



BMW X5



Range Rover Sport

Opulent opponents

BMW X5 outpaces the Range Rover Sport to top the luxury class

BMW'S X5 and Land Rover's Range Rover Sport share a lot of appealing characteristics, as they should while carrying \$70,000 sticker prices. Both combine the hushed, well-appointed interior of a high-end sedan with the roominess, versatility, and all-wheel-drive practicality of an SUV. They have many of the latest comfort, convenience, and safety features. And both can carry up to seven people, although the optional third-row seat in each is very snug and best suited for kids.

It's what you feel from behind the steering wheel, however, that really defines their distinct personalities.

The current X5 has evolved into a luxurious vehicle that's more refined and easier to live with. It has a more comfortable ride and a super-quiet cabin. And it provides impressive fuel economy of 21 mpg overall, which makes it among the most efficient vehicles in its class. All of those qualities helped it earn a road-test score of 84, which places it securely at the top of its well-to-do peers.

The Range Rover Sport is a smaller, more spirited, and less expensive vehicle than the familiar Range Rover (see page 55). And it has a sportier demeanor than the X5, with faster responses, quicker acceleration, and surprisingly agile cornering. Yes, that may seem counterintuitive to those familiar with these brands. But the flip side to this sporty attitude is a stiff ride and a loud exhaust bark that can seem a bit over the top. In addition, the electronic controls are fussy and complicated, and the gas mileage of 18 mpg

overall is nothing special for this class.

Another trade-off: The standard summer high-performance tires help the Sport's handling on pavement, but as we found during the many storms last winter, they're all but useless in snowy conditions. Swapping tires for the winter will be mandatory in snow

country, which just isn't right for an all-wheel-drive SUV.

Both of these redesigned models are too new for us to have reliability data. The reliability of the previous X5 has been average; we don't have sufficient data on the previous Range Rover Sport.

Ratings Luxury midsize/large SUVs

In performance order.

☒ Recommended

● Excellent
○ Very good
○ Good
○ Fair
● Poor

Rec.	Rank	Make & model	Price as tested	In this issue	Overall road-test score	Predicted reliability	Overall mpg
					0 100 P F G V E		
	1	BMW X5 xDrive35i	\$70,050	●	84	new	21
	2	Mercedes-Benz GL350 BlueTec	73,020		82	○	20
✓	3	Acura MDX Tech	49,460		81	●	20
✓	4	Lexus RX 350	47,381		80	●	21
	5	Land Rover Range Rover HSE (V6)	88,545	●	80	NA	17
✓	6	Infiniti QX60 (JX)	51,920		79	○	19
✓	7	Porsche Cayenne (base, V6)	63,805		78	○	19
✓	8	Buick Enclave CXL	43,260		77	○	15
✓	9	Mercedes-Benz ML350	56,960		75	○	18
	10	Land Rover Range Rover Sport HSE (V6)	74,040	●	74	new	18
✓	11	Infiniti QX70 V6 (FX)*	51,635		72	○	18
✓	12	Lexus GX 460	58,428		70	●	17
	13	Toyota Land Cruiser	67,707		68	NA	14
	14	Volvo XC90 3.2	49,850		60	NA	17

*Powertrain has changed since last test.

Why some models are not recommended. The BMW X5 and Land Rover Range Rover Sport are too new for us to have reliability data. The Mercedes-Benz GL350 rated poor in emergency handling. We have insufficient reliability data for the Land Rover Range Rover and the Toyota Land Cruiser. The Volvo XC90 scored too low in our tests.