

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2007 BMW X5 4.8i SAV

BY KATHLEEN CARR

In 1999, BMW introduced a whole new category to consumers: the Sport Activity Vehicle. The X5, as the sole contender in this class, was the first to arrive at the party one might say. That was seven years ago, and there are a few new contenders on the market but also no real competition. In traditional BMW enthusiasm, the 2007 X5 has been revamped with more room, power, luxury and technology. It is safe to say that the 2007 BMW X5 is still the life of the party - first to arrive while outlasting all the other guys!

The BMW designers rose to the challenge of achieving nearly perfect evolutionary growth with the enhancements added to the 2007 X5. There is a lot new here. The 2007 X5 is longer and stronger. There's now space enough for an optional kid-size third row in the additional 7.4-inches of added length, but the visual effect from the curb is of a truck.

The 2007 BMW X5 restyle is not a large departure from the original. If anything, the new body is a bit sexier, employing more pronounced

wheel arches, a more intricately surfaced front end, roof spoiler and muscular rear haunches with 18-inch alloy wheel sporting run-flat tires. The X5 is the first vehicle in this segment to offer run-flats as a standard feature.

The greater exterior dimensions are reflected in the interior, which grows to accommodate more flesh and cargo. Overall, the interior has a more 'Zen-like' elegance. Offering eco-friendly trim options like Poplar and Bamboo at no charge. One neat piece of engineering is in the glove box, whose doors split horizontally in the middle and retract into the dashboard.

Where technology is concerned a lot can change in seven years. It's clear the new X5 has it going on. Standard features include Satellite radio, power driver's seat, split folding rear seat and heated retractable side mirrors. Standard safety features include dual front-impact airbags, SRS (Supplementary Restraint System) with dual threshold and dual-stage deployment, 3-point safety belts and head restraints for all seating positions, front and

Room for Everything Except Improvement



Specifications: 4.8-Liter, 32-valve 8-cylinder 350-hp engine; 6-speed Steptronic automatic transmission with manumatic shifting; 15-city mpg, 21-highway mpg; \$62,500 MSRP.

rear compartment Head Protection System (HPS) with front side-impact airbags, roll-over sensors, steering column crash system and an alarm system with interior motion detectors. BMW's high standards are applied evenly across the board for quality, luxury, style and safety.

Additional options include heated steering wheel, automatic lift-gate operation from the key

fob, programmable steering wheel buttons, Bluetooth hands-free phone system, voice-activated navigational system, rear seat entertainment system, Electronic Damping System, Active Roll Stabilization, Hill Descent Control, a parked-car ventilation system, review camera system and FlexRay - an in-car data transmission protocol that is about 20 times faster than any similar prod-

uct on the market.

Two engines are available - the magnesium-and-aluminum 3.0-liter inline-6 we know from the 330i sedan, and the powerhouse 4.8-liter V-8. The all-new 2007 BMW X5 4.8i boasts an impressive 350-hp with 350 lb-ft. torque. The 4.8i provided an impressive 60-mph in 6.4 seconds, enough to make any 'savvy-chic soccer mom' anxiously anticipate jumping off at the light just to

show that kid who smirks smugly from the Camero in the next lane.

Powerful engines are just one part of the X5, which is tuned to be sporty. The new model also features a revised, standard six-speed automatic transmission, with increased shifting speed 50 percent quicker than that of a conventional automatic. This transmission is able to skip gears while downshifting, and the torque converter now locks up at lower speeds for more efficient operation. The 2007 X5 4.8i SAV has an upgraded suspension and all-wheel drive system and a body shell optimized to be both lightweight and tough. The 2007 X5's upgrades include traction-control system, advanced braking system, brake drying, Electronic Stability Control system, Active Steering System, speed-sensitive Servotronic power steering and the exclusive BMW third generation i-Drive system.

The 2007 BMW X5 4.8i runs fast, looks sharp, has a luxurious interior and can make you think at times that you are driving a real sports car. The X5 high-tech emphasis has been balanced with fun. The 2007 BMW X5 retains the fun-factor at full measure. This is a 5-Star ultimate driving experience.

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Art on Stage

On NE ALBERTA ST Street

The extraordinary styles of costume designer Mabel Astarloa Haley shine on their own - even without the famed choreography or dazzling lights of the ballet stage.



Visit a comprehensive retrospective of Haley's costumes, spanning decades and continents in a special exhibit April 26 through May 29 at Onda Arte Latina/Cross Currents Gallery, 2215 N.E. Alberta St.

What is special about Haley's technique is the way she creates the personalities of the characters who wear her costumes. For more than forty years Haley has employed her extraordinary design and drafting skills in helping create larger works of art for ballet and theatre in her native Argentina as well as France, Switzerland and the United States.

The dozen or so designs for Hartford Ballet's "Carmencita" take the viewer to a sensual place where the other collaborators in choreography, lighting and set design can complete the picture.

An opening and Artist's Reception take place April 26 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. For gallery hours and more information, call 503-493-1909 or visit www.ondagallery.com.

The stylish retrospective "Art on Stage" comes to Onda Arte Latina/Cross Currents Gallery April 26.





U.S. Hispanic Cultural Museum Debuts

Nation's largest blends cultures

AP — A hot-pink building with colored lights in San Antonio, Texas will house the nation's largest museum devoted to Latino culture and arts. As the debate over the grow-

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A painting titled "Rosita" by artist Jesse Trevino is seen at the Alameda, the nation's largest museum dedicated to Latino culture and art, in San Antonio, Texas. (AP photo)

ing number of Hispanic immigrants intensified, organizers decided it was important to showcase the blend of Latino culture with American culture, including that of other immigrant groups, said Ruth Medellin, executive director of the Museo Alameda, a partnership between the Alameda National Center for Latino Arts and Culture and the Smithsonian Institution.

"It's the Latino experience in art, culture and history," she said. "But it's about the American experience," she added, noting a photo exhibit of Latino musicians who borrowed the accordion and polka music of German immigrants to create a unique style known as conjunto.

"There's a lot of blending, the weave of a fabric that we share as a nation," she said.

Located just blocks from the Alamo and the San Antonio Riverwalk, the 39,000-square-foot facility is expected to attract more than 400,000 visitors a year.

All the exhibits in the building but one will rotate, displaying pieces ranging from Smithsonian artifacts to work by emerging Latino artists.