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BMW ActiveHybrid 5 due early 2012



From next year, a production hybrid model of the BMW 5-Series will join the rest of the range. It will make use of the turbo-six and electric motor combination previewed by the ActiveHybrid study at the 2010 Geneva Motor Show, and has the performance of a 535i despite sitting six company car tax bands lower.

BMW claims that the ActiveHybrid 5 will achieve a combined figure of 44.1mpg, almost 3mpg more than the 520i entry-level model. This is despite the power output of 335bhp, which allows it to reach 62mph in the same 5.9 seconds as the 535i (from which it borrows its 302bhp twin-turbo six-cylinder engine). Emissions figures are on par with the lowest polluting petrol 5-Series – the 520i that shares the same 8-speed automatic gearbox as the ActiveHybrid.

One of the features which contributes towards the ActiveHybrid 5's impressive performance alongside the 53bhp electric motor is the satellite navigation system; it scans the road ahead and prepares the car to react to it in the most efficient way. For example, when it detects an uphill stretch of road, the system will conserve battery power in order to prepare assistance to the combustion engine, in the knowledge that it will recoup the energy on the way back down.

As you would expect, the ActiveHybrid 5 can also travel using electric power alone: at speeds of up to 37mph, the lithium-ion battery (stored in the boot) can provide up to 2.4 miles of emissions-free driving. Also, below 100mph, BMW's ECO PRO mode is in effect, which shuts down the engine when no acceleration is required.

As well as the Multimedia satellite navigation system, standard equipment also includes a four-zone climate control system (which is powered by the battery when the engine has been shut down by the start/stop system at a standstill), 17-inch alloy wheels, and various subtle styling changes.



The ActiveHybrid 5 will make its debut in production form at the Tokyo Motor Show, with production commencing in January. UK sales begin on 25 February next year, starting at £46,860.

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Photos: BMW

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