



380SEC.

Engineering excellence in its most exotic form.

Few cars in the history of automobiles have commanded such a premium of demand. Because it has been recognized that this is perhaps the most beautiful body shape of all the 'New S-Class' cars. This is the finest expression of the Mercedes-Benz design philosophy—certainly that part of it which demands that form immediately denotes function, and that each new and greater car must maintain and reinforce the family relationship back to the Silver Arrows and beyond.

The design criteria for the 380SEC continued those of the S-Class—to produce a totally-balanced vehicle that enhanced the driver's work and satisfaction, and to contribute to resource conservation while expanding the parameters of engineering, comfort, safety and reliability.

The 380SEC is available only with the 3.8 litre light alloy fuel-injected V8 engine, coupled to a further-developed four-speed automatic transmission, and having the ABS braking system as standard.

The 3.8 litre engine is considerably lighter than the iron-block 4.5 litre V8 fitted to the 450SLC. Some of the techniques used to achieve this include a crankcase of an aluminium alloy containing silicon, produced by low-pressure chilled casting. The cylinder liners are electrochemically-treated after honing, to expose the silicon crystals on the surface. These super-hard crystals, in conjunction with the light alloy pistons, achieve new operating efficiencies. There are eight balance weights on the crankshaft.

Interestingly, the 380SEC—while having a similar body frame and floorpan—has not a single body panel in common with the rest of the 'New S-Class'. The bonnet, boot lid and boot bulkhead

are made of light alloy, the side windows have no frames, and the grille, air dam, and headlight treatment are unique. However, all the remarkable S-Class characteristics in suspension, steering, braking, ride, and handling are reflected in the SEC.

The front seats adjust electrically in longitude, height, backrest and seat cushion angle, through controls mounted in the doors—and those controls work even with the ignition turned off. The rear seats are divided by a central armrest with a storage tray, illuminated ashtray, and cigar lighter. Each passenger has electrical control of his window.

A unique development is the "belt-bringer",

an electronic system that moves the seat belt forward and alongside the front seat passenger and driver when the ignition is turned on.

The 380SEC seats come with either leather or velour trim, and are highly individual. In common with the S-Class saloons, dash controls set new standards in driver accessibility, including electrical control of the passenger side exterior mirror. Cruise control (Tempomat), bi-level climate control air-conditioning, headlight load adjustment, sound system, and door-sill pavement illumination are all standard. "Standard" is perhaps the wrong word, for the 380SEC sets a standard all its own.

