

BMW M5

KINDER AND GENTLER—
BUT STILL A BEAST

BY *Les Bidrawn*

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM STARTED AS A FAMILY RESTAURANT AND MORPHED INTO A SIZABLE THEME PARK, COMPLETE WITH WILD WEST SHOWS, ROLLER COASTERS AND ASSORTED "SPIN AND HURL" RIDES.

My college girlfriend was the lead operator on an attraction that would send its screaming passengers to 60 mph in 4.5 seconds, terminating with a 90-degree incline that briefly headed skyward until coasting back to the start. Although the entire sequence took 20 seconds, folks would wait half an hour under the hot SoCal sun to become the equivalent of human slingshot ammo.

Fast-forward 20 years and I'm seated in a machine capable of breaching 60 mph in a mere 4.1 seconds. Better yet, I'm doing it in air-conditioned comfort in a ride lasting for hours. Oh, and I can turn too.

Welcome to the new M5, Munich's latest thrill ride.

BMW's M5 has always been the benchmark for midsize sport sedans. Spawned in the hot rod garages of M-Technik, its engineers pulled every ounce of performance from its normally aspirated powerplants. Unlike Audi, BMW believed force-feeding an engine was something of a last resort. BMW didn't need to rely on such blunt little tools for its M line.

Being a tuner-friendly mag and all, we noticed that the majority of tuned BMWs began with an M car, the thought being it was better to start with the best and build from there. Up-rated brakes, tighter suspension, sporty cabins—in essence, the M cars were pre-tuned. Over the last 20 years we've featured more than a few turbocharged and supercharged M cars that developed significantly more power and performance than their factory brethren. Tuners like Dinan, Alpina, Active Autowerke, VF Engineering, G-Power and quite a few others have been force-feeding BMW M cars for decades with proven results.

BMW has decided it's time to use some of the same mojo.

