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Over 7,000 orders already taken for the new sports roadster

The new Mercedes-Benz SLK-Class: Celebrating its world premiere at the Geneva Motor Show

Stuttgart – The second generation of the globally successful Mercedes-Benz SLK-Class is ready for launch, and Mercedes-Benz is set to present the new sports roadster to the public for the first time at the Geneva Motor Show.

The presentation follows the publication of the first photos of the new SLK at the start of the year, which themselves sparked an extremely enthusiastic response. A total of over 7,000 orders have been taken since sales release already. Prices for the SLK-Class range from 33,524 euros for the entry-level model to 63,974 euros (ex factory). Three different engine variants are available for the new car, developing from 120 kW/163 hp to 265 kW/360 hp. The range includes – for the first time in this vehicle class – an eight-cylinder power unit. The V6 engine in the SLK 350, meanwhile, develops 200 kW/272 hp and delivers impressively dynamic driving pleasure.

The second generation of the Mercedes compact two-seater also boasts an exquisite overall design, several details of which take their cue from Formula 1 racing cars. The SLK thus remains true to its reputation as a trendsetter and technological leader in this category of sports cars. The further developed vario-roof, which transforms the roadster into a coupé in just 22 seconds, is joined on the list of standard equipment by head/thorax sidebags, adaptive front airbags and two-stage belt force limiters. The car's chassis, steering and manual transmission have been given an even sportier edge, whilst the interior features a world first, in the shape of the innovative AIRSCARF neck-level heating system.

Over 308,000 delighted customers in every corner of the world, more than 40 inter-national awards and a position as the global leader in its market segment give the

outgoing SLK-Class an extremely impressive CV. The Mercedes-Benz roadster has been setting standards in its class since its arrival in autumn 1996 – not just by virtue of its ground-breaking technological prowess but also thanks to a quite different attribute: its emotional appeal.

The SLK has captured the hearts of the public like no other car and demonstrated that driving is also about passion and *joie de vivre*. In many cases it was love at first sight which prompted customers to make a spontaneous decision to purchase, a compulsion to experience and enjoy the driving pleasure on offer in the Mercedes sports car.

By the end of the first full sales year, over 55,000 SLK models had rolled off the assembly line -- 50 percent more than originally planned. With a conquest sales rate of roughly 42 percent in the major European markets, the two-seater won over a wave of new customers for Mercedes-Benz, making it one of the protagonists in the Stuttgart auto maker's first strategic product initiative.

Design aesthetics, technical excellence and exemplary levels of safety underpin the construction of the compact Mercedes roadster, which has long since taken on a cult image in the modern era. Strong demand for the SLK in the used-car market, where it is one of the lowest-depreciating models, provides ample evidence of this popularity.

More sporty and powerful than ever: The new SLK-Class

Eight years after the first SLK premiere in Turin, the second generation of the roadster is set to celebrate its world premiere at the Geneva Motor Show 2004. As refreshing, enlivening and potent as an Italian espresso, the new Roadster displays its sporting prowess in much stronger terms than the outgoing model. Underpinning these enhanced performance credentials are the powerful new engines, a sporty suspension set-up, more direct steering and a precise six-speed-manual transmission.

Inspired by Formula 1 racing cars, the exterior design of the roadster continues the dynamic theme and identifies the SLK-Class as a fully-fledged member of the Mercedes-Benz sports-car family. The interior, meanwhile, features switches, buttons

and trim elements with silver-coloured surfaces, creating a striking contrast to the dark of the instrument panel. Plus, customers can choose from a range of six shades for the leather trim, or any one of twelve designo colours.

The roadster also builds on the proven strengths of its predecessor – in the shape of a further developed, space-saving vario-roof, for example, even more innovative safety features and unique new systems such as bi-xenon headlamps with cornering light function, the 7G-TRONIC seven-speed automatic transmission and the neck-level heating system AIRSCARF (optional).

Impressively equipped and with a powerful engine: The SLK 200 KOMPRESSOR

Customers can choose from three variants of the SLK-Class. With its TWINPULSE four-cylinder engine, the **SLK 200 KOMPRESSOR** combines impressive power with exemplary economy. Both faster and developing more torque than the outgoing model with the same output, it uses only 8.7 litres of petrol per 100 kilometres – around eight percent less fuel – in the European driving cycle. However, the new sports roadster offers a lot more in terms of its agility, high-class looks and feel, comfort and range of standard equipment, which includes the following features:

- Adaptive front airbags
- ESP[®] with Anti-lock Braking System, Acceleration Skid Control and Brake Assist
- Headlamp Assist (automatically activated headlamps)
- Two-stage belt force limiters
- Belt tensioners for driver and passenger
- Head/thorax side airbags
- Light-alloy wheels: 7 J x 16
- Multifunction steering wheel (leather)
- Six-speed manual transmission
- Sports seats with magnesium frame

- Vario-roof with heated rear window
- Central locking

The four-cylinder SLK 200 KOMPRESSOR is priced at 33,524 euros ex factory.

