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2009 C300 4Matic Sport Sedan

Venus: This was one of my most anticipated cars to review. We both have read the other reviews and finally it was our turn. In summation, I was not disappointed.

Mars: That’s right. We get our review cars from the Mercedes-Benz motor pool in Detroit and the new C-Class has been in such high demand from the journalists that we had to wait longer than normal for our turn to receive one.

Venus: Many people that I come in contact have become accustomed to seeing me with a new Mercedes to review. Usually, the first thing I’m asked is, how much is it? That was not the case with this particular C300. Instead, everyone said what a beautiful car it was, or that they could see themselves driving it.

Mars: This car stole my heart as well. It had the optional Panorama Sunroof instead of the standard moon roof that all of the USA C-Classes get. Our car, in white with the black roof surround, was just stunning. For my money there is no better bargain on the M-B option list. At \$1,000 the Panorama roof really opens up the interior, especially when it is black like our test car was. Outside, it gave the car a very distinctive look as well.

Venus: harman/kardon’s LOGIC7 digital surround-sound system with Dolby Digital 5.1 sound found a way to take my favorite sound system to a new height in the C-Class. Its system features 450 watts of powerfully

clear sound delivered through twelve optimally placed speakers. For cd-audio formats it even include a Gracenote database that automatically identifies each track’s title and artist. The COMAND system included a 40-gigabyte hard drive, of which up to 4 gigabytes could be used to store audio tracks that I had downloaded from my cds. On this car the COMAND system also had a 7" high-resolution monitor that retracted into the top of the dash when not in use.

Mars: You might like your tunes but I was more impressed with the driving capabilities of this car. All of the new C-Classes feature M-B’s traditional multi-link suspension but Agility Control has now been added. Agility Control automatically varies the damping at each wheel as needed. Additionally the new C’s body has been strengthened by the use of an unprecedented combination of high-strength and ultra high-strength steel which contributes to previously unachievable levels of body stiffness. Finally, the new C underwent some 5,500 digital crash tests. Two decades ago 26,000 elements were used for crash simulations. By comparison, 1.9 million elements were used to develop the new C’s crash worthiness.

Venus: This car gave me the ability to show the extreme value that Mercedes offers to a very untapped audience. More than any other Mercedes model that we have ever

reviewed, the new C seemed aspirational to most people. It didn’t hurt that it has one very attractive shape.

Mars: As good looking as it was it didn’t scrimp on safety features. For instance every new C-Class has active front head restraints. In the case of a rear impact exceeding a preset threshold, the head restraints move forward and slightly upward, reducing the distance between the head restraint and the front-seat occupant’s head. This action helps limit the rearward travel of the occupant’s head, thus reducing the possibility or severity of whiplash type neck injuries.

Venus: That’s great but I don’t buy my cars to have people run into them. What I really appreciated was the 4Matic all-wheel drive system. Since I live in the country, and have a 900 foot natural (read unpaved) driveway, maximum winter traction is important to me. The fact that 4Matic offers an automatic transfer of power to the wheel(s) that have grip is very appealing to me.

Mars: Since I live in the city unplowed roads are not a concern for me. However, I was impressed that ESP, the electronic stability program, has migrated all the way down to the C-Class as standard equipment. It used to be that a high-tech option like that was saved for the top-of-the-line models. Now it can be found standard on the new C-Class. Amazing!

Venus: I say Si, Si to the new C-Class. •

