Mercedes-Benz E-Class 350d AMG Line Estate – Road Test

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Robin Roberts-Miller Bett[illegible]ws [illegible] test drives another luxurious yet practical load-lugger from Mercedes-Benz...

The fashion of buying saloons and hatchbacks is looking distinctly outdated with the clamour for must-have SUVs showing no signs of easing off.

[illegible] hold on to their value over longer periods, and which is being felt further down the buying chain.

What goes around comes around, as Mercedes-Benz knows better than most after 130 years making cars.

It has a long history of building estate cars which primarily filled a role as carryalls for the country-set and sporting types and which are also “fashion statements”. The medium-sized E-Class was the backbone of the company for decades until it too diversified into smaller saloons, executive off-roaders and SUVs, and within the E-Class there were always estate cars.

Today, the MB E-Class remains an intrinsic part of the range with its estate derivatives based on the same running gear as their saloon stablemates.

There are 26 versions in the E-Class range of saloons and estates offering rear or all-wheel drive, with petrol, diesel or electric powertrains and priced from £36,000 to £109,600. That’s a wide range whatever you are looking for.



Our test model is one of the most popular with its huge capacity boot, practical layout and total capacity, its gutsy powertrain and sublime sophistication. Today there are SE or AMG Line trim levels and you can have virtually unlimited choice of very worthwhile but highly expensive options.

The 258 hp turbodiesel engine packs a punch and the 3.0 V6 unit developed a very useful 620 Nm (457 lb.ft) between 1,600 and 2,400 rpm, giving it very strong pull for overtaking or hauling a heavy load along as it will tow a 2,100 kg (4,630 lb) braked trailer. It was all made

so easy by the creamy, composed automatic transmission with its very long-legged nine ratios which helped it comfortably into returning close to the “official” combined fuel economy figure, and that is a rarity on a small car let alone something as big as the near 1,900 kg (4,189 lb) test model.

The smoothness and willingness of the engine and gearbox was matched by effortless progressive power-adjusting steering and reassuring brakes. It rides on air suspension so you seem to glide along and are aware of how well the springs and dampers are coping because you can hear the bumps and potholes being crossed.

Despite being rear wheel drive, our test car stuck onto slippery roads with utter assurance, it responded well to controls and you never felt worried with a near neutral handling feedback. It exuded competence and ability.

Secondary switches were spread about the wheel spokes, fascia and console, requiring familiarity to locate and operate every time but the dominating features were the enormous multi-purpose displays for essential as well as infotainment purposes, which looked impressive and actually worked very well with clarity in all lighting conditions.





Heating and ventilation was really straightforward and effective throughout the cabin, backed up by powered windows, while the oddments spaces were also plentiful in a big family car whether in front or back.

Access was excellent and the loadbed capacity could be immediately increased with buttons close to the fifth door. The floor when extended was fairly flat and it more than doubled total space, and the rear seat split 40:20:40 for convenience.



Vision was uninterrupted despite the curving rear roofline and came with an optional camera on the test car but I would have liked faster wipers in bad weather. Lights were bright and far-sighted yet the Multibeam LED units were again another option at a price.

Acceleration from rest was strong and smooth, through the gears it had good punch for overtaking and it really showed no strain at the legal maximum.

VERDICT

The E-Class 350d AMG Line estate really gobbled up miles in a most satisfying manner and the ability to shove in almost anything behind makes it a very practical executive estate.

In fact it does not feel as if you're driving an estate, just a very satisfying executive car with

a bit more to offer.

For: Powertrain, performance, ride, huge room, sophistication, desirable premium brand.

Against: Accessory prices, high taxes, road noise intrusion.



Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Mercedes-Benz E-Class 350d AMG Line Estate.

Price: £60,824 as tested.

Engine/transmission: 258 hp, 3.0 V6, turbodiesel, nine speed automatic, rear wheel drive.

Performance: 155 mph, 0–62 mph 6.0 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 51.4 mpg.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 151g/km, VED road tax £500 First Year rate then £140 Standard rate + £310 annual supplement for five years as it costs over £40k, BiK company car tax rating 32%.

Insurance Group: 43E.

Warranty: Three years/ unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: Sizes: L 4.94 m (16.21 ft), W 1.86 m (6.10 ft), H 1.48 m (4.86 ft), boot/load space 640–1,820 litres (22.60–64.27 cu.ft), braked towing weight 2,100 kg (4,630 lb).