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Cover: Tom Kapikian's 1988 535is at the 2015 Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show. An article on the event appears on page 13. Photo: Raine Mantysalo

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derBayerische



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**BMW Car Club
of America**
National Capital Chapter



President's Message

Welcome to 2016! I can't believe how fast time flies. 2015 came and went in a flash. We had another great year of events and this year will be even better! Hopefully you've signed up for our Annual Meeting at the end of January. We have great speakers lined up and some prizes you'll definitely want a chance to win.

Plus, it's our yearly event where we recognize the volunteers that help run this chapter. Without them, we cease to exist. They dedicate their time in planning and running events because they love being amongst fellow BMW enthusiasts; they truly enjoy seeing others having a good time. These are special people, I'm very proud to work alongside them, and a huge thanks to them for making our chapter the best in the world.

Finally, this year also marks a huge milestone as it's the 100th anniversary of BMW. This once-in-a-lifetime celebration will span two weeks in August at various events, including BMW CCA's Oktoberfest, in beautiful Monterey, CA. While you may not be able to do it all, this qualifies as a bucket list item. Many chapter members have already started planning their vacations to participate, and I hope you can share in this remarkable experience. More information will be coming soon, so stay tuned.





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FromThe Editors

This is my favorite time of the year. Family and friends, and cooking and eating. What a combination. Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Great. The goal has to be not to gain too much weight so those natty clothes fit at the holiday party. Which this year will be the end of January.

Also, this is perfect driving weather. Warm enough to open the windows wide and let the wind blow through the hair. But cool enough that the air conditioner is not needed. Perfect weather for a pie run or two.

A caveat on spirited driving though. In the fall, we have leaves from trees. That is one of the main sources of injuries from falls to humans. The same situation exists for our cars. During the spring and summer, our tires do well with clinging to the road surface. But in the fall, during the raining season, wet leaves are another story. So some care is advisable when leaves are strewn about.

One final comment: James Chew pointed out (see X5d article) that if one has a hankering for a diesel, this might be a good time to buy one.

The fallout from the VW scandal is that diesel drivetrains are down. Perhaps not so much with BMW since they were not caught up in the shenanigans, but it doesn't hurt to ask. It may be a brief window of opportunity if VW and Audi get things fixed and under control.

2016 Capital Chapter Annual Meeting and Holiday Party

We are pleased to announce that our 2016 NCC Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2016, at the Embassy Suite by Hilton Springfield.

8100 Loisdale Rd.
Springfield, VA 22150
571-339-2000

Cocktail hour will commence at 6:30 p.m., Dinner to follow at 7:30 p.m., the annual meeting will commence at 8:30 p.m.

This is the meeting at which the chapter Board members for the 2016 term will be announced.

We have also secured a block of rooms specifically for CCA members. Discounted prices for rooms are: Studio King: \$119/night, King Suite: \$129/night, Double Suite: \$149/night

Please make sure we have your correct email address. It can be checked and updated at the www.bmwcca.org website.

If you would like your 20-year-old or older car featured in *der Bayerische* under the Traditions column, contact our production manager at db-production@nccbmwcca.org.

Attention! Attention! Attention!

To Members of the National Capital Chapter

It takes a great deal of planning and coordination to execute the many club related activities that are put on for the benefit of the membership. It also takes a lot of equipment; the chapter has tents, tables, chairs, banners, and more. Storing and moving these items has become more complex and time consuming as the amount of equipment grows with the increasing number of events.

To address this situation, the chapter is looking to secure a "Chapter Utility Vehicle" to store and move our equipment and supplies. Since we are a BMW club we prefer a BMW Touring model to support our needs. Specifically we are seeking an E39 (1995 to 2003) chassis vehicle. An E34 chassis (1988 to 1995) is also acceptable. Obviously we would like the vehicle to be in the best possible condition, but the need for some degree of minor mechanical repair is acceptable.

If any chapter member owns such a vehicle and is interested in donating it to the chapter we would be interested in hearing from you. Also, if you know of a vehicle meeting our needs that is available outside of the chapter, we would be interested in hearing about it as well.

Please contact one of the following members with any referrals or information:

James Laws, euro6er@gmail.com, 301-717-5950
Marlon Spencer, renntaxi@verizon.net, 240-605-6182

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2015

- 5 NoVa Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse
- 7 Cheesesteak Run IV & Eastern State Penitentiary Terror Behind the Walls
- 7 Street Survival (Columbia MD)
- 8 Street Survival (Columbia MD)
- 11 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 12 Columbia Social @ Bertucci's Columbia, MD
- 14 DIY @ AKTIV Automotive
- 19 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 21 Great Pie Run XVII - Enduro Run Meat & Pie

December

- 3 NoVa Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse
- 9 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 9 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill, Ellicott City, MD (new)
- 12 DIY @ At Speed Motorsports
- 17 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

January 2016

- 7 NoVa Social - TBD
- 13 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 14 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill, Ellicott City, MD
- 21 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 30 2016 NCC Annual Meeting, Embassy Suites Springfield, VA

February

- 4 NoVa Social - TBD
- 10 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 11 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill, Ellicott City, MD
- 18 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

March

- 3 NoVa Social - TBD
- 9 Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille, Rockville, MD
- 10 Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill, Ellicott City, MD
- 17 MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD



COMING EVENTS

NoVa Social – TBD

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD

Thursday, January 14, 2016

MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

Thursday, January 21, 2016

NCC Annual Meeting and Holiday Party

Saturday, January 30, 2016

The format will be similar to prior years, with dinner, drinks and raffles. Embassy Suites Springfield, 8100 Loisdale Road, Springfield VA 22150

NoVa Social – TBD

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD

Thursday, February 11, 2016

MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD

Thursday, February 18, 2016

NoVa Social – TBD

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Board Meeting/Social @ Brio Tuscan Grille in Rockville, MD

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Columbia Social @ Glory Days Grill in Ellicott City, MD

Thursday, March 10, 2016

MoCo Social @ Pizza CS in Rockville, MD

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion

Saturday, August 20, 2016 - Sunday, August 21, 2016

Celebrating 100 years of BMW at Mazda Raceway, Laguna Seca.

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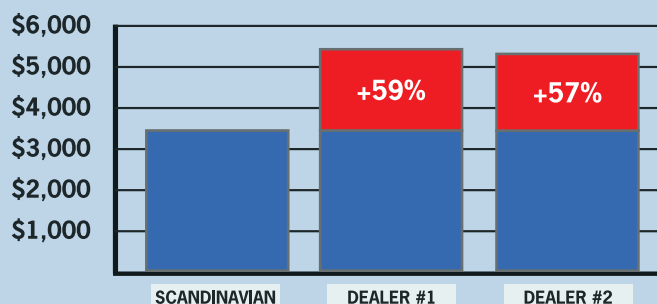


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BMW AT THE 2016 LOS ANGELES AUTO SHOW

Quiet Confidence

By James Chew

I checked the list once. I checked it twice. If what I saw was a prank, it was naughty, not nice.

There was not a scheduled BMW press event at the 2016 Los Angeles Auto Show.

