



Sunday drive: BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe

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The first BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe is the smallest member of BMW's four door coupes comprising 4 Series Gran Coupe, 6



Series Gran Turismo and range flagship 8 Series Gran Coupe, *writes David Miles.*

The new 2 Series Gran Coupe with four passenger doors, a sleek coupe silhouette and front and four wheel drive models architecture also extends the existing 2 Series line up of the rear wheel drive 2 Series Coupe, the Convertible and Active Tourer and Gran Tourer MPVs.

The newcomer has much in common with the brand's new 1 Series family five door Hatchback using the same front wheel drive platform, although there is an xDrive version. Its main competitor will be the Mercedes CLA series which adopts a coupe design from their A-Class family cars.

On the road prices for the 2 Series Gran Coupe start from £25,815 for the 218i 140hp petrol manual or £27,165 for the 8-speed automatic version followed by the 220d 190hp turbodiesel automatic at £31,355 and the hot-shot M235i xDrive 190hp petrol version priced at £37,255. As usual there are options aplenty to push the price up further.



The engine and spec levels mirror those of the new 1 Series Hatchback and are Sport and M Sport specification plus the M235i xDrive model. The Sport model comes with standard features including 17-inch alloy wheels, front and rear Park Distance Control, two-zone automatic air-con, BMW Connected Package Plus, BMW Live Cockpit Plus and Active Guard Plus with Lane Departure Warning.

The M Sport adds 18-inch alloys, Sport Suspension, body styling, Sport steering, electric folding mirrors, Digital Cockpit Professional, Intelligent Personal Assistant and Connected



Package Professional. M235i xDrive gains Cerium grey 18-inch alloys, firmer Sport suspension, rear spoiler, performance exhaust, LSD front axle and 8sp sport automatic box with launch control.



The standout characteristic of the BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe is its side silhouette which includes frameless side windows for the four doors.

There is a 2,670mm wheelbase similar to that of the 1 Series Hatchback. There are various ways to expand the 430-litre load compartment thanks to the 40/20/40 split folding rear seat backs.

At the front slightly angled headlights draw attention to the modern interpretation of the familiar BMW kidney grille. As on BMW coupes from higher up the range, the one-piece kidney grille extends almost the full width between the headlights.

The line-up's sporting flagship - the BMW M235i xDrive M Performance features a pronounced three-dimensional mesh with a Cerium grey finish in place of the classical bars. The outer air intakes are also larger on the M235i xDrive model.

The 2 Series Gran Coupe is equipped as standard with full-LED headlights that can also be specified as an option in adaptive form. The rear lights also feature full-LED as standard. Also at the rear of the car are the 90mm dual chrome exhaust tailpipes although it's a single bore unit on the 218i models while the M235i xDrive features rectangular shaped trims either side of the rear diffuser. Due to the Gran Coupe's front-wheel-drive architecture with transverse-mounted engines and a lower centre tunnel there is acceptable cabin space. Rear passengers get 33mm of extra knee room over the 2 Series Coupe while the seating position is 12mm higher with 14mm more headroom when the optional panoramic roof is specified.

The 430-litre boot, 40 litres more than the two-door coupe, can be expanded further by folding down the split rear seat backrest, while the rear bench can be released fully from the load compartment.

Charles Turner, BMW's UK Product Operations Manager said they expect to sell around 6,000 units of the 2 Series Gran Coupe in the UK, around 15% of the expected 400,000 global sales. He expects the newcomer to attract younger buyers as well as existing Gran Coupe owners as there is a trend for downsizing. He also expects the new models to attract conquest customers. By comparison the new 1 Series Hatchback is expected to achieve around 32,000 sales in a full year, 60% of them to retail customers. He added they anticipate 70% of UK 2 Series Gran Coupe sales will go to retail customers, 35% of buyers will opt for an 118i model, 9% for a 220d diesel and 5% for the M235i xDrive. The rest of the volume will be taken up by further engines to be added to the line-up in future. But there are no plans for pure-electric or PHEV plug-in hybrid versions although there could be some hybrid elements in future. When it comes to the spec level sales, 50% of UK customers are likely to choose the M Sport level. The overall best selling model will be the 118i M Sport priced at £28,315 on-the-road.



The newcomer, like the new 1 Series, benefits from an array of driver assistance systems known from BMW models higher up the range. Standard equipment includes



collision and pedestrian warning with city braking function. Lane Departure Warning with active lane return is also standard, as is Cruise Control with braking function.

The reversing assistant from other recent BMW models helps the driver to exit parking spots or manoeuvre when space is limited. The new BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe allows drivers to use a variety of operating methods, depending on the situation and personal preferences via buttons on the centre console and steering wheel.

The BMW Live Cockpit Plus is standard even on Sport models and includes features such as a Touch Controller, navigation system, two USB ports for data transfer and a WiFi interface. The 8.8-inch control display features a touchscreen, whilst the instrument cluster in front of the driver has a 5.1-inch colour display.

Apple CarPlay repatriation is standard on all models and is included for one year from build, and then renewable via the BMW ConnectedDrive portal thereafter with one year, three



year or lifetime subscriptions available. Android Auto connectivity becomes available from July. The BMW Live Cockpit Professional is standard on M Sport and M235i models. This includes a fully digital, customisable instrument display behind the steering wheel with a screen size of 10.25 inches, coupled with a 10.25-inch Central Information Display.

Like the 1 Series Hatchback the new 2 Series Gran Coupe might be compact but its big on specification as standard or as an option but the more you add to the equipment the more you pay.

