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180 MPH From An Ordinary Production Sedan

By John Hartley

If you would like a car that looks almost ordinary, but that is as fast as many supercars, buy the

BMW M5. Yes, on the outside, this is an ordinary European sedan - but under the hood is a 500 bhp V-10 engine that you might imagine came from a sports-racing car! Will it do 180 mph? No, it could, but it won't because BMW uses a limiter to prevent you going faster than 155 mph on all its hot cars. Actually, BMW says it will do over 190 mph without the limiter in operation.

The BMW M5 is powered by a very advanced 5.0 liter V-10 engine, and fits neatly into the standard engine compartment. This is a very special engine, being built in small numbers and at high cost by BMW's M Center. It's a 90-degree V-10, which means that it won't be quite as smooth as some - in theory, at any rate.

ADVANCED 500 BHP V10 ENGINE

Maximum power is 500 bhp at 7,700 rpm - a real screamer this - while the maximum torque of 380 lb ft is produced at 6,100 rpm. Boy, you're really going to keep this revving if you want to use all that power. Still, when it's just mooching along at 4,000 rpm, this amazing unit produces quite a chunk of power.

Needless to say, it has all the features you'd expect in a supercar engine, such as a stiff aluminum block, twin overhead camshafts per bank of cylinders and narrow 4-valve heads. BMW uses its variable valve timing system, and drives the inlet camshafts on each bank by chain, with a gear drive to the exhaust camshaft, a system pioneered by Toyota to save space.

SEVEN-SPEED SEQUENTIAL GEARBOX

Coupled to this marvel of a power plant, which would seem more at home in a slinky coupe, is a seven-speed sequential gearbox. This is the latest development of the BMW sporty semi-automatic. BMW claims it's the first seven-speed box of its type. Mercedes-Benz has a seven-speed automatic, and Audi has a CVT with seven stages, but these are not quite the same.

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Why all these seven-speed boxes? Well, for maximum acceleration, and so that you have the right gear coming out of any corner, the more gears the better. When you've got that many gears, the shift pattern gets pretty complicated with a manual box, so they're going for either automatics or semi-automatics.

To go with the powerful power train are bigger brakes than standard, wider wheels and tires, and stiffer suspension. The handling is surprisingly good for such an ordinary-looking car.

HOT PERFORMER, QUIET LOOKS

The result of putting this engine in the BMW 5 Series is very hot acceleration for such a big car: 0-60 in 4.7 seconds, and 0-125 mph in 15.6 seconds.

Will people pay over \$100,000 or so for a 500 bhp sedan? You bet they will. There are a lot of people

out there that want supercar performance, but don't want to have to struggle to get in and out of the car. They also want to travel with plenty of luggage, and have room in the trunk for two sets of golf clubs - and more.

And they'll get a real kick from burning off cheeky guys in sports cars who get in the way. Cars that are much faster than they look, which we used to call Q cars, have quite a market. What's it like to drive? Well, at normal speeds, the car is very quiet, and you would not know how power you had. In fact, there is a switch on the steering wheel which limits power to 400 bhp. To get the full 500 bhp, you need to press that.

So, most of the time you'll drive with 400 bhp, and the problem is that the engine does not have a lot of power until you get to 5,000 rpm, and the power keeps coming in until you get to 8,000 rpm. You need deserted roads to use that power, but the car works pretty well in traffic and normal commuting. Not quite so good in everyday use is the gearbox. It does not have a torque converter, so it can be quite jerky when you shift up.

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supercars. He has written from many of the world's top auto magazines, and has written many books about cars and the auto industry, including 'Suspension and Steering Q&A' and 'The Electronics Revolution in the Motor Industry'.

30 Years And Still Strong

By James De Angelo

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The Mazda 929, also sold as the Efimi MS-9, is a full size luxury car. The model Mazda 929 was first introduced back in 1973.

The vehicle was crafted in Japan; it was as big as a coupe, sedan, or station wagon. This line had a 1.8 liter inline four Mazda 1800 engine; the engine was capable of a whopping eighty three horse power output. Since its introduction the Mazda 929 has had five different engines between the years 1973 to 1981.

The second generation Mazda emerged in 1981. It had been sold as a large front engine rear wheel drive sedan. It also used the new HB platform as a base which was also shared with the Mazda Cosmo. The new Mazda has seen three different engines in its life time. The third generation came about a few years later.

This new version had a pillared four door sedan along with a larger hard top that has four doors and no pillars. The engine was even upgraded to a double overhead Cam that had twenty four valves. That would in turn increase its fuel economy, performance and reliability.

The last generation of Mazda 929s still has the same luxury and is considered a premium sedan. It has been redesigned and has a more rounded flowing body. There are many add ons as well. For instance, they added five more horsepower to the engine. They have added dual air bags; a glass moon roof has replaced the metal unit. The premium package includes a wood console trim and rear armrest storage compartment. Leather upholstery has been added, even a remote keyless system and wood interior trim. This vehicle has been ranked the highest among its class.

The Mazda 929 has changed quite a bit in these thirty years, but Mazda still gives us the safety and luxury that all customers want.

James De Angelo is a successful freelance author that writes regularly for

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