Mercedes-Benz E220d – Road Test

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Author: Robin Roberts

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UPHOLDING THE APPEAL OF EXECUTIVE SALOONS – THE MERCEDES-BENZ E220d…

If you believe demand for executive saloons can be overtaken by SUVs, the Mercedes-Benz E220d AMG Line Night Edition Premium Plus could prove you wrong, says our road tester Robin Roberts (and Motoring Milestones).

When it comes to good handling, comfort, sophistication and refinement, the classically shaped four-door saloon from the oldest car maker in the world really takes some beating.

As Mercedes-Benz's global long-term best-selling series, the mid-sized E-Class has been a benchmark for rivals, and it's still a byword for the executive market today.

Originating in 1946, over 14 million saloon and estate models have been sold since 1953 before being joined by the coupé and cabriolet body styles and it now represents the tenth generation.

A facelift in 2020 give it a new grille, nose and tail, incorporating the latest high efficiency headlights and high visibility tail-lights and turn indicators. Inside it has streamlined pads for secondary for controls and 12.3-inch essential and secondary instruments' displays.





The E220d features Mercedes-Benz’s all-new four-cylinder 2.0 litre turbo-charged diesel engine, which produces 194 hp and 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) between 1,600 and 2,800 rpm.



A 9G-Tronic automatic gearbox comes as standard. It offers a combined fuel consumption of 53.3 to 47.1 mpg and CO2 levels from 109 g/km depending on trim and options. Our model was rear wheel drive but AWD is available in some versions.

For an extra £2,495 over the Sport, AMG Line adds AMG exterior styling with 19-inch alloy wheels in titanium grey; upper dashboard finished in Artico leather; black ash wood trim; brushed stainless steel AMG sports pedals with black rubber studs; and a three-spoke AMG steering wheel wrapped in Nappa leather.

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Next-generation driver assistance systems include a Lane Tracking Package that includes

Passive Blind Spot Assist and Active Lane Keeping Assist; and the more comprehensive Driving Assistance Plus Package.

The powertrain has been tuned for easy driving rather than neck-snapping sportiness – you'd have to pay a lot more for that with a spinning propeller badge – yet it can easily keep up with everyday traffic and will happily cruise at the legal motorway maximum all day.

What's more surprising to some is that the fuel consumption is very reasonable and most will see over 50 mpg regularly returned.

The strong engine started fairly promptly and pulled well with plenty of gears to utilise as the speed rose and their engagement was creamy and silent. Most of the time the engine was muted, a distant rumble being the norm, but under a heavy foot it became more noticeable. Motorway cruising was composed and quiet.

I liked the delightful assistance, power and feedback through the brake pedal but the offside parking button did need a bit of familiarisation.

The steering felt a little dead in the straight-ahead position but thankfully the feeling improved as it turned.

However, I was caught out a couple of times by the automatic evasive steering assist which has pre-set limits for vehicle proximity and lane keeping.

The quality of the major controls continued with the secondary ones for wipers/wash, lights, and the infotainment system and myriad of settings for creature comforts including 64 colour combinations for the interior lighting. All had a reassuringly firm feel and positivity.

The fascia displays changed with the modes selected to give prominence when needed and it was good to be able to set up what you wanted to see at any particular time.

The climate control was very comprehensive and was backed up by powered windows and

good sized sunroof.

Oddments room was very good for a car of this size even if the boot was not as big as might be expected with so much space given over to five occupants. Access was easy to boot and cabin and the 40:20:40 back seats were well shaped and comfortable while the front pair were heated or cooled and their adjustment range was very good. Leg and headroom were adequate.

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Visibility was excellent with slim roof pillars, low waistline and active parking assist and 360-deg camera system on the test car. Wipers and wash were powerful and effective.

Noise levels were all low except when the engine headed towards maximum revs in the lower gears if held on the paddles, with only a very distant road rumble ever-present but wind noise seemed to pass us by.

The ride quality was selectable to match a driver’s taste over five modes but it always remained comfortable except in the firmest of them, with the 18-inch AMG alloys, and the roadholding was good and handling surefooted, predictable and safe.



VERDICT

The Mercedes-Benz E-Class today continues the trend it set all those years ago, it turns heads and it also brings big smiles to this driver's face. It's a real benchmark for others to aim for, but possibly miss.

For: Refinement, sophistication, economy, comfort, interior space.

Against: Average performance and dynamics, sensitive assistance systems, expensive tax brackets and options.



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

Mercedes-Benz E220d AMG Line Night Edition Premium Plus Saloon.

Price: £47,690.

Mechanical: 194 hp, 4-cylinder, 2.0 turbo-diesel, 9-speed auto.

Performance: 149 mph, 0 – 62 mph 7.3 seconds, Combined mpg on test 50, CO2 142 g/km.

Tax costs: VED First Year rate £220, Standard rate annually for 5-years £490 as it costs over £40k.

Insurance Group: 31E.

Warranty: 3-years/unlimited miles + 30-years anti-rust cover.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.94 m (16.21 ft), W 2.07 m (6.79 ft), H 1.46 m (4.79 ft), boot space: 540 litres (19.07 cu.ft), kerbweight 1,750 kg (3,858 lb), 4-doors/5-seats.