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Cover: BMW's brand-new purpose-built M8 GTE during the 2018 IMSA Sebring 12-Hour Race. Read the article on page 18. Photo: Steve Tenney

Magazine of the National Capital Chapter BMW Car Club of America

der Bayerische

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



President's Message

Here comes the heat! Spring always brings a full calendar of club events. Both May and June are stacked with HUGE things to do. We continue our annual NCC Spring Extravaganza on Saturday, May 5th with our first Cars & Coffee of the year at BMW of Sterling, followed by the 35th annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance on Sunday at Nottoway Park in Fairfax. No question this weekend will require everyone to clean, wax, and polish their cars for others to enjoy.

While the first weekend of May will be outstanding, it's Saturday, May 12th that deserves top billing. After an eight-year hiatus, we are reviving Chapterfest which is a celebration of all things NCC. It will be held at Summit Point Raceway. All club programs will be showcasing what we do best. Our first HPDE of the year will be running on Summit Main, autocross on the Washington circuit, and a Car Control Clinic on the Jefferson track. In addition, we'll have a car show, tech session, a tour out to Summit Point, and an end-of-day BBQ dinner to bring everyone together. But the kicker, as announced at our 2018 Annual Meeting in February, is that Mike Renner and the BMW Performance Center will run hot laps for members throughout the day in the brand new F90 M5! Can't wait for that!

Now that we've gotten you through half of May, we do not slow down. There are a few more tours (including a Pie Run), a couple of autocross events, ///M Club Day in Spartanburg, another HPDE in June (great for beginners), and our annual golf outing!

I know this is a lot going on in two months, but fear not! Our website calendar and Facebook page has each event listed for you to register, not to mention our bi-weekly email blasts. But there's one more thing! Please save those vacation days for our national Oktoberfest event from July 9-15 and this year is combined with Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix. More details are outlined on another page, but this will be heaven for any BMW enthusiast. We have an action-packed calendar for O'Fest/PVGP and it's only a few hours away. I'm thoroughly expecting an incredible turnout from NCC in Pittsburgh, so come join the fun!

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

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Let us start with the weather. I am about ready to change from winter tires to summer tires. But as of this writing, it looks like another week or two. As the old saying goes, "The weather is what the weather is." Deal with it. But enough about the weather.

At our Annual Holiday Party, we hosted a special guest, Bill Auberlen, who is the top BMW race-car driver. One of the questions from the audience was: How do you drive in normal traffic? Bill's reply was, "I drive really numb until somebody wants to race." That is what I try to do. Fortunately, my car can get me out of tight spots faster than the drivers

around can box me in.

As Paul Seto warmed up the crowd, he pointed out that we had over 120 events this past year, and on the horizon, it looks better this year.

There are events to engage everyone, from driving fast to racing to socializing. A particularly important event this year will be the Chapterfest. Most all of our programs will participate. The end-point is a BBQ at Summit Point. This is a celebration of all things BMW through the eyes of the NCC.

At this event, the food will be provided rather than having members do the work which

happens at our chili outings.

This issue of *der Bayerische* highlights many of our events. Read it and see what you might like to try. They are full and except for racing, very low-impact.

Something we do not emphasize enough is the gratitude we owe our sponsors. They are listed on the NCC website. If you need BMW parts, frequent these vendors.

Just as the magazine was going to press, the weather perked up, and it is definitely time for tires and other changes for spring and summer.

- Walter

Help Wanted

The National Capital Chapter is seeking volunteers to assist with the following positions:

1) Membership committee - these volunteers create activities related to attracting, involving and retaining chapter members. Previous experience in motivating member participation in enthusiast organizations is a plus, but a positive attitude and a willingness to

help are the basic requirements for the position.

If you have a few hours monthly that you are able to dedicate to improving the membership experience for your fellow, please contact James Laws vicepresident@nccbmwcca.org

2) Social Activities Director - responsible for the planning, promotion, and implementation of all Social

activities. This creative person will work directly with the NCC Board and Program Chairs to create various events that enhance the overall membership experience, increase club retention, and most importantly, members enjoy. If interested, please contact Paul Seto paul.seto@nccbmwcca.org

3) NCC is looking for a volunteer (preferably a CPA) to take on the project

of preparing the chapter's 2017 tax submission. As a 501(C)(7) non-profit organization, the chapter is required to file an annual Form 990 with the IRS. The volunteer would prepare the tax return, which will be signed and submitted by the chapter. Our filing deadline is May 15th. Contact Richard B. Kempf ("Rick"), Treasurer NCC Chapter, BMW CCA ncc treasurer@outlook.com.

BMW CCA NATIONAL CAPITAL CHAPTER CHAPTERFEST AT SUMMIT POINT

Join us on May 12 for our premier event of the year

NCC HPDE Program : Main Circuit
Autocross : Washington Circuit
Highway Safety : Jefferson Circuit
Cars and Coffee : Paddock
BMW Performance Center Hot Laps
Tour de Summit Point
BBQ & Refreshments



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

- 1 NoVa Social - Founding Farmers, Tysons, VA
- 3 4th Annual NCC Cars & Chili Competition, MD Location TBD
- 8 Columbia Social - BJ's Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 14 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 15 MoCo Social - Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 17 Novice School - AX Bowie Baysox Stadium, Bowie
- 24 DIY Z Car Focus at BMW of Sterling
- 24 BMW CCA New Member Reception/Open House at BMW of Sterling
- 31 BMW CCA at New York International Auto Show, Javits Center, NY

April

- 5 Apr NoVa Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA
- 7 Test and Tune #1 - AX at Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf
- 8 Odds and Ends Detailing Workshop, Sterling, VA
- 11 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex in Rockville, MD
- 12 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 14 Points Event #1 - AX at Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf
- 14 Ladies DIY at BMW of Annapolis
- 15 NCC Social Outing at Topgolf, Ashburn, VA
- 19 MoCo Social - Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 21 Ladies DIY at BMW of Annapolis
- 28 Spring Tour to West Virginia

