New BMW M2 Coupé Road Test

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BMW’s M2 Coupé – Driver Satisfaction Guaranteed.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The new BMW M2 two door, four seater coupé has a 3.0 litre, straight-six, TwinPower, twin

scroll single turbocharged 370 hp petrol engine. It is currently positioned between the M235i 326 hp plus the soon to arrive M240i 340 hp coupé and the larger, more comprehensively tuned and modified twin turbo 431 hp M3 saloon plus M4 coupe and M4 convertible models.

It replaces the 1 Series M coupé 340 hp launched in 2011, which was limited to 450 cars for the UK market. It is reported that around 2,000 units of the M2 will be available in the UK and the waiting list is also rumoured to be over a year long.

Priced at £44,080 for the six speed manual version, or £46,580 for the more popular seven-speed M DCT dual clutch auto transmission with launch control, the M2 coupe comes with one level of standard equipment that includes sat-nav, cruise control, DAB radio, two-zone air-con, parking sensors, 19-inch alloy wheels, black leather sports seats, 60/40 split rear seats, electric windows and auto lights and wipers. There is of course a comprehensive list of extra cost options.

However compared to the M3/M4 models it doesn't get adjustable suspension or carbon fibre or Kevlar lightweight bodywork, and has one twin-scroll turbocharger rather than twin-turbos for the six cylinder petrol engine. BMW's M Division has though used chassis and suspension components and the active M differential from the M3/M4 models. These include the lightweight aluminium wider front and rear axles. This wide stance now needs prominent bulging wheel arches which increases width over the standard coupe by 55 mm (2.17 in) at the front and 80 mm (3.15 in) at the rear to accommodate the wider tracks and to cover the 19-inch rims and tyres which are 10-inches wide. Braking is by M compound steel discs.

Viewed from the side the 4,468 mm (14.66 ft) long two door coupé body looks brilliantly more purposeful than the standard 2 Series coupé due to the sculptured bulging wheel arches coupled with its lowered sports suspension, giving the coupe a low but wide stance on the road. At the front is the familiar BMW kidney grille with its M logo. Beneath that is a large apron with trapezoidal blades and outer air intakes. Channelling the airflow around

and through the bodyshell is needed for extra cooling of the drivetrain and braking system and it has reduced lift by 35%, maximising the aerodynamic balance at high speeds. The weight balance is 52% at the front and 48% at the rear for optimum handling performance. At the rear the broad and low stance is maintained with an M rear spoiler on the boot lid, a rear diffuser integrated into the rear apron and twin dual exhaust tailpipes which give a glorious soundtrack during acceleration.



Inside the M2 has received a significant upgrading from the standard 1 and 2 Series cars on which it is based. The hand of BMW's M Division is clear to see, with black leather sports seats with blue contrast stitching and M logos. There is an M footrest and kneepad on the centre console. Instruments are M2-specific with a speedo scaled up to 185 mph and a rev counter reading to 8,000 rpm, both with red needles. The M logos continue on the rev

counter, gearshift lever, door sills and M leather steering wheel with its shift paddles for the auto version. Carbon fibre style trim and gloss black trim inserts continue the sports design. Centre of the upper dashboard is an 8.8-inch display screen which operates via the centre controller the standard fit sat-nav and professional media package with real-time traffic information. BMW's connected drive function is one of many extra cost options.

The front interior is best described as compact rather than cramped as is the two seater rear compartment, but it is not claustrophobic. One of its main rivals, the Audi TT family of coupés, has far less rear passenger space. Other rivals include the Mercedes A45 AMG, the Audi RS3 and potentially the two seater Porsche Cayman or even the Jaguar F-Type. There is an excellent amount of boot space at 390 litres (13.77 cu.ft) and this can be extended thanks to the folding rear seat backs. Overall the interior works, being relatively high class and well-equipped for everyday use without detracting from its potential as a track-day or motorsport car.



