

The ASD differential was part of the 4MATIC system, but was also made available as a separate option for the 1987 season.



The subtle '4MATIC' badge on the tail provided the only real clue that the conservative-looking machine wearing it was in fact something of a technical marvel. This is the 300E 4MATIC model.



Tail of the 300D Turbo, as seen in the first US brochure.

under \$34,000, but it didn't take long for prices to increase. By February 1986, even on the East Coast, the stock 300E was commanding a more realistic \$36,710 (or \$35,870 in 5MT guise), at a time when the Audi 5000CS Turbo Quattro was around 28K. Optional extras included metallic paint as a no-cost option, a power sunroof (remarkably, also a NCO), leather trim (\$1190), velour trim (\$1170), heated front seats (\$405), orthopaedic front seats (\$255 per side), reinforced front seats (\$25 per side), and rear reading lamps (\$60). In stark contrast to the domestic market, there was nothing else.



The W124 is leading the way in this catalogue image from the States. Behind it we can see the W201 and W126 models. Note the running lights, along with the unusual headlight wipers and yellow-tinted foglights.

The latest Lang models were really quite impressive, with separate doors for each row of seats. Self-levelling rear suspension compensated for load variations.



An early face-lifted turbo-diesel estate on German plates. Incidentally, while this car has louvres in the front apron, as before, many grades had smooth lower bumper sections if a regular heating and ventilation system was fitted.



long-wheelbase cars were listed from September 1989, incidentally, although, as mentioned earlier on, it would be some time before series production got under way. On the other hand, the trio of 24v machines was made available to German buyers straight away, highlighting their marketing significance.

The majority of the optional extras were carried over, too, albeit a tad more expensive than before in most cases. ASR (short for Antriebschlupfregelung) was new, however, selected via the SA 471 code, and costing almost DM 4000.

Available on manual 260E, 300E, 300E-24, 300TE, 300TE-24, 300CE and 300CE-24 models, ASR was one of the 'driving dynamics concept' systems announced back in the autumn of 1985, but only now was this traction control setup finding its way into dealerships.

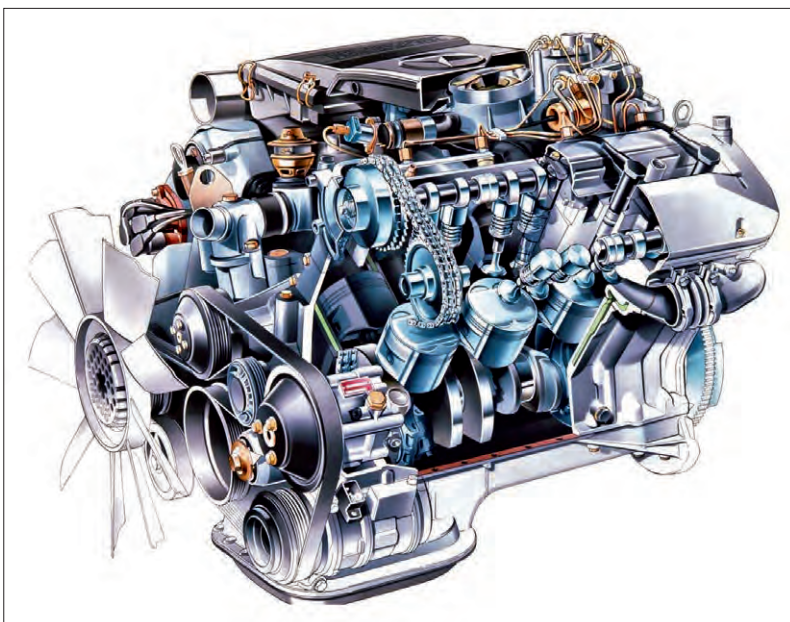
For the record, ASR used the front wheel ABS sensors and another pair of sensors close to and either side of the rear axle to gauge wheelspin, and a black box to activate the brakes – each wheel being operated on an individual basis. In this way, a brake could be applied on a wheel that was about to spin in order to optimize acceleration from a standing start, or stability maintained on bends taken too enthusiastically. A warning light on the dash alerted the driver that he was approaching the car's limit of adhesion, and in extreme cases, power from the engine could be reduced thanks to the use of an electronic throttle hooked up to the ECU.

