



TEST DRIV

ANGRY AMG BRAWLER

2014 Mercedes Benz CLA45 AMG

Let's start with a couple of facts. Mercedes won the world's most powerful series production four cylinder engine contest in 2014 and endowed the baby AMG range with it, one of them being the CLA45 AMG. And SHIFT got a hold of the only unit in Bangladesh (at the moment, that too, quoted at 1 crore 25 lacs taka) to deplete some fuel off the planet. It is after all, an AMG.

Unmistakable AMG cues all over it- just a glance at it and you will find the distinct coupe like resemblance to the big brother CLS63 AMG. With a blend of sleek swoopy body lines and flared arches and gills here and there, Mercedes has butched up the small sized CLA to give it the dynamic AMG character. The matt titanium grey twin blade grille and generously proportioned black flocked cooling intakes below the robust bi-xenon lamps bark like an angry Doberman. The slanted rear with striking LED lamps, side vents to let out hot braking air, chrome plated twin tailpipes of the AMG sport exhaust system and a large matt titanium grey rear diffuser emphasizes the AMG DNA. The wheels are massive 18 inch multi-spoke alloys, painted dark grey with a high sheen effect, that houses 235 40 R18 tyres. The distinctive AMG inscribed red calipers are well hidden behind the dark wheels, but become pretty obvious when the car is on the go.

The interior is equipped around a brushed aluminum instrument console that quarters five galvanized cooler vents. Stereo, air cooler and basic necessities such as traction control are in the center of the dash, below which, is the beautifully crafted mini gear lever that lets you choose between R N D only. My personal favourite of all buttons- the one by the lever that lets you choose Sport and Manual mode. The hugging sport seats are man-made black leather microfiber with red contrast stitching, which are electronically adjusted from the controls located at the black leather trimmed door panel. The multi function steering wheel has stubby little paddle shifters, which work with a click than a flick. Information is provided via AMG instrument cluster, simple and driver focused, with a mono color scheme. The CLA45 AMG's top is all glass; well, 3/4th of the arched roof is a tinted sun roof, which means the rear passengers get a fair share of the night watch too.



Performance. That's what AMG translates to in car-talk. From the relatively tiny 2 liter turbocharged four cylinder unit, Mercedes has punched out 360 PS and 450 Nm of torque with the help of 26 psi of boost from the twin scroll turbo charger unit- making it the most powerful production four cylinder motor in the world at the moment. With the Sport mode on, and right foot down, there is tremendous adrenaline build up when the boost kicks in. But the true AMG spirit of the car is at the heart of each shift as the butterfly flap at the exhaust chamber throws in a loud burble at every up shift. Absolute orgasm.

It takes about 4.5 seconds to hit the 60

mph mark, which in AMG terms, isn't much. But it's the way the car boosts and pins you back to the seat- it's absolutely spectacular. Although the midrange third to fourth gear shot is wild, you'd realize that the car starts dawdling down beyond the 6th- a price you pay when you badge a Merc with the AMG emblem that has only a 2 liter turbo. I did repeated runs with Sport and Manual (with the paddle shifters), and the results were similar- despite the car showing a 200 mph mark in the speedo, I could do 130 top, that too, quite slow towards the end.

The CLA45 AMG gobles up fuel when in Sport mode, but is quite the opposite when in Economy mode. In fact there's a Start/Stop function that is active in this mode, where the car's engine dies during idle and jumps to life at the release of the brake. It also adjusts the transmission, steering and suspension to soft that makes driving almost effortless in Economy. And boring too. That's why I had it on for 10 minutes only.

In Sport and Manual modes, maneuvering through the thick Dhaka traffic with the agile suspension and precise steering setup made me look like an adrenaline junkie. This attention seeking arrangement is crafted by front three link suspension, rear four link independent axles and electro-mechanical dual pinion AMG speed-sensitive sports steering. Moreover, there is 4Matic all wheel drive and an AMG Speedshift DCT 7 speed sports transmission to make the experience more AMG

oriented. The high performance four pot braking system is like jet powered harnesses- with ventilated and cross drilled brake discs all round in size 350 x 32 mm at the front and 330 x 22 mm at the rear provides for insane assured deceleration.

