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DECEMBER 15, 2003

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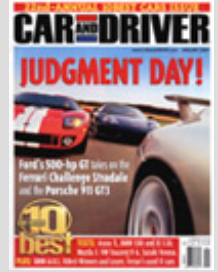
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10Best Cars: BMW 3-series/M3

These cars never let a driver forget that getting there is at least half the fun.

January 2004

Few cars have spent as much time in the crosshairs of so many competitors as has the BMW 3-series, yet no other automaker has managed to deliver a wounding shot to this king of the compact-sports-sedan hill. Part of the BMW's appeal lies in its variety of rear- and four-wheel-drive sedans, wagons, coupes, and convertibles, spanning a price spectrum from the \$28,495 325i sedan all the way up to the screaming \$56,595 M3 convertible.

And by introducing new variants and packages frequently throughout each model's life span, BMW makes sure the 3-series is never a sitting duck for would-be competitors. A recent addition was the 330i with the Performance package of engine and chassis upgrades that shaved a half-second off acceleration times and improved skidpad grip and stopping distance, too, narrowing the performance gap between the 330i sedan and the M3 coupe.

An eager-revving inline six-cylinder engine and a slick-shifting manual transmission come standard in every car, as do a cockpit that fits like a custom-tailored wetsuit and controls that work and respond like second nature. In short, a BMW 3-series car never lets its driver forget that getting there is at least half the fun.



Specifications:

Vehicle type	front-engine, rear- or 4-wheel-drive, 4- or 5-passenger, 2-door coupe or convertible, 4-door sedan, or 5-door wagon
Base price	\$28,495–\$56,595
Engine	DOHC 24-valve 2.5-, 3.0-, or 3.2-liter inline-6
Power (SAE net)	184–333 bhp
Torque (SAE net)	175–262 lb-ft
Transmissions	5- or 6-speed manual, 6-speed manual with automated shifting and clutch, 5-speed auto with manumatic shifting
Wheelbase	107.3 in
Length/width/height	176.0–176.9/68.5–70.1/53.9–56.5 in
Curb Weight	3250–3700 lb
EPA fuel economy, city driving	16–21 mpg


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