May

- 3 NoVa Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA
- 5-6 ///M Club Day at BMW Performance Center (SC)
- 5 DIY at BMW of Sterling
- 5 BMW CCA Cars & Coffee, BMW of Sterling
- 6 Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance, Nottoway Park, Vienna, VA
- 9 Board Meeting/Social - Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 10 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 11-13 NCC HPDE at Summit Point, Main Circuit
- 12 Chapterfest at Summit Point, WV: *Includes the following three events:*
Tour to Summit Point, Highway Safety School, Autocross Points Event #2

- 12 DIY at BMW of Sterling
- 17 MoCo Social - Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 20 Great Pie Run XXI

June

- 2 NCC Autocross Test & Tune #2
- 2 Maryland to Delaware 2.0 Tour
- 7 NoVa Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA
- 9 2018 NCC Autocross Points Event #3
- 9 M Club Day - Tidewater Chapter (BMW Performance Center Greer, SC)
- 13 Board Meeting/Social at Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD
- 14 Columbia Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD
- 16 DIY at Chapman Auto Werks
- 16 Maryland Monument Meander (Tour)
- 21 MoCo Social at Pizza CS, Rockville, MD
- 22-24 NCC HPDE Summit Point, Jefferson Circuit
- 23 2018 NCC Golf Outing, Raspberry Falls Golf Club, Leesburg, VA

July

- 9-15 49th Annual BMW CCA Oktoberfest (Pittsburgh)
- 21 DIY at Benchmark Motors
- 4 AACA Museum Tour
- 5 2018 NCC Autocross Points Event #4
- 11 DIY at Craftsman Auto Care
- 18-19 IMSA Weekend at VIR
- 25 Euro Marque Golf Tournament, Raspberry Falls Golf Club, Leesburg, VA

August

- 4 AACA Museum Tour
- 5 2018 NCC Autocross Points Event #4
- 11 DIY at Craftsman Auto Care
- 18-19 IMSA Weekend at VIR
- 25 Euro Marque Golf Tournament, Raspberry Falls Golf Club, Leesburg, VA

COMING EVENTS

May NoVa Social - BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA

Thursday, May 3, 2018

///M Club Day @ BMW Performance Center (SC)

Saturday, May 5-6, 2018

DIY @ BMW of Sterling

Saturday, May, 2018

BMW CCA Cars & Coffee, BMW of Sterling

21710 Auto World Circle, Sterling, VA 20166

Saturday, May 5, 2018

The Do-It-Yourself (DIY) program allows the club members to work on their own cars under the supervision of expert mechanics and technicians provided by the DIY Sponsor.

Come join the NCC as we host our first Cars & Coffee of 2018 at BMW of Sterling at 9am. This is our NCC Spring Kickoff weekend as we open the year with various events across the DMV.

BMW of Sterling will be providing free coffee in their Cafe and also special BMW CCA pricing on any parts/accessories you may need.

Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance, Nottoway Park, Vienna, VA

Sunday, May 6, 2018

Celebrating 35 Years!

Board Meeting/Social @ Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

May Columbia Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Chapterfest at Summit Point, WV

Friday, May 11, 2018 through Sunday May 13, 2018

MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

Thursday, May 17, 2018

Great Pie Run XXI

Saturday, May 20, 2018

If you have not been to one, join us, it is a special event.

Maryland to Delaware 2.0 Tour

Saturday, June 2, 2018

Autocross Test & Tune #2

Saturday, June 2, 2018

Regency Furniture Stadium,
11765 St Linus Dr., Waldorf, MD 20602

NoVa Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Tysons, VA

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Autocross Points Event #3

Saturday, June 9, 2018

Bowie Baysox (Prince Georges Stadium), 4101 Crain Highway, Bowie, MD 20716

M Club Day (Tidewater Chapter) @ the BMW Performance Center Greer, SC)

Saturday, June 9, 2018

Board Meeting/Social @ Chuy's Tex-Mex, Rockville, MD

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Columbia Social @ BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Columbia, MD

Thursday, June 14, 2018

Maryland Monument Meander (Tour)

Saturday, June 16, 2018

DIY @ Chapman Auto Werks

Saturday, June 16, 2018

MoCo Social @ Pizza CS, Rockville, MD

Thursday, June 21, 2018

HPDE Summit Point, Jefferson Circuit

Friday, June 22 through Sunday, June 24, 2018

Drive Multiple Jefferson Circuit Configurations during the weekend.

NCC Golf Outing @ Raspberry Falls Golf Club in Leesburg, VA

Saturday, June 23, 2018

We will hold our 11th Annual NCC Golf Outing on Saturday, June 23rd at 12pm. Competitive and social rounds.

35th Annual Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance



Sunday, May 6, 2018

(Rain Date: Sunday, May 20, 2018)

Nottoway Park, 9601 Courthouse Rd, Vienna, VA 22181

W E E K L Y C A R S & C O F F E E E V E N T S

1. Bethesda, MD

Saturdays, 8-10 am, Corner Bakery Cafe,
10327 Westlake Drive, Bethesda, MD Westfield Shopping Mall
see: <http://www.carsncoffeebethesda.com>

2. Burtonsville, MD

Sundays, 7:30-10 am, "Church of the Holy Doughnut," Dunkin Donuts
Route 29 & 198, Burtonsville, MD; see: Facebook page

3. Great Falls, VA

Saturdays 6-9am, Katie's Cars & Coffee
760 Walker Road, Great Falls, VA
see: www.katiescarsandcoffee.com

