

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Mercedes-Benz SL - A new look



**The Stuttgart manufacturer's iconic luxury sports car, the SL, has received cosmetic and mechanical updating to ensure its styling and performance match the other models in the Mercedes range.**

The big change is to the front of the car, where a revised grille, new lights and bonnet give the car a fresher 'face'. At the rear, the designers have integrated a 'diffuser-look' bumper and new trapezoidal exhaust tailpipes. The two small power bulges on the bonnet are a styling cue from the famous 300 SL 'Gullwing' and Roadster from the 1950s, a theme that's also taken up by the enlarged air-exits behind the front wheelarches.

Mechanically, there are two big changes: the introduction of an 'entry level' SL 280 equipped with a 228bhp V6, and the adoption of the Mercedes-Benz 'direct-steer system' that's already seen the light of day in the revised SLK and new CLC. The new V6 joins an updated SL 350 (now 312bhp at 6500rpm), the familiar V8 SL 500 and the silky smooth, range-topping V12 SL 600.



AMG's own 6.3-litre V8 will replace the current supercharged 5.5-litre V8 of the SL 55 AMG, while the SL 65 AMG, with its 6.0-litre V12 biturbo (604bhp), remains the model line's flagship. The engineers at Mercedes have been working hard to reduce emissions and fuel consumption. The SL 350 for example - despite its extra power - can return 28.5mpg, a 1.1mpg improvement on the outgoing version.

Inside the new car there's a redesigned three-spoke leather steering wheel and a completely restyled instrument cluster. As ever, buyers can choose from an extensive options list that includes Mercedes' patented AIRSCARF neck-level heating system, a Harman Kardon 'Logic7' sound system, and the Intelligent Light System. The latter provides five different light functions designed specifically for typical driving situations and weather conditions, including a 'Motorway mode' that's activated in two stages when the speed exceeds 90km/h, increasing the driver's range of vision by up to 60 per cent.



The new cars will be officially launched at next month's Geneva Salon and available to order in European Mercedes-Benz dealerships from April.

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Photos: Mercedes-Benz*

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