I called our friends at BMW North America, who confirmed that there was no scheduled press event. When we were at the show, we asked our friend Dr. Ludwig Willisch, why BMW had no scheduled press event. Ironically, we caught up with him between media interviews. He said that they felt that they had nothing significant to present.

I beg to differ.

During the past few months, BMW conducted press events to launch a freshened 3 Series (to include the new 340i and a 3 Series eDrive), the new 7 Series, the M235, the new X1, the X5 eDrive, a very attractive black color for the i3 and the i8, and the M4 GTS. And BMW is celebrating their 40th year of being the "Ultimate Driving Machine" as well as 100 years of being in business.

And it appears that it will again win the North American luxury sales crown, beating a resurgent Mercedes and a desperate Lexus.

So it appears that rather than using the 2016 L.A. Auto Show to beat their chest, BMW instead decided to display a quiet confidence. And it was quite a contrast to the "Look At Me" events from Mercedes, Audi, Lexus, Cadillac, Infiniti (they're still in business?), Acura (them too?), Maserati, and Alfa Romeo.

Here's a quick rundown of the products shown at the BMW booth. I leave it up to the reader to determine their significance:

eDrive: The X5 xDrive 40e is now available. This all-new plug-in hybrid SAV features a 241 horsepower 2.0 liter TwinPower Turbo four-cylinder engine and a 111 horsepower electric motor. Combined delivered horsepower is 309. Because of the li-ion battery pack, there is now a third-row seat

option and there is a bit less cargo space. But, with full-time all-wheel drive and having a 19-mile "all-electric" range, this all-weather SAV

vehicle has a combined horsepower of 245. And if it weren't for the eDrive badging and the charging plug in the driver's side front fender, you would



(Opposite page) A tasteful, eye-catching 2-story M display is one of the cornerstones of the BMW LA Show Exhibit. (Top and above) The mid cycle enhancement 340i - the sports sedan that makes the competition green with envy.

may be an ideal "green" vehicle for most suburban households. A 3 Series eDrive prototype was also on display. Powered by a 180 horsepower TwinPower Turbo 4 and a 95 horsepower electric motor, this

never know that this 3 Series is a plug-in hybrid.

i-Series: We've all seen the greatly reduced lease rates on the i3, with all of the deals offering a free charging

station. That's all you need to know about the current state of i3 sales. As we reported, the i3 is a GREAT car and is indeed the "BMW" of Electric Vehicles. But having had both the i3 and the Kia Soul EV for typical Washington, D.C. metro area commuting duty, range anxiety, the lack of charging stations (even in Washington, D.C./Northern Virginia), cheap gas, and questionable bad weather driving performance limits the appeal of EVs to all but the sunbelt states. That being said, the new "Fluid Black" color of the i3 shows that BMW is doubling down on the support for the i3. It would be interesting to see how many i3s are now being purchased with the range extender option. The i8, however, shows how that BMWs knows how to make an EV very appealing. The long buyer waiting lists as well as the dealer mark-ups prove the popularity of this vehicle. And when Tesla finally folds, one wonders if BMW would offer an eDrive version of the 6 Gran Coupe to compliment the i8.

X1: As with the X3, the first generation seemed to be a "ranging shot" into the SUV market. While a very nice vehicle, the X1 seemed to be more of a tall 3 Series station wagon than an X vehicle. The second generation X1 is pure BMW X Series. It looks, feels, and drives like a smaller X3, which looks, feels and drives like a smaller X5. And with the impressive margins from the X Series sales, the upcoming X7 should be a very interesting vehicle, indeed.

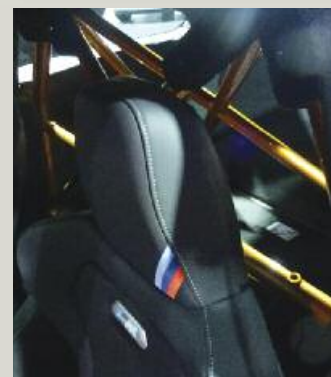
7 Series: My first BMW was a 1990 750iL. The flagship vehicle showed the auto world that BMW's "Ultimate Driving Machine" spirit could produce an ultimate driving performance luxury sedan. This performance luxury sedan was used for livery service, but passengers who were "car guys" wanted to drive it. Lost in 2000, BMW seems to have re-kindled that Ultimate Driving Machine spirit in the all-new 2016



7 Series. Using carbon fiber (that's produced at BMW's Moses Lake facility in Washington to reduce weight (the all new 7 Series weighs less than its predecessor) and increase chassis stiffness. In terms of luxury features, BMW seems to have combined some of the gadgets featured in the BMW "Mission Impossible" movie vehicles (e.g. the hand gestures) and the rear seat

design from the Maybachs. It seems as if the 7 Series interior was designed for the young Silicon Valley millionaires, though the people who are most likely to purchase one (e.g., my age group) will take full advantage of the "BMW Genius" to learn all of the features. And to think that I finally got used to my iDrive.

M4 GTS: In 1996, I attended a North



(Above) The M4 GTS's 496 horsepower water-injected turbo inline six, liberal use of carbon fiber, aggressive front splitter, carbon fiber rear wing, sport seats, 200 mile per hour speedometer and built-in roll cage will make this street legal race car a pleasant daily driver and weekend racer.



American Touring Car Championship race in Belle Isle, Michigan. For some reason, the BMW team M3 racecar didn't make the trip. So the team PURCHASED an M3 from a local area BMW dealer, installed a roll cage, and was leading the race by quite a few car lengths when a couple of competitive drivers caused a wreck, resulting in the M3 being damaged beyond repair. That event proved to me that the M3 really was a street-legal racecar. The 2016 M4 GTS raises the bar on street legal racecars. In a menacing "frosted" grey color with orange highlights, 19-inch wheel in the front and 20-inch wheels in the rear (featuring matching orange color highlights), and carbon-fiber rear wing, the M4 GTS looks road racing ready.

To enhance its racing creds, the M4 GTS has a gold colored roll cage, fire extinguisher, no rear seats, a carbon-fiber hood, 3-way manually adjustable coil over suspension, upgraded ceramic brakes, dual sport seats, and a speedometer that goes to 200 miles per hour. Carbon fiber and aluminum are used thorough the body and the chassis. The famous twin-turbo (don't shoot me folks — that's how BMW refers to it) inline six-cylinder engine features water-injection to produce 493 horsepower and 443 foot pounds of torque is coupled with the proven 7-speed M DCT. To make it street friendly, the M4 GTS features OLED taillights, a navigation system, air conditioning, a leather and Alcantara interior, and parking assist. And its rated fuel



sell them, or notice a number of M1s for sales as those owners are forced to sell those vehicles in order to afford a new M4 GTS. And look for the Lexus F-series copy.

