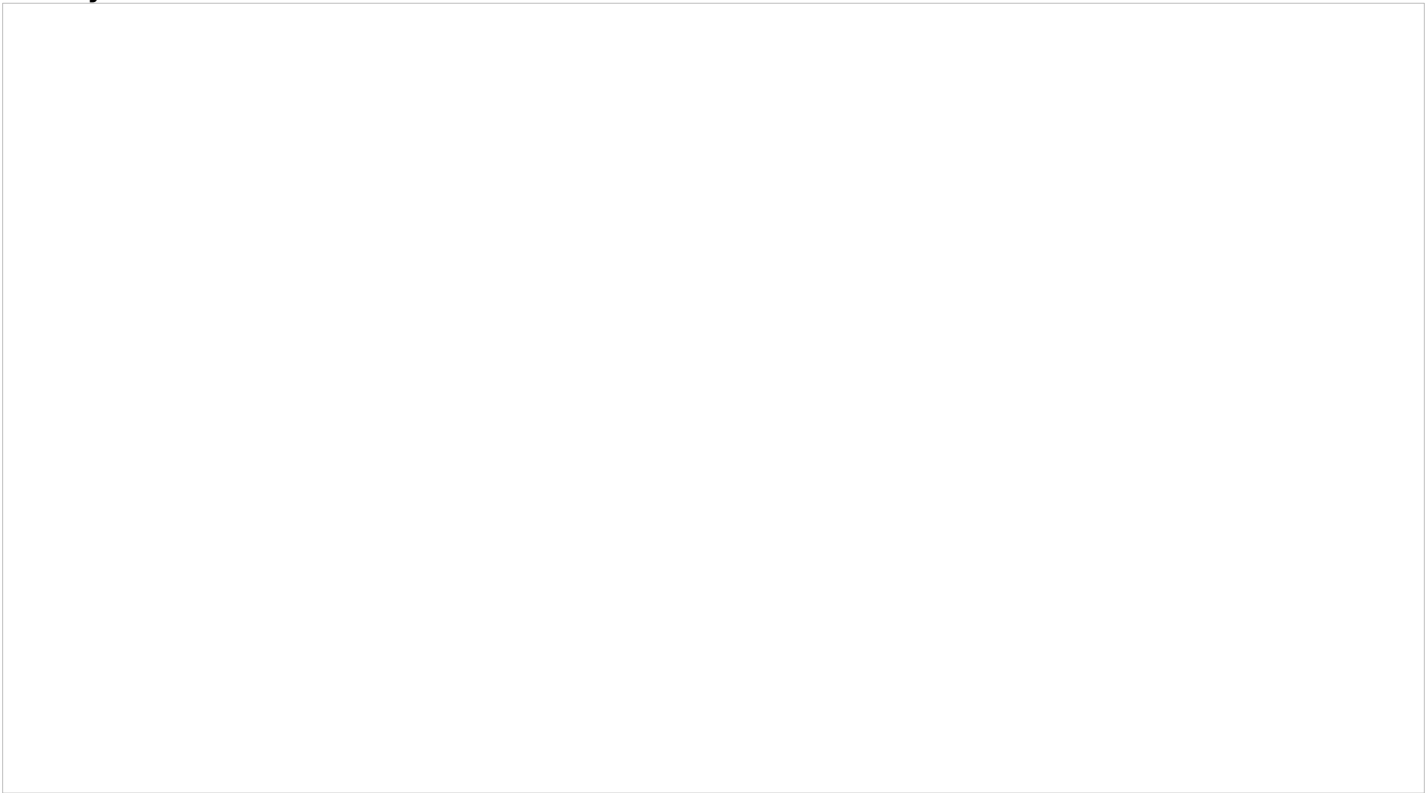
Exterior styling changes for the new G-Class are minimal (new mirrors with integrated turn signals and LED daytime running lights), but the interior boasts a revised dashboard, and a new centre console with a large colour screen. In-car technology includes Internet access and voice control, plus the option of a parking aid system and Blind Spot Assist. What remains unchanged is the off-road, four-wheel-drive technology, with three electrically controlled differential locks, ladder frame and rigid axle characteristics that make it such a formidable proposition in really tough terrain.





