



The Houston Star

MBCA | Houston Section Newsletter

December
2011

www.mbca.org/houston

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2012 Mercedes-Benz S350 BlueTEC 4MATIC: Powerful Performer

By: Brian Armstead of Automotiverhythms.com

I've been a fan of Mercedes-Benz products for decades. I remember my freshman year in college, when everyone still drove American cars, and my buddy Joe had a mint condition 230 sedan. Yes, it was slow, but it still was a Benz, and I not only felt cool riding around in it, but I also felt incredibly safe, and for good reason, as Mercedes-Benz has long been a leader in safety technology.

Graduation in the early 80s saw diesel powered Benzes at their peak. You could choose from entry level diesel sedans, to a cool coupe, to the top of the line S-Class diesel. In fact, 80 percent of Mercedes-Benz sales during that time were diesel-powered models. But due to increasing diesel fuel prices, and a general dislike of the then smelly, slower accelerating process that was diesel, sales waned, and the last full-sized Benz diesel sold in the United States was the 1995 S350.

Though Mercedes restarted U.S. production of diesel powered cars and SUVs several years ago, model year 2012 represents the return of the big S-Class diesel, and it is an incredibly fun car to drive. Because high torque diesels make their power at low RPM, when you put your foot into the new S-Class, it moves out with startling authority (0-60 mph in seven seconds). And with new technology, very low sound levels accompany this powerful acceleration.

(continued on page 5)

President's Message

Greetings!

The Christmas and Holiday season is upon us, a time for reflection, celebration, and in some cases, deferred car maintenance. With the weather getting somewhat cooler, it's time to inspect your Mercedes-Benz to make sure that its systems are prepared for cool and cold weather. That means checking your coolant level and condition, coolant hoses, heater operation, and glow plugs in the case of diesels. Make no mistake, we don't have brutal winters, but if you want to know what to check out for your particular Mercedes-Benz to make sure that it will cruise through a Southern winter without hiccups, send an e-mail to our Technical Chair, Ali Durvesh at ali.durvesh@gmail.com

November was relatively quiet for the Club. While the Lone Star 500E/E500 Gathering was canceled, the Fall Autocross went on as planned and was well attended. Though we were forecast to start at 1pm, we didn't start driving until around 1:30pm and went on until about 4:30pm. Logistical nightmares aside (parked cars, civilian drivers ignoring barricades), we had a fun and safe time. Mike Haney has composed a writeup about the autocross which is published in this issue of the Houston Star.

Our Annual Holiday Brunch has a new venue this year. Join us on Sunday, December 11th at 11:30am at Little Napoli, located at 6445 Westheimer Rd. Please see page 6 for more info.

We are still planning our events for 2012. You can already look forward to our Technical Session and our New Members Meet and Greet, both in February, and our Bluebonnet Run in the Spring. Other events are in their planning stages, and the Club will keep you posted as those events become finalized.

As noted before, MBCA | Houston is now on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Additionally, we now have a page on Google+. Check us out and add us to your circle!

Finally, as MBCA | Houston goes forth into 2012, we are taking steps to establish ourselves as a car Club that cares about our community. Thus, we have begun to donate to local organizations to benefit worthy causes. Our first donation has been made to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo to benefit scholarships for college bound students. The Houston Section donated \$100 worth of MBCA branded merchandise consisting of a duffel bag, polo shirt, baseball cap, and water bottle to be auctioned off to raise scholarship funds. This is just one of many opportunities to support our community and show Houston that we are "more than a car, we're a community."

Take care, and happy motoring!

Joseph Middleton | President | [Mercedes-Benz Club of America](#) | Houston Section

MBCA | Houston Section welcomes the following new members to the Club!

Welcome!

J.S. Alvarez of Texas City, TX

Jesse and Janett Reed of Houston, TX

Kinan Romman of Houston, TX

Carolyn Witherspoon of Houston, TX

Michael Worsham of Sugar Land, TX

Robert Zahn of College Station, TX

Willkommen!

