

AUTO SPIES

SPECIAL REPORT

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Auto Spies World Exclusive

We unveil the 2005-06 Mercedes-Benz S-class prototype (W221)

As predicted by Auto Spies, the new S-class looks like a smaller version of the Maybach

The Spies got a two hour sneak preview last week of the 2005-06 S-class concepts (see exclusive pictures below) as well as the upcoming Mercedes-Benz CLE (cross between CL and E), also known in spy circles as the four door E-class coupe (more on that below).

2005 S-class prototype-short wheelbase version-If you think this is the current version of the car, look closely inside the windshield to see the second hump in the middle of the dash that will house the navigation screen. Also, look very closely at the front headlights and side view mirrors.



The boys from Stuttgart were at an undisclosed location (hint: where the surf meets the turf) in December 2002, doing focus group evaluations of the next generation S-class and the vehicle that is now called, the MB CLS.

Two S-class concepts-Short and long wheelbase were shown

Initial impressions:

They walked us into an area where the cars were displayed

The new S-classes were lined up next to the Lexus LS430, 2003 (New Audi A8), VW Phaeton (We thought it would look better than it did), BMW 745li and current S-class.



Instantaneously, the entire focus group pointed to the new S-classes (the focus group was never told the model name, just that these were prototype MB's) and said that they were by far the best looking of the bunch.

It was amazing, although the spy pictures don't bring out their full beauty, how gorgeous they really were!

The other cars in the room looked dated by twenty years next to the S-classes (how do those MB designers do that!).

We know what you're going to say..." Well, they may have looked better than the Lexus but what about the NEW A8, 745 and Phaeton?" Hands down, these new cars made even those look old and tired.

Especially the 745!

One of the first things we noticed about the cars, were their 'muscular stances'.

They are cars that exuded amazing presence, like nothing else on the road.

Remember how cool the old E500's looked with the fenders above the wheels flared out? Well these new rides fenders are flared out with extreme aggression. If you've ever seen a Ford Explorer, Eddie Bauer edition with its flared wheel fenders, you'll get the idea of how pronounced they are on these new S's.

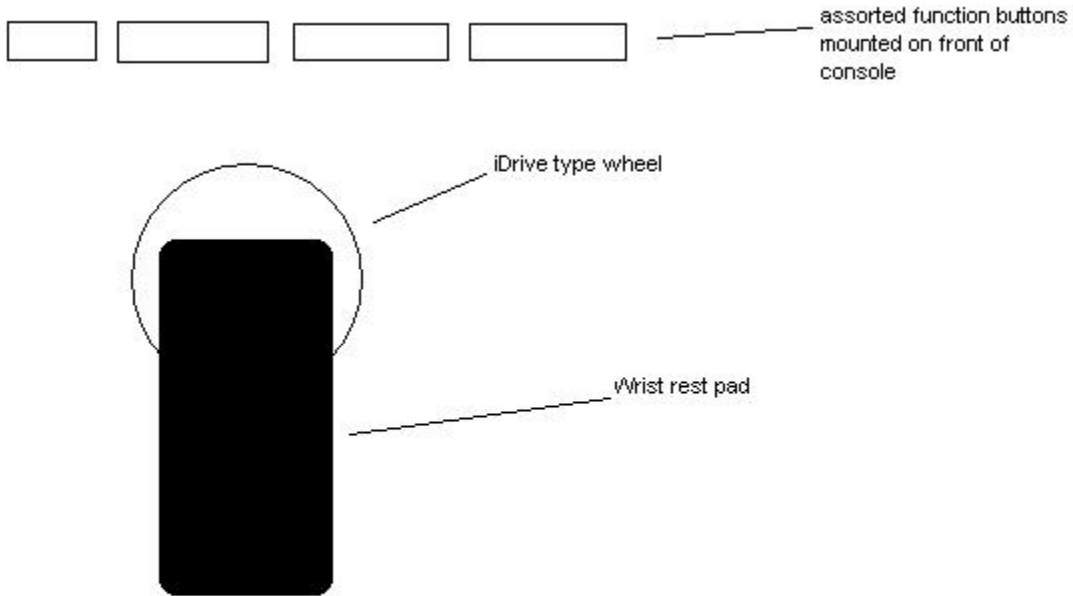
As we walked around the cars, the next thing we noticed was Maybach-like rear. The first thought that came to mind was "Now this is how it should have been implemented!"

The back has a similar look to the 745 but is done much more subtly and elegantly.

