

New A Class Interior

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Interior: Opening the door to convenience and comfort

- Top ratings for spaciousness, comfort and ergonomic design
- Careful choice of materials ensures perceived quality you expect from a Mercedes
- Air conditioning fitted as standard in all models
- A-Class premiere for the control and display system COMAND

A compact car on the outside, yet a family car with the spaciousness of a minivan under the surface, the new Mercedes-Benz A-Class disproves the theory that these apparently conflicting characteristics can be combined into a single vehicle. With an exterior length of 3838 millimetres and a width of 1764 millimetres, the new model may exceed the dimensions of its predecessor, but the A-Class is still more compact and manoeuvrable than its competitors and still allows a clearer view. Indeed, it takes up only 6.7 square meters of space on the road – that’s ten per cent less than other compact cars.

By the same token, the Mercedes-Benz offers significantly more interior space, comfort and functionality than other models in its class. In this respect, two features of the A-Class play a particularly important role:

- The patented sandwich concept allows the engine and transmission to be arranged partly in front of the passenger compartment and partly below, and other components – such as the battery, activated charcoal filter (for the petrol models), fuses, electronic control units and fuel tank – to be positioned under the passenger compartment, thus saving even more space. This construction concept leaves 67 per cent of the body length free for the occupants and their luggage, a peerless achievement of space management.

- An intelligent dimensional concept ensures exceptional spaciousness and more freedom of movement for the vehicle occupants. The new A-Class out-performs both its predecessor model and its rivals in terms of all comfort-related interior dimensions, i.e. shoulder room, hip room, elbow room, space between the seats and head room. In addition, the load capacity of the luggage area is also above the normal level for this vehicle class.

A comparison between the new A-Class and its predecessor model (standard version) confirms that the incoming car has grown up even further in every respect:

New A-Class

(five-door version)

Outgoing model

(standard version)

Difference

Body

Length/width/height

3838/1764/1593

3606/1719/1587

+232/+45/+6

Wheelbase

2568

2423

+145

Interior*

- Shoulder room, front/rear

- Hip room, front/rear

- Elbow room, front/rear

- Head room, front/rear

- Space between seats**

- Knee room, rear

1411/1381

1362/1330

1422/1444

989/983

805

61

1314/1290

1323/1254

1327/1361

977/932

775

31

+97/+91

+39/+76

+95/+83

+12/+51

+30

+30

Boot capacity***
 435 – 1370 l
 390 – 1190 l
 +45 to 180 l

Figures in millimetres, measurements when vehicle unladen.

* Five-door version;

** From seat reference point in the front to seat reference point in the rear;

*** In accordance with VDA measuring method

Entering new dimensions: Greater head and knee room and an ergonomically enhanced seat position in the rear. (Figures in millimetres)

The front and rear passengers both benefit from the larger interior dimensions of the new A-Class. Particularly remarkable is the extra width inside the new car, which passengers will notice most clearly in improvements such as the additional 97 millimetres added to the shoulder room of the outgoing model. The credit for this major advance is shared by the wider body (+45 millimetres), but also the redesigned interior door panels and relocation of the seats a further 15 millimetres (rear: 10 millimetres) to the sides of the car. The new length of the A-Class offers the rear passengers the benefits of extra space between the seats which, at 805 millimetres, reaches the level of a mid-range saloon. Knee room in the rear has improved to a similar degree, whilst a remarkable 53 millimetres have been added to the length of the load compartment floor.

And the Mercedes engineers have made further progress in terms of enhancing visibility for the driver. Slimmer A-pillars and the removal of the window guides in the side windows allow the driver's angle of vision to be widened by some ten per cent forwards and to the right and by as much as around 25 per cent forwards and to the left – a major contribution to further improving vision and safety through corners and when turning off.

Seating comfort over long distances for the rear passengers

A significant comfort feature of the new A-Class is the modified seating position in the rear. The floor structure has been lowered in front of the rear seats, with the effect that the rear passengers sit higher, and thus more comfortably, than in the outgoing model. The seats themselves, which are also new developments, and the improved head and knee room ensure that the rear passengers sit comfortably over long journeys.

Roomy glove compartment and a host of practical stowage compartments

Exemplary functionality and variability have always been among the advantages of the A-Class's innovative body concept. The Sindelfingen-based engineers have continued the development of the compact model's interior according to these criteria and made a number of advances. Indeed, the interior has become even more versatile, thanks to a range of either new or improved stowage compartments. Examples include the following:

- The compartments in the interior panels of the front doors have been designed to accommodate a road atlas and a PET drinks bottle (1 litre). In the rear door pockets, meanwhile, there is enough space for drinks bottles or cans with capacity of up to 0.5 litres.

- The centre console and tunnel trim also offer more stowage options than in the predecessor model. For example, an additional cup holder is located behind the gearshift lever.

- The capacity of the glove compartment, which is cooled by the standard-fitted air conditioning system, has been increased to 8.5 litres, making it more than twice as large as in the outgoing model. In addition to smaller items, this compartment also offers ample room for an A4 atlas and a CD changer for six CDs (optional).

- Both front seats are fitted with an oddments tray which offers room for a tele-scopic umbrella.

Variable rear seat bench and height-adjustable load compartment floor

The 1/3 : 2/3 split rear seat bench allows the A-Class to be adapted quickly and easily according to the transportation job in hand. The basic principle is "rearrangement first". The seat cushions and then the backrests can be folded forwards either individually or as a unit in a single movement, increasing the reach of the load compartment from 649 to 1372 millimetres and the boot capacity from 435 to as much as 980 litres. Plus, the 2/3-section of the seat cushion in the five-door version can be completely removed and stowed under the height-adjustable load compartment floor in order to create more space for luggage and leisure or sports equipment. This pushes load capacity up to a maximum 1485 litres – territory normally reserved for minivans. An overview of the vital statistics:

Five-door A-Class

Position of rear seats
Load capacity

Basic position without luggage area cover;

load compartment floor in lower position.
435 l;

With load up to roof level: 535 l

1/3 rear seat folded forward; load compartment floor in upper position.

a) seat cushion fitted

b) seat cushion removed

635 l;

With load up to roof level: 845 l

690 l;

With load up to roof level: 915 l

2/3 rear seat folded forward; load compartment floor in upper position.

a) seat cushion fitted

b) seat cushion removed

760 l;

With load up to roof level: 1050 l

820 l;

With load up to roof level: 1110 l

Both rear seats folded forwards; load compartment floor in upper position.

a) seat cushion fitted

b) seat cushion removed

980 l;

With load up to roof level: 1370 l

1100 l;

With load up to roof level: 1485 l

Figures in accordance with VDA measuring method

With a width of 1010 millimetres and a depth of 723 millimetres, the boot offers sufficient space in which to transport a medium-sized pram – without having to fold forward or remove the rear seats.

Mercedes experts used a luggage set to demonstrate the benefits of the new dimensions to a family preparing for a trip away. With the rear seat bench in the standard position and the luggage area to be filled to roof level, passengers in the outgoing A Class could take one suitcase with capacity of 86 litres, another offering 69 litres and a small case with wheels (25 litres) with them on holiday. In the new A-Class, on the other hand, they have significantly greater load capacity at their disposal, with the same seating position leaving enough space in the boot for a second 86-litre suit-case, a sports holdall and a beauty case.

When the rear seat backrest is folded forwards, the load compartment floor – which is height-adjustable through 90 millimetres – allows a level loading surface to be created in the rear of the car. As the new A-Class comes as standard with the innovative TIREFIT tyre sealant kit, the spare wheel well serves as a practical and concealed stowage area. The load compartment floor has a capacity of 67 or 118 litres, depending on its position. A further stowage compartment (4 litres) is located behind a flap in the panelling on the right-hand side of the boot area.

EASY-VARIO-PLUS increases load capacity to as much as 1995 litres

Mercedes-Benz has developed the EASY-VARIO system (optional) for customers who demand that much more in terms of interior variability. In the three-door A-Class, the package includes a height-adjustable load compartment floor and removable rear seat cushions (1/3 and 2/3 sections).

The EASY-VARIO-PLUS system, which is available as an option for the five-door version, transforms the interior of the new A-Class into that of a goods carrier:

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Both rear seats can be completely removed – either individually or as a unit - and the seat cushion bases can be folded neatly away. When the following are removed, load capacity increases accordingly:

- 1/3 rear seat to 710 litres (with load up to roof level: 945 litres)

- 2/3 rear seat to 870 litres (with load up to roof level: 1185 litres)

- both rear seats to 1150 litres (with load up to roof level: 1580 litres)

- The backrest of the front passenger seat folds forwards, extending the load area from tailgate to instrument panel to around 2.34 meters in length.