MBCA | Houston Section thanks these loyal Club members

Anne Barrett and Jon Hagstrom of Houston, TX

Rick Candea of Sugar Land, TX

William Caudell of Houston, TX

Curtis Clark of Houston, TX

Charles and Carol B. Goolsbee of Houston, TX

Charles and Dianne Ozment of Sugar Land, TX

Ray and Donna Priest of Conroe, TX

Kevin Sheffield of Dayton, TX

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Gunter Sundag of Humble, TX

H. Dick Tjeenk Willink and Troy Ham of Dan Helder, Netherlands

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S350 Bluetec Test Drive

(continued from page 1)

Take one on a test drive, and if you didn't know going in you were driving a diesel model, I'd bet nine of ten drivers would not know they weren't driving a gasoline powered car. S350 engine technology highlights include Mercedes' BlueTEC system, which uses several after-treatment units in the exhaust stream (including urea injection) to dramatically lower particulate emissions common with diesel combustion. The new S350 also comes standard with 4MATIC all-wheel drive and is powered by a 3.0-liter V6 turbodiesel with 240 horsepower and 455 pound-feet of torque. S350 fuel economy is a seriously impressive 20 mpg city/31 mpg highway. Yes, 31 mpg highway mileage in a car that weighs 4,784 pounds is quite an achievement. This is also the first S-Class model to come standard with 4MATIC.

Interior accouterments are typical S-Class, meaning pretty much every comfort and convenience feature is standard or available. Content levels depend on S-Class model, and the S350 slots towards the lower MSRP for the S-Class range. But a "budget" S-Class still contains big time luxury. One of my favorite features is the SPLITVIEW dual-content viewscreen, which allows the driver and front passenger to view two different programs on the same screen at the same time. For example, the driver can view the navigation system, while on the very same display screen, the passenger (looking from a different angle) can watch a movie. I don't know how they did it, but it works very well, and is typical of the high-technology in what has always been a rolling showcase for technical development, the S-Class.

I wrote earlier of Mercedes being a leader in safety, and the S350 shares impressive safety gear with its S-Class cousins. Take for example the ATTENTION ASSIST system, which alerts the driver to the first signs of drowsiness, a factor that causes more than 100,000 accidents a year in the U.S. Between 50 and 112 mph, the system identifies the erratic steering corrections drivers make as they become drowsy and triggers an audible warning, and a "Time for a rest?" message with a coffee cup icon appearing in the instrument cluster.

Active Lane Keeping Assist and Active Blind Spot Assist both incorporate automatic ESP brake intervention. Active Lane Keeping Assist recognizes lane markings (thanks to a multi-purpose camera in the windshield and a computer that analyzes the images) and alerts the driver by simulating rumble strip vibrations in the steering wheel if the car drifts from its lane without the turn signals on. Active Blind Spot Assist monitors both blind spots behind the vehicle. Whenever a turn signal is activated with a vehicle in the blind spot, the driver gets visual and audible warnings. Both Active Lane Keeping Assist and Active Blind Spot Assist incorporate an intervention feature, in which ESP braking automatically helps correct the car's course if the driver doesn't heed the initial warning. Additional safety systems include Adaptive Highbeam Assist, which automatically transitions between high and low beams to avoid dazzling other drivers; Night View Assist PLUS which allows a driver to see pedestrians as highly detailed black and white video images in the instrument cluster;



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PRE-SAFE Brake, which applies full braking automatically in emergencies; and DISTRONIC PLUS, an adaptive cruise control system that uses radar sensors to help maintain a pre-set following distance behind the vehicle ahead. The latest system can actually brake the car to a full stop and accelerate it again.

Pricing for the S350 diesel begins at \$92,550, just a few grand less than the V8 powered S550. The S550 has fuel economy ratings of 15 mpg city/25 mpg highway, and is the better choice only if you want the growl and performance of the V8. But given the impressive driving characteristics of the more fuel-efficient diesel S350, it would be my choice when shopping for an S-Class.