Meanwhile, an automatic gearbox was fitted as a stock item on the pair of 300D Turbo variants only now, although this situation would soon change anyway; the 2- and 2.3-litre saloons and estates had a 4MT as standard, with all other models getting a 5MT gearbox. The 4MATIC cars and 300CE-24 coupé had a 400mm (15.7in) diameter leather steering wheel, with matching gearlever, but it was possible to specify a 390mm (15.3in) diameter one as a no-cost option; both were classed as an extra on all other grades.



Studio shot of the new 500E grade – a true ‘wolf-in-sheep’s clothing.’

Cutaway drawing of the M119 engine employed in the 500E. With a bore and stroke of 96.5 x 85.0mm, the normally-aspirated engine displaced 4973cc, and with a 10.0:1 c/r and modified fuel-injection system, delivered a healthy 326bhp and 354lbft of torque.



Launched at the Paris Salon, which opened on 4 October that year, the 500E used the 32v all-alloy 5-litre V8 from the contemporary SL (the 326bhp M119 unit), confirming the company’s wishes to be seen as a maker of sporting machinery. It was also luxurious, with a whole host of optional extras fitted as standard, and certainly



Work in progress at the Porsche works (where the project was known internally by the Type 2758 designation), and completed cars awaiting shipping to Sindelfingen for final inspection. (Courtesy Porsche)

novel, in that once full-scale production got under way in February 1991, it was assembled at the Porsche factory a few miles across town.

Although AMG had managed it, because the W124 body was not designed to take a vee-type power-unit, a significant amount of reworking was necessary in the engine bay, meaning a number of new panels needed to be made. The wheelarches were also flared to make space for the 16-inch rubber (more new metalwork), the transmission tunnel was widened, reinforcement sections were added to the floorpan and rear suspension areas, and a special air dam was fitted up front, which was lower



On 25 May 1992, Chancellor Helmut Kohl was on hand to open a new assembly plant at Rastatt. The factory's first task involved the final assembly of 124-series models, delivered as painted bodysells from Sindelfingen. Around 98,000 124s passed through here.



monobloc and three-piece guise, both coming with the option of a blue-black painted centre), a selection of wood trim parts, and a painted radiator grille (SA 775). Incidentally, the AMG catalogue from the time shows a steering wheel also, although for some reason this did not appear in the price list.

A few months later, a new factory was opened at Rastatt, to the west of Stuttgart, close to Karlsruhe. This would have links with the 124-series models, with a fair bit of final assembly taking place there to create breathing space at Sindelfingen. On the 9 June, and just as the two-millionth 124-series car was about to roll off the line (something that happened six days later), the convertible

at last – officially – became available on the home market. With production set at 50 cars per day, all left-hand drive, it would be a rare bird in 'Series 2' guise, although it did last longer in the Mercedes line-up than the other 24v machines.

THE CONTEMPORARY EXPORT MARKET

The 1992 season was interesting on a number of fronts: The 500E made its official debut Stateside, and an all-new V8 model was launched to run alongside it, initially in the export arena, although it would ultimately be destined to sell in Europe as well. This was yet another multi-cylinder car, underlining the company's high-performance image

Contemporary saloons from the W140 S-Class (in the foreground), the W124 E-Class (centre), and the new W202 C-Class. The 'family look' was a deliberate styling ploy ...



The nose of a diesel-engined model, showing off some of the latest styling updates applied to the 'Series 3' cars – the new radiator grille and three-pointed star location, fresh indicator units, and painted bumper inserts amongst them.



body introductions related to the forthcoming 210- and 208-series that would ultimately replace the W124-based variants.

THE CHANGES IN DETAIL

The easiest changes to spot are the cosmetic updates applied to the body, and they certainly provide some handy distinguishing features. Inspired by the S-Class design, a new bonnet provided the frame for a smaller radiator grille to sit in, with the traditional three-pointed star emblem mounted on the panelwork rather than the grille surround, as it had done since the 1920s. Incidentally, like the S-Class, the grille had three horizontal bars, as opposed to two on the C-Class.

To suit the latest recessed grille arrangement, a new headlight lens was manufactured. Much the same as the old light, the top inner edges of the lens were rounded off to allow the wider grille frame on the bonnet to sit flush. Placed next to these were clear indicator units, the same shape as before, but with orange bulbs being used to provide the necessary coloured illumination for the turn signals instead of an amber lens.

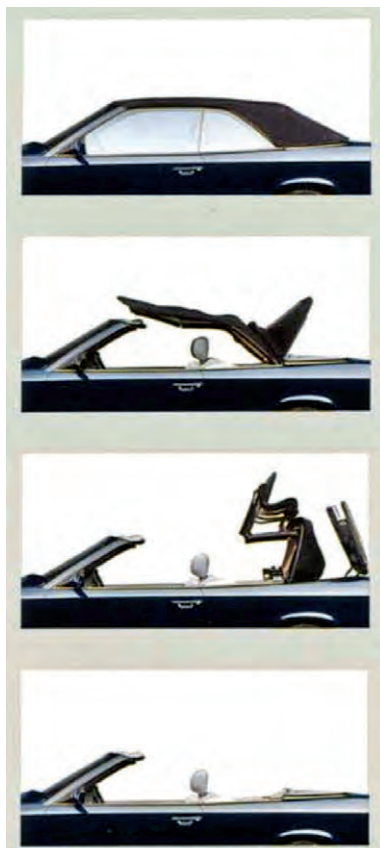
The front bumper assembly (including the model-dedicated air dam designs) was carried over, but the insert was now painted to match the bumper mouldings and side cladding. Combined with the new grille, this created the image of an altogether bolder and more modern front-end.



A clearer view of the new radiator grille arrangement provided by an E320 Coupé.



The E500 was given larger discs for the third generation run. However, note that the E500 continued with the old rear bumper assembly, which had been modified to suit the flared wheelarches. Given that the car was destined to be dropped from the line-up in the very near future, with the low sales volume involved, it simply wasn't worth investing in new mouldings.



The power hood in operation – now a standard fitment on all cabriolet models.



Interior of a 'Series 3' convertible, with the Becker radio showing this to be an early example. The main thing to point out, though, is the red hood switch on the tail of the centre console, just aft of the mirror adjustment toggle that had been introduced for the 1993 season.



Dramatic shot of the E36 AMG Coupé on the move.



A six-door E250 Diesel long-wheelbase model, soon to be axed from the line-up.



The E200 Convertible of 1994 vintage. Incidentally, hardtops were produced by several aftermarket companies, though not by the factory.

at the very heart of the E36 package, however, with the M104 six being given a larger 91.0mm bore and 92.4mm stroke to take the displacement up to 3604cc. Power and torque increased as a result, with 272bhp and 284lbft being quoted, delivered to the rear wheels via a four-speed

automatic transmission. The suspension was duly updated to handle the extra horses, but the regular E320 braking system was considered adequate. Prices ranged from DM 113,620 for the E36 AMG Estate, up to DM 140,300 for the E36 AMG Cabriolet; the E36 AMG Coupé sat between them at DM 122,072.

The E200 Cabriolet was listed in Germany from March 1994, with basic trim and steel wheels keeping the price down to a reasonable DM 69,920. Most prices increased by around two per cent at this time, although the cost of the existing cabriolets, the E500, the AMG cars and the two Lang models remained the same, in the latter case, perhaps because the six-door variants were only listed until July 1994, so didn't have long to go. Only a handful of 'Series 3' lwb cars were made as a result.

