

# Hitting the mark. And the other mark, too.

BY JOE SAGE

The whole premise of an SUV coupe, debated or even lampooned not many years ago, has turned 180 degrees. Back then, people might think, "I can see why you want a sporty coupe, but why would you want a big bulky one?" Today, with SUVs the dominant starting point, the point of reference has reversed to, "Of course I can see why you want an SUV... and a sporty one with coupe styling seems like an extra cool one!"

Famed race driver and automotive writer Denise McCluggage loved to grumble about anything that wasn't a hatchback or utility—"all that space above the trunk is completely going to waste!" In principle, she would have preferred everything have a full-height, flat-roofed profile. An SUV coupe, however, has enough interior space to achieve a well-balanced compromise even on that argument.

Looked at from either direction, the formula hits its stride in the handsome entries from Mercedes-Benz and Mercedes-AMG.

The current GLC two-box SUV (known officially as the "GLC SUV") is perfectly proportioned and perfectly functional inside and out, the compact equivalent of the equally well done GLE. In coupe-styled form (known as "GLC Coupe," as the

three-letter name already implies SUV) is equally successful in looks and function, while eliciting an additional dimension of can't-take-your-eyes-off-it grip.

And as long as we're looking at things via relativity, it's as easy as ever to conclude that if you find a lot to like in the Mercedes-Benz GLC, you will find that much more to love in the AMG version. The first SUV coupe we ever drove was the performance model, in an event starting with a coned acceleration, slalom and braking course, before moving to the open road, and that made all the difference in our own initial embrace of the whole concept.

As an AMG—built in Bremen, Germany, bearing the badge that signifies high degrees of both craftsmanship and performance—the GLC 63 S Coupe's 503 hp and remarkable 3.7-second zero-to-60 time will always be mentioned—and, we assure you, always enjoyed.

But it is indeed an SUV. The GLC Coupe is well positioned in the ever more comprehensive Mercedes-Benz utility lineup, now including GLA, GLB, GLC SUV, GLC Coupe, GLE SUV, GLE Coupe, GLS and the distinctive G-Class... and then AMG versions of GLC, GLE and G (including variously AMG 43, 63 and 63 S versions). To make yourself a little crazier

(or inspired) still, you can also see where it falls among the broader range of coupe offerings (two-door, four-door, regular and 13 AMG coupes). This may sound fairly mind-boggling, but you'll find that the mission—as well as the size, style and budget—of each is quite clear.

The remarkable value of this well-established luxury brand in today's complex market carries through them all—from GLA starting at \$34,250, to the GLC group (the one at hand here) starting at \$42,500, on up to the GLS at \$75,200, then of course the class-of-its-own G-Class at \$127,650. These are prices you can spend on a wide range of brands today—but these are Mercedes-Benz.

Downsides during our week were the type an owner will quickly conquer: a few screen implementations and voice recognition with keywords normal chatter could induce.

Styling gets special commendation, including the newest iteration of tech-bearing tri-star grille, tastefully bold and tucked framelessly into the sheet metal.

The AMG GLC 63 S's \$84k base price seems a considerable value. It does strike us that some of the AMG add-ons



could have already been included on an AMG vehicle, but the amount of added value you get from fully ten significant options and three packages for \$11,000 in our sample, including the AMG ones, is equally remarkable.

As one more point of comparison, we are scheduled to spend a week with the non-AMG GLC 300 4MATIC soon (SUV or Coupe t.b.d.), with 255 hp and 28 mpg highway fuel rating, still hitting 60 mph in 6.1 seconds and starting at just \$44,500 (or \$42,500 in two-wheel-drive). Appropriately (and enticingly) priced as they are, we predict we'll like 'em both. ■

## SPECIFICATIONS

ROWS / SEATS	.....2 rows / 5 seats
BUILD	.....steel unibody
ENGINE	.....handcrafted AMG 4.0L V8 turbo, alum alloy, DOHC, 32v
HP / TORQUE	.....503 hp / 516 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	..AWD: AMG Performance 4MATIC+ w fully variable torque distribution
TRANSMISSION	.....AMG Speedshift MCT 9-spd w wheel-mounted shift paddles
0-TO-60 MPH	.....3.7 sec
TOP SPEED	.....(electr. lim.) 174 mph
SUSPENSION	.....F: independent multi-link w air spring, continuously adjustable damping double-tube gas shock and torsion bar; R: same as front
STEERING	.....speed-dependent electro-mechanical rack & pinion
MODES	.....Dynamic Select
BRAKES	.....F: 15.4; R: 14.2
WHEELS	.....F: 9.5x20; R: 10x20
TIRES	.....F: 265/45R20; R: 295/40R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....186.8 / 113.1
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.7 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....6.4 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....TBA
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....TBA
CARGO CAPACITY	.....up to 49.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4511 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	.....17.4 gal
MPG	.....16/22/18 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	<b>\$84,100</b>
DESIGNO® CARDINAL RED METALLIC	.....1080
AMG CARBON FIBER TRIM	.....975
AMG PERFORMANCE STEERING WHEEL	.....100
21" AMG FORGED CROSS-SPOKE WHEELS	.....2250
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	.....1100
3-ZONE CLIMATE CONTROL	.....760
BRUSHED ALUMINUM RUNNING BOARDS	.....650
INDUCTIVE WIRELESS CHARGING / NFC PAIRING	.....200
WHEEL LOCKING BOLTS	.....150
AMG LED PROJECTORS	.....275
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PKG: Distronic active distance assist, active steering assist, active lane change assist, active lane keeping assist, Pre-Safe Plus, active blind spot assist, active brake assist w cross-traffic function, evasive steering assist, active emergency stop assist, active speed limit assist, route-based speed adaptation.....	1700
PARKING ASSISTANCE PKG: Parktronic w active parking assist, surround view system, hands-free access.....	1290
EXTERIOR LIGHTING PKG: LED intelligent light system, adaptive high beam assist.....	800
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....995
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$96,425</b>

