

CLASSIC DRIVER

[This Lapis Blue Mercedes-Benz C43 AMG is a stone-cold sleeper](#)

Lead

As the first post-merger model from Mercedes-Benz and AMG, the C43 is becoming increasingly intriguing to collectors. That makes examples like this special-order 1999 model in Lapis Blue practically irresistible.



We love a sleeper as much as the next enthusiast here at Classic Driver, but recently [Mercedes-Benz's](#) AMG models have ditched the unassuming bodywork of their early-2000s models in favour of aggressive wide bodies, bonnet bulges, duck tails, and all sorts of addenda that lets everyone in eyesight know you're driving a true German muscle car. However, in the early post-merger days of Mercedes and AMG, cars like the W202-generation C43 remained true to the sleeper formula, with the only real giveaways of its increased brawn being AMG wheels and a pair of oval exhausts.





Despite the wallflower appearance, the C43 packs a punch, thanks to its bulletproof 24-valve 4.3-litre V8 pushing out 302 horsepower via a 5-speed automatic. While by no means a drag strip demon, the C43's quoted 0-60 mph time of 5.9 seconds and 155 mph top speed make it a brisk saloon by modern standards, and certainly far swifter than the 'Sport' bodykit — shared with lesser C-Class models — would suggest.



Perhaps it was this unassuming exterior that kept sales numbers low, because between 1997 and 2000 under 4,000 of these V8 Q cars left Affalterbach, making them one of AMG's rarest models of the post-millennium. This example, however, takes things even further, being one of very few optioned from factory in special-order non-metallic Lapis Blue, which pairs perfectly with its 17" Monoblock AMG wheels.



This example is heading to [Gooding & Company's Amelia Island Auction on March 6th](#), where it's expected to fetch between 60,000 and 80,000 dollars, marking a sharp spike in value from recent years especially when taking the mileage of 111,776 km into account. We'll be fascinated to see what it achieves when the hammer drops, especially as highly-optioned models as these tend to act as flag-bearers for the rest of the breed. So, for the money would you take this stunning naturally aspirated V8 C43, or a new 4-cylinder hybrid C63?

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