Rear lights look similar to the technique used on the GST and Maybach



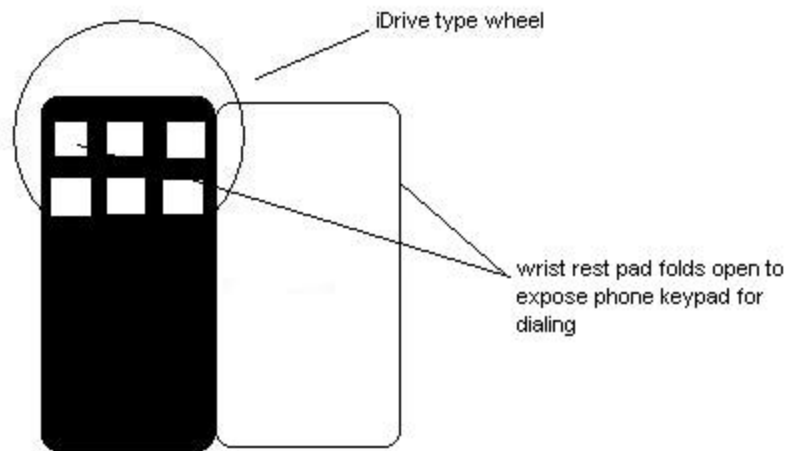
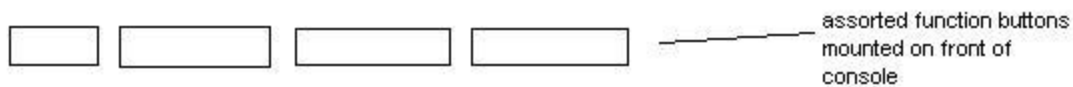
And yes, Mercedes-Benz will be following BMW's lead and have their own version of iDrive...except, they will have FRONT and REAR controllers. (See diagrams below)



Mercedes-Benz iDrive implementation

*note 'wrist rest' type lever on top.

Depress the lever to accept a command



Mercedes-Benz iDrive implementation
 *note 'wrist rest' type lever on top.
 Depress the lever to accept a command

Other observations that were made by the Spies and other group members:

Leather quality (especially seats) was much higher quality than in the current S-class cars. As Marv Albert would say...YESSSS!

All the controls for the seats (including massage etc.) are on the doors.

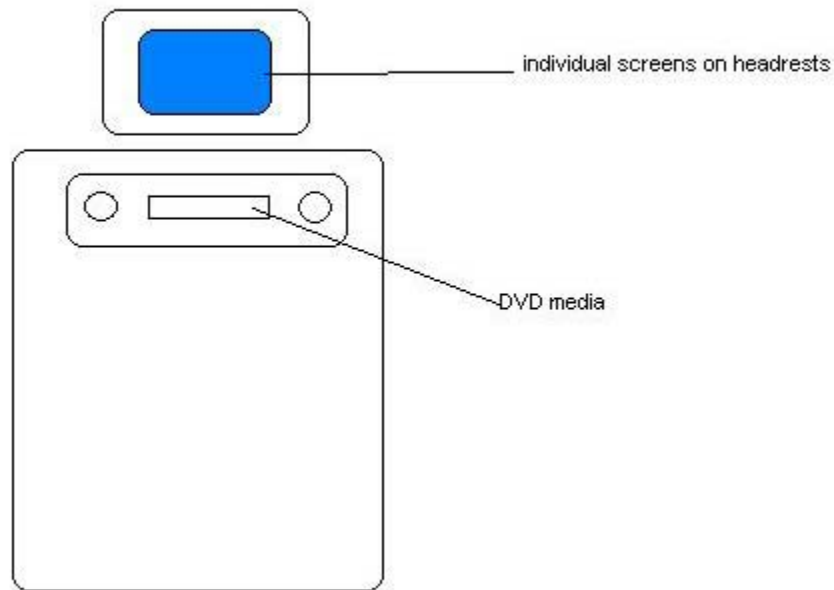
They used a beautiful combination of wood and brushed aluminum.

The black plastic control buttons on the dash are larger than in current cars.

The control buttons were made of a combination of brushed aluminum and textured aluminum (like on the handle of a ratchet set). The texture is so you can 'feel' the button without looking...good idea!

DVD screens are built-in to the rear of the front headrests with individual DVD players for each rear passenger. DVD media tray is also mounted into back of the rear seats. (See diagram below)

Rear view of 2005-06 S-class front seats



The headlights although similar to the current S-class are distinctively different. They look much more expensive than even the 2003 S-class headlights.

The aggressive wheel wells look like they can accept much larger tires than were on the car...maybe 22's?

