

CONCEPT CARS

Luxury car makers say small is beautiful

As the demand for luxury cars dwindles, Germany's prestige motor manufacturers are turning to compact, economical models – equipped, however, with all the usual comfort and safety standards. None is yet in production but prototypes should be revealed in Frankfurt in September

Mercedes – A-Class hatchback

Engine: 3-cylinder 1.2 litre petrol or diesel engines, front wheel drive.

Fuel consumption: 71 mpg (target)

Construction: Steel body bolted on lightweight aluminium frame.

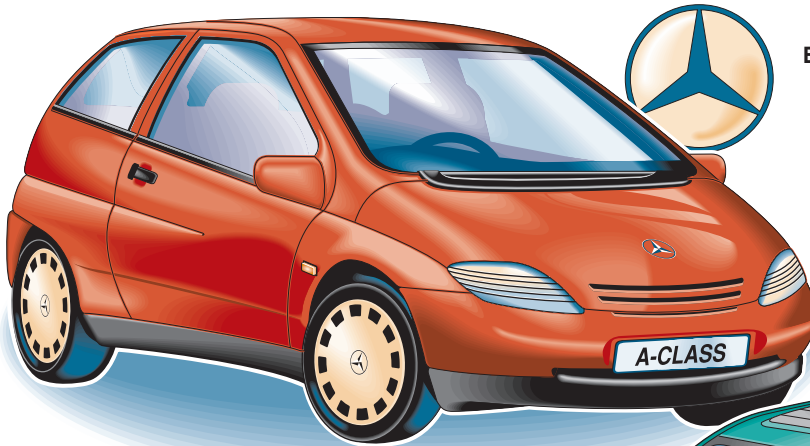
Space beneath floor for battery trays enables conversion to electric version.

Length: 11ft 10ins – 12ft 6ins.

Production: Portugal or Spain to reduce production costs.

Cost: Around \$12,500

Launch date: 1996-97



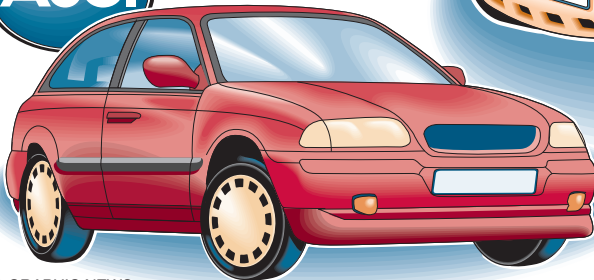
BMW – Terrain Cruiser

Engine: 1.8 litre petrol engine, 140bhp, four-wheel drive.

High driving position, handles more like a car than a utility vehicle.

Production: South Carolina, U.S.

Launch date: Late 1990s



Audi 60 compact

Engine: 1.4 litre petrol engine with 6-speed gear box.

Fuel consumption: 90 mpg (target).

Construction: Light, stiff aluminium body, underfloor fuel tank, kerb weight – 1,540lb.

Length: 12ft 3ins.

Production: Southern or Eastern Europe.

Launch date: 1997