

# Mercedes S-class S400L Hybrid 3.5L Petrol SE Line REVIEW



The **2014 Mercedes-Benz S-Class** is a byword for luxury saloon excellence and is widely regarded as one of the best cars in the world. It goes without saying - expectations are incredibly high. Luckily this 6th generation model proves more than up to the task of maintaining effortless superiority, now with cheaper running costs, a host of incredibly clever technology and class leading engine options (including 3 hybrid variants).

## **Petrol-electric Power-Train**

Lion's share of the power (**306bhp** to be precise) comes from the NEW **3.5-litre V6 petrol engine** up front. That's joined by a **27bhp electric motor** and both drive the rear wheels.

Although the **S400** can operate under the electric motor's power alone, that's more or less limited to low-speed gliding around car parks (making sure you don't run anyone over in the process). The V6 engine joins in pretty quickly if you extend your right foot very far and the electric motor's main job is really to work in conjunction with the engine. It can provide a supplementary power boost if you need to accelerate hard, and it can also help slow the car under braking, charging the batteries in the process.

Helpfully, because the S400 uses fancy pants lithium-ion batteries, they're compact enough to fit inside the engine bay so you don't get the same impact on boot space that affects many other battery-packed hybrids (such as the [Volvo V60 PHEV](#), for example).





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Although performance isn't what the S400's about, it's a surprisingly quick car. Despite a kerb weight of just under two tonnes the big Merc can pick its petticoats up and really get a move on if you ask it to, the V6 making a pleasant muted growl as it does so.

## Rear seats the place to be

Of course, the point of an S-Class is that it's a car to be driven in rather than take the wheel yourself and the back seats are the best place to be. Tested here is the long-wheelbase version (that's what the 'L' in the name stands for), which means rear passengers can recline to a more or less horizontal position if the right boxes are ticked on the options list. It really is like travelling first class in an airliner – only probably a fair bit more comfortable.

If you're sat behind the front passenger seat, you can control its movement as well to create as much room ahead of you as you want. (Something this writer found out to their alarm on the S-Class's original reveal in Hamburg where they were nearly crushed to death by a journalist sat behind them).

Although the L-spec S-Class is too lengthy to fit in most ordinary parking spaces the boot isn't as big as you might expect, as some of its volume is sacrificed to allow extra rear seat space.



## In the driver's seat

Despite seemingly infinite adjustment for the front seats (they're crammed with electric motors, with parameters scattered throughout menus on the display screen as well as the usual buttons on the side of the door) it can actually be quite hard work getting a comfortable driving position – there's almost too much to adjust.

Once you've managed to program the seat just so, the S400 is as comfortable to drive as you'd expect with a smooth ride on its standard air suspension and very little in the way of engine noise (although there is a bit more road and wind noise at speed than you might expect). You're always conscious that it's a big car, but once you've adapted to its dimensions it's an easy machine to pilot, even if you do sometimes feel like you're docking a space station when you park it.

That's a feeling that's heightened by the blue interior mood lighting (there are 500 LEDs throughout the car, and other colours are available with a turn and click of the rotary controller), and the enormous rectangular display screens that serve as the car's instrument panel and multimedia interface. While they look suitably flash, you do wonder how well they'll date. Certainly the attractive large-scale tablet interface on the model we tested recently looked more special, even if it was more distracting to operate than the Merc's rotary dial setup.

There were two criticisms we could aim at the driving experience based on our time with the car; one, that the brake feel is a bit inconsistent, perhaps partly as a result of the electric energy regeneration systems working away behind the scenes.

The other is that occasionally under acceleration there would be a startling and uncomfortable jolt through the drive-train. That said, having driven (and been driven in) other S-Classes and experienced nothing but serene power delivery, this may have been an issue isolated to this particular test car.

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## Verdict

Although 90 percent of British buyers are expected to choose the diesel S350 CDI, if you have a penchant for petrol power then the S400 could be a cost-effective power-train to choose, especially bearing in mind the potential future charges for diesel-fuelled cars.

