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1. You are here:
2. [Reviews home](#)
3. [Cars and motoring](#)
4. [BMW 5 Series first drive](#)
5. [BMW 5 Series design](#)

In this section

BMW 5 Series first drive

[BMW 5 Series overview](#)

[BMW 5 Series on the road](#)

[BMW 5 Series design](#)

[BMW 5 Series initial verdict](#)

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BMW 5 Series first drive: BMW 5 Series design

We think that the new 5 Series looks better than before. In fact, with the deepest ever 'Hofmeister kink' sharp contour line along its flanks, this 5 is even slightly Jag-like in profile. And the graceful appearance is aided by a more coupe like rear end and shorter front and rear overhangs, hiding the fact that this BMW is longer and wider than before. At 2,968mm long, it's now the biggest in its class, although it weighs 23kg less thanks to the introduction of more aluminium body panels.



Deepest ever 'Hofmeister kink' helps 5 Series look slimmer

Up front, the bonnet is distinctly concave and there's a more pronounced trademark kidney grille. That bonnet, capable of rising by 30mm at the front and 50mm at the back to reduce the risk of injury to pedestrians in an accident, is apparently one reason for this model's five-star Euro NCAP rating. Daytime running headlights with LED light rings complete the dramatic front end.

At the back, new L-shaped rear light clusters with a distinctive triple row of LED lights stretch from the boot lid round the sides of the rear panels, giving a more elegant look.

Classic BMW driver's cockpit



Rear lights feature three strips of LED lights

Take a seat at the helm of the new 5 Series and you're cocooned by a raft of controls, all angled slightly towards you. It's a classic BMW trick aimed at making its cars feel more driver-focused. It works and it also puts all the necessary controls within easy reach for drivers of all shapes and sizes.

However, two things detracted from driver comfort. The seat adjustment on the models we tried was part manual and part electric, so not as intuitive as we'd expect of a luxury vehicle. And, in spite of the many seat and steering wheel adjustments, it was also not as easy to find a good driving position as expected.

This is certainly not the case for rear seat passengers, with the extra size of the latest 5 being used to give them plenty of legroom. And the more sloping rear end hasn't detracted from headroom, which also seems adequate for adults.

BMW says the new 5's interior is a mix of business saloon and sporty car, and we'd have to plump for the former, particularly in models with the black leather and matt aluminium trim, which doesn't have such a premium appearance as rivals such as the Audi A6.

Plenty of hi-tech options



Rear seat space is improved thanks to longer wheelbase

All models in the new 5 line-up are SE spec and come with leather, [Bluetooth](#) preparation, auto aircon, [parking sensors](#) and the iDrive audio, navigation and communications system with a 7-inch display. Optional extras include automatic parking, active steering, head-up windscreen display and night vision with pedestrian recognition.

In addition, four option packs can be added. The most interesting of these are BMW's ConnectedDrive, a useful information and assistance system; Dynamic, which adds sporty trim and bigger alloys; and Visibility, which provides adaptive Xenon headlights and high beam assist.

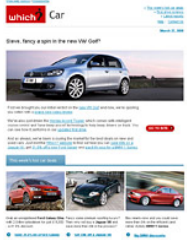
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