

# SHIFT

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## TEST DRIVE

# 2018 BMW F90 M5



If there's any petrol-head who requires an introduction to BMW's famed M-division, it's highly likely that they're not a petrol-head at all. For over 45 years, the letter "M" in the context of German performance cars has meant an undying pursuit of driving thrill, precision performance and a no compromise attitude to engineering. One of their first outings resulted in the iconic M1 in 1978—a mid-engine racer homologated for a race division that went bust before the M1 could be unleashed. Their subsequent rebranding into a performance road-car division came in the shape of the E28 M5 in 1985—a four door supercar born out of the unholy marriage of the M1's M88 straight six motor and the chassis and body of the subtle-yet-capable 5 series. 33 years on, I got the chance to take the wheel of the latest G30 series M5 (designated as the F90) on the streets of Singapore.

The original E28 M5 had great figures for its time—286 HP and 340 Nm of torque from a 3.5 litre straight six in 1985 is nothing to scoff at, even today. It was enough to make the E28 the fastest road-legal sedan of its time. Fast forward to present day and the power figures need to see a significant bump to keep the M5 ahead of the curve. Under its bulbous hood lies a true monster, a motor that takes inspiration from nuclear submarines and



main-battle tanks in the way it generates forward motion—a 4.4 litre twin turbo V8 with 591 BHP and 750Nm of torque, the latter fully available as low as 1800 RPM.

This is not a car you just strap into and go. Especially for the un-initiated, M cars tend to require a little bit of mental preparation before you take it out. Imagine being asked to put your hand into a jar with a tarantula inside it—you'd have to constantly acknowledge the fact that there's a creepy eight legged thing in very close proximity to your hand. With the belt on and the gear in Drive, my brain kept telling me how this beast of a car

has as much power as a Lamborghini or Ferrari from just half a decade ago.

The trick is to feather the throttle. With so much power available, figuring out where the car sits comfortably and where it switches to its feral personality is crucial. From a steady cruise at 20 km/h in light traffic to nearly full throttle when the traffic opens up to an empty stretch of road, the M5 launches with a terrifying growl and you're doing 150 km/h in the blink of an eye. It takes conscious effort to not stab at the throttle any longer than you need to—on public roads, it doesn't take much longer than a couple of seconds for the M5 to



reach triple digits. In a country like Singapore, that means hefty fines and possible jail-time. 3.2 seconds to 100 km/h from standstill makes it a difficult car to drive lawfully in these conditions.

BMW has the antidote to that as well—put the Drive Mode in Comfort, tap the down button on top of the shifter to increase the gear ratios using BMW Dynamic Drive and ignore the solid red aluminium shift paddles affixed to the alcantara clad wheel (which gives more feedback than anything else I've ever driven). The M5 is just as sober and diminutive as the regular G30 5-series at low

speeds, with a ride that's just a tad harsher thanks to the stiffer suspension.

The All-Wheel Drive helps keep everything in check. Much debated since its launch, the F90 M5 has been targeted by purists for playing it safe and dialling back the drift-friendly characteristics of previous M5s. Most of the power still goes to the rear wheels and you have the option of manually unlinking the front differential to make it RWD, but as the BMW folks tell me later—it'll definitely void the warranty.

The F90 is a grown up, mature sports sedan but it has so much power on tap that you'll only ever use half of it at any given time. It's a high strung machine that you might not be comfortable driving in a city setting. Fortunately BMW and M Division realised that, and made sure it can be a regular 5-series when you're just cruising around town. That split personality has now become a staple of the M5, and I'm glad I got to experience it.

