BMW 840d Convertible – Road Test

Published: September 13, 2019

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/bmw-840d-convertible-road-test/



The BMW 840d Convertible – designed to impress…

…By Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Refinement and rarity are the driving forces behind the new BMW 8 Series, and its halo model has to be the Convertible.

Relaunching its flagship series last year after nearly two decades out of the market, it means the premium German brand is better placed to tackle its rivals and raise aspirations among owners.

The 8 Series comprises two-door, four-seat Coupé or Convertible body styles or the very

new four-door Gran Coupé. The Coupé /Convertible versions have choices of 320 hp six cylinder 3.0 litre diesel or 530 hp eight cylinder 4.4 litre petrol engines, with xDrive all-wheel-drive and costing from £76,300 to £107,100.

Our 840d Convertible had the slightly more torquey 700 Nm (516 lb.ft) tuned version of the 3.0d engine and like all versions in the series it works in conjunction with a sequential eight-speed automatic/manual transmission and safely putting power down with BMW's own XDrive system to all four wheels.



The powertrain is truly superb. You'd never know it was a diesel under that long bonnet, so instant, responsive, quiet and smooth a power delivery which puts many petrol units to shame, except for the fact it is also highly economical with almost 40 mpg recorded on our test.

Silken gearchanges whether going up or down the box in automatic mode or subtle switches between manual selection really defy belief and the power keeps coming without much noise and certainly no vibration or harshness.

The refinement of the powertrain, the way it puts it all down through the big wheels and tyres, mean you have to keep a close eye on the speedometer as it rapidly reaches legal limits without any effort or much noise. It dismisses distance with distain and feels capable of popping across continental Europe in a day or so if you have a villa on the Mediterranean and want to arrive for dinner.



Not only is the engine and gearbox highly sophisticated but so are the steering and brakes. The massive discs really haul down speed with only very modest firm and increasing

pressure on the pedal and certainly no sign of snatching, fade or vibration. Even the effective electric parking brake button is commendably progressive in application and that's something I have not encountered before on such a button.

Turning the BMW 840d is satisfying with the well shaped and sized wheel giving great feedback; there's a surprisingly good lock and as speed increases so does the feeling to the hands. The only feature I found disconcerting was the weighted response of the lane-aligning feature on the system and you have to make a determined effort to overcome when moving across a dual carriageway or motorway.

Main secondary controls are on the steering column stalks, wheel spokes or central console with some switches on the fascia, and comfort controls are scattered about the centre of the fascia under the very large infotainment screen with its touch applications as well. It really is a lot to take in but they are brilliantly lit at night to ease selection. Familiarity breeds content.

Extras on the test car included a Bowers and Wilkins Diamond surround sound system; technology, visibility and premium packs and an M series steering wheel and bodykit were no-cost options.

Any convertible poses a challenge in terms of heating and ventilation but the BMW 840d overcomes them all. The huge powered fabric roof folds and closes in seconds under a hard tonneau cover; it's cosy and wind-tight and the system automatically opens or closes four side windows in the process.

(Wheels-Alive adds: You may also be interested in this feature on a USA-based website, looking in detail at a variety of different tonneau covers… Please go to: https://atfulldrive.com/best-tonneau-cover).

The air conditioning and climate control is quick with a wide range of temperatures possible to achieve throughout the cabin and the front passengers can even have warming air 'scarves' to their necks.



Roof down the air turbulence was modest with the windows raised and even when these were dropped the incoming air was bearable around the front seats, slightly more troubling to anyone in the back.

With the roof lowered, visibility was excellent all round, with optional laser headlights seeing a long way up the road and rapid big-sweeping wipers keeping the glass clear.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Room is a real compromise in the BMW 840d Convertible. Those in front have plenty of space to stretch out and the seats have an extremely wide adjustment range while providing very high levels of support and comfort. The two rear seats are well padded but not as well shaped or supporting and knee room soon becomes an issue if the front seats are moved

back. Oddments room is virtually non-existent in the rear but infront are long shallow door bins, a huge central console box, smaller compartments on the transmission tunnel and a decent sized glovebox.

The mechanism to fold and contain the roof takes up room in the bootspace and while the lid opens wide you have to slip soft items to the front under it and larger bags nearer the rear, but even then its not immense for the overall size of the car. Perhaps those who buy the BMW 840d will want no more room than that for a couple of g-strings and gold credit cards, who knows.

The long elegant lines of the BMW 840d conceal a car very capable of gobbling up motorway miles or winding around mountain passes and through sweeping country roads, but also deftly dipping into urban life. Sensors and cameras around the car ease parking worries caused by the erect roof’s blindspots and those wide wings and small rear window.



VERDICT

The more you drive the car, the greater your appreciation for it, whether it’s the looks, sophisticated leather trimmed interior, mechanical refinement or surefooted handling.

It’s a refined and rare car, not without its shortcomings in vision and rear seating or practicality, but it really has very few rivals.

You can smile in anticipation of a journey and afterwards, and there are few cars which are so pleasurable.

For: Elegant styling, performance, economy, handling, comfort, refinement, trim and build quality, rarity value.

Against: Small bootspace, blind spots when hood erect, option prices, poor rear seat support and rear legroom.



Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

BMW 840d Convertible.

Price: £81,655 (as tested £91,580).

Mechanical: 320 hp, six cylinder 2,993cc turbodiesel, eight speed auto/manual gearbox

with xDrive.

Performance: 155 mph (restricted), 0–62 mph 4.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption: 39.4 mpg on test.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 161 g/km, VED diesel rate First Year road tax £855 then Standard rate £145 + £310 annual supplement for five years as it costs over £40k, BiK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 50.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited miles.

Sizes: L 4.85 m (15.91 ft), W 1.91 m (6.27 ft), H 1.34 m (4.40 ft), Boot space 350 litres (12.36 cu.ft), two doors/four seats.