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2004 BMW 3 Series Coupes and Convertibles Arrive Early, with Freshened Design and New Features

Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, March 18, 2003...In addition to being BMW's best-selling Series – 115,428 examples were sold in the U.S. during calendar 2002 – the 3 Series is for many the "definitive BMW." Though from a price standpoint it is BMW's most accessible line, this Series embodies all the core BMW values: performance, handling, quality, practicality, and character.

One might call the current 3 Series a "serial award winner." Among its most recent honors are: Best Luxury Car under \$40,000, Automobile Magazine All-Stars, February '03; Car and Driver's 10Best, January '03; America's Best Sedan, AutoWeek July 1, '02; Best Luxury Car Under \$40,000 and Best Coupe, Automobile Magazine Readers' Choice All-Stars, May '02; and yet another comparison test win (over five key competitors) in the October '02 Car and Driver. The Series consists of Sedans, Sport Wagons, Coupes and Convertibles in two sets, all powered by inline 6-cylinder engines characterized as "smoother than satin" by Car and Driver (January '03), "silken" by Road & Track (July '02), "turbine-smooth" by AutoWeek (July 1, '02) or "smooth, torquey" by Motor Trend (August '02): the 2.5-liter 325 models and the 3.0-liter 330 models.

For their '02 model year, the Sedans and Sports Wagons got a discreet stylistic and technological freshening; now the Coupes and Convertibles begin the '04 model year early with their own round of freshening. The changes include:

- A new 6-speed manual transmission for the 330Ci models
- Rain-sensing windshield wipers and automatic headlight control as standard equipment
- New front-end design, with –
 - lighting units that sweep upward as they wrap around to the sides
 - wider grilles and modified hood contours
 - more prominently flared wheel openings

–more–

- a side character line that now begins aft of the wheel openings and incorporates the side turn-signal “repeater” as its starting point.
(These changes correspond to the Sedan/Wagon freshening of '02.)
- Xenon headlights (low and high beams) now offered either alone or in combination with new Adaptive feature, which “steers” the headlights into roadway curves
- New front and rear bumper contours
- New taillights, incorporating BMW’s innovative Adaptive Brakelights
- New wheel designs, both standard and optional
- New exterior colors
- A newly configured climate-control panel.

All built in Germany, the new models began production at the beginning of March 2003 and begin arriving at U.S. BMW Centers in April.

New 6-speed transmission for all 330 models

Also as of March '03, a new 6-speed manual transmission is standard in all 330 models, including the 330i and 330xi (all-wheel-drive) Sedans that continue as 2003 models. Weighing no more than the 5-speed it replaces, this “gearbox” – the ZF Type H – incorporates refinements that add driving pleasure (and BMW’s are already known for excellent manual transmissions):

- New, even more effective synchronization of shifting
- Sportier shift action, via 10-mm (0.4-in.) shorter shift “throws” from neutral to each gear.

Compared to the previous 5-speed (which continues in the 325 models), the 6-speed’s ratios for 1st through 5th gears are approximately the same; 6th gear provides an 0.85:1 overdrive for quieter, more relaxed and potentially more fuel-efficient cruising. This transmission, with the additional feature of a shorter shift lever, appears in the new Performance Package for the 330i Sedan. Already introduced to the media, this Package also entered production at the beginning of March.

New wheel designs complement the freshened body design

BMW is known for handsome alloy wheels that clearly express the enjoyable and competent performance its motor vehicles deliver. Most wheel designs on the '04 3 Series models are new:

- **325Ci Coupe and Convertible standard** – generously dimensioned at 16 x 7.0 inches, the 325Ci models’ standard wheels are in a new Double Spoke design, with five parallel pairs

of spokes and V-shaped openings between the pairs. These are so assertive and premium in their design expression that not many years ago, they might have been part of a typical BMW Sport Package. As before, they carry 205/55R-16 H-rated all-season tires.

