

Mercedes-Benz of Escondido



Summer Fun

with a car
& the road

By Dawn Berry

Drifting days of summer are here just begging for a fun adventure! Let's imagine one together. In this daydream, we are cruising in a brand new 2008 red Mercedes-Benz SRL convertible—one of the most recognized cars in the world.

The SRL convertible is German engineering at its finest, and it handles like you wouldn't believe. To get the full effect of this car, you need to drive somewhere with plenty of curves and flat stretches. The Boulevard and back roads between Escondido and Temecula are the perfect tracks for a test drive.

Our journey begins with a stop at Mercedes-Benz of Escondido to get the keys from current owner and general manager, Angelo Damante. From here, there are a series of steps to take as we settle into this two-seater sports car.

First, toss the keys in back because they aren't needed. This baby starts with the push of a button as long as the keys are within signal range. Second, we're in Southern California—put that top down so we can feel the warm summer breeze on our skin.

Our first destination is a nice place for breakfast. Then, I'm thinking The River Village in Bonsall for some lunch and a little shopping. The open freeway will give us a chance to experience the fluid acceleration in the car, and we can easily find our way using the voice-activated navigation system.

Safety is an important feature for Mercedes-Benz, so everything we could possibly need while driving is within reach at the wheel. Whatever isn't can be accessed by a verbal request. For example, to change the radio sta-

tion, simply state the call letters: "96.7"

If you prefer not to listen to mainstream radio, check out the built-in satellite radio, or sync up your MP3 player. The car is prepped for every type of audio plug-in imaginable from compact discs to iPod® integration kits.

As we cruise along the scenic Boulevard, we can't pass up a visit to one or more of the entertaining casinos. A quick turn off the 15, onto the 76, puts us on our way to Valley View Casino. We find ourselves on a winding route that's great to experience the air suspension and active body control of the car.

After we've won some money, we venture north to Temecula for dinner at one of the award-winning wineries. Your choice—there's Cafe Champagne at Thornton Winery, The Pinnacle Restaurant at Falkner Winery, Vineyard Rose Restaurant at South Coast Winery Resort & Spa, The Smokehouse Restaurant at Ponte Winery or maybe Carol's Restaurant at Baily Winery. My only request is that when we park, you use the high-tech parking sensors on the dash instead of cranking your neck to see the car behind us.

As our day wraps up, there is a slight chill in the air. Fortunately, we don't have to put the top up because the car has AIRSCARF in the seats that warms your neck and shoulders. The seats also have tiny spores that kick out heat or air, and there is dual climate control. To top it off, our chairs can give us a massage as we kick back on the ride home.

Upon returning the keys to Mr. Damante, he explains that

we were never alone in the car because it's equipped with a service called Tele Aid for emergencies and roadside assistance.

There isn't much a Mercedes-Benz doesn't have, and if it is missing something, there is probably a reason for it.

"People often ask why there isn't a touch screen," said sales representative Robert Nadel. "Mercedes-Benz builds cars to last as long as they possibly can and a touch screen monitor doesn't last as long because of things like lotions and scratches."

This brings us to the end of our daydream, but it doesn't have to be a dream. As Damante points out, many people who tend to think they could never own a Mercedes-Benz actually can.

"There have always been misconceptions that luxury items aren't affordable," Damante said. "But there is something for everybody at Mercedes-Benz, and they may cost less than you'd expect."

For more information on Mercedes-Benz of Escondido, call 888.867.4068 or go to www.mbescondido.com.

