

Press Information

- **From 1993 the intermediate car range of Mercedes-Benz is called the E-Class**
- **The 4MATIC arrives – all-wheel-drive culture on a Mercedes-Benz level**
- **A four-seater cabriolet enriches the model line-up**

In November 1984, Mercedes-Benz presented the eagerly awaited new saloon in the intermediate class. The new 124 series was launched with the 200 D, 250 D, 300 D, 200, 230 E, 260 E and 300 E models. In addition, the 200 E was built for export to Italy. This car family would be the first in the history of the Stuttgart brand to be called the E-Class. The successor to the 123 series was still being referred to as the "mid-size Mercedes class". This reflected the era of the strategic model initiative in the Mercedes-Benz product range, which had seen the addition once again of a 190 model (W 201) in 1982. As a forerunner of the C-Class, however, this model was positioned beneath the E-Class in a market segment which Mercedes-Benz designated the compact class.

The W 124 adopted elements of this young, sporty, compact automobile, but set standards all its own for design and

engineering. There were parallels to the compact class, for instance, in the use of high-strength sheet steel and other weight-reducing materials. Despite lightweight design, the Mercedes engineers further improved vehicle safety, with the W 201 and W 126 S-Class serving as benchmarks. The passenger compartment of the 124 series excelled with high side-impact and rollover resistance and was provided with well thought-out deformation zones at front and rear ends. The criterion of the asymmetric frontal impact with 40 percent overlap at 55 km/h was now also met by the intermediate range. In addition, potential contact zones were designed to yield on impact for the protection of pedestrians and cyclists.

Individualist with family styling features

The design of the W 124 showed a certain family likeness to the compact class. But on the whole the new model series presented itself with original independent design elements that served functional purposes. Bruno Sacco, Joseph Gallitzendörfer and Peter Pfeiffer were responsible for the design. The characteristic rear end, for example, which tapered towards the rear and was strongly rounded on the upper edges of the sides, had a particularly beneficial effect on wind resistance and was the product of wind tunnel testing. Such aerodynamic improvements distinctly reduced fuel consumption over the predecessor model. Two other typical design features

are the trapezoidal boot lid, with rear edge pulled right down, and the slanting inside edges of the almost square taillights. This permitted a particularly low load sill for the large boot.

The much lower c_d value on account of body design compared with the predecessor resulted in significant improvements in terms of fuel consumption in particular. From $c_d=0.44$ in the W 123 series, the figure dropped to $c_d=0.29$ to 0.32 , depending on tyres, engine type and size of radiator and corresponding airflow through the engine compartment. In the case of the estate models it dropped from $c_d=0.42$ in the 123 series to $c_d=0.34$ to 0.35 .

One design detail that was initially not very conspicuous, but nonetheless remarkably innovative, was the single-arm eccentric-sweep windscreen wiper. This wiped 86 percent of the windscreen – the largest swept area of any car in the world when the W 124 was introduced. Owing to a lifting motion superimposed on the rotary motion, the upper corners of the windscreen could be wiped much more efficiently than with a conventional single-arm wiper. Electrically heated windscreen washer nozzles were standard equipment on all models in the series.

The days of the distinct differences between powerful six-cylinder models and moderately powered four-cylinder variants

came to an end in 1984. This was shown by the appointments of the W 124: The exteriors of all models in the series were virtually identical. The only differences concerned the silencer at the rear – the six-cylinder models had twin tailpipes, and the front apron, which featured louvre-like air inlet slots in the 300 D and models with air conditioners.

Chassis and engines

The familiar front and rear suspension designs from the C-Class ensured outstanding handling properties. This was a shock absorber strut independent front suspension with anti-dive control, located by individual wishbones, and a multi-link independent rear suspension in which each rear wheel was located by five separate links.

Many of the engines of the 124 series were newly developed by the engineers. For instance, the M 103 six-cylinder injection engines with 2.6 and three litres displacement in models 260 E (125 kW/170 hp) and 300 E (140 kW/190 hp) were completely new designs. All three compression-ignition engines of the 124 series were members of the new diesel engine generation that had been designed as a modular series. The OM 601 of the 200 D model (53 kW/72 hp) ran with the same output in the 190 D of the compact class. New engines in the 124 series were the five-cylinder OM 602 with 2.5-litre displacement in the

250 D model (66 kW/90 hp) and the 3-litre six-cylinder OM 603 in the 300 D model (80 kW/109 hp). The four-cylinder power plants of the Mercedes-Benz 200 (80 kW/109 hp) and 230 E model (100 kW/136 hp) were engines from the preceding 123 series and belonged to the M 102 engine family, from which the engine of the 200 E model also came.