- The front passenger seat can be completely removed. This allows the A-Class to offer maximum load capacity of up to 1995 litres, whilst the load area – from the tailgate to the front footwells – then measures some 2.75 meters in length.

The seats: two-zone upholstery ensures impressive comfort

Mercedes engineers were not satisfied with merely upping the spaciousness of the interior, improving its ergonomic design and achieving peerless variability in the development of the new A-Class – they also devoted special attention to the seats. And the results of this commitment are impressive indeed. The seats show considerably improvements over the predecessor model’s in terms of comfort, side stability, design and perceived quality. Plus, they also offer greater scope for individual adjustment and a more extensive range of optional extras, laying the foundations for exceptional seating comfort.

The seats for the driver and front passenger represent the fruits of new manufacturing technology, which sees the single-piece foamed seat cushions split into separate zones of differing hardness. The foamed material in the raised side bolsters has a stiffer composition in order to ensure good lateral support for the driver and front passenger when cornering and turning off, whilst the softer properties of the seat surfaces allow pressure to be distributed evenly and offer enviable levels of comfort as a result. The depth of the front seat surfaces now measures 512 millimetres, up from the previous 502 mm, whilst 14 millimetres have been added to the width of the cushion, which now spans 513 mm.

The new A-Class sees the frame-type head restraints of the outgoing model replaced by fully padded active variants, which can be adjusted in height and angle. The front seat backrests, meanwhile, are fitted with head/thorax bags – another of the safety systems fitted as standard in the new A-Class. These newly developed airbags further improve occupant protection in the event of a side collision.

The scope of adjustment for the front seats is the same as that in the predecessor model. The reach of the driver’s seat can be modified through up to 260 millimetres and its height by 56 millimetres. If the driver alters the height of the seat, the tilt an-gle of the seat cushion is adjusted automatically through up to six degrees. A full range of adjustment for the driver and front passenger backrests means that they can be reclined fully, if desired.

The front seats of the three-door A-Class are fitted with a system which allows the rear passengers to climb in and out of the car comfortably and easily. When the front seat backrests are folded forwards, the EASY-ENTRY function allows the seats to slide all the way forward in a single movement, creating extra room to get in or out of the car.

Customers looking for even greater individualisation in their seat comfort can choose from a selection of enticing options:

- Seat comfort package: height-adjustable front passenger seat, both front seat cushions adjustable for angle, lumbar support for driver and front passenger.

- Electric adjustment for front seats and head restraints.

- Multicontour backrest for the driver: the pneumatic properties of the upholstery allow the contours of the backrest to be adjusted to the occupant’s body shape

Other practical extras include stowage compartments under the front seats and the luggage nets on the back of the front-seat backrests.

The seat cushions in the rear of the new A-Class are also made using leading-edge foamed materials, the around 100-millimetre-thick foamed upholstery in the seat surfaces offering significantly greater comfort than the outgoing model.

Instrument panel: exemplary touch and feel and perceived quality

Two of the top priorities in the development of the interior for the new A-Class were its touch and feel and ergonomic design. Surface materials, display instruments, buttons and control switches were all subjected to thorough testing according to these criteria. Scientists at the DaimlerChrysler research department's Customer Research Center in Berlin used drivers to help them explore the properties of various different material variants and developed methods of objectively assessing the totally subjective perceptions of the participating drivers. The tests produced valuable feedback for the development of the interior design and technology.

The instrument panel has a single-piece construction and the instrument cluster, controls and ventilation outlets blend harmoniously into the overall form. The precise edges and radiuses which define its appearance are the result of a cutting-edge manufacturing process which Mercedes-Benz has further refined. Robots apply a so-called "spray-on skin" to a negative mould. This consists of a soft polyurethane plastic whose top surface is pleasant to the touch and can be shaped as desired – according to the specification for the vehicle – whilst the process is being carried out. The result is an even surface unblemished by parting lines or seams. Concealed on the inside, even the tear seam of the front passenger airbag fails to disturb the consistency of the styling.