### OPTIONS & EXTRAS

Direct steering	Standard
Doorhold system	Standard
Instrument cluster with display	Standard
Mercedes-Benz emergency call	Standard
Outside temperature gauge	Standard
Remote boot release	Standard
Service indicator (ASSYST)	Standard
Speed limit assist	Standard
Touch pad controller for COMAND online	Standard
Trip computer	Standard
Reversing camera	No Cost
Speedtronic cruise control	No Cost
Garage door opener - integrated in rear view mirror	£230
Telephone pre-wiring with hands free facility	£410
Splitview	£820
Surround camera system	£880
Telephone in rear	£970
Head up Display	£1,230
Night view assist	£2,250

## Safety

ABS	Standard
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# Mercedes S-class S400L Hybrid 3.5L Petrol SE Line REVIEW

## Safety

Active bonnet	Standard
Brake assist	Standard
Driver/Front Passenger airbags	Standard
Electronic parking brake	Standard
ESP with Acceleration skid control (ASR)	Standard
First aid kit	Standard
Front + rear side airbags	Standard
Front seatbelt pretensioners with force limiters	Standard
Pre-Safe anticipatory safety system	Standard
Rear outer seatbelt pretensioners with force limiters	Standard
Rear seatbelt warning indicator	Standard
Three 3 point rear seatbelts	Standard
Tyre pressure monitoring system	Standard
Window airbags	Standard
Fire extinguisher	£130

## Security

Alarm system with interior protection	Standard
Immobiliser	Standard
Locking wheel bolts	Standard
Remote central locking	Standard

## Interior Features

12V socket in luggage compartment	Standard
12V socket in rear centre console	Standard
3 rear head restraints	Standard
Ambient lighting	Standard
Anthracite Velour floor mats	Standard
Auto Mercedes-Benz child seat recognition sensor	Standard
Comfort ventilated rear seats	Standard
Door sill panels with stainless steel inlays	Standard
Easy entry/ electrically adjustable steering column	Standard
Electric adjustable front seats including height adjust	Standard
Electric adjustable rear seats	Standard
Electric rear roller blind	Standard
Electric sunblinds for rear side window	Standard
Front seat back map pockets	Standard
Front seats electric adjust lumbar support	Standard
Front/rear centre armrests with storage	Standard
Front/rear reading lights	Standard
Heated front seats	Standard
Heated rear seats	Standard
Illuminated rear vanity mirrors	Standard
Illuminated/air conditioned glove compartment	Standard
Isofix rear child seat preparation	Standard

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## Interior Features

Load securing rings in luggage compartment	Standard
Luggage nets in boot/front pass footwell	Standard
Luxury automatic climate control	Standard
Multi function steering wheel	Standard
Rear auto climate control	Standard
Rear seat memory	Standard
Reclining backrests on all rear seats	Standard
Steering wheel gearshift paddles	Standard
Sun visors with illuminated vanity mirrors	Standard
Sunglasses storage	Standard
Twin front cupholders	Standard
Leather upholstery	No Cost
Nappa leather steering wheel	No Cost
Storage compartment and 12V socket	No Cost
Ashtray and cigar lighter	£80
Luxury front head restraints	£260
Ski bag through loading	£320
Wood/leather trimmed steering wheel	£640
Comfort ventilated front seats	£660
Refrigerator behind rear armrest	£1,130
Nappa leather upholstery	£1,740

## Wheels

Tyre sealant kit	Standard
18" 5 twin spoke design alloy wheels	No Cost
19" 5 twin spoke design alloy wheels	£1,750

## Trim

Dashboard upper section in artico artificial leather	Standard
Black poplar wood trim (in conjunction with Exclusive Nappa leather pack)	No Cost
Burr walnut trim - brown (in conjunction with Exclusive Nappa leather pack)	No Cost
Eucalyptus wood trim - dark brown	No Cost
Leather - Black	No Cost
Leather - Crystal grey/Seashell grey	No Cost
Leather - Nut brown/Black	No Cost
Leather - Silk beige/Espresso brown	No Cost
Designo brown sunburst myrtle wood trim	£230
Designo metal ash wood trim	£380
Black poplar wood trim	£430
Burr walnut trim - brown	£480
Designo trim - Black piano lacquer	£1,230
Nappa leather - Black	£1,740
Nappa leather - Crystal grey/Seashell grey	£1,740
Nappa leather - Nut brown/Black	£1,740
Nappa leather - Porcelain/Black	£1,740

