

CLASSIC DRIVER

BMW announces 1-series



BMW is poised to shake up the compact executive segment with the arrival of the new 1 Series. Featuring four engines, three gearboxes and rear-wheel drive, a combination not found in any of its competitors, the BMW 1 Series makes its entrance in autumn 2004 and will immediately offer a new benchmark to driving dynamics in its class.

A 1.6-litre petrol engine producing 150Nm of torque at 4,300rpm powers the entry-level BMW 116i. The 115bhp unit achieves a zero to 62mph time of 10.8 seconds and a top speed of 125mph. Even with this high level of performance, the 116i achieves an economical fuel consumption of 37.7mpg.



The high-performance four-cylinder petrol model is the BMW 120i with its 150bhp and 200Nm (at 3,600rpm) 2.0-litre VALVETRONIC petrol engine. Light and nimble, the 120i covers zero to 62mph in 8.7 seconds before going on to achieve a maximum speed of 135mph.

The BMW 1 Series launch line-up is completed with two versions of the powerful yet frugal 2.0-litre common rail diesel engine. The 122bhp BMW 118d averages 50.4mpg while posting a zero to 62mph time of 10 seconds and reaching a top speed of 125mph. The higher-performance 163bhp BMW 120d achieves 49.6mpg yet is capable of a 7.9 second zero to 62mph time and a 137mph top speed. Instant turbo power delivered smoothly to the red line results in the 120d posting sharper performance figures than its 2.0-litre petrol equivalent.

In-gear overtaking in both diesel models should prove rapid thanks to a maximum torque of 280Nm and 340 Nm respectively, much of this urge available from a low 2,000rpm. Both diesel-engined derivatives and the two petrol units are EU4 emission compliant.

Power is delivered to the road via a six-speed manual in 118d, 120d and 120i models, while the 116i has a five-speed manual gearbox. An optional six-speed automatic will also be offered on 120i and 120d models.



Although a new car in a new premium segment, the 1 Series has the traditional BMW design trademarks – the front kidney grille, double headlamps and ‘Hofmeister kink’ on the C-pillar all feature. These punctuate a genuinely head-turning styling that ensures the new 1 Series will stand out amongst its competitors.

After slipping behind the wheel and firing up the engine via a starter button, the driver will go on to enjoy BMW’s renowned 50:50 weight distribution and front engine, rear wheel drive set-up – unique in this class. Coupled with a technically elaborate aluminium front axle and five-link rear suspension, this ensures optimum handling and traction, and the most invigorating drive in the compact executive segment. A drag coefficient of just 0.29 helps the new BMW 1 Series slip through the air with maximum efficiency and the minimum of noise. Standard fit 16-inch run-flat tyres also mean the days of motorway hard shoulder tyre changes are over.

Measuring just 4.23 metres long, but with a relatively long wheelbase of 2.66 metres, driving dynamics have been cleverly worked into a practical four-seater. The new 1 Series offers ample shoulder and legroom for rear passengers and, thanks to split fold rear seats that fold virtually flat, a similarly generous luggage capacity of between 330 to 1150 litres of storage space.

Dynamic Stability Control, Dynamic Traction Control, Dynamic Brake Control and Electronic Differential Lock help ensure the 1 Series provides the highest standards of active safety without impacting unnecessarily on driving enjoyment. An airbag system that includes head airbags for all occupants means the new BMW 1 Series also meets the most stringent passive safety requirements.



The high level of standard safety features combined with structural integrity means that the new 1 Series is clearly aiming for five stars in the Euro NCAP crash test.

Meanwhile, optional extras include Bluetooth capability, sports seats with backrest width adjustment, acoustic Park Distance Control at the front and the rear and Bi-xenon headlights. The pioneering iDrive controller when mated to a navigation system is also an option. Keyless access and voice-activated radio and navigation systems will appear after launch.

Prices for the all-new 1-Series will be announced later in the spring.

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