

VW Bora

Featuring 2.3 V5



SCORECARD

Overtaking / pulling power

●●●●○

Fuel economy

●●●○○

Handling / steering

●●●●○

Comfort / ease of control

●●●●○

Interior space / practicality

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Accident / injury avoidance

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Costs in service

●●●○○

Depreciation prospects

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SO FAR, THE BORA HASN'T BEEN AN overwhelming sales success. It's a saloon version of the more versatile Golf hatchback, and although the back seats tilt and fold forwards in the same exemplary way, rear legroom is inferior on this V5 version; smaller adults still enjoy good posture support, however.

The boot is quite large, as well, although the full-sized spare wheel limits deck height somewhat and there's a prominent load sill.

OK, so there may be limitations imposed by its body style, but this has never prevented BMW's 3-Series from being a runaway success. And we're pleased to say that when it comes to its engine, gearbox and suspension, this Bora V5 is far from boring.

It possesses that still-rare quality of being able to adapt to any traffic condition or driver mood. If you want to amble around the lanes, it will do it all barely above idle speed in third and fourth, without the trace of a tremor or

complaint; in spite of a silky-smooth clutch and an ideal gearchange being on hand, you seldom have to use them in this mood.

A change of pace tells a different story, however – rev the engine from 3000 to 6000rpm and the distinctive V5 burbly yowl (reminiscent of an Alfa Romeo) builds up.

All this dynamic delight would be squandered if the car's suspension and steering were not up to par. The Bora doesn't disappoint, however – it's an object lesson in how grippy, responsive cornering agility can be combined with an exemplary ride that feels just right for the part, yet never degenerates to thumpy harshness.

When you're in more tranquil mood, the springing feels suitably composed, as well.

Of course, a car with this potential isn't cheap to insure and it's not particularly frugal on fuel either – an Audi 100 V6 will do almost as well. However, it's a saloon with real merit – when you go out and drive it, it's guaranteed to put a smile on your face.

HOW THE BORA COMPARES	Engine cap/power (cyl/cc/bhp)	Revs at 70mph (rpm)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (m/kg)†	Maximum legroom - front (cm)	Typical leg/kneeroom - rear (cm)	Steering turns/ (p) circle (m)	Overall length (cm)
VW BORA 2.3 V5	V5/2324/150	3220	8.5	18.8/14.0	32	24/17	109	93/65	3.0/10.55	438
Audi A6 2.4 V6	V6/2393/165	3100	8.8	21.6/15.2	30½	23/19	109	100/74	2.8/11.15	480
Alfa Romeo 156 2.0 Twin Spark	4/1970/155	3310	7.8	22.6/15.7	31	26/22	106	95/76	2.2/11.4	443
Peugeot 406 2.0 16v	4/1998/135	3210	10.5	27.2/17.6	32½	25½/36	111	99/74	3.2/11.0	456
Ford Mondeo 2.5 V6	V6/2544/170	2955	8.2	21.7/15.0	29	23/22	110	102/76	2.8/11.7	456
† all with ABS									(p) all power assisted	

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds

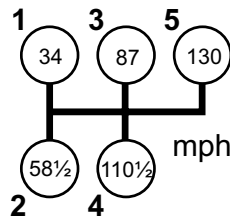
mph	30	40	50	60	70
THROUGH THE GEARS		1.7	3.4	5.7	8.5
IN 5TH GEAR		4.8	9.4	13.9	18.8
IN 4TH GEAR		3.6	7.1	10.5	14.0

20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES		9.7/7.4		9.1/6.9	
			9.4/7.1		9.4/6.9

Maximum speeds

REVS PER MINUTE	1st	6150*	4th	6250*	5th	5975
	2nd					
	3rd					

* for best acceleration



FUEL CONSUMPTION

Type of use - with air conditioning off*	mpg
Urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	22
Suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	27½
Motorway (70mph cruising)	33
Cross-country (brisk driving/20 miles from cold start)	31½
Rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	36½
Typical mpg overall	32

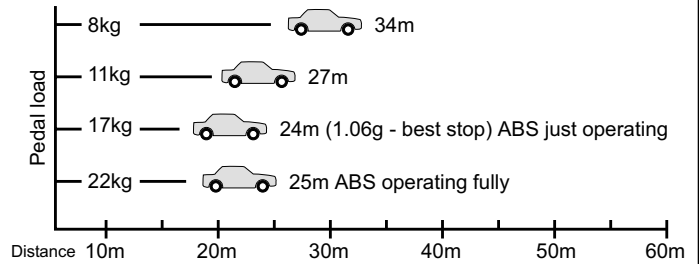
*with air conditioning switched on, consumption will increase by 2–4% in winter and 4–8% in summer

BRAKES

Pedal feel ●●●●○ Behaviour in an emergency ●●●●○ Handbrake ●●●●○

Dry road stopping distance from 50mph (with standard ABS)

(A good-to-average best stop is about 26m at 15-20kg pedal load)

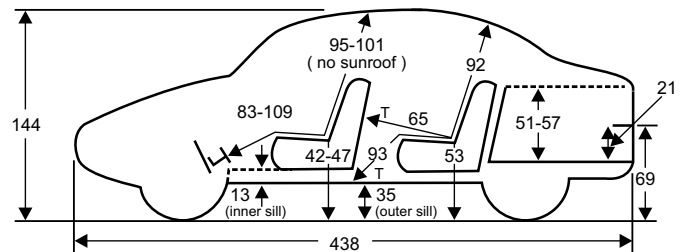


Fade test: pedal load required for a moderate (34m/.75g) stop:

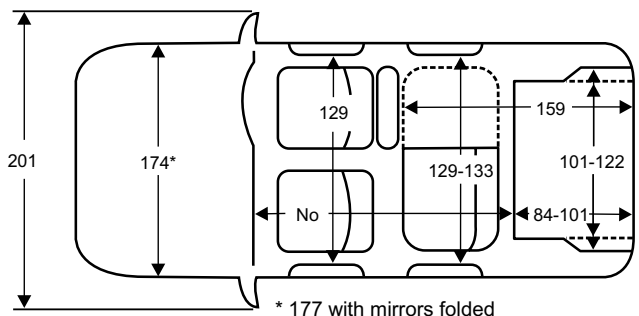
8kg at start of test, 8kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

MEASUREMENTS

Centimetres



T: typical back seat space behind medium-sized front occupants



LIKES AND GRIPES

V5's heavily sculptured seats support well	...	but make it harder to get in and out
Optional 'Sat Now' kit costs £2,500	...	but the radio reception is terrible
Nicely weighted and placed pedals	...	but left footrest too prominent
Air con works sensitively and well	...	but display hard to see low down
Sound security includes independent boot locking	...	but ours played up on test