



A beast in a designer suit

The BMW M5 may look like a bank president's car, but it is better suited for a bank robber.

Who else would need 600 horsepower and the ability to reach a speed of 100 kilometres per hour in 3.4 seconds but a guy who's just lifted a few million from a friendly financial institution.

And, of course, it would be nice to have a bushel of cash to pay for this car. At \$133,800, the M5 would put a big red sinkhole in most people's budget. But one drive in it, and you'll wish you had some cannabis stock to trade in.

To be fair, the 2018 M5 starts at \$113,300, but my test car's pricey options soon seemed indispensable in a week shaving and paving in the twin-turbo maniac.

The \$5,000 sound system is galactic; a \$5,000 massaged-by-mermaids leather interior is life affirming; and the \$6,500 Premium Package is like the best box



Kathy Renwald

of assorted chocolates – reading lights, window shades, soft close doors: necessities of daily living.

Face it. You have to go deep with the M5, tick the boxes, say yes to the dress.

Entry into the car's parallel universe of fun comes via two red buttons on the steering wheel. Do they deploy a parachute or unleash a fire extinguisher? No, the buttons, which read M1 and M2, are programmed by the driver. They let you drive like Sebastian Vettel or Betty White. Your choice.

These buttons open the door to the secret club, but BMW loves complex redundancy, so the exact same tinkering can be done on

2018 BMW M5

Base Price: \$113,300

Price as Tested: \$133,800

Engine Type: 4.4-litre V8 twin turbo

Power: 600 hp

Torque: 553 lb.-ft.

Fuel Consumption

City: 14.3 L/100 km

Highway: 9.4 L/100 km

What's Best: Can be driven like a race car, or a luxury sedan

What's Worst: Exterior styling lacks a thrill factor

What's Interesting: All-wheel drive is standard. Manual transmission isn't offered, but few will miss it.

the central touch screen or the centre console. Push a button, poke a screen, toggle a switch – master control is at your fingertips.

The opportunity to shape the way the M5 drives is diabolical. It might make you wish for a co-pilot with a master's degree from M-University.

Drive it with stability control off or on, in Sport or Sport Plus, in four-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive. Chose automatic shifting or shift it yourself knowing that the r.p.m.

pre-warning field awaits to prevent a M-eltdown.


There are more choices than a Chinese restaurant menu, but you will still find a setting that gets you near the gates of heaven. The M5 is blistering fast, smacks through gear changes, steers athletically and tracks like it knows the DNA of every road. Switch to Comfort driving mode and your pulse returns to normal. After a jaunt, when the car is safely parked, take time to notice how heat wafts off the brakes like a busy barbecue at a ribfest.

Did I mention it has a sumptuous 4.4-litre V8, and the exhaust note can be changed with the M Sound Control button, and the eight-speed Steptronic transmission allows do-it-yourself shift-mapping? All this raw aggression, and it can still get 12.1 litres/100 km in combined driving.

Though the M5 is a big car, it drives small thanks to a graceful and agile personality. The interior architecture with its wide windshield, low dash and perfectly placed driver's position comes off as sporty. Spend a good 10 minutes adjusting the seat and it will mould to your body. The back seats are first-class roomy, and the deep-dish trunk stows luggage and sports gear easily.

I could grouse about the small print on the centre-console buttons, the fussy climate controls and the fact it took too long to find "Park" on the gear shift. But the charms are stacked so high the gripes seem petty.

How can a car be thrilling and relaxing to drive, and sharp and comfortable too? Even on brutal roads, it is a congenial ride.

The complexity of the car is vast, but it's not obtrusive and never comes between the driver and the car. Recent versions of the M5 failed to spark passion. They were so layered and sophisticated it put a muzzle on excitement. No more. The 2018 M5 is a raw and seductive beast dressed in a designer suit. 

Kathy Renwald is an award-winning automotive writer, photographer and videographer.

WHERE TO GET IT: PAGE 142

Way More Than Skin Deep



Beauty attracts.
Beauty takes effort.
Your fine car deserves our fine care

Mitek

Fine Automobile Body and Paint

mitekautobody.com

519-578-2052 • 207 Centennial Court, Kitchener

OEM Certified Approved



INJECTABLES



by Dermatologist Dr. Jennifer Salsberg MD.

www.JolantasSpa.com | 519.725.9999

646 Erb Street West, Unit 105, Waterloo