



The Bavarian tour-de-force

Motoring journalist, Tim Barnes-Clay finds out if the new 2017 BMW 5 Series – First Drive leaves Mercedes-Benz and Audi stalling in the paddocks.

Tested: Estepona, Spain.

For more than four decades, BMW's 5 Series saloon has been drooled over by executives around the globe.

It's a car that still wields more status points than many – and the seventh incarnation of this Bavarian tour-de-force has shown the likes of Mercedes-Benz and Audi that the 5 Series will always be a tough cookie to beat.

The new 2017 BMW 5 Series is lighter and quicker than the outgoing version – it's also more efficient. Naturally, the car is stuffed with better tech than before and it's also been given a boost in the comfort department.

It's a looker, too – with a conservatively handsome exterior not drastically different from the exiting model, but now a touch more like the 7 Series. The subtle changes could perhaps be perceived as unambitious by BMW, but the company has tried to make bolder shapes before and it just hasn't worked. Coming across as a smaller 7 Series is no bad thing at all.

Inside is visually very like the outgoing 5 Series. Anyone who's owned or driven a recent BMW will recognise the layout and positioning of the controls, but there's now an extra focus on quality. While the last generation of 5 Series had a perfectly good interior, it had fallen behind the Mercedes-Benz E-Class in terms of style and overall finish - it simply didn't feel as special. From a design point of view, some may still feel that's the case, but at least now the quality is bang on par with its compatriot's offerings.

Technology has moved on now to the point where semi-autonomous technologies are being filtered into new cars. This new generation of 5 Series is capable of accelerating, braking, and steering around objects - perfect for long-distance motorway driving. It can also park itself without you even being in the vehicle - a system that uses BMW's new key to operate. The technology is seriously impressive, but you must learn to trust it.



The car has room for five adults, and out in the boot there's 530-litres of load space available. This is perfect for some golf bags or a very large trip to the shopping centre, although it's a little awkward to load comfortably because of the shape.

Overall build quality feels better than ever, the 2017 BMW 5 Series is beautifully finished and the Bavarian marque has really stepped up in delivering the premium, classy feel the last 5 Series was starting to lose a little. We challenge anyone to feel disappointed with the overall finish of this new car.

On the road, the new 2017 BMW 5 Series is everything you'd hope for – and more. Behind the wheel, you sit low down, and the wraparound dash and clear clocks make you feel as though you're in a jet fighter plane. All the switchgear falls easily to hand and it operates with an effortless action.

It's agile, even though it's longer by 36mm and 6mm broader - and the six-cylinder 265ps 530d M Sport Saloon we drove pulls like a freight train. Zero to 62mph arrives in 5.4 seconds – and when fitted with BMW's all-wheel-drive system – xDrive, the car grips to corners like a koala bear to a Eucalyptus tree.

Turn into a twisty section of tarmac and the new BMW 5 Series replies rapidly to the precise steering, while the car's Comfort, Sport and ECO PRO modes – each altering the throttle and steering response – will fit your mood, as well as road and weather conditions, perfectly.

But, let's face it; the new 2017 BMW 5 Series is more likely to be used as a motorway mile muncher than a sports car strung through switchbacks. We certainly had no worries cruising at 70mph up and down the Spanish test routes we were allocated. The 5 Series irons out lumps and bumps, making any road surface – even the less than mirror-smooth ones – feel brand new.

Expect to pay £49,130 for the 265ps BMW 2017 530d xDrive M Sport Saloon we tested, but if you're a business user choosing this as your company car, the new 2017 BMW 5 Series will give you those lower emissions you'll need for reduced benefit in kind tax bills. This fresh, powerful model gives off only 138g/km of CO² – and you'll be pleased to hear it will return up to 53.2mpg.

{ The wraparound dash and clear clocks make you feel as though you're in a jet fighter plane. }

Pros ‘n’ Cons	
Performance	✓
Efficiency	✓
Kit	✓
Ride	✓
Divisive Image	X

Fast Facts (BMW 530d xDrive M Sport)

- **Maxspeed:** 155 mph
- **0-62 mph:** 5.4 secs
- **Combined mpg:** 53.2
- **Engine layout:** 2,993 cc 6-cylinder turbo diesel
- **Max. power (PS):** 265
- **CO²:** 138 g/km
- **Price:** £49,130