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## Trim

Nappa leather - Silk beige/Esspresso brown	£1,740
AMG carbon fibre/black piano lacquer trim	£2,880
Exclusive nappa leather pack - Black	£6,890
Exclusive nappa leather pack - Crystal grey/Seashell grey	£6,890
Exclusive nappa leather pack - Nut brown/Black	£6,890
Exclusive nappa leather pack - Porcelain/Black	£6,890
Exclusive nappa leather pack - Silk beige/Esspresso brown	£6,890
Exclusive nappa leather pack - Silk Beige/ Satin Red Pearl with designo interior	£10,090
Exclusive nappa leather pack - Silk Beige/ Titanium Grey Pearl with designo interior	£10,090

## Exterior Features

Active light system	Standard
Adaptive brake lights	Standard
Adaptive high beam assist	Standard
Auto dimming driver's door mirror	Standard
Auto dimming rear view mirror	Standard
Body coloured bumpers	Standard
Electric adjustable/heated/folding door mirrors	Standard
Electric windows with one touch open	Standard
Front fog lights	Standard
Green tinted glass	Standard
Headlamp assist	Standard
Headlight wash system	Standard
Heated screen wash system	Standard
Intelligent LED headlight system with active cornering lights	Standard
LED tail lights	Standard
Rain sensor windscreen wipers	Standard
Rear black sill protector	Standard
Visible twin exhaust tailpipe	Standard
Metallic paint	No Cost
Illuminated door sills	£160
Privacy glass (rear side windows only)	£400
Heated windscreen	£610
Special Metallic paint	£760
Infrared protective + noise insulating glass (when chosen with Night view assist)	£1,010
Infrared protective + noise insulating glass	£1,180
Electric panoramic glass sunroof	£1,430
Designo metallic paintwork	£3,130
Designo Magno Paint	£3,650

## Paintwork

Metallic - Anthracite Blue	No Cost
Metallic - Cavansite Blue	No Cost
Metallic - Diamond silver	No Cost

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## Paintwork

Metallic - Iridium silver	No Cost
Metallic - Magnetite black	No Cost
Metallic - Obsidian black	No Cost
Metallic - Palladium silver	No Cost
Metallic - Peridot brown	No Cost
Metallic - Ruby black	No Cost
Special metallic - Diamond white	£760
Designo metallic - Mocha Black	£3,130
Designo Magno - Allanite grey	£3,650
Designo Magno - Cashmere white	£3,650

## Entertainment

DAB Digital radio	Standard
Frontbass loudspeakers	No Cost
Single CD player	No Cost
Remote control for COMAND	£160
6 CD autochanger	£260
TV tuner	£1,110
Burmester surround sound system	£1,130
Rear seat entertainment system	£2,450
Burmester high end 3D surround sound system	£6,430

## Technical

AirMATIC suspension	Standard
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### **Air-balance pack - S Class - £360**

Fragrance generator in glove box

### **Front seat memory pack - S Class - £500**

4 way electrically adjustable lumbar support for front passenger seat

Door mirror memory

Electric adjustable steering column with memory

Electric front seats with memory

### **Warmth comfort pack - S Class - £530**

Heated front and rear armrest

Heated steering wheel

### **Pre-Safe rear pack - S Class - £1,230**

Belt buckle and bag for outer rear seats

### **Keyless Go comfort pack - S Class - £1,490**

Keyless Go access/ignition system

Remote boot closing

### **Rear seat reclining pack - S Class - £1,500**

Luxury front head restraints



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Rear seat reclining pack - S Class - £1,500