Sure enough, the E200 Cabriolet was on display at the 1994 Geneva Show in early March, playing a minor role as it was the launch of the new W140 S-Class that stole the limelight. Also making its debut in Switzerland was the 500-off E500 Limited saloon, available in Brilliant Silver (744) or a special Sapphire Black (009) only, matched with black leather with striking grey, red or green inserts and detailing, plus black bird's eye maple woodwork, with the familiar walnut trim being a no-cost alternative. The E500 Limited came with six-spoke 'EVO-II' 8.25j x 17 alloys (SA

APPENDIX II

ENGINE SPECIFICATIONS

Split into petrol and diesel units and running in numerical order, the following is a survey of all the mainstream production engines employed in the 124-series models featured in this book, complete with the leading specifications and any other notes of interest. The figures and code number changes are based on the domestic market situation. As such, some of the dates and specifications may not tie-up with exported machines, although these are all covered in the main text. In addition, certain models were introduced earlier or ran longer than others (convertibles versus saloons, for example), so the date shown is the first and last use, regardless of body type; Appendix I details the production era for each model.

PETROL (GASOLINE) ENGINES

Type 102.922 (M102 V20)

Production (CY)	1984-1990
Cylinders	Straight-four, water-cooled
Main bearings	Five, in cast iron block
Valve operation	Sohc, 8v, in alloy head
Bore & stroke	89.0 x 80.2mm
Cubic capacity	1997cc
Compression ratio	9.1:1
Fuel delivery system	Single Stromberg 175CDT carburettor

Power @ rpm	109bhp (80kW) DIN @ 5200
Torque @ rpm	125lbft (170Nm) DIN @ 2500

Notes: Used in the strict 200 and 200T models. Carburettor changed to a Pierburg 2E-E unit in September 1986, reducing torque to 122lbft (165Nm) at 3000rpm. Cat-equipped cars available from the same month, reducing power to 105bhp (77kW) at 5500rpm, and torque to 118lbft (160Nm). Second generation cars were listed with 105bhp (77kW) and 116lbft (158Nm) of torque at 3500rpm.

Type 102.963 (M102 E20)

As per 102.922, except:

Production (CY)	1985-1992
Fuel delivery system	Bosch KE-Jetronic fuel-injection
Power @ rpm	122bhp (90kW) DIN @ 5100
Torque @ rpm	131lbft (178Nm) DIN @ 3500

Notes: Used in 200E, 200TE and 200CE models. Cat-equipped cars available as an option (becoming standard in Germany from September 1988), reducing power to 118bhp (87kW) at 5200rpm and torque to 127lbft (172Nm) at 3500rpm.

Type 102.982 (M102 E23)

Production (CY)	1984-1992
Cylinders	Straight-four, water-cooled
Main bearings	Five, in cast iron block
Valve operation	Sohc, 8v, in alloy head
Bore & stroke	95.5 x 80.2mm
Cubic capacity	2299cc
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Fuel delivery system	Bosch KE-Jetronic fuel-injection

Power @ rpm	136bhp (100kW) DIN @ 5100
Torque @ rpm	151lbft (205Nm) DIN @ 3500

Notes: Used in the 230E, 230TE and 230CE models. Cat-equipped cars optional from September 1985, and standard from September 1986, reducing power to 132bhp (97kW) and torque to 146lbft (198Nm) at the same revs.

Type 103.940 (M103 E26)

Production (CY)	1984-1992
Cylinders	Straight-six, water-cooled
Main bearings	Seven, in cast iron block
Valve operation	Sohc, 12v, in alloy head
Bore & stroke	82.9 x 80.2mm
Cubic capacity	2599cc
Compression ratio	10.0:1
Fuel delivery system	Bosch KE-Jetronic fuel-injection

Power @ rpm	170bhp (125kW) DIN @ 5800
Torque @ rpm	170lbft (230Nm) DIN @ 4500

Notes: Used in the 260E and 260E LWB models. Compression ratio lowered to 9.2:1 from September 1985, reducing power to 166bhp (122kW) at 5800rpm and torque to 168lbft (228Nm) at 4600rpm. Cat-equipped cars available from September 1985, with catalytic converters made standard from September 1986, further reducing output to 160bhp (118kW) and 162lbft (220Nm).

Type 103.943 (M103 E26)

As per 103.940, except:

Production (CY)	1985-1991
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Notes: Used in the 260E 4MATIC models.

Type 103.980 (M103 E30)

Production (CY)	1984-1985
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