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**2011 BMW 550i Sedan-** The 5 series is an important car for BMW. While it doesn't generate the same sales figures as the 3 series, it's a status icon for many a doctor, lawyer, business professional and budding rap star. Its importance in BMW's line up often overshadows the flagship 7 series, so when it was time to replace the 5th generation model, BMW knew they couldn't afford to screw it up.

The all-new 550i communicates a more cautious and conventional approach from BMW. Gone is the controversial "flame surfacing" from former design head Chris Bangle. Replacing it is a more conservative, but still muscular approach with character lines that seem attractive to most onlookers. The long, low, purposeful stance reflects a renewed BMW focus on driving dynamics over "look at me I'm unusual" styling.

The big news for enthusiasts is what's offered under the hood. BMW has applied the same twin turbo philosophy from the 335i to a new 4.4 liter V-8 that first appeared in the X5 and X6 models. Twin turbos reduce turbo lag because they are typically smaller and can spool up quicker than a larger single turbo that provides the same boost levels. The 550i engine has its turbos placed between the cylinder banks in the "V" for space efficiency and adds direct injection for a nice, flat power curve. Horsepower is rated at 400 from 5,500 to 6,400 rpm. Torque is 450 lb-ft from a lowly 1,800 rpm all the way up to 4,500 rpm.

Power from the twin turbo V-8 is dealt through an 8-speed automatic with available paddle shifters. Equally impressive is that BMW continues to offer a 6-speed manual tranny on the 5 series. How many high tech, \$60,000 plus sedans still allow you to row your own gears? Thank you, BMW from the bottom of our enthusiast hearts.

Inside the 550i is packed with technology that will certainly impress your friends, but only with the appropriately checked option boxes. Integral Active Steering is BMW's take on the familiar 4-wheel steering idea. Adaptive Drive actively controls body roll and shock damping to make hard cornering as pleasant as possible. An array of cameras allows you to check out what's happening around your vehicle blind spots, including a rear view camera for the Parking Assistant option. Night Vision with Pedestrian Detection uses an infrared camera to spot pedestrians on the iDrive screen or optional heads-up display. The important thing to remember is that the options list is as long as you arm, which is expected in a car of this price point.

BMW has given a new sense of purpose to the 2011 550i. By concentrating on performance and driving dynamics over unusual styling, the model now seems more focused on delivering the "Ultimate Driving Machine" mission. Time will tell if it becomes a favorite of BMW fans.

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## THE ESSENTIALS

- **Engine:** 4.4 liter Twin Turbo V-8, DOHC, direct injection, aluminum block and heads, 4 valves per cylinder
- **Horsepower:** 400 hp @ 5,500 - 6,400 rpm
- **Torque:** 450 lb.-ft @ 1,750 - 4,500 rpm
- **Drivetrain:** Longitudinal front mounted V-8 engine, 8-speed automatic or 6-speed manual transmission, rear wheel drive
- **Empty Weight:** 4,376 lbs (8-speed automatic), 4,343 lbs (6-speed manual)
- **Power to Weight:** 10.9 lbs/1 hp
- **Suspension:** Front multi-link, coil springs, anti-sway bar / Rear multi-link, coil springs, anti-sway bar
- **Brakes:** Front 14.7 in. ventilated discs / rear 14.6 in. ventilated discs
- **Wheels/Tires:** 18 x 8 in. aluminum alloy / 245/45 R18 96Y
- **Seating Capacity:** 5 passenger
- **Cargo Volume:** 14 cubic ft
- **Fuel Economy:** TBD
- **Recommended Fuel:** Premium
- **Major Safety Features:** Driver and front passenger airbags, front side airbags, side curtain airbags, 3-point safety belts with driver and front passenger automatic tensioning, driver and front passenger active head restraints, traction control, ABS with electronic brake force distribution, tire pressure monitoring system
- **Base Price:** \$59,700
- **Cost per Horsepower:** \$149

## NOTABLE STANDARD FEATURES

- 400 hp Twin Turbo V-8 engine
- 6-speed manual transmission
- Brake energy regeneration system
- Dakota Leather upholstery
- iDrive system
- BMW Assist safety system - 4 years of automatic collision notification, emergency request, enhanced roadside assistance, door unlock, stolen vehicle recovery, customer relations
- BMW Ultimate Service - 4 years/50,000 miles warranty, 4 years/50,000 miles maintenance, 4 years/unlimited mileage roadside assistance

## MAJOR OPTIONS

- **Sport Package** - 19 in. wheels with performance run-flat tires, sport leather steering wheel, multi-contour seats, increased top speed limiter, Shadowline exterior trim
- **Cold Weather Package**- heated front seats, heated steering wheel, retractable headlight washers, heated rear seats
- **Premium Package 2**- Premium hi-fi system, heated front seats, satellite radio with 1 year subscription, rear view camera, power rear sunshade, manual rear side window shades, iPod and USB adaptor
- **Dynamic Handling Package**- Adaptive Drive and sport package
- **Driver Assistance Package**- lane departure warning, automatic high beams, parking assist, Active Blind Spot Detection
- **Convenience Package**- power tailgate, soft-close automatic doors, Comfort Access keyless entry
- **Active Ventilated Seat Package**- front active, heated and ventilated seats, multi-contour seats
- **8-speed automatic transmission** (with available paddle shifters)
- **Night Vision with Pedestrian Detection**
- **Rear, side and top view cameras**
- **Active cruise control**
- **Integral Active Steering (4 wheel steering)**

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