4. Potomac, MD

Sundays 10-12, 10220 River Road, Potomac, MD
see: www.potomaccraferacers.com



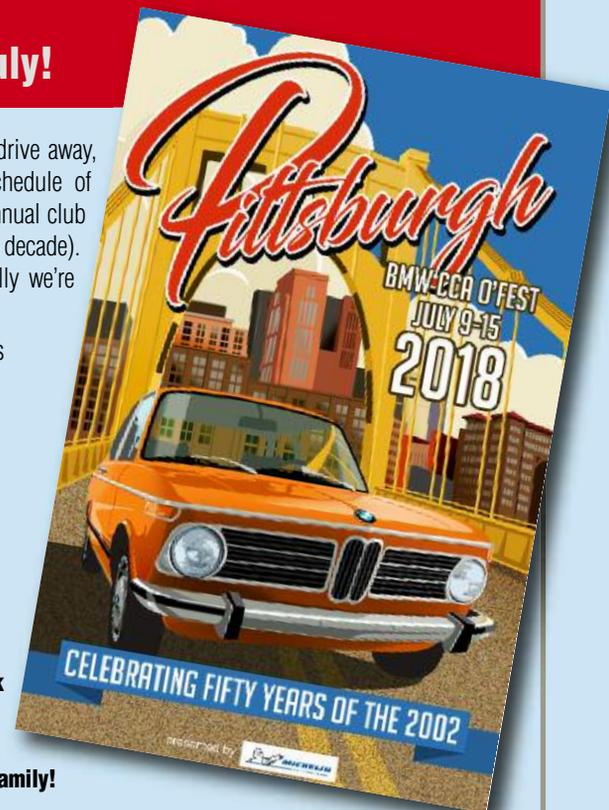
Top Ten List to Join NCC at Oktoberfest/Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix in July!

Attention NCC members! With Oktoberfest and Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix only a short drive away, our chapter will have a huge presence throughout the week. With an action-packed schedule of different BMW events happening everyday, Pittsburgh makes an incredible location for our annual club celebration (the Steel City has really transformed into a very hip city over the past decade). And if you've never been to O'Fest and/or PVGP, this is your opportunity to go! Nationally we're expecting well over 1000 CCA members from across the US, so hopefully you will join us.

So, whether you're staying the entire time or only a few days, we will have a few caravans heading up at different times throughout the week, so stay tuned for more details.

Paul

10. It's a really FUN 4 hour drive through the mountains
9. It's our annual week-long club celebration of all things BMW
8. It's the 50th anniversary of the 2002
7. BMW is the 'Marque of the Year' at PVGP
6. Because you can't miss the Gilligan's Island Themed Shell River Boat Cruise
5. BMW Performance Center will be giving hot laps around Schenley Park
4. We are planning a world-record breaking parade lap of BMWs on the PVGP race track
3. Take a charity ride in the Z4 GTLM race car or 3.0 CSL Batmobile
2. Because vintage racing matters
1. You'll be among the thousand BMW enthusiasts from around the U.S. whom we call family!



Spending an Evening with Bill

By Pearl Aliga Jones
Photos from various sources

Prologue

It has been brought to my attention that der Bayerische's readership has expanded. It now includes some residents of Japan, Philippines, and Indonesia, as well as a BMW-driving American family in Nigeria. Some may not be familiar with the acronyms utilized in this article, hence the necessity of spelling them out.

This narrative is written in excruciating (but hopefully exhilarating), lap-by-lap detail for a reason – to let chapter members and friends who could not join us enjoy the delightful evening as we did. So buckle up and enjoy the...ride! ☺



(Above) Mike Renner and Bill Auberlen. (Right) Part of the lively throng.



The 2018 National Capital Chapter Holiday Party and Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, February 10, at Pinstripes in North Bethesda, MD. With venues alternating between Virginia and Maryland, this year found us in a contemporary landscape, a repurposed retail-corridor on Rockville Pike called Pike & Rose.

It is in keeping with “mixed-use development” that is all the rage in revitalizing urban America by fostering a pedestrian-friendly blending of residential, commercial, recreational, cultural, and entertainment functions.

Through the years, our chapter's organizing committee has situated our holiday parties in locales with various food themes – from the

classically decorated Normandie Farm Restaurant in Potomac, MD, offering French-American cuisine, to the reminiscently colonial Mt. Vernon Inn Restaurant in Mt. Vernon, VA, serving traditional American fare, and restaurants and hotel ballrooms in between. This was also the first in a mixed-use microcosm, Pinstripes being a bistro, a bowling alley, and a

bocce venue rolled into one! I had initial misgivings about how a party with spoken presentations could peacefully co-exist with the noise emanating from rumbling bowling balls, crashing bowling pins, and striking *bocce* balls.

The holiday party is the best-attended of our chapter events, year after year, drawing keen interest

Auberlen and Mike Renner



across the region. So popular it is that some of us cut vacations short in order to attend. My husband Walter and I had a San Francisco-Napa vacation booked, but when the date of this event and the identity of another special guest were revealed, it was a no-brainer. "My BMW idol, Bill Auberlen, is a featured guest! We're coming back East earlier!" Walter

declared. We excitedly joined 175 like-minded chapter members and friends for this fascinating evening.

Unlike holiday parties past, where our Bimmers were lined up next to one another for an impromptu car show, the charming neighborhood of Pike & Rose, with its small parking lots and surrounding garages, did not allow for this adjunct

event. It was also cold and raining, not exactly conducive to a car show. The entertaining program more than made up for this omission.

The evening began with a cocktail reception as our highlighted guest, the affable race-car driver *extraordinaire* Bill Auberlen, autographed posters and welcomed photo ops. Delicious *hors d'oeuvres*

included crispy calamari, avocado hummus, garlic hummus, cold cuts, brie and other select cheeses, and salsa, complemented with an array of cucumber and zucchini rounds, celery sticks, pita chips and wedges, grapes, and dates on a bed of broad-leaf kale. Dinner followed, with sumptuous offerings of mixed-green salad, Caesar salad, maple-glazed



(From Left) Doug Verner and our newly inducted chapter officers; Bill Auberlen autographing posters.

salmon, chicken marsala, lasagna, and baked ziti.

It became obvious that dinner served family style was better than buffet this time; it maximized our time listening to our speakers without buffet lines and other distractions.