- **325Ci Coupe and Convertible Sport Package** – continuing in 17 x 8.0 dimensions, the Sport Package wheels have a new Star Spoke design, with five wide and tapered spokes running right out to the rim's edge. Their very open design showcases (and helps cool) the large ventilated disc brakes and their calipers. They wear 225/45R-17 W-rated performance tires.
- **330Ci Coupe and Convertible standard** – sized 16 x 7.0, this wheel was formerly included with the run-flat tires that are optional on all 330 models. The run-flat option continues to be offered on the '04 330Ci models, but the wheel design is now standard on the Coupe and Convertible, whether with their standard 205/50R-17 V-rated all-season tires or the identically sized V-rated run-flats.
- **330Ci Coupe and Convertible Sport Package** – As the 330Ci models' 1st-stage sport upgrade, these wheels continue in their previous sizes and design. They are differentiated front-to-rear – 17 x 7.5 front / 17 x 8.5 rear – and carry Z-rated performance tires of 225/45R-17 front / 245/40R-17 rear dimensions. In both *Car and Driver* (July '02) and *Road & Track* (January '01) tests, 330Ci Coupes with this Package achieved 0.85 in skidpad cornering tests. In that test, *Car and Driver* concluded that "The 330Ci remains the finest mid-size sporting two-door on the planet."
- **330Ci Coupe and Convertible 18-inch option** – as if that weren't enough, there's more yet: 18-in. wheels and tires, available "on top of" the Sport Package. Here the front wheels are 18 x 8.0, the rear 18 x 8.5; the design is new for '04. In a construction BMW reserves for its sportiest models, each wheel is cast in two pieces, which are bolted together near the rim. These wheels are called Double Spoke Composite, "composite" referring to the bolted construction; they carry ultra-low-profile Z-rated performance tires sized 225/40R-18 front / 255/35ZR-18 rear. This is the sportiest wheel/tire equipment currently available for the 3 Series; the '03 330i Sedan with Performance Package has equipment of the same dimensions but a different wheel design.

New features for safer, more convenient driving

Three new standard features of the '04 Coupes and Convertibles contribute to safer, more convenient driving. Of these, the most innovative is BMW's **adaptive brakelights**, which first appeared on the 7 Series in '02 and has since been adopted for the Z4 roadster and X5 Series; BMW will continue to incorporate this feature into new models in the future.

Each taillight unit's tail- and brakelight segment consists of clusters of LEDs. In normal braking, the central cluster illuminates more brightly. Under heavy braking or anytime the ABS goes into action, additional LED clusters, in- and outboard of the main one, illuminate to enlarge the total brakelight area. Following drivers are thus alerted automatically to sharp braking by the BMW driver, potentially lessening the likelihood of a rear-ender.

Rain-sensing windshield wipers, formerly optional on 325s and 330s, now standard for '04, as is the **automatic headlight control** that switches on the headlights and all related lighting when ambient light drops below a certain level. Both these features add convenience, one under the sometimes harrowing conditions of driving in the rain, the other at night or when passing through tunnels.

Xenon headlights continue as an option; 2004 3 Series Coupe and Convertible buyers have the further choice of adding **Adaptive Headlights**, which, together with **Xenon Headlights**, are literally "aimed" at making night driving safer. With the headlight switch in its Automatic position, as soon as the vehicle is moving forward, the outboard Xenon lights steer with the vehicle, guided by an electronic control system and swiveled up to 15° in either direction by small servo motors. The system responds not merely to the steering angle, but also vehicle speed and the yaw rate (the rate at which the vehicle's direction is changing). In a further enhancement envisioned for future application in vehicles equipped with GPS Navigation, ALC can utilize the GPS and a navigation database incorporating the radii of road curves to illuminate curves before the vehicle is actually in them.

The tangible benefit for customers is enhanced night vision around corners and curves. With or without the Adaptive feature, the Xenon headlights are automatically leveled according to vehicle loading.

Revised color palette complements the freshened design

Two new metallic colors join the exterior palette for '04: Mystic Blue and Silver Gray. At the same time, Topaz Blue and Steel Gray (also metallics) are phased out. The design freshening, in typical BMW style, is subtle and tasteful, not screaming for attention but at the same time signifying that further progress has been achieved.

In the cabin, a new climate-control panel improves on what was already a very satisfactory arrangement: The temperature and blower-speed keys are now more widely separated; increases are effected by pressing the upper key, decreases by pressing the lower one. Salient features of the automatic climate control remain:

- LED display of temperature setting and current blower speed
- Automatic recirculation control
- Large-area, soft-touch keys for all functions.

