

CLASSIC DRIVER

BMW Concept 5 Series Gran Turismo



It seems almost de rigueur these days to claim that every new car ‘defines a brand-new vehicle segment’. And perhaps it’s true: perhaps the blurring of boundaries between estate and SUV, saloon and MPV, mean that each new car, fresh from the designer’s page, occupies its own little segment of one. Buyers want the best of all possible worlds, from the elevated driving position of an SUV to the luggage capacity of an estate. Exactly where the line is drawn between sportscar performance, SUV functionality, and so on, is unique in each case.



The latest to ‘define a brand-new segment’ and – by the look of it – very successfully, is BMW. Its Concept 5 Series Gran Turismo, revealed to the world last Friday via an online press preview, aims to lend the characteristics of a classic GT to a four-door, four-seater, with a dash of SUV. It certainly looks the part – which is fortunate, because something very similar will go into production later this year.



At the rear, horizontal lines emphasise the car's width, with the sporting character further accentuated by a three-dimensional chrome bar and the flared wheelarches. Another typically BMW feature are the L-shaped rear light clusters, with horizontal rows of lights extending round to the side of the car.

The saloon character is seen in a separate luggage compartment but accessible via a two-piece tailgate. It can be opened either like a saloon, with the bottom half acting as a boot, or the entire thing can lift as a hatchback. Fold the rear seats, and the luggage capacity increases to an estate-car-challenging 1650 litres.





The proportions, particularly the long bonnet, are recognisably BMW, while a sportingly coupé-like fastback roofline accentuates the long, sinewy body (longer than the existing 5 Series) and subtly houses the four, frameless doors. The side windows have aluminium surrounds milled from one continuous piece.

Inside the car, there is the expected BMW luxury, but – reflecting the SUV side to its character – a slightly elevated seating position; plus a panoramic glass roof. Visually, the greatest impact in the interior comes from the centre console which extends right through to the rear of the car. It's thought, however, that when concept becomes production car, an extra rear seat will replace the rear part of this console. BMW tells us that, with the rear seats in their regular position, the Concept 5 Series Gran Turismo gives rear passengers as much legroom as in a 7 Series; and virtually the same headroom as in an X5.



The new BMW Concept 5 Series Gran Turismo will be unveiled in the metal at the Geneva motor show in March.

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Photos: BMW

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