




BMW 535d

by Tunit

When BMW's 535d arrived in Britain the plaudits followed fast, with *Diesel Car's* award of "Best Performance Car" being one of many awards received by "the quickest diesel you can buy" as we called it. With two skillfully phased turbochargers of different sizes releasing 272bhp in a seamless flow of power and torque that delivers the yardstick 0-62mph in 6.7 seconds, and yet with a modest combined economy figure of 34.4mpg this surely is the diesel saloon (or estate) to end all disputes about the viability of diesel power in the sphere of performance motoring. And with an in-gear acceleration figure that can destroy many a serious sports car, the on-road performance potential is arguably far greater than even that 6.7 seconds promises! So I was more than a little excited when Tunit



invited me to see an example of the 535d, a Touring SE, tested on its rolling road dynamometer and then given the Tunit treatment. As I had not driven a 535d recently I took a short run to refresh my memory, finding it to be just as impressive as I had expected, and remembered. Leave it in the standard auto mode of the six-speed

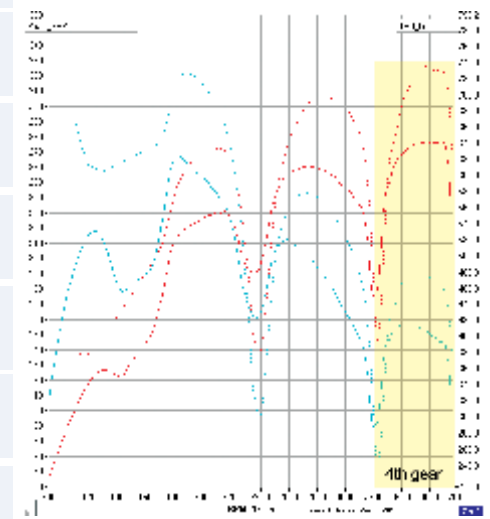
Steptronic transmission and it's as docile as any 530d, but with a constant reminder from any meaningful prod on the 'go' pedal that it has considerably more to offer when you ask the question. In the Sport setting the promise is more easily sensed and, if you opt to select any gear with the manual override, the sensation is even more heightened. Put



to believe! But I will leave it to the owner's comments to accurately capture the difference compared with the standard car – after all, he's a lot more familiar with his own car than I am. He reported after an electrifying weekend at the wheel, during which he had had a lot of time to fully evaluate it, that the car was, "Excellent! Smoother and quicker from a standing start, bottom end torque is awesome, and the mid-range acceleration is phenomenal!" That just about says it all, doesn't it? Indeed it does...

simply, you have to ask yourself how much better diesel power can sensibly get! Well, Tunit's target was to deliver an answer to that question! With a brief run to establish the output of the standard power unit, the figures of 277bhp and a calculated torque of 406 lb ft appeared – virtually as per BMW's specified figures of 272bhp and 413 lb ft. So, without more ado, the compact and easily fitted Tunit conversion was very swiftly slotted into the BMW's wiring harness and

out at the exotic level of 152mph that was briefly achieved at the end of the run. Who would ever have thought – ten years, or even five years back – that we would see a diesel saloon delivering such blinding performance? Time did not allow me long to sample the delights of the now even more potent car, as the owner was anxious for its return. But a brief run out into the country left me in absolutely no doubt that this was now one even more stunningly quick machine, with overtaking potential that needs experiencing



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the serious business was about to begin! The first run registered 293bhp and two swift adjustments to the Tunit saw this rising to 326bhp, with the calculated torque figure a massive 480 lb ft. Another couple of runs to confirm the figures, left the Tunit technicians more than happy with their achievements. They knew that maybe more was there for the asking, but were quite satisfied that this level of improvement would put a wide grin on the face of the BMW's owner. Like Oliver Twist, he could always ask for more, and would probably not be refused! The whole tuning process was very swift – as much down to the brevity of the full-power acceleration runs as the speed and ease with which the tweaks to the adjustable Tunit conversion were made. I've never seen the power trace move quite as quickly on the VDU screen as with this modified 535d! Neither had I seen the registered speed top



The BMW 530d is a stunning performer before the Tunit unit!