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Mercedes-Benz 107 E35 Third Generation SL Comparison Chart

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Mercedes-Benz R107 SL Comparison Chart									
Model	Years	Number Built	Engine	BHP	Torque	Trans	Top Speed mph/kph	0-100 km/h	
280SL	1974-1985	25,500	2746cc 6 cyl	185	176	4 Spd Auto	124/200	11	
280SLC	1974-1981	10,700	2746cc 6 cyl	185	176	4 Speed Auto	124/200	11	
300SL	1985-1989	N/A	2962cc 6 cyl	188	192	4 Speed Auto	127/204	9.6	
350SL	1970-1980	15,300	3499cc V8	200	211	3 Speed Auto	127/204	9	
350SLC	1971-1980	14,000	3499cc V8	200	211	3 Speed Auto	127/204	9	
380SL	1980-1985	53,200	3818cc V8	218	224	4 Speed Auto	134/216	9	
380SLC	1980-1985	3,700	3818cc V8	218	224	4 Speed Auto	134/216	9	
420SL	1985-1989	N/A	4196cc V8	218	242	4 Speed Auto	134/216	9	
450SL	1971-1980	66,300	4520cc V8	225	279	3 Speed Auto	134/216	8.5	
450SLC	1972-1980	31,800	4520cc V8	225	279	3 Speed Auto	134/216	8.5	
450SLC 5.0	1977-1981	2,700	4990cc V8	240	297	3 Speed Auto	140/225	8.5	
500SL	1980-1989	N/A	4973cc V8	240	297	4 Speed Auto	140/225	7.8	
500SLC	1980-1989	1,300	4973cc V8	249	297	4 Speed Auto	140/225	7.8	
560SL	1985-1989	1,300	5547cc V8	300	279	4 Speed Auto	137/220	8	

Impressions Of The R107 At Release

Whenever Mercedes-Benz presented an all new model, it generally incorporated a number of advanced technical features. The 350 SL was no exception. It heralded a new departure in sports cars in that the primary emphasis was placed more on comfort and safety-features which, inherently, made a car heavier - than on classic design for light weight and handling.



Solid and impressive, the styling of the 350 SL appeared to be slightly heavy handed with the "pagoda" top in place. The car had better-balanced lines in open form with its top down...

It was obvious even to the casual observer that the 350 SL wasn't competition oriented, but traffic oriented. And as such, it left little to be desired. On a long trip it possessed all the attributes of a then modern GT car: comfort, relative silence, a good ride, adequate luggage capacity for two and, most important of all, it required very little driving effort to cover ground rapidly.

The front- and rear-suspension components of the 200/250 Series saloons were employed, putting an end to the low-pivot swing axle which has been utilised for so many years in the Mercedes sports cars. With the 350SL the rear wheels were suspended on diagonal, lower arms with coil springs having coaxially located dampers. The aluminium, 3.5-litre V8 engine was a scaled-down version of the big, 6.3-litre Mercedes unit and was identical to that powering the 280 SE/SEL 3.5 and 300 SEL 3.5 saloons.

It delivered 200 (DIN) bhp @ 5800 rpm and possessed a single overhead camshaft for each bank of cylinders and Bosch indirect electronic fuel injection. Very smooth in operation, it had a good reserve of both power and torque throughout most of its operating range. Either a manual, 4-speed transmission or the Mercedes-Benz 4-speed automatic unit with torque converter and planetary gears could be specified.

It was in the area of body construction, however, where the greatest advances had been made. Karl Wilfert, one of the world's leading authorities on automotive safety led the design team responsible for the 350 SL's body. Of unitised construction, it was delivered with a cloth, convertible top and the "pagoda"-type, removable hard-top could be ordered as an option, just as on the previous 230/250/280 SL types. Whereas these cars had aluminium doors, those of the 350 SL were steel, in compliance with the U.S. safety norms.

Much use was made of the ElastoElement-Methode (ESEM), developed jointly by Mercedes-Benz and Teldix. This system employed a computer to analyse each component relative to the total strength of the entire body unit. It was possible to increase windshield post strength by 50 per cent. The posts were also designed so that rain water was deflected upwards, over the top, rather than against the side windows. An advanced ventilation system directed air against these to keep them clear. The corrugations on the lower body sides also tended to keep the windows free from mud and water splashed upwards from the road, the wrap-around tail lights being specially designed to remain clean under adverse conditions. Halogen headlamps were standard equipment and, in those countries which permitted its use, a halogen rear fog warning lamp was employed.

Recirculating-ball-type power steering was standard and the 4-spoke steering wheel was of new design to reduce impact, combined with the previously employed Mercedes-Benz padded wheel centre. The side mirror could be adjusted from the inside and was constructed to snap off under impact. Large, round, white/black instruments were clustered directly in front of the driver to supply instant, legible information. Ergonomically, the interior was well thought out, enhancing the ease with which the 350 SL could be driven. Though a 2-seater, a small rear seat for children could be specified as an option.

With a top-speed capability of 130 mph and a zero-to-60 time of under 9 seconds, the brake system had to match the 350 SL's performance potential, being of the dual-circuit type, power assisted with discs all round, the front pair ventilated. The newly introduced, electronic Anti-Bloc unit, which could intermittently apply each brake individually for optimum retardation under all road and climatic conditions, was available for the first time, as an option.