But for some, in addition to the appeal of the elegant four door coupe styling, what's under the bonnet also counts. The 1.5-litre three-cylinder petrol engine for the entry level 218i has technological changes



which have reduced CO2 emissions by 29g/km over the previous engine, while boosting maximum power output by 4hp to 140hp.

It generates peak torque of 220Nm, with an overboost function which briefly generates an extra 10Nm in fourth gear or higher. The BMW 218i accelerates from zero to 62mph in 8.7 seconds and can reach a top speed of 134mph. With a manual gearbox it will return 45.6 -



47.1mpg under the new WLTP regulations with CO2 emissions under the soon to be ended NEDC measuring system of 114 to 123g/km.

The new 2.0-litre petrol unit under the bonnet of the M235i xDrive is BMW's most powerful four-cylinder engine delivering a maximum output of 306hp with the help of BMW TwinPower Turbo technology. Peak torque is 450Nm, which helps it to achieve the benchmark zero to 62mph sprint in 4.9 seconds, while top speed is limited to 155mph. The M235i returns 36.2-37.2mpg with CO2 emissions of 153g/km.

The diesel offering, which meets the latest RDE2 compliancy, is the 2.0-litre four-cylinder BMW 220d which generates a maximum power output of 190hp with a peak torque of 400Nm. The sprint from zero to 62mph takes 7.5 seconds on the way to a top speed of 146mph. The BMW 220d returns 53.3- 57.6mpg and emits 110g/km of CO2.

I've had the opportunity to drive what is expected to be the best selling version - the BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe 218i M Sport. With the optional dual-clutch automatic transmission this version



has an on-the-road price of £29,665. But the vehicle was fitted with numerous other



showcased options so the test car's actual price was £33,635.

The newcomer looks an elegant cruiser with huge kerb appeal but when you step inside the first impression is that it is equally driver focussed with its cockpit design mirroring that of the new 1 Series Hatchback. All the controls fall to hand and the displays are within the driver's eyesight. A look behind the sports front seats and there is about the same legroom as the 1 Series Hatchbacks so it's not plentiful but potentially enough for a young family. It's only adult six-footers who will find the coupe roofline restrictive for headroom.

The next most noticeable feature once on the road was the more compliant ride than I recently experienced with the same specced 118i Hatchback. The ride was comfortable seemingly without losing any of its taught handling and precise body control, ideal for a long-legged stylish cruiser even though our test drive was on winding Cotswold country roads. Top speed is 134mph and the zero to 62mph acceleration time is 8.7-seconds.

The 1.5-litre, 3-cylinder 140hp, 220Nm turbo petrol engine matched with the auto gearbox proved lively but the test drive real-life fuel economy proved disappointing at 32.2mpg given the official new WLTP figures are 42.2 to 44.8mpg for the auto model. The new CO2 emission levels are also worrying. Currently they are a NEDC rated 114g/km but from April this year under the new and more accurate WLTP system these go up to 146g/km which increase tax costs.



As no diesel powered model was at the media launch I had time to fit in a brief dash up the road in the 'halo hot-shot' M235i xDrive Gran Coupe version which will only appeal to hardcore petrol-heads although its aggressive sports styling will be visually enjoyed by a larger audience.

The 2.0-litre, 4-cylinder twin turbo 306hp, 450Nm petrol engine is awesome in this model thanks to its power to weight ratio and fully justifies having xDrive all wheel drive traction to keep it under control. Priced at £37,255 this is a lot of car for a lot of money and by adding a few options the test car's price was £42,280.

The huge power and massive torque coupled to the standard fit revised 8-speed auto



gearbox and xDrive traction make it a real cut and thrust performance driving machine but with a much firmer ride than the 118i model. There are of course various driving modes to tailor the car's performance to meet the driver's needs. Top speed is limited to 155mph and the zero to 62mph acceleration time is 4.9-seconds so that easily sums up this model's performance potential. In reality this engine/transmission/drivetrain is more suited to the new 1 Series M135i xDrive Hatchback rather than this new and very elegant 2 Series Gran Coupe which is very much a 'grand' to look at but compact tourer in size.

The Official new WLTP fuel economy figs are 36.2 to 37.2mpg and on our brief test driving on winding Cotswold roads returned just 24.8mpg. The outgoing NEDC CO2 figure is 153g/km but under the new WLTP system operating from April these go up to 177g/km so running costs and tax implications are significant, and it falls into Group 36 for insurance.

Overall the new 2 Series Gran Coupe might be a niche model range within the very extensive BMW model line-up but for some customers niche will be nice.





MILESTONES: BMW 2 Series 218i auto M Sport Gran Coupe (expected best selling model) £29,665 (£33,635 as tested with options added)

Engine/transmission: 1.5-litre, 3-cylinder 140hp, 220Nm turbo petrol, auto gearbox

Performance: 134mph, 0-62mph 8.7-seconds, WLTP Combined Cycle 42.2 to 44.8mpg (32.2mpg on test)

new WLTP CO2 emissions 146g/km, tax costs from April 2020 First Year VED £215 then £150 Standard rate BiK company car tax 32%

Insurance group: 22 Warranty: 3-years/unlimited mileage

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,526mm, W 1,800mm, H 1,420mm, wheelbase 2,670mm, boot 430-litres, 4-doors/4-5 seats

For: Superb 4-door coupe styling, better ride quality than the new 1 Series Hatchback which shares the same components, brilliant interior build quality and sports cockpit design, excellent driver support and infotainment systems, wide range of options

Against: Limited rear seat headroom, average boot size, higher tax costs due to the new mandatory WLTP more accurate mpg/CO2 measuring system applicable from April registrations.