



SHIFT

AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION OF The Daily Star

TEST DRIVE



PRECISION STAR

2012 Mercedes Benz E250 coupe

The Three Pointed Star needs no introduction. Synonymous with power, grace, a certain touch of opulence and a mechanical efficiency that surrounds everything German, Mercedes Benz is one of the most recognisable brands in the world.

The longest running model in the Benz stable is the Merc "E". The E class gained popularity starting from the late 70's continuing all the way to the early 90's. The vehicle of choice for many a statesman (and occasionally mass murdering dictators of banana republics), the E class was meant to be dignified and smooth.

Somewhere around the late 1990s, there was a visibly dramatic shift in the way Mercedes Benz did things. The cars they made were...a bit meh. They were all drab, predictable, formal and waxy in nature: much like the bureaucrats they chauffeured around. Fantastic offerings from BMW and Audi took the chance to take over the luxury car market in Europe, making it twice as difficult for Mercedes to be competitive.

Cut to somewhere around 2006, and Merc has gotten its mojo back. With a bunch of exciting, overpowered cars launched like the CLS63 and the revamped C and E classes, Mercedes took the fight to its German counterparts and took charge over the rest of the world. The E250 coupe you see here today was part of that revamp.

The angular yet curvaceous coupe is hyper modern, but incorporates elements of old Mercs into the design. The egg-crate grille at the front with the massive Merc logo is reminiscent of mid-80's Mercedes and the lines that flow back from the grille set the stage for an edgy but beautiful design. There's quite a bit of the CLS in the roofline, and that can only be a good thing.

Inside, there's lots of leather in a gaudy shade of red. That might not sound very appealing, but it works really well and if maintained well, will fetch a premium 20 years from now. The seats come with an insane amount of adjustment: mess with the controls and you can lock yourself in-



between the lumbar and thigh supports. The interior plastics are above average, but nothing exceptional for the price you pay; however, the design is top notch and the fit and finish is great. The brushed aluminum trim works great in breaking up the black interior into sizeable pieces for your eyes. The full panoramic roof is a must-have option, because it entirely transforms a dark and gloomy interior into an airy living room where you can sit back and relax, or enjoy driving a throaty beast (see sidebar for driving impressions).

Ride comfort wins major points, the E250 gliding over potholes and bumps with ease. When pushed hard, the cabin is a bit too quiet, which creates a difference in what you're seeing/feeling, and what you're (not) hearing. In sport mode, though, the exhaust notes open up and makes it into the incredibly quiet cabin.

The major complaints would be the fiddly infotainment system and the surprisingly difficult Bluetooth system, which for some very odd reason is unable to play songs from your phone. There is a 6 disc CD changer, which is a bit redundant because, well, no one keeps music CDs anymore. The speakers emit a clear and refined sound, and once you figure out how to play your music, you're in for an aural treat.

Its hard to find faults with a car that is so incredibly refined in terms of ride quality and interior/exterior design. If you own the necessary wealth to buy one, make sure it stays in the family, because this will definitely be a future classic.



SPECS

2012 Mercedes Benz E250 coupe

ENGINE:

1.8 litre 4 cylinder gasoline engine (204 HP @5500 RPM).

TRANSMISSION:

5 speed automatic transmission, paddle shifters, manual and sport mode.

BRAKES:

Ventilated, cross drilled disc front, solid disc rear, ABS, EBD, Brake Assist, dual circuit system.

SUSPENSION:

Coil springs, gas pressure shocks, stabiliser front and rear.

FEATURES AND OPTIONS:

6 disc CD changer, Bluetooth, leather upholstery, panoramic glass roof with slide and tilt, AMG Sports package with Avantgarde interior options, LED Daytime Running Lights, 18 inch AMG alloys.

PRICE: 1,45,00,000 TAKA.

For details, contact Rancon Motors Limited.

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PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

So what's it like, driving a Mercedes luxury coupe?

The coupe felt like a coupe should. From the outside this looks like a considerably large car, you'd expect it to be heavy, to have trouble maneuvering through Dhaka city traffic. However, once I got into the drivers seat, every preconception changed.

The car handles very well. Acceleration is swift and almost unannounced, like it will pull forward without a grunt or a crackle of the exhaust. The muffler notes only kick in at higher RPM, but when they do, oh my they are music to ears. Almost like the soft purr and aggressive growl of a wildcat all at the same time.

I drove it in Economy mode and even then the car had a lot of oomph to it. The open straights down Purbachal road was absolutely perfect to test out the 5 speed automatic, which comes with paddle shifters. The shifts were effortless and the climb to 140km/h was a piece of cake. Although the E 250 is not a sports car per se, the enthusiastic 1.8 liter 4 cylinder engine conquered the wide open road with ease. The suspension is best suited to normal driving but when push comes to shove over potholed roads, the E250 soaked in every bump and every crevice.

