

# 2010 MERCEDES-BENZ [W212] E63 AMG [518] 4Dr Saloon REVIEW

## 2010 Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG

With its brilliant chassis, trick gearbox and 518-bhp V-8, you forget the new E63 AMG is a 4-door.



Back in the late 1980s, before performance tuner AMG became an official branch of Mercedes-Benz, the Affalterbach-based personal trainer of three-pointed stars took an off-the-showroom 300E sedan, stuffed it full of massaged V-8 (first a 5.6 liter, later a 6.0) and a catalog's worth of track-tuned chassis bits, and dubbed the hugely fast and expensive result "The Hammer."

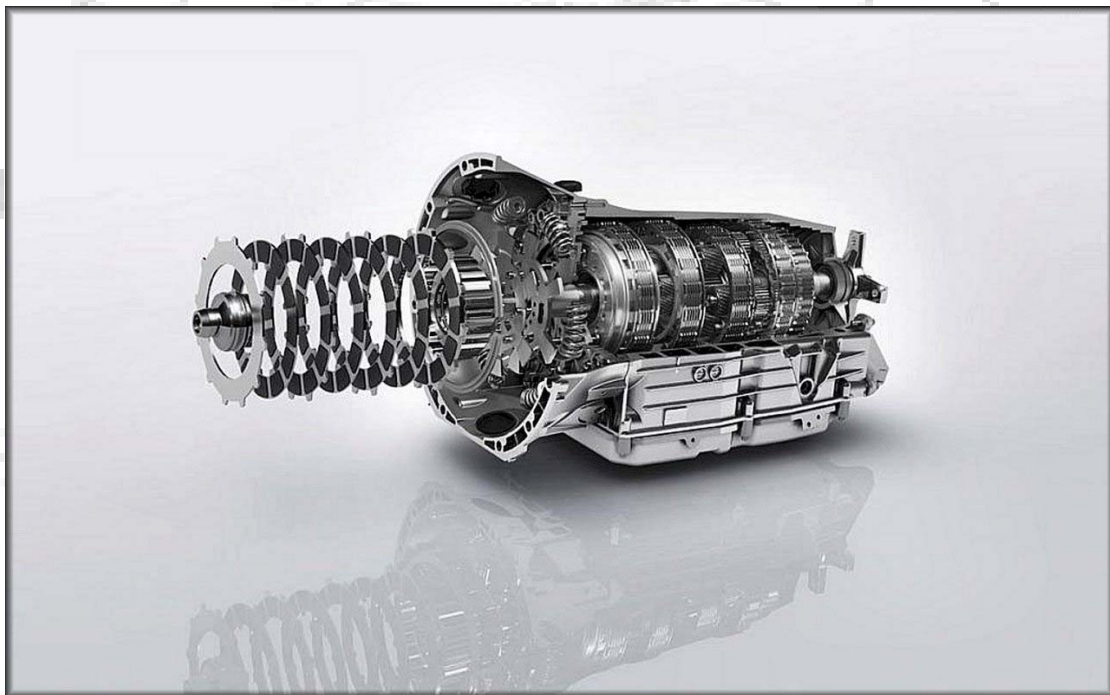
So if that was The Hammer, what do we call AMG's latest, far more powerful and formidable tool? Maybe "The Cannon?" AMG is really on its game. Whereas the original tuning company was best known for building mostly one-dimensional sedans (fast in a straight line, clumsy and unbalanced in corners), the 21st Century AMG, now officially the hyper-performance division of Mercedes-Benz, has of late been cranking out full-bodied supercars with all rough edges smoothed away (i.e., the CLK63 Black Series, the SL63 AMG). With the arrival of the 2010 E63 AMG, based on the all-new E-class sedan, rivals like the BMW M5 and the Cadillac CTS-V may very likely scurry for cover.

