

Beast of the Green Hell

Driving the Mercedes-AMG GT R

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This month I received an invitation to join Mercedes at the Zolder circuit in Belgium to drive in "the beast". The Mercedes-AMG GT R, a furious green coloured performance car that gets its nickname from the Nürburgring where it was developed. It was an incredible experience, well worth a blog post!



The Mercedes-AMG GT R at the Zolder Circuit in Belgium

Technical facts

- 430kW (585HP) at 6250rpm
- 700Nm torque at 1900-5500rpm
- 4.0L twin-turbo V8
- mid-front engine, transaxle, rear gearbox
- made from aluminium and carbon
- 0-100KM/h in 3.6 seconds
- top speed of 318KM/h
- rear-biased weight distribution of 47.3% to 52.7%
- active aerodynamics
- active rear wheel steering



4.0L V8 Twin turbo AMG engine

Circuit day with AMG Driving Academy

The action packed day started with a good and early breakfast followed by a presentation addressing AMG's history.



Breakfast at 8 am at the Zolder Circuit

Fun fact is that while AMG was originally not owned by Mercedes, the founders were actually former Mercedes-Benz engineers: Hans Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher. They started AMG after their job on a special performance Mercedes engine was cancelled. Their engine was a great success and won many prizes, inspiring the entire brand. The letters "AMG" stand for Aufrecht, Melcher and Großaspach (Aufrecht's birth town).



1971 Mercedes 300 SEL 6.8 AMG at the 24 Hours of Spa

4x4 off-roading

After the presentation we went on to drive the G-class on an off-road track, exploring its 4x4 capabilities. The G is an amazing car that feels like a tank. The model I drove was a "Professional" edition, used by police and army.



Mercedes-Benz G-Class - a 4x4 powerhouse



The G-Class Professional is pretty hardcore "function first"



The Mercedes-AMG G63 comes in fancy colours, too

Scenic tour

Next we went into the Belgium country side driving various AMG models, including the A45, C63S, SLC45 and the S63 cabriolet. Before driving each car we had to sign a document stating you take responsibility for traffic fines etc.. :-)



Happy boy, driving AMG-goodness on the open road

While I have driven different AMG cars before, driving the different models on the same road, closely after each other allows you to better understand the differences in driving dynamics between the cars. It makes quite the difference if you drive the S63 or C63; even though they are both very fast.



The C63S is definitely my favourite, a rudimental monster with an open roof



Some more details of this brutal C63S machine



If you drive in the AMG GT S you feel like Bernd Mayländer (who drives a similar F1 Safety Car)



The S63s feels like a ship, a very fast one...



The S63s interior is second to none: amazing details, very high-end



The S63s is very comfortable for its passengers and there is plenty of space

Race Taxi

After lunch we went to the paddock, taking on race helmets and getting ready to be driven around the track by a professional race driver. Man! That is bloody fast! A race driver brakes much later, harder and goes much faster through corners than I as a normal driver would comfortably go. Quite amazing!



Ready for a run around the track with a professional race driver



Not your average Taxi...

Driving the E63S AMG on track

Next I drove the E63S on track. We were to follow a professional race driver that gave instructions using a radio inside the race helmets. He explained the racing line, break points and corner apex.



Driving the E63S around track surely gets the blood pumpin'...

It is very nice to be able to drive a car much more aggressively because on track there is no police (and traffic lights, pedestrians etc.). It really makes a difference and is much more fun because of the lack of worry.

Agility-X

Then followed an agility challenge where I had to drive as fast as possible on a small and twisty track with two very different AMG cars. The A45 (light, four wheel drive) and the S63S (heavier, more powerful). Due to the laws of physics, the smaller, less powerful A45 was quicker.



The less powerful A45 (left) is actually faster at the agility challenge than the S63s (right)

Beast of the Green Hell

Then it was finally time for me to drive the Mercedes-AMG GT R, nicknamed the "Beast of the Green Hell". This car is the street legal version of the AMG GT3 racing car. It's a powerful car, but it really stands out in terms of balance. The engine is in the front/middle and delivers it's 585HP through an axle to the gearbox that is mounted in the rear. The better a car is balanced, the faster you can go through corners.



The Beast from Green Hell: Mercedes-AMG GT R

The car features many technical novelties, it's an ultimate gadget on wheels. Man! What an incredible experience! The car is furious, extremely powerful, full of grunt and angry noises. Yet, after two of three laps it gives you the confidence you can go faster and faster. That's what sets this car apart: its a monster that grows on to you, making you feel comfortable.



It looks hungry.... for speed!

The balance is amazing, you have the feeling you can turn into any twisty corner and the car simply follows. Screaming tires are an indication you're on the edge of physics... but inside it's still a comfortable Mercedes. One you drive with an heart rate well above what's normal... :-)



As hardcore is it is, the interior of the GT R is still top notch!

The green beast made a lasting impression on me! Whoow!

//Special thanks for this amazing day to Mercedes-Benz, Stern Auto Amsterdam, Bernd Schneider (the four-time DTM champion giving instructions on track).//

Gallery

Some more awesomeness, tap any picture to enlarge:













