

CLASSIC DRIVER

New BMW 3-Series Convertible for 2007



Just in time for next year's summer sun, BMW have launched the cabrio version of its current 3-Series. Available initially with 325i and 335i engines, the new car has an innovative folding hard-top roof, and the world's first Sun-Reflective leather upholstery.

The fourth generation of BMW's open-top four-seater heralds a new chapter in the history of the BMW Convertible. While the company employs triple-layered fabric roofs in the 6 Series Convertible and the Z4 Roadster, the designers of the new 3 Series Convertible decided to incorporate a three-piece electronically-operated retractable hard-top – a first for BMW.

Stowed or raised in approximately 22 seconds, the new roof has been introduced, not only for added security, but also for better visibility and a greater feeling of space and light for occupants. Because the roof features a larger rear glass windscreen and side windows, visibility has improved by 38 per cent compared to the outgoing 3 Series Convertible.





The unique way in which the roof folds also maximises available boot space. With the roof up 350 litres of storage capacity beckons while with the roof down, the boot can still accommodate up to 210 litres of luggage. In another world first, the rear seat backrests of a 3 Series Convertible can also be folded flat to provide additional storage space. As an option, a through loading system with transport bag can also be specified to allow for longer or bulkier items to be accommodated and it can still be used when the folding metal roof is lowered. For added practicality, a stowed roof can be electronically raised out of the boot area to allow for longer items such as golf clubs to be secured before being folded away again.





The new BMW 3 Series Convertible can also be specified with the world's first Sun-Reflective Technology leather upholstery. Now owners of BMW's latest four-seat sun-trap can enjoy the warm weather and leave the roof down for prolonged periods without singeing themselves on the seats or armrests. Special pigments embedded into the leather help reflect infra-red radiation ensuring treated areas that are exposed to sunlight for a prolonged period can remain up to 20 degrees cooler compared to untreated leather.





A choice of two petrol engines, both with new High-Precision Direct Injection technology, offer the best blend of performance and economy. Further engine variants will follow during the model's life cycle; a 330i, 330d and 320i.

The new High-Precision Direct Injection system on the BMW 3 Series Convertible uses centrally-mounted piezo crystal injectors spraying atomised fuel vapour directly into the combustion chamber. Combined with Bi-VANOS variable valve technology the system delivers the most efficient burn of fuel for maximum power and parsimonious economy.

The fruits of this technology are highlighted by the impressive performance figures posted by all of the petrol-powered 3 Series Convertibles. The 325i Convertible with its all-new 218hp six-cylinder engine develops 270Nm of torque. The open-topped 325i covers the 62mph sprint in 7.6 seconds and can attain a top speed of 152mph. However, it is still capable of a combined consumption figure of 35.8mpg.

Representing the flagship of the range is the 335i Convertible with its twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre engine. Using an aluminium cylinder block rather than the magnesium alloy unit from the 325i Convertible, but with the added benefit of lag-free forced induction, the 335i posts a zero to 62mph time of 5.8 seconds. The 306hp engine, higher than the output of the E36 BMW M3, has been restricted to a 155mph top speed. Fuel consumption on the combined cycle is 28.5mpg. Peak torque of 400Nm from just 1,300rpm through to 5,000rpm gives the driver a real surge of effortless power, acceleration and flexibility.

Both the 325i Convertible and the 335i Convertible come as standard with a six-speed manual gearbox. A new six-speed automatic transmission featuring steering wheel-mounted gearshift paddles first shown on the 3 Series Coupé can also be specified.

The BMW 3 Series Convertible will make its debut at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit on 7 January, 2007. It will go on sale in the UK in March, 2007.

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