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swapped the stock (for the Hammer) Pirelli P700s at the rear for a pair of Goodyear slicks. After heating the slicks by doing several burn-outs in a puddle of water, our test driver was able to bring the 0-60 time down to less than 5 sec, acceleration that puts the Hammer in the same lofty league as the Ferrari Testarossa and Lamborghini Countach.

Parked among the throng of low-slung 2-seat

exotics gathered for our World's Fastest test, the 4-door, relatively upright Hammer didn't appear to be in its element. It astounded everyone, though, by blasting through the Volkswagen's Ehra-Lessien test track at 183 mph, without undue drama, without frazzling the driver's nerves. "This car, for a big comfortable sedan that you could drive to church, is remarkably steady at these speeds," said for-

ward Driving Champion Phil Hill. "It certainly isn't a thorough engineering job to work so hard under these conditions." The Hammer's performance is incredible, but not without a price. As experienced race car drivers are wont to say, "Speed costs money; how fast do you want to go?" In the case of the 6.0-liter Hammer, you're prepared to shell out \$175,000—a huge investment to be sure, but with only 10 or so Hammers being sold around America and only 30 more in the rest of the world, yours should be the only one in your block. Although the engines are assembled at AMG's shop just outside Stuttgart, you have the rest of your car built stateside at Mercedes-Benz of North America (233 W. Ogden Ave., Bensenville, Ill. 60559; 800 652-2366), or order through Beverly Hills Motoring Accessories (1111 Robertson Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212; 310 657-4800).

Mercedes-Benz plans to offer more performance to clients who lust for still more acceleration. In the near future, a new Bosch-Motronic fuel-injection system should be good for an additional 40 hp and a Getrag 5-speed manual transmission. The Hammer can be retrofitted to earlier Hammers. The client can't buy and what the Hammer is a deserted stretch of *Autobahn*—the Hammer takes a firm grip on the wheel, opens the throttle all the way, and feel the exhilaration as the scenery and road signs change from recognizable objects to a splendid blur. ☺

Top Speed

183 mph

- 0-60 mph **5.2 sec**
- 0-100 mph **11.5 sec**
- Standing 1/4 mile, sec @ mph **13.6 @ 109.5**

U.S. SPECIFICATIONS

Price	\$175,000
Curb weight, lb	3635
Wheelbase, in.	110.2
Track, front/rear	58.9/58.6
Length	186.6
Width	68.5
Height	54.1
Fuel capacity, U.S. gal.	18.5

ENGINE

Type	dohc 4-valve V-8
Bore x stroke, in./mm	3.94 x 3.73/100.0 x 94.8
Displacement, cu in./cc	363/5953
Compression ratio	9.8:1
Bhp @ rpm, SAE net	375 @ 5500
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft	407 @ 4000
Fuel injection	Bosch K-Jetronic

DRIVETRAIN

Transmission	4-sp automatic
Gear ratios: 4th (1.00)	2.24:1
3rd (1.44)	3.23:1
2nd (2.41)	5.40:1
1st (3.68)	8.24:1
Final-drive ratio	2.24:1

CHASSIS & BODY

Layout	front engine/rear drive
Brake system	11.2-in. vented discs front, 10.2-in. vented discs rear; vacuum assist, ABS
Wheels	cast alloy, 17 x 8
Tires	Pirelli P700; 215/45VR-17 front, 235/45VR-17 rear
Steering type	recirculating ball, power assist
Turns, lock-to-lock	3.4
Suspension, front/rear: MacPherson struts, lower A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar/5-link, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar	

With 407 lb-ft of torque on hand, an indiscreet prod of the throttle will produce expensive tire smoke (above). Interior revisions (left) include 320-km/h speedometer, AMG steering wheel and optional Recaro seats.