



Press release  
January 2012

## **Born electric.** **The BMW i design DNA.**



BMW i spells visionary vehicles and a new take on premium mobility that has sustainability very much at heart. Pivotal to the new BMW sub-brand are alternative drive systems that are specifically conceived for use in the city and dictate the design process from start to finish. BMW i sets out to rethink mobility and come up with pioneering solutions to the challenges posed by cars of the future. These are the driving forces behind the groundbreaking LifeDrive concept – a unique, purpose-built vehicle architecture geared to electric mobility and boasting highly innovative use of materials.

The BMW i designers have succeeded in developing a unique design language which also displays strong links with parent brand BMW. Innovative technologies are given a contemporary, authentic visual style, and the initial concept cars – the BMW i3 Concept and BMW i8 Concept – open up values such as lightness and efficiency to the naked eye. These cars herald the dawn of the new sub-brand and instantly highlight the potential of BMW i.

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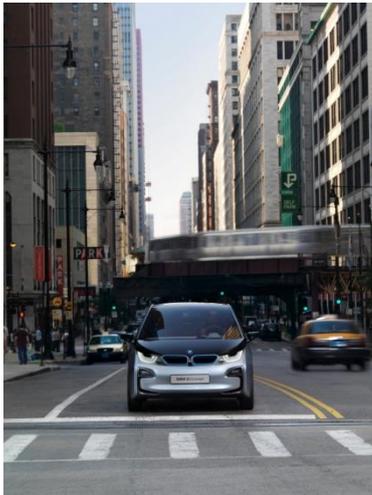


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## **Running in the family: design features from parent brand BMW.**

BMW i references its parent brand BMW clearly through the use of design themes such as absolute precision, lightness and clean modernity. Picking up on hallmark BMW design features allows BMW i design to maintain a clear **connection to its parent brand**. However, BMW i also takes a whole new look at various stylistic elements, giving the sub-brand's vehicles a distinctive identity. To this end, a three-dimensional blue ring has been added to the outside of the BMW badge for the BMW i **logo**. A fresh interpretation of the classic BMW kidney grille reflects the inspiration provided by its parent brand for the BMW i face. With their horizontally sectioned headlights, the BMW i cars share the intent look familiar from BMW models but add a flavour all of their own.



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## **The BMW i “next premium” claim.**

“Clean”, “clever” and “premium” are three key words in BMW i design. BMW i cars take the idea of premium to the next level to meet the demands of the future: “next premium” defines comfort, functionality and aesthetics beyond the usual perceptions of higher standards. Never before have sustainability and premium been combined in this depth. Preserving resources was a key consideration in the development of materials, for example. **The design of the interior** puts renewable and **naturally treated raw materials** on open display for the first time. The new LifeDrive architecture gave the designers the freedom to introduce a clean-sheet design for the interior. Only genuinely premium, clean and clever features were included. The result is a contemporary, pared-down aesthetic which reduces weight without the need to compromise on functionality. **The design of the exterior** uses a stimulating design language to communicate this new approach. Transparency and the use of **contrasting colours** bring the cars’ lightweight design to the attention of the observer. The extremely clean, minimalist surfaces have been conceived to lend visual impact to the sub-brand’s all-embracing sustainability concept.

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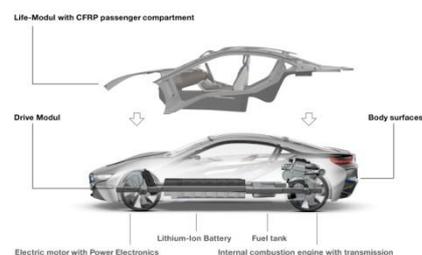
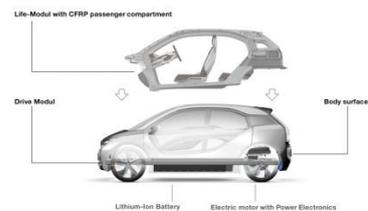
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## Typically BMW i: model-specific design features.

### LifeDrive architecture.

The purpose-built basic construction of the BMW i models – the LifeDrive architecture – represents their single most defining feature. Within this concept, the **carbon fibre-reinforced plastic (CFRP)** Life module houses the passenger compartment, while the Drive module brings together all the operational driving functions.



