

The new BMW X1 sDrive18i: Bigger, better, and ready to impress

 By [Imran Salie](#)

26 Jun 2023

The new updated BMW X1 can easily be mistaken for the X3 as it's much bigger. It's safe to say the X1 has grown up, offering an alternative to the manufacturer's more expensive SUVs. I recently spent a week with the petrol derivative of the new X1 sDrive18i and tested its fuel consumption in city driving and how it fares as a daily driver.



What my time with the X1 sDrive18i was like

Having briefly driven the X1 models in Johannesburg earlier in the year at its local launch, I was hoping that I would get the diesel derivative to test because of the slightly higher torque output. Also, because it's diesel, I could have driven more as it comes with more range than the petrol model.

Notwithstanding, my time X1 with was fruitful. What I enjoyed most about it was the updated interior and enhanced infotainment system, which to me slightly edges its rival the MBUX system in terms of picture quality and responsiveness.



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The interior boasts a minimalistic design with a floating island that serves as an armrest and a place for the automatic handbrake and volume control. Adding to this is BMW's new Curve Display, which seamlessly joins the driver display and infotainment system; not revolutionary but it further serves the neat and clutter-free design. The X1 also has a cool wireless phone charging set-up where you are able to charge your mobile device by having it stand upright instead of flat down on its back.

When it comes to drive performance the X1 sDrive18i has different modes, with the sportier option providing the most torque and power for easy overtaking and uphill driving. The X1 also handles quite well and because its more compact it has a good centre of gravity.



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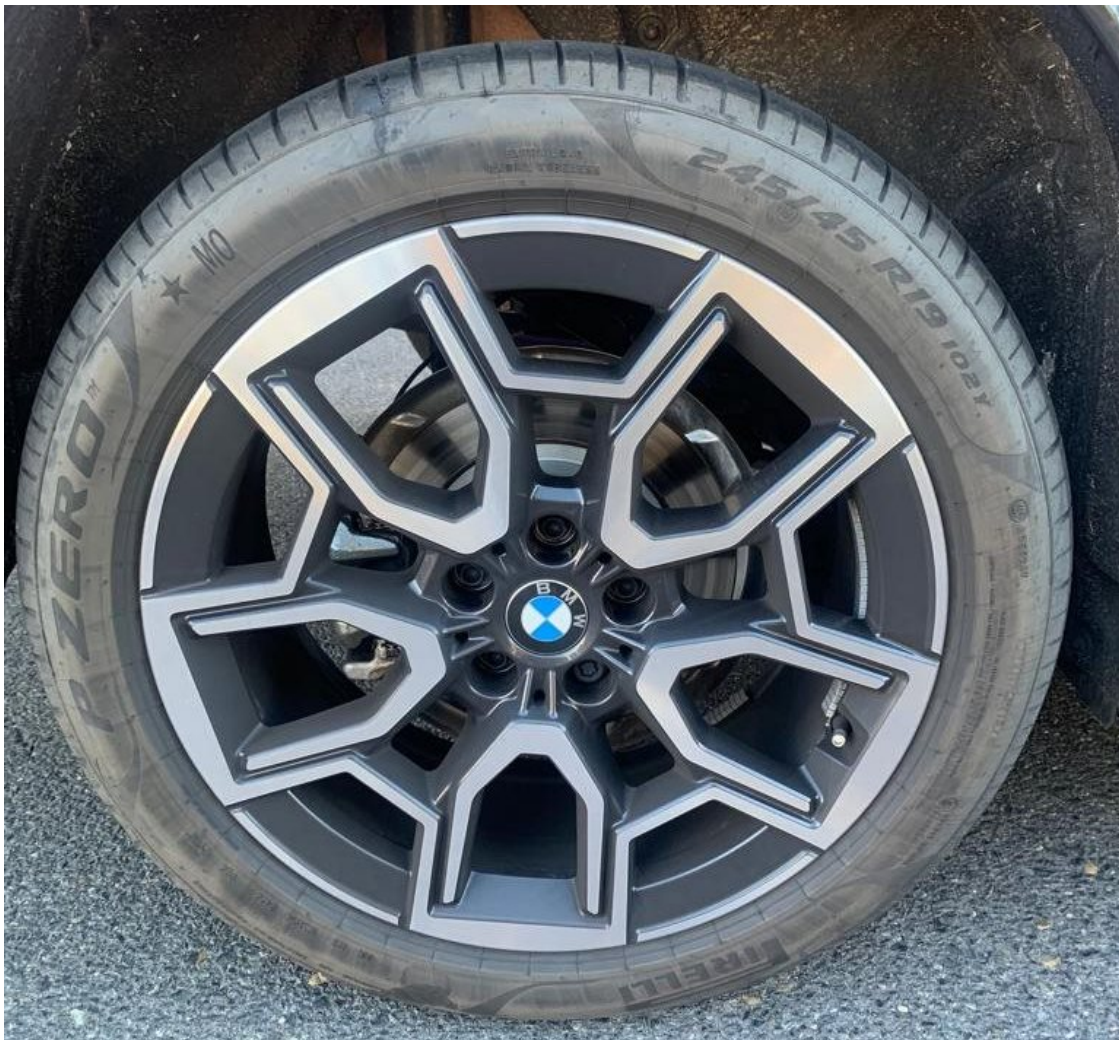
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The petrol derivative also did well fuel-wise, averaging just near 7l per 100km in city driving while encountering plenty of traffic. It's worth noting that a lower fuel consumption is achievable, which I think is a big standout feature of the third-generation X1.

Exterior-wise I noticed that I got a lot of heads turning and I got a few compliments on the car from random people. This is thanks to the new aggressive-looking design that sees the X1 come with a bigger kidney grill and sharper lines. Objectively these look great and usher in a new modern look for this compact SUV.









Features

- 18-inch light-alloy wheels as standard
- 115 kW three-cylinder engine
- Sport seats, electric seat adjustment with memory function, and lumbar support with massage function
- 40:20:40 split rear seat backrests and adjustable rear seats
- Boot capacity expandable from 540 to a maximum of 1,600ls
- Sport leather steering wheel
- Intelligent two-zone automatic climate control
- Rain sensor with automatic headlight activation
- Four USB-C ports and two 12V power sockets
- Enhanced driver assistance systems
- Seven-speed Steptronic transmission with double clutch
- Drive power channelled to the front wheels
- Cruise Control with brake function and front-collision warning system
- Parking Assistant including Reversing Assist Camera and Reversing Assistant
- Personal eSIM for 5G mobile technology
- BMW Digital Key Plus, BMW ID functionality, Apple CarPlay, and Android Auto integration

Verdict

Despite it having less torque and less range than its diesel counterpart, the X1 sDrive18i manages to offer the same level of refinement. The benefit of this is that the petrol option is nearly R50,000 cheaper. However, in today's climate where close attention is paid to how frugal a car's fuel economy is, the diesel option might be the better money saver in the end.

All in all, the X1 has grown significantly since its introduction to the local market, and now that it's up to date with BMW's latest tech and interior design cues, it can remain a formidable player in its segment.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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