

Head turner

By Joe Sage

There is no shortage of E-Class sedans, nor CLS four-door sedans, nor C-Class coupés in this neck of the woods. There have long been a lot of CLK coupes, as well, but in 2009, the E-Class Coupé effectively replaced that. We may think this E-Class Coupé is a familiar E-Class but in coupé form. Or we may think this is a familiar Mercedes-Benz coupé but in E-Class size. Unlike the E-Class sedan or wagon, the coupé is actually based on the C-Class chassis, giving it a sportier profile and stance. From any angle, it seems they have hit upon a magical combination of elements: everywhere we went, we received an inordinate number of oohs, ahhs and compliments.

The car's beauty is more than skin deep: it's a smooth driver, generating ample power from its 3-liter biturbo V6 run through a 7-speed automatic. Its cabin and controls are state of the art premium in every way. And they deliver all this for \$53,350 base, an attractive price for all it includes. Ours, done up with a healthy list of attractive options and packages, topped out at \$66,300, bringing a

car with style, spirit and content on a par with some costing about 50 percent more. The difference is its medium size, but that's the most popular, so this is actually more benefit than tradeoff.

Models and engines have evolved through this generation, currently comprising this E400 (also available with 4MATIC all-wheel drive) and the E500 with a 402-hp 4.7L biturbo V8. The overall lineup is complex—and the E-Class is due for a new-gen reveal in Detroit in January—but this particular 329-hp, 29-MPG, red leather sport seat power-and-trim combo hits a sweet spot.

Nitpicks: the innovative shifter may strike some as simple and/or distinctive. It strikes us as unintuitive and complex, requiring active thought and a better line of sight to use effectively in a panic situation. The cupholders block quite a few center stack controls, if they contain cups. The backup camera seems to require having the radio on.

All in all, this car is a pleasure to drive, and if you have the kind of neighbors whose heads need turning, the E400 Coupé will do the trick. ■



2015 MERCEDES-BENZ E400 COUPÉ

BASE PRICE	\$53,350
OBSDIAN BLACK PAINT:720
RED/BLACK NAPPA LEATHER:	1370
BLACK ASH WOOD TRIM:	n/c
SPORT STEERING WHEEL:	n/c
HEATED-VENTED SEATS:	450
KEYLESS ENTRY/START:	650
UNEXPLAINED SPECIAL ORDER LINE ITEM:	250
PREMIUM NAV/AUDIO PACKAGE:	3430
LIGHTING PACKAGE:	1500
SPORT PACKAGE: wheels, pedals, seats	1490
LANE TRACKING PACKAGE:	875
PARKING ASSIST PACKAGE:	1290
DESTINATION CHARGE:	925
TOTAL	\$66,300

