

2023 BMW M2 First Look: M3 Power Without the Weird M3 Looks

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October 11, 2022



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MOTORTREND

Sure, the new M2 wears a new face—but, critically, it's not that strange.

Remember when the current BMW M3 and its flared nostrils was revealed for 2021 and we all began to worry that every new BMW beyond could wear ever more controversial styling? Well the 2023 BMW M2 coupe is here to challenge that assumption, trading the M3's wild dual snorters for smaller, more traditionally sized kidney grilles. That's good, even if everything else on the nose carries strangely blocky detailing relative to the regular 2 Series coupe. It might not be hugely attractive, but it lacks a focal point for haters to fixate on.

Anyway, even though the 2023 BMW M2 marks the second generation of the most brutish 2 Series coupe, it isn't a complete blank-slate job. Just as BMW claims, the rest of the M2 package largely mirrors (and builds on) the "winning formula" of the previous model—taking some of the suspension and engine bits from the BMW M3/M4 and putting them in to the smaller 2 Series package.

M3 Power!

That means the new BMW M2 features the same S58 3.0-liter turbocharged inline-six engine found in various other M models. Here it is tuned for 453 horsepower—about 48 hp more than the previous model and 9 hp more than the [2020 BMW M2 CS](#), and just 20 hp shy of the base M4 coupe. Max torque is 406 ft-lb and is available between 2,650 and 5,870 rpm.

A six-speed manual gearbox will be standard equipment—yes!—and the M2's available automatic switches from a dual-clutch unit to a traditional eight-speed torque-converter unit. Like other recent M models, the 2023 M2 comes with a few neat drivetrain tricks. A "Gear Shift Assistant" will automatically match revs for downshifts on the manual, and the Active M differential allows for several selectable driving modes. There are also 10 levels of DSC (dynamic stability control) intervention to choose from.

There also is an M Mode button, which is essentially puts track mode one steering-wheel-button-press away, reducing all the electronic babysitters in the pursuit of track performance. To keep track of said track performance is an M lap timer which is fairly self-explanatory—time yourself! More interesting to us is the return of the M Drift Analyzer which will actually record the duration, distance, and angle when the driver is sending it sideways; we've played with this in the new M3 and M4, and it's an addictive way to up your spending on replacement rear tires.

Unfortunately, all of these new features and the tech-y new interior features like curved displays and eSIM capability (new to the regular 2 Series Coupes for 2023), all add weight. Therefore the new M2 coupe tips the scales at 3,814 pounds for the six-speed manual and 3,867 pounds when equipped with the eight-speed automatic; at least comparing the manual transmission versions, that represents a weight increase of about 300 pounds relative to [the 2016 model](#). A carbon fiber roof can be optioned to shave a few pounds.

So, About that Design

OK, we've stalled long enough—it's time to talk in greater depth about the 2023 BMW M2's design. It isn't a complete shock since the [camo-wrapped prototype has already made the rounds](#), but now we can take in the full effect of the M2's unique, highly three-dimensional façade.

The M2 mercifully does not inherit the current M3 and M4's massive kidney grilles that dominate those cars' front fascias, but they are frameless—meaning the body-color surrounds just sort of jarringly end where the grille opening begins. Easily the most noticeable features are the very prominent square intakes that flank the front air dam, quite a departure from the base 2 Series coupes' triangular pieces. While not the worst of the modern BMW bunch,

here's our rub with the M2: The regular 2 Series Coupes represent a relative high point of styling restraint for the Bavarian brand, which places the fussier M2 in slightly less flattering relief.

Elements of the previous model can still be found in the 2023 M2's overall appearance. It becomes especially apparent when looking at the 2023 M2 in profile. The short overhangs, wide wheel arches, and defined rear diffuser are all there. Visually, the small sports car looks about the same in all dimensions but at 180.3 inches long, 74.3 inches wide, and 55.2 inches tall, the new M2 is 4.1 inches longer than its predecessor, 1.3 inches wider, and 0.3 inches lower.

The 2023 M2 will offer five hues, with two of them being solid colors and the remaining three metallic finishes. The shade you see in the official release images is Toronto Red metallic. Black Sapphire metallic, Brooklyn Grey metallic, Alpine White, and the new exclusive Zandvoort Blue are among the available color options.

Before you jump to arguing on Reddit over the way this M2 looks, consider that it will have a base price of \$63,195 when it launches early next year. That's not much more than a loaded-out 382-hp M240i coupe, and it's a few thousand bucks less than an entry-level, non-Competition-level M4, while being smaller and delivering similar power—and, based on our experience [behind the wheel of an M2 prototype earlier this year](#), should provide an absolute riotous driving experience.