

LUXURY & EXOTICS

MODIFIED
RENNtech
CL55 TRANSFORMED



FIRST LOOK

Brabus
CLS 6.1S

10-SECOND

996 TwinTurbo

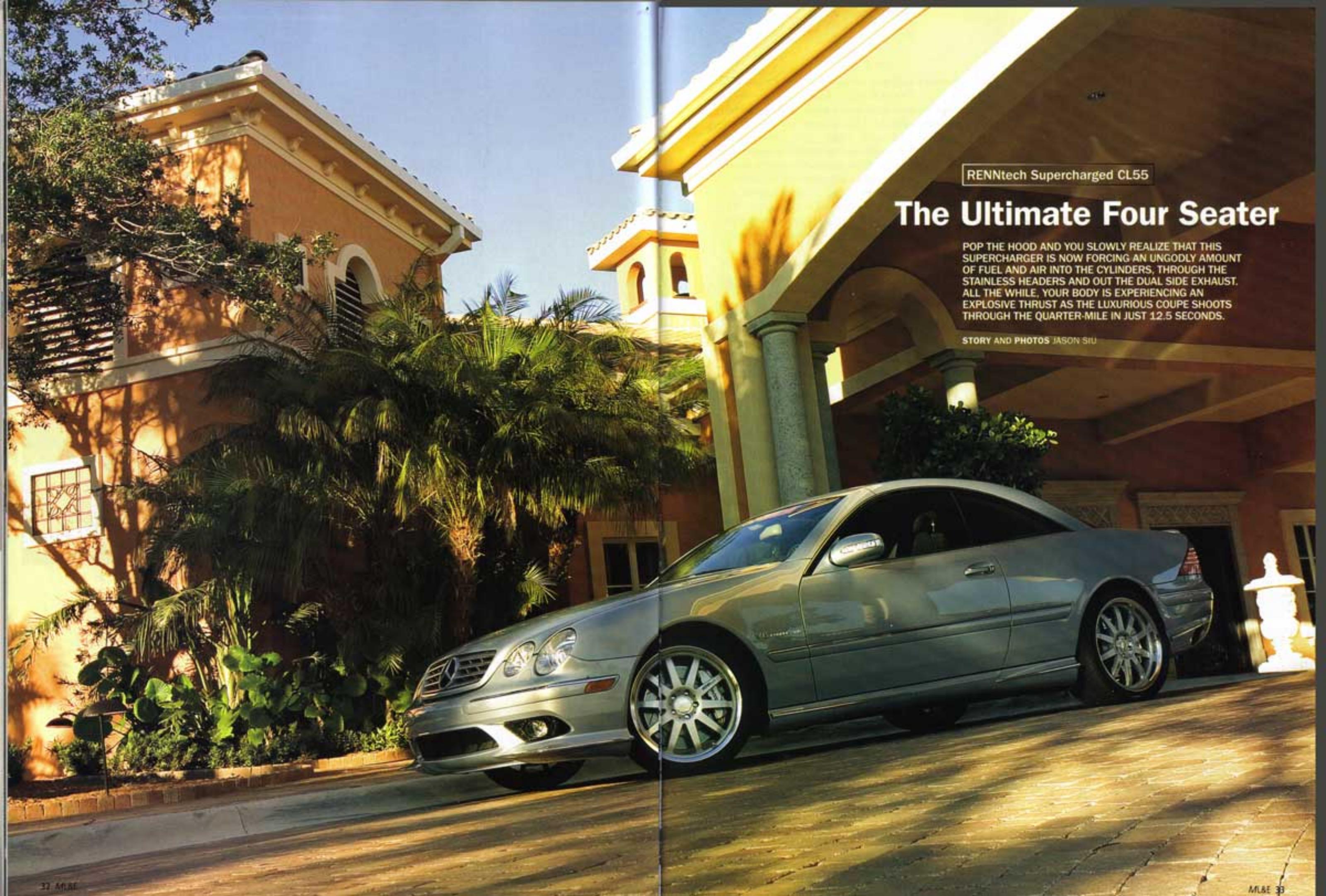
LUXURY GUIDE
BRAKE & SUSPENSION

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RENNtech Supercharged CL55

The Ultimate Four Seater

POP THE HOOD AND YOU SLOWLY REALIZE THAT THIS SUPERCHARGER IS NOW FORCING AN UNGODLY AMOUNT OF FUEL AND AIR INTO THE CYLINDERS, THROUGH THE STAINLESS HEADERS AND OUT THE DUAL SIDE EXHAUST. ALL THE WHILE, YOUR BODY IS EXPERIENCING AN EXPLOSIVE THRUST AS THE LUXURIOUS COUPE SHOOTS THROUGH THE QUARTER-MILE IN JUST 12.5 SECONDS.