Mercedes-Benz axes Maybach Brand

By: Greg Cable of Autoweek.com

High ranking Mercedes-Benz sources have confirmed to Autoweek that the underperforming Maybach brand will be officially killed off in 2013.

The decision to disband Mercedes-Benz's upper luxury marque comes after a decade of disappointing sales for the Maybach 57 and 62 and a recent decision from the German car maker's chairman Dieter Zetsche not to push ahead with the development replacement models – the likes of which were tentatively due out in 2014 – owing to what one insider describes as a “positive move to focus greater attention on the Mercedes-Benz brand” .

Read more: <http://www.autoweek.com/article/20111125/CARNEWS/111129952#ixzz1fG1Fb7XC>

Technical Q & A with Ali Durvesh

Question: When I start my 1995 C280 on cold mornings the engine makes a whining noise. After the car runs for a few minutes it stops abruptly. Where is this noise coming from and should I be worried about it?

Answer: The noise you are hearing is the air pump that only functions when the engine is cold. It's part of the emissions system. All gasoline Mercedes from the 90s make this noise and it's completely normal. When you hear it stop abruptly you know the air pump has been shut off.

If you have any questions, please send your requests to the *Houston Star* or contact me directly. I can be reached at ali.durvesh@gmail.com.

Holiday Brunch

Join us for our annual Holiday Brunch from 11:30am-1:30pm on Sunday, December 11, 2011 at Little Napoli, located at 6445 Westheimer Rd. The cost is \$25 per person and includes starter items, salad, an appetizer choice of spinach artichoke dip, or hot sausage and peppers sautéed in onions, your choice of a chicken, steak or red snapper combo entree, fettuccine alfredo or pasta napolita pasta dishes, and desert. Payment will be taken at the restaurant. Your payment method options are cash and major credit cards. Seating is limited, so RSVP as soon as possible. **The deadline to RSVP is Thursday, December 8.** Don't forget to bring a gift for our White Elephant Gift exchange. You don't have to bring anything expensive, a gift costing \$20 or less will do. We are also taking canned food donations to send to the Houston Food Bank for the Holiday Season. We ask that you bring a canned food item to donate to the Food Bank. Send your RSVPs to mbca.houston@gmail.com, or call Joseph Middleton at 713-487-8197.

Houston Section Member Ownership Report: 2010 E350 Sedan

By: Andrea Taner



I have never been more pleased and pleasantly surprised by a four door passenger car in my life. Up until now, I've owned American sedans and a couple of Volvo sedans. I was until now, very satisfied with those vehicles.

The most surprising thing about my Mercedes-Benz sedan is the way it drives. I realize that it is **NOT** a sports car, however the way it holds the road, the ease to maneuver the vehicle around curves and the comfortable feel of the vehicle are just outstanding. I love all the features, the terrific stereo system, the navigation, the hands free phone system, etc...

I opted for the 60/40 fold down back seat option. I am so glad I did. The family took a road trip from Houston out to Tucson, Arizona in the new Mercedes, and by having that feature, my husband, our golden retriever and I were all able to go. All of us were very comfortable and still had plenty of room for the luggage.

Thanks to Mercedes Benz for making my purchase such a wonderful one.

It's been over a year since purchasing this car. We have had several additional road trips and fun excursions. I am as pleased today with the vehicle as I was when we purchased it last August. I look forward to many more fun adventures in our 2010 Mercedes Benz E350.



We should also note that Andrea is the fab bowler who helped us beat the BMWCCA in our bowling tournament last year! -Ed.

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2001 Mercedes-Benz CLK320

2001 Mercedes CLK320 Convertible (W208 Chassis) is finished in Brilliant Silver Clearcoat Metallic. Original Paint, no accidents. All the body panels are straight with no major dents/dings. This car was purchased by my mother about 4 years ago as a gift to herself for beating cancer. She typically drives her W126 every day, and the CLK only gets driven on the weekends. This car only has 58,700 miles on it.

