Latest BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé – First Impressions + other model news

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THE NEW BMW 2 SERIES GRAN COUPE FIRST DRIVE NEWS AND VIEWS.

By David [illegible] Miles Better News Agency

This is the first ever BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé model and the smallest member of the BMW's four door Coupés family, which are the 4 Series Gran Coupé, 6 Series Gran Turismo and the range flagship 8 Series Gran Coupé.

The new 2 Series Gran Coupé with four passenger doors, a sleek coupé silhouette and front and four wheel drive models architecture also extends the existing 2 Series line up of the rear wheel drive 2 Series Coupé, the Convertible and Active Tourer and Gran Tourer MPVs.

The newcomer has much in common with the brand's new 1 Series family five door Hatchback using the same front wheel drive platform, although there is an xDrive version.

Its main competitor will be the Mercedes CLA series which adopts a coupé design from their A-Class family cars.

On the road prices for the 2 Series Gran Coupé start from £25,815 for the 218i 140 hp petrol manual or £27,165 for the eight speed automatic version followed by the 220d 190 hp turbodiesel automatic at £31,355 and the hot-shot M235i xDrive 190 hp petrol version priced at £37,255. As usual there are options aplenty to push the price up further.

The engine and spec levels mirror those of the new 1 Series Hatchback and are Sport and M Sport specification plus the M235i xDrive model. The Sport model comes with standard features including 17-inch alloy wheels, front and rear Park Distance Control, two-zone automatic air-con, BMW Connected Package Plus, BMW Live Cockpit Plus and Active Guard Plus with Lane Departure Warning. The M Sport version adds 18-inch alloys, M Sport Suspension, M Aerodynamic body styling, M Sport steering, electric folding mirrors, Digital Cockpit Professional, BMW Intelligent Personal Assistant and BMW Connected Package Professional. Customers who opt for the M235i xDrive get exclusive Cerium grey 18-inch alloys, M235i M Sport suspension, rear spoiler, M Performance exhaust system, Limited Slip Differential on the front axle and eight-speed sport automatic transmission featuring launch control.

Charles Turner, BMW's UK Product Operations Manager said at last week's media launch they expected to sell around 6,000 units of the 2 Series Gran Coupé in the UK, around 15% of the expected 400,000 global sales. He expects the newcomer to attract younger buyers as well as existing Gran Coupé owners as there is a trend for downsizing. He also expects the new models to attract conquest customers. By comparison the new 1 Series Hatchback is expected to achieve around 32,000 sales in a full year, 60% of them to retail customers.

He added they anticipate 70% of UK 2 Series Gran Coupé sales will go to retail customers, 35% of buyers will opt for an 118i model, 9% for a 220d diesel and 5% for the M235i xDrive. The rest of the volume will be taken up by further engines to be added to the line-up in future. But there are no plans for pure-electric or PHEV plug-in hybrid versions although

there could be some hybrid elements in future. When it comes to the spec level sales, 50% of UK customers are likely to choose the M Sport level. The overall best selling model will be the 118i M Sport priced at £28,315 on-the-road.

The standout characteristic of the BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé is its side silhouette which includes frameless side windows for the four doors. It is 4,526 mm (14.85 ft) long and 1,800 mm (5.91 ft) wide, but stands just 1,420 mm (4.66 ft) tall. There is a 2,670 mm (8.76 ft) wheelbase similar to that of the 1 Series Hatchback. There are various ways to expand the 430 litre (15.19 cu.ft) load compartment thanks to the 40/20/40 split folding rear seat backs.



At the front slightly angled headlights draw attention to the modern interpretation of the familiar BMW kidney grille. As on BMW coupes from higher up the range, the one-piece kidney grille extends almost the full width between the headlights. The line-up's sporting flagship – the BMW M235i xDrive M Performance – features a pronounced three-

dimensional mesh with a Cerium grey finish in place of the classical bars. The outer air intakes are also larger on the M235i xDrive model.



The 2 Series Gran Coupé is equipped as standard with full-LED headlights that can also be specified as an option in adaptive form. The rear lights also feature full-LED as standard. Also at the rear of the car are the 90 mm (3.54 in) dual chrome exhaust tailpipes although it's a single bore unit on the 218i models, while the M235i xDrive features rectangular shaped trims either side of the rear diffuser.

