

## The Return of the Shooting Brake

by Ian Lynas

SHOOTING Brake now there is a name from the past; not any more it is back to adorn a very special Mercedes-Benz, the CLS Shooting Brake.

I have had the opportunity to take the wheel of this newcomer which really does stand out from the crowd with its distinctive styling.



Innovative design and engineering which has characterised Mercedes-Benz cars for more than 125 years and it draws inspiration from the coupe-like estates loved by sportsmen, and especially shooting parties, in the 1950s and 1960s and nowhere more so than in these islands.

This newcomer delivers luxury; comfort and elegance with the efficiency, safety and attention to detail that are hallmarks of this German carmaker.

Some eight years ago the CLS was introduced, a new kind of car which combined the elegance and beauty of a

large coupe with the accessibility and space of a four-door saloon. The Shooting Brake is the latest chapter in the story.

Luxury is what you expect from Mercedes-Benz and even the luggage area is lined with high-quality carpet and is optionally available with aluminium designer loading rails and you can specify a *designo* American Cherry Wood floor with black inlays, similar to the decking of luxury yachts.

There are two individual rear seats with generous space for a full-sized third passenger between them and the rear seats can be folded to increase the luggage capacity from 590 to 1,550 litres. An electric automatically operated Easy-Pack tailgate is standard; just to make life even easier.

Just like the CLS Coupe, the Shooting Brake features an aluminium-intensive construction; the tailgate is made of aluminium, as are the frameless doors, bonnet, front wings, suspension, engines and substantial parts of the support elements.

A slippery shape makes a significant contribution to fuel economy and the economy-enhancing electro-mechanical power steering is fine-tuned to deliver the ideal balance of responsiveness and feedback to match the character of this vehicle.



The Shooting Brake shares its three engines with the Coupe. There are two turbo diesel engines, the 204bhp 2.2-litre four-cylinder and 265bhp three litre V6 and then there is the 557bhp 5.5-litre twin-turbo V8 that powers the CLS 63 AMG Shooting Brake.

My test vehicle was the CLS 250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY AMG Sport with the impressive 7G-TRONIC PLUS seven-speed automatic transmission.

The end result in the performance stakes, 0-62 mph in 7.8 seconds with a top speed of 146 mph.

On economy the combined figure quoted is 52.3 mpg with a CO<sub>2</sub> rating of 143 g/km.

I tried the Shooting Brake over a variety of roads which included some mileage in the Peak District, demanding roads which permitted me to explore the sports-like handling of this vehicle.

Every version is equipped with ADAPTIVE BRAKE with Hill Hold

function, the ATTENTION ASSIST driver drowsiness detector, automatic headlamp beam range control, NECK-PRO anti-whiplash front head restraints and the PRE-SAFE system to prepare the seat-belts, windows and sunroof to give occupants the best chance of emerging from an impending collision unharmed.

With a price tag of £52,370 you do get a lot for your money, this is a superbly equipped vehicle not only in terms of equipment, but luxury and handling.