The new 3.0 litre straight-six engine also has components from the more powerful unit used for the M3/M4 models. It is all-aluminium and uses a twin-scroll turbocharger, high precision fuel injection, variable camshaft timing and variable valve control. The turbo is integrated into the exhaust manifold, reducing the engine warm-up time after a cold start and that improves fuel consumption and lowers CO2 emissions. Start-stop is also fitted. Components including pistons were sourced from the M3/M4 as were the crankshaft main shell bearings. The M2 also has a modified lubrication system with additional oil cooler for the DCT twin-clutch auto version, a further engine cooler and a modified sump for oil control during use on a race track.



This is a high revving unit producing 370 hp at 6,500 rpm and with peak torque of 465 Nm (343 lb.ft) available from just 1,400 rpm right up to 5,560 rpm so there is a very wide power band for an instantaneous amount of ‘grunt’. There is also a 35 Nm (26 lb.ft) torque overboost function for extreme acceleration giving a maximum 500 Nm (369 lb.ft) when needed. Top speed is restricted to 155 mph and with the M DCT twin clutch auto transmission zero to 62 mph takes just 4.3 seconds, 0.2 seconds faster than the manual gearbox. Launch control is also included.

Officially the Combined Cycle figure for the auto is 35.8 mpg and during my week long test driving, no track use included, the figure was 28.3 mpg. With CO2 emissions of 185g/km for the auto VED road tax is £355 for the First Year rate reducing to £230 for Year Two onwards. Company car drivers will pay 34% Benefit-in-Kind tax. Insurance is Group 42.

Of course this is a very fast car, perfectly balanced with rear wheel drive and with potent performance but the overriding impression is just how good the M2 can be as everyday transport if you are prepared to pay £44,080 for the manual or £46,580 for the more refined DCT auto. It looks great; there is no doubting its kerb appeal so pride of ownership is high. With Comfort, Sport and Sport+ modes to select from there is a mode to suit our changing driving moods whether it is everyday business or social use, long run cruising and of course even more enthusiastic motorsport potential. Comfort mode is for everyday driving coping with other traffic, Sport just brings the drivetrain to life for the open road and Sport+ allows the traction and stability control to give an even edgier performance before kicking in. Turn off the electronics and if you are skilled enough, preferably on a race track, you can take the M2 to its limit, that's if the driver's limit isn't reached first.

The ride was on the firm side resisting cornering body roll but it was not uncomfortable. The huge wide tyres created a lot of roar inside the cabin and the wide tyres followed creases and ruts in the road surfaces created by heavy traffic. But the steering was well weighted, the handling sublime so it really felt predictable and secure, but all my driving was done on dry roads and greasier surfaces may be more challenging.

VERDICT

Overall the BMW M2 coupe provides a wide range of capabilities from its easy-to-live-with everyday use, its well equipped interior with stylish sports looks and all in a practical compact four seater coupé body. At the other end of the satisfaction scale is the outright hard-core performance potential when needed. It is yet another shining star in BMW's M range.

For: Huge driving satisfaction, fast when needed, great handling, aggressive good looks, great exhaust soundtrack, comfortable, well-equipped, roomy in the rear for a compact coupé, long warranty.

Against: Costly if options are added, high fuel and tax costs, road noise intrusion.



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

BMW M2 Coupe DCT auto. Price: £46,580.

Engine: M 3.0 litre, straight-six, all-aluminium, twin scroll turbocharged petrol engine, 370 hp, 465 Nm (343 lb.ft) of torque from just 1,400 rpm.

Transmission: Seven speed M DCT twin clutch auto, rear wheel drive.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 4.3 seconds.

Top speed: 155 mph (restricted).

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 35.8 mpg (28.3 mpg achieved on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions,185g/m, VED £355/£230, BIK company car tax 34%.

Insurance Group: 42.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.468 mm (14.66 ft), W 1,854 mm (6.08 ft), H 1,410 mm (4.63 ft, boot 390 litres (13.77 cu.ft), two doors/four seats.