1985: The second station wagon generation

The history of the 124 series is characterised by a previously unattained variety of models, body shapes and innovations. The launch of the S 124 station wagon model in September 1985 at the Frankfurt International Motor Show (IAA) marked an important step. This second generation of sporty lifestyle station wagon from Mercedes-Benz conformed to a large extent to the engineering and styling of the saloons. Apart from a modified design of the rear end, a higher roof and changes resultant from these features, there were no differences to the body. The major components, brakes and suspension were merely adapted to the higher payload, but otherwise taken practically unchanged from the saloons. The station wagons featured a multi-link independent rear suspension, but now combined as standard with hydropneumatic level control and a shock absorber strut independent front suspension.

The engineers also incorporated the safety standards of the

saloons into the station wagon models as far as possible. The latest findings of safety research were applied to the development of the rear body overhang, a particularly critical area where station wagon cars are concerned. One example of this was the fuel tank, which in the station wagon was mounted for structural reasons under the vehicle floor. It was given a special shape with sloping stop faces on the tank upper side and the vehicle floor. This ensured that in a rear-end crash involving deformation of the side members the tank would be pushed downwards and away and be held by check straps so that it would not come in contact with the roadway.

Very many common engines

The close relationship between saloon and station wagon was also evident in the engines. The original station wagon range comprised seven models whose engines were all used in the saloons, with one exception: the engineers developed the 105 kW (143 hp) OM 603 A, the 3-litre six-cylinder turbodiesel of the 300 TD Turbo model, from the saloon's naturally aspirated engine. In a modified form the turbocharged compression-ignition engine was also used in the S-Class export model, the 300 SDL. On the other hand, the 2.6-litre petrol engine and the 3-litre naturally aspirated diesel engine of the saloon were not in the station wagon version's engine line-up at its debut.

As was usual for decades in the intermediate range of Mercedes-Benz, the 124 model series also was available as a partially bodied chassis. These were made into ambulances, hearses or other special body versions by domestic and foreign bodybuilders. One innovation, however, was that for the first time these chassis were based on the station wagons and were manufactured with them in Bremen. Along with the standard-wheelbase versions, available as 250 D and 230 E, additionally there was again a long-wheelbase version offered as the 250 D, 230 E and 260 E models. Ambulance bodies on these chassis originated mainly at Binz in Lorch, Miesen in Bonn and Visser in Leeuwarden, Netherlands. The best-known manufacturers of 124-based hearses were bodybuilders Pollmann in Bremen, Rappold in Wülfrath, Stolle in Hanover and Welsch in Mayen.

1985: 4MATIC is all-wheel drive culture at Mercedes-Benz level

Simultaneously with the station wagon models, Stuttgart introduced the automatically engaged 4MATIC four-wheel drive as part of their "Mercedes-Benz Driving Dynamics Concept". This all-wheel-drive system was available for the six-cylinder models of series 124. Along with the complex control electronics, 4MATIC comprised an additional complete front-wheel drive with transfer case and differential; for space reasons, the latter is integrated into the oil sump in the engine

compartment.

The great technical complexity of this perfected traction system was reflected in the selling price: the 260 E 4MATIC, 300 E 4MATIC, 300 TE 4MATIC, 300 D 4MATIC and 300 TD Turbo 4MATIC, delivery of which began in 1987, cost almost DM 12,000 more than their rear-wheel-drive counterparts. In addition to the automatically engaged 4MATIC four-wheel drive, the "Mercedes-Benz Driving Dynamics Concept" included the automatic locking differential (ASD) and the anti-skid control (ASR). So in this package Mercedes-Benz offered three graduated automatic electronic driving dynamics system, all of which used signals from the anti-lock braking system.