340i: This is the type of BMW that drives the competition crazy. When other manufacturers introduce a product mid-cycle enhancement, it's generally an exterior design "freshening" with some new exterior colors. They then invite the media to

economy is the same as the M4. With only 300 available for sale in the U.S., look for these vehicles on the road in the Sun Belt and the Silicon Valley. The wise BMW enthusiast will either wait for the first wave of buyers to tire of the "rough ride" and

(Top) The X5 4.0e has the utility of an "X", the performance luxury driving quality of a BMW, and an average fuel economy of a compact sport utility vehicle. With the new Fluid Black color, the i3 now looks as menacing as the i8.



an overblown event to convince the assembled masses that it's "new." When BMW does a mid-cycle enhancement, it includes a new engine. And the media beg to be included in that launch event. The 340i uses the all-new turbocharged inline six that's part of BMW's new "modular" engine architecture. Producing 320 horsepower and 330 foot pounds of torque (the 335i engine produced 300 horsepower and 300 foot pounds of torque) the 340i can be equipped with x-drive AND a six-speed manual shifter. Based on an all-too-short drive, I suspect the 340i will quickly become the preferred daily driver for the CCA members. And by the time Mercedes, Audi, and Lexus launch their competitive products, BMW will be launching an all-new 3 Series.

Rounding out the BMW exhibit were the M Series vehicles, including the M4 convertible, M6 convertible, X6M, and the M6 Gran Coupe (my favorite), were on display, as was the new X3. And to further distinguish them from the competition, a product from BMW Motorrad was also featured.

There were some other vehicles of interest at the L.A. Auto Show. These vehicles were:

Honda Civic/Acura ILX: These two vehicles show that the once mighty Honda is having difficulty



facing the challenges of providing distinctive products for two brands. They are basically the same vehicle that stretch the design limits to make them look different. Honda may have to resort to Toyota's approach



(From top left clockwise) Race car driver in front, Grey Poupon user in the back – that's the all-new 7 Series interior. (Middle left and above) The X6M, M235, and (left) Z4 race car show that BMW performance comes in all shapes and sizes.

toward product design. As an example, the Lexus NX 300 is just a Toyota Rav-4 that has undergone plastic surgery (which went massively wrong) and has a leather interior. However, Lexus makes full use of short-term, low-mileage leases to create product turnover, ensuring that the Lexus faithful are always driving a new Lexus. If you haven't noticed, a three-year-old Lexus drives like a Toyota, while a 20-year-old BMW (and there are plenty of them still on the road) still drives like an Ultimate Driving Machine.

Acura NSX: Well, it's here. And while Acura was teasing us with prototypes, BMW launched the i8 and Chevrolet the Corvette Stingray and Z06. After the Acura NSX faithful scoop up the first year's production, look for massive discounts in the following years.

Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio: Alfa's answer to the BMW M3. Why they would display a product that won't be in the U.S. for at least a year was beyond me. But the media was not flocking toward the Alfa display for the products.

Cadillac CT6 and XT5: Consistently trying to provide the American interpretation of performance luxury, Cadillac launched two new products that are aimed at Mercedes for image and Lexus for sales. While the XT5 will build on the popularity of the SRX, which it is replacing, the CT6 will be a puzzling product. The ATS, CTS, and XTS have been selling poorly and the CT6 looks way too much like an ATS and CTS. Cadillac may find that they have to offer lease incentives to launch the CT6, which may spell doom for the CTS or the XTS.

Leaving the 2016 BMW L.A. Auto Show display and walking into the media circus that characterized the other brand exhibits, the rationale behind Dr. Willisch's statement for why there was no BMW media event made sense. For 40 years, BMW has



been making the Ultimate Driving Machine. So while all the displayed BMWs are significant to the market, for BMW, it's what they do every day.

And for the BMW enthusiast, that's a good thing.

(Top right) The Motorrad display distinguishes the BMW exhibit from the competition. (Top center) Cadillac shows its latest attempt at defining America's performance luxury with the XT5 (SRX replacement) and CT6. (Middle) Much to the relief of the Acura faithful, the all new NSX is finally here. (Left and above) The Alfa Romeo Giulia – made to make you forget the BMW 3 Series. The Alfa Romeo girls – there to make you forget that the Giulia won't be available for at least another year.



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Vintage BMWs Rock at the **Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show**

By Marc Caden | Photos by Marc Caden and Raine Mantysalo



(Inset) NCC Chapter President Paul Seto snaps a picture of an adorable little Isetta 250 cabriolet. (Above) Lothar Schuettler's Z1 was the only car on the field that could drop its doors on command.

ROCKVILLE ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC CAR SHOW



The Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show is an annual event that occurs in October each year and attracts over four hundred classic cars on the grounds of the Glenview Mansion. In past years, however, the number of BMWs could usually be counted on just one hand. The event is supported by over thirty local car clubs, but until this year we haven't been one of them.

Determined to make a better showing, our chapter's Membership Chair, James Laws, joined the Rockville show's planning committee and got our chapter recognized as one of the event's official car clubs. This paid immediate dividends in the form of a reserved parking area for classic BMWs adjacent to a large banner displaying our chapter's name.

James also encouraged our members to make a good showing this year, and he was not disappointed



(Top) Thanks to the efforts of James Laws there was a generous BMW parking area on the lawn and a banner designating our chapter. (Middle) Parking next to an Isetta can make even the smallest cars look quite large. (Below) The suicide doors on Lothar Schuettler's 1958 502 provided an interesting contrast to the drop down doors in his Z1.





as a record number of BMW owners registered! Lothar Schuettler brought his freshly restored 1958 502 and his 1990 Z1. It was really fun to see two BMWs with such contrasting door operations – the suicide doors on the 502 next to the drop down, disappearing doors on the Z1.

I parked my 1973 2002 next to a 1957 Isetta 250 cabriolet owned by Phillip Ulzheimer. Normally, I consider the 2002 to be a pint sized car, but parking it next to an Isetta made the 2002 look like a Lincoln Town Car. As you can imagine, the Isetta drew a lot of fanfare from the crowd, especially the kids for whom it seemed just the right size.

Wayne Watkins brought his rare Euro model 1975 3.0 CSI. John McWilliams and Raine Mantysalo each brought their concours winning 2002s. There was also a row of four E30 M3s parked next to each other and a 1964 1800ti shown on behalf of Dr. Ronald Costell.

The special display area for this year's event was reserved for Woodies and there was a lovely sampling of these handcrafted, wood-sided vehicles. Amanda Knox does an amazing job coordinating this event for the City of Rockville, and she said there was a record 582 cars in attendance. She also noted

that (at 54 years and ongoing) the Rockville Show is the longest running non-judged show in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Our club was tasked with the responsibility of tallying the votes for the People's Choice Award. Never one to shy away from math, James Laws took great care in

(Above left) A full-day event is guaranteed to make you hungry. Gretchen Carroll always seems to have the solution. (Above right) The Rockville Swing Band played lively oldies all day long. (Right) The sublime engine bay of Dr. Ron Costell's 1800ti (Below) with its dual sidedraft carburetors

and higher compression pistons good for about 110 horsepower.



ROCKVILLE ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC CAR SHOW



counting the ballots. This year the People's Choice winner went to a very original 1967 Ford Mustang brought by Alexander Horbiz.

While the sheer number of impressive vehicles in attendance was overwhelming, there was general consensus among the club that the most noteworthy non-BMW in the show was a recently restored 1934 Pierce Arrow 840A Convertible Sedan owned by Charles Gillet. At the end of the show, this car won a special award given each year on behalf of the Rockville Mayor and City Council. Mr. Gillet's car is having a very good year – in addition to capturing top honors at the Radnor Hunt Concours d'Elegance in Pennsylvania, his Pierce-Arrow was the recipient of the 2015 Bernard J. Weis Trophy for the most authentically restored example at this year's Pierce-Arrow Society meeting in Buffalo, New York.

