

Mercedes offers luxury S-Class hybrid

September 11 2013, by David Mchugh



A man disembarks from a Mercedes S 500 Plug-in Hybrid during the second press day of the 65th Frankfurt Auto Show in Frankfurt, Germany, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013. More than 1,000 exhibitors will show their products to the public from Sept. 12 through Sept.22, 2013. (AP Photo/Michael Probst)

Daimler AG's Mercedes-Benz is offering a hybrid version of its flagship S-Class luxury sedan that can drive emissions-free—and still provide the kind of pampering and power the pricey brand's wealthy customers expect.

Stuttgart-based Daimler AG took the wraps off the 2015 Mercedes-Benz S 500 Plug-In Hybrid this week at the Frankfurt Auto Show, following the introduction in May of the gasoline and diesel powered versions of the S-Class. The sedan is a key earnings driver in China and comes loaded with technology and extras that can include a hot-stone massage function in the seats and a perfume generator that allows the interior scent to be adjusted.

The S 500 plug-in is aimed at people who want a hybrid without compromising on the luxury, powerful acceleration and image that go with driving a Mercedes. Its six-cylinder gasoline engine has a robust 328 horsepower, and there's no range anxiety, or fear of running out of [battery charge](#), as with an all-electric car.

A computer selects the best mix of internal-combustion and [battery power](#). The system uses [navigation data](#) to scan the road ahead and maximize efficiency, for instance by using the battery on an uphill stretch, in order to recharge it on the following downhill using energy from the brakes.

The car can also use the [gasoline engine](#) to charge the battery en route, although that's more expensive than charging it up at home.

The S 500 can be switched to all-electric mode, in which it has a range of 30 kilometers, or about 18 miles. Someone with a commute shorter than that could simply charge it overnight and travel back and forth all week without burning gasoline at all. Or it can switch to E-Save mode, in which the battery is held in reserve to drive on electric power alone later.

The car, which goes on sale next fall, generates 69 grams of [carbon dioxide](#) per kilometer, which would exempt it from London's 10-pound (\$15.80) congestion charge to enter the city center during working hours.

UNDER THE HOOD: 3.0-liter turbocharged V6 plus a 107-horsepower electric motor and a high-voltage lithium-ion battery. The company says the car will accelerate from 0 to 62 mph (0-100 kph) in a brisk 5.5 seconds. Top speed is 155 mph (250 kph).

INSIDE: Like the conventional model, the S 500 caters to the comfort of rich customers who may have hired drivers. Back seats recline 43.5 degrees if the passenger wants to kick back and rest. Advanced driver assistance and safety systems using cameras and radar mean the car can adjust the suspension for rough pavement ahead, and drive itself in slow stop-and-go traffic.

OUTSIDE: The car doesn't change much in terms of the older model's sleek lines. It has a taller grille.

FUEL ECONOMY: The company says it gets up 78 miles per gallon, or 3.0 liters per 100 kilometers under the European standard, which combines city and highway conditions.

PRICE: Not announced yet, but it's likely buyers will pay a premium over conventional S-Class models.

CHEERS: Helps take hybrids and low-emission driving further into the mainstream to new, upscale buyers.

JEERS: Hybrids are still only a tiny part of the market.

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