

## BMW 520d

By Jim Mc Cauley

BMW has uprated its successful 5-Series range for 2014 adding more engine options, additional features and a subtle family restyle. The current sixth generation 5-Series is the most successful in the model's 41 year history, with saloon sales alone topping one million units in just over three years.



Test choice in the new range was the ever popular 520d, its lightweight in-line four producing 184 bhp with a useful 380 Nm of torque on tap from 1750 rpm. While the car is available with a standard 6-speed manual gearbox, the test car came with the preferable 8-speed automatic transmission.

Despite the development of the car, BMW has slowly morphed the changes to retain the familiarity of the company's DNA. While the outside of the car has been sharpened with a more prominent front end and new tail-lights to the rear, the interior retains the classic features which provide a pleasant driving environment.

Off the mark acceleration returns a sharp response of just 8.1 seconds to 62 mph with a potential top speed on offer of 145 mph. However, while the more powerful 525d and 530d models will obviously outperform the 520d, it is worth comparing the performance figures against fuel economy and emissions figures. While the 0-62 mph times of the more powerful engine options line within 2.3 seconds of the 520d, fuel economy falls from the combined figure of the test car of 62.8 mpg to just under 48 mpg for the other two along with significant differences in CO2 emissions.

On road, and the 520d impresses with its solidity and linear power delivery, the automatic transmission considerably adding to the appeal of the car with its virtually seamless changes. For passengers, and particularly those in the rear, the 5 Series provides so much more room over the 3 Series and a much more desirable long distance tourer. Supporting long range use is its official combined fuel consumption along with the standard provision in all models of the company's Business Navigation System. An additional feature of this system is the 'Emergency Call' element which automatically establishes contact with the



emergency services if any crash sensors are deployed in the event of an accident.

Advances in the new model range can also be seen in optional safety systems. The new 'Driver Assistant' delivers a tailored combination of camera-based driver assistance systems that significantly reduce the risk of potential collisions at both high and low speeds. The package includes



Lane Departure warning, Front-end Collision warning and Pedestrian Recognition with proactive autonomous braking which supplement the driver's reaction times to improve braking efficiency. A full colour head-up display is a £995 option on the model. Another safety option is the 'Night Vision with Dynamic Light Spot' at £1,750. This system uses a thermal imaging camera to detect otherwise unseen pedestrians, and in addition to alerting the driver to a potential hazard, directs the fog light beam to clearly illuminate the heat emitting object.

The 520d is available in four trim levels with prices starting at £31,530 for the SE. The test vehicle was finished in Luxury trim at £34,330 and for business users is rated at 19% BIK. The model is in Band D for annual car tax and is in Group 34 for insurance purposes. For a one-off payment of £475, a 5-year, 50,000 mile service package is an attractive option.