

Little BMW soft-top

BY
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No sooner did BMW bring us the 1 Series, than they renamed things—turning their 3 Series coupes and convertibles (but not sedans or wagons) into 4 Series, and turning 1 Series coupes and convertibles into 2 Series, which is what we have here. (There is not a 1 Series sedan in the US this year.)

The convertible bears a soft top, which operates relatively quickly for a four-seater—about 19 seconds down and 22 up—even with complex bodywork involvement during the process. With the Z4 roadster now bearing a retractable hard top, this makes the little 2 Series the smallest BMW to bear the day-at-the-beach casual ragtop feel.

When the top is up, this model has the same bulging, prominently-ribbed baby carriage style we dislike in the 3-now-4 Series.

The soft top operation is almost as complex as a hard top, requiring working through a series of alerts and alarms, particularly dealing with a movable partition within the trunk, which needs to be dealt with whether you have luggage or not, before you can proceed. And its system of panels and blocks to

conceal the top and its mechanism are about as complex as with the Z4's hardtop.

On the road, the car's power handles its relatively light weight well, with nimble and fairly quick power and handling. Annoyances with the joystick shifter, feature interface screen and turn signals are familiar from other current BMWs.

And as with other BMWs we've driven, we are unable to ignore the option list and pricing. An upper-mid \$30s car once again quickly turns into a mid-\$50s car, with the addition of such fundamentals as rear camera, keyless entry and navigation, each of which forces you into a bundle of additional add-ons. Skim the full list, and you'll see there are a few things that seem desirable—some properly priced, others not—but a number of things you could scratch out. As it is, this car stickers higher than the base price of a 3, 4 or 5 Series, a Z4, X3 or X4 and matches the base price of an X5. It is encroaching on M Series pricing. For the same price, we'd be more tempted to forgo all their add-on costs and instead move up the model lineup. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L 4-cylinder direct injection turbo
TRANSMISSION	.....8-speed sport automatic
DRIVETRAIN	.....rear-wheel drive
POWER/TORQUE	.....240 hp / 255 lb-ft
WEIGHT	.....3625 lb
ACCELERATION 0-TO-60	.....5.7 sec
TURNING CIRCLE	.....35.8 ft
FUEL CAPACITY / FUEL REQ.	.....13.7 gal / premium
MPG	.....23/34/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$37,900
GLACIER SILVER METALLIC	.....550
CORAL RED DAKOTA LEATHER	.....incl
SPORT LINE: 18" alloy green wheels, black mirror caps, sport seats, aluminum/black trim	.....2050
COLD WEATHER PACKAGE: Heated front seats, heated steering wheel, headlight washers	.....700
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PACKAGE: Rear camera, park distance control	.....950
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PLUS	.....700
LIGHTING PACKAGE: Xenon headlights	.....900
PREMIUM PACKAGE: Keyless entry, garage opener, auto-dim mirrors, power front seats, lumbar support, ambient lighting, satellite radio	.....3400
TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: Navigation, BMW online and apps, RTTI, remote services	.....2150
TRACK HANDLING PACKAGE: M Sport brakes, adaptive M suspension, variable sport steering	.....1600
BLACK SOFT TOP	.....100
PARKING ASSISTANT	.....500
HARMAN/KARDON PREMIUM AUDIO	.....875
ENHANCED BLUETOOTH AND SMARTPHONE	.....500
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....950

TOTAL \$53,825

Our car's silver paint, which was an added cost option, makes a fairly dull presentation from without, until you put the top down and reveal the stunning Coral Red Dakota Leather within.