Reclining rear seats

Front seat comfort pack - S Class - £1,740

Massage function for front seats

Multi-contour front seats

Driving Assistance pack - S Class - £2,300

Blind spot assist

DISTRONIC plus with PRE-SAFE brake and BAS plus

Lane keep assist

Rear seat comfort pack - S Class - £3,500

Burmester surround sound system

Multi contour rear seats with massage function

Rear seat entertainment system

Exclusive nappa leather pack - S Class - £6,890

Exclusive Nappa leather upholstery

Illuminated door sills

Rear seat comfort pack - S Class with Burmester 3D surround sound - £8,800

Burmester high end 3D surround sound system

Multi contour rear seats with massage function

Rear seat entertainment system

## Technical Specifications

44.8 mpg Combined MPG / G 154 g/kmCO<sub>2</sub> Emissions / 6.6 sec0-60 mph / 155 mph Max Speed / 333 bhp Max Power

Height: 1,491 mm Width: 1899 mm Width (inc. mirrors): 2,130 mm / Wheelbase: 3,165 mm Length: 5,246 mm

## Engine and Drive Train

Cylinders - Bore 92.9 mm / Cylinders - Stroke 86 mm / CC 3,498 - Cylinders 6 / Cylinder Layout - V6 / Number of Valves 24 / Camshaft - DOHC

Fuel Delivery - Multi Point Fuel Injection / Catalytic Convertor - Yes

Engine Layout - North South / Compression Ratio - 12:1

Transmission - Semi-Auto / Gears - 7 Speed

## Performance

3498 cc V6 Petrol [306BHP] + 27BHP Electric Motor Total - 333 BHP [190Kw] / 370 Lbf-Ft[273Nm] 0-60 in 6.6 sec  
Top Speed - 155 mph

## Fuel Consumption

EC Directive 1999/100/EC Applies - Yes

EC Urban - 42.8 mpg / EC Extra Urban - 46.3 mpg / EC Combined - 44.8 mpg

## Emissions

CO<sub>2</sub> - 154 g/km / Standard Euro Emissions - Euro 6 / Noise Level - 74 dB(A) / CO - 0.802 g/km / HC - 0.043 g/km / NOx - 0.005 g/km / Particles - 0.0006

## Tyres

Alloys? - Yes / Space Saver? - No / Wheel Style - 18" Alloy 5 Twin Spoke / Tyre Size Front & Rear - 245/50 R18 / Tyre Repair Kit



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## Weight and Capacities

Minimum Kerb weight - 1,945 kg / Max. Loading Weight - 685 kg / Luggage Capacity (Seats Up) - 510 Litres / No. of Seats - 5  
Gross Vehicle Weight - 2,630 kg / Fuel Tank Capacity - 70 Litres / Max Roof Load - 100 kg / Turning Circle Kerb to Kerb / 12.3m

## General

Standard manufacturers warranty - 3 Years / Manufacturers Paintwork Guarantee - 3 Years / Man Corrosion Perforation Guarantee - 30 Years

Service Interval Miles - 15,500 / Service Interval Frequency - 12 Months / Badge Power - 333 BHP/PS / Badge Engine CC - 3.5  
Vehicle Homologation Class - M1

## ! CONCLUSION !

Not just the flagship for Mercedes-Benz, it is *the* flagship. Since the first generation S-Class made its debut in 1972, the S-Class has been the high-tech spearhead for technologies and safety features we now take for granted. ABS, airbags, traction control, stability control, active cruise control - all made their production-vehicle debut in an S-Class. And now we have a new one. While there are no significant 'firsts' with the new W222 S-Class, there's now more technology than ever before. So much, in fact, that an optioned-up S has twice as many lines of code in its various on-board computers than a modern airliner. Mere wires aren't enough to run this ship either, and the entire car is fitted with a fibre-optic network that's so fast and comprehensive.

And there's more luxury. Forget business class, with a few select options Benz's new flagship easily becomes more luxurious than a lot of first-class cabins. Let's delve in, shall we?

While for most cars the focus is on the driver, in the S-Class the most important chair is in the back. To emphasise this, the first leg of our test 'drive' was made from the rear seat, with none other than [V8 Supercar](#) driver Karl Reindler up front manning the helm of our S 350 L BlueTec diesel. From the back, it's like being whisked along in a comfy lounge chair. 'S' is clearly not for 'small'. Not only does the long wheelbase model provide acres of legroom, but models equipped with power-adjustable rear seats (standard on long wheelbase; a cost option on normal wheelbase) provide up to 37 degrees of backrest recline.

