

The New BMW 3 Series Touring

by Ian Lynas

A recent arrival has been the fifth generation BMW 3 Series Touring, the original first appeared in 1987 and over the years this practical and sporty estate-like vehicle has become very popular across a wide buying audience.

In its latest guise the practical side has been enhanced, as the latest model offers class leading boot space with through loading as standard and an auto tailgate is also standard.

Three advanced, powerful, yet frugal engine choices are available at launch. Very

impressive is the new BMW 330d Touring with 258bhp and 560Nm of torque, enough to whisk you 62mph from rest in just 5.6 seconds, yet still this vehicle achieves 55.4mpg on the combined cycle.

Styling is clean and smart, from the tip of the nose to the B-pillar, the 3 Series Touring is exactly the same as the Saloon: an expressive front end, accentuated by the 37mm wider track over the previous generation model, creates the perfect foundation for the



frontal styling.

Twin headlamps, with LED accent lights, combine with the gently forward sloping BMW kidney grille to provide a purposeful face, further highlighted by the additional outer air intakes below the headlamps and the sweeping lines of the bonnet that converge on the grille.

From the side it is defined by the sweeping silhouette, with its smoothly sloping roofline and glasshouse that extends to the rear of the vehicle.

The new model is longer overall and at the rear, the spoiler peak accentuates the long roofline, together with the horizontal lines and L-shaped lights set far out to the edges, combine with the 48mm wider track to give a strong on road presence.

The interior design is identical to that of the recently Saloon. Once again a cockpit with a traditional BMW driver focus, what we have come to expect from this German carmaker.

The clear, circular dials and the



flatscreen monitor for the iDrive system are integrated into the dashboard structure; define the instrument panel and the iDrive controller is mounted within easy reach of the driver down on the centre console.

With a loading sill just 620mm off the ground which is protected by a stainless steel strip, the rear luggage area is a significant 35 litres greater in capacity than the previous generation model, at 495 litres.

A more practical vehicle this time round, including the already noted automatic boot opening, there are luggage securing lugs, a pair of coat hooks, a luggage net and strap and a deep storage compartment on the left-hand side of the load area. The luggage cover can be stored under the boot floor when removed.

Power choice, a petrol and two diesel engines, all using BMW's TwinPower turbo technology. A much wider selection of engines will be offered later.

The 320d with the two litre TwinPower turbo diesel engine from the previous generation, but further modified is likely to be the big seller.

Power output is 184bhp and a combined fuel figure just proud of 60mpg and a relatively low CO2 output of 122g/km is all very good news.

The 328i and 320d models come as standard with a six-speed manual gearbox while the 330d gets the eight speed automatic gearbox as standard.

Prices range from £29,380 - £34,700; but of course there are many options to choose from.

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