A newly developed cross member forms the high-strength basis for the instrument panel and its components. The glove compartment, airbag, centre console and jacket tube are attached to this solid structure, which reduces shaking and vibrations. The cross member is bolted at either end to the A-pillars, helping to provide them with critical transverse support. A firewall, which is bonded and bolted to the bodyshell, seals the openings between the engine compartment and interior.

This new firewall concept offers audible benefits, allowing less obtrusive noise to filter through from the engine compartment to the interior.

Attractively designed cockpit with state-of-the-art control and display concept

The newly designed cockpit without doubt constitutes the most eye-catching element of the A-Class interior. Clearly laid-out circular instruments with chrome surrounds, black dials and white lettering and figures keep the driver informed of the vehicle speed and engine speed, whilst smaller instruments on either side indicate the coolant temperature (left) and fuel level (right).

In the centre of the instrument cluster is a striking two-section central display. The top section indicates the daily and overall mileage, with the outside temperature, time, current gear and selector lever position for the AUTOTRONIC continuously variable transmission (optional) stated below.

The control and display concept for the new A-Class also invites drivers to programme in their own settings, in order to tailor various functions to their personal requirements. Once stored, these settings are instantly recalled without the need to so much as lift another finger or press another button. Drivers can amend the settings from the standard-fitted multifunction steering wheel familiar from other Mercedes model series, which is linked up to the central display in the instrument cluster, the radio and the car telephone. All they have to do is touch the lower button on the left-hand side of the steering wheel and the main "Settings" menu will appear on the display. From here, individual functions can be programmed under various different menu options.

Centre console designed using knowledge from research into touch-and-feel characteristics and ergonomics

The centre console is a good example of the flawless interplay between touch-and-feel characteristics and ergonomics in the new A-Class. The visible surfaces of the switches and controls are treated with a special paint, which produces a silky shine and soft finish. This "soft-touch paint" is another component analysed by experts in the DaimlerChrysler research department's Berlin-based touch-and-feel laboratories. There, they established the thickness of coating necessary to create surfaces which drivers will find pleasant to the touch. The tests revealed that the drivers' sense of touch allowed them to detect a difference of just a few micrometres.

Another criterion in the development of Mercedes' hallmark touch and feel properties is the "genuineness" of the materials used. Human senses interact with one another and perception is therefore shaped by their combined responses. Hence, the experts at the Stuttgart-based car maker are keen to avoid disappointing their customers by using anything less than genuine materials. The following claim underlines the standards Mercedes sets itself in this area: "The looks of exquisite wood are combined with the authenticity of real wood."

Indeed, the new A-Class is a convincing example of this approach. The attractively styled trim elements on the sides of the centre console, tunnel trim and interior door panels consist of either fine myrtle wood (ELEGANCE equipment line), structured aluminium (AVANTGARDE) or black high-gloss plastic (CLASSIC - in the centre console and tunnel trim only).

Controls and displays within easy reach and clearly visible

The buttons and controls are arranged according to the principles of ergonomic design. They are positioned in order of either the importance of their functions, the frequency with which they

are used or stylistic considerations. For example, the striking red button for the hazard lights is located in the upper-most position, within equally easy reach of the driver or front passenger. Underneath – depending on which has been specified – is the radio or navigation system, whose colour displays are positioned well within the driver's field of vision. Next to bottom in the switch order on the centre console is the control unit for either the standard-fitted air conditioning or optional THERMOTRONIC automatic climate control. The latter stands out with its user-friendly and attractive rotary-type switch for manual adjustment of the fan speed (right) and air distribution (left). A switch strip with buttons for optional extras such as seat heating, PARKTRONIC, tow-away protection and interior motion sensor forms the bottom line of the centre console.

Buttons with convenient push-push control

The technology and functional principles behind the development of the buttons were also established on the back of knowledge compiled in touch-and-feel tests conducted by DaimlerChrysler research engineers and involving the input of 120 drivers. The tests involved assessing the force needed to operate the buttons and the force/path values, as well as the driver's sensual perception of the buttons when pressing them and when hearing the "click" sound. The results of the tests have helped produce a new generation of buttons based on the so-called "push-push" principle. In other words, a single press of one of these buttons is enough to activate or deactivate the function concerned. The buttons lock into position with a satisfying "click", which doubles up as an audible confirmation that the required function has been successfully engaged.