1986: Catalytic converter as standard on all Mercedes cars

As early as September 1985, a closed-loop emission control system with three-way catalytic converter was available as an optional extra on all petrol-engined models of the series except the carburettor-equipped 200 model. Alternatively a so-called catalyst retrofit version was available, in which the vehicle was provided without catalytic converter and oxygen sensor, but with multifunctional mixture preparation and ignition system (MF system). This permitted retrofitting a vehicle with a closed-loop catalytic converter at any time and without any problems. This arrangement gave the customer the greatest possible flexibility in determining the time of conversion. In the 1980s that was a considerable advantage as the supply of unleaded fuel was not yet guaranteed everywhere. The six-cylinder models were delivered in the catalyst retrofit version as standard. Their output was slightly reduced by the change to the MF system. In the 230 E the catalyst retrofit option was initially only available as an extra.

From September 1986 onwards, the carburettor model was also available with emission control system. At that point the closed-loop catalytic converter became standard equipment for all Mercedes-Benz passenger car models with petrol engines. The retrofit vehicles were now only available as an optional extra (with an appropriate reduction in price). This offer was

discontinued in August 1989.

1987: Advent of the coupe

In 1987 Mercedes-Benz extended the model range of the 124 series once again. First, two coupe models made their debut in March at the Geneva Motor Show, rounding off the range as a third body variant. As with the 123 series, in terms of engineering and styling the design was closely related to that of the saloon. However, the floor assembly of the four-door was changed so that the coupe had an 8.5 centimetre shorter wheelbase. This emphasised the sporty character of the two-door and made it a body variant in its own right, both structurally and in terms of styling. Commonalities with the saloon were reduced to the front end and the taillights.

The safety standard achieved in the 124 series saloons was also adopted by the engineers for the coupes. The lack of B-pillars was compensated by reinforced A-pillars, rocker panels and doors, as well as a particularly large proportion of high-strength steel panels. The design engineers trod new paths in designing the end section of the roof: The interior panelling of the roof was extended slightly over the backlight, benefiting the safety and comfort of back seat passengers: in dangerous situations neither the edge of the panel nor the edge of the window were close to the head. And since the roof did not begin

its downward slope until well towards the rear, despite the coupe shape, the passengers in the rear had much more headroom than was customary in a coupe. The overlapping area was visually camouflaged by a dark pattern on the backlight.

Distinctive design highlights

A characteristic design element that documented the independence of the coupe design over other series variants were the rub strips combined with integral side skirts. Between the wheel cut-outs at bumper level they created an optical link between front and rear apron and, like the aprons, were painted in contrasting metallic colours.

Initially the model range comprised the 230 CE and 300 CE. Their engines, a 2.3-litre four-cylinder and a 3-litre six-cylinder with mechanically/electronically controlled petrol injection, were the same as those for the respective saloon models. The mechanical components of the coupes and their four-door counterparts were in any case identical. On the outside, the 230 CE and 300 CE models could only be told apart by the twin tailpipe of the six-cylinder and the model plate.

Further diversification

The International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt/Main in September 1987 saw the arrival of two new saloons, the 300 D Turbo and 300 D Turbo 4MATIC. Both featured the turbodiesel unit that had been presented two years earlier in the corresponding station wagon models. Only the 4MATIC version was completely new and unique, since the 300 D Turbo model with its conventional drive had been a part of the sales range of the American sales company, MBNA, since April 1986. The turbodiesels were outwardly distinguished from the other models of the series by five additional air intake louvres in the front right wing.

Two further models followed at the Paris Motor Show in September 1988. The 200 E with its proven two-litre direct injection engine from the 190 E was now no longer exclusive to

the Italian market as in previous years, and as such was not a genuine premiere in the strict sense. The 250 D Turbo on the other hand had been created by resorting to the modular engine range. Basically it was the equivalent of the 250 D model, but powered by a modified version of the turbocharged 2.5-litre diesel engine already used in the compact class.

1988: Cleaner turbodiesels

The changes made from September 1988 in the turbocharged 2.5-litre diesel engine, and simultaneously in the 3-litre turbodiesel, emphasised the reduction of particulate emissions through improvements to the combustion process. This objective was achieved by using a newly designed prechamber featuring oblique fuel injection, which ensured more efficient combustion. A fortunate side effect of the new diesel technology was a 2.9 kW (4 hp) increase in the output of both engines. In outward appearance, the 250 D Turbo conformed to the sister model with 3-litre engine in having additional air inlets.

