

Mercedes-Benz CLS 250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY

Pace, grace, comfort and beauty are the perfect words to describe this German machine.

After a 200 mile journey I felt as fresh when I got out of the Mercedes-Benz CLS as I had when I'd started the trip. The car is great at soaking up the UK's pothole ridden A and B roads and it has bags of smooth, seamless grunt for straight stretch sprints, thanks to its powerful 2143cc twin-turbo diesel engine.

With a 0-62 mph time of 7.5 seconds and a top speed of 150mph, the 250 CDI has a split personality: it's stimulating, yet, at the same time, relaxing to drive. The seats are ultra supportive and the car is so quiet it's easy to forget that an oil-burner lurks under the bonnet. A sleek shifting G-Tronic Plus 7-speed auto 'box with steering column gear selector and gearshift paddles, along with Speedtronic cruise control, makes motorway commuting a breeze. The only niggle I found was getting used to the Mercedes' control layout. I kept turning the indicators

on when I wanted the windscreen wipers to work!

You get as much of a thrill seeing the CLS parked up as you do driving it. What immediately strikes the eye is the front design, which is reminiscent of the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG. Visually, the radiator grille is not integrated into the bonnet but is formed separately. This highlights the long, sporty bonnet even further. The large, elongated, dark air inlets with black grilles also add to the vehicle's look. Another distinguishing feature comes in the form of the full LED headlamps. Inside they are divided into three arrow-shaped layers from top to bottom. A total of 71 LEDs not only provide a 'string of pearls' appearance, but they also give you a really clear view of the road at night.

The CLS's outline, with its pleasingly long proportions, is the main attribute of the model's appearance. A distinctive and brawny shoulder line above the rear axle highlights the athletic character of the latest CLS. The flared wheel arches resemble the powerful thighs of a feline predator waiting to attack. The side view is rounded off with wide tail lights, again featuring LED technology, which are arranged in the form of a linking element to the rear of the vehicle.

Back inside, the Mercedes-Benz CLS 250 CDI is distinguished by an enduring design that combines straightforward sophistication with modern details and handcrafted perfection. An attention-grabbing feature is the wrap-around effect of the cockpit: a high line sweeps

from the driver's door over the instrument panel support and across to the front passenger door. The central display has also been nicely integrated into the upper part of the instrument panel. At the same time, the downward sweeping side line on the doors continues the energetic dropping line of the exterior.

The model also lives up to its role as a design icon thanks to the nature of the materials used in the cabin. These consist of a mixture of satin and high-gloss finishes used on the metal surfaces. Highlights include matt galvanised air vents, for example, which form the ideal frame for a high-gloss-trimmed analogue clock - it's a lovely, classy touch. Handcrafted perfection is reflected in details such as the stitched leather seat covers,

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dashboard covering and wood trim. The particularly fine leather has an especially warm and soft feel to it.

Looks, speed and luxury fittings aside, the Mercedes-Benz CLS 250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY is pretty practical, too. There is enough room to seat four adults and the large boot with remote release is convenient and easy to access. The German motor will also do

54.3mpg on the combined cycle, and, with CO2 emissions of just 135g/km, the car will be cost-effective to run.

So, in my opinion, if you want a stylish, fast, comfortable and safe car that also tells the world you've not done badly in business, then the CLS could well be the one for you.





Mercedes-Benz

Fast Facts

Max speed: 150 mph
0-62 mph: 7.5 secs
Combined mpg: 54.3
Engine: 2143 cc 4 cylinder twin-turbo diesel
Max. power (bhp): 201 at 4200 rpm
Max. torque (lb/ft): 369 at 1600-1800 rpm
CO2: 135 g/km



Price:
£46,360
on the road



REACH OUT TO THE MEDIA ONLINE

Written by Chris Batten

There are plenty of journalists who are active on blogs and social media sites who like to be updated with news and information from your sector. Chris Batten, Director of Global Sales and Marketing of social network ipatter.com, shares his tips for making the most of engaging with the press online:

Don't become white noise. The downside to the online revolution, particularly when making contact with the media, is that everyone has a story to tell. You can only imagine how many e-mails, bulletins and other electronic messages journalists and editors are getting, and a lot of the time e-mails from unknown sources are looked upon as spam.

Firstly, understand that bombarding the media with indiscriminate PR materials and messages is not a strategy, and, if it is, it's certainly not a good one. Try to plan your communications into a tailored strategy. Using a PR agency or a communications professional will ensure that you develop a bespoke communications strategy, but if you can't commit budget to full-time communications support, then follow these pointers to help you get noticed:

The rules. As with many things in business, the Web has changed the rules. The Internet has changed the way in which people research and buy products and services. You need to be playing to the strengths of the Web. So, here are the new rules for establishing media relations:

Be selective: Only send news to the people who want to read things related to the subject.

Be targeted: Don't get the reputation of sending unsolicited mail which is of no interest to the recipient.

Do your research: Identify those who are interested in the subject, even if they don't know you. Make sure they can find your material via sites such as Google, Digg and Technorati.

Put pen to paper: Write a regular blog. Reporters who cover your space will find you.

Get connected: Add other bloggers to your network. Pitch to them the benefits of including your material. This will get you noticed. The more important the blog the better.

Be newsworthy: Distribute news releases on a regular basis. Create the maximum activity you can, all the time.

Be a feeder: Make sure you have RSS. Many journalists will use RSS feeds.

Be helpful: Don't pitch what your product or service does, pitch what problem it solves for your target customers.

Contribute: Find out if the journalists of your choice have a blog and contribute to it. It is also worthwhile establishing relationships with other bloggers well known in the area in which you operate. The more well known they are the better. These will have great distribution. If you are able to contribute to their content it will assist you in getting noticed by those in the media interested in your sector.