

The New Mercedes-Benz A-Class

By Ian Lynas

THE launch of a new model from Mercedes-Benz is always a notable event; the latest is very special in that at last the premium German carmaker has a model in the compact sector which will rival the likes of Audi and BMW. Later this year the original A-Class gives way to a new high tech compact car far removed from the first generation car, one which bristles with technology as I discovered on the press launch in Slovenia.



For the younger set and should I dare say the young at heart, which just about covers everyone, Mercedes-Benz has integrated the Apple iPhone comprehensively in to the new A-Class, including SIRI compatibility.

The Drive Kit Plus, available as an option across all models, will enable drivers to access all the key content from their iPhone through the in-vehicle display, controlled safely via the centre armrest.

The system, accessed via a special Mercedes-Benz app, allows users to send pre-determined messages, select music tracks and access social media, and will be optionally available across all the model lines as a retro fit at retailers.

This very impressive newcomer to the premium compact segment goes on sale in December and I can assure you that it will be worth the wait.

Clearly Mercedes wanted us to get a feel for the new car well ahead of its public on sale date as soon Audi will launch the new A3 and BMW recently launched the new 1 Series.

In our market there will be five model lines priced from £18,945, supported by two design-led packages, aggressive styling and powerful power units ranging from 109bhp to 211bhp, with extremely efficient emissions from just 98g of CO₂/km. Entry to the new A-Class line-up comes courtesy of the A 180 BlueEFFICIENCY petrol available with a six-speed manual transmission including comfort suspension; fabric upholstery; and Audio 20 CD/radio with 5.8 inch colour display; MP3, WMA

and AAC-compatible; aux-in socket; USB port within the centre armrest, Bluetooth and Becker Map Pilot pre-wiring.



The A 180 SE also keenly priced from £20,125, will offer the distinctive two lamella grille in the vehicle body colour; comfort suspension; 16 inch 10-spoke alloy wheels; sports seats in a fabric and ARTICO stripe design; Nappa leather steering wheel; fabric trim parts with stylish contrast stitching; and Audio 20.

Available as both A 180 BlueEFFICIENCY petrol (122bhp) and A 180 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY, with the diesel variant offering 109hp and from 98g CO₂/km. this is the first Mercedes-Benz to emit below 100 g/km CO₂emissions.

We all enjoy the economy of a diesel and this model returns 74.3mpg on the official combined cycle.

The Sport model will be available with a choice of four engine options: A 180 BlueEFFICIENCY petrol (122bhp), A 200 BlueEFFICIENCY petrol (156bhp), A 180 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY diesel (109bhp), and A 200 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY diesel (136bhp).

The A 200 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY reaches 0-62mph in 6.2 seconds and returns 65.7mpg with CO₂ emissions of just 114 g/km when twinned with the 7G-DCT automatic transmission. This transmission is worthy of the extra cost and I certainly would have it on my shopping list.

The SE, the Sport, priced from £21,240, offers twin visible exhaust pipes; 17 inch bi-colour five-twin spoke alloy wheels and the two lamella grille in silver with chrome highlights.

The interior of the Sport has a perforated Nappa leather steering wheel, ARTICO trim parts with contrast stitching, sports seats in a fabric and ARTICO chequered design and Audio 20.

Other goodies include comfort suspension, as well as cruise control with Speedtronic, and comes with rain sensors and interior ambient lighting.

Mercedes-Benz has also introduced two AMG-inspired modes to complete the range: AMG Sport and Engineered by AMG.

The AMG Sport, priced from £23,445, which I consider great value for money, includes the Dynamic Handling Package with sports suspension; perforated disc brakes and cruise control with Speedtronic, as well as AMG body styling; 18 inch AMG five-spoke alloy wheels; AMG floor mats and door sill panels; and the two lamella grille in silver with chrome highlights.

This sporty variant comes in A 200 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY, A 220 CDI

BlueEFFICIENCY, A 200 BlueEFFICIENCY and A 250 BlueEFFICIENCY with up to 211bhp, has a flat-bottomed perforated Nappa leather sports steering wheel, Alcantara trim parts with sporty red stitching, sports seats in ARTICO and Dinamica, rain sensors, ambient lighting and Audio 20, as per the Sport line.

Completing the line-up the Engineered by AMG model, which will be available with the A 250 BlueEFFICIENCY at launch, and the A 220 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY AMG Sport which will be available in the first half of 2013.

The Engineered by AMG model features the Diamond grille with one louver, taken directly from Concept A-CLASS of 2010; AMG sports suspension; red brake callipers; 18 inch AMG twin-spoke alloy wheels, and 235/40 R18 tyres; and changes to the ESP characteristics.

You can further personalise the Sport and AMG Sport model lines with a further two optional packages: Night package and the Exclusive package.

All engines feature ECO start/stop as standard, and in addition to the new six-speed manual transmissions, the 7G-DCT dual clutch automatic transmission is also available across all engines.

Safety is paramount, ESP, Active Bonnet and Adaptive Brake with HOLD function and Hill-Start Assist, radar-based COLLISION PREVENTION ASSIST, which can reduce the risk of nose-to-tail collisions, or minimise their effects, in conjunction with the standard ADAPTIVE BRAKE feature.

Also included as standard is ATTENTION ASSIST: the innovative system developed by Mercedes-Benz to monitor driver behaviour and warn of signs of tiredness.

Summing up, one of the most impressive new cars and one which is affordable, a car with a lot going for it.

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