There are some very unusual cars at this show that you really must see. For example, there is an



(Top) Wayne Watkins brought his Euro model 1975 3.0 CSI. (Bottom left) Note that this Amphicar is registered in Maryland as both a car and a boat - its boat registration numbers appear on the driver's side fender. (Bottom right) The "double bubble" roof on the 1959 Abarth Zagato 750GT allowed more helmet room for its occupants.



ROCKVILLE ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC CAR SHOW



Charles Gillet brought several cars from his collection to this year's show. His 1934 Pierce Arrow 840A Convertible Sedan (Top) received a special award and his 1931 Cadillac 452A Phaeton with a V16 engine was a previous award winner.

ROCKVILLE ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Amphicar (e.g., amphibious car) that comes every year that my son once passed in the middle of the Potomac River while on a camp canoe trip. There is also a 1931 Cadillac 452A Phaeton with a 16 cylinder engine. I once watched a serious car collector tender an impromptu offer to the owner for the V16 Cadillac for several hundred thousand dollars, only to be summarily rejected (note, its owner is Charles Gillet, see Pierce Arrow above). Another one of my personal favorites is a little 1959 "Double Bubble" Abarth Zagato 750GT that races every year at the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix in July.

Many thanks go out to Mr. Laws for getting our chapter recognized as an official sponsor. This is an unjudged show that offers a little something for everyone. There are many vendors, good food, and the Rockville Swing Band plays lively, period music. It is the kind of show that you can bring your spouse, child, parent, grandchild, or even dog to and they will thank you.



(From the top) Spectators had a rare opportunity to see beautiful European exotics, typical American classics and a good selection of featured woodies all in one place. There were several woody sedans, coupes and wagons from different decades. Among the variety of cars were a Ferrari Testarossa (top left), a 1927 Dodge Cantrell (top right) and a 1947 Nash Ambassador (middle right).





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Traditions

BY John Steers

PHOTOS Raine Mantysalo

The E28 M5: the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing





The E28 M5 came into my ownership almost by chance. I had been a BMW enthusiast since I bought a gently used E36 M3 in 1998. That car was my daily driver for over a decade until my need for a snow vehicle pushed the M3 to reserve status years later. The need to haul items and provide for three kids' college educations had relegated me to a reliable but pedestrian Toyota pickup truck, and my need for driving satisfaction had been pushed to the back burner. After the last college graduation in 2011, my wife said to me one day: "You're 50 years old and you make a good living.....how long are you going to drive that crappy truck?"

I realized she was right. Life was too short. I had brushed off the

inner desire that the M3 had ignited in me years ago for too long. I went out and bought a very nice 2008 550i MSport at auction as my new daily driver. But during my extensive search a funny thing happened. Looking far and wide for my 5 Series, Google had led me to the long lineage of BMW's 5 Series vehicles, and the E28 M5 seemed to always wind up on my computer screen. What a cool car! Its elegance was in its simplicity: a fast, if boxy, business saloon in

(Above and right) The natur leather interior appears as on the day of delivery. Front seats have been reconditioned. The radio has been updated and the prior owner added a very basic cupholder.





(Above) Although the odometer shows over 140 thousand miles, the condition of the car inside and out is a testimony to a lineage of enthusiast owners.

which the original M1 engine had been dropped under the hood. I was intrigued by the heritage and the seeming austerity of a car that in retrospect was now seen as the forefather of everything that is the evolution of the BMW Motorsport brand. The more I researched the more I was hooked.

Most BMW fans have heard

the E28 M5 story before. The cars were hand built in the Garching BMW Motorsport plant sixty miles east of Munich. Only 1239 cars were built for the U.S. market. The only color available was Schwarz (black.) All but thirty had Natur tan interiors, (giving the remaining thirty cars with black interiors certified cult status.) To my surprise

many examples of this unique and rare car were available at (then) relatively modest prices.

My wife's words would come back to haunt her. I spent months combing the forums, Craigslist, Autotrader.com, and every other source I could think of. Life WAS too short. I was going to find this car come hell or high water.



I researched multiple cars on the East Coast. I paid for several inspections in Philadelphia, Ohio, D.C., and Tampa, only to find that cars that looked beautiful on the internet had hidden rust, lousy leak-down tests, or were painted some almost-BMW color that just wouldn't do. Finally, I found the car I was looking for in Charlotte, North Carolina.

At first my wife's response to my aspirations was one of indifference. Why this car? It doesn't have the outward lines of a Porsche or the head-turning looks of a Ferrari. "It's the wolf in sheep's clothing,

dear. This M5 defines BMW Motorsport in the same way as the E30 M3." (Yawn.)

One Thanksgiving Friday we bought a one way ticket to fly to Charlotte. The car was owned by a true enthusiast, and when he opened his garage door my mouth hit the floor. This was THE car. It could have been in the showroom. Originally delivered in Phoenix, Arizona, the car had been in California, Ohio, and Georgia before coming to its current owner. It looked like it had never been outside. The prior owners had driven the car well, but had

addressed all known issues: the front seats had been professionally reconditioned, and Dinan springs, a Frank Fahey crank hub, and stainless steel brake lines had been installed with deletion of the quirky self-leveling suspension. UUC shifter and exhaust, recent timing chain and valve issues had been addressed. It had a detailed service history bigger than a Bible and a

(Left and below) In contrast to today's models, the E28 M5 was distinguished by little more than a front and rear M5 badge, and shadowline trim.





clean Carfax report. A quick test drive removed all doubt about how we were going home. The drive north was the best seven-hour drive I've ever taken.

The E28 M5 is like Clark Kent. Those who don't know what the car is kind of smile and nod. My kids joke that the car is as aerodynamic as a toaster. They refer to it as "the Clunker." Millennials in Subaru and ricer Accords test it on the expressway, only to be left in a cloud of UUC cat-delete fumes. The car is 1980's average off the line, but aggressively pulls as the engine is pushed into its higher RPM power range. It is every bit an M car.

Take the car to a local Cars and Coffee and suddenly the S is visible on the car's chest. Everyone who knows cars well is aware of the significance of the E28 M5. In 1988 this was the fastest (and most expensive) production car in the U.S. The original limited edition production of 500 cars sold out so quickly that BMW NA pushed the number to 1,235, prompting a class action lawsuit from those who had invested in the lower number.

Most owners of the E28 M5 consider themselves to be curators. With only 394 on the M Registry, the actual number of those in decent condition is probably south of 500. Although the value of these



cars is finally starting to climb (see EAG,) the monetary value doesn't compare to the feeling of being in the M5 club at The Vintage, or the Pittsburgh Grand Prix, or the Deutsche Marque Concours.

In the summer of 2014, we drove the car to the Pittsburgh Grand Prix. There was a spectacular event at the Sewickly BMW dealership. The new cars had all been moved off of the lot, and all of

the BMW CCA members drove their cars onto the front lot to be displayed in groups, as if we had stepped back in time to a 1970's-1980's dealer lot. As we drove onto the lot, a gray haired attendant on the far side signaled for us to come over to the end spot with the E28s. As we parked the car just so, the gray-haired man opened the passenger door, valet style, and took my wife's hand as she stepped out.

