

Portland Observer Auto Review

2007 Mercedes-Benz S550

BY KATHLEEN CARR

The 2007 Mercedes-Benz S550 is an all-new luxury sedan presenting the best the iconic German car manufacturer has to offer. Like previous generations of the S-Class line, the S550 coddles driver and passengers alike in luxurious surroundings, while taking electronic control over interior systems and driving aids to a new level.



Tested Vehicle Information: Price: \$103,895; Engine: 5.5 Liter V8; Transmission: 7-speed Automatic.

Mercedes-Benz has assembled a broad array of groundbreaking performance, safety, communications, entertainment, and gee-whiz technologies in a muscular design that will not be mistaken for the previous, eighth-generation S-Class. Airplanes ride on a cushion of air, and so does the 2007 S-Class: Its 4,270 pounds are suspended by compressed air inside four special struts; there are no springs.

The 5.5 liter V8 engine makes substantially more power than the previous-generation S-Class. This is a big car, but the 382 horses under the hood have no trouble getting it motivated in a hurry. Four-valve construction and variable valve timing enable the 2007

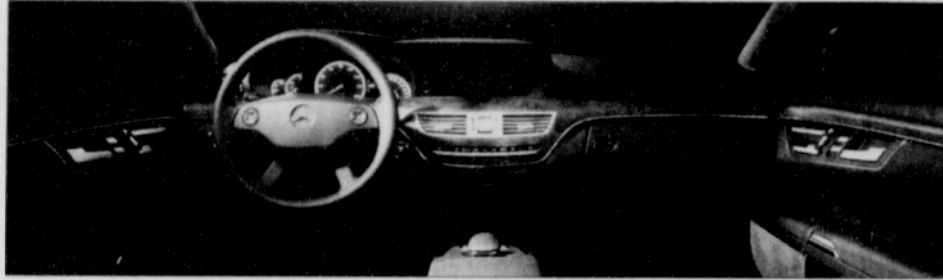
Mercedes S550 to enjoy the benefits of more power without sacrificing fuel economy ("Economy" is relative, of course: the 2007 Mercedes S550 still gets hit with a gas guzzler tax). The engine is mated to a seven-speed automatic transmission. The 2007 Mercedes-Benz S550 is slightly longer than its ancestors, with an extra 3 inches in the wheelbase. It also sports muscular wheel-arch

bulges. The S550 was loaded with options, such as active body control, a panorama sunroof, Sirius Satellite Radio, electronic trunk closure, power rear seats, and four-zone climate control, in addition to those already mentioned. The total retail price was a whopping \$103,895, including \$775 for destination and delivery and a \$1,000 gas-guzzler tariff. The front interior multi-con-

tour seats contain electronically adjustable air bladders and offer numerous massage settings in addition to heating and cooling controls and 14-way power positioning. The front seats also automatically adjust the side bolsters to grip the more zealous driver in heavy cornering.

All this wizardry is controlled by enough microprocessors to keep chip fabs worldwide humming for years to come. Rather than placing dozens of knobs and switches on the dash to control the controllers, Mercedes has followed the lead of the BMW iDrive in the competing and now aging 7 Series (as well as the Audi MMI) by relegating most of the secondary and tertiary functions to a force-feedback cockpit-control wheel called the COMAND (short for Cockpit Management and Data System).

Although the tested vehicle was loaded with extra packages, you find that the base price of \$85,400 is nicely loaded. In my opinion there is not doubt that if you have the chance to drive the 2007 S550 Mercedes-Benz you will enjoy every moment. It is a complete package.



PCC Graduation Marks Milestones

Students overcome many challenges

Portland Community College is celebrating its 44th graduation ceremony, awarding 2,415 diplomas and certificates during commencement exercises from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday, June 9 at the Memorial Coliseum.

"Graduation marks a milestone and major accomplishment for our students," said Preston Pulliams, PCC district president. "These graduates have worked hard. They did not, however, do it alone. I want to thank the able staff and faculty of PCC, the supportive family and friends of the students and the many donors to the PCC Foundation whose financial support enabled many of our students to continue their studies to graduation."

This year's student speaker is Leah Gibson of northeast Portland. Adopted as a child, Gibson represents the diversity of PCC students. She is half Lakota Sioux and half Persian and faced many challenges during her childhood. At 14, she became homeless and was addicted to drugs and alcohol. By 16, she had



Leah Gibson will be the featured speaker at Portland Community College's 44th commencement. Gibson represents one of the many PCC students who have overcome personal challenges to graduate.

dropped out of three different high schools.

During her four years at PCC, she has maintained her sobriety, completed her high school diploma via Gateway to College, worked as student body president at the Cascade Campus in north Portland, and earned her Oregon Arts Transfer Degree with flying colors.