AMG has always done engines right, but the new E63's -- also seen in the SL63 -- is perhaps the best ever. The hand-built, DOHC, 6.2-liter V-8 from the previous edition returns boasting 11 more horsepower (now 518 hp at 6800 rpm) yet also a 12-percent increase in fuel efficiency. All that naturally aspirated horsepower is a wonderful thing on its own, but for 2010 it flows through Mercedes' Speedshift MCT 7-speed automatic. Dispensing with a conventional torque converter in favor of a "wet start-up clutch," the MCT can crack off shifts in just 100 milliseconds (in manual mode). Four shift modes are available, with Sport Plus perhaps the most impressive. Like Porsche's dual-clutch PDK transmission, the MCT in Sport Plus upshifts and downshifts as if guided by your thoughts. Forget the shift paddles and simply leave the console lever in "D." Then brake hard from speed when approaching a corner and watch (and listen) as the MCT automatically blips the throttle and fires two machine-gun downshifts. Brilliant stuff. The transmission is best of both worlds, too, smooth and shock-free when executing shifts

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around town. The MCT's best act by far, though, is performing full-throttle upshifts. Stand on the gas, let the revs build to redline, and the lightning shift is accompanied by a "*whap!*" from the exhaust that sounds like an M-80 exploding in the trunk. Ludwigsburg-Asperg, Germany — "Get a bigger hammer" goes the popular adage of shade-tree mechanics, suggesting that many problems can be solved with a blow from an especially large mass affixed to the end of a handle. In the mid-1980s, respected Mercedes-Benz tuner AMG took a mighty swing at supercar performance by essentially shrink-wrapping the W124 E-Class shell around a 360-bhp 5.6-liter V-8. The 183-mph AMG Hammer (an apt name if there ever was one) was forged, and the world of high-performance sedans was changed forever.

More than two decades later, the new E63 AMG is true to the Hammer's original mission, except now there's 6208 cc of hand-assembled 4-cam 32-valve V-8 underhood, and it's housed in the all-new W212 E-Class shell whose rhomboid headlights and rear "Ponton" fender outlines are taken from last year's Fascination concept car. With a full 518 bhp, a peak 465 lb.-ft. of torque at 5200 rpm and a celestial redline of 7200 rpm, this V-8 has more torque than any other naturally aspirated engine in its class. And — best of all — it delivers that power through the magnificent Speedshift MCT-7 transmission that we first saw in the SL63 AMG.



The "MCT" part stands for Multi-Clutch Technology, and the design marries a planetary-gear 7-speed automatic with a compact multi-disc clutch, electronically controlled and running in an oil bath, where a conventional fluid-coupling torque converter would normally be. The result? Lower rotational inertia (effectively, a lighter flywheel) and shifts in just 100 milliseconds in the sportiest "S+" and "M" modes. There's a "Race Start" setting too that will optimize launch rpm; simply select that mode, mash the throttle, release the brake and 60 mph will arrive in just 4.4 seconds, by Mercedes' reckoning.

Select "C," for Controlled Efficiency, and the 2010 E63 will short-shift its way to 12 percent better fuel economy than last year's car (which achieved 12 mpg city/19 mpg highway), despite its 11

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additional horsepower. Truthfully, even in this mode you never feel power-deprived. Also contributing to the savings are a low-friction cylinder coating called TWAS (Twin Wire Arc Sprayed), an on-demand fuel pump and an alternator that both decouples on acceleration and works as a generator on overrun and during braking. Still, AMG is unlikely to be on Al Gore's Christmas card list.



Even before you burn that first drop of premium, the E63 looks fast just sitting there. The front track is a significant 2.2 in. wider and has the sheet metal flares to prove it. Distinctive chunky quad tailpipes, aggressive side skirts, a modest trunklid spoiler and the signature "frowning" AMG front fascia complete the look, along with 18- or 19-in. 5-spoke alloys shod with tires of 255- and 285-mm section width, front/rear. The rear multilink suspension gets self-leveling air springs, and the adjustable shocks can be set in three damping modes, ranging from taut to racetrack-ready.

