

BMW 135i!

THERE'S something about turn 4, the slowest turn on Oran Park's North Circuit, which you enter off the main straight. Vehicle performances there are absolutely counter-intuitive. The mighty GT2 Renaultsport Clio, meanwhile, came first, and the 135i (the tiny Beemer that could) finished second. The F6, STI, SLK and the Lotus all hated turn 4, too. Cars that Ed says feel a bit soft for serious track work all seem to blitz turn 4, the 135i penultimate therapeutic to carve up a field of GT2s on the inside of turn 4, over, and over, and over... Fast-forward to turn 1, the fastest turn on the track. The tables are turned, and the 135i wooden spoons that test. All the expected exotica (and the Clio) is back up the pointy end. At least that's in

line with the 135i's circle-based absolute grip test, in which it also came dead last, snatching defeat narrowly from the XR6T. In turns 2 and 3, which are essentially joined at the hip, the tables turn again. It's the fourth-fastest M3 and Type R beat it, and then the second-slowest through turn 3, onto the main straight (it beats only the XR6 and F6). The 135i's tables are spinning so fast my head's starting to hurt. Lane-change time, and Dr Jekyll replaces Mr Hyde, again. The 135i nails it, and only three exotics can beat its pace. The 135i pulls almost 130km/h through a test designed for a maximum of 110, with just the Elise, the M3 and the GT2 in front of it. It's exceedingly average, brilliantly capable and utterly disappointing – all within the space of a single lap.

Rubber range

Standard-equipment tyres varied widely across the field. Most mundane were the Elise's fronts, which were 175/55s. Most were 40 diameter wheels (16 and 17 front and rear, respectively). Second most insane were eclipsed only by the GT2's the GT2's rear: 275/30R20, SLK, M3, GT2 and Elise – ran different tyres front and rear, though only the Elise combined that with different front and rear, respectively).



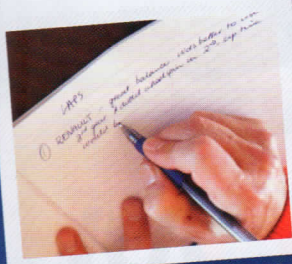
BMW 135i Sport Coupe

\$72,230
Drive/steer 3.0-litre in-line six-cylinder, twin-turbo, 225kW, 400Nm, 6sp man, rear drive Chassis 1485kg, Bridgestone Potenza RE050A 215/40R18 85V (F), 245/35R18 88V (R)



“Great engine; runs hard. Extremely linear power delivery, and good, meaty steering feel.”
“Soft on the track. A little too benign to drive. And it wallows a bit too much over irregularities.”

ED says



Test	Result	Rank	Score
Best theoretical lap time (sec)	36.94	8	9.34
Best actual lap time (sec)	37.42		
Vmax, main straight (km/h)	135.1	9	4.44
Vmax, short straight (km/h)	112.8	9	4.29
Vmax, flyover (km/h)	123.0	10	4.75
Turn 1 speed (km/h)	70.5	13	4.57
Turn 2 speed (km/h)	65.3	4	4.66
Turn 3 speed (km/h)	62.2	11	4.65
Turn 4 speed (km/h)	62.5	2	4.83
Maximum cornering force (G)	0.848	13	7.74
Slalom (sec)	8.34	9	9.29
Lane change (km/h)	129.5	4	9.22
Acceleration, 0-100km/h (sec)	5.52	7	7.45
Braking, 100km/h-0 (metres)	38.27	9	8.58
Driver ranking	4		87.81
TOTAL SCORE			