The program was opened by James Laws, our chapter vice president and membership chair. He welcomed the lively throng, now cozy and oblivious to the dipping temperature and persistent raindrops shrouding the outdoors.

Next, Doug Verner, chair of our chapter's BMW Performance ///M school events, conducted the swearing-in of incoming chapter officers: Paul Seto, president; James Laws, vice-president; Richard Kempf, treasurer; and Gina Hector, secretary.

Outstanding chapter members were feted. Special recognition went to Chuck Pompei and Phil Yates, co-chairs of the Autocross Program; Phil Cummings, chair of DIY (Do-It-Yourself) – the Program of the Year; and Gina Hector, Volunteer of the Year. An interesting twist to award-giving played out this year, much to everyone's delight – the awardees got to choose their prizes from the beautiful array of swag on display for the

evening's raffle prizes. Our stylish Gina picked a snazzy laptop bag, of course!

Next, Paul Seto, our chapter president, announced that there were over 120 club events this past year and gave us a brief overview of what to expect in 2018. He was most excited about the forthcoming "resurrection of a special and huge event" called Chapterfest, on May 12, at the Summit Point Raceway in WV. The previous iteration was nine years ago. He explained that "it is a celebration of all things that the National Capital Chapter does so well – HPDE (High Performance Driver Education), Autocross, Highway Safety School, a car show, a *Tour de Summit Point...and BBQ!*" A special feature will have Mike Renner (a professional driver for BMW, Instructor and Corporate Sales at the BMW Performance Center in Spartanburg, SC) providing hot laps that day. No self-respecting Bimmer lover/chapter member will want to miss this memorable weekend, so make your reservations now.

As we continued to savor the dinner courses, the much-awaited highlights of the program commenced. Doug Verner introduced

one of our special guests, the aforementioned Mike Renner. Mike is a dear and loyal friend of the NCC. He always graces our holiday parties, bringing good tidings in the form of updates, videos, and the raffle's grand prize. This year he brought along a stunning video titled "Why Don't You?" that commanded, er, commanded everyone's attention away from our dinner plates. The video started with spectacular guitar riffs of none other than Joe Bonamassa (Grammy-nominated blues-rock guitar icon). The sound track of his song "This Train" accompanied the stunning visuals of Bimmers in action at the ///M school as well as several BMW CCA (Car Club of America) employees and club members including our very own Doug Verner.

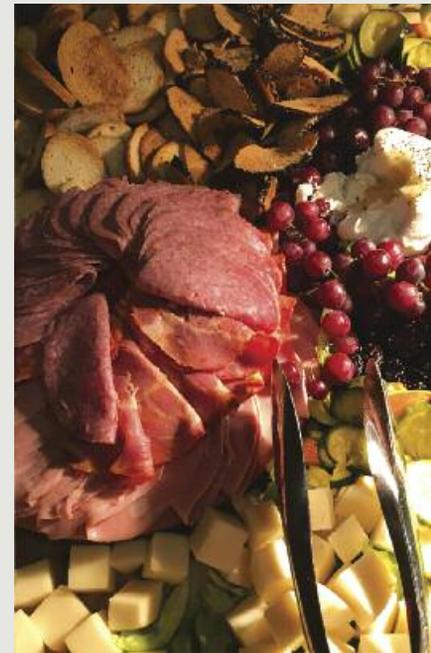
Imagine slick BMWs flashing on the screen exuberantly doing what Ultimate Driving Machines are designed to do. Now also imagine the vivid lyrics of "This Train": This train don't stop for no one; this train got a mind of its own; this train don't wait for no one; this train stays on the track; this train like a hurricane... And now replace the word "train" with "Bimmer." Unbridled excitement, yes? ("This train don't stop for no

one" reminded me of the slogan of the BMW 2 Series: Rebel Without A Pause.) One cannot unhear a Joe Bonamassa song and its pulsating guitar licks, and I am certain no one can unsee an entertaining ad; it was akin to a Super Bowl ad, after all. At the end of the video, Mike and then Doug exhorted us, "So why don't you...come drive with us at the BMW Performance Driving School?" Impressive ad, Mike.

Mike then introduced Bill Auberlen.

Sparkling but definitely accurate phrases (and praises) come to mind easily to anyone describing the guy: legendary and one of the world's best racers; exceptionally talented driver with an unparalleled passion; consistent winner with an unrivaled career; preeminent BMW-brand ambassador; personable guy with a welcoming smile; dashing gentleman with a buoyant demeanor; and more.

Bill has a 21-year racing career with 400 starts with the BMW *marque*. He recently garnered his 151st victory with the brand (a whopping and impressive 38% of his starts!) at the 2017 *Petit Le Mans* in October, driving the No. 25 BMW M6 GTLM.



(From Left) Bill Auberlen with Perlita Jones, author of this article; Bill Auberlen sharing racing stories; Some of the plentiful hors d'oeuvres.

And what became of that triumphant M6? According to Caleb Jones, writing for *The Drive* magazine on Oct. 9, 2017, "It was announced earlier in the year that the M6 race car used by BMW Team RLL (Rahal Letterman Lanigan) will be replaced next year by the all-new M8 GTE. However, to honor Bill Auberlen, the team will be leaving his winning car in its original livery, continuing on his legacy for years to come."

Bill's reaction was heartfelt. He said, "The really cool part is, they already told me, since this is the biggest win it's won, they're leaving it in that livery. It's got my name all over the thing! That will be cool; it will live in museums and maybe I'll get to drive it again." Certainly, a distinct honor befitting a champion!

At the party, it was a sight to behold: two BMW greats, with Mike introducing topics and asking questions, and Bill answering them. With both seated around a bistro table in a talk-show format that conformed to their genial personalities, they ensured an informal conversation with casual ease instead of a formal "power-point" presentation, ending with a question-and-answer segment with the audience.

