

# BMW 220d X DRIVE GRAN TOURER

By Jim Mc Cauley

It may be a BMW but not as we know it. The company has launched its 2 Series Gran Tourer which is the first premium compact model to offer seven seats, and in the case of the test car, all-wheel drive

as well. It takes a little time to acclimatise to a new vehicle within an established model range, but ultimately it is the vehicle that persuades you into acceptance.

Providing a slightly higher seating position than the mainstream car ranges, there is a forward viewing advantage, but the positioning of the join in the wishbone 'A' pillars partially blocks viewing at junctions, and it is necessary to peek around it to ensure maximum safety.

With keyless entry and starting on this range topping x Drive M Sport model, a quick dab on the starter button fires the 2.0 litre turbo diesel

into life with a smooth tickover and little noise intrusion into the cabin. This engine produces 190bhp which in terms of basic statistics takes it from rest to 62mph in 7.8 seconds with the potential to top 135mph. Driving through an 8-speed automatic gearbox, changes are super smooth while steering wheel mounted paddles provide for manual override.

Although an all-wheel drive vehicle, primary transfer is through the front wheels only with percentage support to the rear wheels as conditions demand. But there is no feeling that the driving experience differs from the company's historic rear wheel drive preference, and this is reinforced by its negligible cornering roll and pin-sharp steering.

Maintaining pace is underwritten by the firmer M Sport suspension of the test car and head-up display which keeps the digital speed readout always in the line of vision. Night driving is aided by excellent light spread and even





illumination, although the high level lighting on the door interiors can be distracting at times.

But this may provide night-time security for younger passengers, and this is the main reason for a 2 Series Gran Tourer – its ability to seat up to seven people as well as useful seating flexibility.

With the rearmost pair of seats folded, the vehicle has a substantial 560 litres of luggage space. However, the rear seats flip up in a one-touch operation with good access through the fold and slide arrangement in the middle row – two seats on one side and one on the other.

These units slide individually to balance leg

room for the middle and rear row occupants to make the best of available room. However, with the full complement of seats in use, luggage space is extremely limited, although there are useful oddment storage spaces, including under-seat lockers, around the cabin.

For the driver, the cabin maintains BMW's signature detailing with clear analogue instrumentation and the option of duplicating the speedometer reading in the digital head-up display. A fixed 6.5 inch colour infotainment screen sits above the centre console, and while the manual radio selection unit sits high and can be duplicated by the console mounted i-Drive controls, the heater controls are positioned too low. But quality abounds in the cabin from the metal detailing on the gear change paddles to the contrasting blue stitching on the leather upholstery, and there is no mistaking the BMW heritage.

Economy-wise, this 2.0 litre diesel model with automatic transmission and all-wheel drive has an official combined fuel consumption of 57.6mpg. In around 500 miles of mixed driving, the test car returned 39.7mpg, a creditable 69% of the official laboratory figure. With a CO2 emissions of 133gms/km, the model is in Band E for annual car tax of £130.

Although the car tested is the current range topping offering, standard specification across the range is extremely high, and all models come with BMW navigation, DAB radio, Bluetooth connectivity, i-Drive centre console infotainment controller, Intelligent Emergency Call, and automatic lights and rain sensing wipers. The cars also come equipped as standard with rear parking sensors, Collision Warning and City Braking technologies.



The top M Sport trim of the test car adds the M Aerodynamics package, M special trim, leather interior with sports seats and 18-inch alloys. A range of extras allows owners to further upgrade their vehicle and among those are electronic damper control at £150, panoramic glass sunroof at £945 and electric front seats with memory at £650.

The range topping 220d M Sport Gran Tourer is listed at £33,510 with metallic paint adding £550.

The model is covered by BMW's comprehensive 3-year warranty and all-inclusive servicing packages are also available.

(Driven March 2016)