

peugeot 504.info

50 WAYS TO FIGHT THE GAS SQUEEZE

THE COMPLETE AUTOMOTIVE MAGAZINE • AUGUST 1979

MOTOR TREND

\$1.25
\$1.50
In Canada

FIRST REPORT
**1980 MARK VI LINCOLN
Z28 & TRANS AM
CONVERTIBLES**
5-DOOR COMPARISON
CORONA VS. CITATION

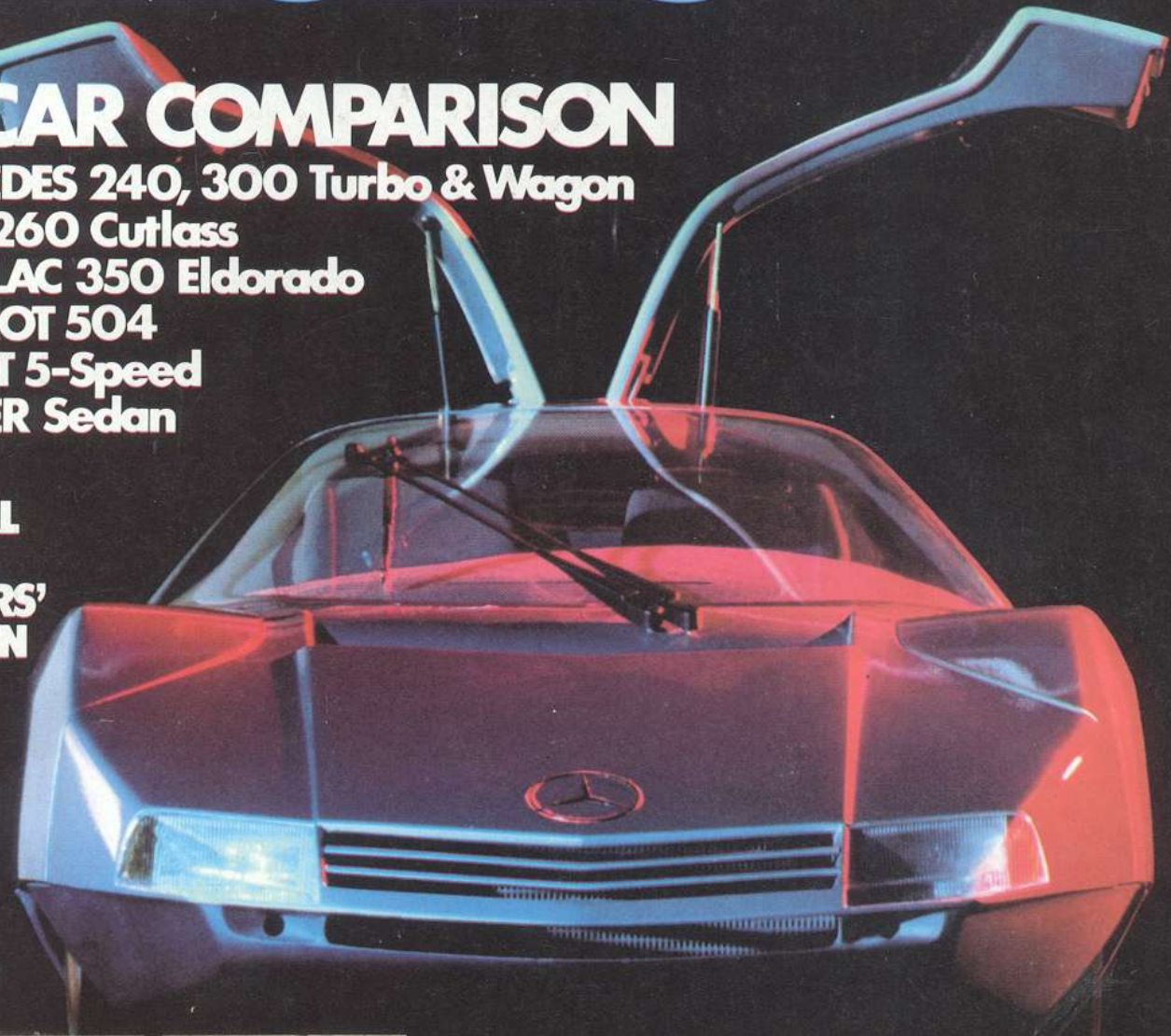


DIESELS

8 CAR COMPARISON

- MERCEDES 240, 300 Turbo & Wagon
- OLDS 260 Cutlass
- CADILLAC 350 Eldorado
- PEUGEOT 504
- RABBIT 5-Speed
- DASHER Sedan

**PLUS:
SPECIAL
DIESEL
OWNERS'
SECTION**



200-MPH DIESEL

20KIPAI#R004C078 JAN80
EDW KEIPER
BX 955
ERIE
PA 16912



AUTO REPAIR: getting your money's worth

The first and last
thundering turtle ride

by Ro McGonegal

PHOTOGRAPHY: BOB D'OLIVO AND JOHN GATES

Dieselmania!



The Manchurian candidate had nothing on us. Say the word diesel and our shoulders hunch, nape hairs standing hopelessly at attention. This is accompanied by a feeling as inexplicable as any love/hate relationship, and it creeps over you like the morning of a 90-degree day.

Diesel Land is a curious place to be, disorienting and terrifying at first. You discover the real meaning of "get a horse" and of the homicidal look in the eyes of that steaming 18-wheeler driver when you're in front of him at his fill station.