Photos: Daimler

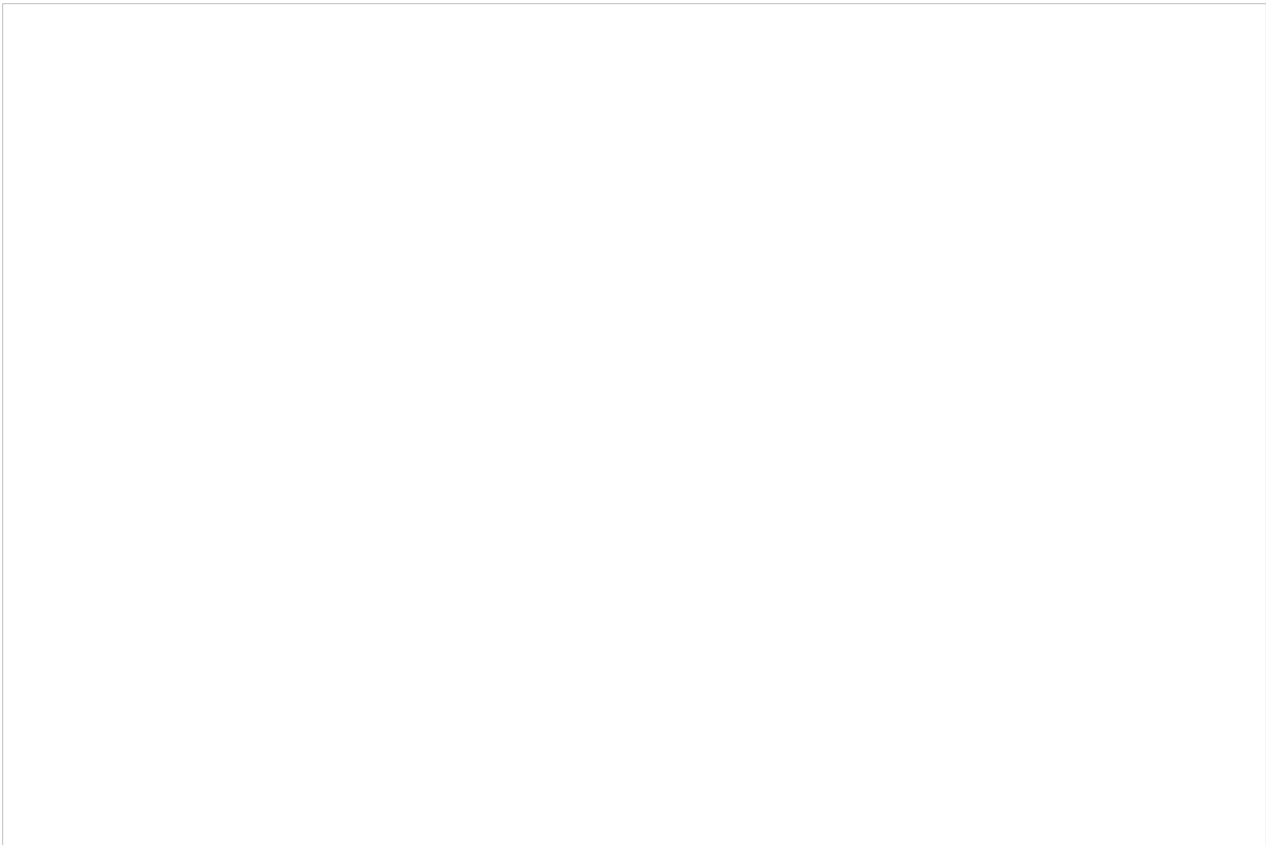
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