"It's amazing how much I've learned and grown at PCC," Gibson said. "There are so many great people here that are like my family. Now I have to leave and move on. It's kind of scary. I sat down to write my speech and I started to cry. This has been a special year here."

Gibson worked two jobs to support her family while she attended school full time, and regularly volunteers in the community. She was the director of legislative affairs for student government, diversity programmer for Cascade and student representative on the Educational Advisory Council.

She campaigned for students in Salem and Washington, D.C. on issues such as childcare, student loans and education funding. She also worked tirelessly with the PCC Board of Directors to give a voice to students concerning the college's budget priorities.

Dear Deanna!

My husband's old affair is tearing me apart. First we had one child and then another one before we got married. I later learned he had an affair with a woman that stroked his ego during my first pregnancy. He claims it was one time but the way she stalked him, harassed us and bothered us for a few years made me doubt it. He confessed when the phone calls started but I still can't get the affair out of my mind when I look at him. —Anonymous; On-Line Reader

Dear Anonymous:

You set yourself up for drama by getting pregnant without the wedding ring in the first place. You can't lay too much blame on his actions because he wasn't officially your man. If this is in the past, you need to leave it there. Unless he's doing something that's current then get over it. You're causing yourself pain and agony from an old wound. Seek professional or spiritual counseling to get to the root of your pain, squash it and keep it moving.

Dear Deanna!

I'm in prison responding to advice you gave a lonely inmate. With a few years left of his sentence you

Ask Deanna!



Real People, Real Advice

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told him to focus on getting a degree instead of worrying about a woman on the outside. I feel you're wrong. You also didn't tell him what kind of degree he needs. He needs a woman because it's lonely in prison and companionship will help his time pass faster and keep him mentally stable. —Anonymous Inmate; Soledad, Calif.

Dear Inmate:

He had the chance to build a relationship and grow a family when he was free but lost that chance when he committed a crime. Regardless of the major, an educated ex-con will find employment faster than one with no books on the brain. A woman will love you like Luther Vandross behind the ink pen but when it gets serious, she'll start singing no romance without finance and you gotta have a J-O-B to be with me.

Dear Deanna!

I saw my pastor shopping with the church checkbook. I could see the church logo, name and everything on the outside cover. A clerk was trying to refuse the check because it was a business check and required signatures. My pastor pulled rank and said he was authorized. Then he signed two signatures, winked at me and told me to turn the other check. What do I do about this? —Sylvia M.; St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Sylvia:

You sure that wasn't Jim Baker? Your pastor is a thief setting a bad example for the congregation. The pastor knew this was wrong especially if he advised you to look the other way. What part of Exodus 20 Verse 15 Thou Shall Not Steal doesn't he understand? Pray for your pastor and God's guidance as you report this to the church governing board. Telling is not between you and man, but you and your dedication to God and protecting His house.


Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211. Website: www.askdeanna.com

Jefferson Scholar Named

Shereen Sherman of Jefferson High School has been recognized for her leadership and academic achievement with a \$1,000 grant from The Comcast Foundation.

The 2006 graduate of Jefferson's School of Pride & School of Champions, student body president and valedictorian, will be attending George Fox University in the fall.

The Comcast Leaders and Achievers Scholarship Program recognizes high-school seniors for exemplary community service, leadership skills, positive attitude, and academic achievement



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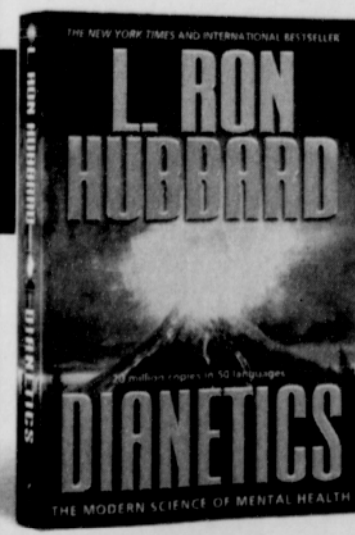
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Rights Advocates Share Struggle

St. Andrew Church, 806 N.E. Alberta St., will host the Native American Club of Mt. Hood Community College for an evening with two of the most visible advocates for the rights of Native Americans.

Carrie Dann of the Western Shoshone Nation and Louise Benally-Diné of Big Mountain, Arizona, will share their struggles to protect the rights of their tribes at 7 p.m. on Sunday, June 11. Dona-

tions accepted of \$5 or more. Information will be shared about the bombing practice at the Nevada test site, the recent forced relocation of the Diné Nation and the depletion of our natural resources.



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