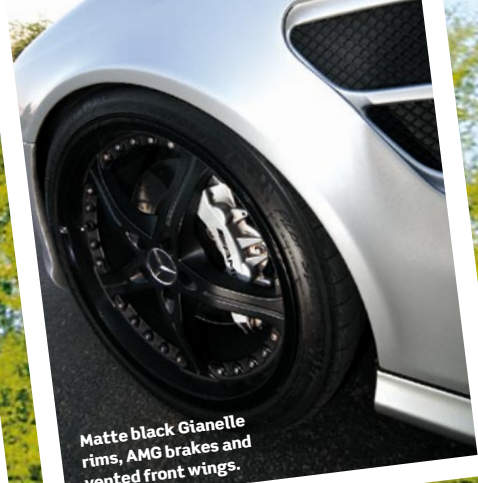




Sticky Michelin tyres are no match for the sheer thrust of this V8 saloon.



Matte black Gianelle rims, AMG brakes and vented front wings.

CHARGING FOR THE HORIZON

HEAVILY TUNED AND READY TO ROCK, THIS MODIFIED E55 AMG SALOON HITS HARD WITH AGGRESSIVE LOOKS TO BACK IT UP

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JUST THE FACTS



“It all adds up to one brutal concoction – NASCAR thrust under town car wrapping”

Modified Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG (W211)

Engine M113 5,439cc V8 supercharged

Power 570bhp@6,400rpm

Torque 660lb ft@2,500rpm

Transmission 5-speed auto, RWD

Weight 1,835kg

0-62mph 4.0sec (approximate)

OVERVIEW

A thorough mechanical and visual overhaul have pushed this E55's performance, handling and kerb appeal to a new level

Figures for car as pictured, except weight which is for a standard car





HAVE WE FINALLY REACHED THE outer limits of saloon car development? That is surely an interesting after dinner question, one which simply begs for robust debate over a choice alcoholic beverage.

Consider the Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG. It's a big, powerful, executive level saloon. It delivers 469bhp in standard form, yet still achieves 21.9mpg (NEDC combined). For the vast majority of the buying public, it has more power than they can skilfully handle. But for the small percentage that can, when they grow bored they can see Richard Garcia, owner of Dyno-Comp in Scottsdale, Arizona, and the builder of the silver rocket pictured here. For a paltry fee, Garcia will see to it that your E55 can shred tyres and pummel the ground to the tune of 570bhp and 660lb ft of torque – an improvement of ... oh heck, does it really matter? We're out of fingers and toes when it comes to calculating the increase. Could this heavyweight be the best four-door ever created?

'Too many chefs spoil the stew' is the old adage. But it doesn't seem to apply here. AMG took what Mercedes-Benz created in the W211 E-Class saloon and added power, making it better. RennTech took the AMG script and decided that if a little more power is good, a whole lot more can't be bad, right? The tuner cooked up its own

82mm carbon fibre airbox and matched it to its own 82mm throttle body, which is 8mm larger than standard. A larger intercooler and a new, high pressure, high flow pump were also added into the mix.

FULL THROTTLE THUNDER

It's easy to see what's coming next – RennTech's 180mm Super-Pulley, which increased the maximum boost of the supercharged, 5,439cc eight-cylinder from 0.8bar to 1.2bar. Dyno-Comp/MBH jumped into the game with a set of stainless steel long tube headers that dramatically increased the exhaust flow. The Dyno-Comp/RennTech custom ECU mapping sorts out the extra power and torque, the latter delivered at just 2,500rpm, as recorded at the wheels on the in house dyno. As Garcia says, "torque is king!" The coup de grâce is the Dyno-Comp Pro-Shift transmission upgrade, which swaps the OEM solenoids for faster, stronger units that decrease shift times. It all adds up to one brutal concoction – NASCAR thrust under town car wrapping.

While no one will ever confuse the handling of a Mercedes-Benz with that of a Mazda MX-5, by the same token, no one will confuse the appearance of this saloon for a run of the mill E55 AMG. The revised exterior starts with blacked out emblems and sinister, 20-inch

△ The modified V8 now has 570bhp, up from 469bhp.

△ Still luxurious inside with room for family or friends.

“It's very hard not to notice this E55 on the street, which is where it really begins to shine”



◀ Smoked lights and a carbon fibre grille for this E55.