I did turn the traction control off. Yes, I did the unthinkable. The CLA 45 is quite forward biased despite the AWD; and it refuses to slip its tail up the way you would expect any other car to loosen up when the T/C is shut off.

Is the CLA45 worth the AMG badge? AMG usually signifies screaming V12s, large block bi turbo V8s or at least supercharged 6s, but then comes this puny 2 liter turbo miracle for the smaller ranges that changed everything. This is a serious fast car, don't get me wrong- with all the right elements inside and out. But it just lacks the brute performance of an AMG at speeds higher up the speedometer. The CLA45 AMG is not the average hairy-chested maniac of a car you would expect it to be despite the rogue looks and the AMG badge slapped in its melty ass. Anyone would love the CLA45's up shift burbles, orgasmic downshifts of the loud, raspy exhaust and nerve wrecking acceleration of the 26 psi of boost. I was genuinely sad to let go off the keys after my time with it.

For more information on this red angry brawler of a CLA45 AMG, contact RPM Motors.

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PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

COLLECTIBLES

MUSCLE CARS COLLECTION FROM GL



Greenlight 1:64 cars are a hit and miss affair. Some of the early ones had 'steam roller' tires, ones that were ridiculously wide in proportion. Most get it right though. Recently released were several sets of popular American muscle cars in the GL Muscle series. One of the better collections is this set of six, featuring some amazing cars most notably the lime green Charger from Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry. Sadly, this suffers from



the steamroller tire syndrome but you can hardly notice. Then comes the beautifully detailed Daytona Charger with proper width wheels.

Check our online section for more pics, details and pricing.



WORDS & PHOTOS: E.R. RONNY

WHEELS, WOMEN AND AIRBRUSHED ART SEMA 2015



This year, there was a plethora of Ford Mustangs on the show floor, from the Ringbrothers Carbon-Fiber 1965 Ford Mustang Wide-Body to the 2015 Mustang RTR by Vaugh Gittin Jr. The Ringbrothers Mustang has a full custom wide-body, which anyone can order, although the chassis requires extensive work done to it. As usual, there was a heady selection of classic and

restomod cars, but this year's SEMA was surprisingly packed with a ton of rat-rod builds, where old cars were made to look even older with rusted panels and unpainted bodies. One of our favourites is the Hagerty Insurance sponsored 1946 Ford 1/2 ton pickup, in all its rat-rod glory. Another favourite is the Craftsman Twin-T, a 1913 Ford Model T. Why is it called the Twin T? Because there are TWO Model T engines strapped to it, obviously. That's the kind of craziness that makes SEMA great.

Stanceworks brought out their infamous "Rusty Slammington" BMW, an E28 5 series Bimmer that became famous a couple of years ago on the internet for its distinctive rat rod look. Since then, it has continuously evolved, and is apparently in its final stage of evolution: an ultra-widebody, ultra-slammed

look with a race ready BMW inline six engine (complete with sequential transmission, direct port nitrous injection, race ready fuel cell, and more). Madness.

If you thought the exclusively designed Hot Wheels models you refuse to buy are "unrealistic", you just need to visit SEMA. The Kool Kombi lives! The Surf Seeker Shorty Bus, built by SKJ Customs and Ron Berry, has melting proportions and an ultra-short chassis, which gives it a comical Hot Wheels look. Don't worry though, this incredibly cool-yet cringeworthy Volkswagen Bus isn't based off a real VW - it's a complete custom from the ground up. It can also move pretty quickly thanks to a supercharged VW four cylinder engine.

Fans of JDM rides weren't disappointed either, as Fast and Furious actor Sung Kang brought out the much-hyped, much-drooled



over "Fugu Z", a widebody Nissan 240Z that people expected would win the SEMA's best



custom car award. It looked amazing, but it did not win, the award going to a restomod 1967 Camaro.



The crazies were out in full force at this year's SEMA, with aftermarket cooling parts manufacturer Mishimoto bringing in an actual TANK. Another custom that left attendees' jaws on the floor was the "Valyrian Steel", a massive...thing with wheels and chrome and jagged edges, inspired by the Game of Thrones series of books and the TV show. It took 2000 hours of work to build the thing from scratch, and it isn't even complete yet. Underneath is a 5 litre Ford Mustang GT V8, although we wouldn't be brave enough to drive it.

Expect more of the same kind of madness and epicness next year.