

NEW MERCEDES E-CLASS CABRIOLET

The highly appealing and emotionally charged Cabriolet is the latest addition to the successful Mercedes-Benz E-Class line-up. The open-top two-door model, which goes on sale in the first quarter of this year, features a classic fabric soft top, making for a stylistically pure cabriolet feeling. Viewed from the side, the new model is an intriguing proposition – with its clear proportions and a flawless cabriolet silhouette.

In keeping with the motto "four seasons, four personalities", all-year-round suitability was right at the top of the designers' list of priorities. With the new E-Class Cabriolet, the cabriolet season lasts the whole year because, while many cabriolets tend to disappear from the roads of Western Europe in the autumn, the Mercedes-Benz E-Class Cabriolet provides driving pleasure and comfort whether the roof is open or closed. New features include:

- The AIRCAP® automatic draught-stop: always on board and easily controllable at the push of a button, it reduces turbulence substantially for all four seat occupants
- The modified AIRSCARF® neck-level heating system
- The acoustic soft top fitted as standard

The soft top can be opened and closed fully automatically within 20 seconds – even when driving at speeds of up to 40 km/h. The cabriolet roof is stowed in a special compartment behind the rear panel. A retractable cover separates the soft top compartment from the boot area; it must be closed in order to close the soft top. If the roof is to remain closed, the cover can be slid rearwards, in which case the boot capacity is increased by 90 litres to 390 litres. A through-loading feature is included as standard for the new Cabriolet, as is EASY-ENTRY—a manually operated entry and exit aid for the rear passengers.

The powerplants for the new E-Class Cabriolet are equally innovative: the new direct-injection diesel and petrol models combine efficiency with effortlessly superior power delivery. The exemplary, low fuel consumption has not only been achieved because of the new engines, but also with a number of practical measures. These include on-demand activation of the steering and fuel pumps, the use of tyres with low rolling resistance and an alternator control system which takes account of the current driving situation and the vehicle's electrical power requirements, plus the crucial factor of outstanding aerodynamics. The Cabriolet's cd figure of 0.28 is the best in its class, marking a continuation of the E-Class success story in the field of aerodynamics.

An overview of the engines:

- E 220 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY Cabriolet: **125 kW** (170 hp)
- E 250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY Cabriolet: **150 kW** (204 hp)
- E 350 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY Cabriolet: **170 kW** (231 hp)
- E 200 CGI BlueEFFICIENCY Cabriolet: **135 kW** (184 hp)
- E 250 CGI BlueEFFICIENCY Cabriolet: **150 kW** (204 hp)
- E 350 CGI BlueEFFICIENCY Cabriolet: **215 kW** (292 hp)
- E 500 Cabriolet: **285 kW** (388 hp)

Less turbulence, easier to use: AIRCAP® is a world-first

In 1989, Mercedes-Benz introduced a world premiere in the shape of a draught-stop for the SL model series, followed in 2004 by the AIRSCARF® neck-level heating system to further enhance comfort in open-top models. Now comes another world-first: the AIRCAP® automatic draught-stop, which can be activated at the push of a button, greatly reduces turbulence in the interior of the new Mercedes E-Class Cabriolet, creating a **sea of warm air**.

Quiet, warm and windproof: acoustic soft top fitted as standard

Thanks to its acoustic soft top, fitted as standard, even the closed E-Class Cabriolet has one of the quietest interiors in the segment for 4-seater premium cabriolets with a fabric roof. The soft top's exceptionally high-quality insulation brings about a clearly noticeable reduction in the interior noise level compared to conventional fabric soft tops. On the road, the difference is audible from speeds of just 80 km/h, for example when driving through a tunnel. At higher speeds, the benefits of the acoustic soft top are even more tangible. For instance, it is possible to have a perfectly normal phone conversation in hands-free mode even when travelling at a speed of over 200 km/h.

