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The What Car? 2007 Awards

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Mercedes-Benz wins two prestigious awards

Mercedes-Benz topped two categories at the 2007 What Car? Car of the Year Awards. This prestigious event held at London's Grosvenor House Hotel in January saw Mercedes-Benz celebrate wins in both the Luxury Car, and the all-important Safety categories.

Safety

The Safety award saw Mercedes-Benz overtake every other car manufacturer, demonstrating once more that their vital safety work has been recognised. Over the last fifty years, Mercedes-Benz has pioneered a multitude of safety features which have been adopted and are now fitted as standard across most manufacturers. This includes modern-day staples such as body shell crumple zones (introduced in 1957), diagonal safety belts (1965), anti-lock brakes (1978), airbags (1981) and electronic stability control systems (1995). In 1997, Mercedes-Benz began implementing the ESP® Electronic Stability Programme across its vehicle range. ABS with Brake Assist and Acceleration Skid Control also feature on every car alongside a host of advanced airbags and occupant restraint systems.

A further innovation, PRE-SAFE®, appeared in 2002 and is now standard on six model ranges. It detects a potential accident via a series of sensors and in the moments before collision can protect the vehicle occupants by electronically pre-tensioning the seat belts, moving electric seats to a more upright position, and if necessary, closing windows and the sunroof. Additionally fitted features can even enable the vehicle to brake independently of the driver, maintaining a safe distance regardless of speed.

Commenting on the Safety Award, Steve Fowler, Group Editor of What Car? observed: "For half a century, Mercedes has been at the forefront of safety innovation and research. Mercedes fits stability control to every model in the range. Where it leads, others follow."

S-Class

The second award of the evening went to a car which has perhaps premiered more safety systems than any other in the world - the S-Class Saloon. Winning the Luxury Car category, S 320 CDI managed to seize the crown from last year's winner, the S 500, and is the seventh time in eight years that the S-Class has taken the honours.

Steve Fowler explained why the S-Class won: "The S-Class is still head and shoulders above its rivals. It's another easy win this year. Running costs are an essential consideration and the S 320 CDI's diesel engine is not only smooth and powerful, it's also extremely fuel-efficient, averaging 34mpg. The Mercedes boasts the best residuals in its class, too."

"It's built to the most exacting standards using the finest materials. There's acres of room in which to stretch out, while scrupulous attention to detail, lashings of high-grade leather, polished wood and aluminium switches endow the cabin with unsurpassed quality."

The safety award-winning Mercedes-Benz range starts from £13,770 on the road, and the luxury S-Class range is available from £48,455.

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