STORY AND PHOTOS JASON SIU

Occasionally in life you run into many unexpected surprises that stay with you for a long period of time: a book you can't put down, a movie that left you wanting more, a song that left you speechless, or a car that left you breathless. Think back on how many vehicles have truly left you breathless and overly-satisfied. Having a hard time? That doesn't come as a surprise as many of us have high demands when it comes to satisfying our balanced desires for adolescent acceleration and mature, sophisticated luxury of adulthood. However, we never lose hope for finding that special vehicle packaged in sheer acceleration, handling and braking performance.

Shying away from the "wolf in sheep's clothing" exterior, the Mercedes-Benz CL55 raises the standard of excellence in both performance and aesthetic pleasures. Equipped with an AMG-built supercharged 5.5L 24-valve V8 engine, the CL55 carries

a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$119,620. It's hard to believe you'd be willing to dig into your pockets for more performance. However, when there are companies out there like RENNtech Mercedes, the key question is what happens when they get their hands on a CL55?

Introduced in 1998, the CL-class exemplified Mercedes' desire to build a performance yet luxurious coupe that seated four comfortably. With its debut, Mercedes sold only 342 of these vehicles in the United States, sporting a 4.973cc V8 motor equipped with barely over 300 horsepower and a \$91,900 price tag. Having its designers produce a sleeker design for the CL, Mercedes introduced the new body style

in 2000 was key to its success but there was still something to be desired under the hood.

For the die-hard performance enthusiast with a passion for luxury, the answer came in form of the AMG CL55. From the factory, the AMG CL55 features an AMG-built and intercooled supercharged 5,439cc SOHC 24-valve V8 engine powerplant. Add to that a high-pressure die-cast alloy cylinder block and a reinforced crankshaft and valvetrain. All of the components to building the motor including rods, pistons, oil pan, and camshafts have all been lightened and reinforced for high horsepower abuse. Rolling out of the showroom is a 493hp monster at 6,100rpms. As with any supercharged

vehicle, the torque is what is exemplified; with 516 lb-ft @ 2,750-4,000rpms, the CL55 makes for one entrancing trip on four wheels.

Specializing in extreme performance on all Mercedes-Benz vehicles, RENNtech Mercedes strives to offer performance while keeping the luxurious Mercedes package intact. Admiring the exterior of the CL55, this is arguably Mercedes' most sensuous vehicle with incomparable styling and an aggressive front fascia slightly hinting at the entertainment underneath the hood. Mildly enhancing the stock body, RENNtech installed and painted its aerodynamic body accents and rear diffuser. Suddenly the rear of the CL55 isn't tame – in fact, your eyes send mixed signals as you try to grasp the idea of dual side exit exhausts on a luxurious coupe. Adding one last touch to the rear, is a RENNtech trunk decklid spoiler.

Fast forward to being seated in the driver's seat and twisting





the key, the CL55 comes to life and your ears are celebrating an exciting stereo symphony without the 8-speaker radio switched on. Hearing a faint whine from under the hood and a low rumble emanating from the dual side-exit exhaust system, you realize you are no longer in Uncle Jim's Mercedes. To really make this CL55 untamed, RENNtech enhanced the motor to a 97mm bore, 92mm stroke and installed an upgraded crankshaft pulley kit. Tapping into the engine management system, RENNtech installed its custom ECU upgrade which offers tuning adjustability to bring out every ounce of horsepower and torque from the supercharged V8. Sounding like a simple combination of parts, the result is a lot more than just 30 to 50 horses that "performance upgrades" typically gain. Pop the hood and you determine that this supercharger is now forcing an ungodly amount of fuel and air into the cylinders, through the stainless headers and out the dual side exhaust. All the while, your body is experiencing an explosive thrust as the luxurious coupe shoots through the quarter-mile in just 12.5 seconds.

Handling the duties of getting the power to the ground, the CL55 is equipped with an AMG-enhanced driver-adaptive electronic 5-speed automatic transmission. With electronically controlled shifting, the AMG transmission adjusts the shift points to the driver's current driving style. Sound like fun? Yes! As you rip through the RPMs and the transmission smoothly goes into each gear, you start approaching the twists and wonder how the entire package will react as you shift your right

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foot from the accelerator to the brake pedal. As the 8-piston front calipers come into effect and you feel the solid brake pedal, you suddenly realize how quickly the AMG SpeedShift reacts to sudden changes in driving conditions. Providing up to 35 percent faster gear changes, the SpeedShift technology automatically downshifts during braking, preventing unwanted upshifts during cornering and aiding in your anticipated bullet-like acceleration off the apex of the turn.

