

The Benz CLK Convertible is on its way

You can tell Mercedes-Benz wants to impress the public, with the opening words: "Highquality technology, fascinating styling, and driving fun for four passengers."

(PRWEB) February 9, 2003 -- Benz has finally taken the hacksaw to the roof of the gorgeous CLK coupÃ©, turning into a beautiful convertible. The new CLK convertible continues the successful tradition of open-roof four-seater convertibles, by promising less wind noise, a bigger trunk, and superb aerodynamics. In fact, the CLK convertible cuts through the air with a coefficient of drag of 0.30 - something that most sedans and coupÃ©s are still trying to match. Trunk space has been increased over the predecessor by a full 40 liters to end up with 390 liters of trunk space.

To protect its passengers, Benzs has given the CLK a bit of a fixing up. The body has been stiffened to cope with the loss of a solid roof. Its body is composed mostly of high-strength steel alloy, which helps keep the weight down, as opposed to the regular steel Mercedes-Benz uses. As a result, the car's torsional rigidity has been increased 12% from the previous CLK convertible. The car also receives head and thorax airbags which adapt for the driver and front passenger. All seats on the car receive seatbelt pretensioners, and Benz's pop-up rollover protection has also been fitted. Within a fraction of a second, the sensor-based system will spring up the bars, preventing a injury to the car's passengers.

One thing that Benz has solved is the feeling of a cramped interior - especially for rear-seat passengers. Thanks to the larger body, which is based more around the E-Class, than on the previous version, the car is bigger. In length, the car has grown 71 millimeters, and of that, 25 millimeters went to the wheelbase. The first thing you'll notice is that any spots where you may previously have pressed upon the cockpit, or where it may have been a pinch to fit in, that there's going to be at least a two-finger wide space. Headroom, for when the roof is up, has grown by 23 millimeters, and elbowroom in the rear has grown by 30 millimeters. Most importantly, knee room for those passengers has grown by nearly 44 millimeters. Benz has facilitated easier entry and exit to the cup-like rear seats.

Without any options the CLK is very well equipped. Although you won't need it with the roof down, there's air conditioning, with vents that go to the rear seating places. Benz has equipped the car with standard rain sensors for the windshield, and the wonderful multi-function steering wheel. Distronic, the keyless entry system is optional, allowing the operation of the radio, navigation, and air conditioning system all without the keys. This also includes the Keyless Go system.

Benz has offered a large choice of engines for the CLK Convertible, running from simpleton four-cylinder, to six, to a grand eight cylinder. The highlights of course, are the two big V8 engines. The CLK 500 puts out 306 horsepower, and brings the car to 100 km/h in a mere 6.2 seconds. It's got 27 more horsepower than the CLK 430 it replaces, and it accelerates 1.2 seconds faster. On the other hand, the 500 engine consumes 5% less fuel than the old 430. The other star engine comes from the AMG department. The CLK 55 AMG puts out 367 horsepower, and accelerates to 100 km/h in a scant 5.4 seconds - its predecessor took 6.2 seconds. The CLK is a seriously quick car - even for a convertible.

The CLK convertible will most definitely be a worthy successor to the car it replaces, being not only stronger and faster, but more efficient than the older version. Prices will be steep, but it will be well worth it. The base 200 K starts at 41,644 Euro, while the 320 in 51,244. The top of the line CLK 500 Cabrio will cost \$62,408,



while the supercharged AMG version costs a hefty 83,868. Benz will debut the CLK convertible at the Geneva show.

More information and photos available at <http://www.carbc.com>



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