

2000 Mercedes E55 AMG

Just slightly more subtle than an M5.

by [Nick Twork](#) ✉ (2000-05-01)



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Money may not be able to buy happiness, but it can buy the Mercedes Benz E55.

And while this car will not make your life eternal bliss, a drive in it is sure to etch a smile on your face, deeply.

And, unlike some sports cars, you won't have to look as if you're having a mid-life crisis while you're driving the E55. With only subtle exterior cues to differentiate it from any other Mercedes E-class, the E55 is stealthy. Casual observers will probably dismiss the car as nothing special - the only cues on the outside of the E55, besides badging, are twin chrome exhaust outlets, 18-inch AMG monoblock wheels and subtle changes to the fascias and side sills.

However, the E55 is not just any Mercedes. While it may look quite ordinary, a 349-horsepower 5.5-liter V-8 lurks under its hood. And the AMG wheels conceal larger brakes with 13.2-in diameter vented rotors in front and 11.8-in vented rotors in the rear.

The five-seater four-door can, so equipped, hurtle to 60 mph in less than five seconds. The car's massive brakes can slow it from that speed to a halt in a mere 120 feet. As these numbers suggest, the E55 is anything but ordinary.

While there are faster cars out there, this one is unlike any other. Routed exclusively through a five-speed automatic transmission, the E55's potency is visceral but easy to use. With the standard Electronic Stability Program left switched on, the whole affair is relatively foolproof - even an amateur driver can safely approach maximum acceleration with this car. Just plant your foot and hang on.

Displays of power

And hang on you should, because this car pulls like a diesel locomotive from a rolling start. Besides the BMW M5, few other cars pile on speed at such an exhilarating rate. So much so, you really can't fault the E55 for lacking a manual transmission, even if BMW's M5 offers one.

In the E55, the automatic transmission is in line with the car's personality. Crowded urban areas and city streets make the automatic transmission a blessing, too. And at the hands of even an experienced driver, it sacrifices little to the M5 in acceleration times. Better in daily driving than on the racetrack, as Benz would have you think.

Elsewhere inside, the E55 is all business. While it looks dark and Germanic, the interior is comfortable and well built. Subtle touches like headlight washers, a button to lower the rear head restraints and Mercedes SmartKey remind you that this is high luxury, but it's all subtly restrained.

From the driver's seat, the E55 feels like it has an exceptionally solid body structure. While the firmer tuning and larger tires unique to the E55 make the ride less compliant than the E430, it's far from harsh, even on the winter-scarred roads of the Midwest.

For hi-po enthusiasts of all stripes, the E55 sits in front of the daydream parking lot, keys in the ignition. It combines performance, luxury and practicality in a way that burnishes the reputation for sophistication and engineering, all at once. One stomp on the throttle and one slam of the door are convincing arguments for paying the stiff sticker price.

2000 Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG

Base Price: \$71,395

Engine: 5.5-liter V-8, 349 hp

Transmission: electronically controlled five-speed automatic with Touch Shift

Wheelbase: 111.5 in

Length: 189.4 in

Width: 70.8 in

Height: 56.9 in

Weight: 3746 lb

Fuel economy: 16 city/ 23 hwy

Major standard equipment:

Dual-zone climate control

Ten-way power front sport seats, heated

Xenon headlamps

Power tilt/telescoping steering column

Glass sunroof and rear sunshade

TeleAid emergency communication system