**Continuity: at their core,
"the finest mid-size sporting two-doors"
are still just that**

As impressive as the progressive features in this latest edition of the 3 Series Coupes and Convertibles are, the heart of the 3 Series' appeal remains unchanged: a unique concept that the *Wall Street Journal*, in a February 7, 2003 feature on the entry-luxury segment, said "sparked the sector." The 3 Series concept embodies a constellation of appealing characteristics:

- Each model – Sedan, Sports Wagon, Coupe, Convertible – is compact and tightly dimensioned, with short overhangs, a relatively long wheelbase, and wheels/tires that fill out their fender openings not only with serious road adhesion, but also appropriately sporty looks.
- Every model is powered by an acclaimed inline 6-cylinder engine with dual overhead camshafts, steplessly variable valve timing, aluminum construction and other features that add up to not merely strong, but also esthetically satisfying performance. The 325 models' 2.5-liter unit generates 184 horsepower; the 3.0-liter of 330 models delivers 225 hp. (The new 330i Sedan with Performance Package ups this to 235 hp.)
- All models offer a choice of manual or STEPTRONIC automatic transmission, the latter with selectable Sport and Manual modes.
- For optimum handling, all 3 Series models employ rear-wheel drive – except the three "xi" models, with fulltime all-wheel drive to enhance traction while maintaining BMW's handling edge.
- 3 Series suspension, a unique combination of strut-type front and multi-link rear systems, also contributes to outstanding handling and roadability as well as supple riding comfort.
- All models have 4-wheel disc brakes, with larger dimensions for the higher-powered 330 models.
- Like all BMWs, the 3 Series vehicles are meticulously built and finished and comprehensively equipped. Every 3 Series interior exudes quality; with the available leather upholstery and wood trim, it exudes luxury as well.

Dynamic Stability Control, standard in every model

BMW has led in engineering traction and stability-enhancement systems into its vehicles and then evolving them. The 3 Series DSC system is now enhanced by an unusual, highly useful function called Dynamic Traction Control.

With the BMW DSC system it has always been possible, by a brief push of the DSC button on the console, to de-activate the system's engine intervention but leave the brake intervention functional. This "softens" the traction-control effect of DSC and is useful on certain very slippery surfaces, such as gravel or packed snow. In this mode, when the drive wheels begin to slip, individual wheel brakes react to control the slip but the usual reduction of engine power does not occur.

With Dynamic Traction Control, included since '02, after this brief push of the DSC button, engine intervention phases back in with increasing vehicle speed, adding stability at higher speeds while leaving the moderated traction control at low speeds. Pressing the DSC button for a longer period (2 seconds) completely de-activates all DSC functions except antilock braking.

As an all-encompassing system, DSC includes the following functions:

Dynamic Traction Control (DTC), as described.

Antilock braking. The most familiar DSC function, hindering wheel lockup or skidding to help the driver control the vehicle under hard braking.

Electronic Brake Proportioning. Anytime the brakes are applied, there is some degree of wheel slip (not to be confused with skidding or sliding); in turn, the slip indicates the degree of braking at any given wheel. EBP continually monitors this slip, and accordingly distributes braking force to the wheels for optimal braking effect and relatively even brake and tire wear.

Dynamic Brake Control. In hard or emergency braking, DBC intervenes to assist the driver in achieving the shortest possible stopping distance.

Stability enhancement. In avoidance maneuvers, hard cornering or braking while cornering, DSC recognizes when the vehicle tends to depart from its normal cornering path and intervenes via the wheel brakes and/or engine power to help keep it on course.

Famously intimate feel of the road, recently refined

Given the almost universal raves over 3 Series handling, one might expect BMW to rest on its laurels. Not so: Over the '01 and '02 model years, BMW phased into the 3 Series an exacting detail refinement of the suspension and steering, consisting of –

- Firmer suspension bushings

- A firmer flexible coupling between the steering-column shaft and the rack-and-pinion steering gear
- A “quicker” steering ratio, reducing the amount of steering-wheel motion for any given turning of the vehicle.

This quicker ratio reduced steering turns lock-to-lock from 3.4 to 3.0, a significant change that along with the other changes resulted in even keener responses than before.

