

CLASSIC DRIVER

Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG 4Matic S: The 'other Quattro'



For the very first time, big-engined Audi 'RS' models are facing some competition. Thanks to AMG's 4Matic S version of the E63 (not available in all markets), Mercedes can at last compete with its Ingolstadt nemesis not only on a 'level playing field', but up snowy hills and along winding wet roads, too. We've just driven it.

It's taken several generations (this is the fifth) of the E-Class before 4Matic, part-time 4wd assistance was coupled with AMG power. The fact that so many middle-European (or North American, in the snowier states) owners preferred an RS6 to an AMG E55, or E63 frustrated the company's management. Those times are over, with the introduction of the 'E63 AMG 4Matic S'.

Don't be fooled by the 'E63' bit: for reasons of economy and emissions, the AMG-built 6.2-litre V8 is no longer installed under the bonnet. Instead, an equally impressive (585HP, 800Nm torque) 5.5-litre, twin-turbo V8 gives performance of 0-62mph in 3.6 seconds. The AMG 'Speedshift MCT' 7-speed sports transmission, coupled with the car's formidable on-board electronics, ensures that every tiny fraction of power and torque is transmitted to the correct wheel, with minimum loss of traction. Even the most skilled driver could not improve on it.





For the brave, a choice of three modes is available that can - to a certain extent - override the electronic safety net. The steering becomes more direct; the ride harder, the characteristics of engine and transmission changed from 'street' to 'circuit'. And it's on the race track that these more extreme settings are most appropriate - this car has so much performance it's best to let it look after you on the road. There will be times, too, when you will thank the engineers for offering - as an option - 402mm-diameter carbon composite material brake discs. You would not want to spoil the elaborate intakes, ducts and grilles of the E63's front valance, would you?





On the road, at sensible speeds, the sound of the growly V8 barely enters the cabin. To reduce consumption, emissions and sound levels, the car switches the engine off when stationary in traffic. As a result, although we did not achieve the promised 10.5l/km consumption figure, a realistic 14.0l/km is attainable.

And in addition to other S-Class-type luxury features, the E63 comes with full LED headlamps and lane assist. It almost seems to 'see' an accident ahead and take the appropriate avoiding action. For a German-market price of 118,000 euros, it should do. In summary, one could say: "For 12,000 euros less, you can order a 'standard' E63, with two-wheel drive and only 557HP - why buy the 4Matic S?"



True, but the 'S' gives almost SLS-like performance, with greater practicality, at a considerable saving. The choice is yours and, if 4wd is a 'must', AMG E-Class enthusiasts need no longer look wistfully at an Audi RS6.

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You can configure your Mercedes-Benz E 63 AMG 4Matic S at www.mercedes-amg.com

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