When we took our thundering turtles into the void (see map), we did it at the height of the petrol war, on one of the worst fuel weekends of the year. We had our own way of getting what we needed (see Editor's Report), and we felt the security attached to this, which gave us a distinct feeling of superiority over every gas-crazy hellion on the roadway.

(Yes, Madge, only the chicquiest people need drive a diesel, you know. Gasoline is so proletarian.)

Happily, this condescension lasts only as long as you're inside a diesel. You

see people looking, and you say to yourself, "Yes, it's loud and it smokes, but I'm smart just for having one... and you know it."

So in the tules somewhere north of Taft (California), 17 of us found out what the diesel holds for a finite number of Americans.

There is choice, certainly; our fleet was confined to cars manufactured or imported for legal U.S. consumption, ranging from the Volkswagen Rabbit to the Mercedes-Benz 300SD. In between there were the VW Dasher, Peugeot 504, Cadillac Eldorado 350, Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme 260, Mercedes 240D and 300TD.

While we couldn't have been more aware of the importance of fuel conservation on this particular weekend, we decided to wring the diesels through a mania of our own, to see them at their best (or worst) in altitude that ranged from sea level to a mile above; bombing across a valley floor well beyond the double nickle; cutting and switching through a gargantuan model of Mulholland Drive, and tooting officiously down the freeway. If you've never heard a chorus of eight flat-out diesels, you haven't lived.

This curious ability of the diesel engine to vocalize at its upper limits created a curious hole in each of the eight fuel tanks. And at the end of this piece, you'll find the inescapable spec chart, and mileage figures nearly as good as the EPA city mileage. The figures are like that because we drove the diesels as if we didn't have a dime in them, something you will probably not do. Your fuel mileage, should you decide on a diesel, will be an easy 10 mpg better than what you see on our chart.

You shouldn't feel disillusioned; everything you've heard about diesel mileage is true, to a point. After that point, inertia takes a heavy toll, creating an inordinate amount of friction that rubs away power and uses more fuel than is economically feasible. In truth, at normal cruising speed and beyond, the gas engine runs much more efficiently.

The diesel does yeoman duty; stuffy in-town traffic and bumper-locked freeway jams are its watering places. But it does well with a 60-mph ceiling, too.

We broke out the Rabbit (the smallest) and the 300SD (biggest and most powerful) for an extended mileage run and discovered that the littlest VW, which recorded a 41.8-mpg on the thrash trip, unreeled a beautiful 52.3 on a freeway run that included 25 miles of solid Memorial Day traffic. The turbo-charged 300SD cranked out 22.6 mpg during the torture parade, but through even measures of inner city and freeway, it blew that figure to a nice, live-a-





A member of the largest race of diesels sits idly behind part of the MT force while its driver steams.



At prescribed intervals, chief Dianna (right) made us stop and write things down.



ble 30.1. Is this the stuff of which history is made?

After an indoctrination that would make advancing to Webelos seem like a cakewalk, some of our committee has managed to stay aloof, uncharmed by the grace and solace one experiences while learning to drive the diesel.

No, it doesn't have three gearshift levers and 22 forward speeds or a hand-oiler on the dash. Driving the diesel only requires common sense and an hourglass. You must be able to anticipate sharp curves, gluts of snarling gasoline cars, the whim of every other driver and, most importantly, the imminence of passing another vehicle.

The key to the diesel is simple. It is something we shall call the Speed Zone, which is the relationship of the engine's rpm to its torque curve.

Most diesels produce optimum torque between 1600 and 3000 rpm. Once you're in the Speed Zone, you can fairly well leave the gearshift lever in high, even when engine speed is so low it





A highlight of the Diesels to Hell Ride was the Fred Gregory-selected menu. Mandel and McCraw scrabble for the last brandied cherry.



The Thundering Turtles as seen from the rear; gasoline cars never smelled or sounded like this, as the locals can attest.