The centre console leads down to a tunnel trim section, whose level design (standard) allows the integration of further stowage areas and a cup holder. A raised version of the tunnel trim can be ordered as an option, complete with a fore/aft sliding armrest and a stowage compartment drawer function for mobile phones.

High-class combination of materials in the door panels

The interior door panels also reflect the commitment of the Mercedes engineers to bring together attractive design and pleasant touch-and-feel properties. They achieve this aim by combining fabric (top) and scratch-resistant plastic (bottom), which has a new double-gloss grain-effect finish. This eye-catching styling is further enhanced – depending on the equipment line – by a striking trim strip in wood or aluminium. Discreet chrome surrounds adorn the grilles on the door-mounted speakers of the ELEGANCE and AVANTGARDE models.

The wide armrests integrated into the interior door panels are pleasantly soft and, as such, extremely comfortable. The attractively styled controls for the power windows and exterior mirrors are integrated into the door panels within easy reach of the driver/front passenger.

Climate control: top-class comfort comes as standard

In addition to the dimensional concept, seat design and ergonomic properties of a car, interior climate control also contributes to the safety and comfort of its passengers. That's why Mercedes-Benz is fitting all new A-Class models as standard with a powerful air conditioning system, whose user-friendly controls are located on the centre console. The driver and front passenger can use the rotary-type switches to adjust the temperature, air distribution and blower speed. The controls for the air conditioning are joined here by other climate-related buttons, such as those for the air recirculation function and heated rear windscreen.

A sensor located in the climate control unit monitors the temperature of the interior and ensures that the level programmed in by the vehicle occupants remains constant. Further sensors measuring the outside temperature and air humidity allow the air conditioning system (with fully adjustable coolant compressor) to be adjusted when required and therefore to economical effect. A solenoid valve enables the system to be regulated continuously in response to the level of humidity in the air, varying the swept volume of the climate control compressor and thus the cooling effect.

Like every Mercedes air conditioning unit, the system in the new A-Class works according to the reheat principle. The system remains constantly active – in low as well as high outside temperatures – in order to first cool the intake air and at the same time remove the moisture from it with the aim of preventing the windows from misting up. The air is then re-heated to the desired temperature. A humidity sensor allows this reheat function to respond to need – the intake air is cooled according to the level of moisture it contains, and then re-heated.

Another special feature is the tunnel function. If the driver presses the air recirculation button down for an extended time (approx. two to three seconds), the air recirculation flap in the climate control unit and all the open side windows and sun-roof are closed automatically. When the button is pressed again, they all return to their previous positions.

Mercedes-Benz fits the CDI models as standard with a newly developed PTC (Positive Temperature Coefficient) heating system, which is positioned behind the air conditioning unit's heat exchanger and activated automatically according to the outside temperature. The compact but powerful heating system whirrs into action a short time after the engine has been switched on, warming up the interior.

THERMOTRONIC automatic climate control with sun and pollutant sensor

THERMOTRONIC is a synonym at Mercedes-Benz for unbeatable climatic comfort and now also available for the A-Class. The highly efficient automatic climate control sys-

tem is making its debut on the Mercedes compact car's options list.

The THERMOTRONIC control unit differs from the air conditioning system in various ways. Its two striking rotary-type switches, for example, govern the blower speed and air distribution. In between these controls are push buttons, which are used to activate the residual engine heat utilisation function (right) and automatic mode (left). The driver and front passenger can key in their desired temperatures separately at the touch of a button in the centre of the control unit. Separate displays confirm the values entered.

In the same way as the air conditioning system, THERMOTRONIC also works partly on the basis of data supplied by sensors indicating the interior and outside temperature and the level of humidity of the in-flow air. In addition, a pollutant sensor is also integrated into the system. If the concentration of nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide in the outside air exceeds certain values, THERMOTRONIC switches automatically to air recirculation mode. Seven electric motors in the THERMOTRONIC control unit ensure that the air flaps are controlled automatically.

The automatic climate control system also contains a special sun sensor. Positioned on the instrument panel, it supplies the THERMOTRONIC system's electronic control unit with information on the intensity of the sun's rays. In automatic mode, this sensor helps to control the quantity and temperature of the air channelled towards the driver and front passenger according to the angle of the sun's penetration.

