

# This year's top dog GLE

No V8 version this year creates a compelling opportunity - by Joe Sage

The Mercedes-Benz GLE evolved from the ML when series lettering was changed a few years back. It has gained similarly styled siblings, the GLA and GLC, while the smaller GLB and larger GLS (formerly GL) retain more distinctive styling. Of these, all but the GLB follow suit to A-, C-, E- and S-Class sedan nomenclature, with the GLE equivalent to the E-Class sedan, a midsize category known to the brand as executive class. (The one-of-a-kind G-Class retains its single-letter name.)

All have both Mercedes-Benz and Mercedes-AMG performance variants, while both GLC and

GLE offer two body forms—a conventional “SUV” version, like our sample here, and in certain models also a “Coupe” version (atop the same SUV bones). We have driven variants of all versions over the past couple of years, starting with this gen-four GLE’s launch in 2020, first as the standard lineup, soon followed by the AMG variants. If you were to drive absolutely all in the G and GL lineup, that adds up to a whopping 29 possibilities.

The most recent two GLE models we had driven were the AMG GLE 63 S SUV and the AMG GLE 53 Coupe. Since Coupe versions cost more than SUV

versions, that equated to the more expensive variant of the second-most expensive trim (our 2021 53 S Coupe had a base of \$76,500 and total of \$95,875) and the second-most expensive variant of the most expensive trim (our 2021 63 S SUV had a base of \$113,950 and total of \$133,660).

The core differentiating attribute of the 53 S is its “AMG-enhanced” 429-hp 3.0L inline-6 turbo (adding up to 21 hp via EQ Boost), running zero-to-60 in 5.2 seconds, while the 63 S has a 603-hp “handcrafted AMG” 4.0L biturbo V8 (plus up to 21 hp via EQ Boost), hitting zero-to-60 in 3.7 seconds.

The pertinence of those versions today is that the V8-powered 63 is not available this year, due to supply chain constraints throughout the industry. And this is the surprise virtue of this year’s offerings. Already a tough and perhaps perplexing

decision in a regular year—whether you absolutely have to have the top dog (for its specifications, but also just for its own sake) or an extremely solid alternative for about \$40 grand less—that angst is removed for 2022. You can save that money and, while admittedly not having those extra horses nor the V8 rumble, have full bragging rights to family, friends and self, for taking home the top model.

As for the AMG 53’s turbo-six powertrain, it is glorious in its own right. Acceleration—fed through its proven 9G-TRONIC automatic and 4MATIC+ all-wheel drive—is strong and smooth, with a subtle but noticeable kick in the pants at key points, helped along by the EQ Boost system (which provides additional power while also boosting fuel mileage) making its audible presence known.

If you’ve gotta have a V8, you’ll have to wait. But if you didn’t know it ever existed, you wouldn’t care now. You will find that this powerful and well-balanced AMG GLE 53 is a gem. ■



A detail of note in our climate (we had this mid-summer): a great many interior controls and surfaces are bright metal and basically untouchably red hot without gloves till the AC kicks in.



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Vance, Alabama
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	.....Germany/Germany
CONTENT	.....46% US/Canada / 36% Germany
PASSENGERS	.....five (7 opt)
ENGINE	.....AMG-enhanced 3.0L inline-6 turbo, diecast alloy block and head, EQ Boost (integrated starter-generator) and auxiliary compressor; 48V mild hybrid system
HP/TORQUE	.....429 hp / 384 lb-ft
+ EQ BOOST	.....up to 21 hp / 184 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....10.5:1
0-TO-60 MPH	.....5.2 sec
TRANSMISSION	.....9G-TRONIC 9-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	.....4MATIC+ fully-variable AWD
SUSPENSION	.....self-leveling AMG Ride Control based on Airmatic w Adaptive Damping System Plus (ADS Plus)
STEERING	.....pwr rack & pinion w speed-dependent electromech pwr assist
BRAKES	.....na
WHEELS	.....9.0x20 AMG twin 5-spoke
TIRES	.....275/50 R20 high-performance
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....194.4 / 117.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....na
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....40.5 / 36.9 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....40.3 / 40.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....33.3 / 74.9 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	.....7700 lb
WEIGHT	.....5082 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....premium unl / 22.5 gal
MPG	.....18/22/19 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$73,550
PAINT: Emerald Green	.....750
LEATHER: AMG Black Nappa	.....2990
TRIM: Natural grain grey oak	.....160
POWER PASSENGER SEAT W/ MEMORY	.....350
HEATED/VENTED FRONT SEATS	.....450
HEATED STEERING WHEEL	.....250
MB-TEX wrapped dash & door trims	.....350
(CREDIT: missing NFC wireless charging)	.....(200)
DRIVER ASSIST PKG PLUS: active distance Distronic; active assist steering, lane change, emergency stop, speed limit, brake w cross traffic, evasive steering, lane keeping, blind spot; Pre-Safe Plus rear collision protect, impulse side, route-based speed adapt, stop-and-go, traffic signs	.....1950
ACOUSTIC COMFORT PKG: extra cabin insulation, infrared-reflect windshield film, acoustic and infrared-absorbing side window film	.....1100
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1050
TOTAL	.....\$82,750

(Note: prices have increased; see below.)

## 2022 GLE-CLASS LINEUP

GLE 350 SUV	.....RWD	.....\$56,150
	.....4MATIC	.....58,650
GLE 450 SUV	.....4MATIC	.....65,000
GLE 580 SUV	.....4MATIC	.....*---
AMG GLE 53 SUV	.....4MATIC+	.....74,150
AMG GLE 53 Coupe	.....4MATIC+	.....78,450
AMG GLE 63 SUV	.....4MATIC+	.....*---
AMG GLE 63 Coupe	.....4MATIC+	.....*---

\*(Note: V8 models skipping 2022 due to supply chain issues.)