

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2022 BMW M4 Convertible

MSRP: \$55,500 (430i) As Tested: \$110,245 (M4 Competition)



I am a card-carrying, winter denialist. Despite living in the northeast all my life, I manage to convince myself, every year, that winter isn't coming. When it inevitably arrives, I insist that spring is right around the corner. With this (delusional) spirit in mind, I suggest that this week, we take one, last, top down blast for the season. Aiding me in my quest is the BMW M4 Convertible. Four series convertibles come in three variations (430i, M440i, M4 Competition), with prices spanning from \$55,500 - \$89,700. All-Wheel Drive is standard on the M4, and optional otherwise (\$2,000).

Dropping the top is one button simple. Push and hold, for up or down, in less than 20 seconds. Top down, windows up, wind buffeting doesn't rise past moderate levels at highways speeds. If you're stretching the seasons, insert the removable wind blocker, and turn on the heat (or the heated seats). Add the optional "neck scarf" (\$650) and thumb your nose at the calendar. The well insulated top, when lowered, stores under the rear deck, reducing cargo capacity from 13.6 cu.-ft. to 10.6 cu.-ft.

I have often been accused of being thick of head, but never broad of beam. Therefore, while the M carbon bucket seats in my tester fit me to a tee, some may find they run too narrow.

Four Series models have different seat options, so pay attention to the test sit in your test drive, and pick your best fit. Six footers fit easily in front, back seats



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer

are +2 sized: best for bags or packages, owing to the limited leg room. Driving position is first rate. Controls for vehicle and infotainment systems are average in terms of ease of use. Drivers find their preferred path of controls (10-¼" touch screen, center stack/console, steering wheel) for making system adjustments. The convertible top's wide c-pillars limit the driver's rear-¾ visibility. The oversize outside mirrors help; checking your blind spot detection system is essential.

Which engine you get depends on which version 4 Series that you choose. The 430i is equipped with a 2.0L twin turbo, 4 cylinder engine (255 h.p.). The M440i runs a 3.0L twin turbo inline six (382 h.p.). Finally, the M4 Competition's 3.0L straight six is tuned to a hearty, 503 horsepower. I've driven the 2.0L in other BMW's. It's a balanced performer (0-60 = 5.9 seconds, EPA 25/34/28), and fine for most uses. In M4 Competition tune, the 3.0L six is as impressive for what it can do (0-60 in 3.6 seconds, top speed 174) as the way it does it. On a track, with sport exhaust in full throat, it's exhilarating. But, in normal, 'round town driving (where most of these cars will spend most of their lives), it's smooth and refined. The normal exhaust note will ruffle no neighborhood feathers, and the car handles daily driving situations with silken ease. Velcro-like cornering grip invites you to get time at a track day or autocross. The M carbon ceramic brakes on my tester would be welcomed at the track, but are overqualified for street use, and pricey (\$8,150). The number of driving mode selections in M cars is arguably TMI for most drivers.

The M4 Competition appeals to those who plan to regularly get some track time, or simply want the most performance you can get (even if you'll never use it). For those seeking a fine, luxury sports car, the 430i will fill the bill nicely, and offers the added luxury of a lighter touch on your bankroll.