In September 1988, all models of the series had their standard equipment extended to include anti-lock braking system ABS and a heated right exterior mirror. Here the windscreen washing system adopted from the S-Class was fitted with a heated washer reservoir and heated nozzles and hoses.

1989: The Diesel '89 initiative

As part of the "Diesel '89" initiative, in February 1989 the non-turbocharged diesel cars were also equipped with revised engines and the new oblique injection prechambers. In the naturally aspirated engines, too, the new diesel technology resulted in an increase in output, 2.2 kW (3 hp) in the 200 D model and 2.9 kW (4 hp) in the 250 D and 300 D models. In addition, the injection pumps of all naturally aspirated diesel engines got an altitude correction unit to minimise emissions in operation at higher altitudes. The improved models, whose particulate emissions declined by 40 percent, met the stringent particulate limits applicable in the USA even without a particulate trap and operated almost entirely smoke-free. Pollutant emissions were reduced still further with the aid of a complex emission control system, in which an oxidising catalytic converter specifically developed for diesel engines was combined with a carefully coordinated exhaust gas recirculation function. This very efficient system was available as an optional extra from October 1990 for diesel cars with naturally aspirated engines, and six months later for the models with turbocharged engines.

1989: Facelift for the intermediate class

In September 1989 at the IAA Frankfurt Motor Show, Mercedes-

Benz showed a completely revised intermediate class model range. The model refinements focused on changes to the styling of the body and the redesign of the interior. The most conspicuous features of the facelifted models were the side rub strips with integral side skirts, which the coupe models had received in similar form two-and-a-half years earlier. At the upper edges of the side skirts, narrow polished stainless steel trim strips were now additionally fitted and continued along the tops of the front and rear aprons. In a discreet form they brought back that often missed touch of sparkling chrome after a long absence. They were complemented by chrome trim elements on the door handles and modified wheel embellishers, in which the Mercedes star and a narrow trim ring on the circumference were also chrome-plated. Another new feature was the exterior mirror housing painted the colour of the car. The interior also presented itself in a new design offering improved front and rear seats and numerous detailed improvements.

For all 124 series models with the exception of the 4MATIC variants, from September onwards the Sportline package familiar from the compact class models was also available as an optional extra. External features were the sports suspension with wide-base tyres size 205/60 R 15 on 7 J x 15 light-alloy or steel rims and a distinctly lower-slung body. The other appointments of the package included stiffer springs and shock

absorbers along with modified interior appointments with a leather-covered steering wheel and gearshift lever, as well as individual front and rear seats.

Four-valves-per-cylinder technology in the 124 series

The revised 124 series also offered five entirely new models. For the saloon, coupe and station wagon there was now a 3-litre six-cylinder engine with four-valve technology and adjustable intake camshaft. The unit came from the 300 SL-24 sports car model. Owing to different installation conditions in the 300 E-24, 300 CE-24 and 300 TE-24, however, it was not possible to use the same catalytic converter cross-section as in the SL. For this reason the rated output of 162 kW (220 hp) was 8.1 kW (11 hp) lower than in the sports car (170 kW/231 hp).

Along with these new top-of-the-range models, in Frankfurt the Stuttgart company introduced a long-wheelbase saloon as fourth body variant of the intermediate class. After a hiatus of four years, a long-wheelbase version was again part of the sales range. The long body was developed in close cooperation with the Binz company in Lorch, which also carried out the work on the bodyshell during series production. The wheelbase grew by 80 centimetres to 3.60 metres, the overall length increasing by the same amount. In contrast to the predecessor models the 250 D long and 260 E long had six doors and a fully-fledged

middle seat bench, whose seat depth and backrest height practically matched those of the rear seat row. Series production of the long-wheelbase saloons began in May 1990.

1990: The 500 E sets standards for the V8

At the Paris Motor Show in October 1990, the 500 E took to the stage, the new top-of-the-range model in the 124 series and also the first E-Class with a V8 engine. Production began in February 1991. From the outside, the 500 E model was at first glance indistinguishable from its sister models. But its "inner values" were all the more impressive: the newcomer had a 240 kW (326 hp) 5-litre V8 engine with four valves per combustion chamber which was based on the proven power plant of the 500 SL and enabled truly breathtaking performance. With the four-speed automatic transmission as standard, the saloon reached the 100 km/h mark in 5.9 seconds from a standing start. Its top speed was automatically governed at 250 km/h. The anti-skid control ASR fitted as standard prevented the drive wheels from spinning even at full throttle.