"M'am," he said, "Do you have any idea of the significance of this car?" My wife looked over at me and rolled her eyes. He continued: "This is the wolf in sheep's clothing! One of the greatest cars BMW ever made." Who was she to argue with Erik Wensberg, the night's keynote speaker, and the former M Brand manager of BMW North America?



(Top right) The U.S.-spec E28 M5 7.5x16 inch cross-spoke alloy wheels, carrying 225/50VR16 Pirelli P700 tires. (Left and above) The E28 M5 engine is derived from the same 24-valve inline six developed for the mid-engine M1 supercar. It produces 256 hp (SAE) at 6500 rpm and 240 lb-ft of torque at 4500 rpm. This was the fastest production car in the U.S. in 1988.

The 520d rental car parked in the picturesque town of Erfurt, awaiting Autobahn adventures.

When the Autobahn Becomes a Racetrack

By Anna Maripuu

Oh to find oneself in Germany in October! This means Oktoberfest, beer, all manner of wursts, giant pretzels and Ferris wheels. Riding the enormous Riesenrandat (Ferris wheel to non-German speakers) in the quaint medieval town of Erfurt in Thüringen was fun, but I was more interested in

a different kind of ride. It involved three ingredients: a BMW, the Autobahn and speed.

I consulted a friend who works for BMW in Munich. First he recommended that I try the half-meter-long specialty of the region, the Thüringerwurst, and then rent a car and drive the Autobahn.

Early Sunday morning found me in a cab heading to the outskirts of town. I wanted to be the first person at the little Europcar rental site when it opened. I figured this would maximize my chances of getting a BMW.

Walking through the small parking lot, I spied one BMW – a black wagon. I presented my credit card

and driver's license and casually asked if a BMW was available. The price I had been quoted was for a BMW 3 Series or Mercedes C-Class or something comparable.

The gentleman behind the counter said “no problem” or the equivalent in German, and I breathed a happy sigh when I saw him produce

the familiar-looking key fob and place it on the counter.

We walked out to the black wagon and to my surprise it was a 520d M package. It had all the necessary bells and whistles including seat and steering wheel heaters, heads-up display, navigation, and satellite radio. I wished for a little more horsepower but this was very nice, and in the U.S. it would have been nearly impossible to rent the equivalent.

I couldn't wait to let it loose in its natural habitat, the Autobahn!

The Autobahn or Bundesautobahn (BAB) is a federally controlled-access highway system – the word literally means “Federal Automobile Track.” Its allure lies in the fact that technically there are no mandated speed limits for certain classes of vehicles, although limits are posted and enforced on certain stretches such as when going through urban or populated areas and during bad weather. The Autobahn usually consists of three or four lanes in each direction and a hard shoulder or emergency lane.

On the speed-unrestricted stretches, an advisory speed limit (Richtgeschwindigkeit) of 130 kph (81 mph) applies. Even though most of the Autobahn is not speed restricted, driving faster than the advisory limit could mean a minimum of thirty percent legal liability if you have an accident, even if one is not at fault. So, though we think of the Autobahn as unrestricted, there are all sorts of rules in place to keep it safe, and the Germans stick to them, which makes driving less stressful and more a joy, as it should be.

And how can one not be tempted to drive fast? The road surface is as smooth as silk and straight as an arrow. Everyone “knows” how to drive and readily gives the right of way. Conditions are just perfect.

Thank goodness for the HUD because it displayed the distinctive round white sign with five black diagonal slashes on the road stretches of “freie Fahrt.” And because we were



driving fast, the speed-restricted stretches of 120 kph came upon us so quickly that I sometimes missed the road sign and needed to rely on the HUD. Then as soon as a “freie Fahrt” section resumed after a speed-restricted section, the five black slashes appeared in the windscreen. And one could feel the road surface change underneath the wheels – unbelievably even and smooth – a cue to let the car fly.

The Germans have all manner of specialized Autobahn terminology and rules. The right lane should be used when it is free (Rechtsfahrgebot) and the left lane is intended only for passing. It is legal to flash your headlights to indicate that you wish to overtake (Lichthupe), while keeping a safe distance from the car in front of you. Overtaking on the right is strictly forbidden.

There are penalties for tailgating. In the event of an emergency, drivers must form a “lane” in the middle of the left two lanes to allow

emergency vehicles to reach an accident scene. If there is an accident, drivers are obliged to stop and help. In fact, first aid training is mandatory in order to obtain a driver's license in Germany.

And the idea of no speed limits

has historical roots associated with war-time restrictions and deprivations that German citizens faced. In the 1970s the German Auto Club started promoting the slogan “Free driving for free citizens” (freie Fahrt für freie Bürger). Discussions to take away the unrestricted-speed stretches always cause controversy.

A great feature of the Autobahn are the many rest stops (Autobahnraststätten) and truck stops (Autohof). Petrol stations are numerous and strategically placed so that there is no possibility of running out of gas. Drivers may face fines and a six-month license suspension for stopping on the Autobahn because they have run out of fuel.

I actually didn't know any of this before my first run on the Autobahn and it would have been good to have been armed with this knowledge, but luckily the trip was issue free.

Our route started off on the A4 from Erfurt through the Lobdeburgtunnel near Jena. It was

(Above) The leather-bound steering wheel and sleek dash of the 520d M package car. (Below) A statue of Gustavus II Adolphus, the Swedish king, who died in battle, stands in the town square of Lützen.





(Above) There was no shortage of Tesla charging stations at the rest stops along the Autobahn.

on this stretch that I had the first opportunity to let the 520d loose. I could only obtain a speed of 220 kph (135 mph) due to the top speed limiter. It felt a bit peculiar to push the throttle to the floor and not be able to drive any faster, but this was plenty fast enough. Most of the time, I found myself cruising between 170-190 kph.

Our destination was Berlin so we had to head north at the Hermsdorfer Kreuz on the A9 which connects Munich and Berlin via Leipzig and Nuremberg. We then

decided to take a little detour at the Rippachtal four-way interchange to join the A38 to drive to a little town called Lützen. It is famous for the Battle of Lützen which was part of the Thirty Years' War. In 1632 Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden defeated Albrecht von Wallenstein here only to die on the battlefield. There is a statue of him and a stone called the Schwedenstein close to the spot where he died, and a memorial church that I am told is a little piece of Swedish sovereign territory.

After this interlude into

Swedish/German history, it was easy to take picturesque country roads to join the A9 again on its stretch north.

A portion of the A9 near Dessau-South used to be the "Dessauer Rennstrecke" (Dessau Racetrack), an 82 foot wide high-speed track intended for motor races and record breaking attempts. These attempts included Rudolf Caracciola in 1938 and 1939 and Hans Stuck in 1940 with the Mercedes Benz T80 land speed record car. This road has such straight alignment that it was intended to be used as an auxiliary airfield during World War II. After the war, annual races were resumed from 1949 to 1956.

