

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2007 BMW 335i Convertible

The New Transformer ~ Powerful Functional Art

BY KATHLEEN CARR

In simpler times BMW would have rolled out a convertible with a soft top just like it has since 1987. For 2007 model year BMW introduced its first ever, retractable hardtop.

With a retractable hardtop the car becomes a year-round traveler ready for rain, sleet, snow and construction zones.

Gone are the typical soft top shortcomings -- wear and tear and stains on the fabric, noise from the top flapping in the wind up or down, and most important, having only a thin sheet of canvas between your melon and whatever you hit in an impact.

The 2007 BMW 335i Convertible, a car whose quicksilver transformation from coupe to convertible; just push the console button and the metal top hides in the trunk in 22 seconds. Push the button again, and it motors back up in 23 seconds; ample time to open or close at a stop sign, usually. The three roof panels levitate apart from one another, shuffle together and sink in a stack under the open deck



Specifications: 3.0-Liter, 24-Valve, 300-hp @ 300 lb-ft. torque, 6-Cylinder Twin-Turbo Engine; 6-Speed Steptronic Automatic Transmission; 20-City 29-Highway MPG; \$57,225 MSRP

lid, when the rear-hinged deck lid closes and all seals compress, you're looking at a whole different car.

Though it is air tight and doesn't whistle or flap, a retractable hardtop does have its drawbacks, the primary one that it's easier to find a needle in a haystack than to find luggage room in a trunk with the top there.

With the top up you can carry a small overnighter providing the case and contents bend or fold. To hold a couple suitcases, the rear seat back folds flat. The rear wall also conceals a bag that slips out and into the back seat to hold a pair of skis. Actually lots can be held in the back seat except people.

Convertibles are parade cars, but the huge headrests over the back seats rob the rear ledge of room to seat queen and her court. Headrests are made to rise and serve as

roll bars in a rollover.

The speed comes smoothly and deceptively fast in the 335i. All that technology works together seamlessly to launch the 335i up to speed briskly -- zero to 60 in 5.3 seconds. That smooth power could lead owners to rack up a lot of speeding tickets because the 335i hustles to speeds much higher than what normally registers with a driver's senses. Consider yourself

warned.

The exquisite twin-turbo 3.0-liter puts out 300 hp; is a powerhouse, but a convertible typically is a sit-back--and-cruise machine. No need to rush the experience. This twin-turbo lacks the typical lag. Hit the pedal and the car takes off. No waiting for the turbo to take a deep breath. The convertible's structural reinforcement adds 375 pounds to the 335i. In terms of

driving dynamics and performance; these are unbelievably refined automobiles, powered with hydraulic smoothness by the company's new twin-turbocharged inline six, complete with direct injection and the Double VANOS variable valve timing. With a bank of Bosch computers running the show, this engine generates 300 foot-pounds of torque.

As with all BMWs, the 335i is designed for optimum performance. That means a stiff suspension to move from point A to B nimbly. But while agile, the car isn't necessarily comfortable. When driven at length a backache and/or leg cramps await from stiff ride, stiff suspension and stiff seats. A six-speed manual transmission is standard; the six-speed automatic is a \$1,275 option, and worth every penny in this town. Our car came with run-flat radial tires and a sports suspension that prevents lean in corners -- at the cost of a very stiff ride.

Handling is superb. You can corner with confidence well into highway speeds. The speed-sensitive power steering does lighten

the feel when going slowly, so you don't jolt.

Yet BMW took pains to ease one pain associated with a convertible. Hop back into the car after the leather has baked a few hours and chances are you'll toast a thigh or burn a bun. So BMW has gone with Dakota leather treated to reflect heat that can hit 140 degrees. Dakota reduces the temperature by 30 to 40 degrees so the seat will be about the same temperature as the body.

Noteworthy features include a cell-phone holder in the center console, cell-phone/iPod holders plus iPod jack and power plug under the center armrest, includes rain-sensing wipers, power locks/windows/seats/mirrors (heated), automatic climate control and AM/FM stereo with C/MP3 player. On trick that adds to the magic; the key fob can raise or lower the top as you stand nearby.

There's little debate in the auto world that BMW makes the finest sports coupe on earth when it comes to feel and performance on a track. The 335i Convertible is a beautiful, powerful work of functional art.



Fans find that the wait between championships was a lot easier this time around for the Boston Red Sox, who completed their second World Series sweep in four seasons after an 86-year drought.

Red Sox Celebrate Title Repeat

Fans swarm streets of Boston

(AP) —Tens of thousands of Red Sox fans lined the streets from Fenway Park to City Hall on Tuesday to cheer Boston's second World Series title in four years, and celebrate how a team once known for losing was again baseball's best.

Bostonians had lived and died before they saw a world championship and now they've seen two in the last four years.

Screaming fans greeted Red Sox players and their families as they climbed into the 20 brightly colored boats outside the stadium for a three-mile journey through the city. The parade followed a similar route to the rolling celebration staged after the Red Sox broke an 86-year World Series drought in 2004 by sweeping the St. Louis Cardinals. The Red Sox completed a sweep of the Colorado Rockies on Sunday with a 4-3 win in Denver.

Most of the players and manager Terry Francona wore bright red hooded championship sweatshirts. First baseman Kevin

Youkilis wore a T-shirt that said "We did it AGAIN."

The parade was set to slow down at Copley Square, Boston Common and City Hall Plaza, where closer Jonathan Papelbon has promised to do his infamous Irish jig to "I'm Shipping Up to Boston." He was being accompanied by the Dropkick Murphys, a Boston-based punk rock band with heavy Irish folk music influence.

Fans decked out in Red Sox gear lined the route, holding signs and cheering for the team.

There were some indications Boston fans might even be getting picky about their championships, with 2004 and 2007 coming when the Sox were on the road.

Red Sox president Larry Lucchino said before the parade that he could not choose which Series win he liked better.

"They're two flavors of ice cream -- they both taste good," he said. "You can't choose among them. I think the next one is going to taste good, too."

Cully Park Planning Begins

A controversial plan to convert a former landfill site into Thomas Cully Park goes before the public in a design workshop on Saturday, Nov. 3.

The Portland Parks and Recreation Department wants to identify local needs and design their vision of what the new park could look like. The workshop is the first step in master planning the

25-acre site between northeast Columbia Boulevard, Portland Highway and Killingsworth Street near 72nd Avenue.

The workshop will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Word of Life Community Church, 4927 N.E. 55th Ave. Childcare and lunch will be provided for those who register by Thursday by calling 503-595-8733.

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