Overall this car is a treat for any driver of any age. A 22 year old could have as much fun as a 40 year old with a mid life crisis. It was slow when you needed it to be, and pretty damn fast when you put your right foot down.

MOHAMMAD AKIB NAWAZ

COLLECTIBLES



Scale model collectors under one roof: DCCCB Meet 2015

Diecast-cars Collectors Club Bangladesh recently got together for an evening of mixing with like minded people to share stories of scale model collection, show off their prized possessions, and have an evening involving everything from cake to a buffet dinner and a prize giving ceremony for winners of DCCCB's photo contest. Fahim Chowdhury took home the first prize, while Shift's editor Ehsanur Raza Ronny won 2 out of 4 categories. The cake was delicious, the cars were incredible, the people were great: what else would you want from a community of car lovers?



PHOTOS: SHAFAYET CHOWDHURY

ONLINE PREVIEW

Hold'en on no more



Besides the 'Muricuns, there's another breed of horsepower and torque fetish humans who fantasize flogging their own built V8 super saloons on public roads, wowing pedestrians and leaving big, black tyre shredding strips everywhere-Aussies with their Holdens. However, it is only a matter of time for the fun to subside as the Aussies are embracing small cars, SUVs and pick-ups in record numbers. The once iconic family and fleet V8 monstrous sedans are now gradually becoming passé.

Holden is going through its final chapter- the last of the famous Commodore revealed and all Australian production to cease by 2017. This week we look at some of the sensations and nightmares of Holden and its specialized wing HSV.

Head over to www.thedailystar.net/shift for the unadulterated piece.

MAHBUB HUSSAIN

TUNING MENU

BIIG WINGS, RACE AERO.

THE JAPANESE ARE BIG ON WINGS. MOSTLY FOR SHOW, SOMETIMES FOR GO, RACE WINGS ARE CONSIDERED "RICE" ELSEWHERE. BUT IN JAPAN, ITS A PART OF THEIR CAR CULTURE IN A WAY THAT WE WONT REALLY UNDERSTAND. ALL WE KNOW IS, ITS PROPERLY JDM AND IT LOOKS DAMN COOL. CANARDS, LIKE BIG WINGS, DONT SUIT EVERY CAR, BUT LOOKS DOPE ON THE GT86.

WIDE-BODY, WIDE STANCE.

WIDEBODY KITS FOR THE GT86 ARE QUITE COMMON ABROAD, GREDDY'S ROCKETBUNNY KIT BEING THE MOST POPULAR. LIBERTY WALK ALSO MAKES A WIDE KIT, AND A COMMON PRACTICE IS USING ROCKETBUNNY FENDER FLARES COMBINED WITH DIFFERENT FRONT AND REAR KITS. ITS SAFE TO GO WITH THE FULL KIT THOUGH, BECAUSE IT IS VERY EASY TO MESS UP THE LINES OF THE GT86

LOUD COLOURS, CLEAN BODY.

LOUD COLOURS SUIT THE GT86, LIKE MOST MODERN CARS. YELLOW, BURNT ORANGE, BRIGHT RED, ALL ARE GREAT COLOURS. OUR PERSONAL PICK WOULD BE THE BABY BLUE THAT IS BOTH SUBTLE AND IN YOUR FACE AT THE SAME TIME. WITH THE RIGHT BODYKIT AND CURVES IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES, A GOOD BODY-WHEEL COLOUR COMBO IS ALL YOU NEED TO STAND OUT.

COILOVERS, SLAMMED RIDE.

NOT A GREAT OPTION FOR GT86 OWNERS IN BANGLADESH, BUT LOWERING THE GT86 IS ESSENTIAL FOR THAT PERFECT JDM LOOK. WE MAY SAY "SLAMMED", BUT WHAT WE REALLY MEAN IS LOWERED SENSIBLY. K-SPORT MAKES CHEAP-ISH COILOVERS THAT DELIVER ON THE PERFORMANCE WITHOUT MAKING YOU BROKE.

(-)VE OFFSET WHEELS

WHETHER YOU GO FOR A WIDE BODY-STANCE LOOK OR NOT, NEGATIVE OFFSET WHEELS WILL CHANGE THE APPEARANCE OF THE GT86 DRAMATICALLY. THE CAR COMES WITH CHICKEN FEET FROM THE FACTORY, SO BE WARNED THAT WIDER WHEELS AND TYRES WILL TAKE AWAY FROM THE DRIVING EXPERIENCE OF THE 86.



TURBOS.

OR FORCED INDUCTION. SUPERCHARGER KITS FOR THE GT86 ARE QUITE A BIT CHEAPER THAN A FULL FLEDGED TURBO KIT. SO THEY OFFER MORE BANG FOR BUCK. BIG NAMES LIKE HKS, GREDDY, TURBONETICS MAKE PERFORMANCE PARTS FOR THE 86, WHICH ADDRESSES THE POWER LACKINGS OF THE 86.