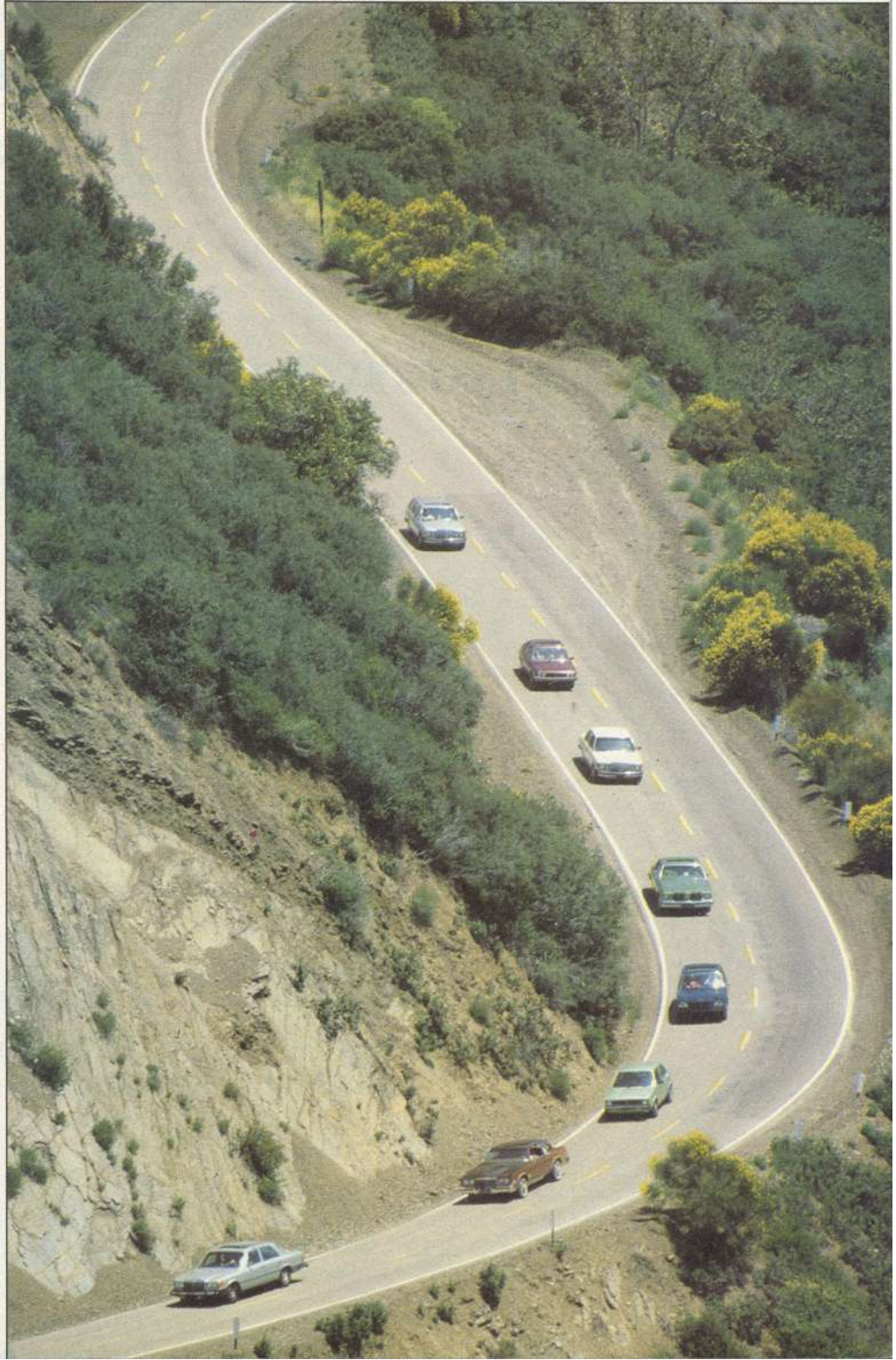
would make a gasoline engine vomit its crankshaft. All passing, cornering and maintenance of cruising speed should be confined to this range, because once the diesel's momentum is interrupted, you'll have to shift gears, put the pedal to the metal and suffer the interminable WAIT until the engine regains the preferred plateau. So you find your particular niche, your place in the asphalt pecking order, and hold it. Diesel driving is just as much of a game as driving a gas car; the only difference is that events seem to happen in minutes rather than seconds.

So if you can glom onto a diesel real fast, you'll be golden, right? You might be if you do it right now—because by the end of this month (August), the powers that be will decide whether the restriction on particulate matter should remain status quo or if it will be lowered even more. If the latter happens, the production of Detroit-built diesels will cease because GM has neither the time nor the inclination to embark on an intensive emissions program.

The diesels of some other companies (VW and Mercedes) will meet the new proposal until 1983, when regs will be very, very tough. At that point, there will probably be no more imported diesels either.

And there's more. In the latter part of May, the media handily shifted from the gas crisis to the even better story: will there be enough No. 2 diesel to run the automobile? Since only 2.4% of all cars in the U.S. are diesel powered, they appear to be at the bottom of the list, following home, industrial, agricultural, truck and locomotive allocations.

In the Southwest, No. 2 sells for almost 80 cents a gallon, but if a diesel fuel shortage is hyped like the gas crisis was hyped, the price could easily match that of unleaded gasoline before the end of the summer. There have already been isolated incidents of trucks blocking gas station driveways in protest over the rising cost of No. 2. So at the very worst, it might come down to something like pay your money and take your choice of a gasoline-powered car or a diesel-powered car. One man's erotica is another man's ennui.



VW Rabbit 5-speed

The Rabbit diesel is a flat amazing car. It does things so well, you're inclined to think that all autos should be built this way—and maybe someday they will.

The Rabbit is not as fast as its gasoline brother, but the diesel engine will wind to at least 5000 rpm (pretty risqué for a clatter motor) and affords the Rabbit a modicum of flexibility over most other small-displacement diesels. The diesel is apt to speed cleanly through its first three gears (which are direct) and then bask in the unhurried rpm of its overdrive 4th and 5th gears. The car doesn't nose-dive when you change ratios, and the engine has enough power to propel two plus luggage and full-on air conditioning to an all-day 85-mph outing.

The Rabbit's negative side manifested itself in the handling (the extra weight of the diesel enhanced understeer characteristics) and the brakes (which faded to the point of fright). The first thing is inherent, but it is entirely possible that the Rabbit's brakes were torched by some other magazine scribe before we took delivery.

Comfort and cargo space are outstanding for a car with such small exterior dimensions, and you feel like you're being hosted by a much larger vehicle—until you slide it into the first available parking space. The manual



steering is on the heavy side, but it's nothing a modern-day woman (or man) can't manage.

With the 5-speed coupled to the diesel, you are apt to do a lot of shifting; and so, to accommodate, the Rabbit's lever is positive, especially when you are going for reverse in a hurry. No hunt, no peck; it just pushes in as easily as second nature.

The only place the Rabbit comes near a fall is when it must be started on a severe grade with the air conditioning running. If you can get the clutch out without stalling the engine, you are in for one of the slowest uphill climbs in memory. Do yourself a favor and turn

the a/c off. But with 50-mpg out-of-the-box mileage, and the best comfort for the money anywhere, who cares?