We took the A115 into Berlin and then onto the A10, the Berliner-ring. The northern part of the A115 comprises part of the AVUS race track (Automobil-Verkehrs- und Übungsstrasse or automobile traffic and training road). It opened in 1921 as Germany's first limited-access road and was used as a motor racing circuit until 1998. It was unusually shaped for a race track in that it consisted of essentially two long straights with a hairpin corner at each end.

When it first opened, it was 19 1/2 kilometers long with each straight approximately being half the length, joined at the ends by flat large-radius curves, and driven counterclockwise. The circuit was the site of motorcycle races as well as

car races. Famously, Czechoslovak driver Prince George Christian of Lobkowicz died when his Bugatti Type 54 crashed in the southern hairpin.

From 1937 to 1967, the north curve included a steep bank. Dubbed the Wall of Death, the turn was made of bricks and banked at a steep 43 degree angle. Compare this to track banks at other circuits, such as 31 degrees at Daytona International Speedway and 11 degrees at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The AVUS bank had no retaining barrier so cars that missed the turn easily flew off the track.

The AVUS was the site of F2 and F3 races as well as German Grand Prix racing. In the 1960s the north bank was removed and chicanes were added to reduce entry speed into the north curve. Yet incidents continued to occur. In 1990 Dieter Quester's M3 rolled over upon exiting the last corner and crossed the finish line sliding on its roof, sparks flying, for a dramatic third place finish in the DTM. You can watch it on YouTube. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gzYrKYAKpU>)

The last real race took place in 1998. Starting in 2000, the new EuroSpeedway Lausitz in Brandenburg became the replacement for the AVUS. However, one can still see the old round race control tower at the north end which has become a restaurant and motel, and the old wooden grandstand is a protected historic monument.

I knew I was in for a thrill driving the Autobahn, but little did I know I would in fact drive on two historic race tracks on my way to Berlin. Goal accomplished: BMW, speed, Autobahn, plus bonus race-tracks. And no flipping over and sliding on the roof of the rental car.

(From left) Car badge, ///M package door sill, ///M badge on the side of the car.



Solomons Saturday Social Six

By Brooklyn Taylor | Photos by Paul Seto and Tim Robinson

The 6th Annual Solomons Saturday Social took place on October 24, 2015, on Solomons Island, Maryland. You get a nice view of Solomons Island, as you cross the impressive Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge. The bridge is a tall structure, reaching 135 feet. With a population of 2,368 (as of the last census) Solomons Island is a 2.5 square mile island, located at the mouth of the Patuxent River, in Southern Calvert County, Maryland. The island was settled in colonial times, and has been continuously inhabited since then.

Every year since 2010, the Solomons Saturday Social Event has consisted of a BMW meet on the waterfront at Solomons Pier, followed by lunch in a private dining room, at a dockside restaurant, overlooking the Patuxent River. At the pier, the clean boardwalk was lined with beautiful BMWs, ranging wildly in age, shape, and power. There was everything from a 85 horsepower 1969 BMW 1600, to a 567 horsepower 2015 X6 M in attendance. Every Bavarian automotive interest was catered to with this group of cars.

I arrived early, to put down cones, in order to save spaces along the boardwalk for the attendees. I knew that, before long, parking spots would be filled with BMWs, Muscle Cars, and Exotics. My friend, Nicole, and her friend, Kelly, were already on location, taking in the sights as I arrived. This year was



(Above) The big catch outside of The Lighthouse. (Below) Another great catch, social attendees caught for a group shot.

special for me, because a few of my closest friends were able to make the trek to attend. Three of those friends are fellow Marines and avid BMW enthusiasts; Carl "Dre" Ledgister, Craig Harvey, and Timothy "Tim" Robinson. Dre drove up from Jacksonville, Florida, stopping in South Carolina to pick up his girlfriend, Heather. His black on black E36 M3 sedan looked menacing with its dark tint, lowered stance, and front splitters. The paint was shiny and perfectly polished; unbelievable, after a trip of that length. I drove Dre's M3 the night before the event, and it reminded me that I need to show my own E36 M3 some love more often. Craig Harvey arrived from North Carolina with his wife, Catherine, and their children, Ella and Alex. Craig's Chamonix White 1974 2002tii, known as 'Louie', is a great example of a tastefully modified, legendary car. The custom lip spoiler, lowered suspension, 5-speed manual transmission, aftermarket seats, Wilwood brakes, and Panasport wheels, are all business. I had a chance to drive this squaretail beast, but I ran out of time. Next time Louie. Next time.

Then there was 'Sweet 16', the 1969 BMW 1600 of Tim Robinson. Tim brought his wife, Tyshemia, and his daughters Timia and Tayla. The trunk was full of gear for the girls, including two full-sized soccer goals! This car makes a splash everywhere it goes. The Chamonix White exterior, matching white basket weave wheels, large fog



lights, and fuzzy dice, suggest a bygone era of motoring. The "Sweet16" vanity plates are also white, if you are keeping track. The style and feel of this 1600 shows that the "Respect Your Elders" sticker it wears is well deserved.

The bulk of the BMWs at the event rolled down in a caravan that originated at Passport BMW, a club-friendly dealership in Marlow Heights, Maryland. Mark Rosenberg led the way in his white E93 328i convertible. Mark recently put this gem up for sale, so if you are in the market for one, you are in luck. Former Chapter President, Zach Pullins, Sr., followed in his red E46 323i. Zach is our high-mileage king.



His car has over 400,000 miles on it, and is going as strong as ever. This is the beauty of proper maintenance, and opting for a manual transmission.

Our Chapter President, Paul Seto, arrived in his white E92 M3 coupe. The white BMW thing is starting to look like a trend at this point. Paul popped the hood to reveal the massive V8 and autographed engine cover. Everything about this car is aggressive and sporty.

Every one of these annual gatherings is set in motion by an

ominous text from Paul, asking when I can host the next Solomons event. For some reason, I'm usually reluctant to jump into the planning and logistics, but the event always turns out to be a spectacular success. This time was no different.

There was a certain graceful flow to the social. After the Passport BMW caravan arrived and parked, my Marine friends arrived. In a move straight out of the Anita Patton play-book, I ended up with three of my cars at the same event. I already had my Laguna Green 850i 6-speed at the pier. My girlfriend, Andrea, accompanied by her Mother, Mrs. Pointer, brought my recently acquired E39 M5. I am always amazed at the skill, precision, and outright scariness of her driving. I think she would murder an autocross course. We are going to have to arrange that.

White, with the black extended leather package and Alcantara headliner, my M5 has exactly the Star Wars Storm Trooper look I was going for during my long search for what is a very rare color combination on these cars. While talking to Mike and Lorraine Holder about their gorgeous Z4 M Roadster, I was able to get a cool video of the Marines rolling in. Tim drove "Sweet16", followed by Cat, driving "Louie", followed by my Cinnabar Red E24 M6 "Marine6", driven by Craig. Parked next to my M6, was James Laws' pristine 1988 M6, also Cinnabar Red, but with the exotic Lotus White interior (my interior is silver-grey). Both cars sit on classic 17" BMW/BBS Style 5 wheels.

