The BMW 5 Series Gran Turismo: On Sale from October 2009

Well, we all knew they'd make it, didn't we? The seemingly production-ready car that debuted at this year's Geneva show will be on sale later this year.

BMW includes the new Gran Turismo in its 5 Series model range although, in actual fact, the new car is nearer to the top-model 7 Series in both dimensions and market positioning. Among its high level of standard equipment it will feature the new eight-speed automatic gearbox announced earlier this month on the 760Li.

Inside the new car, owners can choose between four-seat 'Executive specification' for a 'luxurious, spacious feel' or a more conventional five-seat 'SE' set-up. The seating position is mid-way between the 7 Series and X5, and is described as 'semi-command' – i.e. one that mixes the high visibility of a 4x4 with the more practical advantages of a limousine.

The company states that the 5 Series Gran Turismo has the 'second greatest amount of legroom offered by any BMW, while headroom is equivalent to that of a BMW X5'. So, it's a roomy environment for both passengers and driver alike. The innovative luggage compartment treatment should offer the space (up to 1700 litres) of an estate with the quietness and security of a saloon.

How it works is that a conventional-style boot can be used for small items, while opening the tailgate complete with glass rear window allows almost Touring-like access. The rear seats can be moved 100mm fore or aft to either increase boot space or provide greater legroom for rear seat passengers. With the rear seats in their most forward position, and folded flat, the 5 Series Gran Turismo can swallow surprisingly large objects.

Three engines will be available from launch, all married to the eight-speed auto and rear-wheel drive: the **530d** 2993cc 245bhp six-cylinder diesel, the **535i** 2979cc single-turbo 306bhp petrol six-cylinder, and the range-topping **550i** with its 407bhp twin-turbo 4395cc petrol V8.

The latter will sprint from 0-62mph in 5.5 seconds and on to an electronically limited 155mph. In the 550i, peak torque of 600Nm is available from 1750rpm to 4500rpm. Despite such mighty performance, the **BMW 550i GT** records a combined fuel consumption of 25.2mpg and CO2 emissions of 263g/km.

In the UK, prices are likely to start at £40,000 for the 530d GT SE but the well-specified car will include leather, metallic paint, the aforementioned automatic transmission, four-zone air-conditioning and Drive Dynamic Control. This is a feature first shown on the new 7 Series. It allows the driver to fine-tune the chassis configuration, selecting from Normal, Comfort, Sport and Sport+, with each setting changing the steering

assistance, throttle response and gear change characteristics.

BMW anticipates buyers for the new car will come from those who like the idea of an SUV and ‘the practicality that type of vehicle brings’, but who do not like the genre’s styling or image. In addition, there are those looking at the 7 Series or Mercedes S Class but want ‘something different’.

And anyone else, including the Classic Driver UK office; we like it.

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