16" Mercedes Benz Aluminum wheels, finished in factory silver, wrapped in a Matching Set of Goodyear Eagle LS H-Rated tires, the tires have less than 5,000 miles on them, and have plenty of tread left.

The black power fabric top opens and closes normally. The top is in great shape, and the car has always been garaged when not used.

The engine is the 3.2L 18 valve, Single Overhead Cam (SOHC) V6 (M112 - E32) with 218 hp. The engine starts and runs flawlessly. This engine is mated to a smooth shifting 5 speed automatic transmission. There are no leaks, funny noises, or fluid consumption. Car runs and drives great. The brakes work fine with no problem, no warpage, and no fading. Stops are straight and squeak free. The suspension is tight, squeak free and the car drives straight. We recently installed a brand new Interstate Battery (located in trunk), next to the full sized spare tire, which has never seen the ground.

The interior is finished in grey leather. Driver and passenger power seats both work fine with no problem with power tilt/slide for access to rear passengers. All power everything works. Dual zone climate control works fine with no problems at all. Nice condition inside for a 10 year old car. There is a trunk mounted CD changer.

The car has two keys, one original key as well as a new style chrome key.

This car hasn't seen the shop for anything since we owned it (except a flat repair) and I believe my mom has driven the car less than 5000 miles in the three years that she's had it. Texas Registration and Inspection are current.

Asking \$11,500 and entertaining all reasonable offers.

Email: weschain@gmail.com



Mercedes-Benz parts for sale

Location: SW Houston/Missouri City

Used and new parts for sale for Mercedes-Benz autos ranging from the 1960s-1980s. Parts include **Pagoda Euro headlights**, 2nd generation W126 SEL/SDL **velour interior parts**, M102 oil filters, 2 brand new W201 interior wood trim pieces, W201 right corner lamp, W201 front rotors & pads, plus more assorted MB parts.

You can take it all home for \$2100 obo, or you can buy the parts individually.

Contact Angie for more info: 832-453-9698

1960s era Mercedes-Benz parts for sale

* Set of 4 MB factory original alloys (14 X 6) with 195/70R14 Kelly Metric 600's mounted (<2000 miles).

They include the center hub covers and correct wheel nuts.

They are ready to bolt on and go - complete and great "driver" condition.

No damage to the metal (curb rash or otherwise).

I had been using these occasionally on my 280SL until I sold her. \$600.

* Original steering wheel in black. Removed from 1968 280SL, but will fit many 1960's cars. Great condition, but not perfect. \$400 OBO.

* Kangol 2-point seat belts and mounting hardware Black, no damage, but appear used. \$400 OBO.

* Service manuals for cars between 1958 and 1969 (Big Blue Book). Different books (cover different topics). \$130 together.

* Rubber door seals for W113 - both L&R. \$60

Will send photos upon request

Contact sctripp@comcast.net

1983 Mercedes-Benz 380SL



For Sale

**1983 Mercedes Benz 380SL above avg.,
both tops, blue w/grey leather \$13,500**

713-557-2741

Hardtop for 1983 380SL or similar model

Selling a dark green hard top with an ivory headliner that I no longer need (a long story). Very good condition. I am very flexible regarding price, i.e., make me an offer.

Contact: Joe Fischer at: joe.fischer-vbj@sbcglobal.net or (713) 850-1128.



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2011-12 Upcoming Events

Holiday Brunch

December 11

Tech Session at Motorwerks

February 18

New Members Meet and Greet

February

Board of Directors Meeting

January 3

Board Meetings are **open to ALL MBCA | Houston Section members**. Board Meetings are held every 1st Tuesday of odd numbered months at 5:30 PM in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at Mercedes-Benz Greenway (3900 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77027), unless otherwise noted.

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