AUTOTALK

Driven by perfection

The BMW Gran Turismo combines the characteristic features of a prestigious sedan, the functionality and space of an SAV and elements of a traditional grand touring car. A review by Mayank Singh

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he BMW Gran Turismo (GT) is an embodiment of the leading premium automotive manufacturer’s commitment to innovation. The exterior of the car combines the proportions so typical of a BMW, an elegantly stretched silhouette and a coupé-like roofline, as well as four doors with frameless windows to create one complete, harmonious unit.

The front view of the car animates powerful dynamism through the sheer presence of the upright BMW kidney grille, large air intakes and dual round headlights slanted back at an attractive angle. For the first time the daytime driving light function is provided by corona rings with LED technology, while the rear end is enhanced by L-shaped rear light clusters with illuminated rows of lights in LED technology and a two-piece tailgate.

Lap of luxury

The luxurious interior of the GT enables the driver and passengers to vary the generous space inside the car to their individual, personal requirements. This superior feeling of comfort is further enhanced by the large window areas, the optional panorama glass roof, as well as high-class materials with supreme quality of finish.

It’s the interior package that makes the GT unique. The front seat H-point is about two inches higher than that of a regular 5 Series sedan, but almost four inches lower than that of an X5. You slide in behind the wheel of the GT rather than sinking down or stepping up to it, and get a better view of the road ahead. BMW calls it a ‘semi-command’ driving position.

The long wheelbase and heavily crowned coupe roofline means there’s plenty of leg and headroom, especially for rear seat passengers. The standard rear seat slides 3.9 inches fore-aft, and its backrest, which is spilt 40-20-40 is rake adjustable from 15 to 33 degrees. An optional luxury rear seat package, which also includes rear window sunshades and four-zone climate control, offers accommodation for two passengers only and is electrically adjustable.

The really clever stuff -- and the key to the GT’s appeal -- is the configurable load space behind the rear seats. Unlike most hatchbacks, wagons, and SUVs the GT features a variable partition between the cabin and the load space, topped by a solid parcel shelf edged with a stout rubber seal. In regular mode the partition and parcel shelf offer the silence and security normally associated with a regular sedan   
or coupe.

But with the parcel shelf removed the partition can be moved through the same arc as the rear seats. The GT enters the market carrying over BMW EfficientDynamics into a new segment in the automobile world, allowing the model to set new standards in terms of economy and emission management.

Top of the range

The GT is available in the Oman market with eight-speed automatic transmission and two engine variants – the in-line six cylinder 35i and the V8 50i – both with twin-turbo technology. The BMW 35i GT has a maximum output of 306 hp with a top speed of 250 km/hr and acceleration from 0–100 km/h in 6.3 seconds. The top-of-the-range engine, the BMW 550i GT has a maximum output of 407 hp with a top speed of 250 km/hr and acceleration from 0–100 km/h in 5.5 seconds.

A host of safety and comfort options are available on the model, including Integral Active Steering to improve manoeuvrability and safety at low and high speeds, Driving Dynamic Control for variable drive settings depending on road conditions and adaptive headlights - a function that varies the angle of the headlight beam when it detects a change in direction. Active and passive warning systems such as the Lane Change and Lane Departure Warnings ensure that the driver stays within lane limits.

The GT also comes with a wide range of comfort touches and innovative entertainment options, including telecommunication and navigation systems, a multi-channel audio system, a DAB double tuner, USB port, 80 GB Hard Disk, DVD entertainment system in the rear, four-zone automatic air conditioning, and a panorama glass roof. Overall the GT is a complete family vehicle that combines innovation and elegance in equal measure.