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## The New BMW Z4

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**In what is a first for a BMW roadster, the new Z4 - due to go on sale in the UK in May - has a retractable metal roof. The two-piece electrohydraulically operated hard-top, which opens or closes in 20 seconds, is just one in a number of innovations for the all-new model.**

Other developments include Adaptive M Suspension, with electronically controlled dampers giving three potential configurations and lowering the ride height by as much as 10mm. Another first comes in the form of the standard Drive Dynamic Control function which allows the driver to alter such things as the throttle and steering response, ride comfort, DSC (Dynamic Stability Control) response and, on automatic models, gearchange times.

The 20-second roof-opening time is reasonably impressive (though no match for the 12 seconds of the hugely popular Mazda MX-5) but the Z4's 0-62mph figures are something else again. Glancing at the performance data for the three six-cylinder models contained in the range, I assumed the 6.6-second figure at the top of the table would be for the flagship 3.0-litre twin-turbocharged model... but no, it's for the entry-level 2497cc 204hp Z4 sDrive23i, the 'economy' model, if you like, capable of 33.2mpg on the combined cycle with CO2 emissions of 199g/km.



Move up a notch and the Z4 sDrive30i comes with a 258hp 2996cc powerplant, with 0-62mph in 5.8 seconds; while the flagship 306hp Z4 sDrive35i powers its way from zero to 62mph in just 5.2 seconds for the standard 6-speed manual version, or 5.1 seconds for the Double Clutch Transmission-equipped car.

All three six-cylinder powerplants surpass the latest strict EU5 emissions standards, helped by BMW's award-winning EfficientDynamics programme (brake energy regeneration, electric power steering with Servotronic, reduced rolling resistance tyres and so on).



The new BMW Z4 is larger than its predecessor: some 148mm longer and 9mm wider, to improve interior space and luggage capacity. With the roof up, headroom has been increased by 44mm while the increased width and design enhancements mean 20mm more shoulder room and 43mm more elbow room.



Meanwhile, the unique roof construction of the new Z4 creates a boot that varies in capacity from 180 to 310 litres – large enough to stow a full set of golf clubs. Specify a through-loading system, however, and a hatch between the two seats will allow you to carry a second set of clubs...

Prices for the new BMW Z4 will be announced in 2009.

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*Photos: BMW*

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