Due to the Gran Coupe's front-wheel-drive architecture with transverse-mounted engines and a lower centre tunnel there is acceptable cabin space. Rear passengers get 33 mm (1.30

in) of extra knee room over the 2 Series Coupé while the seating position is 12 mm (0.47 in) higher with 14 mm (0.55 in) more headroom when the optional panoramic roof is specified. The 430 litre (15.19 cu.ft) boot (40 litres or 1.41 cu.ft more than the two-door coupé) can be expanded further by folding down the split rear seat backrest, while the rear bench can be released fully from the load compartment.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.



The newcomer, like the new 1 Series, benefits from an array of driver assistance systems known from BMW models higher up the range. Standard equipment includes collision and pedestrian warning with city braking function. Lane Departure Warning with active lane return is also standard, as is Cruise Control with braking function.

The optional Driving Assistant additionally comprises the Lane Change Warning system, which prompts the driver to guide the car back into the correct lane at speeds from 12 – 155 mph by means of a visual warning and, if necessary, a steering input. The Driving Assistant's other functions include the route-ahead assistant, rear collision warning and crossing traffic warning, which reduces the risk of a collision when reversing into roads obstructed from the driver's view, and Active Cruise Control system with Stop & Go function.

The Gran Coupé offers standard-fit Park Distance Control with sensors at both the front and rear while a rear-view camera is fitted with the Park Assistant option. The optional Parking Assistant goes further still by offering automatic assisted parking in spaces that are either parallel or perpendicular to the road. This system takes care of steering the car, accelerating and braking.

Being a Coupé rear visibility support can be needed and the reversing assistant, already familiar from other recent BMW models, helps the driver to exit parking spots or manoeuvre when space is limited.

The new BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé allows drivers to use a variety of operating methods, depending on the situation and personal preferences via the usual buttons on the centre console and steering wheel. The BMW Live Cockpit Plus is standard even on Sport models and includes features such as a Touch Controller, navigation system, two USB ports for data transfer and a WiFi interface. The 8.8-inch control display features a touchscreen, whilst the instrument cluster in front of the driver has a 5.1-inch colour display.

Apple CarPlay preparation is standard on all models and is included for one year from build, and then renewable via the BMW ConnectedDrive portal thereafter with one year, three year or lifetime subscriptions available. Android Auto connectivity becomes available from July. The BMW Live Cockpit Professional is standard on M Sport and M235i models. This includes a fully digital, customisable instrument display behind the steering wheel with a screen size of 10.25 inches, coupled with a 10.25-inch Central Information Display.

Like the 1 Series Hatchback the new 2 Series Gran Coupé might be compact but its big on specification as standard or as an option but the more you add to the equipment the more you pay.

But for some, in addition to the appeal of the elegant four door coupé styling, what's under the bonnet also counts. The 1.5 litre three-cylinder petrol engine for the entry level 218i has technological changes which have reduced CO2 emissions by 29 g/km over the previous engine, while boosting maximum power output by 4 hp to 140 hp. It generates peak torque of 220 Nm (162 lb.ft), with an overboost function which briefly generates an extra 10 Nm (7.4 lb.ft) in fourth gear or higher. The BMW 218i accelerates from zero to 62 mph in 8.7 seconds and can reach a top speed of 134 mph. With a manual gearbox it will return 45.6 – 47.1mpg under the new WLTP regulations with CO2 emissions under the soon to be ended NEDC measuring system of 114 to 123 g/km.

The new 2.0 litre petrol unit under the bonnet of the M235i xDrive is BMW's most powerful four-cylinder engine delivering a maximum output of 306 hp with the help of BMW TwinPower Turbo technology. Peak torque is 450 Nm (332 lb.ft), which helps it to achieve the benchmark zero to 62 mph sprint in 4.9 seconds, while top speed is limited to 155 mph. The M235i returns 36.2 – 37.2mpg with CO2 emissions of 153 g/km.



The diesel offering, which meets the latest RDE2 compliancy, is the 2.0 litre four-cylinder BMW 220d which generates a maximum power output of 190 hp with a peak torque of 400 Nm (295 lb.ft). The sprint from zero to 62 mph takes 7.5 seconds on the way to a top speed of 146 mph. The BMW 220d returns 53.3 – 57.6mpg and emits 110 g/km of CO2.

