

The Mercedes-Benz E350 BlueTEC AMG Sport Saloon

I can find no better way to describe the new Mercedes-Benz E-Class, comfort and performance excellence.

The E-Class has been a firm favourite for many years with Mercedes-Benz customers but with the latest version it moves to an even higher level.



I had on test the E350 BlueTEC AMG Sport powered by a V6 engine with 252bhp, enough performance to whisk you from rest to 62mph in under seven seconds and on to a top speed far beyond the legal limits.

In fact so smooth is the performance delivered by the V6 power unit; you really have to keep a very close eye of the speedo.

My test car was fitted with AirMATIC air suspension and it just soaked up the bumps delivering a smooth and comfy ride for all onboard.

The biggest surprise for me came with economy, official figures state that this saloon can deliver as much as 47mpg. I did most of my driving in urban areas so I suspect the figures I achieved were much lower than that. No doubt given a longish run and the figures stated by the manufacturer could be on.

You will not fail to recognise the newcomer as an E-Class; clever design has delivered a sports saloon with distinctive styling, classic and refined.

Moving to the interior and it is very Mercedes-Benz; using quality materials you really get the feel that you are in command of an executive car.

For regular drivers of this marquee, the controls are placed much in the same fashion, with everything designed to make this a driver's car.

I particularly liked the new three tube instrument cluster and while on this subject the instruments are very clear and thus easy to read.

I must admit that I am not a fan of certain cars which seem to delight in providing a light show of many colours on the instrument panel; simply a distraction.

The design of the centre console has been improved, but still the Mercedes-Benz style and feel has not been lost, evolution rather than revolution.

Always safety has been paramount with this German carmaker and quite rightly so, therefore the new E-Class bristles with safety aids designed to keep driver and passengers safe.

Collision prevention assist with adaptive braking to my mind is a great safety aid, standard on all saloons and estates.

Should you dare feel drowsy behind the wheel then there is a warning system yet another useful safety aid, particularly when you indulge on a long drive alone.

Returning to engines and with the new E-Class comes a wide choice of both petrol and diesel engines, ranging from 136-252bhp, something to suit all tastes. There is

even a hybrid version, the E300 BlueTEC hybrid and Mercedes-Benz quote an economy figure as high as 69mpg. Surely the equal of many small hatchbacks in economy terms.

Now to the cost; the on the road price is £40,900; however with an array of options, the final figure of the model on test - £49,345. The insurance group rating is 44 and CO2 figure 157g/km.

Ian Lynas