The Super, Exotic, Muscle Car crew was led by Cyndi Tatar in her red Ferrari 360 Modena. Grayson and Tommy Stevens drove SRT Vipers. Bob Pecker and Neil Williamson drove 911s, and Richard Seidlitz drove his Aston Martin Vantage.

A Solomons Saturday Social Event has the feeling that you might get if you showed up at a Cars & Coffee (an event where people gather to drink coffee and stalk each other's cars on a weekend morning), and you



already knew fifty of the people in attendance. Everyone mingled, spoke about the cars and the scenery, and took lots of photographs.

Then it was time for the official greeting of the day. As has become the tradition since the first event in 2010; I stood atop a bench, like General George Washington, crossing the Delaware. I thanked everyone for coming out, and pointed them toward the giant gazebo where Tim Robinson would take our group photo, before heading over to the restaurant venue, The Lighthouse

Restaurant & Dock Bar. In previous years, we've patronized Stoney's Solomons Pier, but they had a leasing dispute that threatened to close them down before our event was scheduled to take place.

The Lighthouse Restaurant & Dock Bar opened its doors in February of 2014. Brothers, Nick and

(Above) Our host Brooklyn Taylor getting everyone's attention away from the cars. (Left) Smile for the camera, Cathryn and Heather. (Below) It's time to eat!





Rusty own the restaurant, and personally helped me reserve the entire 2nd floor for our group. President Seto was generous enough to treat the group to an enormous buffet spread of appetizers for the attendees. The space was comfortable and the food was delicious. Caitlin and the other servers took great care of us. Those at my table enjoyed main courses that included giant crab cakes, lobster, and other such delights. I am not a seafood eater, which is practically a sin here in Maryland, so I opted for the Hawaiian Burger. Perfectly prepared, featuring a large pineapple ring and tasty bun,

this burger is a winner!

As I walked around the venue, I could feel the happiness. I asked for everyone's attention, and quizzed the crowd about the distances they had travelled to attend the social. Many had traveled over 100 miles. In the midst of the group discussion, Dre raised his hand, and indicated that his 720 miles was likely the furthest distance. He won the 2015 Solomons Saturday Social Farthest Traveled Award. It wasn't even close. The award itself consisted of four scale model BMW M cars in a display case: E30 M3, E36 M3, E92 M3, and an F32 M4. Dre was very

pleased with his award, and the crowd gave him a rousing round of applause for making the trip to join us.

Everyone enjoyed the great food, camaraderie, and good vibes. To wrap things up, Anna Maripuu, James Laws, and President Seto,

gave out awesome prizes in a raffle process that garnered as much good-natured laughter as it did gifts. The social was a big hit, with over 60 people in attendance. Be there next year for our 7th Annual Solomons Saturday Social. You won't want to miss it.



(From top left) Tim Robinson's beautiful 1969 1600. Always cruise with the top down. Torque monster X6 ///M. (Right) Such a great variety of BMWs. (Below right) Hoods up! Brooklyn Taylor's V12 850 and Paul Seto's E92 M3. (Below left) Duane Summons' BAD E39.





Trading Places

We Drive a “Jeep-like” BMW and a “BMW-like” Jeep

By James Chew

My participation in the recent “Ultimate Driving Experience” inspired this article. With BMW using a “hill climb” to showcase the X5’s “Jeep-like” off road prowess and with Jeep continuing to raise the Grand Cherokee’s performance luxury presence, it was clear that it was time to have a back-to-back drive with these class leading products.

Ironically, BMW is responsible for the development of the Grand Cherokee, while the Grand Cherokee is responsible for the development of the X5.

In 1983, when AMC (remember them?) began the development of the Grand Cherokee, they noticed that most Grand Wagoneer and Cherokee owners drove BMWs and Mercedes so they made a conscious effort to give the new vehicle the driving refinement and luxury that European sedan owners expect. As Jeep’s first new product under Chrysler ownership, the



Another similarity with these two products is that their major competitors during their respective launch – the Ford Explorer for the Grand Cherokee and the Mercedes M-Class for the X5 – are both based on light truck chassis. The Grand Cherokee and BMW X5 feature unibody chassis.

The X5d and the Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel are not direct competitors. BMW prides itself on using the famous Nürburgring track to develop and test the X5’s chassis and the resulting X5M is the ultimate SAV performance statement. Every Jeep is developed and tested using the Rubicon trail, hence Jeep’s “Trail Ready” badging. The X5d’s and Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel’s standard tires quickly reveal this difference.



With both are outstanding premium SUVs, the BMW leadership must have been getting tired of reading the reviews of how the X5 is very nice, but one would never consider taking it off road. Likewise,

the Grand Cherokee launched the modern American SUV market, instantly becoming the benchmark in this segment. The sales success and profits from the Grand Cherokee has been a significant contributor to the Chrysler, then Daimler, and now Fiat bottom line.

BMW noticed that when their owners owned an SUV, it was either a Grand Wagoneer or a Cherokee. They also noted the potential revenue and margins from such a vehicle. So when they owned Land Rover (remember THAT business disaster) they studied the Land Rover HSE and developed the X5. BMW made it clear that the X5 is a BMW, not a Jeep, hence the Sport ACTIVITY Vehicle “SAV” moniker.

the Jeep leadership must have been frustrated with those same reviewers stating that the Grand Cherokee is a true Jeep, but doesn’t have the gravitas of a BMW, Mercedes, or Land Rover. Having driven both, it was clear that both products have the underpinnings to be credible in each other’s areas of strength.

However most X5 owners aren’t going road racing in their X5s and most Grand Cherokee owners aren’t taking their Grand Cherokee off road. For all intents and purposes, the X5 and the Grand Cherokee are 21st century Chrysler Town and Country/Buick Electra station wagons. So we tested the fully loaded “upscale performance luxury suburban/urban” equipped versions. You’ll see these versions “uptown”, downtown, in gated suburban communities, upscale

(Top) Two benchmarks that keep inspiring each other— the Jeep Grand Cherokee and the BMW X5.



shopping malls, and country clubs. They'll be used in school and work carpool duties, support kids' afterschool and weekend activities, and carrying the weekly "haul" from the big box retail/warehouse store shopping trips. And they'll be used to support their owner's hobbies.

The diesel-engine versions were selected because that's the engine that best matches the typical ownership profile. People who own these vehicles own them for the long run. Anecdotal, it seems that there are a surprisingly high number of earlier generation X5s and Grand Cherokees still on the road. So having a durable, powerful, fuel-efficient engine should significantly enhance the ownership experience.

The BMW engine is the proven inline 6-cylinder twin-turbocharged diesel engine. Producing 255 hp and 413 ft-lbs torque, the X5d has the performance of the V-8 powered version with the fuel economy of their inline six-cylinder gasoline engine models.

The Jeep has a V-6 twin-turbocharged Italian diesel engine. Originally developed under a GM/Fiat partnership for use in European Cadillac CTSS, GM abandoned this project during their bankruptcy. Producing 240 hp and 420 ft-lbs torque this same engine is used in the very popular Ram Diesel 1500. As with the BMW, the diesel engine gave the Grand Cherokee V-8 performance with V-6 fuel economy.

In terms of exterior design, even the casual observer will never mistake the X5 for being other than a BMW and the Grand Cherokee being other than a Jeep.

