



Mercedes-Benz CLS

250 CDI Shooting Brake

The CLS Shooting Brake is a coupé with a difference. The proportions of the German luxury model are surprising; with a long bonnet, narrow-look windows and a dynamic roof stretching all the way to the rear, it takes a second before it becomes clear that this particular Mercedes-Benz has five doors.

Words: Tim Barnes-Clay



In essence, it represents an unparalleled version of a sports car with five seats. It's a special proposition for people looking to differentiate themselves from the conventional, and who don't wish to compromise on either sportiness or stowage space when it comes to travelling in style.

With a volume of between 590 and 1,550 litres, the CLS Shooting Brake's luggage compartment offers a lot of room despite the flat, sporty lines of the roof, and is simple to use thanks to the automatically opening tailgate fitted as standard. A load compartment cover also protects



Luxury space carrier

luggage from prying eyes.

Indeed, the Merc really goes to town on the boot area. It's lined with premium carpet, and the hand-stitched material is integrated into the sideliners in combination with leather appointments. Optional designer loading rails made of aluminium give an even more elite look.

Inside the cabin, the seat backrests can be folded down from the load area as standard. The rear seats themselves grant room for three people, with individual seats on the outsides and a third seat in the middle. And if fashion is more important to you than function, you can still get your kicks. Mercedes offers five interior colours, five trim designs and three qualities of leather to choose from. You also have a choice of three exclusive wood types: high-gloss brown burr walnut, high-gloss black ash and satin-finish light-brown poplar.

On the move, the air suspension

at the back helps to ensure top road holding at all times. The super-smooth 7G-Tronic Plus automatic transmission mated to the CLS 250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY makes for a very satisfying drive. Producing 204hp the car will do 0-62mph in just 7.8 seconds – and with a top speed of 146mph the Shooting Brake always reminds you that you're in something far beyond average.

But it's not all about practicality, pomp and potency; the Shooting Brake is efficient too. It has an ECO start/stop function, helping to tease up to an average of 53.3mpg from the tank. This is excellent for this performance class and equivalent to CO2 emissions of 139g/km.

It's a very safe car as well; more than a dozen gadgets help to prevent crashes and reduce the severity of an accident. Active Blind Spot Assist and Active Lane Keeping Assist are available as part of the Driving Assistance package, in combination with DISTRONIC Plus, BAS Plus and the Pre-Safe® Brake. Both systems are not only able to detect an unintentional lane change or vehicles in the blind spot, but can also correct the direction of travel by gentle brake intervention if you ignore the visual or audible danger warnings.

Now, away from the tech-talk, I really should mention where the term 'Shooting Brake' comes

from. Well, it was the name once given to carriages used to 'break' in wild horses and also to restrict (or 'brake') their urge to move, so that they could be put to use as workhorses. Since the carts could easily be broken as part of this process, people tended not to use ones which they may have urgently needed for other purposes. Where necessary, 'brakes' were often fitted out with variable bodies, which were only really used to carry along anything that may have been necessary for the hunt, for example. Any such vehicle which was used when going out shooting was called a Shooting Brake or Shooting Break. I bet you didn't know that?

If you're old enough, you may remember that 'Shooting Brake' vehicles were popular in England in the 60s and 70s – exclusive two-door sports cars, which combined the luxury and style of a coupé with a larger load compartment and large tailgate. If truth be told, it seems likely that Mercedes-Benz will kick off that trend (in a five door way) once again – especially if the company keeps making models as ingenious as the CLS 250 CDI.

So, if you want the model I tested brand new, then you'll need to dig fairly deep – and you won't get much change out of £50,000. But what do you expect of great vehicles like this? You really will get what you pay for with this marvellous motor.

