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Tapping into the Undercurrent: BMW i3 Concept Coupé

Lead

This could well be the future of city transport. Launched at BMW's LA Show preview party in a sunny shade of 'Solar Orange', the i3 Concept Coupé shows that 'style' and 'speed' can live with 'economy' and 'environmentalism'.

The message Classic Driver received at the by-invitation-only event was that in 2013 not only would the Bavarian company have a production-ready electric car, it would actually be able to offer that car to the public at dealerships. This latest concept is a step towards that car, although it's likely another will be shown next year. Compared with the i3 hatchback, the Coupé has only three doors, a more steeply raked roof and more rounded windows.

The small car was revealed by the company's design chief Adrian van Hooydonk, at a typical luxury LA location of a white villa set high in the hills above the city.





Despite its small size (3964mm long, 1768mm wide and 1555mm high) the three-door has good interior space, with individual seats for rear passengers and a 'lounge' atmosphere.

As a technological ground-breaker, the i3 is presented as the world's first 'fully networked electric vehicle'. That is to say that BMW's ConnectedDrive services are fully configured to download real-time traffic information via a smartphone, ensuring the most economical route planning and vehicle dynamics settings.





'Under the bonnet' (it's actually located on the rear axle) lies a BMW Group electric motor generating 170bhp and 184lb ft torque. The car uses Lithium ion batteries which are stored inside the floor structure of the car - that same set-up as the 5-door. BMW quotes a range of around 100 miles when the car is at its most efficient Eco Pro+ setting.





No performance figures have been released, but one can assume that BMW will live up to its 'ultimate driving machine' image and make the car as perky as it is parsimonious.



Photos: BMW

Gallery

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