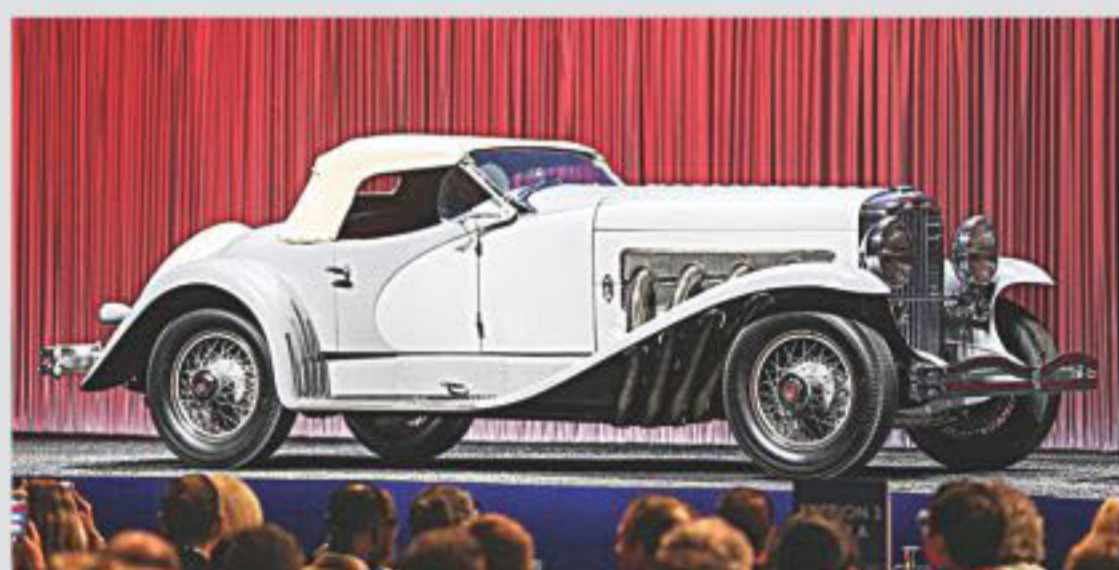
A big thanks to Executive Motors Ltd. and BMW Group Asia for the opportunity to test drive their cars.

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## The stars of 2018 Pebble Beach Concours d' Elegance



1962 Ferrari 250 GTO - most expensive auction (\$46 mil).



1935 Duesenberg SSJ - most expensive American (\$22 mil)



1948 Talbot Lago T26 Grand Sport Figoni Fastback Coupe - contender for best of show.



1935 Rolls Royce Phantom-II Continental Gurney Nutting Streamline Coupe.



Mercedes Benz EQ Silver Arrow EV.



Genovation GXE - Corvette bodied EV.



1937 Alfa Romeo 8C - winner, Best of Show.

## AUTO NEWS

### All new Ford Ranger Raptor

While America and Europe gets the manic Ford F150 Raptor, we get the entry ladder of the Ford Trucks Empire, the Ranger.

Thankfully, Ford has addressed the lack of a "hot" Ranger and released the bulkier, sturdier and meaner Ranger Raptor. The new 2.0 litre diesel inline-six has two turbos, giving a total output of 211 HP and 500 Nm of torque, routed through a 10-speed automatic gearbox that has as many as six drive modes—including one "Baja" setting in case you want to tear up your local stretch of desert.

The small displacement is good news for the displacement-handicapped local market—let's hope AG Automobiles decides it's an exciting enough prospect to bring a few units into Bangladesh.



## COLLECTIBLES

### Bangladeshi Ducati

A Ducati 900 Monster. Made by Atlas, made in Bangladesh. Yep. That's right. These scale models are now made in Bangladesh, then sent abroad, then someone buys them with taxes and brings them back here. Why not sold here? Not a big enough market.

The scale is 1:24 and the detail is mostly a mixed bag leaning towards the good. It has photo etched metal parts for the brake discs and chain/sprockets. Adds to the realism. In other models these are made of thick plastic. Decals are superb and the lettering on the gauges are almost readable. And it also comes with wing mirrors which is usually reserved for larger scales.

While it amazes in some areas of detailing, one bit is sorely disappointing. The twin exhausts have casting flash and one is missing a tip. Would have been complete if both had drilled tips.



WORDS & PHOTOS: E. R. RONNY



### Mobil launches Kart Championship

MJL Bangladesh Limited, the Alliance Partner of ExxonMobil, has organised a karting championship, to be held from the 1st of September to the 14th, 2018. Implemented by Xtreme Racing, a concern of Concord Group, the championship will be held at the go-kart track adjacent to Ashulia's Fantasy Kingdom theme park.

More than a 100 racers competed head to head on the first day of the qualifying round on September 1, with the second and final rounds to be held on the 8th and 14th, respectively. More than 300 go-kart racers will compete for cash prizes and Mobil 1 products. The final day of the championship event will see Tom Goh and Angeline Lee from Malaysia in attendance.

While motorsport events are not common in Bangladesh, the organisers hope the championship will foster an interest in pro-driving.