In keeping with all the safety features, the steering box was located behind the front-wheel centres and the column was designed to collapse on impact. The fuel tank was positioned above the rear-wheel centres, behind the passenger compartment and to the front of the luggage boot, thus moving it out of the danger zone in a rear-end collision. Door handles were newly designed to be pulled, and the rear window of the optional hard-top was electrically heated on some.

The U.S. version of the 350 SL used a 4.5-litre engine coupled to a 3-speed automatic transmission, the larger-displacement powerplant being able to more easily comply with the strict emissions standards. The impression you had when viewing the 350SL from the outside was that of a rugged, sturdy construction, the smooth, ripple-free sheet metal and fine finish in the best of Mercedes tradition enhancing this feeling. Entry and exit were comfortable and the seat backs were adjustable for rake. Visibility was excellent and the cockpit was very roomy, but it was a little surprising to see such a large steering wheel considering there was power assistance.

The fuel injection engine idled very smoothly and power came on instantly, which was also due to the single overhead camshafts. Both the manual and automatic transmissions were well matched to the engine's potential, the automatic unit shifting very smoothly. The basic tendency was that of oversteering, but there was never the feeling of having to force the car into a corner, the steering effort being low. All in all, it was an excellent road car for rapid journeys.

The Perfect Sports Car For The 1970's

However, it was in town driving and dense-traffic conditions where it became evident, especially with an automatic transmission-equipped 350 SL, how radically the term "sports car" has changed in the eyes of the Mercedes-Benz engineering department. The SL had metamorphosed from the 300 SL of the early Fifties - a hard sprung, competition-oriented machine based directly on the 300 SLR racing sports car - to a comfortable tourer which didn't require much effort to make it go fast; it was, as a matter of fact, a rather sedate machine in comparison to the driver's-car nature of the 300 SL, which required effort to negotiate the road rapidly and great skill to control at high speeds. It was, however, one of the fastest road cars of its era.

The 350 SL was just another good GT automobile; safe, simple to drive and not requiring any great skill, very comfortable and, despite all the advanced design features, not in the least bit an exciting car. A sports car for the Seventies had different functions to fulfill than one from the Fifties. It had to meet rigorous safety and emissions standards for the U.S. market; it also had to cope with increasingly dense traffic conditions in Western Europe. The 350 SL did all these things very well because that is what it was designed for. In this respect it was the perfect sports car for the 1970s.

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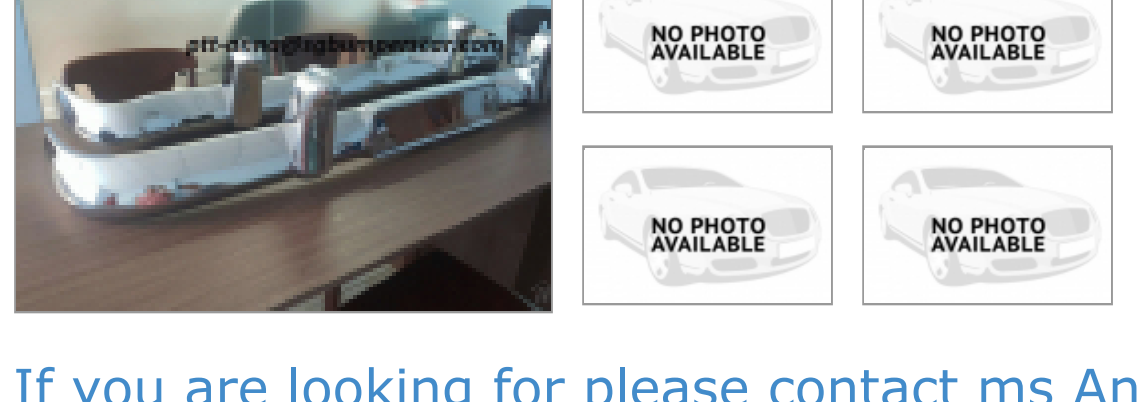
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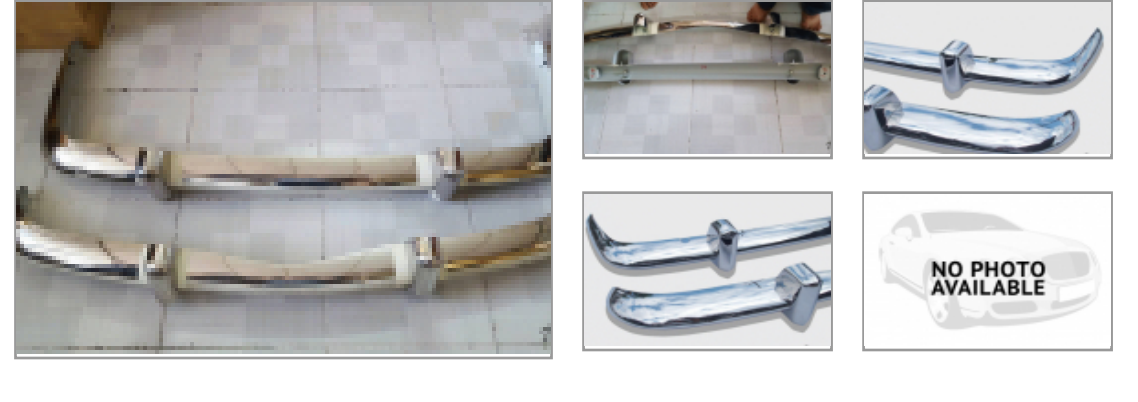
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