

Bit by bit, it seems we will drive the full Mercedes-Benz EQ lineup of EVs. We had our first here in late 2021, did an immersion event in Colorado in fall 2022, of all that were ready by that point, then have had an additional variety here, for a week at a time.

As with the Mercedes gasoline lineup, EQ includes sedans (but no coupes or cabriolets) and SUVs in B, E and S sizes (but no C SUV so far, at least not in the US). There are AMG versions of some and a Maybach of one (see sidebar). All are built atop new-through-and-through EV architecture (except the EQB, so far an adaptation of the gasoline GLB).

The many we have driven so far have run us from 2021 now into 2024. Although it feels like a longer span of time, all have been 2023 models except for our very first 2022 EQS Sedan (although that was unchanged for 2023).

The EQE SUV we're driving here is in fact a first shot at one of the newest. At our Colorado event, we had in-depth presentations of the EQE SUV and its AMG version with engineers and designers—but no driving. They said the EQE SUV would arrive by year's end, in time to be a 2023 model, hence the sample driven here is new indeed (and not likely to particularly change as a 2024.) The AMG version is expected early this year, as a 2024.

Ten inches shorter than the EQS SUV, on a wheelbase 7.1 inches shorter, our base model EQE 350+ SUV, the only rear-driver, is also differentiated by lower total power from a single motor (though matching the EQS in 4MATIC trims). The EQE SUV is also 5.4 inches shorter than the EQE Sedan, noticeable in overhangs, on a 3.5-inch shorter wheelbase. With an almost coupelike stance, the EQE SUV aims to

be youthful, a refocus from the big EQS's luxury emphasis. (Accordingly, the top EQE SUV is an AMG, the top EQS SUV a Maybach.)

Though shorter overall, the EQE SUV has just over 40 inches of rear legroom, matching the front, perfect for executives or other four-adult outings.

Our drive time was all in town—surface streets, freeways and parking—where it was always smooth and dominating. A special delight is its 10-degree standard rear-axle steering. They don't state a spec for this modified turning circle, presumably conditions-dependent. But against a published standard of 40.4 feet, this clearly achieves a much tighter turn.

We had taken the EQS SUV (also with 10-

degree rear-axle steering, a spec that varies by model and is optional on some) on a rugged, complex and tight trail in the Rockies at our earlier event, where it was mind-blowingly maneuverable. Their statement on that one was that its turning circle was "less than 36 feet, even tighter than many models in the compact class." Though not specified, the EQE SUV's notably shorter length presumably delivers an even tighter turn than that. In our experience, this felt clearly likely.

As rear-drive-only, with one motor only, the EQE 350+ SUV, though weighing over two and a half tons, delivers 282 horsepower versus 402 for 4MATIC versions. On the plus side, with fewer moving parts and lighter weight, it delivers a bit more range than the 4MATICs. For our time in the field, this added up to driving it routinely for a week without needing to recharge and always with plenty of power—strikingly so, in fact, from this, the lowest-powered and most affordable version. ■

# Step by step

## The Mercedes electric future solidifies and evolves

BY JOE SAGE



### SPECIFICATIONS

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| ASSEMBLY           | .....Vance, Alabama   |
| MOTOR/TRANSMISSION | .....Germany/Germany  |
| CONTENT            | .....US/Canada 10% / Germany 10%  |
| ELECTRIC MOTOR     | .....rear axle, 215kW, permanently excited synchronous  |
| HP / TORQUE        | .....288 hp / 417 lb-ft   |
| BATTERY PACK       | .....Lithium ion / 90.6 kWh   |
| TRANSMISSION       | .....single-speed   |
| 0-TO 60 MPH        | .....6.3 sec  |
| TOP SPEED          | .....est 130 mph  |
| DRIVETRAIN         | .....rear-wheel drive   |
| SUSPENSION         | .....4-wheel multilink w selective damping and comfort tuning; (AIRMATIC air susp w adapt damp avail) |
| STEERING           | .....rack and pinion, electro-mech power assist, incl opt 10° rear-axle steering                      |
| BRAKES             | .....(no info or specs)   |
| WHEELS             | .....(opt) 20-in 5-spoke, black accents   |
| TIRES              | .....255/45 R20 XL  |
| GROUND CLEARANCE   | .....(no spec stated)   |
| TURNING CIRCLE     | .....40.4 ft  |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE | .....191.5 / 119.3 in   |
| HEADROOM (F/R)     | .....39.5 / 39.4 in   |
| LEGROOM (F/R)      | .....40.6 / 40.6 in   |
| CARGO CAPACITY     | .....14 / 55 cu.ft  |
| WEIGHT             | .....5300 lb  |
| RANGE              | .....279 miles  |
| CHARGING TIME      | .....240V/32A (10-100%) 9.5 hrs   |
|                    | .....170kW DC Fast Charging (10-80%) 32 min   |
| RANGE: EPA         | .....279 mi   |
| MPG                | .....(MPGe) 94/87/91 (city/hwy/comb)  |