How does it all work? Well, it's difficult to believe a 2-ton sedan can corner so rapidly, with such composure...there's little wasted motion from steering input to chassis reaction. The V-8's sound is deep and glorious, the throttle response crisp and immediate. The MCT gearbox will almost read your mind on downshifts, capable of dropping three gears (7th to 4th, or 5th to 2nd, for example) depending on throttle and braking inputs. Optional carbon ceramic brakes seem like overkill, as the stock system — and I use "stock" loosely, as there are 6-piston front and 4-piston rear calipers — offers a firm pedal, confident initial bite and throw-you-into-the-seatbelts deceleration. Perhaps this quote sums it up best: "This car, for a big comfortable saloon that you could drive to church, is remarkably steady at these speeds. It certainly has had a thorough engineering job to work so well under these conditions." It's as true now as it was then; these words were spoken by Phil Hill after achieving 183 mph in the Hammer, during our "World's Fastest Cars" test in July 1987.

It's a shame that infomercial pitchman Billy Mays passed away just as Mercedes-Benz is launching the performance version of the [2010 E-class](#), because he would have done an excellent job of touting the many uses for the *new* and *improved* 2010 E63 AMG. "The 518-hp V-8," Mays would say in his booming



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voice, “rockets you from 0 to 60 mph in 4.4 seconds, making quick work of sports cars with less than half the seating. And you can still use it every day to pick Junior up from school and drop Grandma off at the library.” Not that the E63 is the sort of car that would be hawked via cable-TV ads, but it does promise a “You won’t believe your eyes!” combination of performance and usability. There are no easy payments, however, despite the fact that when the E63 goes on sale in October, pricing should fall below that of its predecessor. Expect to pay just under £88,000 to start.

### Highly Evolved from the Standard E-class

Previous E-class AMGs merely had stiffened versions of the standard suspension, but like its little brother, the [C63 AMG](#), the new E63 gets a seriously reworked suspension compared with that of the standard car on which it’s based. The 2010 version gets an entirely new front axle with a 2.2-inch-wider track. Spring rates are twice as stiff as the regular car’s, necessitating a change from air springs to conventional coils. Load-leveling air springs remain at the rear. In addition, the anti-roll bars and the subframe bushings have been beefed up. And if the standard E63 is too soft for you, a Performance package stiffens up the front anti-roll bar and the tuning on the standard adaptive dampers, adds lightweight 19-inch forged alloy wheels, and raises the electronically governed top speed from 155 mph to 186. With both the 18- and 19-inch wheels, the tire width is 255 in front and 285 in the rear. The steering ratio, at 14.0:1, is 22 percent quicker than in the regular E-class and uses a direct, rather than variable, rack.



Under the hood is the venerable 32-valve 6.2-liter V-8 (the 63 in the car’s name and the 6.3 badges on its front fenders pay homage to an older engine with a true 6.3-liter displacement). Here it makes 518 hp, an increase of 11 over the old E63, mostly due to a freer-flowing exhaust. Torque remains the same at 465 lb-ft. New to this car is a clutch-activated (no, there’s no clutch pedal, but we’ll get to that part in a sec) alternator, which allows the engine to charge the electrical system only during coasting to save on fuel. Overall, the E63 is 12 percent more efficient in the European combined fuel-economy cycle.

The engine is paired to a seven-speed automatic, but it’s coupled to the engine via a wet-plate clutch instead of a traditional torque converter. First seen on the [SL63 AMG](#), this arrangement allows for a more direct connection between the engine and gears and results in quicker shift response. As in the SL63, there are multiple settings: C (for “controlled efficiency”), sport, sport plus, manual, and race mode launch control.