But first we were treated to another dazzling video. Here's the background: After his latest victory, Bill was interviewed by Sportscar365 and when asked how he felt upon achieving this magnificent feat, he replied, "It feels great, as you can imagine. I've been with so many amazing people from BMW. The smartest, the best, the fastest. To do 400 races and on the anniversary of my 400th, to win, **there's nothing better.**"

How apropos, therefore, that a video-tribute for him, a masterpiece of Mike Renner's, was titled "**Nobody Does It Better.**" It honored Bill's 400 starts and 151 victories, cementing his place in the annals of BMW racing as the winningest and most successful driver in BMW's history, winning six races in the 2017 IMSA (International Motor Sports Association) WeatherTech Sportscar series alone. He has won in an M3, Z4, and M6. A collage of his racing photos, cars he has raced, and victorious moments with his teammates current and past adorned the screen while Carly Simon's distinctive singing of the 70's anthem from the movie, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, enveloped the room with

nostalgia. It was delightful to catch a glimpse of "JOY" also known as "Never Say Never," the E92 M3 GT2 that Tom Plucinsky (Dept. Head, Product and Technology Communications with BMW North America) and Mike Renner resurrected and transformed into one heck of a race car. The amazing video-tribute ended with a hearty "Congratulations, Bill! We'll do it again when you hit 400 wins!" The grateful man of the hour said he found the video touching and that it was difficult to keep his emotions in check.

(A little sidebar here: How in the world did "Nobody Does It Better," dubbed the swooning and insistently sexy 007 tune, lose to "You Light Up My Life" by one-hit-wonder Debby Boone for the 1977 Academy Award for Best Original Song?? Just wondering.)

Bill inherited his racing genes from his father, Gerd Auberlen, who is originally from Stuttgart, Germany, raced cars, and was friends with an owner of a Porsche repair shop. At 14, Bill started working on cars; at 16, he was building motors; and at 17, he raced for his Dad in Daytona. He has been racing ever since. Since his youth, all he has wanted is to

follow in his Dad's footsteps. Gerd (also called Gary) won Sebring in '85, and Bill won it in '96, '97, and '98. Following in his old man's footsteps with enormous success, indeed!

Bill's stars have been aligned since the beginning. Well, perhaps an occasional misalignment here and there, but things seem to work out for the better in the end. To wit: One of Bill's fondest memories of his young racing career happened in New Orleans when then-owner of IMSA, Charlie Slater, told him during a race, "I'll step out; you drive my Porsche!" What led to this special, unexpected offer? Bill recalled, "This happened because I crashed my car in practice, and I was second in the championship. Charlie Slater stepped out of his car to let me continue going for the championship." *Presto Chango!* Bill's stars realigned, and he wound up qualifying on the pole and actually won the race! He shared that it was an incredible moment for him to have met somebody so generous and kind. He was deeply grateful for the opportunity to drive Charlie's car, which was on the Alex Job Racing team. Obviously, Charlie Slater's confidence was well placed.

Bill's talents and skills did not



(Form Left) Geoffrey Young, winner of the grand prize, flanked by Mike Renner and Bill Auberlin; the man of the hour watching the video-tribute created by Mike.

escape the attention and interest of BMW, which gave him the chance to drive for the *marque*. BMW asked him, "How much would it take?" Bill said he was blown away, thinking, "Hold on a sec! You can get paid to race a car?? There is nothing better in the world when you can get paid to do what you love!"

The watershed moment did come 21 years ago when Bill was on a holiday for the BMW Motorsport Banquet in Kitzbuhel (east of Innsbruck), Austria. There were also ski races in progress, Kitzbuhel being a small Alpine, medieval town of international renown as a luxurious ski resort. He got a call from Porsche asking him to drive a GT1. He did, then went skiing. Shortly thereafter, a seriously alarmed BMW official was asking him for an emergency meeting, saying, "We heard you test-drove a Porsche. You're supposed to sign a contract with us!" A tug of war ensued between Porsche and BMW, with Bill and his Dad giving it a long, hard thought. In the end, he took BMW and has been happy ever since.

Bill has raced the M3 GTR the most. He is intimately familiar with the different personalities of BMWs whose DNA, as we all know, includes

athletic dynamics and razor-sharp aesthetics. He added, "Every time you drive a BMW race car, they have their own souls and do things slightly different from one another. The one thing they all have in common is they win!"

He likened racing the Z4 to performing brain surgery. And what attributes are required of a brain surgeon? Exactly what Bill possesses: an alert mind, sharp eyes, skilled and steady hands, laser focus, inner tranquility, unshakable composure, and full product-knowledge. And as a racer, he has one more: nimble and dexterous feet!

And what are his other strengths as a race-car driver? "Mechanical awareness," he said. "I feel like I know a car inside out. I can pinpoint once something goes wrong, and I can definitely help the engineers."

Another strength? Mike Renner interposed, "If you want it, Bill can drive a car fast. He CAN make a car fast! Few are that talented." Bill's response revealed what I believe is his mantra: "If you go slow, you don't have a job," to which Mike added, "You cannot hide talent."

Any weaknesses? He said there is probably one but cannot give it

away. However, he continued, "A crash makes you conservative; conservative and racing don't go together." But he revealed that when it comes to crashes, "I've raced since I was 17 years old, and have been knocked out 15 times."

He always bounces back, more determined than ever while acknowledging that no racer is immune from setbacks.

