

MOTORING



HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Guilherme Marques

THE BMW M catalogue has a hidden gem in the form of the M340d xDrive. A model with residual sales that proves we are coming up short in this whole electric revolution.

Let's get one thing out of the way first: this car, as tested, costs €111,000. That is way too much money for a diesel 3 Series, no matter how you look at it, no matter how good the car is (and this car is very, very good). Obviously, you may think BMW is pushing the envelope here, but the truth is somewhat different: the car costs around €70,000 - the rest goes straight to the taxman.

Together, car tax (ISV) and VAT represent almost 60% of what you pay BMW for decades of investment, development, evolution, innovation - or, in one word, progress. It does seem like something is wrong here, doesn't it? The government might as well ban this car - because, at €111,000, no one is going to buy one. I don't remember the last time I saw one on the road and I tend to notice them, believe me.

I have a journalist friend who knows more about cars than me who says this kind of car - a very powerful diesel saloon - is a dinosaur and, therefore, it doesn't really matter what it costs, as it is irrelevant in the ongoing transition to electric mobility.

It's not hard to see he and I have different views on the subject. He thinks the world should go fully electric; I think the world would go mad if that happened. He thinks diesel cars are too big a polluter to exist; I think electric cars are too big a polluter to be the answer governments are trying to sell us. That discussion is healthy but endless.

What I want to say is this: it really is a pity we have to pay almost 60% tax on top of the €70,000 BMW wants for the M340d, because this is, quite simply, the best diesel car on sale today. The best. It has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? To be the best at something.

It seems like a waste that more people are not driving this car. BMW was a master of diesel technology and although it is frowned upon today - for right but also very wrong reasons - the truth is it's still here, it's still the best solution for someone who does a lot of high-way kilometres a year. It offers an unbeatable blend of torque, performance and average fuel consumption.

The M340d xDrive is the only diesel car in the M catalogue and likely to be the last one ever built, as I don't see the Bavarians replacing it for the next generation, where everything is going to be electric, petrol or petrol-hybrid. It uses



mode, because, well, there is an M badge to be honoured here. Mainly though, this is a car that has nothing to do with diesels of old. It is super

quiet, extremely refined and a true pleasure to drive at any speed. The handling is absolutely fantastic too. The way it behaves mid-corner when the weight transfer is more pronounced is something else - the 3 Series always had an amazing chassis - whereas the four-wheel drive system feels natural and progressive.

The ride is very good, but naturally busier than other models in the range with much less performance. The suspension controls the body movements with a beautiful fluidity - even with the whole family, the dog and the bags on board. The ability to cover ground is actually scary ... for your driver's license, as you have to be extremely careful to keep within the legal limits

at any given situation. Those 700Nm of torque can do magic after all.

Apart from that, it's a 3 Series. Practical, small(ish) by today's standards and aesthetically pleasing. The interior is high-quality and the infotainment one of the best in the business.

If the M340d xDrive is a dinosaur then take me to Jurassic Park because I love this car. And I know exactly the one thing that could make it even cooler than it is - and I think for all its non-conformity, rarity and unique personality it is very cool. The Touring version. The wagon. Everything this car is but in a more family-oriented style. You can keep all your EVs, hybrids and the likes. A BMW M340d Touring xDrive might just be my perfect car in 2025.

*.....
"The M340d is the best diesel car on sale today. In the world. By some margin. I wished more people could drive one and understand why and how it still makes total sense in 2025"
.....*



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