Controlled efficiency mode (can’t we just call it comfort?) starts from a stop in second gear and acts much like a regular automatic, choosing the highest ratio whenever possible. Sport mode is slightly more aggressive and shifts with a little more force. We like sport plus most of all, however, since it holds gears and enacts rev-matching downshifts. Enabling sport plus or manual makes for the quickest shifts, which add a delightful crackle to the exhaust note. New to the E63 is a simplified shift lever with three

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positions: reverse, neutral, and drive. Park is activated by pressing a button, and manual shifts are actuated via the steering-wheel-mounted paddles.



One big-ticket item on the E63 is a set of optional carbon-ceramic brakes. They come standard with the Performance package in Europe, but due to production constraints, we won't see them in the U.K. for another year. They could cost between £8000 and £10,000 as a stand-alone option. If you can wait—and are cool with spending the extra coin—you'll save 31 pounds over the standard setup, which uses 14.2-inch discs all-around. Go carbon, and 15.8-inch ceramic discs are fitted up front; the rears stay the same size. The ceramic package requires larger calipers that offset some of the weight saving, though.

### **Sinister yet Stealthy Styling and Versatile Performance**

Visually, the E63 treads the line between sinister and stealthy. Compared with the stock E, the AMG's front fenders are 0.7 inch wider on each side to accommodate the wider track. At the front, there's a lower front spoiler with LED running lights, functional gill vents (they feed engine-oil coolers), and tinted headlight lenses. Inside, the new shift lever is flanked by a knob to select the transmission mode and a trio of buttons: one for stability control (on, sport, and off), one for the suspension (comfort, sport, and sport plus), and a programmable AMG button that instantly brings up your favorite combination of settings.

The have-it-all proposition of the E63 is nothing new. The old E63 delivered extra helpings of performance and luxury, as do the current BMW M5, Cadillac CTS-V, and Jaguar XFR. But the AMG treatment on the latest E-class has transformed the car into something greater than it was before. It's akin to comparing the C63 to the old C55, but this E AMG is a more civilized package. Next to the previous E63, the handling is much more responsive, and the hefty steering delivers a good level of feedback. The engine, already one of our favorites, is more responsive, thanks to the transmission.

Mercedes-Benz claims the E63 will equal or better the C63 in overall performance, which is highly believable. The E63 is far more comfortable, though, and not just due to its larger size. Stability is excellent even at autobahn speeds, and the tires never seem to give up in corners. Our only complaint regards the suspension on the Performance package. Comfort mode is a relative term, and the sport plus setting (which Mercedes-Benz recommends reserving for track use) is so stiff that it batters the kidneys even on the smooth German roads we sampled during our drive. The standard E63 suspension is slightly more plush (and, thankfully, much more sporty than the pillowlike E-class), although we will be interested to sample both on the rougher roads here at home. The carbon-ceramic brakes work excellently, with little of the squeal found in other ceramic systems and plenty of pedal feel even when

