



# SECOND TIME LUCKY

For his third Mercedes-Benz and the realisation of a motoring dream, a leap of faith was required

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**W**E COME BY CARS through a variety of routes and as we all know, the course of true automotive love rarely runs smooth. And so it was for Alan Bain-Tipping, who owns the 1991 500E that you see here – it was very nearly the car he always wanted, but didn't buy.

"It was quite a tough decision," begins Alan. "I bought my first

Merc back in 1999, a W123 200 saloon for £800, and ran it for eight years, during which it was faultless. Sadly though, the toll of being a daily driver led me to that point where it becomes an economic decision. Do I stick with the car and spend some money on it, or do I look for another?" Suffering the usual W123 woes of wheelarch corrosion and the costs associated

with repairing the double skinned rear arches, Alan decided by 2006 it was time to cut his losses and look for something else.

"I found a 124 estate to replace it, in the shape of a 230TE," he says. "But within two weeks of buying it I was sat at the side of the road with an engine that had destroyed itself. As I sat there, waiting for the tow truck, all I could think about was the W123

and how I wished I'd never let it go." You can make your own jokes about having a hard shoulder to cry on at this point if you want, but for Alan, he had to consider his motoring future.

"I got home and was so down about the whole episode that I just sank into the chair with a beer and started flicking through your magazine. I'd heard these good things about the W124s and had





### ▶ JUST THE FACTS

#### Mercedes-Benz 500E (W124)

ENGINE M119 4,973cc V8

POWER 322bhp@5,700rpm

TORQUE 354lb ft@3,900rpm

TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto, RWD

WEIGHT 1,700kg

0-62MPH 6.1sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

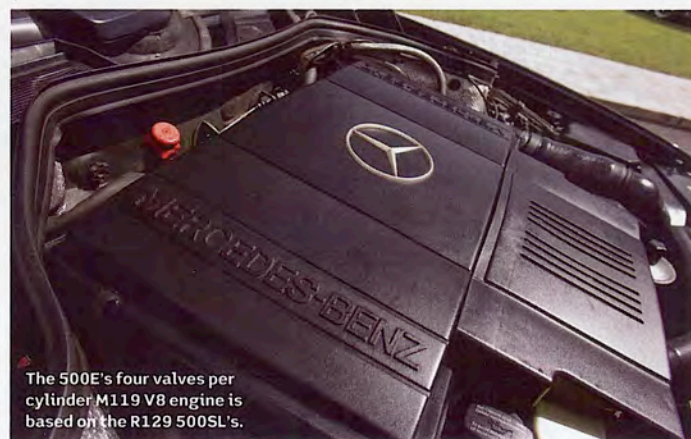
FUEL CONSUMPTION 16.1mpg

YEARS PRODUCED 1991-1995

#### OVERVIEW

An iconic modern classic and true enthusiast's Mercedes – for many, including this owner, the 124-series 500E is a dream daily driver

Figures for a 1991 W124 500E as pictured; fuel consumption according to EEC urban; top speed electronically limited



The 500E's four valves per cylinder M119 V8 engine is based on the R129 500SL's.



This 500E's cabin has fared pretty well despite its 202,500 miles of service.



It did not take long for Alan Bain-Tipping to fall for the blue-black 322bhp beast.



I use it as my daily car because it's simply so much fun to drive, but I'm aware that it's not the most economical of cars

◀ Widened wings, 23mm lower suspension and 16-inch alloy wheels for the 500E.

always hankered after a 500E, but this whole episode had really put me off the idea of owning another 124. Then, after maybe the second or third beer I was a bit more relaxed and spotted a silver 500E for sale. The next day I called to be told it had sold, but there was a blue-black one available."

That afternoon the dealer swung by Alan's house. After a 15-minute viewing and a quick test drive, in spite of his previous experience, Alan's mind was made up. "I had the money and had always wanted one, so decided that despite the estate, which is about as far removed as you can get from the 500E given it's a totally different engine, I'd buy it." A day

Owned originally by a property development company, this Mercedes' service history stamps come from all across Europe. Leipzig, Stuttgart, London, various Italian cities and then finally Cornwall are shown in its history, this also explaining how the car managed to cover 326,000km (over 202,500 miles) prior to Alan taking ownership.

So how has it coped with its years of use? "Incredibly well," replies Alan. "Until recently I was an MOT tester and used to see some cars coming in with not even a quarter of that mileage on them and they needed condemning. But this," he says, as he turns and taps the wing, "seemed to be built to last."

him right and question his use of the word 'seemed'.

"Yes," he sighs. "I was lucky enough to run it along the airfield at Dunsfold a few times when Brooklands Museum held its Wings and Wheels event in 2009. Naturally I was giving it everything, which was amazing, but on my last run I wanted to go even faster and managed 142mph then had to brake for the turn at the end of the runway, however I totally misjudged it and stamped on the brakes so hard they overheated and ended up needing a complete overhaul."

With the brakes repaired, Alan has reached the point of financial justification again, though not

condition but by the fact that his growing family is tugging at his purse strings. "I still use it as my daily car because it's simply so much fun to drive, but I'm aware that it's not the most economical of cars for the family man."

While it will undoubtedly be a hard decision to make, for now Alan continues to enjoy the 500E, knowing that there surely cannot be any better way of relieving the daily monotony of the school run. The hard part is trying to explain why the kids always arrive at school grinning wildly.

▶ The car featured may be for sale. If you are interested please contact us Email [info@mercedeseenthusiast.co.uk](mailto:info@mercedeseenthusiast.co.uk)