

ALL-NEW BMW 8-SERIES CONVERTIBLE 2019

What the re-booted 8-Series lacks in agility, it more than makes up for in speed and style, writes Tim Barnes-Clay





Fast Facts (2019 BMW M850i xDrive Convertible)
Max speed: 155 mph
0-62 mph: 3.7 seconds
Combined MPG: 28.2 mpg
Engine layout: 4395cc V8 twin-turbo petrol
Max. power (PS): 530
CO2: 229 g/km
Price: £107,100

When the original 8-series showed up, it made a real impact with its stunning wedge-shape design. It looked like no other BMW product of the time and has been a profoundly popular car ever since.

This 8-series is a little different, though, being more of a successor and a rebranding to the 6-series than something bright, drastic and new. Should that put you off? Absolutely not, this is a highly luxurious and powerful machine that'll give you a great sense of desire, irrespective of BMW's business strategies.

From launch, the fresh 8-series Convertible offers a couple of engines – a 3.0-litre turbocharged straight-six diesel, and a strapping 4.4-litre V8 twin-turbo. Both powerplants result in a maximum speed of 155mph, but the petrol V8 will get to 62mph in 3.9-seconds, and the diesel will make the 0-62mph sprint in 5.2-seconds.

Regardless of your engine choice, your BMW 8-series will house an 8-speed automatic transmission as well as 'XDrive' all-wheel drive.

The new 8-series Convertible is composed, comfy, well-appointed and brain churningly quick. However, if you're expecting nimbleness and lots of steering feel you'll be disappointed. This car is better cruising across hours of smooth tarmac.

As with all the current line-up of BMWs, the latest 8-series Convertible does refinement wonderfully, providing you with a satisfying driving experience. Despite the soft roof, it is remarkably well insulated. And driving with the lid in position doesn't rain on the parade, as it might in some previous soft top luxury cars. That roof is speedy, too, opening and closing in

only 15-seconds via the press of a button – and you can operate it on the move up to 31mph.

Inside, the 8-series has a brilliant cockpit design, being driver-focused but still high in quality. The controls are all rationally arranged, too, meaning you feel at home as soon as you slide behind the wheel.

A digital display takes the place of what would be dials in most motors – and BMW's iDrive infotainment unit comes with voice control, a prominent touchscreen, and a swivel wheel next to the gear selector – both now obtainable in crystal.

For a convertible, this is a relatively roomy model. It has four seats, but only two smallish kids will fit in the rear – not because of the width or headroom – but due to limited legroom. As for the BMW's boot, there's 350-litres of cargo capacity available, which is decent for a vehicle of this class.

If you're purchasing a car in this class, you won't be too fussed about the running costs. But if you're curious, the 850i V8, that I tested will do around 28mpg in the real world. Mind you, over 500 horsepower returning circa 28mpg isn't bad!

As anticipated from a car reducing your bank balance by six-figures, the quality is precisely what you'd expect. Fine-looking rich leather is wrapped around the cabin, and the metals and plastics feel exceptional.

When it comes to safety, you've got nothing to worry about – there's a lot of kit built-in to this German convertible, including sensors and cameras. A head-up display, which keeps your eyes fixed on the road, is also fitted. And in the unlikely event of a roll-over accident, a roll-bar will deploy, protecting the heads of all occupants.