The air recirculation function also works automatically. In high outside temperatures, the microcomputer automatically adjusts the proportion of recirculated air in the in-flow air in order to cool the interior more quickly and to limit the energy required. Another standard feature of THERMOTRONIC is a combined filter with active charcoal layer, which collects dust particles and pollen when the air conditioning is set in fresh-air mode.

Four pivoting rectangular vents in the instrument panel, four defroster vents for the windscreen and side windows and four vents in the front and rear-passenger foot-wells ensure that the interior receives efficient ventilation. In conjunction with THERMOTRONIC automatic climate control, Mercedes-Benz also equips the new A-Class with a vent which faces upwards from the centre of the instrument panel, distributing air over a large surface area and therefore not creating a draught, as well as two pivoting vents for the rear compartment positioned on the back end of the tunnel trim.

Audio systems: state-of-the-art technology from luxury-class models

In the area of entertainment and communications technology, systems more familiar from Mercedes' leading models are now available for the A-Class. Topping the range is the optionally available control and display system COMAND APS, which combines the services of a radio, navigation system and DVD /CD player. The centrepiece of the system is the large (6.5-inch) TFT colour display boasting flawless clarity and colour presentation. A DVD is available for the navigation system featuring both the European road network and tourist destinations. The route guidance function uses a colour map on the COMAND display, arrow commands in the instrument cluster's central display and audible instructions. Once the route has been calculated, the navigation DVD can be removed and replaced by music CDs. If the driver chooses this option, the navigation system relies on arrow commands only. The system is equipped with an FM-RDS dual tuner for receiving long, medium and short-wave radio stations.

The optional Audio 50 APS is a high-quality system which includes an FM dual tuner receiver, CD drive and arrow-based navigation system with integral RDS-TMC dynamic route guidance. The system's display unit comes in the form of a 4.9-inch TFT colour screen with graphics reproduction capability. The navigation CD contains the road networks of all major European countries, and the CD drive can also be used to play music CDs whilst the route guidance function is in operation.

The Audio 20 CD radio is equipped with an FM /MW and LW receiver. Up to ten stations can be stored for each wave band. The system's four-channel amplifier has output of 4 x 25 watts. The integral CD player can also play privately burned CDs. Automatic station search, the Radio Data System (in conjunction with FM reception) and scan function are further features of this optionally available system, whose integral telephone keypad can also function as a control centre for a mobile phone.

The entry-level system for the new A-Class is the Audio 5 CD (optional) with FM/MW/LW and SW receiver and CD player.

All Mercedes radios are linked up to the standard-fitted multifunction steering wheel to deliver faultless ease of use. A whole host of functions can be operated from here, allowing drivers to keep their hands on the steering wheel when adjusting the volume, for example, or , searching for a different radio station. Another outstanding feature of the audio systems is their speed-sensitive volume control. From approx 20 km/h the volume level is increased in stages in order to adjust to the changing driving situation. Aerial diversity, which selects the strongest signals picked up by the roof-mounted aerial and a pair of FM aerials in the rear window, thus ensuring optimum reception, is another impressive feature of the Audio 20 CD, Audio 50 APS and COMAND APS.

Flawless sound reproduction from the ten-speaker surround sound system

The Mercedes radios are hooked up as standard to six speakers. However, an even higher-quality eight-speaker set can be ordered as an option. Meanwhile, the newly developed surround-sound system (optional) with ten speakers, including active tweeter and woofer system

with built-in amplifiers, takes sound reproduction to the next level and adapts precisely to the acoustics of the A-Class interior. A microphone assesses ambient noise conditions, allowing the microcomputer to adjust the volume and sound development of the system sensitively to the situation in hand. The result is a wonderfully consistent audio quality at all times. The sound system can be combined with the Audio 20 CD, Audio 50 APS and COMAND APS options. And customers can also specify a CD changer for six CDs as an option for the Audio 20 CD, Audio 50 APS and COMAND APS and this unit slots neatly into the glove compartment of the new A-Class.

Universal interface for mobile phones from various manufacturers

Mercedes-Benz offers a universal interface which allows mobile phones from a range of different manufacturers to be integrated into the on-board communication and information data network. This means that the driver can use the telephone easily and comfortably via the buttons on the multifunction steering wheel or the telephone key-pad on the radio (Audio 20 CD, Audio 50 APS and COMAND APS only).

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