

M synthesis

BY JOE SAGE

When SUV coupes first came along, some people wondered why. They deliver elements of completely different types of vehicles in one, but might that compromise each? Then came performance versions, which no doubt had a lot of the same people scratching their heads. But this is where the seemingly odd mix of elements really comes together. These, too, deliver elements of completely different vehicles in one, now definitely enhancing one another—the intent all along.

We had learned this during pavement sessions at a utility comparo event, in the M version of X4's original bigger sibling, an X6 M. Performance is top-spec, with a power-to-weight ratio delivering well-sub-5 acceleration times, all atop reliably responsive BMW suspension and chassis.

In daily driving, you won't even be aware of the bulk and hulk of its shape—which is familiar enough now to not draw debate (and so popular that other manufacturers have followed suit). And even in this smaller of the BMW X "Sport Activity Coupes," you'll benefit from almost 50 cubic feet of cargo space behind the front seats.

The instruments of the X4 are well laid out—though very complete in content, simple in presen-

tation. Many features and readouts in the binnacle are invisible in an overall black field, unless in use, and can be customized extensively. On-or-off-as-you-prefer digital charge and temp gauges round out the speedo and tach. Even this era's electric steering and electronic shifter are getting better.

In a sign of the times (and, to a degree, the particular brand), we noted annoyances from application of electronics to seats, overly aggressive lane warnings, backup camera and a few other details. Bottom line may be that while BMW forces you to buy multiple option packages to get a lot of these, the good news is you may be able to think twice about a number of them and save thousands.

The X6 M mentioned above was a full M model. Here we have the X4 M40i, in what has become an ever-finer line of distinction between M features and full-M. The X6 M has power and torque in the 500s, the X4 M40i in the 300s, yet the X4 M40i's 4.7-second acceleration time is healthy against the X6 M's 4.1, and the X4 M40i's base price is barely above half that of the X6 M—apples and oranges, as we are also comparing two sizes, but it's a comparative you might want to embrace. There's an X4 xDrive 28i at a base price of \$47,600, but the first step from that to an M40i may be the best \$12,000 or so you'll spend. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....3.0L twinscroll turbo inline-6
DRIVETRAIN	.....4WD
HP/TORQUE	.....355 hp / 343 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd sport automatic
SUSPENSION	.....F: Double-joint spring strut axle R: Five-link axle in lightweight construction
STEERING	.....electric power
ACCEL / TOP SPD	.....0-60mph 4.7 sec / 155 mph
BRAKES	.....F/R: 1-piston floating caliper vented
WHEELS	.....(standard) F/R: 8.5x19 / 9.5x19
TIRES	.....(standard run-flat) F: 245/45 R19 98 R: 275/40 R19 101
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....183.9 / 110.63 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.04 ft
GRND CLEAR	.....8.03 in
WEIGHT	.....4056 lb
TOW CAPACITY (BRAKED/NOT)	.....5291 / 1653 lb
LUGGAGE CAPACITY	.....49.44 / 17.66 cu.ft
FUEL CAPACITY	.....17.7 gal
MPG	.....19/26/25 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$59,250
MELBOURNE RED METALLIC	.....550
WHEELS & TIRES: 20" M Double-spoke 680M wheels w/non-RFT Michelin Pilot Super Sport tires	.....950
COLD WEATHER PACKAGE: Heated seats front and rear, heated wheel, headlight washers	.....950
DRIVING ASSISTANCE PACKAGE: Heads-up display, active blind spot, instrument cluster w extended contents, speed limit info	.....1700
DRIVING ASSISTANCE PLUS PACKAGE: Adaptive full LED lights, auto high beams	.....1200
PARKING ASSISTANCE PACKAGE: Surround view cameras, park distance control	.....700
NAVIGATION	.....1700
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....995

TOTAL **\$67,995**

Additional available options Include:

APPLE CARPLAY	.....300
WIRELESS CHARGING & WIFI HOTSPOT	.....400
ACTIVE BLIND SPOT DETECTION (à la carte)	.....500
BMW ULTIMATE CARE	.....600
BMW ULTIMATE CARE & CARE-1 BUNDLE	.....2049
BMW IPAD HOLDER	.....188
BMW WIRELESS CHARGING CASE	.....75

