

driven

If it's fast & new, it's in here

LAMBorghini GALLARDO LP550-2 / BUGATTI VEYRON
 GRAND SPORT / SUBARU IMPREZA WRX STI SPEC C /
 BMW 760Li / MASERATI QUATTROPORTE SPORT GT S

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FAST FACTS

ENGINE 5972cc V12, DOHC, 48v, twin-turbo
 POWER 400kW @ 5250rpm
 TORQUE 750Nm @ 1500-5000rpm
 WEIGHT 2175kg
 0-100km/h 4.6sec (claimed)
 TOP SPEED 250km/h (limited)
 ON SALE October
 PRICE \$350,000 (estimated)

+ Effortless, cruising ability from superb V12, rear seat comfort

- Too heavy, difficult to achieve claimed fuel consumption

BMW 760Li

BMW'S NEW FLAGSHIP 7-SERIES V12 IS EFFORTLESS, LUXURIOUS AND QUICK

Surgency isn't a word. I know, because I tried to look it up in four different dictionaries. It should be, though, as it's the only way to adequately describe how BMW's new, hand-built 6.0-litre V12 propels the new 7-Series.

It starts quietly but as soon as you tickle the accelerator, there's a surging wall of acceleration that never stops; its urgency never drops off, hence, "Surgency" (copyright, Wordabymt).

It's also a word that sounds smooth, fast and subtle, which is what this car is all about.

But it's not just a V12. It shares a lot of parts with the Rolls-Royce engine, but that's not the only reason it's special. Most of its buyers won't care how it does what it does, as long as it makes a non-V8 sound, wears a V12 badge and wags the biggest BMW to its 250km/h v-max in a manner befitting the money they've spent.

For starters, it's a twin-turbo V12. That means it doesn't feel a lot of stress when you ask it to pump out its 400kW. That means it doesn't send many signs of exertion to the cabin and that means you just wait

along blissfully unaware of running to 100km/h in 4.6sec, apart from that enormous surgency pushing you into the soft leather chairs.

Besides having a twin-scroll turbo hanging off each bank of six cylinders, the 6.0-litre engine also scores direct fuel-injection and double VANOS variable valve-timing and lift on both the inlet and exhaust cams. But that's not all. Inside the nitty-gritty bits of the V12, the conrods are forged and sintered (broken and reset to fit perfectly around the forged crankshaft), the aluminium pistons are coated in iron and the exhaust valves are filled with sodium to make them easier to cool.

To suggest 400kW is enough power for a limo is to expose yourself to accusations of naivety, but it's a 22 percent improvement over the old V12. But this engine's not really about power. It has a monstrous 750Nm of torque (25 percent more than the old car) from just 1500rpm, which it keeps squeezing out until 5000rpm.

Stay in the throttle, and the 60-degree V12 will just keep surging out effortless power until 6500rpm, when it asks the all-new eight-



Typically luxurious cabin sees as much focus on the rear seats as from

speed gearbox for a higher gear.

It's not a small car by any measure. The long-wheelbase version we tested weighs in at 2175kg, and while it's a trustworthy and reliable handler, it never quite shrinks around you like the best big BMW sedans. But squeeze the accelerator into the soft carpet and its combination of unburstable, escalating speed without any hint of violence or tremor mounts a convincing argument. And then, just like that, it's resting on its 250km/h speed limiter with plenty in reserve.

Flick it into Sport mode and the gearbox can change down from

eightth gear directly into second, then tighten the already stiffened damping and steering as the 760 points its longer wheelbase at the apex, then calmly, surgently, accelerates out again.

Throughout these shenanigans, nothing shakes up the rear seat enough to bother anybody cosseting themselves back there. Nothing much shakes up the front, either, but unusually for a BMW, rear seat comfort levels have taken up much of the cabin's development.

But the real key is that in tough times, BMW has confirmed the V1 has a future. A big, smooth future.