

BMW bucks convention with its new genre-defying GT

Mix 'n' match

BMW 5 SERIES GT

BMW isn't known as a risk-taker, but the winner of the 2009 Which? Award for best car manufacturer has repeatedly pushed the boundaries of its traditional market with vehicles such as the X5, X6 and the 1 Series.

The new 5 Series GT is an effort to blend elements of the 5 Series, 7 Series and X5 into a multipurpose performance coupé. It's almost as complicated as it sounds, but it's actually rather good.

It slots in just above the regular 5 Series in the BMW range, and comes with a versatile two-piece bootlid that can be opened as either a saloon or hatchback. It has real load-lugging ability with the rear seats folded down.

Cabin design and quality are excellent, and there's plenty of space for occupants in all seats. Backseat passengers, in particular, will feel like royalty. But the



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driver is not forgotten – this is a BMW after all – and the 5 GT delivers a surefooted and engaging drive. The diesel 530d, which will be the bestseller, is powerful, smooth and quiet.

Prices start at £40,810, but this is an impressively versatile, enjoyable and comfortable car for those looking for a change from the 5 Series norm.

Choose the cheaper 530d instead of the 535i and fuel bills will be £1,123 over 10,000 miles instead of £1,534. Owing to lower CO2 emissions, road tax for the 530d is also £40 a year less.

We rate Vauxhall's next-generation electric car

Charged up for 2012

VAUXHALL AMPERA

The Ampera could be the most important Vauxhall for generations when it goes on sale in early 2012.

It's an electric car with a difference. It has a 1.4 petrol engine, but this only charges the batteries when they're depleted, and never drives the wheels. So it's a kind of hybrid, capable of running on electricity for up to 40 miles per charge and only calling on the engine for longer trips.

We drove the prototype – and it impresses. It's surprisingly quick (0-62mph in 8.5 seconds), with instant throttle response, and it's also very quiet.


Vauxhall claims it takes 3.5 hours to recharge and offers zero tailpipe emissions while

running purely on electricity (CO2 is generated at the power station, though).

VERDICT The Ampera is suitable for short daily trips and longer hauls – and that makes it very appealing. Prices will certainly start above £20,000.



This month

Visit www.which.co.uk/cars to read more first drives, including the latest Seat Ibiza Ecomotive, and watch our videos from the Frankfurt Motor Show. 

Seat Ibiza Ecomotive

The new Seat Ibiza Ecomotive claims 76.3mpg and CO2 emissions of 98g/km (free road tax). However, we reckon you'd be better off with the regular 1.4 TDI Ibiza – find out why at www.which.co.uk/ibizaecomotive.



Audi A5 Sportback

The Audi A5 coupé was for people who thought the A4 saloon had two too many doors. Audi's now confused matters by making a five-door A5 called the Sportback (from £23,710). It's a joy to drive – but can it rival the Mercedes CLS? Read our first drive at www.which.co.uk/a5sportback.

Frankfurt Motor Show

We've been pounding the show halls in Frankfurt to bring you details of the latest car launches. Find out about the Mercedes 'Gullwing' (and many more), and watch videos from the show, at www.which.co.uk/frankfurt.



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