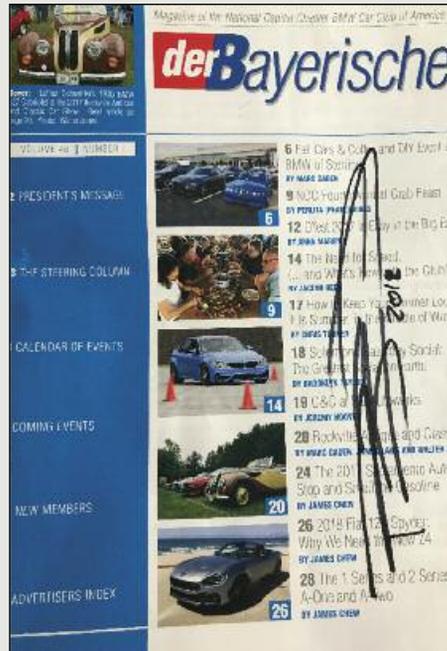
Speaking of another setback of sorts, Bill touched on the subject of BOP (Balance of Performance) after being asked. It is a hot-button issue, with some racers calling BOP the worst three letters in motorsports lexicon, although its expressed *raison d'être* is it is IMSA's way to create an even playing field. Bill was just fresh off 24 Hours of Daytona (Jan. 27-28) where, he lamented, "BOP killed us." As the sportswriter Bradley Brownell of *Jalopnik* explains, "BOP is effectively the means by which the series officials try to level the field on lap time; adding ballast, adjusting pit-stop refueling times, and fitting various diameter engine air restrictors. In a pro class like IMSA's GT *Le Mans*, the point of BOP is to make the race about things like strategy, driver capability, and luck."

In other words, the new BMW M8 GTEs were outstanding (well, what else would you expect from Ultimate Driving Machines?), but the BOP overdid the performance penalty. It gave two Porsches, two Corvettes, and two Ford GTs an unfair advantage, in that they shared the top six starting positions. Brownell further wrote, "Those BMWs got the absolute worst of it, and BOP had done them wrong."

But Bill has taken such hiccups...and the sometimes-disjoined stars in stride.

Besides his innate abilities and focused determination, how has Bill built his storied career? Consistency, for one. It has been the hallmark of his longevity. As Paul Seto opined, "The one thing about Bill that's most amazing is that he's been so consistent throughout the years. For a race-car driver, this means winning, as you essentially have to 'earn' your way onto the team each year."

His consistency also has been instrumental in propelling him into an enviable distinction: Bill is the second all-time victor in North American endurance sportscar racing, with 58 wins so far. Two more and he will be tied with the recently retired Scott Pruett; three more and he will be at the



(From Left) The bountiful swag; der Bayerische autographed by Bill Auberlen; Nathan Ware and Stephanie Collins with the autographed photo she won at the raffle.

very top of the victory list all by himself! Bill has his sights set on winning the *Le Mans* race next. As for pole positions in all of North America, he stands first. ("Pole position" is the position at the inside of the front row at the start of a racing event. It is typically given to the vehicle and driver with the best qualifying time in the trials before the race.)

While enjoying dessert of classic tiramisu and traditional carrot cake, we were further regaled with Bill's stories of race-car drivers pranking one another, like applying grease on steering wheels and taking a car apart and reassembling it inside a room. Yes, racers do need moments of levity as a break from moments of intensity.

Speaking of unwinding from the daily rigors of racing five to six weeks at a time, what does Bill do to let loose? He goes boating and sailing, "the perfect antidote to racing pressures," according to him. He collects and modifies boats to get them to go fast...faster..., and fastest! He calls one of his boats "32 feet of pure excitement!" He installed two 1,500-hp motors that can make a boat glide effortlessly on the lake at 180 to 190 mph! Lake Elsinore in Riverside, CA

is his favorite race track on water; it does not have speed limits.

When a member of the audience asked how he controls the urge to race while on a regular, mundane drive, Bill replied, "I drive really numb until somebody wants to race." Then, watch out! His daily drivers are an M6 and an i8.

There was more to the event's excitement. The raffle is always a fitting cap to the evening. To the generous donors of the bountiful and always-desirable prizes, our heartfelt thanks: BMW Performance Center, Radial Tire Co., BMW of Silver Spring, Sterling, and Annapolis. Geoffrey Young won the free ///M School grand prize, while Paul Seto won the radial tires – four for the price of two. Other prizes were tickets to the MLB Nationals game, jackets, pieces of luggage, headsets (BMW Beats), autographed and framed posters, BMW model cars, wristwatches, messenger bags, purses and backpacks, Smartphone halter, leather care, umbrellas, laptop bags, duffel bags, cuff links, headphones, coffee cups, and many more.

What a lovely evening this was, and everyone had a splendid time. We are the largest and most active

chapter of the BMW Car Club of America, all 5,300+ strong. Among other activities, we participate in ///M school events at the BMW Performance Center and attend the annual VIR (Virginia International Raceway) races in droves, proof-positive that we avail ourselves of BMW CCA offerings and enjoy them. But most important, we appreciate and applaud BMW's illustrious brand ambassadors, two of whom are Bill Auberlen and Mike Renner. Our profound thanks to them. This was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to have Bill come and speak to us. His joining us this year is one for the ages. We hope he will grace other special NCC events again soon.

To summarize what the evening meant to this chapter member:

- 2 tickets to the party = \$130
- A new outfit, high-heeled ankle boots, and accessories = \$295
- 2 airline date-change fees = \$300
- Meeting Bill Auberlen and being regaled with his racing stories = Priceless!

As for the possibly distracting noise from the bowling balls, bowling pins, and bocce balls, we did not hear

any. As far as we were concerned, they were the onslaught of robust guitar riffs by Joe Bonamassa and the electrifying roar of revving engines of Ultimate Driving Machines depicted in Mike Renner's videos!

Epilogue

After Daytona, IMSA revised the BOP guidelines. Some restrictions imposed on the BMW M8 GTE in its maiden race (so-called "baptism by fire") were relaxed. According to Brian Morgan, writing for BimmerLife on Feb. 17, 2018, "The BMW M8 GTE has been granted increased turbo boost levels at higher rev ranges and an additional two liters of fuel capacity in advance of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Series' test days at Sebring on Feb. 20-23."

And how did Team RLL's No. 25 M8 GTE finish at Sebring on March 17? A very impressive first podium on its second race in the challenging GTLM class! In Bill Auberlen's words, it was "running like a rocket," and Team RLL did a fantastic job. No. 25 finished second (missing the top step of the podium by just a few seconds). Congratulations! It will only get better.

