

Unfiltered: The BMW 128ti

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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I recently spent some time with the BMW 128 ti. Before I go any further, I find the letters 'ti' intriguing. So for those who are wondering, the ti is short for 'Turismo Internazionale'. Beemer first used the ti badge in 1963 on the 1800Ti, a punchy 110-horsepower sedan that imbibed the qualities of a true Turismo Internazionale model as defined by BMW.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

With its specially tuned M Sport suspension and Torsen limited-slip differential, the exclusively front-wheel-drive compact sports model has an unwavering focus on providing highly engaging driving pleasure.

I put the 128 ti through its paces recently in the Cradle of Mankind area near Tshwane. Flat straights and some twisty winding corners made sure that the vehicle was getting a solid drive. And solid it was throughout the 4 hours of rigorous testing. Lots of speed and agility will stand this beauty in good stead against its competitors. It is clear that BMW wants to aim the 128ti at the sports compact market and especially to younger individuals.

Unfiltered

The new BMW 128ti is an unfiltered driving machine with a distinctive character and sound. With its specially tuned M Sport suspension - lowered by 10mm, a Torsen limited-slip differential and a bespoke steering application, the exclusively front-wheel-drive compact sports model is focused squarely on highly engaging driving pleasure.



The BMW M twins land in Mzansi. More M Power to the M people

Naresh Maharaj 6 Apr 2021



The BMW 128ti carries over the firmer anti-roll bars and anti-roll bar mounts with high preload from the BMW M135i xDrive. Stiffer springs and shock absorbers adapted accordingly to provide excellent driving dynamics. In addition, the front-wheel-drive 128ti is around 80kgs lighter than the flagship model.

Two-litre engine

The two-litre engine with BMW TwinPower Turbo technology is a direct offshoot of the variant in the BMW M135i xDrive – the BMW Group's most powerful four-cylinder unit. In the BMW 128ti, it develops 180kW from 5,000–6,500rpm and peak torque of 380Nm from 1,500–4,500 rpm. The eight-speed Steptronic Sport transmission is fitted as standard and the 0 – 100km/h time is 6.3 seconds.

As in the BMW M135i xDrive, the standard-fitted M Sport braking system with red-painted brake callipers - a first for a BMW 1 Series model - provides good braking performance. It has to. The 18-inch Y-spoke 553 M bi-colour light-alloy wheels are reserved exclusively for the BMW 128ti, while sport tyres - Michelin Pilot Sport 4 - can be specified as a no-cost option. That's truly wonderful.

Distinguished

Exclusive distinguishing features on the inside and outside of the BMW 128ti give the car a distinctive Beemer appearance. Taking the M Sport model as a basis, it adds specific covers and trim mouldings, side skirt trim and a 'ti' badge ahead of the rear wheels in a sporting red colour. If the BMW 128ti is ordered with the Melbourne Red or Misano Blue metallic paint finishes, the accents and 'ti' badge - which can be deleted, if desired - come in black.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

Standard specification includes extended Shadowline trim with black BMW kidney grille and black mirror caps, while the optional BMW Individual lights Shadowline for the headlights creates a darker appearance, helped by the absence of various chrome trim elements.

Insider information

The interior also contains a host of red accents, including a large Race Red surface in the backrests of the standard sport seats, the embroidered 'ti' badge in the central armrest and contrast stitching in the other armrests, door panels and instrument panels. The steering wheel rim and airbag cover in the M Sport steering wheel feature red stitching.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

The BMW 128ti breathes new life into a long tradition at BMW. Since the 1960s the 'TI' - later "ti" - badge has stood for "Turismo Internazionale" and marks out particularly sporty models – from the iconic BMW 1800 TI and BMW 2002 TI to the BMW 323ti Compact and BMW 325ti Compact of the late 1990s. Rims are 18" inch and styling.

Pricing

Priced from R687,418.00, including 15% VAT and CO2 tax.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist. Contact Naresh on nmaharaj321@gmail.com.

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