At last week's UK Media test driving event I had the opportunity to drive what is expected to be the best selling version – the BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé 218i M Sport. With the optional dual-clutch £1,350 automatic transmission this version has an on-the-road price of £29,665. But the vehicle was fitted with numerous other showcased options so the test car's actual price was £33,635.

The newcomer looks an elegant cruiser with huge kerb appeal but when you step inside the first impression is that it is equally driver focussed with its cockpit design mirroring that of

the new 1 Series Hatchback. All the controls fall to hand and the displays are within the driver's eyesight. A look behind the sports front seats and there is about the same legroom as the 1 Series Hatchbacks so it's not plentiful but potentially enough for a young family. It's only adult six-footers who will find the coupé roofline restrictive for headroom.

The next most noticeable feature once on the road was the more compliant ride than I recently experienced with the same specced 118i Hatchback. The ride was comfortable, seemingly without losing any of its taut handling and precise body control, ideal for a long-legged stylish cruiser even though our test drive was on winding Cotswold country roads. Top speed is 134 mph and the zero to 62 mph acceleration time is 8.7 seconds.



The 1.5 litre, three cylinder 140 hp, 220 Nm (162 lb.ft) turbo petrol engine matched with the auto gearbox proved lively but the test drive real-life fuel economy proved disappointing at 32.2 mpg given the official new WLTP figures are 42.2 to 44.8 mpg for the auto model. The new CO2 emission levels are also worrying. Currently they are a NEDC rated 114 g/km but from April this year under the new and more accurate WLTP system these go up to 146 g/km which increase tax costs. Insurance is Group 22.

As no diesel powered model was at the media launch I had time to fit in a brief dash up the

road in the ‘halo hot-shot’ M235i xDrive Gran Coupé version which will only appeal to hard-core petrol-heads although its aggressive sports styling will be visually enjoyed by a larger audience.

The 2.0 litre, four cylinder twin turbo 306 hp, 450 Nm (332 lb.ft) petrol engine is awesome in this model thanks to its power to weight ratio and fully justifies having xDrive all wheel drive traction to keep it under control. Priced at £37,255 this is a lot of car for a lot of money and by adding a few options the test car’s price was £42,280.

The huge power and massive torque coupled to the standard fit revised eight speed auto gearbox and xDrive traction make it a real cut and thrust performance driving machine but with a much firmer ride than the 118i model. There are of course various driving modes to tailor the car’s performance to meet the driver’s needs. Top speed is limited to 155 mph and the zero to 62 mph acceleration time is 4.9 seconds so that easily sums up this model’s performance potential. In reality this engine/transmission/drivetrain is more suited to the new 1 Series M135i xDrive Hatchback rather than this new and very elegant 2 Series Gran Coupé which is very much a ‘grand’ to look at but compact tourer in size.

The Official new WLTP fuel economy figs are 36.2 to 37.2 mpg and on our brief test driving on winding Cotswold roads returned just 24.8 mpg. The outgoing NEDC CO2 figure is 153 g/km but under the new WLTP system operating from April these go up to 177 g/km so running costs and tax implications are significant. Insurance costs are also high with a Group 36 rating.

VERDICT

Overall the new 2 Series Gran Coupé might be a niche model range within the very extensive BMW model line-up but for some customers niche will be nice.

For: Superb four door coupé styling, better ride quality than the new 1 Series Hatchback which shares the same components, brilliant interior build quality and sports cockpit design, excellent driver support and infotainment systems, wide range of options.

Against: Limited rear seat headroom, average boot size, higher tax costs due to the new mandatory WLTP more accurate mpg/CO2 measuring system applicable from April registrations.



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

BMW 2 Series 218i auto M Sport Gran Coupe (expected best

selling model).

Price: £29,665 (£33,635 as tested with options added).

Engine/transmission: 1.5 litre, three cylinder 140 hp, 220 Nm (162 lb.ft) turbo petrol, auto gearbox.

Performance: 134 mph, 0 – 62mph 8.7 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 42.2 to 44.8 mpg (32.2 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: New WLTP CO2 emissions 146 g/km, tax costs from April 2020 First Year VED £215 then £150 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 32%.

Insurance Group: 22.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,526 mm (14.85 ft), W 1,800 mm (5.91 ft), H 1,420 mm (4.66 ft), wheelbase 2,670 mm (8.76 ft), boot 430 litres (15.19 cu.ft), four doors; four/five seats.