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Classy Mercedes-Benz C 200 – Road Test

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Mercedes-Benz C 200 4Matic AMG Line Saloon Tested.
By Robin Roberts (Miles Better News Agency)

You should rightly expect something special from the world's oldest car-maker and you wouldn't be disappointed with the Mercedes-Benz C-class range, particularly the highly popular C 200 4Matic AMG Line saloon automatic tested here.

Almost 100 years after the company was created from the partnership of German engineers Daimler and Benz it introduced the car which was to be the foundation for today's C-class, the W190.

The compact executive arrived as the W190 in 1982 until the introduction of the C-Class in 1994, and is now in its mid-term fifth generation.



It is a massive C-class range of petrol, diesel, and hybrids in rear and all wheel drive configurations, with cabriolet, coupé, saloon and estate body styles spanning £33,000 to £82,000.



The normal saloon boot space of 455 litres (16.07 cu.ft) is increased to 1,480 litres (52.26 cu.ft) when the estate is ordered for about £1,500 more. Our test model uses the company's latest hybrid technology and all-wheel-drive powertrain to maximise performance and handling, stretching economy and delivering an extremely sophisticated small executive character.

The 1.5 litre petrol-electric hybrid engine is a quick starter and pulls well thanks to its electric assistance which delivers a smooth and strong push, ideal for a rapid getaway or



swiftly overtaking slower moving traffic. It also cruises in a completely relaxed and unstressed manner on main roads and motorways.

With a remarkably smooth changing nine-speed automatic transmission it seamlessly and quickly selects the best gear for any purpose and it edged towards 45 mpg at times, before falling back to our average just over 40 mpg.

It's respectably quick through the gears and you are unaware of how quickly you are going until you look at the speedometer so it maintains the legal motorway maximum without any strain, stress or mechanical noise.

What did surprise me was the road noise generated by the low profile tyres. The ride is slightly firm, not uncomfortable, and it usually soaked up the worst bumps without complaint but the tarmac tremble and pothole pitch was pronounced and intruded into the cabin to contrast with the very low engine and wind noises.

The seats did a good job of holding occupants firmly and comfortably, even if taller people in the back might find leg room on the short side. Front seats' adjustment was very good and supportive and headroom was fairly good throughout.

Access was easy and the boot had a low lip and small opening with a modest capacity in the saloon, but it was a good shape.



The driver has excellent driving position with everything to hand and foot; instruments are big and clear, with modern selectable settings to highlight elements of choice. Stalks and buttons are well placed but I must confess to not being a fan of their brightwork finish.

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The infotainment display was big, clear and comprehensive, easy and rapid to use, while the heating and ventilation climate controls were very effective throughout with straightforward settings, and powered windows are standard of course.

Oddments provision is good throughout and you are not really stuck for space to put items most commonly taken on journeys in a family car.



Visibility is clear to front and sides, slightly restricted over the shoulder with the deep C-pillars, but the wipers, lights and reversing camera and sensors keep you out of trouble.

VERDICT

With many mainstream competitors raising their game and prices to the level of the Mercedes-Benz C-class you can appreciate that this compact executive car is good value for money and its residual value will be higher than rivals.

It embodies the latest petrol-electric hybrid powertrain technology and equipment packages in a compact size and delivers a driving experience filled with satisfaction.

For: Powertrain and economy, comfort, sophistication, ride quality and handling, test drive fuel economy mirrored the official Combined Cycle figure.

Against: Road and tyre noise intrusion, modest boot space, tight rear legroom, 'glitzy' fascia treatment.



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

Mercedes-Benz C 200 AMG Line 4MATIC Saloon.

Price: £38,250.

Mechanical: Four cylinder, 184 PS, 280 Nm (207 lb.ft), 1.5 litre petrol-electric hybrid, nine speed automatic and 4WD.



Performance: 145 mph, 0-62mph 8.1-seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 41 mpg.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 156 g/km, VED First Year road tax £515 then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax rate 32%.

Insurance Group: 32.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,686 mm (15.37 ft), W 1,810 mm (5.94 ft), H 1,452 mm (4.76 ft), wheelbase 2,840 mm (9.32 ft), boot space 455 litres (16.07 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,800 kg (3,968 lb), four doors/five seats.