The long wheelbase car was shown with a photo-chromatic panorama roof...KILLER!

The cars looked like they cost TWICE as much as their competitors. Definitely, due to the Maybach supercar influence.

They will implement a steering wheel transmission shifter, ala BMW 745...the MB shifter has left the building! ☹

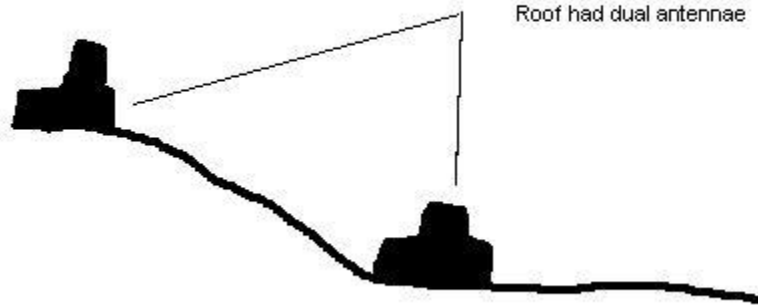
There were more interior storage trays inside the cars...two drawers, in particular mounted in the dash below heat/cool/radio, again ala BMW 745.

The exterior door handles are similar to the current generation S-class.

Keyless go will be standard, there was no slot on the dash for a key.

There were two antennae on the back of the car (See diagram below)

Side view of rear roofline on S-class

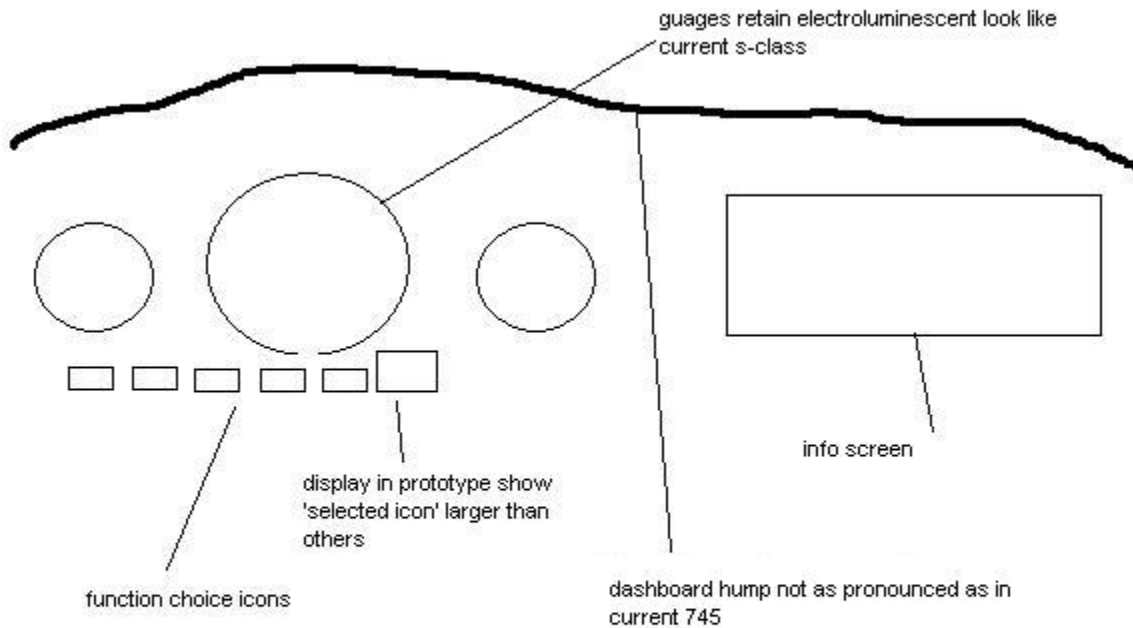


Observers noted the current S-class looked very dated compared to the new cars.

Rear orthopedic seats were shown in the vehicles. Controls were on the rear console in front of the iDrive-like controller. Seats could be adjusted EXACTLY like high end front seat adjustments work.

A new feature mounted as a lever to the left of the headlights was 'night view' (similar to Cadillac/Lexus night vision).

Dashboard was shown still implementing the electroluminescent gauges.



We saved the best for last...What would be better than owning a \$350K Maybach? Well, we think the new S-class is BETTER looking than the Maybach. Think of it as a more aggressive and sporty version of the Maybach. AND more people will be able to afford it and enjoy it!

Well done Mercedes-Benz...have a salesman contact us so we can be first on the list to get one of these beauties!

If you have any further info on these cars email rumors@autospies.com