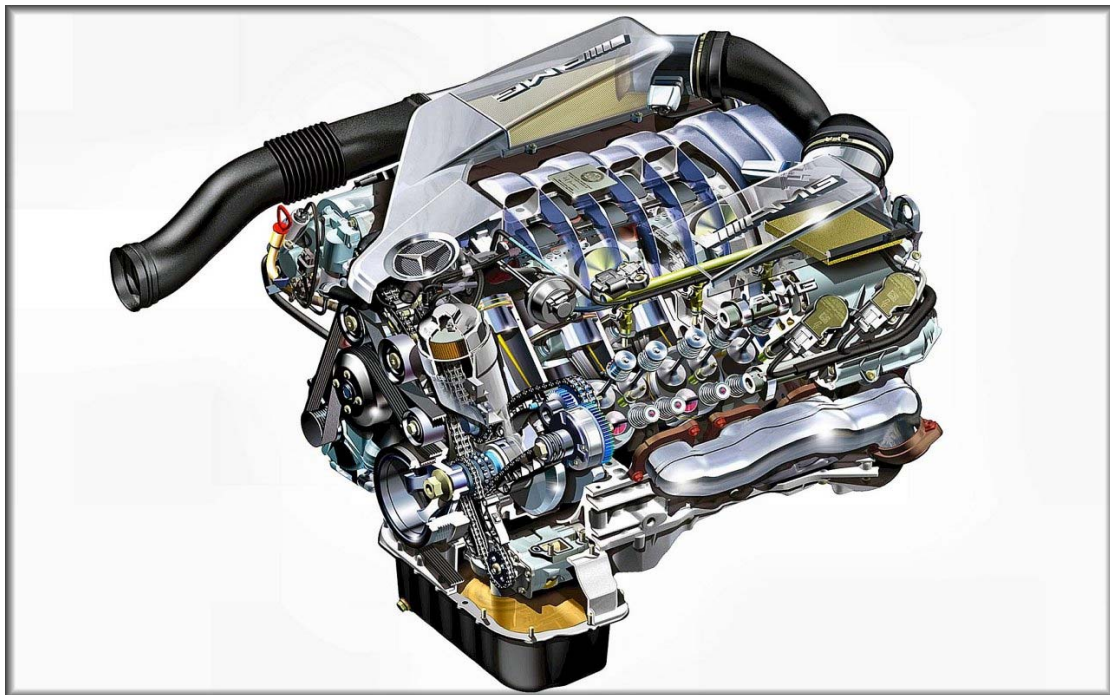
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cold. Still, nobody will be disappointed by the standard brakes, which are easier to modulate than the carbons.

## Unfortunately, Options Packages Aren't Buy-One, Get-One Free

As we mentioned, the E63 won't go on sale until October; unlike the commercials for Oxi-Clean, however, operators are not standing by. It is likely your local Mercedes-Benz dealer will be happy to accept a deposit, though, and with a few "act now" offers thrown in to boot. As for extra equipment, the options packages will be fairly simple. In addition to the Performance package, there's the Premium 1 package, which includes dynamic seats with heat and ventilation, navigation, voice recognition, and a rear-view camera. Premium 2 adds automatic high-beams, active headlights, a power trunklid, and keyless ignition. Then there's the Driver Assistance package, which has adaptive cruise control, lane-departure warning, and blind-spot detection. The stand-alone options, excluding the late-arriving carbon ceramic brakes, consist of night vision with pedestrian detection, a panoramic sunroof, rear-seat entertainment, and walnut or carbon-fiber interior trim.

Yes, Mercedes likes to spread the BHP love around and so it's no surprise that the shortly after the release of the regular E-class, we're now being offered this: the AMG-fettled E63, a circa £89k businessman's hot rod. It's running the same naturally aspirated engine that all non-V12 AMGs have used since Merc ditched the old supercharged 5.5-litre V8. It pumps out 518bhp and 464lb ft of torque – around 10bhp up on the old E63 and enough to push the 1840kg E-class to 62mph in 4.5sec. And it's slightly greener this time, recording 22mpg, a 2mpg improvement, while CO2 emissions drop from a terrible 341g/km to a faintly less terrible 295g/km.



## Forget the figures, tell me about the E63's noise!

It's indecent, a proper solid, metallic V8 throb. Twist the key to start it and you get a good flare of revs before it settles down to a meaty idle. Nice, but at low speeds it sounds like a typical low-revving V8 with some free-flow pipes on it. This engine really revs, and when you extend it towards 6500rpm and hear the hard bark filtering through into the cabin, that's when you it really know that this is no ordinary Benz.

**But is it all about the E63's engine? What about corners? Are they off limits? Or just beyond them?**



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The E63 can do corners, and far better than you might imagine for a car so large. The standard three-stage adjustable dampers give you a choice between a cushy limo ride and still good body control or a more traditional nuggety German hot-rod experience that gives no quarter to body movements. The E-class is so refined though, so quiet, so smooth, that it feels wrong to force it to buck about on bumpy roads. So Comfort it is.