With all this entertainment at your fingertips, you slowly become curious as to how much power this CL55 is really producing. Laying your right foot onto the accelerator can be compared to kicking a hibernating bear. All of this comes as a result of 625hp @ 6,500rpm, and 620 lb-ft of torque at a very respectable 3,500rpm. To help ensure all this power gets to the ground safely and no parts on the Mercedes are in shambles as a result of physics, RENNtech installed their reinforced axle shafts to the drivetrain.

As you reluctantly let off the gas pedal approaching another sharp turn in the CL55, your mind shifts from braking and acceleration to pondering the suspension capabilities. From the factory, the CL55 sports an independent 4-link suspension in the front and an independent 5-arm multilink suspension in the rear. However, its claim to fame is the utilization of its Active Body Control technology. This AMG enhanced ABC system automatically adjusts each wheel's suspension (individually) to counteract vibration, pitch, dive, squat and roll. If that isn't enough, the ABC also provides adjustable ride height and automatic lowering at high speeds to mate with the aerodynamics reacting on the chassis. RENNtech understood the desire for a more aggressive stance and installed a lowering kit to the CL55 as well. Using a similar coil spring and a separate gas-pressurized shock absorber, the RENNtech system is balanced for extreme handling while keeping the luxurious feel from the factory. Combine the RENNtech tuned system with the CL55's ABC technology and you'll discover ripping through turns then back onto the straights becomes more appealing with each lap.

With plenty of power comes the desire to burn off some rubber. Removing the stock 18-inch wheels and their respective tires, RENNtech went with its 10-spoke Monolite wheel design to save weight on rotational mass and give the CL55 a wider stance to hug on every corner. In the front are 19x9-inch width wheels wrapped in 255/25R19 Michelin Pilot Sport PS2 tires. Shining clearly behind the multi-spoke wheel design are RENNtech's 15-inch rotors and 8-piston calipers which your

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MODIFIED LUXURY

SOURCE BOX

RENNtech Mercedes SL500

Performance Package 4

5.5L Conversion with high boost supercharger and intercooler

228bhp gain, 208 lb-ft torque gain

530 @ 5,800bhp, 548 @ 2,400-5,000 lb-ft torque

\$42,800

Pirelli Tires

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Inner stomach has already become accustomed to. Widening up the rear are 19x10-inch width wheels equipped with plenty of rubber: 295/30R19 Michelin Pilot Sport PS2 tires. Behind the 10-inch width wheels are RENNtech's 13-inch rotors and 4-piston calipers. What a splendid combination of parts working together naturally to cushion all 600 plus horsepower while propelling this massive car down the freeway.

As all great things must come to an end, the CL55 is pulled back to its dealership. Slowly loosening my death-grip on the RENNtech sport steering wheel, the silver carbon fiber and leather combination that adorns the interior comes into focus. Located in each fine weave of alternating silver and carbon fiber shade, the intricacy of each piece easily matches the overall fine tune of the CL55. An entire RENNtech silver carbon fiber kit replaces the 12 pieces of OEM wood. Last but hardly least, are RENNtech silver carbon fiber door handles that really offset the interior.

Stepping out of the vehicle, I'm envisioning removing a helmet and unfastening racing gloves, but then I'm reminded that this is merely a street vehicle. Merely a street vehicle? A luxurious coupe that fits four comfortably and sports over 600 horsepower that makes ripping through each revolution per minute a breeze? I relive the moment of a sweeping needle on the tachometer and speedometer while being pinned to the leather, time to schedule another appointment RENNtech. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

MERCEDES BENZ CL55

ENGINE

RENNtech 5.5L V8

ENGINE MODIFICATIONS

RENNtech supercharger system, 97mm bore, 92mm stroke, upgraded pistons and crankshaft, pulley kit, stainless steel side exit dual exhaust

ENGINE MANAGEMENT

RENNtech ECU upgrade

DRIVETRAIN MODIFICATIONS

RENNtech reinforced axles

SUSPENSION

RENNtech lowering kit

WHEELS, TIRES, BRAKES

(f) 19x9-inch RENNtech 10-spoke Monolite alloys with 255/25/19 Michelin Pilot Sport PS2 tires (r) 19x10 RENNtech 10-spoke Monolite alloys with 295/30/19 Michelin Pilot Sport PS2; RENNtech 15-inch rotors with 8-piston caliper in front with 13-inch rotors and 4 piston calipers in rear

CHASSIS, BODY

RENNtech trunk decklid spoiler, aerodynamic body accents, rear diffuser

INTERIOR MODIFICATIONS

RENNtech: (Sport steering wheel in silver carbon fiber/leather, 12-piece silver carbon fiber interior kit, silver carbon fiber door handles

NUMBERS

Horsepower: 625hp @ 6,500 rpm, 620 lb-ft torque @ 3,500 rpm
Acceleration: 12.5 @ 117 mph quarter-mile