

BMW 1 Series Hatchback

WhatCar? verdict



For:

Engaging to drive, thanks to sharp handling and communicative steering. The diesel engines are refined and frugal, and the priciest versions are very swift. Residual values are solid.

Against:

BMW's premium image costs you dear, and equipment levels are mediocre on base models. Rear space and access are tight and the ride quality is firm.



On the road verdict

Performance



All engines perform strongly

You can choose between a 122bhp 1.6 or 141bhp and 168bhp 2.0-litre petrol engines. Three 2.0-litre diesels, with 141bhp, 175bhp, or 202bhp are also available. The 1.6 feels underpowered next to the smooth 2.0 petrols, while the three diesels offer increasingly strong performance.

Ride and handling



Fun to drive, but doesn't score highly for comfort

It's irritating that an overly firm ride compromises the 1-Series' driving manners, especially on M Sport models. Hit the countryside and it's a totally different story. With superb body control, loads of grip and a balanced feel provided by the front-engined, rear-wheel-drive chassis, the 1 Series is sure to appeal to enthusiastic drivers.

Refinement



Smooth engines and little road noise

The 1 Series offers an impressively refined environment for a small family hatchback. The engines stay smooth and hushed, although the diesels aren't quite as hushed as some. Road and suspension noise are both kept in check, but there's some wind noise on the motorway.

In the cabin verdict

Behind the wheel



Superb driving position and a simple dashboard

Like most BMWs, the 1 Series has an excellent driving position, with a wide range of adjustment. It's a shame that BMW persists with a fiddly system of pulling a lever and

Ownership verdict

Buying



Pricey, but most versions are cheap to run

The 1 Series is expensive to buy, but the allure of the BMW badge means that it has stronger residual values than many other small hatches. Running costs are lower than average, too, thanks to BMW's 'Efficient Dynamics' technology. On all versions, fuel economy and carbon dioxide emissions are among the best in the class.

Quality



Solid and well built but some trim is rather basic

The 1 Series' interior isn't as classy as BMW's pricier models, with some rather functional-looking materials and details. You can't argue with the build quality, however, which is top-notch. The controls work with well-engineered precision, too, and there's still reason to have every confidence in the car's long-term reliability.

Safety and security



Even base models provide a safe environment

Driver, passenger, side and curtain airbags, plus traction and dynamic stability control are standard on every model. An alarm, immobiliser, remote central locking and deadlocks are in place to keep thieves at bay.

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Vehicles	Finance	Tracking	Valeting	S.M.A.R.T	Maintenance
New and Used Cars and commercial SuperCars Part Exchange	Contract hire Finance lease Hire purchase Conditional purchase	Live vehicle tracking Timesheets Site reports Mileage	Internal and external Supagard Autoglym DiamondBrite	Dents Scatches Alloy Wheels Repairs	Pay as you go Fixed Fleet support Breakdown recovery

shifting your weight to alter the height or angle of the seat, however. The dash is refreshingly simple, although the optional sat-nav system brings BMW's iDrive control system, which some may find fuusy.

Space and practicality

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Fine up front, rear seat and boot are compromised. Space for legs and heads in the rear falls well short of that in the VW Golf, while access to the back seats is awkward because of the high sill and, on five-door versions, a small door opening. The boot is rather small and oddly shaped too, although the rear seat backs split 60/40 and fold flat onto the fixed rear bench to extend the space available.

Equipment

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Basic model is just that; others have decent kit. Entry-level models have a full set of powered windows and a CD player, but it's stingy not to include air-conditioning and alloy wheels at this price. For those, you need to upgrade to ES. Extras on SE cars include climate control and parking sensors, while M Sport models get a bodykit and firmer suspension.

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