

# Top-drawer midsize

BY JOE SAGE

**M**ercedes-Benz GLE corresponds to the popular E-Class cars, made clear when utilities were renamed a few years ago: GLC, GLE and GLS as in C-, E- and S-Class. (GLE was formerly the M- or ML-Class.) There are now both SUV and Coupe models of GLC and GLE. Also in parallel to the cars, GLE is the biggest seller in the utility lineup.

The gen-four 2020 GLE is all-new, featured in our JanFeb issue at its launch drive in Texas. New or significantly upgraded available features are many, from all-new intelligent suspension, to gesture control, to new engines with EQ Boost tech, to elements from touchpad to shifter to panorama roof, to its new 9-speed transmission.

The wheelbase has grown by over three inches, providing for more second-row legroom and even an optional third row (suitable for anyone up to 5-foot-10, more generous than many full-size SUVs, and with easy second-row power access).

Features are piled on in this sample, bringing its just-over-60 price up to just shy of 100 grand. Creature-feature tech and driver assistance tech galore in particular boost the price. (It might be worth visiting many in detail before just buying them all.)

The clean and impressive real estate of a fully digital double-12.3-inch-screen instrument panel accesses most features—an extensive set, with layers of subsets and subsets of those. Expect to spend time digging for and mastering the details.

The single priciest is perhaps the most distinctive: the E-Active Body Control® Package, at \$8070 (the difference between a build 56 percent higher than base or just 43 percent higher). Essential if you need it (its electronically articulating suspension can rock you out of a jam in sand or snow), superfluous if you don't, though still compelling just in case—or even just to entertain your friends (at launch, we were entertained by a programmed vehicle dance to a powerful house music beat).

You'll find it easy enough to choose from among the 17 freestanding options totaling \$9995 at right. A few more less common yet compelling-to-indispensable include multicontour front seats with massage (\$1100 and worth a dive into the menus every time), that power second row (\$1200), and a personal fave, heated-cooled cupholders (very useful in Arizona in their own right, and for just \$180 also worth it for their show-off value). Heated-vented seats, heated wheel, trailer hitch and Burmeister surround sound are also essential investments (to the point we're surprised most aren't included).

The 2020 Mercedes-Benz GLE is on sale now and includes a GLE 350 model at about \$5000 less than our GLE 450 SUV. A GLE 450 Coupe, not yet announced at the time of our launch drive, is now also available, at about \$15,000 more.

Also available are three AMG models: an AMG 43 starting at just \$68,150, and AMG 63 and 63 S models starting at over \$100k, with engine output as high as 577 hp, from a 5.5L biturbo V8. ■

## SPECIFICATIONS

<b>ENGINE</b> .....	3.0L alum alloy inline-6 w EQ Boost
<b>HP/TORQUE</b> .....	362 hp / 369 lb-ft
<b>TRANS/DRIVE</b> .....	9G-TRONIC/paddles / 4MATIC® AWD
<b>0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED</b> .....	5.5 sec (est) / 130 mph (elec lim)
<b>SUSPENSION</b> .....	<b>F:</b> indep dbl wishbone w coils; <b>R:</b> indep multi-link w coils;
	<b>F/R:</b> single-tube shocks w SSD & tubular torsion bar
<b>STEERING</b> .....	speed-dep electro-mech rack & pinion
<b>BRAKES</b> .....	<b>F:</b> 14.8x1.4, <b>R:</b> 13.6x0.9
<b>WHEELS / TIRES</b> .....	8.0x19 cast / 255/50 R19
<b>LENGTH / WHEELBASE</b> .....	194.3 / 117.9 in
<b>TURNING CIRCLE</b> .....	39.4 ft
<b>GROUND CLEARANCE</b> .....	var w Sport+ mode & Airmatic
<b>HEADROOM (F/R)</b> .....	40.5 / 39.6 in
<b>LEGROOM (F/R)</b> .....	40.3 / 40.9 in
<b>CARGO CAPACITY</b> .....	22.2 / 72.6 cu.ft
<b>WEIGHT</b> .....	4991 lb
<b>PAYLOAD / TOW CAPACITY</b> .....	1623 / (est) 7700 lb
<b>FUEL CAPACITY</b> .....	22.5 gal
<b>MPG</b> .....	19/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)

<b>BASE PRICE</b> .....	<b>\$61,150</b>
<b>PAINT:</b> Lunar Blue Metallic.....	720
<b>NAPPA LEATHER:</b> Magma Grey / Black.....	2990
<b>WOOD TRIM:</b> designo® black flamed natural grain.....	850
<b>INDIVIDUAL OPTIONS:</b> (16 various).....	9995
<b>DRIVER ASSISTANCE PKG PLUS:</b> (16 various).....	2250
<b>PARKING ASSISTANCE PKG:</b> surround view system.....	400
<b>EXTERIOR LIGHTING PKG:</b> intel LED, adaptive high.....	900
<b>WARMTH &amp; COMFORT PKG</b> .....	1050
<b>NIGHT PKG:</b> black exterior trim elements (6 areas).....	300
<b>ACOUSTIC COMFORT PKG</b> .....	1100
<b>AMG LINE EXTERIOR:</b> vehicle-color wheel arches, wheels, sport braking, diamond-block grille, sport exhaust.....	3250
<b>PREMIUM PKG:</b> 115v power, SiriusXM trial, rear seat access- sory adapters, inductive wireless charging, 64-color ambient lighting w illuminated door sills.....	1000
<b>MBUX TECH:</b> MBUX aug video for nav, HUD.....	1300
<b>E-ACTIVE BODY CONTROL® PKG</b> .....	8070
<b>DESTINATION CHARGE</b> .....	995
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$96,320</b>