Sports car dynamics from the top drawer: The SLK 350 with new V6 engine

The **SLK 350** offers everything that you would expect from a full-blooded sports roadster: spirit, authority and undiluted driving pleasure. Under the bonnet, the newly developed six-cylinder engine gives the SLK a particularly powerful heartbeat, one which sets the driver's pulse racing the second the key is turned. One press of the accelerator and you're hooked, the V6 powerpack accelerating the two-seater from 0 to 100 km/h in only 5.6 seconds. At 6000 rpm a maximum output of 200 kW/ 272 hp is achieved – a pace-setting figure in this displacement class.

Impressive torque of 350 Newton metres is available as low down as 2400 rpm and remains constant up to 5000 rpm, which also allows a quite different, yet also typically roadster, style of driving: relaxed, enjoyable cruising in high gears – forever in the reassuring knowledge that all you have to do is touch the accelerator lightly to unlock the engine's imposing pulling power. The technical make-up and equipment features of the SLK 350 are a reflection of the performance-based character of this model variant. The V6 models comes with the following items of standard equipment not included in the SLK 200 KOMPRESSOR:

- Enlarged brakes with perforated front brake discs
- Interior lighting package
- THERMATIC air conditioning
- 17-inch light-alloy wheels in five-spoke design
- Mixed tyres (front: 225/45 R 17, rear: 245/40 R 17)

The SLK 350 is priced at 43,384 euros ex factory.

Powerful and unique: The SLK 55 AMG with eight-cylinder dynamics

With the **SLK 55 AMG**, the second generation of Mercedes' compact roadster has produced a car which gives the sports car elite a run for their money. No other model in

this vehicle class can compete with the 265-kW/360-hp output and 510 Newton metres of torque generated by the top-of-the-range SLK. The V8 engine at the source of this prodigious power also has the distinction of being the only eight-cylinder unit available in this market segment. The standard equipment package for the AMG model is equally as exclusive, and includes the following items not offered in the SLK 200 KOMPRESSOR:

- AMG sports suspension
- AMG sports seats
- AMG bodystyling with special front apron and spoiler lip on the boot lid
- Mercedes-AMG ergonomic sports steering wheel
- High-performance braking system with perforated composite brake discs at the front
- Interior lighting package
- THERMATIC air conditioning
- Mercedes-AMG 18 -inch light-alloy wheels in multi-spoke design
- Mixed tyres (front: 225/40 R 18, rear: 245/35 R 18)
- Nappa leather upholstery
- 7G-TRONIC seven-speed automatic transmission with AMG-SPEEDSHIFT and steering wheel gearshift buttons

The new eight-cylinder SLK-Class is priced at 63,974 euros.

Exclusive to Mercedes-Benz: High-tech features for extra comfort and driving pleasure

New technical developments and innovations from luxury-class Mercedes-Benz models are available as options for the SLK, further improving comfort and active safety and enhancing the value of the sports roadster. A range of systems can be ordered for the new model which only Mercedes-Benz offers in this vehicle class. AIRSCARF, THERMOTRONIC and 7G-TRONIC are good examples:

- The innovative new neck-level heating system AIRSCARF allows the driver and passenger in the SLK to keep the vario-roof open even in colder weather and thus enjoy the roadster experience more frequently and over a longer period of time than has previously been possible. At the touch of a button, heated air flows out of

special vents in the head restraints, acting as an invisible scarf to warm the driver and passenger's neck and head. During a journey, AIRSCARF adjusts the air flow according to the speed of the car and the outside temperature.

- Another new arrival in this vehicle class is THERMOTRONIC. This luxury automatic climate control system is fitted with sun and pollutant sensors, allowing it to create the perfect on-board climate in any situation.
- The newly developed seven-speed automatic transmission 7G-TRONIC – the world's first transmission of this type for passenger cars – opens the door to more powerful acceleration and fast mid-range sprints, as well as helping to reduce fuel consumption. 7G-TRONIC can be ordered as an option in conjunction with the V6 engine in the SLK 350 (fitted as standard on the SLK 55 AMG) and can also be combined with steering wheel gearshift buttons, enabling the driver to make optimum use of the engine's exceptional power reserves in any driving situation by changing gear manually.

Another new feature of the SLK-Class are bi-xenon headlamps with cornering light function, the control and display system COMAND APS with a colour screen and Europe-wide DVD navigation function, a 380-watt sound system with surround sound and the automatic tyre pressure loss warning function of the Electronic Stability Program (ESP[®]). Plus, infrared remote control for opening and closing the vario-roof is available as an option.

The new Mercedes-Benz SLK-Class will arrive at Mercedes-Benz' European sales and service outlets and dealerships on March 27, 2004.

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