February DIY at Craftsman Auto Care

I have always admired the BMW of DIY regular Frank Kapitan. His 2005 X3 likely represents the last BMW SAV model to be offered to the US market with a proper old-school, manual transmission. The six-speed gearbox option was only available on X3's with the larger 3.0 liter engine and very few people ordered them with three pedals. Frank is one of the fortunate ones who still can enjoy rowing the gears while getting the practicality of the ultimate driving SAV.

Frank brought his X3 to the February Do-It-Yourself event at Craftsman Auto Care to scan some codes. As a courtesy, Shop Foreman Mike Reynolds also offered to give Frank's X3 a brief overview inspection. Mike has been working on BMWs for over forty years and knows just what to look for. He examined it for the usual culprits – suspension components, brakes, tires, and leaks. It came as a bit of a surprise, however, when Mike asked to remove a rear wheel so he could check the coil springs.

Mike explained that it is common to see broken rear coil springs on these X3 models and similar generation 3 Series. Water and road sediment can build up and cause the lowest part of the coil spring to rust and weaken.

By Marc Caden



(Top) Ross Tsiomenko drained the automatic transmission fluid on his 1999 750i. (Above) Craftsman Auto Care is conveniently located in Alexandria, Virginia.

In fact, it is usually the very last coil at the bottom that breaks and most people drive around that way without ever realizing it.

After removing a wheel, Mike's suspicion was confirmed and we could plainly see that both of Frank's rear coil springs were broken. Because the part of the coil spring that breaks is at the very bottom, it doesn't usually fall out and any change in ride height is subtle. Back in the old days many shade tree mechanics would purposefully cut a coil spring down to create homemade lowering springs.

I thought about Frank's broken rear coils for a few minutes and felt pretty sorry for him. Then I decided that I better go check out my E46 located just one bay over. I don't need to tell you what I found, right? You guessed it – two broken rear coil springs! What are odds of that? Apparently, a lot higher than I previously would have thought. And, like Frank, I had been driving around with them that way and had no idea whatsoever.

I went home and immediately ordered a new pair of rear coil springs and upper/lower rubber perch mounts. The process to replace them couldn't have been easier and it is the perfect task for an upcoming DIY



event. You jack the car up, remove the rear wheels, and then remove the one lower bolt holding the rear shock in place. After that you can take the OEM scissor jack from your trunk and place it in between the control arm and body of the car. By opening up the scissor jack in this position it creates enough space for you to remove and replace your coil spring. The following weekend I replaced both rear springs on my car in the driveway in a little over an hour. In case you are wondering, I do think the car rides better with the

new set of springs and my car's ride height certainly looks more balanced. I mentioned this to several friends and they noted having broken rear coil springs on other models of cars, including Audi and Mercedes. So apparently this problem isn't limited to just BMWs. What is the moral story? Go out and check your rear coil springs and make sure they aren't broken. Of course, the other moral to this story is the benefit of having a trusted shop like Craftsman Auto Care that knows how to inspect for

these issues. I had never seen anyone check rear coil springs as part of a routine inspection and Mike taught me a valuable lesson. Craftsman Auto Care is a family run shop located in Alexandria, Virginia. The owner, Matt Curry, has been successfully running some of the best independent shops in our area for decades. At Craftsman, he has assembled the same group of trusted technicians that he has worked with for many years – like Mike, Ben, and Drew. Craftsman has a unique “show

‘n’ tell” service that Matt Curry demonstrated for me on the computer. While your vehicle is in for service, the technician takes detailed pictures to support any recommendations made for the service or repair of your car. The pictures will typically contain highlighted arrows or circles to show exactly what needs repair on your car. Depending on your preferred method of communication – the photographs can be sent to you by a text message or email. Many of us buy German cars

(Below from Left) Joseph Concaugh removes the DISA valve on his E46 to gain access to clean the throttle body and ICV; Jedd Vertman removes a wheel from his 2004 325xi to begin replacing his brakes and rotors; Mike Reynolds from Craftsman Auto Care helps Phillip Cummings replace the window regulator on his E39 540i.



because we appreciate the thoughtful engineering that underpins the vehicle. This type of owner is frequently a detail-oriented person who wants to better understand the inner workings of their car (yeah, I am pointing the finger at myself here). As a lawyer, I would say Craftsman's "show 'n' tell" service uses their photographs as supporting evidence. It all makes sense, sure you can trust what they tell you, but sometimes an accompanying picture is, as they say, "worth a thousand words."

Our DIY event started off just right when Phillip Cummings showed up with the jolt we all needed in the form of fresh coffee and donuts the size of your head. Phil and Matt Curry gave us some brief safety instructions and each participant had two hours to finish their planned tasks.

Joseph Concaugh tried to address a jumpy idle in his 2003 330cic. He cleaned the E46's throttle body and idle control valve, and replaced the upper and lower intake boots. Mike Painter brought his 2004 M3 to flush the brake fluid and coolant, and also replaced his rear differential fluid. Ross Tsiomenko brought in his 1999 750il to replace the automatic transmission fluid. Jedd Vertman replaced the rotors



and brake pads on his 2004 325xit. Mark Shaffer did an oil change on his supercharged 1995 325is. Doug Verner also did an oil change on his 2008 M3.

Even though longtime chapter member Brian Lovecchio moved to the Philadelphia area a couple of years ago, he still comes back for many of our DIY events. He replaced the power steering hoses and reservoir on his 2001 330ci. John Francis did an oil change and replaced the coolant, differential fluid, and transmission fluid on his classic 1982 528e (the oldest car at the event).

The DIY committee provided a nice pizza lunch and everyone

finished the projects within the time allotted. Many thanks to Matt Curry and Craftsman Auto Care in

Alexandria for hosting this event! We hope to see you at a DIY event sometime this year.



