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## Test Drive: 2013 BMW X1 xDrive35i

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Review and photos by Steven Bochenek

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2013 BMW X1 xDrive35i. Click image to enlarge

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### Manufacturer's Website

BMW Canada

The first thing you need to know about the BMW X1 xDrive35i is that it's not a hatchback or wagon. It's an SAV, Sports Activity Vehicle in BMW-speak [maybe they're just acknowledging that it is lacking utility—Ed.]. If they're inventing unique titles, maybe they should call it a cross-under. At just 1,545 mm high, it's well shorter than any SUV: the VW Tiguan stretches 136 mm higher, the Acura RDX 133. Even Mini sells a taller product!

However, in the city, where many of us spend most of our time, small is good, provided the space is intelligently allocated.

Which leads to the second thing you need to know: the X1 is a great ride. The X1 provides the burst of a sprinter with the agility of a dancer, a good choice for city life. Moreover, some design and safety features also make it a viable candidate for a specific type of weekend warrior.

In city traffic you need thrust *and* nimbleness to safely seize opportunities. The diminutive X1 xDrive35i hides a Silverback beneath the hood: a 3.0L turbo six-cylinder engine that generates 300 hp and 300 lb-ft of torque. Hence, the thrust. You can switch its six-speed automatic transmission to Sport mode or even manually upshift and downshift. This tester didn't have paddles, and the accelerator was so responsive that I rarely used it (note the hp and torque). It did change the feel of the drive somewhat but the ride was already pleasantly sporty.

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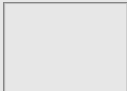



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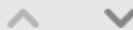
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\$43307.00
-  2012 BMW X1  
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2013 BMW X1 xDrive35i. Click image to enlarge

The point? On the very busy day the X1 was going back, I was able to slip effortlessly across three busy lanes in seconds to access the collectors and avoid a sudden blockade in the 'express' lanes. It saved me at least a half hour that day.

But pick your battles. That engine demands premium gasoline and a heavy foot gets expensive. Its fuel consumption stats list at 11.4 L/100 km in the city, 7.4 on the highway and 9.6 combined. I consistently did better in the city (usually in the low 10s) to my ongoing surprise, but worse on the highway (at times over 9). However I rarely used the Eco Pro mode, a standard feature you'll want to explore on less traffic-intensive days. It finds ways to temper power usage to save energy, the most noticeable being the lack of launch on the accelerator.

Back to the city driving experience. With a turning circle of 11.8 m (my Mini Clubman gets 11) it's nimble enough to U-turn you instantly for a parking spot. This tester contained the M Sport package, a legacy of BMW's racing program that's become a brand unto itself. It costs an additional \$2,900 but features, along with sporty design details, a sport suspension stiffly tuned for superior handling on its 18-inch Malloy wheels. However, this being winter, the tester followed the one-inch rule and rode on 17-inch Dunlop SP Winter Sport tires. Narrower tires perform better on snow. On dry pavement, you couldn't push these Dunlops as much as you would the softer rubber-compound 18s, but on snow, they were like rolling claws.

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By Steven Bochenek

### About StevenBochenek

Despite being a member of the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada and a member of its house band, the Troubadours, Steven is a veteran marketing writer who came to writing about cars almost by, umm, accident.

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