



Special ingredient X

Few would disagree that BMW's chic diesel off-roader is well-nigh perfect in standard form. However, for those insatiable few who crave more than enough, **Victor Harman** has the answer

BMW's striking X5 is widely regarded as the most accomplished up-market 4x4 on and off the road. It has received innumerable accolades since it was launched in the UK just over a year ago, and few admirers would disagree that it impresses most when powered by BMW's brilliant 3.0-litre, six-cylinder turbodiesel.

While there are those, with the deepest of pockets, for whom the £44,000, 4.4-litre, petrol V8 version offers that essential slice of extra power, the £11,000 cheaper, 184bhp diesel has more than enough performance for most people, thanks to its hefty, 302 lb ft-slug of torque. This kind of pulling power gives the X5 3.0d plentiful low-down punch under all driving conditions. Not that we have seen many muddy X5s: like most 4x4s, few venture far from metalled surfaces, but the satisfaction is in knowing that the potential is there for tackling rough terrain.

Having established that the six-cylinder oil-burner is by far the more rational choice of X5, the case for the gas-guzzling V8 is weakened even further if we consider the performance benefits

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offered by tuning the turbodiesel. One such route is the installation of a Bromley's Tuning Unit, which typically produces a 20%-plus increase in torque and power. Even for the most fervent petrolhead, the lure of the petrol V8, with its sub-20mpg 'economy', is surely beginning to fade...

Diesel Car reader John Slack, of Cumbria, was tempted to unleash this potential, so he took his low-mileage X5 3.0d automatic to Chorley, in Lancashire, for a dose of Mike Bromley's special tonic.

Only a few minutes were needed to install the Bromley's Tuning Unit, after which John and Mike Bromley were off to Blackburn College, where Mike has a Bosch 4x4 dynamometer at his disposal. They wanted to establish precisely how many extra horses had been liberated, and they were both delighted with what was revealed.

With the Tuning Unit switched off, the X5 produced 194bhp, some 10bhp more than the official figure, showing John's car to be a particularly healthy example of the type. But the post-tuning figures were a revelation: power had been boosted by no fewer than 51bhp, an increase in excess of 25%.

As for post-tuning torque, that came out at an impressive 360 lb ft, produced over a wide, slightly rising curve, all the way from 1,750rpm to 3,000rpm, then gently tailing off to 4,500rpm. That represents a 17.5% increase on the 302 lb ft factory figure, taking it well beyond the 324 lb ft peak of the 4.4-litre V8. And let's not forget that the petrol engine's admittedly handsome torque is not developed until it is spinning at 3,600rpm. Diesel aficionados know where we like our torque produced, and in this regard it must be said that even the V8 does not cut the mustard.

John Slack took a little while to register the full extent of the performance released by the Bromley Tuning Unit, but by the time we caught up with him a wee while later, he had realised that he was more than delighted with the enhancement, commenting that he can discern no disadvantages

whatsoever to the Bromley's conversion.

The straight-line performance of his X5 is considerably sharpened, enabling swifter overtaking, and making for less stressful, safer driving. The smooth Steptronic automatic transmission – one of the very best modern, 'intelligent' automatic gearboxes in production – seems to revel in the extra power, and continues to execute slick and logically-timed shifts. Fuel consumption on a recent jaunt around Scotland registered a highly acceptable 28mpg, despite the considerable weight and tall, bluff shape of this mighty off-road machine.

The X5 3.0d is an undeniably impressive machine; but then we have always said so, voting it *Diesel Car's* 4x4 of the Year 2002. It can be made all the more impressive, though, by a visit to Bromley's. John's conversion cost £400+VAT, and he is in no doubt that it was money well spent.

Most Bromley's conversions can be supplied mail order, for easy fitting on a DIY basis. Visit www.bromleystuning.com or call 01257 274100 if you want to know if your car is suitable for the tuning treatment, or if you require more information.



Transforming the X5's performance takes only a matter of minutes, and the tuning unit is very discreet

Bromley's can boost the BMW's torque to 360 lb ft, putting the diesel's peak well ahead of the V8's

