

CLASSIC DRIVER

BMW ActiveHybrid 3 Due Late 2012



Like the recently revealed [ActiveHybrid 5](#), BMW's hybrid version of its staple [3 Series](#) has a twin-turbo straight-six supplemented by an electric motor. As a result, the ActiveHybrid 3 has the ability to return around 44mpg, while providing the performance of the 335i.

With the ActiveHybrid 3, BMW isn't taking its fight to the Prius. For those determined to save the planet while retaining a propeller badge on the bonnet, there's always the EfficientDynamics version of the BMW 320d - which boasts 68.9mpg. The ActiveHybrid 3, on the other hand, takes its engine from the range-topping (for now anyway, until the new M3 arrives) 335i, in the form of a 3.0-litre twin-turbo straight-six. The 302bhp engine is coupled to a 54bhp electric motor, generating up to 335bhp when used in combination.

Clearly, then, the ActiveHybrid 3 is aimed squarely at those wanting the power of a six-cylinder BMW, while also enjoying lower company car tax (it should be six bands lower than the 335i) and the imaginary green halo associated with driving a hybrid. Illustrating this, the 332lb ft of torque offered by the ActiveHybrid 3 is 37lb ft more than the current E92 M3, and the car is likely to have a 0-62mph sprint time less than a second off the pace of the existing performance-orientated model.

As with the ActiveHybrid 5 (with which it shares its drivetrain), the smaller hybrid BMW has the ability to travel just under 2.5 miles using electric power alone, and also has a 'sailing' function: at constant speeds, the petrol engine is disengaged and the electric motor maintains momentum until further acceleration is required.



Despite these advantages, the addition of the electric drivetrain componentry has had relatively little impact on the packaging of the car. The motor is housed within the case for the eight-speed gearbox, while the batteries stored under the boot floor deduct just 90 litres from boot space, which now stands at 390 litres.

When launched in late 2012, the ActiveHybrid 3 is likely to have little competition from its German rivals: a dual-power version of the Mercedes C-Class is expected in 2013 at the earliest, while a semi-electrified derivation of the Audi A4 will probably be held back until the next generation, due in 2014.







The price has yet to be announced, but logic would place it somewhere between the £35,525 335i and the £46,860 ActiveHybrid 5.

Text: [Joe Breeze](#) / Classic Driver

Photos: BMW

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