

Incredible hunk.

Admittedly a bit of a showoff, this beast means business.

by Joe Sage

The Mercedes-Benz G-Class has always been a bit of a paradox wrapped inside an enigma, originally built for the military, but long popular at the country club. You wouldn't expect such a brick to be so showy and elegant—yet it is. And you might not expect something so showy and elegant to be so brawny and capable—yet it is. There's really only one way it can outdo itself, and that's with the Mercedes-AMG version driven here.

This marks the 40th year of the G-Class (né Gelandewagen). With AMG models first introduced at the 20-year mark, this also marks their 20th year.

G-Class is the longest-standing passenger vehicle series in Mercedes-Benz history.

Nobody had ever heard of an SUV in 1979. The marketplace included the first closed-body truck-framed 4WD vehicles from the Detroit Three and from farm implement manufacturers. A luxury version of such a vehicle—with the persona of a tank,

yet repurposed for graceful, safe family duty—was unprecedented.

Quickly adopted globally by police, fire, rescue and security services, the first G then gained wide popular exposure—and confirmation of its status as a secure cocoon—serving as the Popemobile.

If you're already looking at the \$124,500 Mercedes-Benz G 550, the jump to \$147,500 for an AMG G63—18.5 percent—provides a 38.7 percent boost in horsepower (577 hp vs 416). Despite its remarkable gain in road performance, the AMG's off-road specs are remarkably similar—approach angle reduced a few points, breakover by a couple (AMG's sexy side pipes perhaps being one factor), departure by only a fraction, with the same fording depth. The trade-offs are more than appropriate.

City and combined fuel mileage are the same in the AMG, just two points off for highway—and the last thing you'd be thinking about when you give it the gun on a mountain two-lane, where its sophisticated suspension belies its physical height.

We spent our week with the AMG G63 largely

within metro Phoenix, carrying four adults as often as not, in luxurious leather, brushed metal and massaging seat comfort, with ample rear legroom that even slightly exceeds the spacious front row.

We had taken it off-road at the NWAPA Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year competition a few weeks prior, tapping the full range of benefits of its locking front, center and rear differentials.

Would you buy a G-Class because you want the luxury style and fitment of a Mercedes-Benz but never quite know when you may have to go off-road? Or because you want a supremely capable off-roader but never know when you might have to pick up a corporate executive on the way home? We suspect many people gravitate to it because they specifically know they will indeed be doing both of those things regularly.

We similarly suspect buyers of the AMG G-Class equally allocate and/or blend their goals and purposes when adding its layers of style and performance.

Between its off-road capabilities and its aura



of personal success, the G-Class exudes a never-give-up persona. Whichever way you approach the formula, once you have your hands on a G-Class, you will likely never want to give it up. If something else catches your eye or serves some other purpose, you'll just need a bigger garage.

It is said that the Mercedes-Benz GL-Class, when new over ten years ago, had been intended as a unibody replacement for the G-Class. Instead, they continue to happily coexist. Rumors persist of the G's discontinuation (which might be a sure way to make existing ones worth two or three times as much overnight). We'd like to see the G-Class stick around for another 40 years or more. Not that many vehicles have such a niche all their own. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

FORMAT/BUILD ...4-door, 5-passenger, body on frame	
ENGINEhandcrafted AMG 4.0L biturbo V8	
DRIVETRAINpermanent 4WD (40:60)	
HP/TORQUE577 hp / 627 lb-ft	
TRANSMISSIONAMG Speedshift TCT 9-spd auto	
0-TO-60 MPH(est) 4.4 sec	
TOP SPEED(elect lim) 137 mph	
	(or w Driver's Pkg) 149 mph
SUSPENSION ...F: indep dbl wishbone w longitudinal & transverse links, coils, shocks	
	R: rigid axle w longitudinal & transverse links, coils, shocks
STEERINGrack & pinion electro-mech	
BRAKESF: 15.7 / R: 14.6	
WHEELS / TIRES ...std 9.5x20 / 275/50R20 (ours: 22")	
LENGTH / WHEELBASE191.9 / 113.8 in	
GROUND CLEARANCE(max load) 9.5 in	
APPROACH/BKOVER/DEPART27 / 21.7 / 29.6°	
MAXIMUM TILT ANGLETBA	
FORDING DEPTH27.6 in	
TURNING CIRCLETBA	
HEADROOM (F/R)41.9 / 40.5 in	
LEGROOM (F/R)TBA	
CARGO CAPACITYTBA	
PAYLOAD / TOW CAPACITYTBA	
WEIGHT5842 lb	
FUEL CAPACITY(w reserve) 26.4 gal	
MPG13/15/14 (city/hwy/comb)	

INCL: Designo brown/black Nappa leather, walnut trim, AMG silver-painted brake calipers, Polar White paint, AMG Nappa leather performance steering wheel, AMG transmission, AMG Dynamic Select, AMG Ride Control sport suspension, AMG high-perf brakes, AMG perf exhaust, AWD, Camtronic cylinder deactivation, sequentially lockable differentials, low range gearbox, power tilt/slide sunroof, 12.3" widescreen display, Comand nav, Bluetooth, Burmester surround sound, 3-zone auto climate, heated seats front & rear, keyless start, multicolor ambient lighting, rain-sense wipers, split-fold 2nd row, Android/Apple, Mercedes me connect, LED lights.

BASE PRICE\$147,500
EXCLUSIVE INTERIOR PKG: AMG Nappa diamond-quilt leather, Nappa leather dashboard, AMG headrest/floor mat badging, multicontour front massage seats, rapid heat/vent front seats7200
AMG NIGHT PKG: side mirrors, spare wheel ring, bumper trim in Obsidian Black; outer protective trim strip w black inserts; black brush guard; tinted headlights, indicator lights, taillights1800
AMG CARBON FIBER ENGINE COVER1500
12.3" WIDESCREEN INSTRUMENT CLUSTER850
22" FORGED AMG BLACK WHEELS4450
DESTINATION CHARGE995

TOTAL (based on prelim pkgs/pricing)\$164,295

Welcome to a world where the roads are dry, the cars are slick and the destinations are limitless...



We drive customers to your business.

Focused content for a targeted, engaged audience
Print, social and web promotional bundles
Special sections and sponsored content available
Custom publications, brochures and direct mail

sales@arizonadrivermagazine.com / main office: 480-948-0200
www.arizonadrivermagazine.com / FB: @arizonadrivermagazine
IG: @arizonadriver / TW: @arizonadriver / Pedal: @arizonadriver