This **distinctive two-way split** is also reflected in the design of the cars. The modules are partly covered by plastic side panels, but remain clearly distinguishable. Expressive surfaces and precise lines form a harmonious transition between the two. This overlap and interlocking of surfaces and lines – **“layering”** in BMW i speak – marks out the exterior and interior design of the vehicles. This striking interplay highlights the linking together of the individual structures and their arrangement within the framework of the LifeDrive architecture.



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## **Aerodynamics.**

The aerodynamically optimised “**stream flow**” represents one of the most striking design themes of BMW i. Two horizontal lines converge from above and below – like streaks of air in the wind tunnel – into a dynamic C-pillar sweep. These lines are expressed in different ways depending on the model. Among the other aerodynamically significant features which double up as hallmark elements of BMW i design are large and relatively **narrow wheels**, as well as aerodynamic elements such as **AirCurtains** (which channel the air flow around the wheel arches) and the **aeroflaps** behind the front wheels.



## **Lightweight design and efficiency**

BMW i design uses lightness and efficiency to give the sub-brand’s innovative drive technology a fitting showcase. These central values are expressed in the design of the vehicles through large transparent surfaces and a **light-bathed interior**, a powerful stance and **aerodynamic additions** such as contact surfaces, spoiler lips and elements allowing air through-flow. This high degree of transparency imbues the cars with an airy feel, while the **generously-sized glass surfaces** give an optimum view outside.





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The impressive swathes of exposed CFRP reflect the lightness and efficiency of both vehicles. As a central element of efficient mobility, aerodynamics play a key role in reducing fuel consumption. The design of the BMW i vehicles uses numerous aerodynamic measures to reduce the cars' drag substantially, increasing their efficiency – and therefore their range when running on electric power alone.

## **Rear lights.**

BMW i introduces a fresh interpretation of the familiar BMW rear light design. The intricately-worked U-shaped rear lights use state-of-the-art LED technology and are designed for maximum efficiency, in terms of both their space requirement and energy usage. Their distinctive looks also ensure the BMW i vehicles are clearly identifiable during the hours of darkness.





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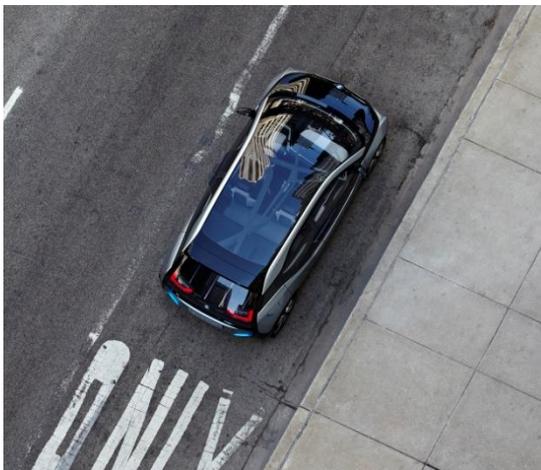
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## **Black band.**

Another distinctive design feature is best viewed from above; a black band rises out of the bonnet just behind the kidney grille and continues over the roof to the rear, creating a visual link between the different sections of the car.



“We take our responsibility very seriously when it comes to the mobility of the future and the future of our society,” says Benoit Jacob, Head of BMW i Design, with reference to the BMW i sub-brand. “We are in no doubt of the need to take a fresh view of things going forward. That’s why, at BMW i, we’ve been asking ourselves a host of questions which challenge many of the things we currently take for granted. Every design element in the creative process was subjected to three fundamental questions: Does it meet our definition of premium? How clean is it? How clever is it? And those questions provoked some revolutionary responses. Suffice to say, rarely has the future promised so much.”



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## **The BMW Group**

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI, Husqvarna Motorcycles and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 25 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2011, the BMW Group sold about 1.67 million cars and more than 113,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2010 was euro 4.8 billion on revenues amounting to euro 60.5 billion. At 31 December 2010, the BMW Group had a workforce of approximately 95,500 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last seven years.

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