

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [BMW announces new X5 4.6iS](#)



### **Range topping new model now on sales in the UK**

The new BMW X5 4.6is is now on sale in the UK priced at £54,000. Adding further choice to an already comprehensive range, the 4.6is offers even more sportiness and pure performance.

The 4.6is features an exclusive 4.6 litre V8 engine producing 347 bhp, capable of developing an almighty 480 Nm of torque (354 lb ft). This new high-performance power unit is derived from the 4.4 litre V8.

Performance is impressive, launching from standstill to 62 mph in just 6.5 seconds and on to a top speed of 149 mph.

### **Sporty shifting**

The 4.6is features a modified five-speed automatic transmission with Steptronic. An entirely new programme has been created to accentuate the sporting character of the vehicle even in the conventional D mode. Switch to S mode and the driver discovers a new uncompromising sports shift programme tailored to meet even the most enthusiastic driver's demands.

### **Outstanding suspension qualities**

Racing driver Hans Stuck proved the outstanding capacity of X5 suspension technology when he lapped the 20.8 km long northern circuit of the Nürburgring in under eight minutes, hitting a top speed of 193 mph in a special X5 model powered by the BMW Le Mans engine. As with all models in the X5 range the 4.6is benefits from superior suspension technology ensuring safe motoring even at high speeds. As an additional safety measure the 4.6is is also fitted with BMW's DSC III stability control as standard.

### **Power under control**

Despite the greater emphasis on sports-car performance, the X5 4.6is retains its off-road qualities. With 40 Nm of extra torque over the 4.4i, this new model has even greater power reserves when subjected to extreme gradients or off road conditions.

Like the 3.0i, 3.0d and 4.4i versions, the X5 4.6is also comes with BMW's electronic ABD differential lock integrated in the electronic DSC (Dynamic Stability Control). The same applies to ABS with CBC (Cornering Brake Control), ASC and DBC (Dynamic Brake Control).

For use on hilly terrain, the X5 4.6is features BMW's enhanced HDC (Hill Descent Control) for keeping a constant speed when driving downhill. Previously when in HDC mode the speed was fixed at 6mph. Now, by pressing the plus (+) button on the cruise control feature of the multifunction steering wheel the driver can increase HDC speed to a maximum of 16 mph. Pressing the minus (-) button will reduce the speed to minimum of 4 mph. By using buttons on the steering wheel rather than the pedal the driver has far greater precision which is especially important in rough conditions when the vehicle might be moving heavily from side to side.

### **Trailer stability control**

Unique to the X5 is a new system that provides far greater safety and comfort when towing. BMW's trailer stability system recognises via a yaw rate signal any swerving action and in simple terms brakes the towing vehicle as well as the trailer itself (through an auxiliary brake system), returning the vehicle and the trailer to a stable driving condition.

A connection at the rear through the trailer hook up electrical socket informs the DSC system that the vehicle

is towing. This signal activates the control system, which is programmed to intervene when necessary at a speed of more than 40 mph. Activation of trailer stability control is shown by the traction light flashing on and off.

### **More choice**

Two-axle pneumatic suspension with self-levelling has also been introduced as an option. This system allows the driver to lower the vehicle by 35 mm for loading purposes (access mode) and increase the height of the vehicle by 25 mm of extra ground clearance (off-road mode.)

As soon as the vehicle exceeds a speed of 20 mph in access mode, the X5 automatically reverts back to the standard mode. The driver can then select the access mode again while driving, the system returns to this mode automatically as soon as the road speed drops below 16 mph. In the off-road mode the X5 can be driven at speeds of up to 31 mph, automatically returning to its original level once that speed limit has been exceeded.

Currently only available on non-Sport models, this option will be introduced for all Sport models and the X5 4.6is from October 2002.

### **Design**

Visual changes to the 4.6 are understated but create an even greater sense of power and formidable on road presence. With 20 inch specially designed wheels fitted as standard, running on 275/40 tyres up front and 315/35 tyres at the rear, the 4.6is has had its wheel arches flared to house them.

Viewed from the front the 4.6is is equally impressive. The front air dam finished in the body colour powerfully accentuates the lower air intake scoops whilst the striking 'wind splitters' on the side of the air dam have been added in the interest of optimum streamlining.

The rear air dam is also finished in body colour continuing the striking look. The two tailpipes are finished in chrome. A choice of four colours is available, two of which are from the BMW Individual Collection underlining the stance of the vehicle. They are Imola red, Estoril blue, Titan silver and Sapphire black.

*Story and photos: BMW Press*

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