Glow plug waiting time: 12 seconds

Staff Reactions

On the bottom line: "Comes closest to being a 'fun' diesel car, and at 53 mpg, what else need be said?"—*B. Nagy*

On owning the car: "You betcha Red Rider... love the passive restraint system and the a/c. The car sustains a strong 55 mph with elan."—*J. McCraw*

On the bottom line: "I can feel the added front end weight... it exacerbates pushing tendencies. But at full list, the Rabbit is the car of the decade."—*L. Mandel*

VW Dasher 5-door sedan

If you're waiting for a side-by-side Dasher/Rabbit comparison, don't hold your breath. Although the cars share certain mechanicals and construction ideas, there's no real similarity between them.

The Dasher's interior is opulent and very Germanic, but instead of being a cold, sexless frontier, it has a personality to foil its efficiency. Quality pervades wherever one looks, and it's pleasing to the eye as well as to the touch. It's so nice that you'll feel as if you're driving a much more expensive car. In LA, used diesel Dashers have been seen as high as \$12,000 loaded, and that way is the only way you'll

have one this year because Wolfsburg can't make them fast enough.

The seats are very supportive and fully adjustable. Rear seat leg room is comfortable and adequate for two and a toddler, and behind those seats is a fairly monstrous payload space, all neatly covered to stay prying eyes from your latest early-gauche collection. The interior fit and finish is excellent and complemented by an easy-to-operate manual sunroof.

Out there in the mix, the Dasher comes on like a quiet baby bear. At speed, you never suspect there's a diesel under the hood because it's response is quite gasoline-like. In fact, the Dasher

turns a half-second-quicker quarter mile than the 150-pound-lighter Rabbit. (Both cars use the 1477cc engine, but the one in the Dasher has conventional placement instead of being mounted transversely.)

The only thing we coveted in the Rabbit was its 5-speed box, which is not offered in the Dasher. It should be. To a man (and woman), the *MT* consensus was an overwhelming yes.

Blistering along rural byways, you notice that the Dasher feels completely different from the Rabbit. Road manners are strict, and the Dasher feels hundreds of pounds heavier than the Rabbit, but it tends to wander somewhat, and the brakes are good for your conscience. Owning a diesel Dasher is having the best of both worlds... at 49 miles per gallon.

Glow plug waiting time: 12 seconds

Staff Reactions

On handling: Car is tight and very predictable... the only problem is lack of power during fast cornering."—*F. Stafford*

On dollar value: "At the same price as the Peugeot, I'll take the Peugeot."—*L. Mandel*

On owning the car: "Perhaps the most pleasant overall car to drive. Really could use an extra gear, though."—*B. Nagy*



Oldsmobile Cutlass 260

It was our plan to include both the 260 and 350cid Olds diesels and test them in addition to the front-drive Eldo. But it seems that our 350 car was not to arrive until long after the thrash, and the 260 we planned on using was summarily sold out from under us. So we did the next best thing and borrowed his personal 260 Cutlass from our firm's vice president of finance. After we drove the car for 600 miles, we think he made a mistake.

The fault lies not with the engine or the car, but with Oldsmobile's marketing program. The Cutlass Supreme has a base price of \$5600, which in today's money means that just about everything else is an extra-cost option. In the case of this Olds, we're not talking about any light hit; we're talking about an extra \$4000. The result is a salesman's sedan with every option in the known world plugged into it.

At the very least, this kind of cargo (3200-pound shipping weight) needs at least 350 cubic inches of smoking diesel to make it acceptable. But the 260 engine produces only 90 horsepower, and its torque matures at an incredibly low 1600 rpm—creating the need for much manual shifting and a constant tightening of jaws. Passing another car on the upgrade is purely suicidal; flinging the



Cutlass through sharp turns is downright foolish. You have to be happy the car runs in a straight line and live with it.

Inside, the affair grew even colder; the seat belts fit badly, and the seats were typically uncomfortable. The sunroof came apart before our very eyes, and at altitude we had to run with the air conditioning off most of the time. But through it all, the Cutlass was quiet inside, even with the windows down.

We are not intentionally axing this car; we're just saying that of the eight thundering turtles, we liked the 260 Cutlass the least. Except for its price, the Olds makes a great point-A-to-point-B, as-the-crow-flies car, keeping

up speed and knocking down mileage as long as you can stand being in it.

Glow plug waiting time: 4 seconds

Staff Reactions

On owning the car: "No. Too noisy and sooty. The potential gains in economy are outstripped by the fact that this car is not very pleasant to drive."—*B. Nagy*

On owning the car: "I could be convinced to drive one of these, but gasoline would have to be a thing of the past."—*J. Dianna*

On owning the car: "No, under any circumstances. I wouldn't lease it; I wouldn't rent it; I wouldn't even say good morning to it."—*L. Mandel*

Peugeot 504

Once you work your way around the funky old body, you get a great view of the past and Peugeot's heritage of being the oldest production diesel maker on earth. Peugeot touts the 504 as a lifetime car, and by the feel of it, we'd agree to at least half of that.

The 504's prosaic exterior completely belies its warm, down-home demeanor, welcoming its passengers with seats that are cushy at first and delightfully firm shortly afterward. You sink into their plushness for the first inch or so, then your bottom stops on a firm, well-padded seat that increases in comfort as miles pile up. It's like settling into a big puffy armchair only to find that there's

a Recaro under it all. The rear bench has a similar feel and a goodly amount of leg room.