To improve the vehicle's emission characteristics the volume of the double catalytic converter was increased from 3.9 to 5.8 litres; secondary air injection and exhaust gas recirculation enhanced emission control. The 500 E model marked the first

use of a new variant of the V8 four-valve engine, which differed from the version in the SL by having a different injection system as well as a modified crankcase. Instead of using the mechanical-electronically controlled Bosch KE-Jetronic system, the engine designers relied for the first time on the electronically controlled Bosch LH-Jetronic, featuring air flow measurement. The changes to the engine block were of a more profound nature. It now had the same overall height as its smaller brother with 4.2 litres displacement.

The characteristic features of the 500 E model included discreetly flared wings, fog lamps integrated into the front apron, and 16-inch eight-hole light-alloy wheels with wide-base tyres of size 225/55 ZR 16. Compared with the other models, the body was lowered by 23 millimetres; to compensate for load-induced spring compression the rear axle was fitted with hydropneumatic level control as standard. Production of the exclusive model, which carried a price tag of almost DM 135,000 when it appeared, was handled in close collaboration with Porsche. Bodysheet construction and final assembly were performed at Porsche in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, while the Sindelfingen plant retained responsibility for the paintwork and delivery.

1991: The 124 appears with an open top

In September 1991, as a further body variant of the 124 series Mercedes-Benz presented the 300 CE-24 cabriolet. Production began in 1992. After an interruption of exactly 20 years, a four-seater cabriolet was once again available in the intermediate range. Cabriolet development was based on the coupe. After a great investment of engineering know-how, the two-door was prepared for its role as an open-topped car – merely stiffening the body adequately required the redesign of 1000 parts. Each cabriolet needed a total of more than 130 kilograms of additional sheet metal to structurally compensate for the 28 lost kilograms of the coupe roof. Body vibrations, a system-related weak point of open cars, were eliminated by four vibration absorbers fitted in the left shock absorber strut, the roof frame and the side boot recesses.

To make up for the lack of side roof frame, in the area prone to buckling the A-pillars were welded together with metal sections inside the pillars to form a sturdy unit. The combination of this A-pillar with an automatic rollover bar produced a fully-fledged safety system. Specifically for the 300 CE-24 cabriolet, a linear bar arranged behind the rear seats was developed that extended almost perpendicularly within 0.3 seconds in the event of a rollover. Simultaneously it served the rear-seat passengers as a head restraint. For this purpose the rollover protection could also be extended and retracted manually.

The fully retractable top impressed with an abundance of well-thought-out technical details. Retracted, the high-precision structure, which weighed 43 kilograms and had 27 linkage parts and 34 joints, occupied a mere 80 litres of space, so that the car still had a generously sized boot. The large heated rear window made of safety glass was screwed flush with the outer skin by a double frame, affording undistorted rear vision. To improve the convenience of operation, as an optional extra there was an electrohydraulic actuation system for the top. Ten valves and twelve electric limit switches controlled the perfect sequence of three swivelling movements, as well as the correct engagement of the different locking mechanisms, and monitored the closed condition when the car was on the move.

1992: Two million 124 series vehicles

In June 1992 the 2,000,000th vehicle of the 124 series rolled off the assembly line. Just a few weeks later the intermediate class again got a major facelift. This time Mercedes-Benz concentrated on the engine and appointments. The petrol-powered models were presented with a thoroughly revised engine range, completely converted to four-valve-per-cylinder technology and – in the case of the 2.2-litre unit – fitted with two overhead cams with adjustable intake camshaft. The four-cylinder units, featuring 2 and 2.2-litre displacements in the 200 E (100 kW/136 hp) and 220 E (110 kW/150 hp) models

respectively, were from the new M 111 series. The new engines were distinguished by increased output and higher torque over the entire engine speed range; at the same time, fuel consumption was down. Thanks to an increase in the volume of the catalytic converter, pollutant emissions were also reduced.

