

Mercedes-Benz unveils new flagship S-Class sedan

September 2 2020, by David McHugh



Ola Kaellenius, Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler AG, presents the new Mercedes-Benz S-Class at the world premiere in the "Factory 56" in Sindelfingen, Germany, Wednesday, Spt.2, 2020. (Silas Stein/dpa via AP)

Daimler AG on Wednesday unveiled the new version of its Mercedes-Benz S-Class luxury sedan, the company's most important model and one

it hopes will generate fat profits to help the Stuttgart-based automaker through the COVID-19 recession and wrenching structural changes to the auto industry.

Daimler CEO Ola Kallenius called the long, sleek S-Class "the heart of our brand" during an on-line event Wednesday in which he touted the car's highly personalized luxury technology.

The company will be relying on profits from its internal combustion-driven luxury vehicles like the S-Class and SUVs to finance investment in new, low-emission technology. Ferdinand Dudenhofer, director of the Center for Automotive Research in Duisburg, called the S-Class "very important" for Daimler and its Mercedes-Benz luxury division because it generates 15-20% of operating earnings from only 3% of sales.

Kallenius is carrying out a cost-cutting drive to conserve cash during the recession, as well as to find the money for expensive investment in the electric and digital technologies that are transforming the car industry under pressure from regulators and competitors from the tech sector.

In particular, carmakers in Europe must sell significantly more [electric vehicles](#) to meet tough limits on [carbon dioxide emissions](#) from the start of next year. Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas blamed by scientists for climate change. The limits are part of the European Union's effort to comply with the 2015 Paris climate accord.



A Mercedes-Benz employee is working on a fuel cap cover for an S-Class at the "Factory 56" plant in Sindelfingen, Germany, Wednesday, Sept.2, 2020.. The new S-Class is built in the new, completely digitalized and networked factory. (Silas Stein/dpa via AP)

The S-Class will be built at a new factory in Sindelfingen near Stuttgart that the company touts as carbon dioxide-neutral; it uses 25% less energy than other factories and generates 30% of its electricity from solar panels on the roof while using recycled batteries for energy storage.

The new version does not look much different from the previous one, apart from new horizontal taillights. Features include a voice assistant that functions in all seats and can be used to ask for a hot seat massage or to play one's favorite music.

Drivers up front can use the dashboard touchscreen to swipe content to their kids' screens in the back—while ensconced in seats adjusted for a perfect fit by 18 motors and guided by the car's digital brain that remembers personal mirror and seat positions. Customers in China, a crucial market for the vehicle, will be the first to get an option to order dinner through the voice assistant as they drive home.

The rear wheels can turn up to 10 degrees, enabling a tight turn radius despite the vehicle's size. The S-Class comes in a hybrid version that combines electric and internal combustion propulsion, with an improved all-electric range of 100 kilometers (62 miles) before the [internal combustion engine](#) needs to kick in.

The [internal combustion](#) and hybrid versions will be joined by the EQS, an all-electric sibling model expected next year. The company's news release didn't have price information; the old model started at \$94,500 in the United States.

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