



Smart Roadster

Confessions of a Smart Roadster

Car review | "They don't understand me. I am one of the nicest open top sports cars of the moment and yet no one buys me. I want to entertain people. Just like other Smart cars I want to show how things can be different, how things can be better. Why don't they want me?". Speaking is the Smart Roadster. This sporty Smart is tested for the second time, this time in Brabus outfit. This time around the car will not only be driven, but it will confess about the real life of a Smart Roadster to the Autozine welfare worker.

Editor: Welcome at the Autozine news desk. I've heard you want to tell our audience what makes you such a special car?

Roadster: That's right. I'm being misunderstood and people misjudge me.

Editor: Please start at the beginning, what makes a Smart Roadster so special?

Roadster: I am a small sporty convertible. Although I look different than other convertibles, people mainly judge me on my technical specifications. When you only consider my engine displacement or my performance, you get the wrong impression. If I'd make a test drive, you'd learn that numbers mean very little.

I am not a cute little car, I am a hard core sports car. I have rear wheel drive, a fierce engine a very direct

steering. I do not only offer the freedom and exclusivity of the average convertible. You can compare me to real performance cars from English or Italian makes. My performance may be modest, I guarantee the same driving experience.

Editor: I noticed that during a road test with a basic model. That is why I wanted another Smart Roadster to drive, because such fun in driving is rare. However, don't call yourself a "convertible" all the time, because your rear window does not fold down and at speeds of 60 MPH or more wind and noise quickly ends all comfort.

But indeed, the fun is not only in technical specifications. Sitting low, or rather laying down behind the wheel is also part of the experience. The gear levers behind the steering wheel made me feel like a Formula 1 driver.



Gearbox

Roadster: Oh, that gearbox. That is still my biggest frustration. I have a small engine and an automatic clutch. When people drive me like an ordinary car, I shake, wobble and annoy the driver by the so called slow gear changes. But none of that will happen if you treat me right.

Editor: I mentioned that in my other Smart-tests, the gearbox is fine isn't it?

Roadster: Now don't you brag about your driving, you needed several hundred miles before you got it. At first you had a bumpy ride just like everyone else. You also thought I was slow at shifting gears.

Here's the thing: I have a small engine that needs the turbo to perform. Only when the engine revs, the turbo will give the extra boost and enough power is available. In my case that's even 101 horsepower, because I went to training school at Brabus. If you change gears at the moment the turbo doesn't deliver the extra power, you hit the turbo lag. That doesn't mean I changed gears slowly, it means there's no power in the next gear. It is just a feeling. Some drivers never get it and eventually blame me.

Editor: yet, you don't shift as well yourself. You offer a choice between manual sequential and a full auto gearbox. In case of the latter you don't seem to notice a cold engine and again you deliver a bumpy ride. When seeking maximum performance, you simply wait for the rev limiter to kick in and select the next gear. Didn't Brabus improve your automatic gearbox while tuning you?

Roadster: I admit, the automatic gearbox isn't my strong point. But I do want to point out that the frequently had me shifting in traffic jams and city traffic. Apparently I am not that bad after all ...



Handling

Editor: You mentioned tuning by Brabus. I have to say that you perform very well now. You're not just fierce like other Roadsters, but you now deliver with ease and perform even better at the extremes. The sound of the turbo charger and the dancing needle of the turbo gauge on the dash make it even more exiting.

Roadster: Thanks, but speeding in a straight line is easy. Thanks to my rear wheel drive and fine suspension I can also deliver tons of fun in corners. Especially the people who think I am a cute little car forget that. Thanks to the ESP I can go completely crazy without really losing control. If you make a mistake, I can save you from almost any situation.

Editor: Sorry, I forgot to mention that. Perhaps the Brabus treatment still didn't make you a performance car, the enjoyment in fast corners is amazing. I trusted you more than most other cars. Therefore I stretched my limits and pulled some tricks I never dared with other cars. It is just that the previous Roadster I drove had no power steering, which made it even better.

Looks

Roadster: Well, Brabus means all options, including power steering. Don't forget that Brabus gave me more than just enhanced performance. I now offer leather upholstery, heated seats, a light sensor, a rain sensor, a computer and air conditioning. My looks have been improved as well. If I remember correctly you were pretty impressed when we first met.

Editor: That's right! I really admired your new look and walked around you one more time before getting in. And because you're still a small car, you're still modest. Therefore I feel more comfortable with you than with most exotic sports cars.

But about the interior: I don't really like the looks of the leather and the passenger's seat is still not adjustable. I prefer the colourful upholstery of the cheaper versions.

Roadster: Whatever you like. And as to the interior I want to get something off my sleeve. Again and again people say I have insufficient storage capacity. But they forget I have two luggage compartments. The one in the back is indeed very small. But people always seem to forget there's a lot of room under the bonnet!



Conclusion

Editor: You've made your point. Yet one thing remains. Your cheapest family member costs 11.995 pounds. That's fair. But for you with all your Brabus-logos I have to pay 16.995 pounds. That is a whole lot of money! As far as I know therefore only five Roadster Brabus cars were sold last year!

Roadster: In that case let me summarize once more. I am not just a convertible, I can compete with hard core sports cars. Although I do not offer the same performance, I do offer the same experience. Besides that I am very safe, somewhat practical and drivable all year long. My appearance does draw a lot of attention, but because I am small that's always positive attention. Every Smart Roadster offers these unique selling points. Being a Roadster Brabus I offer improved performance and all available options.

You must not judge me by the pound or the inches of car per pound. You should consider the fun. Drive me and you know me and my fellow Roadsters can conquer the world. Compared to full blown sports cars I am not only a bargain, I'm even more special.

Editor: If you look at it like that, sales will soon increase. And you'll be less special.

Roadster: Thanks.

Editor: You're welcome. ■

Specifications

Smart Roadster BRABUS 74 kW

Size and weight

Length x width x height	343 x 162 x 119 cm
Wheelbase	236 cm
Kerb weight	832 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	35 l
Luggage space	59/86 l
Tyre size	

Engine and performance



Capacity	698 cc
Cylinders / valves	3/
Max power	101 PS @ 5250 rpm
Max torque	130 Nm @ 2500 rpm
Drive	rear wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	9.8 secs
Top speed	190 km/h
Average mileage	6.6 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	5.3 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.6 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	126 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 16,990
Price base model	Â£ 11,995