The X5 has the famous Hofmeister "kink", familiar BMW dual kidney grill, and several aerodynamic features from their "Efficiency Dynamics" research. The two most obvious features are the functional front end vent and fender gill for the front wheel well "air curtain." And one will notice the subtle features on the X5 rear give it a nice aerodynamic boat tail. All of these features

combine to give the X5d exterior a quiet, refined, precision presence.

"Tough" is probably the best word to describe the Grand Cherokee's exterior design. Starting with the famous Jeep grill, the "true believers" at Jeep design integrated enough design features to give Grand Cherokee an upscale rugged outdoorsman presence. Think upscale ski lodge or upscale hunting lodge.

The X5d and Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel interiors provide a case study on two different interpretations of luxury. In both vehicles, the driver's areas are ergonomically designed, refined,

(Above) The X5d looks like a "standard" X5, but is equipped with the proven 3.0 inline six turbo diesel. (Below) The Grand Cherokee Diesel looks like a Grand Cherokee and is equipped with the 3.0 liter Fiat V-6 turbo diesel. Jeeps wants all to know that this vehicle is Rubicon Trail ready.





luxurious, comfortable, and feel durable. We noticed the higher Grand Cherokee fenders sometimes obscured the driver's sightlines when turning left, but that simply required adjusting how we looked before and during a turn.

Owning a 2007 X5, the durability, comfort, and luxury of the Dakota leather is unquestioned. However, when compared to BMW's Nappa leather, the Dakota leather seems much more like the entry-level "SensaTech" vinyl.

The Jeep leather felt thicker than the BMW, but had the shiny softness of the material found in a Chrysler 300 and Dodge Charger. Not bad, but for a Jeep, one would expect leather that's a little more distinctive

Our passengers had no complaints with either vehicle. While both vehicles have outstanding rear seat entry and access, it was interesting to see how much bigger the X5d's rear doors were than the Grand Cherokee.

The cargo areas of both vehicles are big and boxy. Because it can be equipped with an optional third-row seat, the X5 rear cargo area is a little bigger than in the Grand Cherokee. The X5's two-piece power-assisted rear gate had a lower lift height, which made loading the bigger, bulkier items easier than with the higher, one piece power-assisted rear hatch Grand Cherokee. And with their rear seats folded, both vehicles are capable of carrying a surprising amount of "stuff."

Both vehicles drive well in the typical "suburban" environment. Both vehicles are responsive and nimble, allowing us to parallel park quickly and easily, and navigate the upscale mall parking lots. With the windows rolled up, the respective diesel engines and 8-speed electronic automatic transmissions provided quiet and smooth acceleration, responsive handling, and predictable braking. With the windows down, both had a soft diesel clatter.

Both 8-speed automatic transmissions use a "shift by wire" design. However with the BMW, push the shifter up to engage reverse while with the Jeep, pull down. Keep that in mind if you decide to test drive both!

The observed fuel economy from both vehicles was quite respectable. For the X5d, we achieved a combined 27 mpg, while the Grand Cherokee Diesel achieved 26 mpg.

The BMW X5d retail price is higher than that of a comparably equipped Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel. Our fully equipped (including rear seat entertainment system) Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel Overland edition had an MSRP of \$57,715, while the fully loaded X5d (with rear-seat entertainment system) MSRP was \$74,470.

Both are very nice and should be considered



(From the top) The X5d interior feels like a German businessman's office. The supportive X5d seats are covered in a tastefully colored Dakota leather. While still nice, the Dakota leather is starting to feel like the SensaTec Upholstery. The large, cube-like cargo area is enchainned by the dual folding rear seats.

(From the top) The Grand Cherokee interior feels like an upscale hunting or ski lodge. The leather seats are very nice, but the leather seems a little too shiny for us. The large car makes the Jeep an idea "warehouse club" hauler and "active kid" ready.



(Above) The attractive wheels and massive brakes add to the BMW's performance-luxury gravitas.

for those shopping these respective products, however there are four reasons why both models may never sell well.

First is the price premium. The X5d is \$3,800 more than the comparably equipped 3.0i gasoline model. The Grand Cherokee is \$4,500 more than the comparably equipped 3.6 V-6 model. While the current and past X5s and Grand Cherokees have stood the test of time, the growing popularity of leasing makes the diesel models unattractive for that growing market.

Second is the price of diesel. Even in California, the price of premium gasoline is now less expensive than that of diesel. While the diesel models will achieve better fuel economy than their

gasoline versions, the fuel costs more, eliminating one of the previous major attractions of owning a diesel-powered vehicle.

Third is the availability of diesel. Many neighborhood service stations still don't have diesel. And when they do, the pumps are generally messy.

Fourth is the current VW "clean diesel" scandal. One of the reasons clean diesels are possible is the use of urea. From a separate tank (highlighted by a blue cap next to the fuel filling tube) urea is injected into the exhaust pipe, where the aqueous urea vaporizes and decomposes to form ammonia and carbon dioxide.

The X5d, Grand Cherokee Clean diesel, and every other modern "clean diesel" vehicle (including trucks) have urea tanks. The VWs and Audi A3 TDI models didn't. Why THAT didn't raise eyebrows with the inspectors boggles the mind. Unfortunately, the VW diesel scandal will have a temporary negative impact on all diesel vehicle sales.

The ONLY good thing that can come from the VW clean diesel scandal is a temporary price reduction of diesel models, potentially eliminating the price premium over the gasoline models. That's when the clever person who would like an X5d, Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel, or other "legal" clean-diesel vehicle should shop!

BMW has engineered enough "Jeep" in to the X5d to give the drivers the confidence that can "go anywhere." Jeep has engineered enough



(Above) The Jeep wheels give this SUV an "outdoorsy" rugged look.

"BMW" into the Grand Cherokee to have their drivers look right at home next to the Land Rovers and Mercedes.

Who says competition isn't good!

By the way, I thank Tony Zarcone, Sales Manager at BMW of San Diego for allowing the use of an X5d for the photographs. These vehicles were tested separately, weeks apart. Mr. Zarcone graciously provided access to one of the BMW of San Diego retail units for the side-by-side photos.

(Below) The X5d – built for the road but trail capable. The Grand Cherokee Diesel – built for the trail but good on the road.





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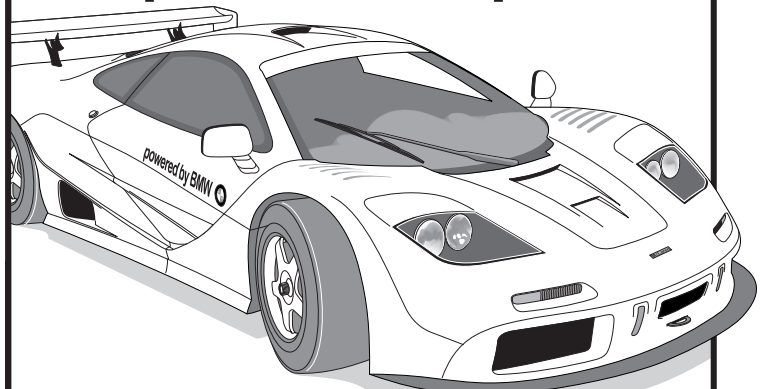
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