

Tested: The Mercedes-AMG CLS 53

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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Is the Mercedes-AMG CLS 53 a perfect combination of performance and design? Naresh Maharaj takes it for a test drive and shares his insights.

I had the stunningly beautiful, and dare I say sexy Mercedes-AMG CLS 53 for a week, and enjoyed every minute of it!

Mercedes-AMG has extended its product portfolio with the 53-series models of the CLS, E-Class Coupé and E-Class Cabriolet which combine powerful performance with sporting style and high efficiency.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

At the heart is the new electrified 3.0-litre in-line engine with twin forced induction delivered by the combination of an exhaust-driven turbocharger and an electric auxiliary compressor.

Don't get hit for six

The six-cylinder in-line engine offers top performance and intelligent electrification in a single unit. It produces an output of 320 kW and develops a peak torque of 520 Nm. The EQ Boost starter generator combines a starter and an alternator in one powerful electric motor that sits between the engine and the transmission.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

With its assistance, the electric auxiliary compressor can build up high boost pressure without delay. This means that the torque available for acceleration increases more rapidly until the large exhaust-driven turbocharger kicks in.

The 3.0-litre engine thus reacts extremely promptly and provides a highly dynamic response without turbo lag. An additional bonus is the extremely smooth operation of the six-cylinder in-line engine.

When I tested the various models on track at Kyalami recently, it was like guiding a rocket, especially when we deployed the launch start. The refined car stayed straight in line, despite me 'flooring it'.

Driving dynamics

The EQ Boost starter generator and the intelligent forced induction with an electric auxiliary compressor and exhaust-driven turbocharger all have the same goal: to boost the hallmark AMG performance and driving dynamics, while at the same time reducing fuel consumption and emissions.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

And it does so very successfully: The CLS 53 4MATIC+ accelerates to 100 km/h in 4.5 seconds and with the Driver's Package reaches a top speed of 270 km/h. The E 53 4MATIC+ Coupe and Cabriolet accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h in just 4.4 and 4.5 seconds respectively, and with the Driver's Package reaches a top speed of 270 km/h.

Short shift times, high efficiency

The new 3.0-litre in-line engine is coupled with the AMG SPEEDSHIFT TCT 9G transmission, which impresses with extremely short shift times, fast response to shift paddle commands, double-declutching function and multiple downshifts. Whether automatic or initiated by the driver using the steering wheel shift paddles, upshifts or downshifts are implemented instantly. Especially in the "Sport+" and in manual driving modes, the transmission is very responsive.

One, two, three, four

Also part of the standard specification is the AMG Performance 4MATIC+ all-wheel drive. The fully variable torque split between the front and rear axles ensures optimum traction and high directional stability and safety in all conditions. The switch from rear-wheel to all-wheel drive and back occurs continuously because the intelligent control is incorporated into the overall vehicle systems architecture.

Luxurious interior

The interior of the new AMG models welcomes the passengers with model-specific exclusive appointments, luxurious materials and significantly expanded options. The optional Widescreen Cockpit has a large display with virtual gauges to serve as the instrument cluster in the driver's direct line of vision, as well as a central display above the centre console.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

The fully digital cockpit allows the driver to choose the look from the three different display styles and also configure the information and relevant views at will.

Everything at your finger tips

With the five DYNAMIC SELECT drive modes, I was able to tailor the characteristics of the new 53-series models even more to suit my personal preferences at the press of a button. The available range extends from efficient and comfortable to very sporty.

This modifies key parameters, such as the response of the engine, transmission, suspension and steering. Independently of the DYNAMIC SELECT drive programs, I had the option of pressing the “M” button to switch directly to manual mode, in which gearshifts are executed exclusively using the shift paddles on the steering wheel. The suspension set-ups can also be selected if desired. Now that is amazing.

Exclusive Edition 1 for the CLS 53 4MATIC+

The exclusive Edition 1 is available for the CLS 53 4MATIC+ boasts the COPPER ART interior design. Numerous highlights in a fine copper colour help to ensure a particularly high-quality interior atmosphere. The leather upholstery in black Nappa also features copper-coloured contrasting topstitching, as do the instrument panel, armrests, centre console, door panels and piping on the floor mats.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

Trim elements and the centre console in carbon fibre with COPPER ART copper stitching and the Performance steering wheel with Edition badge equally underscore the vehicle's exceptional position. The luxurious character is furthermore reinforced by the ambient lighting with 64 colours, the Memory and Mirror package and the exclusive IWC analogue clock.

Verdict

So, to answer my question earlier: Yes, it is, most definitely, a perfect combination of performance and design. All of this and more coming together to give you that perfect ride, whichever drive mode you choose. The AMG 53 Series exudes confidence, sportiness, design and luxury all at the same time. Sexiness personified.

Pricing

- AMG CLS 53 4MATIC+: R1,491,600 incl.
- AMG E 53 4MATIC+ Coupé: R1,311,700 incl./Cabriolet: R1,430,600 incl.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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