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| BASE PRICE (2023)  | .....\$77,900 |
| TRIM: Anthracite 3D Relief-Optic   | .....540      |
| CABLE: 110V home charging  | .....250      |
| DRIVER PROGRAMS: beginner, valet   | .....50       |
| ACOUSTIC COMFORT PKG   | .....1100     |
| WHEELS: 20-in five-spoke, black accents  | .....850      |
| REAR STEERING: 10-degree, rear axle  | .....1300     |
| VENTED FRONT SEATS   | .....450      |
| ILLUMINATED RUNNING BOARDS   | .....650      |
| DRIVER ASSIST PKG: active speed limit, Distronic, steering, lane change, evasive steering, blind spot, emergency stop, Pre-Safe Plus, Pre-Safe Impulse side, traffic sign assist | .....1250     |
| EXCLUSIVE TRIM LEVEL PKG: active ambient lighting, MBUX augmented reality nav  | .....850      |
| DESTINATION CHARGE   | .....1150     |
| TOTAL  | .....\$86,790 |

2023 sample; 2024 pricing unchanged, below.

### 2024 MERCEDES EQE LINEUP

|                 |             |               |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Sedan EQE 350+  | .....288 hp | .....\$74,900 |
| EQE 350 4MATIC  | .....       | .....77,900   |
| EQE 500 4MATIC  | .....402 hp | .....85,900   |
| AMG EQE 4MATIC+ | .....617 hp | .....106,900  |
| SUV EQE 350+    | .....288 hp | .....\$77,900 |
| EQE 350 4MATIC  | .....       | .....77,900   |
| EQE 500 4MATIC  | .....402 hp | .....89,500   |
| AMG EQE 4MATIC+ | .....617 hp | .....109,300  |

### 2024 COMPLETE EV LINEUP

|             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| EQB SUV     | .....\$52,750-60,550 |
| EQE Sedan   | .....74,900-85,900   |
| AMG Sedan   | .....106,900         |
| SUV         | .....77,900-89,500   |
| AMG SUV     | .....109,300         |
| EQS Sedan   | .....104,400-125,950 |
| AMG Sedan   | .....147,550         |
| SUV         | .....104,400-125,950 |
| Maybach SUV | .....179,900         |

### NAME GAME

A decade or more back, everything was a Mercedes-Benz, including AMG variants (e.g. a Mercedes-Benz CLS 550 vs a Mercedes-Benz CLS 63 AMG). Maybach did not bear the Mercedes-Benz name at all. But then, though models still have a two-digit variant for AMG, the brand name itself shifted, e.g. Mercedes-Benz C 63 AMG became Mercedes-AMG C 63. At the same time, Maybach vehicles became Mercedes-Maybach. Okay.

Then along came the EVs, a family of Mercedes-EQ vehicles. Okay. Follows suit. Except for a glaring difference. Model names also started with EQ, making for awkward redundancy: Mercedes-EQ EQ and so on.

(On a parallel note, this evolution freed us up from years of always faithfully using the full "Mercedes-Benz" name, now able to use just "Mercedes" with a clear conscience, as the general public always has.) Roll forward to today, and it seems they've noticed the redundancy themselves. Or it may be purely evolutionary. They say every new vehicle will be an EV by 2025 and every vehicle, period, will be an EV by 2030, thus no further need to distinguish "EQ" at the brand level. Indeed, various clues suggest a change to using "Mercedes-Benz" as brand, with EQ at the model level (EQE and so on). Okay. Makes sense. No more redundancy for EQ, AMG and Maybach unchanged.

But has it happened yet? We wanted to get our subject bar at upper left correct (factoring in the fact this was still a 2023) and to know in general. So we dug.

We found no specific announcement, and their reference materials vary widely, without spelling this out. Some corporate reference materials identify upcoming models as Mercedes-Benz EQE (etc.), yet these same documents are still headlined as Mercedes-EQ.

So is one neither a brand nor model, but an umbrella term? Will the protocol be "Mercedes-Benz EQE from Mercedes-EQ"? Not so fast. Other documents (even this vehicle's Monroney) don't say either, simply stating the model, "EQE 350+ SUV." However, further documents refer to e.g. "the EQE from Mercedes-Benz." So take a guess. It seems likely multiple approachness will be around awhile, one way or another. Benz may be the name and EQ the umbrella. Or EQ may be the name and Benz the umbrella. Stay tuned.

### ROOTS

This EQE was built in the USA. But only 10 percent of its parts are from the US/Canada, another 10 percent from Germany, leaving 80 percent unaccounted for. So we dug. An EV's battery is currently generally about 60 percent of cost (and is declining), so it must be from elsewhere outside those two 10 percents. That totals about 80 and leaves about 20 percent (though it's not uncommon to have a variety of other smaller parts from all over). Sources cite a Mercedes "battery partnership" with China plants since 2020, though the partners are now building a plant in Hungary. It all leads to informed speculation, but not confirmation. *Automotive News Europe* reports, though, that Beijing Automotive Group and China's Geely chairman Li Shufu are Mercedes' biggest shareholders. ■

