

BMW 3 Series - Got Speed?

By Chhaya Sanghavi

On Valentine's Day this year, I was at BMW of Sarasota to meet with the new owner of the dealership, Victor Young.

Since I was a little early and had a few minutes to kill before I met with Victor, I couldn't help but ogle shamelessly at the cars in the lobby. I was not shopping for a new car and knew, that eventually, I would be buying the M whenever I could afford one. I did not think it would be such a big deal to drive a 3 series! Knowing full well what I want from my future car, I shrugged when Terry offered to pull out a 3 series for a test drive. I did not once think I would want it, let alone want it so badly!

Being a true *Marwari*, I know better than to test drive a car until I have negotiated the price and done enough research on various websites to figure out the MSRP, dealer invoice pricing as well as how low the dealer can be pushed below invoice pricing, along with resale values and options. Enough information to write a very informative epic that can put any professional researcher to shame!

I have always loved BMWs and while I never thought of a brand new one as the BMW of my choice, (you know, the whole thing about driving a car off the lot and losing at least 10% of its value and all), when I got into this silver bimmer and felt the car respond to the slightest acceleration, I knew I was sold. The car was loaded and I was in such a hurry to possess it that I did not even think about getting the dealership to throw in at least a few freebies!

As I drove the car, I couldn't help thinking that BMW could not have a come up with a better line than "The Ultimate Driving Machine" for



their cars. The leader of the pack of sports sedans in its class, the 3 series makes for a comfortably luxurious drive where the car constantly hugs the road and begs the driver to push the pedal to the metal. It handles curves beautifully and effortlessly. The inline six engine offers smooth power, greater acceleration and 200 lb-ft of torque at 2750 rpms. Automatic lights that shut off when you leave the car alleviates the tension of leaving the lights on and having the battery die, however, with BMW roadside assistance, you do not really need to worry about that! You do not even need to worry about the maintenance because of the BMW Ultimate Service plan where the maintenance of the car is covered, including oil changes at no extra cost!

Car and Driver says "We're not exactly sending lambs off to the slaughter, but putting various competitors of the BMW 3-series into the ring with that brilliant German car can occasionally feel like cruelty. A perennial 10Best Cars winner, the 3-series—and especially the current generation—is so good at doing so many things that these contests turn out to be battles for second place."

"Once again, a 3-series rises to the top of a comparison test. It is simply the best executed, best conceived, and best sports sedan currently available for the price."

Victor Young is an extremely savvy,

smooth, confident and astute young man. With 16 years of experience as Automotive GM at Automation and Sonic Automotive, two of the largest public retailers, Victor knows how to crank up the profitability in the automobile industry. When I had met him the last time, he had been the GM at another luxury car dealership. I asked Victor why he bought a BMW dealership. He said, "It is because of the brand. BMW is such an exciting brand with a lot of heritage. BMW is an enthusiast's car. I have spent several years in different classes of road racing, so when the opportunity of buying this dealership presented itself, I took it. I am from the Tampa area and while I looked at opportunities in different states, the ability to stay close to home made more sense and Sarasota is a very vibrant business market, the combination is perfect!"

As I drove back home in my brand new car that evening on I-75, I felt at some point that the traffic was slacking off. I glanced at the speedometer and was shocked to see that I had dropped the speed down to 110 mph! I dread to think what speed I was at before I slowed down and thank God there were no cops around.

Since I am also a major phone person, I was thrilled to see that when I connected my Blackberry to the car Bluetooth, it imported my entire phonebook. I still need to accept that I don't need to yell while I am on the phone in the car. A lot of my friends have assured me that they can hear me very well!

I have read since then that the controls are easy to use in BMWs. They are strategically placed so that the driver does not need to take his eyes off the road. I have not tried them as yet because I am too busy competing with the car as to who is handling the driving, the car or I! I want the car to take a break from being so smooth and not help me be one with the road. I push the car to the limit and it wants more! I guess I am having some control issues.

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