But the Merc does put its 464lb ft down really well, even on the standard Euro-spec 18-inch wheels (19s will probably be standard in the UK). This is one AMG where the dashboard doesn't blink away like a lighthouse every time you dip your toe into the power.

### Does it feel sober or sexy from behind the wheel?

It's certainly Teutonic in feel thanks to the angular, upright dash and console structure, but it's light years ahead of the old E-class in terms of cabin materials. Apart from the metal dash trim, chunky three-spoke steering wheel and grippy leather sports seats, there are plenty of techy buttons to remind you that you're driving something tweaked by AMG.

Apart from the damper button you can switch the ESP between On, Sport or Off, and you can choose between gearshift settings too, using a rotary dial just like the one fitted to the SL63. In fact the gearbox is the same seven-speed epicyclic auto as used in the SL and, like the sports car, ditches a heavy torque converter for a lighter wet clutch pack more normally found on dual-clutch gearboxes. It works well, slurring between ratios in Comfort mode, where you'll mostly leave it, and feeling responsive in Sport or Sport Plus. There's a pointless Race Start function too.



### VERDICT

There are no great surprises here, the E63 is just as we'd expected. The new E-class is a great car, a proper Mercedes and the E63 the most fun of the lot. It's more exciting than BMW's aging M5 and Jaguar's agile XFR, and it's a lot better all-rounder than either. It sounds glorious, is beautifully built and trounces the Jag in the practicality stakes while highlighting the BMW's agricultural transmission.

Enjoy .... !