As successors to the two-valve-per-cylinder six-cylinder unit and the 3-litre four-valve unit, four-valve-per-cylinder engines with displacements of 2.8 and 3.2 litres now powered the 280 E (145 kW/197 hp) and 320 E (162 kW/220 hp) models. These engines, like the old 3-litre four-valve unit, belonged to the M 104 series, but had a changed bore-to-stroke ratio. All four- and six-cylinders now had the same bore. The new 2.8-litre engine surpassed the proven two-valve-per-cylinder engines of the M 103 model family in power and torque without consuming more fuel. In the 3.2-litre variant, which was already providing good service in the S-Class, the rated output was the same as that of the old 3-litre four-valve unit, but it was reached at an earlier point. Despite the obvious advantages of the new power plant, the 3-litre engine remained in the range for the time being to power the 4MATIC models and the cabriolet.

Apart from the new petrol engine range, the model refinements included distinctly upgraded standard appointments for all models of the intermediate class. Airbag, central locking and

electrically adjustable exterior mirrors on both sides were part of the standard specifications from October 1992 on. In addition, the four-cylinder models were equipped with a five-speed transmission at no extra charge.

Mercedes-Benz 400 E now also in Europe

Concurrently with the facelifted models of the intermediate class, the new 400 E model appeared on the European market. This variant of the W 124 had already been in production since September 1991 for export to the USA and Japan. As the new top model among the volume cars, it featured the 4.2-litre V8 engine with four-valve-per-cylinder technology, familiar from the S-Class, and generated 205 kW (279 hp). Performance did not quite reach the level of the 500 E, but was still highly impressive: With the four-speed automatic transmission as standard, the 400 E took 6.8 seconds to reach 100 km/h from a standing start. Again, the top speed was electronically governed at 250 km/h. On the outside, only the model plate distinguished the 400 E from its class brothers. Under the sheet metal, on the other hand, it diverged in a number of ways. For example, the bodyshell structure had been modified to accommodate the large engine. Parts of the suspension were borrowed from the SL models. Finally, the exhaust system corresponded to that of the 500 E model.

1993: Four-valve-per-cylinder diesel

As a world first, the four-valve-per-cylinder technology also found its way into the diesel models in 1993. The new technology guaranteed not only enhanced torque and power

over a substantially larger engine speed range, but even cut full-load fuel consumption by as much as eight percent. On top of that the optimised combustion process slashed particulate emissions in the exhaust gas by around 30 percent. Mercedes-Benz only changed the five- and six-cylinder naturally aspirated engines to the four-valve system, the 2-litre four-cylinder and the two turbocharged engines retained the two-valve-per-cylinder configuration. Fresh-air intake in the four-valve diesel models was achieved by means of five louvres on the right front wing, as was already the case in the turbocharged variants. To further improve environmental compatibility, from June 1993 all diesel models of the 124 series were fitted as standard with exhaust gas recirculation and oxidising catalytic converter.

As part of the model refinements, some finer points of the 2.8-litre six-cylinder engine of the 280 E model were once again modified. But this time it was not mainly a question of new technology. Instead the rated output was reduced by three kW (4.1 hp) to 142 kW (193 hp) to give the model a better third-party insurance classification in Germany.

Updated styling

From June 1993 the Mercedes-Benz designers revised the bodies of all 124 series models, updating them stylistically and adapting them to the other model series. The most striking

feature of the modified vehicles was the radiator grille, which was redesigned after the S-Class. This so-called integrated radiator featured a much narrower chrome surround compared with the previous design, and the Mercedes star sat on the bonnet as in the S-Class saloons. The light units were also modified to include colourless glass covers on the front direction indicators and bi-chromatic covers on the taillights.

Changes also were made to the shape of the boot lid, to the wheels and to the bumpers. Among other things, the steel disc wheels were given new hub caps in a six-hole design, and the protective mouldings on the bumpers were painted the colour of other detachable parts. In addition, the protective strip on the rear bumper was extended to the wheel cut-outs.

From the intermediate class to the E-Class

To coincide with the sales launch of the redesigned models, a new nomenclature came into effect for the 124 series in June 1993. In analogy to the S-Class and the new C-Class, the intermediate class was now called the E-Class. The model designations also followed a modified system, in which letters documented a car's membership of a certain class. The letter(s) were followed by a three-digit number based as previously on engine displacement. The E suffix that formerly was used to

indicate a petrol engine with fuel injection was potentially a source of confusion, but this abbreviation could now be dropped, since there were no longer carburettor engines in the range. Forthwith, Mercedes dispensed with the practice of codifying body variants such as the coupe and station wagon, which were in any case self-evident.

