

Road test: The BMW M340i xDrive: Sheer power

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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But not only that. It's elegant, sporty and agile and once you are seated and strapped into the cockpit, you know that you are going to experience a real thrill of a drive. Start up the engine and the engine roars to life with that throaty tone enough to wake up the neighbourhood. No, it's not loud. It's just such a honed-in power tone that speaks volumes of its speed capabilities. Everything about the M340i xDrive shouts power and speed, whether you are inside or looking at it from the outside. And it's a real head-turner wherever you may drive this iconic 3 series member.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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‘M’ for motorsport

Before I tell you anymore, I often get asked what does the ‘M’ mean. The ‘M’ in the BMW M series stands for “Motorsport” and the M Series was originally created to facilitate BMW’s racing programme. Over time, the BMW M programme began to supplement its vehicle line-up with modified vehicle models available to the general public.

The BMW 3 Series has provided a reference point for driving pleasure in the premium mid-size segment for more than 45 years. With its clearly structured surfaces, dynamic lines and large air intakes, the front adds even greater emphasis to the sporty appearance of the new BMW 3 Series Sedan.

The redesigned headlights and kidney grille also give the car strong visual presence. The standard full-LED headlights are now much slimmer, with clear contours and daytime driving lights arranged in an inverted L shape to create a harmonious and modern look.

Safe travels

Standard equipment includes front collision warning with brake intervention, which detects the presence of cyclists as well as vehicles and pedestrians, cruise control with brake function, the speed limit display with no-overtaking indicator, manual speed limit assist and lane departure warning with lane return.

Options include lane change warning, the BMW heads-up display and driving assistant professional, which comprises the steering and lane control assistant and the active cruise control system with stop and go function, automatic speed limit assist, the route monitoring function and traffic light detection.

Model range

The M Sport package Pro is a new arrival on the options list. Available as an extension of the M Sport package as well as for the BMW Performance models from BMW M GmbH, this package includes extended M High-gloss Shadowline trim, M lights Shadowline and an M Sport braking system with red callipers. Retrofit items from the BMW M Performance Parts range offer distinctive options for accentuating the dynamic character of the new BMW 3 Series Sedan even more intently.

The focus on dynamism and modernity woven into the exterior design is also reflected in the restructured model range and especially in the M340i xDrive. It already has a boldly sporty appearance in the standard specification – a visual quality further emphasised by the now standard M High-gloss Shadowline trim.

The stylistic dynamism of the 3 Series can be further strengthened with the M Sport package. Now standard on the BMW 330i model, it brings new design features including a honeycomb pattern for the BMW kidney grille, a new design for the front and rear aprons and likewise new M light-alloy wheels in 18-inch format with mixed-size tyres.

Cockpit

The interior of the best-selling sedan to come from the Bavarian marque has been updated most elegantly. The new interpretation of the brand-typical driver focus is embodied by the 12.3-inch information display behind the steering wheel and a control display with a screen diagonal of 14.9 inches merge into a single fully digital and high-resolution unit. This cutting-edge cockpit design has progressive digitalisation.

Drive systems

Highly efficient internal combustion engines with BMW TwinPower Turbo technology, and electrification in the form of a 48V mild hybrid technology, strike an exceptionally fine balance between driving pleasure and fuel economy.

One diesel and four petrol engines with four or six cylinders are offered for the 3 Series. This line-up includes a four-cylinder petrol unit with an exhaust manifold integrated into the cylinder head and an upgraded turbocharger system to optimise power delivery.

All the engines for the new BMW 3 Series link up with an eight-speed Steptronic transmission as standard. Its sporting character is reinforced by the likewise standard gearshift paddles on the steering wheel.

Available as standard on all models, barring the BMW 318i, is an eight-speed Steptronic Sport transmission, which stands out with its particularly sharp shift dynamics, provides a Launch Control function for traction-optimised acceleration off the line and unlocks ultra-quick bursts of mid-range power with its Sprint function.

Recommended retail price

- BMW 320d M Sport – R930,768
- BMW 330i M Sport – R953,197
- BMW M340i xDrive – R1,338,207

All BMW 3 Series models come standard with a two-year/unlimited-kilometre warranty and a five-year/100,000km maintenance plan.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist.

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