

# Maximum package by Joe Sage

The Mercedes-Benz GLS (formerly the GL, the model that has now lent its flagship letters to the entire Mercedes SUV-crossover lineup: GLA, B, C, E and S) has always been a standout, not just among their own lineup, but across the whole segment. Noteworthy at its (the GL's) introduction in 2006 as the first big three-row, seven-seat European SUV, GLS launched its third generation for 2020. For 2021, an AMG model is once again added, the one we are driving here (so new, its fuel mileage was not yet rated). Whether in Mercedes-Benz or Mercedes-AMG build, the GLS successfully delivers the compelling blend of luxury and utility its badge and format promise—and priced accordingly and appropriately.

The lineup starts at \$75,950 (the 362-hp inline-six turbo GLS 450) and steps to \$98,800 (483-hp bi-turbo V8 GLS 580). Take a lateral move to an AMG-handcrafted 603-hp V8, bumped to 624 hp via the inclusion of Mercedes' power-juicing, fuel saving, low-end torque-boosting EQ Boost mild hybrid technology—currently working its way into more and more models—and you have our Mercedes-AMG GLS 63, at \$132,100. Its power-and-torque formula delivers zero-to-60 in 4.1 seconds, compared with 5.9 or 5.2 with the Benz models. That's

cutting 21 percent off the GLS 580's time and adding 29.2 percent more horsepower, at 33.7 percent higher cost, reasonable given all the other elements added in the AMG version.

Add-ons are, as usual, numerous and relatively pricey, though at this level, the extensive list added to our sample represents only a 15 percent price bump, easily absorbed by most in its target audience. AMG badging is kept low-key, but the model is immediately recognizable by its grille—sharing styling first introduced in the GT Roadster series about three years ago and expanding through appropriately rarified models since then.

Much of what charmed us in the GLS is being applied through much of the overall Mercedes lineup. There's that EQ Boost powertrain. There's the twin-12.3-inch widescreen instrument panel (a driver-centric digital instrument cluster and a center media display, the latter a touchscreen), which surprised us with several why-didn't-anybody-else-ever-think-of-that implementations (e.g. extremely useful new and/or redundant paths to audio content selection), as well as with a whole raft of settings that—quite uncharacteristically—we changed absolutely none of. Their defaults suited us perfectly. Having searched for auto start-

## PRICING

<b>BASE PRICE</b> .....	<b>\$132,100</b>
<b>METAL WEAVE INTERIOR TRIM</b> .....	440
<b>CARBON FIBER ENGINE COVER</b> .....	1500
<b>AMG PERFORMANCE STEERING WHEEL</b> .....	600
<b>AMG 21" WHEELS:</b> multi-spoke forged matte black.....	4950
<b>AUGMENTED VIDEO</b> .....	350
<b>PREMIUM AUDIO:</b> Burmeister high-end surround.....	4550
<b>MAGIC VISION CONTROL</b> .....	350
<b>WARMTH/COMFORT PKG:</b> rapid heat, heated door panels, front/rear armrests, center console.....	1100
<b>EXECUTIVE REAR SEAT PKG:</b> heated/vented multicontour rear massage seats, lux armrests, extended console, lux center armrest w 7" MBUX tablet, storage, 2 USBs, wireless charging, heated/cooled cupholders.....	3700
<b>ENERGIZING PKG PLUS:</b> Air-Balance w fragrance.....	550
<b>NIGHT PKG:</b> dark trim A-wing, front splitter, window frames, rear apron, tailpipes; gloss black roof rails.....	750
<b>ACOUSTIC COMFORT PKG:</b> extra cabin insulation, infrared-reflecting windshield film, acoustic/infrared-absorbing side window film.....	1100
<b>DESTINATION CHARGE</b> .....	995
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$153,035</b>

stop defeat in dozens of vehicles, we were delighted to find it right next to the engine start-stop here, another why-didn't-anybody-ever solution (though we wish it were in plain sight).

We had the AMG GLS through a patch of decidedly nasty weather, which gave us just that much more appreciation for its well above average camera system, rain or shine, with a screen that fade-animates to life, typical of that just-a-bit-more approach to features throughout.

Most buyers will likely choose the AMG version

## SPECIFICATIONS

<b>CONFIGURATION</b> .....	4-door steel unibody; 6- or 7-seat
<b>ENGINE</b> .....	handcrafted 4.0L V8 twin turbo w integrated EQ Boost starter-alternator
<b>HP/TORQUE</b> .....	603 hp / 627 lb-ft incl EQ Boost up to 624 hp / 811 lb-ft
<b>DRIVETRAIN</b> .....	AMG Performance 4MATIC AWD w fully variable torque distribution
<b>TRANSMISSION</b> .....	AMG Speedshift TCT 9G auto
<b>0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED</b> .....	4.1 sec / 174 mph (lim)
<b>SUSPENSION</b> .....	F: indep dbl wishbone w Airmatic air suspension & ADS+ adaptive damping; R: indep multi-link w Airmatic air susp & ADS+ adaptive damping
<b>STEERING</b> .....	speed-dependent electro-mech rack & pinion
<b>BRAKES</b> .....	F: 15.7"; R: 14.5" (further details tba)
<b>WHEELS</b> .....	F: 9.0x21; R: 11.5x21 cast
<b>TIRES</b> .....	F: 275/50R21; R: 315/45R21
<b>LENGTH / WHEELBASE</b> .....	206.4 / 123.4 in
<b>TURNING CIRCLE</b> .....	tba
<b>GROUND CLEARANCE</b> .....	tba
<b>HEADROOM (F/2/3)</b> .....	39.4 / 40.2 / tba in
<b>LEGROOM (F/2/3)</b> .....	40.3 / 41.9 / tba in
<b>CARGO CAPACITY</b> .....	17.4 / 42.7 / 84.7 cu.ft
<b>TOW CAPACITY</b> .....	tba
<b>FUEL CAPACITY</b> .....	23.8 gal
<b>MPG</b> .....	not yet rated

for its power and performance, but it has decent off-road chops, with trail, sand and slippery modes in addition to sport, sport plus and comfort—plus your customizable individual recipe. Ground clearance and towing are not yet stated, but for the buyer who goes for AMG not just for power and performance, but as the maximum presentation of everything that comprises the GLS, every layer—from capacity and layout, to powertrain and performance, to all-wheel-drive road and trail worthiness—delivers in top form. ■



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