Through the bus-like steering wheel, you will not feel this car's Gallic roots—only a very close kinship with certain high-priced German performance cars and all the suspension sensibility that goes with them.

Winding the rattler through its first two cogs is about as exciting as a yawn, but once you plop the 504 in high gear ... watch out. It pulls like a Caterpillar D9 in heat. It is *the* gear for in-city driving; once the engine has found the Speed Zone, all you need do is apply the throttle as needed and forget about

downshifting altogether.

The 504's handling is softened somewhat by the diesel's inability to produce a high engine speed, but the car hangs on like grim death; and with its 4-wheel disc brakes, it stops in its tracks just as suddenly. Premium steel radials, good shock absorbers and front/rear anti-roll bars assure this.

What didn't we care for? The dashboard looks like something out of a 1965 Plymouth Satellite, but it works just fine. Some of our crew didn't care for the large-handle manual sunroof or the right-hand-mounted directional signal control, and nobody liked the noise the engine made when it was dead cold. But in times like these, things could be a lot worse.

Glow plug waiting time: 15 seconds

Staff Reactions

On passing uphill: "Feels like it's got a fair amount of torque, pulls well and seems to pick up speed more readily than some of the other cars, especially in 4th gear."—*B. Nagy*

On dollar value: "The vehicle is just too old to justify the asking price ... they need a new car to compete in today's diesel market."—*J. Dianna*

On the bottom line: "A last-generation diesel; no longer any excuse for an expensive, well-appointed car to make sounds like a vomiting slot machine."—*L. Mandel*



Mercedes-Benz 240D

You don't realize until much later that the stickshift 240D is a bare-bones auto, because inside the looks, the smell and the clarity whisper luxury at a wholesale price. Certainly it is the chicquiest economy car going, even though no Beverly Hills matron will ever mate her Calvin Klein jeans with the M-B Tex upholstery.

It's the exterior that fools you, with its economy of design and carefully arranged sheet metal providing a much more aerodynamic form than you can believe with your eyes. When the vehicle is conventional, this factor is important; but when it's a diesel, the factor is imperative, even though oil burners don't like anything over 65 mph.

Once you're securely belted in the driver's position, the 240 could just as easily be a 450SEL; this state of awareness comes not from the car's engine or cornering power but from its ambience. That is the wonderfulness of M-B.

Yeah, but it's a stickshift Mercedes, a rare animal on this side of the Atlantic; and M-B should equip more U.S. cars with it, simply because it puts a solid measure of fun into driving. First and 2nd gears are ratioed to get the 146cid engine to peak power as soon as possible, while 3rd and high are held in reserve for inner-city cruising. Once the car is in the Speed Zone, you rarely



need take the trans from 3rd. And if you can manage it, the car will lope along in high like nobody's business at 25 mph.

There is no doubt that the 240 is a diesel, but once the car is underway, the engine has enough spunk to maintain an rpm level that will not fall off significantly before the next gear can be selected. This was an annoyance with smaller-displacement diesels we included in the thundering turtle herd. Careful driving should put the 240D well over the 30-mpg mark.

Glow plug waiting time: 14 seconds

Staff Reactions

On the bottom line: "Typical M-B quality, but I would expect more power options at this price. A tachometer would be useful with the 4-speed."—*F. Stafford*

On the bottom line: "Too expensive; Rabbit, Dasher and Peugeot are as good or better for less money."—*J. McCraw*

On handling: "A 45-mph turn at 80—terrific."—*P. Frey*

Cadillac Eldorado 350

We would like to call the diesel Eldorado an experiment, but it has gone beyond that. Before the Eldo, there were a substantial number of diesel Seattles and quite a few more light-duty pickups and Oldsmobiles of every incarnation. And the alternate power source found its niche and everyone was happy. But this game plan doesn't work nearly so well with the Eldorado, even though that car appears to be the prime candidate. It is a medium-weight contender without a driveshaft or a 90-degree turn to go through before the

power is supplied. It seems like a natural application for the torquey V-8, but somewhere there's a part that's not screwed on.

It's not that the car doesn't run well, because it does; it's the strangeness of expecting the full boost of a gasoline engine but finding only half of it. The suspension doesn't seem to be matched to the engine's weight, either. Most of our drivers found quite a bit of float, wallow and understeer, curiously mixed with a superb feel for the straight and smooth.

But when you get inside the Eldo, you get away from a lot of things that contribute to its dieselness. The interior is just plain Cadillac plush, with full, wide seats and one of the handsomest dashboards of the decade. It says, in a medium voice, that the Eldorado is a luxury car and don't forget it. How can you, when you look out over a hood that still seems to be attached to a pre-downsized Cadillac. The long-car illusion is alive and well, bumpy, and that's a coup unto itself.

The Eldo's brakes are good, but they don't do a thing to mask the inordinate engine clatter or exhaust smoke from an accelerating 350cid powerplant. If you can survive all this niggling, you'll love the 25-mpg mileage.

