



environments that need to be sufficiently secured today; ensuring your safety on the roads is also of paramount importance. The latest offering from Mercedes-Benz Guard Class is making it easier for South African's to achieve a higher level of security. The M-Class Guard offers purchasers all of the benefits of a special armoured protection vehicle, wrapped up in the comfort, elegance and high performance that you've come to appreciate in the M-Class production series vehicles.

A wealth of experience

For the past 85 years, Mercedes-Benz has excelled in the production of special protection vehicles. Their long-standing, continuous and close cooperation with nationally and internationally recognised security authorities has ensured that Mercedes specialists continue to increase their expertise in the fields of development and manufacturing and at the same time applying their vast experience in vehicle protection technology and ballistics to meet the highest standards. Over the past eight decades, the company's rigorous advancements on the road to perfection are a result of extensive materials testing, focused development and continuous improvement which have secured their solid reputation in the industry as renowned specialists in special protection vehicle production.

Discreet Security

Mercedes-Benz believes that a Guard vehicle should be virtually indistinguishable from its series production counterpart and this is certainly true of the armoured version of their popular SUV which follows the brand-typical integrated special protection design principle. This means that all the additional protection systems are taken fully into account right from the development phase of each model series and are then perfectly integrated into the vehicle's architecture.

The vehicle's body-shell is also strengthened from the outset to accommodate the greater weight and positioning of the armour

Mercedes-Benz M-Class Guard SPECIALIST PROTECTION FOR THE VIPS IN YOUR LIFE

According to the latest statistics, South Africa's private security industry is currently estimated to be worth approximately R50 billion and is one of the largest in the world. Risk management, including close-protection, is no longer reserved for diplomats, government officials, or executives operating in high risk regions. Today, private citizens – particularly high net worth individuals - are becoming more cognisant of the potential risks that they and their loved ones face on a daily basis. Being proactive rather than reactive when it comes to your family's security is important and it is not just your residential and business





elements, resulting in greater stability of the entire body structure and in the typical longevity and high resistance characteristics of the conventional M-Class models. As the individual protection elements are integrated in the raw vehicle bodyshell in an autonomous process, the entire passenger compartment is fully protected, including the roof frame struts, locks, door gaps and exterior mirror mounts – nothing is left to chance.

The new M-Guard meets the requirements of protection level VR4 according to testing guidelines for Bullet Resistant Vehicles 2009. The vehicle will resist, amongst others, a Magnum .357 and .44. Certification was carried out by the Ulm-based Ballistics Bureau, in an independent, neural test ensuring that the integrated protection concept is appropriate to face the hard requirements of real danger situations. The M-Guard, with optional floor armour, passed ballistic and explosive tests successfully, withstanding fire from

different angles, and blasts with DM51 hand grenades to both the front and rear of the vehicle, according to test guidelines ERV 2010. By following the integrated special protection design principle, Mercedes-Benz ensures that all the advantages of their standard series-production vehicles are retained, like the luxurious yet functional vehicle interior, the high level of active and passive safety and the exceptional ride comfort and agile driving dynamics. Generously dimensioned suspension components and brakes ensure that their handling qualities closely match the production counterparts, giving the driver optimal driving feel, with high dynamic reserves at all times.

The M-Guard is exclusively available with tyres with run-flat capability and 5-spoke 50.8 cm (20-inch) AMG light-alloy wheels, making it possible to drive on safely for up to 30 km at a maximum speed of 80 km/h even if the tyre has suffered a total loss of air.



Put plainly, while you are driving in the safety of an armoured car, which is approximately 400 kilograms heavier than the standard series-production model, you don't feel as though you're driving a cash-in-transit vehicle. At most, the car will feel, with one passenger inside, as it would if you had four adults in the car – slightly heavier and slightly slower to react. Even armoured, the ML500 Guard (powered by the popular V8 petrol engine, delivering 300 kW of power and 600 Nm of torque), will accelerate from 0–100km/h in 6.5 seconds, a stunning and exceptional achievement. The top speed is limited for safety reasons to 210km/h. In addition to building and maintaining the special protection vehicles, Mercedes-Benz takes care of their customers too, providing a sophisticated driving training course at the Mercedes-Benz Dynamic Driving Academy. The course enables customers and their drivers to make optimum use of their special protection vehicles in all kinds of conditions.

Three special-protection models

While there are a number of standard production Mercedes-Benz Guard vehicles available, your personalised Guard vehicle will take approximately six months to produce, from time of order to delivery. The Mercedes-Benz E 500 Guard, ML 500 Guard and S 600 Guard series are available through a select number of Mercedes-Benz dealers in South Africa, including Mercedes-Benz Fountains in Tshwane, Mercedes-Benz Bryanston in Johannesburg and Mercedes-Benz Century City in the Cape. These designated dealers have a sales force with advanced technical knowledge to advise and fulfil your requirements and give you a personalised experience during the selling process. Likewise the service teams in all of these dealerships are fully trained with skills to maintain our Mercedes-Benz Guard vehicles to the highest Mercedes-Benz standards. Should there be an issue that cannot be resolved by the local market, Mercedes-Benz will dispatch one of their 'flying doctors' – a specialist technician working out of Germany – to handle the problem in order to get your special protection vehicle back on the road as quickly as possible. While Mercedes-Benz sincerely hopes that the type of protection which they are offering to their customer with the Guard range of vehicles is never needed or necessary, they can promise that when it is needed, a Guard series vehicle can be relied upon. ■ Lindsay Grubb



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