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BMW iX3 50 xDrive – Road Test

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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) writes...

With VAT-free home charging from October, now is the time to put in your order for the BMW iX3 50 and just hope you're not stuck in a queue of customers.

That will be the only annoying fact if you want to get your hands on the World Car of 2026. It really is very, very good.

If you think electric cars are boring, this Neue Klasse BMW iX3 will destroy any illusions



you may have.

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BMW learned a lot with their first EVs and the appearance of rivals, and engineered a car with a completely new floorpan together with a state-of-art powertrain including repackaged battery cells and motor windings.

The result is that the BMW iX3 50 can take up to 400 kW charging, under 25 mins to hit full charge and then majestically sweep along for up to 500 miles before reboosting.

While some rivals will run it close in the technical tests, the BMW iX3 50 holds an ace in its performance pack, a dynamic drive so typical of the brand which has made them the cars of choice for enthusiasts.

The powertrain pushes out 463 hp giving it supercar acceleration and delivers it silently and swiftly despite weighing over 2.3 tonnes. That weight is actually put to good use keeping the car firmly planted on the road with independent suspension which gives excellent handling through the big 20-inch tyres, a very communicative steering system and powerful, precise brakes.

You can enjoy winding along country roads or settle back and put up with a motorway crunching ability if commuting.

Whatever road you are on, the car's regeneration eases it to a stop and when you are back up and running the driver assistance system is very good and not over-reactive.

I only wish it had more driver friendly adjustment for setting the radar detection in variable traffic.

The iX3 50's ride quality was generally very compliant and uncomplaining but occasionally it was too firm and noisy over particular bumps or potholes and with no engine noise this



road rumble and bump thump intruded.

BMW is very proud of its full-width, content selectable display immediately beneath the windscreen for the most likely instruments – its certainly unique in my experience – but it has a distraction-detected alert built in which appeared too frequently for my liking.

Come up to a junction, look around and the alert was triggered, or check the radio station setting on the six-sided infotainment screen atop the fascia and the alert would go off.

Heating & ventilation was extremely good with a very wide variation possible to select throughout the cabin, backed up by full powered windows but, sadly, no sunroof.

There is a fair amount of oddments space in the cabin with door bins, console tray and box, a glovebox and seat back pockets and a small front compartment under the bonnet for charging cable and a few bits.

The main rear loadbed opens from knee-height under a powered fifth door and that also has another underfloor recess for soft bags and suchlike, while the capacity of the boot can be gradually increased with seatbacks dropping from their 40/ 20/ 40 positions to more than triple size.

The rear loadspace is easily accessed from the back or through the rear doors and the seatbacks simply pull down or pop up by releasing a latch either side.



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The legroom is good in the back for three and headspace is adequate as well, while the seats' adjustment in front is plentiful; they're well shaped, supporting and comfortable.

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Because you sit up high in the cabin and survey the road you have a generally good view but what you can see close up when parking or manoeuvring is much more limited and the car's sensors and cameras really come into their own.

At night the lights are very bright, self dipping and lifting as necessary with long and wide beams illuminating footpaths and side turnings. Without any rain it was not possible to judge the wipers' efficiency but they had a big sweep.

The BMW iX3 50 xDrive seemed at home whether fulfilling the role of a shopping trolley, family runabout or crunching miles along a motorway to business meetings.

Handling was pin sharp responsive, roadholding worry-free and comfort levels were high thanks to the suspension and seats.

It takes more time than we had to fully master the complexity of the technology systems but where we did, their performance was so subtle and sophisticated.

The straight-line speed was awesome for a family SUV and when you came to a corner it took it like a sports car without raising any concern.

For many drivers, the very quick charging that is possible and the long range between boosts is a real game-changer if you are considering a move from a conventional engine to your first EV, or indeed if you have a zero-emissions car and want something a bit special for your next.



VERDICT

Now, just form an orderly queue outside your BMW dealer.

For: Fast charging, long range, strong performance, excellent build quality and equipment, comfortable & roomy, a dynamic drive.

Against: Occasionally lumpy & noisy ride, distracting fascia, some visibility issues.

FAST FACTS

Model: BMW iX3 50 xDrive

Price: £61,362

Mechanical: 345 kW twin motors, 108.7 kWh battery, 4WD

Max Speed: 130 mph

0 - 62 mph: 4.9 sec

Range: 463 miles

Insurance Group: 42

C02 emissions: Zero

Bik rating: 4%, £10FY, £640SRx5

Warranty: 3 years/ unlimited & 8 years/100k battery

Size: L 4.79 m (15.72 ft), W 2.10 m (6.89 ft), H 1.64 m (5.38 ft)



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Bootspace: 520 to 1,750 litres, (18.36 to 61.80 cu ft); 58 litres (2.05 cu.ft) frunk

Kerbweight: 2,360 kg (5,203 lb)

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