

BMW

United Kingdom

Corporate Communications



Media Information

23 January, 2026

BMW UK triumphs at the 2026 What Car? Awards as the BMW iX3 is named overall Car of the Year.

- BMW iX3 crowned overall Car of the Year after topping the Premium Electric SUV category.
- BMW M3 Touring celebrated as three-time Performance Car of the Year.
- Coupé of the Year awarded to the BMW 4 Series for the sixth consecutive year.
- Luxury Car of the Year title retained as the BMW X7 takes this year's top spot.
- BMW X3 secures this year's Safety Award.

BMW UK welcomes the new year with outstanding success at the 2026 What Car? Car of the Year Awards as the all-new BMW iX3 is named overall Car of the Year after topping the Premium Electric SUV category. Alongside these awards, BMW collected four additional accolades across a variety of categories. The BMW M3 Touring was celebrated as three-time Performance Car of the Year, while the BMW 4 Series was announced as What Car?'s Coupé of choice for the sixth consecutive year. BMW continues to lead the Luxury Car category as the BMW X7 succeeds the BMW i7 in securing the 2026 accolade. Rounding off a triumphant night, the BMW X3 attained this year's Safety Award.

BMW iX3 crowned overall Car of the Year.

Marking a true milestone moment for the brand, the BMW iX3 arrives as the first series-produced Neue Klasse model, introducing a broad spectrum of innovations and technologies that will soon be adopted across the entire BMW product portfolio. Since its unveiling last year, the trailblazing BMW iX3 has garnered widespread acclaim, and this momentum continues after securing the coveted overall Car of the Year title at this year's What Car? awards.

The BMW iX3 thoroughly impressed judges, topping the Premium Electric SUV category before collecting the headline award. Handing over the trophy, Steve Huntingford, Editor of What Car?, said: "The premium electric SUV market is one of the most hotly contested, yet in so many respects the BMW iX3 offers a step change in capability. It combines a huge range with ultra-rapid charging; its new 'brain' improves everything from the infotainment system to safety; and despite being one of the most enjoyable SUVs of any kind to drive, it's also very comfortable. In short, it's a truly great car."

On accepting the award, David George, CEO, BMW Group UK and Ireland commented: "We are truly honoured that the BMW iX3 has been named as the 2026 What Car? Car of

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the Year. This award is especially meaningful given its prestigious reputation and What Car?'s rigorous testing process. Like the original Neue Klasse of the 1960s, the BMW iX3 represents the beginning of a new era for BMW, bringing significant advancements in technology, range and charging capabilities while maintaining the unmistakable driving experience our customers know and expect. We extend our thanks to the entire What Car? team for this special recognition and look forward to showcasing the innovations of the Neue Klasse across the BMW product portfolio."

The new BMW iX3 will launch in the UK on 7 March, 2026 and can be preordered at retailers nationwide. Following its launch, BMW will introduce 40 new models and model updates between now and 2027, commencing with the BMW i3 Saloon – which begins production in the second half of 2026.

BMW M3 Touring celebrated as three-time Performance Car of the Year.

Since its launch in 2022, the BMW M3 Touring has remained a consistent favourite, impressing judges year after year with its unique combination of exhilarating performance and practical versatility. Its success continued at this year's awards, after collecting the Performance Car of the Year accolade for the third consecutive year. "The BMW M3 Touring isn't a jack of all trades; it's a master of most that manages to combine everyday usability with a huge amount of fun," said Huntingford. "The handling can feel as secure or playful as you wish. No matter where you are in the rev range, acceleration is savage when you put your foot down. And yet the M3 Touring is just as capable of playing the classy and practical family car," he continued.

Coupé of the Year awarded to the BMW 4 Series for the sixth consecutive year.

The remarkable winning streak of the BMW 4 Series remains unbroken as it tops What Car?'s Coupé of the Year category for the sixth time since its 2020 launch. The judging panel commended its "precise steering," "balanced feel through corners" and engine, which "loves to be revved..." "One of the best things about the BMW 4 Series is that even the entry-level 420i version is great to drive," Huntingford added.

Luxury Car of the Year title retained as the BMW X7 takes this year's top spot.

2026 begins as another successful year for BMW's luxury division after the BMW X7 succeeded the BMW i7 in securing this year's Luxury Car of the Year title – marking a third consecutive victory for the brand. Judges highlighted the seven-seater's combination of "luxury and power" to deliver "effortless performance". Additional tribute was paid to its

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serene driving experience – standing as one of the “quietest vehicles ever tested” by the publication – alongside abundant interior space and an “impressive ride,” which “gets even better” with the optional Executive Drive Suspension.

BMW X3 secures this year's Safety Award.

The final award of the evening was presented to the BMW X3, which was unveiled as What Car?'s pick when it comes to safety. Commenting on the win, judges said: "As well as keeping its occupants safe in a crash, the BMW X3 is packed with active safety technology that can prevent accidents from happening in the first place. However, what really sets it apart is the way in which these systems work collaboratively with the driver, avoiding the unnecessary interventions that can lead to them being switched off."

The current generation BMW X3 will continue to be sold in the UK alongside the new BMW iX3, offering customers a choice of all-electric, petrol, diesel and plug-in hybrid powertrains for maximum flexibility.

Ends

The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2024, the BMW Group sold over 2.45 million passenger vehicles and more than 210,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2024 was € 11.0 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.4 billion. As of 31 December 2024, the BMW Group had a workforce of 159,104 employees.

The economic success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. Sustainability is a key element of the BMW Group's corporate strategy and covers all products from the supply chain and production to the end of their useful life.

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