

GO FOR A SPIN

in one with racing pretensions costing nearly five times as much. I drove in full auto mode the rest of the week.

It's a shame because otherwise the Black Series is an absolute blast to drive. It turns into corners fabulously, accelerates like a hammer (zero to 60 in four seconds), and sounds like an offshore powerboat racing at full gallop. The suspension is stiff, but I found the ride comfortable enough for commuting. The car offers very high lateral grip, and its fat (265/285) Pirelli P Zero Corsa tires stick until controllable understeer creeps in. With 500 horsepower, injudicious use of throttle can whip the back end out in a blink. Fortunately, the CLK's electronic stability control effectively mutes that tendency without being too intrusive.

Despite its use of lightweight materials, the car is still a bit heavy (just

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over 3,900 pounds), and critics rightly point out that one can enjoy the same (or better) performance for about \$30,000 less from a Porsche GT3. But as rare a bird as the GT3 is, you're more likely to see one than the CLK63 AMG Black Series. The Black Series is an instant collectible. Sadly, I didn't have any black-tie engagements during my time with the Black Series, but merely sitting in it was just as satisfying. ■

Eric Tegner's previous automotive reviews can be read at continental.com/magazine.