It is a BMW tradition to offer a Sport Package, generally including a firmer “sport” calibration of the suspension system, and all 3 Series models do indeed offer a Sport Package. In fact, certain of the models come standard with the sport suspension settings: the 330i Sedan and all of the Coupe models that now appear in '04 form. On the Convertibles, the sport suspension calibration is part of the optional Sport Package.

Optional run-flat tire/wheel system: upgraded pressure-monitoring technology

Surely destined for wider popularity are **run-flat tires and wheels**, optional on all 330 models including the '04 330Ci Coupes and Convertibles. Sized and speed-rated like the standard 330 tires – thus 17 x 7.0 wheels with 205/50 V-rated tires – this option includes:

- Special wheels with rims designed to hold a deflated tire securely; their Double Spoke design is newly standard on the 330Ci Coupe and Convertible, though the run-flat tires remain optional.
- Self-supporting tires
- A Tire Pressure Monitor .

In their design and configuration, the self-supporting tires have special sidewalls, with specific inserts and highly heat-resistant rubber compounds. These features allow a deflated tire to maintain its essential shape and guidance characteristics for a considerable distance, so that the driver can continue on at reduced speed until reaching a convenient and/or safe place to install the spare or have the tire repaired or replaced. The wheel rims include an extended center hump that helps keep the tire in place when running flat.

Included in the run-flat option is a Tire Pressure Monitor, which measures tire pressure directly and continually via a tiny sensor/radio-frequency transmitter at the inboard end of each tire's valve stem. Should there be a significant pressure falloff, TPM triggers the instrument-panel indicator. This system can even recognize and indicate normal loss of pressure in all tires over longer periods of time.

Because the Sport Packages include special sport tires on all except the xi (all-wheel-drive) models, the run-flat option is not offered on Sport Package -equipped rear-wheel-drive models. The Sport Package for the 330xi sedan includes the run-flat tires.

Comprehensive safety equipment

The 3 Series incorporates as standard equipment an array of safety features that has contributed to widespread recognition of these vehicles' excellent occupant protection. Among many impressive test results the Series has earned, the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety rated the 3 Series sedan its Best Pick rating in offset crash testing. Contributing features include –

- “Intelligent lightweight” body structure, designed for effective energy management in a crash impact without excess weight.
- Optimized steering-column design: a complex 2-section system employing aluminum and magnesium to achieve outstanding protection of the driver, again without excess weight.
- Head Protection System (HPS) in closed-body models: BMW's pioneering inflatable tubular cushion, anchored in the windshield pillar and roof, deploys to afford protection of front-seat occupants' heads – particularly in side impacts, but also in mixed-direction collisions.
- 2-stage “smart” front-impact airbags.
- Front-seat side-impact airbags, standard in all models.
- Rear-seat side-impact airbags, optional in all models.
- Rollover Protection System (RPS) in convertibles: an independent module behind each of the two rear-seat passengers' heads, deploying automatically in case of an impending vehicle rollover.
- Height-adjustable front safety belts with automatic tensioners and force limiters. In the convertibles, the belts are integrated with the seats and are power-adjusted along with the head restraints.
- Interlocking door anchoring system for side impacts.
- Battery Safety Terminal, automatically severing the high-current connection between the battery and starter cable to reduce the likelihood of fire after a severe crash impact.

Standard security features include –

- Coded Driveaway Protection, a rolling-code immobilizer system proven to reduce the probability of theft
- A central locking system with double-lock anti-theft feature to hinder the opening of doors even if a thief breaks a window
- Pathway Lighting, which via the headlight flasher switch activates the headlights and interior lights for 40 seconds.

Like all current models, each 3 Series vehicle is covered by BMW's 4-year/50,000-mile limited warranty and comes with a 4-year/50,000-mile Full Maintenance Program for customer convenience, peace of mind and economic benefit.

Performance with a conscience

BMW strives to produce its motor vehicles and other products with the utmost attention to environmental compatibility and protection. Integrated into the design and development of BMW automobiles are such criteria as resource efficiency and emission control in production; environmentally responsible selection of materials; recyclability during production and within the vehicle; elimination of CFCs and hazardous materials in production; and continuing research into environmentally friendly automotive power sources. Tangible results of these efforts include the recycling of bumper cladding into other vehicle components; water-based paint color coats and powder clear coats; near-future availability of hydrogen-powered models; and various design and engineering elements that help make BMWs easier to dismantle at the end of their service life.

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