

A-class and the Moose test

{mosgoogle right} Shortly after the Mercedes-Benz A-class was introduced in 1997 the Swedish magazine "Teknikens Vaerld" (World of Technique) gave one A-class in the hands of the car tester Robert Collin.

For the unfortunate surprise of Mercedes-Benz he flipped it on it's top during a routine test to avoid a moose at just 60 kmh. First the he right front wheel rim scratched on the asphalt followed by the right back rim and then the car rolled over. Although the company's test drivers went through a few million of kilometers testing and tried to flip the car with some roof load they could not get it to roll. The problem of this tests would be, says Mercedes spokesman Wolfgang Inhester, they do not exclude misleading results caused by driving mistakes. The fact the rims touched the asphalt shortly before the accident is a possible hint for too low tire pressure.

This test, usually passed with ease, costed the German car manufacturer additional \$250 million to the initial over \$1.5 billion for the development. Mercedes-Benz also had to recall the 2500 cars sold till then.

To improve the stability of it's new baby, Mercedes added stability control (ESP) and redesigned the car's suspension. As a result the ride on the old A-class is very firm; this combined with the short wheelbase makes this car very jittery over rough surfaces.

Mercedes-Benz A-class after the Moose test