The soft top is of course waterproof and windproof. Plus it can be put through an automatic carwash without any hesitation. With a total thickness of 23.5 mm, the fabric soft top offers excellent thermal insulation, meaning that the E-Class Cabriolet is also ideal for use in winter.

Safety: robust structure, anticipatory protection and windowbags

The new Cabriolet offers the wealth of safety innovations one would expect from a Mercedes model. Highlights of the open-top two-door model include roll-over protection, A-pillars reinforced by two additional tubes and the plug-in B-pillars. This new model is also the first Mercedes cabriolet to feature headbags.

The roll-over protection consists of two robust bars, each with a diameter of 35 mm, which are housed in the rear head restraints in modules behind the rear seat backrests. A tilting cone sensor detects imminent danger to the occupants based on extreme skidding movements or acceleration caused by impact. If this sensor then sends a corresponding signal, pre-tensioned pressure springs are activated by pyrotechnic means, i.e. extremely quickly.

The plug-in B-pillars are extremely robustly connected as they engage in the side skirts, thus offering highly effective protection in the event of a crash. A shoe made from ultra-high-strength steel braces the inside of the B-pillar against the rear seat crossmember.

With seven airbags fitted as standard, belt tensioners and belt force limiters for all seats, not to mention crash-responsive head restraints for the driver and front passenger, the new E-Class Cabriolet offers the most extensive safety equipment package in this vehicle category. The airbags, which can deploy in milliseconds in the event of an accident, include front airbags and sidebags for the driver and front passenger, a kneebag on the driver's side, and headbags.

Further exemplary safety equipment available for the E-Class Cabriolet includes ATTENTION ASSIST drowsiness detection, PRE-SAFE® anticipatory occupant protection, the sophisticated Intelligent Light System, the Active Bonnet and DISTRONIC PLUS proximity control.

An innovative family at the heart of the brand

In March 2009 Mercedes-Benz embarked on the renewal of the E-Class model family - one year later, with the market launch of the Cabriolet, the portfolio will be complete. A **number of technical innovations** have been incorporated into the new E-Class which no other car in this class is able to offer - from drowsiness detection to automatic emergency braking when an accident is recognised as imminent, and from Adaptive Highbeam Assist to the active bonnet. The E-Class is one of the safest vehicles in its segment, a fact which has also been proven by independent crash tests and the specialist press.

"The renewal of the E-Class model family at the heart of the Mercedes brand has come at precisely the right time. The success of the new E-Class shows that even in what are now economically turbulent times, Mercedes brand values such as safety and efficiency, combined with exciting design, enjoy particular significance among discerning customers", explains Dr. Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars.

As such the E-Class is the clear leader in its market segment: in Germany the E-Class Saloon enjoys a market share of around 60 percent in its respective segment, while in Western Europe (excluding Germany) its share is more than 40 percent.

Besides the innovations which all of the models of this family share, the individual variants have a number of new products and features to enhance the comfort, safety and appeal which are specific to this model. With the new AIRCAP® feature, enhanced AIRSCARF® and also the standard acoustic soft top, the new **E-Class Cabriolet** for example provides all-year-round comfort which is unique in the segment of open-top vehicles.

"Never before have we had such an effective presence with our E-Class model series as we have with today's range. Saloon, Estate, Coupé and Cabriolet all share the same winning gene, yet appeal to our customers in a very individual way. This mixture has been extremely well received by our customers. With the new Cabriolet we are complementing our successful E-Class family with yet another particularly emotionally appealing model, in which our customers can continue to enjoy the Cabriolet season even longer thanks to the unique automatic draught-stop", confirms Dr. Joachim Schmidt, Head of Sales and Marketing of Mercedes-Benz Cars.

Auto Sales (Mer) Ltd, local importers for Mercedes-Benz in Malta are eagerly awaiting the arrival of this new model which is foreseen for April/May 2010 – just in time for some wonderful open-top driving!