

Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2023 BMW X1 xDrive28i

MSRP: \$39,100 (X1)

As Tested: \$46,795



The smallest of BMW's X series, the X1 was introduced to the lineup in 2009. It rolls into 2023 sporting a fresh redesign. The third generation X1 checks in a skosh longer and wider than previously, with traditional styling. Outfitted with a pair of packages (Premium, xLine) and a couple of stand-alone options, my tester had an as-delivered price of \$46,795.

While the body design is conventional, the interior is anything but. The X1 cabin has a high tech look. The presentation and materials make a good first impression. Function and fashion are blended nicely, witness the shape of the door handles, or the center arm rest, suspended over a storage shelf below. Most system controls are channeled through the 10.7" center touchscreen. Ease of use is on par with others in this segment, and so my beef with the controls here is no different than elsewhere. In my view, HVAC controls should be located in a spot that's distinct from other systems, and should employ physical (rather than virtual) buttons, dials and switches. Adjusting the cabin's environment is something drivers do frequently. Having simple switchgear in easy reach means more time with your eyes on the road.

Forward, lateral and rear visibility are better than average for the segment, and standard, blind spot monitoring has your back. Six footers seated behind same will be a snug fit. Cargo capacity measures 25.7-57.2 cubic feet, with a slightly slanted load floor (with rear seatbacks folded) and a low liftover height in back for



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer

loading. Among the features included in the Premium bundle (\$4,200) are such desirables as heated seats and steering wheel, a bird's-eye view camera system, parking assist, wireless device charging and a harman/kardon sound system. My X1 was also equipped with the optional Sport seats. They're nicely supportive, to keep you in place during spirited driving. But, they're also firmer than the stock seating, and to me, less comfortable. So, while I would spend that \$400 elsewhere on the option sheet, I suggest you include a test sit (in both seats) in your test drive, and decide for yourself. After all, reasonable rumps can differ.

I've often said that there's little Sport in most Sport Utility Vehicles. While I'll stand by that statement, X1 is an exception - it's legitimately fun to drive. All X1's are All Wheel Drive. That means less stress on wintry roads, of course, but also, better traction on roads wet or dry. X1 corners flat and gathers pace smoothly. The turbocharged, 2.0 litre four cylinder engine is rated at 241 horsepower and 295 lb.-ft. of torque (up from last year's numbers (228/258)). The new, 7-speed transmission has one less gear than formerly. Less is not usually more when it comes to gearbox cogs, but the new unit is a dual clutch design, making for quicker shifts. BMW estimates a 0-60 time of 6.2 seconds, and I've seen times posted by reliable sources that shave a half second off that. So, quick indeed, smooth and enjoyable to drive, with the lone gripe of a slight hesitation at initial takeoff from a stop. The EPA says that your expected fuel economy will be 25/34/28, and I logged 26 mpg's. In sum, X1 is a fine blend of function and fun, in a subcompact form.



A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.