In the case of the diesel-engined models, a postpositive "Diesel" or "Turbodiesel" replaced the previous letter symbols. Applying the new rules, the 300 D, for example, got the designation "E 300 Diesel". However, the word "DIESEL" on the right of the boot lid could be omitted on request, as could model plates in general. Upon introduction of the new nomenclature, the 400 E model was renamed E 420 to reflect its actual engine displacement. Even before the facelift, in March 1993, the front wheels of the 400 E model had been given the brake system of the Mercedes-Benz 600 SL. In order to create space for this, 8-hole light-alloy wheels were used, dimensions 7Jx16 H2 ET 45, with tyres measuring 215/55 ZR 16.

An aura of even greater sportiness was spread by the new top-of-the-range model E 60 AMG, which the "corporate tuners" offered with the 6-litre V8 M 119 engine. The output of the racer was 280 kW (381 hp) at 5,600 rpm. Coupe and cabriolet were also uprated by AMG: E 36 AMG models developing 200 kW (272 hp) at 5,750 rpm likewise came on the market in 1993.

These had a 3.6-litre engine, which was based on the 3.2-litre M 104 unit.

Taking leave of the first E-Class

In June 1995, two years after the last extensive facelift, Mercedes-Benz introduced the E-Class saloons of the 210 series, the successor to the 124 series. Production of the 124 series saloons ended a short time later, between June and August 1995 depending on model. The station wagon continued to be built until 1996. Until 1996 Mercedes-Benz also manufactured the E 250 Diesel and E 220 in ckd kits and sent them to Pune, India, for assembly. The convertible – since its facelift the range comprised the E 200 cabriolet, E 220 cabriolet, E 320 cabriolet and E 36 AMG cabriolet – even continued rolling off the assembly line until 1997

All in all, in a production period lasting over eleven years, 2,213,167 saloons, 340,503 station wagons, 141,498 coupes, 33,952 cabriolets, 2,342 long-wheelbase saloons and 6,398 partially bodied chassis for special-purpose bodies were manufactured – making a grand total of 2,737,860 vehicles.

124 series in the press

auto motor and sport, Germany, issue 25/1990, wrote of the

Mercedes-Benz 500 E: "As good-natured as a story-hour presenter, as agile as a nimble sports car, and with ride comfort to boot! Yes, that's the most surprising component of the suspension. Despite their firmness, the springs and dampers absorb bumps in such a well-mannered way that even the most discriminating individual could have no cause to grumble."

Looking back, *Auto-Bild*, Germany, issue 18/2006, recalled the launch of the 124 series: "But the new car caused an even bigger adrenalin rush, it had real character. Classic Mercedes at the front, powerful design at the rear."

mot, Germany, No. 10/1995, on the new E-Class of series 210, comparing it with the 124: "Though already a Methuselah among cars with its eleven years, the W 124 still cuts a good figure."

Further information from Daimler is available on the internet at:
www.media.daimler.com

About Daimler

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Services division has a broad offering of financial services, including vehicle financing, leasing, insurance and fleet management.

Daimler sells its products in nearly all the countries of the world and has production facilities on five continents. The company's founders, Gottlieb Daimler and Carl Benz, continued to make automotive history following their invention of the automobile in 1886. As an automotive pioneer, Daimler and its employees willingly accept an obligation to act responsibly towards society and the environment and to shape the future of safe and sustainable mobility with groundbreaking technologies and high-quality products. The current brand portfolio includes the world's most valuable automobile brand, Mercedes-Benz, as well as smart, AMG, Maybach, Freightliner, Sterling, Western Star, Mitsubishi Fuso, Setra, Orion and Thomas Built Buses. The company is listed on the stock exchanges in Frankfurt, New York and Stuttgart (stock exchange abbreviation DAI). In 2007, the Group sold 2.1 million vehicles and employed a workforce of over 270,000 people; revenue totaled €99.4 billion and EBIT amounted to €8.7 billion. Daimler is an automotive Group with a commitment to excellence, and aims to achieve sustainable growth and industry-leading profitability.