◀◀ Carbon fibre trim inserts from tuner RennTech.

▽ This five-speed auto shifts faster than standard.

▷ Gianelle Spezia-5 wheels in matte black, and continues right through to the Lorinser front bumper with gaping central intake and the vented front wings. Dyno-Comp's one-off, hand made, carbon fibre grille looks perfect between the smoked headlamps. At the rear, matching blacked out tail lamps and third brake light combine with a red on black RennTech emblem and a carbon fibre Vorsteiner lower diffuser for a menacing parting shot.

BASSY BRILLIANCE

This theme even carries over into the interior where all the trim panels have been replaced with carbon fibre pieces from RennTech. These aren't cheap, stick on panels either, but authentically moulded pieces developed for the E55. The RennTech V3 lowering module plays its part, tucking the wheels into the arches. Overall, this silver rocket shouts 'performance' in deep, bassy tones laced with Teutonic profanity. It's hard not to notice this E55 on the street, which is where it really begins to shine.

AMG cars always bring excitement to the straight line drag – and it is here where the RennTech augmented powertrain comes into its own. It is undoubtedly an 'engine car' – its 660lb ft torque is a substantial number, even for a saloon as heavy as this one. Needless to say, acceleration with the ESP and traction control system

turned off is not for the fainthearted. Complete your will and notify your next of kin before stoking this Mercedes.

Garcia says the 0-60mph time drops to, "around the four-second range", but this depends on the available traction. We easily saw acceleration matching his claim in our brief time behind the wheel, which is even more remarkable because the rear tyres never stop spinning. Indeed, a straight line run is comprised of lurid zigzags along the intended direction of travel, as steered by the impressive thrust. The stability control system has proven capable of reining in the rambunctious rear end even with the extra power, which shows the remarkable forethought the Mercedes-Benz engineers must have had.

It must also be noted that it isn't possible to just put on a pair of sticky tyres to solve this traction issue. The big saloon is already wearing gummy 295-width Michelin Pilot Sport 2 tyres stretched over 20-inch wheels. Press the accelerator to the floor and it is a full on battle royale between road and rubber. But don't try this too often in public as the local police usually take a pretty dim view of wavy black stripes plastered down the street. This monster's ability to effortlessly scald the pavement is truly amazing to behold, words do not do it justice. Words also fail to adequately describe how fun it is – hooliganism never grows old.



“This E55 is undoubtedly an 'engine car' – its 660lb ft torque a substantial number”



“The E55 still can’t be flicked into a corner but a certain measure of surgical precision becomes apparent”

▷ **HARDER, FASTER**

Nothing gives off attitude like a pavement scraping stance. With the RennTech V3 lowering module activated and intercepting the signals from the OEM module and the shocks and air springs, the ride levels out at a race car like altitude. This is suitable for chewing up fast mountain sweepers with aplomb (and style). The adjustable air springs actually become stiffer the lower they go due to the bell shaped metal mount underneath them. This trick does a very good job of controlling the substantial heft of this sizeable four-door saloon.

The Mercedes still can’t be flicked into a corner and it is impossible to mask all of its mass, but a certain measure of surgical precision becomes apparent. It does become stiff, but not harsh. The factory installed ride height settings remain unmodified so, should you happen to reach a particularly steep driveway, it is possible to crank up the suspension and easily navigate the obstacle. For an owner tired of hearing his BMW M5 owning buddies rave about the prowess of their suspension, the RennTech suspension module is *the* modification to purchase. Miles better than any coil-over set up, it neatly plays to the innate sophistication of a Mercedes-Benz. After all, most owners of three-pointed stars probably don’t do coil perch adjustments.

Nor should they have to, for the near stratospheric price requested for one of these über saloons. Which leads us right back to our initial question. Could this be the ultimate, road gobbling, traffic light cruising, valet impressing, luxury, low riding four-door saloon? The latest E63 AMG offers impressive numbers, but simply cannot match the bhp of this modified E55.

There’s no word as to whether this car’s 155mph speed limiter has been removed with the installation of the RennTech software. Equally, there’s no reason to believe that it hasn’t been, which would be a nice perk if you’ve got the room to exercise its legs. ■



A bold front bumper from Lorinser and a RennTech lowering module are fitted.

With ESP off and 660lb ft of torque, it is very easy to light up the rear tyres.

