

Worth every penny

This potent luxury utility's price point spurs a study in relativity. BY JOE SAGE

We've noted before that there's a fair degree of commonality between the Mercedes-Benz GLS and Dodge Durango, going back to the days of the DaimlerChrysler marriage. There's little information on what they share from mutual origins, but neither is likely to infringe upon sales of the other. Dodge's closest model to this AMG GLS63 is the Durango SRT, at just about exactly half the price. Both have high horsepower (577 AMG, 475 SRT), similar capacities and functions, AWD and decent tow capacity (8700 lb SRT, 7500 lb AMG).

But walk around the Mercedes-AMG GLS once, hop in and look around, turn the key, and you'll find a thousand ways it's quite something else. It may share some DNA, but it has had a whole different upbringing. Despite our fascination with those commonalities, there is so much that is so different.

So luxuriously and technically outfitted is the GLS63, a comparative shopper might instead think of SUVs with much higher starting prices, such as

the Bentley Bentayga (\$230,000), Lamborghini Urus (\$220,000) or the new Rolls-Royce Cullinan (\$325,000). And those are base models, not even including huge differences in option pricing, while this AMG GLS63 is top-of-the line. Even our sample's few add-ons—also distinctly premium items (see sidebar)—are very reasonably priced.

Plus you can show up in this just about anywhere without starting a revolution or having your executive compensation package questioned.

Enough shopping—let's drive. Accelerating up a freeway ramp, it's clear this potent utility can take on and conquer anything. Under its skin, it is a beast, but from the driver's seat, it's as smooth and powerful a vehicle as you could imagine—and this while moving almost three tons.

The GLS is good-looking in a top-dollar suit kind of way. The AMG version is good-looking in a top-dollar racing suit way (the kind a superhero could peel away to reveal an executive suit beneath).

For anyone with the GLS63's price of entry, the comparison with less expensive SUVs is not even the question. Compared with more expensive ones, it knocks 'em dead. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

SEATING CAPACITY	seven
ENGINE	AMG handcrafted alum alloy 5.5L biturbo V8
HP/TORQUE	577 hp / 561 lb-ft
TRANS	AMG Speedshift Plus 7G-Tronic 7-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	AMG Performance 4MATIC AWD (40:60)
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	4.5 sec / 168 mph (elec lim)
SUSPENSION	F/R: indep multi-link w air spring, single-tube shocks w continuous adjust damping; + F: torsion bar; R: tubular torsion bar
STEERING	speed-dependent electro-mech rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 15.4x1.4 / R: 14.2x1.0 in
WHEELS/TIRES	10x21 cast / 295/40ZR21
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	203.2 / 121.1 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(w max load) 7.8 in
APPRCH/BRKVR/DEPRT	22 / 15 / 21 degrees
TURNING CIRCLE	40.7 ft
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	40.3 / 38.5 / 35.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	16.0 / 49.4 / 93.8 cu.ft
WEIGHT / TOW CAPACITY	5754 lb / 7500 lb
FUEL	26.4 gal
FUEL ECONOMY	13/18/15 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$125,300
OPTIONS:	Air ionization w filter (280), AMG Performance steering wheel (500), heated/cooled cupholders (180), trailer hitch (575), power easy-entry system (400), rear seat entertainment pre-wire (170), Bang & Olufsen BeoSound audio (5400), 22" AMG black multi-spoke wheels (1750).
AMG NIGHT STYLING PKG:	Black A-wing & front apron insert, black side mirrors, black roof rails, black twin tailpipes, black belt line and window strip.....300
DESTINATION CHARGE	995
TOTAL	\$137,960