Glow plug waiting time: 4 seconds

Staff Reactions

On acceleration, handling: "Good, a little slow off dead start; but once it's rolling, it does quite well... bit on the mushy side, typical Cadillac wallow."—*F. Stafford*

On the bottom line: "I don't like the mix. Body and engine just don't make it together—this is a confusing car."—*J. Dianna*

On the bottom line: "There's real schizophrenia with a diesel in this car."—*L. Mandel*



DIESEL COMPARISON

SPECIFICATIONS:

VW Rabbit 5-Speed

VW Dasher 5-Door Sedan

Oldsmobile Cutlass 260

Peugeot 504

GENERAL

Vehicle type	Front-engine, front-drive, 4-pass., 4-door sedan	Front-engine, front-drive, 5-pass., 5-door hatchback sedan	Front-engine, rear-drive, 5-pass., 2-door coupe	Front-engine, rear-drive, 4-pass., 4-door sedan
Base price	\$5943	\$7440	\$5610.64	\$9598
Options on test car	Metallic paint, 5-speed, heavy-duty radiator, tinted glass, AM/FM stereo, air conditioning	Leatherette upholstery, sunroof, 175-series radial tires, tinted glass, heavy-duty cooling system	Power windows, electric sunroof, A/C, 4.3-liter 260 diesel, automatic transmission, power steering, stereo, etc.	Air conditioning, radio
Price as tested	\$7216.75	\$7925	\$9502.64	\$10,477

ENGINE

Type	In-line four, transversely mounted, water cooled, cast iron block, aluminum head	In-line four, water cooled, cast iron block, aluminum head, 5 main bearings	V-8, water cooled, cast iron heads and block, 5-main bearings	In-line four, water cooled, 5 main bearings
Bore & stroke	3.01 x 3.15 in.	3.01 x 3.15 in.	3.5 x 3.38 in.	3.70 x 3.25 in.
Displacement	89.7 cu. in.	89.7 cu. in.	260 cu. in.	140.6 cu. in.
Compression ratio	23.5:1	23.5:1	22.5:1	22.4:1
Fuel system	Mechanical fuel injection	Mechanical fuel injection	Mechanical fuel injection	Mechanical fuel injection
Recommended octane number	No. 2 diesel	No. 2 diesel	No. 2 diesel	No. 2 diesel
Emission control	None needed	None Needed	None needed	None needed
Valve gear	OHC	OHC	OHV, pushrods & rocker arms	OHV, pushrods & rocker arms
Horsepower (SAE net)	48 at 5000 rpm	48 at 5000 rpm	90 at 3600 rpm	71 at 4500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	56.5 lb.-ft. at 3000 rpm	56.5 lb.-ft. at 3000 rpm	160 lb.-ft. at 1600 rpm	99 lb.-ft. at 2500 rpm
Power to weight ratio	44.6 lb./hp	45 lb./hp	35.6 lb./hp	43.6 lb./hp

DRIVETRAIN

Transmission	5-speed manual transaxle	4-speed manual transaxle	3-speed automatic	4-speed manual
Final drive ratio	4.17:1	4.11:1	2.41:1	3.70:1

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	94.4 in.	97.2 in.	108.1 in.	108 in.
Track, F/R	54.7/53.5 in.	52.7/53.1 in.	58.5/57.7 in.	55.91/53.54 in.
Length	155.3 in.	173.1 in.	200.1 in.	182.4 in.
Width	63.4 in.	63.6 in.	71.3 in.	66.7 in.
Height	55.5 in.	53.5 in.	53.4 in.	57 in.
Ground clearance	4.9 in.	4.2 in.	5.2 in.	7 in.
Max. load length w/rear seat(s) folded down	N.A.	54 in.	N.A.	N.A.
Curb weight	2142 lb.	2300 lb.	3208 lb.	3098 lb.

CAPACITIES

Fuel capacity	10.6 gals.	11.9 gals	19.8 gals.	18.5 gals.
Crankcase	4 qts.	4 qts.	5 qts.	5.25 qts.
Cooling system	6.3 pts.	6.3 pts.	13.3 qts.	10.5 qts.
Trunk capacity	22.6 cu. ft. (seat folded)	46.6 cu. ft. (rear seat folded)	16.1 cu. ft.	14.9 cu. ft.

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent, coil springs, tube shock absorbers, MacPherson struts	Independent, MacPherson struts, anti-roll bar, tube shock absorbers	Independent, unequal-length A-arms, anti-roll bar, coil springs, tube shock absorbers	Independent, coil springs, tube shock absorbers, anti-roll bar
Rear	Independent, stabilizer axle, coil springs, tube shock absorbers	Solid axle, coil springs, Panhard rod, tube shock absorbers	Solid axle, 4-link, coil springs, tube shock absorbers	Independent, coil springs, tube shock absorbers, anti-roll bar

STEERING

Type	Rack and pinion	Rack and pinion w/steering damper	Recirculating ball, power assist	Rack and pinion, power assist
Turns lock-to-lock	3.85	3.95	3.6	3.5
Turning circle, curb-to-curb	31.2 ft.	31.2 ft.	37.4 ft.	35 ft., 10 in.

BRAKES

Front	Discs	9.4-in. discs	10.5-in. discs, power assist	Discs
Rear	Drums	7.85-in. drums	9.5-in. drums, power assist	Discs

WHEELS AND TIRES

Wheel size	4.5 x 13	5 x 13 in.	6 x 14 in.	5 x 14 in.
Wheel type	Steel	Steel	Steel	Steel
Tire make and size	Michelin 155SR13	Continental 175SR13	Firestone P195/75R14	Michelin 175HR14
Tire type	Radial	Steel radial	Steel radial	Steel radial
Recommended pressure, F/R	27/31 psi	25/25 psi	30/35 psi	28/28 psi

TEST RESULTS:

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph	6.22 secs.	5.1 secs.	6.12 secs.	7.5 secs.
0-40 mph	9.62 secs.	8.3 secs.	9.19 secs.	10.0 secs.
0-50 mph	14.94 secs.	13.8 secs.	14.03 secs.	16.1 secs.
0-60 mph	21.38 secs.	19.2 secs.	20.09 secs.	22.2 secs.
0-70 mph	N.A.	N.A.	29.23 secs.	N.A.
0-80 mph	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Top speed	90-95 mph (approx.)	90 mph	100 mph (approx.)	N.A.
Standing quarter mile	22.21 secs./61.50 mph	21.3 secs./62.3 mph	22.08 secs./62.60 mph	22.2 secs./60 mph

BRAKING

30-0 mph	42 ft.	40 ft.	40 ft.	32 ft.
60-0 mph	179 ft.	171 ft.	167 ft.	153 ft.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

EPA city	41 mpg	36 mpg	24 mpg	28 mpg
600-mile trip	41.8 mpg	39.9 mpg	21.4 mpg	28.2 mpg

SPEEDOMETER

Indicated	30 40 50 60	30 40 50 60	30 40 50 60	30 40 50 60
Actual mph	27 37 47 57	29 39 48 57	30 40 51 62	28 37 47 59

ROAD TEST DATA

Mercedes-Benz 240D

Cadillac Eldorado 350

Mercedes-Benz 300TD (Wagon)

Mercedes-Benz 300SD (Turbo)

Front-engine, rear-drive, 5-pass., 4-door sedan

Front-engine, front-drive, 5-pass., 2-door coupe

Front-engine, rear-drive, 5-pass., 4-door station wagon

Front-engine, rear-drive, 5-pass., 4-door sedan

\$14,466
Electric sunroof, protective metal undershielding, Becker Europa AM/FM, front-folding armrest air conditioning
\$16,520

\$14,500
Two-tone exterior, leather, power recliner seats, tilt & telescope steering wheel, rear window defogger, cruise control, diesel V-8,
\$17,844

\$24,162
Manual sunroof, protective metal undershielding, Becker Mexico stereo cassette
\$25,673

\$25,229
Special paint, leather, electric sunroof, Becker Mexico stereo cassette
\$27,659

Inline four diesel, 5 main bearings

V-8, water cooled, cast iron heads and block, 5 main bearings

Inline five, water cooled, 6 main bearings

Inline five, turbocharged, water cooled, 6 main bearings

3.58 x 3.64 in.
146.4 cu. in.
21.1
Fuel injection
No. 2 diesel
None needed
OHC
62 at 4000 rpm
97 lb.-ft. at 2400 rpm
52.41 lb./hp

4.057 x 3.385 in.
350 cu. in.
22.5:1
Mechanical fuel injection
No. 2 diesel
None needed
OHV, pushrods & rocker arms
125 at 3600 rpm
225 lb.-ft. at 1600 rpm
32.8 lb./hp

3.58 x 3.64 in.
183 cu. in.
21.1
Mechanical fuel injection
No. 2 diesel
None needed
OHC
77 at 4000 rpm
115 lb.-ft. at 2400 rpm
49 lbs./hp

3.58 x 3.64 in.
183 cu. in.
21.5:1
Fuel injection
No. 2 diesel
None needed
Overhead camshaft
110 at 4200 rpm
168 lb.-ft. at 2400 rpm
39.5 lb./hp

4-speed manual
3.69:1

3-speed automatic transaxle
2.56:1

4-speed automatic
3.46:1

4-speed automatic
3.07:1

110 in.
58.6/56.9 in.
190.9 in.
70.3 in.
56.6 in.
6.5 in.

113.9 in.
59.3/60.5 in.
204 in.
71.4 in.
54.2 in.
5.5 in.

110 in.
58.6/56.9 in.
190.9 in.
70.3 in.
57.9 in.
5.9 in.

112.8 in.
59.9/59.3 in.
205.5 in.
73.6 in.
56.1 in.
5.8 in.

N.A.
3250 lb.

N.A.
4099 lb.

70.2 in.
3780 lb.

N.A.
3850 lb.

21.1 gals.
5 qts.
10.6 qts.
12.57 cu. ft.

22.4 gals.
7 qts.
17.2 qts.
16.3 cu. ft.

21.1 gals.
5 qts.
11.6 qts.
N.A.

21.7 gals.
5 qts.
11.6 qts.
14.96 cu. ft.

Independent w/double A-arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar, gas pressure shock absorbers, anti-dive control
Independent w/diagonal pivot axle, anti-lift control, coil springs, anti-roll bar, gas pressure shock absorbers

Independent, torsion bars, tube shock absorbers, anti-roll bar, air reservoir & rebound cutoff
Independent, trailing arms, coil springs, tube shock absorbers, anti-roll bar

Independent, double A-arms, anti-dive control, coil springs, anti-roll bar, gas pressure shock absorbers
Independent, w/diagonal pivot axle, anti-lift control, coil springs, anti-roll bar, gas pressure shock absorbers

Independent w/double A-arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar, gas pressure shock absorbers, anti-dive control
Independent w/diagonal pivot axle, anti-lift control, coil springs, anti-roll bar, gas pressure shock absorbers

Recirculating ball, power assist
3.2
37 ft.

Rotary-valve recirculating ball
2.9
38.4 ft.

Recirculating ball, power assist
3.2
37 ft.

Recirculating ball, power assist
2.7
38 ft.

