



## Mercedes-Benz E 300 BlueTEC Hybrid Estate

*The Mercedes-Benz E 300 BlueTEC HYBRID, available as a Saloon and Estate, impresses with new record values when it comes to efficiency.*

**I**t boasts exemplary consumption levels as well as inspiring performance. Combined with an electric motor, the E 300 BlueTEC HYBRID is the most economical luxury-class vehicle in the world.

The hybrid is part of Mercedes-Benz's clever downsizing strategy which aims to make conventional models perform significantly more resourcefully than ever before – without compromising when it comes to driveability or comfort.

Looks-wise, the new-generation E-Class displays a new front-end design as well as fresh proportions. The result is a superior and refined, sporty appearance. The nose has been completely changed with new headlamps, which comprise all functional elements within a single headlamp lens. Flowing light elements within the headlamps help to ensure that the 'four-eyed' look, which is typical of the E-Class, has been graphically retained. The headlamps are fitted with partial LED lights as standard, while full LED technology is available for the first time in this class as an option.

A new feature line and a repositioned three-dimensional trim strip give both the Saloon and Estate models inventive, aesthetically exciting proportions. This line runs from the rear door through to the tail light. Visually, this benefits the vehicle in terms of length. It underscores the side trim, which has been shifted downwards. Overall the E-Class looks more elongated and elegant, yet at the same time both vibrant and composed.

At the rear, the lights and bumper have been altered too. The up-to-the-minute horizontally structured LED tail lights with new two-tone look emphasise the width and feature a distinguishing night design. The rear bumper has a characteristic lip and a black insert with chrome badge.

Inside, the E-Class has been subtly reworked and harmonised with the expressive exterior. High-quality materials and sophisticated, subdivided areas with precise joints and sharp curves underscore the overall impression of the generous interior. A highlight is the two-part trim which stretches across the entire dashboard; it can be selected in a

wood or aluminium look, irrespective of the equipment line. Also new are the three-tube instrument cluster, the trapezoid-shaped, high-gloss framed display in the head unit with flat-frame look, the design of the air vents as well as an analogue clock between the two central air vent outlets.

In addition, the agreeable cabin is characterised by a refashioned centre console without a selector lever, as well as a new multifunction steering wheel with Direct Select lever and shift paddles in conjunction with automatic transmission.



As standard, both Saloon and Estate models are fitted with Collision Prevention Assist, a radar-based collision warning system with adaptive brake assist systems. It helps to radically reduce the risk of a rear-end crash. Also forming part of the standard equipment list is Attention Assist, which is able to warn of inattentiveness and sleepiness. It also tells you about the amount of driving time that has elapsed since your last break.

The Mercedes-Benz E 300 BlueTEC HYBRID Estate, under examination here, brings together a forceful, yet highly cost-effective, 2,143cc, four-cylinder diesel lump that delivers 201bhp and globs of torque – 368 lb/ft to be exact. The result is 0–62 mph in 7.8 seconds and a top speed of 144 mph.

As well as all that poke, you get up to 62.8mpg on a typical urban/rural trip. The tank just seems to take a mouthful of fuel now and again. Come to think of it, when you first drive off it doesn't even need a swig at all. This is because the E 300's engine works in accord with an electric motor and a battery pack. With its hybrid system, the car runs on stockpiled electric power for short-distance city driving. In this mode it can be as quiet as a mouse – and pollution-free. Then, when you've had enough, the sturdy turbo diesel will get going and give you fluid forward motion for many miles. The electric motor will also unite with the oil-burner to give further driving force when necessary – and the battery pack will revitalize as you drive.

Price: £41,435 on the road

*Tim Barnes-Clay*