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2010[10] MERCEDES-BENZ [W212] E63 AMG Saloon V8 [518] 6.2 Litre 6208 cc V8 32v DOHC Naturally Aspirated / 518-BHP[386kW] / 630-Nm [465 lbs-ft] with 7-Speed & 7-GTRONIC SpeedSHIFT Automatic. One previous LADY owner with F/MB/S/H. 27K warranted miles. Finished in Bright Silver metallic with lavishly sumptuous Two-tone Special AMG Anthracite black soft NAPPA Leather. This brutal yet beautiful, lively and sybaritic phantom-in-motion with a unique style with elegance is the true and undisputed Sindelfingen champion of all the mid-range saloons of all-time. It has a distinct image of exclusiveness that goes far beyond the imagination. The E63 AMG is, of course, by any measurement, a mighty, mighty car. Everything about it is defiantly un-PC, from the way its big V8 cuts through the air like a demented jackhammer, to the way it eats up other traffic like a road-going basking shark. You should love this car. But, and this is another guess, you're not really that bothered, because Mercedes has done the implausible: made 500bhp+ normal, run-of-the-mill, predictable and safe. Taken in isolation, though, the stats are drool-inducing. The new, bespoke, normally aspirated 6.2-litre V8 (which replaces the supercharged 5.5-litre V8 of the E55 of previous era) produces a mammoth 518bhp and backs it up with enough torque to fill the air with thick white smoke almost at will. The 1840kg E63 warps to 60mph in just 4.3sec, and were it not for the usual 155mph limiter it would comfortably knock on the door of 200mph. The E63 AMG is therefore anything but boring. In fact it's utterly, wonderfully, intoxicatingly, barking mad. It pulls from nowhere to infinity with a savagery that is totally at odds with its conventional appearance, attacks corners with enthusiasm and menace in equal measure, and simply demands that you get involved with channelling its 500+ BHP through its manic High Performance Low Profiles [285/30 ZR19 at rear and 255/35 ZR19 at the front]. It combines awesome power with velvet-like refinement, provides ride comfort that is in the magic carpet class and offers more standard equipment than you would find in a top 7 star hotel. It seems almost churlish to mention such standard fitments as air-conditioning, automatic transmission and remote central locking when it has creature comforts that extend to special AMG seats with multi-way adjustment and heating, three memory settings together with steering wheel and the mirrors all automatically moving to your pre-set requirements as soon as you sit in your driving seat. Find an open stretch of motorway, floor the gas-pedal of this E63 and you'll soon know what it means to travel through time/space continuum. There's a miniscule pause and a gentle jerking sensation as the 7-GTronic gearbox kicks down and the V8 comes alive. And then this AMG-fettled sport saloon launches itself like a ballistic cruise missile at the horizon with a single, seamless blast of forward thrust. Any doubt that this elegant E63 can obliterate time with acceleration dissipates the moment you watch the speedo arc gracefully past 140mph, and keep on going until it stops at the computer controlled max speed of 155mph. I guess that's what happens when Affalterbach decide to stuff 514 horses with 630Nm of brutal torque under the bonnet of an E-class. Even in these horsepower mad times, it's enough shove to put Mercedes' 6.3-litre V8-powered automotive marvel on a par with a Porsche 911 Turbo-S (both sprint from 0 to 60mph in around 4.0 seconds.) No wonder the technician who builds the E63's power plant signs his name on the engine; "Guido Nordheim" wants you to know as to who owns your adrenal glands. The list of high cost extras in this car is extensive and includes Satellite NAVIGATION, TRACKER System, Telephone System. AMG exterior CARBON package [773]/ Reverse AID colour CAMERA with guidelines [R01FRC]/ SPORTS Suspension [486]/ Digi-TV [R03FDT]/ Parking GUIDANCE system with route display on main DASH-Panel [230]/ Digi-DAB Radio [R04FDR]/ Speed-Sensitive POWER steering-VARIO steering [213]/ LED Day Driving Lights [236]/ Night VISION Front view colour CAMERA [R02FVC]/ 6.3 litre DISPLACEMENT High-Performance Engine [M63]/ Mechanical Locking DIFFERENTIAL [471]/ iPhone, iPad and iPod connections to COMAND NTG4 [R05IF]/ SpeedTRONIC Cruise Control, Extensive Designo AMG Badging internally and externally, so the list goes on and on. With superior build integrity, masses of airbags, features such as traction control, anti-lock brakes and Mercedes-Benz' own Brake Assist system highly tuned by AMG, it is hard to imagine being in any safer form of transport. In driving terms, this Mercedes-Benz is absolutely impeccable. AMG has successfully created a drawing-room feel like no other. This, when coupled to impeccable German efficiency and pure functionality, is the creation of the superlative E63 AMG Saloon. It is a car that you are reluctant to stop driving. Despite its sheer potency, it remains entirely unruffled thanks to a superb AMG suspension set-up, which delivers wonderful ride comfort even in the hardest of driving circumstances. This magnificent piece of artistic engineering creation can now be yours today at an incredible value indeed. AMG is obviously very keen that we enjoy their cars to the full, and I can unreservedly say that with the E63 AMG you will do just that.

## MAKE & MODEL:

Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG Saloon, 7-GTRONIC SpeedSHIFT Automatic.

## Registration NUMBER:

LD10 BWL

## Date of First Registration:

23rd March 2010

## COLOUR [Body / Interior]:

Bright Silver - METALLIC [775U]/AMG Anthracite NAPPA Leather[201A]

## Number of Cylinders & TYPE:

V8 32v DOHC Naturally Aspirated.

## Cylinder CAPACITY:

6208 cc

## Horse POWER / Torque:

518 BHP[386kW] @ 6800 rpm / 630-Nm [465 lbs-ft] @ 5200 rpm

## Chassis/Frame NUMBER:

WDB212077 2A 083701

## Engine NUMBER:

156985 60 049283

## Fuel TYPE:

PETROL [Shell V-Power ONLY]

## Oil TYPE:

CASTROL [Edge FST 10W-60, [API SJ/CF, ACEA A3/B3] ONLY]

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