11-in. discs, power assist
11-in. discs, power assist

Cast iron, vented 11.7-in. discs
Cast iron, vented 11.1-in. discs

11-in. discs, power assist
11-in. discs, power assist

11-in. discs, power assist
11-in. discs, power assist

5.5 x 14 in.
Steel
Michelin 175SRx14
Radial
28/32 psi

6 x 15 in.
HSLA steel
Uniroyal P205/75R15
Steel radial
26/28 psi

6 x 14 in.
Steel
Pirelli P3, 195/70HR14
Steel radial
28/32 psi

6 x 14 in.
Alloy
Michelin 185HR14
Steel radial
28/30 psi

5.99 secs.
10.35 secs.
19.01 secs.
27.40 secs.
N.A.
N.A.
100 mph (approx.)
23.58 secs./56.20 mph

5.06 secs.
7.65 secs.
11.74 secs.
16.92 secs.
N.A.
N.A.
105 mph (approx.)
20.78 secs./64.80 mph

5.63 secs.
10.10 secs.
14.49 secs.
20.56 secs.
N.A.
N.A.
105 mph (indicated)
22.18 secs./62 mph

4.37 secs.
6.90 secs.
10.58 secs.
15.14 secs.
N.A.
N.A.
110 mph (indicated)
20.00 secs./69.98 mph

50 ft.
177 ft.

45 ft.
165 ft.

43.3 ft.
169 ft.

37 ft.
151 ft.

27 mpg
25.2 mpg

21 mpg
21.6 mpg

23 mpg
22.0 mpg

24 mpg
22.6 mpg

30 40 50 60

30 40 50 60

30 40 50 60

30 40 50 60

28 38 47 56

27 37 47 57

25 35 45 55

30 40 50 61

Mercedes-Benz 300TD

The 300TD: Is it really a Mercedes-Benz? Is it really a station wagon? Both questions can be answered only after you've spent time on the inside. The TD is based on the 123-series Mercedes and is very similar to the 300D sedan. It uses the same engine, chassis platform, running gear, etc., and differs only in curb weight; and due to better aerodynamics, the TD is capable of a higher top speed than the sedan.

In Europe, this car is available in several incarnations, including several gasoline-engine models and varied levels of interior trim. Here, what you see is what you get, and that includes an engine choice of one: the 3-liter 5-cylinder diesel. It also has one price: more of an admission fee, actually, that will allow 3000 Sybarites the pleasure of driving a relative oddment. Status is the name of the game, but a station wagon that handles as well as the sedan is something altogether different.

Everything forward of the front seats looks and feels very sedan-like; the disorientation begins when you cast an eye in the rearview mirror. The seats and extra cargo room are the reasons for this car, but people who must inhabit the same will find it decidedly uncomfortable on all but the shortest haul. The middle seat captured our interest



but not our sacroiliac; it was devoid of thigh support, was rather short and cushiony and was about as far away from a Mercedes-Benz seat as a barstool is in a church.

The 300TD proved to be the least responsive of the three Mercedes used in this test, and rightfully so. It weighs 3800 pounds and comes only with an automatic transmission. Moving to the top takes a long time in the TD, but getting around corners is more good, clean, solid fun than you can imagine. The 300 may look like an afterthought car, a capitalization on a fine automobile, but it's not. It is a car unto itself,

engineered and built as a superwagon, with a great deal of panache and excuses for nobody.

Glow plug waiting time: 14 seconds

Staff Reactions

On handling: "Excellent. The ads say that it handles like a Mercedes-Benz sedan, and it does."—*P. Frey*

On noise: "Knock, knock, knock, knak, knak, knak, knock, knock, knock, rumble, rumble, knock."—*J. McCraw*

On the bottom line: "Size and general layout are excellent... probably the best wagon on the market—except for the price."—*F. Stafford*

Mercedes-Benz 300SD

The turbocharged 300SD isn't sure whether it's a diesel or not. It sips No. 2 but runs like a high-octane gas motor. It is the state of the diesel art, the concept that all other makers will copy. It is also the most expensive car of the lot.

The SD isn't particularly fast, but it is so smooth that it gives an illusion of mega-power and seems to possess two modes of acceleration. The first is obvious. You tromp the throttle and, after a moment of turbocharger hesitation, the

forward thrust comes with the alacrity of a gas motor. The 4-speed automatic is especially useful here, helping the 3-liter engine to hold correct rpm range.

Ninety-five percent of the time, there is no noticeable diesel lag. When it falls out of the Speed Zone, the turbocharger quietly helps the engine back in. The remaining 5% of the time, perhaps once a day, is the only time the diesel reveals its nature.

Like all Mercedes-Benz cars, the 300SD is extremely comfortable and

safe feeling; but the fact that it is turbocharged causes mixed reaction to its purpose. Though turbos usually indicate a terrific increase in horsepower (about a 33% increase over the 300D), the system used in the 300SD is more for smoothness than for brute acceleration. Part-throttle take-off from a traffic light nudges the SD into a short-lived minifury of acceleration that continues to 35-40 mph; then the engine regains its composure and carries on as if it were normally aspirated. This mode is unique only to the turbo diesel.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the SD is its performance, when compared to the unturbocharged 300D. The latter is 320 pounds lighter than the SD, smaller overall, but realizes about 3 miles less per gallon of fuel. Let's hear it for efficiency at a time when it's needed most.

Glow plug waiting time: 14 seconds

Staff Reactions

On odor: "Smells like stocks and bonds."—*L. Mandel*

On owning the car: "Yes, yes, yes—beautiful. Everything one would expect in a Mercedes-Benz; unfortunately, dollar value is way off."—*J. McCraw*

On the bottom line: "Overall performance is outstanding, and it should be for this kind of money."—*F. Stafford*

