



Regular tyres help keep the D3's ride nice and supple

## ALPINA D3 BITURBO COUPE 5000-MILE REPORT

**PRICE** £32,950 **PRICE AS TESTED** £34,020 **OPTIONS** Metallic paint £535, Bluetooth phone preparation £535, 19in Dynamic alloys (no cost) **ECONOMY** 43.8mpg **FAULTS** None **EXPENSES** None **WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT** To see if Alpina has made the greatest everyday 3-series **PREVIOUS REPORT** 5.11.08

# Basically brilliant

It might be low on frills, but our D3 is majoring on the thrills

THIS IS AN AGE of complexity. Did you know, for example, that the combined thinking power of all the computer processors produced during the next two years will exceed the total number made up to now? Or that we're living in an era where DNA, the building blocks of life itself, can be manipulated to perform simple calculations?

Our Alpina D3 Biturbo Coupé flies in the face of this trend, not because it shuns automotive complexity – two different-sized turbos that operate sequentially and Efficient Dynamics' stop-start technology see to that – but because it shields the owner from it.

This car has been passed from pillar to post in the office during the past few weeks, allowing everyone an opportunity to sample it over a decent mileage. All have come back raving about (a) how rapid it is, (b) how civilised it is,



Economy started at 43mpg and hasn't moved much since. Motor's a cracker, though

(c) how economical it is and (d) how simple it is.

In this respect, at least, the D3 is living up to its billing as a very different sort of Alpina. The company's desire to build it to a specific price (aimed squarely at BMW's detuned six-cylinder diesel, the 325d) has resulted in possibly its most focused, purest vehicle ever. It's certainly the neatest; the interior is based on the 3-series' SE spec, which means no iDrive, sat-nav or automatic climate control.

What you're left with, then, is a car short on bells and whistles but brimming with basic soundness. The engine is a belter; miles have freed it to the point where it's happy to rev

to (and pull strongly at) 5500rpm. The chassis is a peach, helped by regular tyres instead of run-flats (only increased noise gives away the fact that you're on 19in rims). The steering is beautifully weighted. The cabin is restrained, with only a couple of badges, a numbered plaque and some coloured stitching on the steering wheel to take it beyond regular BMW trim.

The D3 is not flawless; rear head room is cramped for adults, and it refuses to crack 45mpg. But it does 600 miles to a tank, and we've now cruised past the 5000-mile mark with no glitches, no rattles and no problems. No complexity, in fact.

**JOHN MCILROY**



Poor rear head room is a bugbear