(Middle from Left) The author's broken rear coil spring next to a new replacement; after you remove the lower bolt holding the rear shock in place, you can use a scissor jack to gain enough space to remove the coil spring.

(Below from Left) The DIY Committee supplied a nice breakfast of coffee and doughnuts; Matt Curry (on right) welcomes participants to Craftsman Auto Care and gives some brief safety instructions.





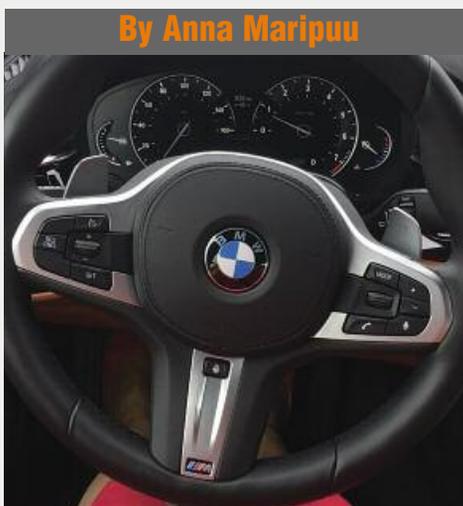
The widely-spaced corporate kidney grills and sharper profile lines running along the doors, make this vehicle look very handsome.

Super Uncle: 530xi Sport Line

Who doesn't enjoy the comfort of big, luxurious cars. They make driving easier, they just do. You can crank the music, sit back, and make the most of your awful commute or long road trip. It's no secret that driving in the DC metro area is stressful. There are often long traffic queues, people are rude and unhelpful in traffic, you end up spending way too much time stuck in a "parking lot" on the highway as you inch forward toward your destination. The roads are of varying quality and drivability, filled with potholes and lined by shoulders you would hardly consider driving on even in an emergency.

It is for this reason that I like being able to turn to my trusty 2010 X3 aka Dumbo aka "the tow-truck". It was manufactured the last year the X3s were built in Austria, before production moved to the South Carolina plant. This version of BMW's sport activity vehicle is the handy uncle you can turn to who would never let you down.

It's dependable and sturdy. It can haul furniture from Ikea or garden supplies from Home Depot. It maneuvers well in almost all road and weather conditions. It takes speed bumps like they aren't even there.



By Anna Maripuu

(Above) The M sport steering wheel with aluminum paddle shifters not only handles great, but feels great to touch.

It doubles as a snow plow when it's snowing. For a "truck" it is stylish and fun to drive, has some real get up and go, and is a pretty fashionable grocery-getter.

I also like cars that can perform and have some significant horsepower. The antithesis and polar opposite to the X3 is my 2013 135is aka Woof Woof aka "the Chihuahua". This vehicle is not so easy to drive with its low-profile tires that have you feeling every imperfection and bump in the road is a growly little noise machine. The unbelievable acceleration, 0-60 mph in 4.5 seconds, and nimble drive train will take you out of a jam quickly or just leave every other car on the road in the dust if you so please. This is your bachelor uncle who lives in a modern glass cube and has a different date every night. He drinks and smokes and drives too fast and takes you on slightly dangerous adventures of which your parents would not approve. While not the most

comfortable ride in the world, this car is fun and adrenaline loaded, far from pedestrian. In its simplicity, the interior is beautiful and Spartan, and it drives like the wind.



(Above Left) The 10.2 inch touch-screen dominates attention in the cabin. (Above Right) Ambient lighting bathes the interior of the cabin making the interior look sleep and welcoming. (Left) The driver's instrument cluster and heads-up display are clear and easy to read, as well as stylish.

ever since it debuted in the X5. I love being able to change the interior accent lighting from blue to orange to green. Two thumbs up (or all ten fingers) for the heated M steering wheel which BMW has managed to manufacture with the most luxurious, soft leather.

On the tech side, BMW seems to have come a long way with its rear-view cameras and park distance control features. Parking this rather large car was a cinch when using these assists.

I would have liked the car even better had it had the 19-inch alloy wheels that are an option on the M sport version. The sport line is fitted with 18-inch double spoke alloy wheels that were certainly accept-

able in their loveliness. The door thresholds lit up with the words "Sport Line" in the same pleasing orange color that is distinctive to BMW instrument panels. And speaking of the instrument panel, BMW somehow manages to make their panels more attractive with every new vehicle. Less orange-dominated than older panels, the instruments were easy to read.

Over the past sixteen years, BMW IT engineers seem to have spent quite bit of time perfecting the iDrive. Their hard work was evident in this car with the iDrive 6.0. It was easy to scroll through the options for navigation, radio, and car settings. One can also use the touch screen, if one prefers, or gesture controls with the appropriate hand motion near the center console. Perhaps it is just that I am accustomed to iDrive by now so I have a sense of how the system works, but in my estimation,

If these two uncles amalgamated into one Super Uncle who has it all, they just might become the next-generation, cutting-edge 2018 530xi sport line (there is also an M Sport version). I'm not a super fan of fussy cars with too much infotainment system stuff going on and most modern cars just can't seem to perform. But this car simply blew me away with its sleek unfussiness and ability on the road. It seemed to be the perfect combination of what you want and need in a car. Large enough to ferry you and your family and friends around in style and comfort as an SAV would, yet peppy and enjoyable to drive, almost handling like a sports car. It's hard to believe that there is as much power as there is in the B46 turbocharged 2.0-liter inline-four engine, but this car will go from 0-60 mph in 5.8 seconds.

One of the reasons it feels so quick is the extensive use of aluminum – including in the trunk lid, doors and suspension parts. This makes the car sprightly and some 123 pounds lighter than the last 5 Series. The redesigned suspension is largely made from aluminum, which helps to reduce unsprung mass.

Let's turn to the facts. The car I drove was a handsome Imperial Blue metallic that shimmered a deep, fathomless shade of lapis lazuli. The interior upholstery was a luxurious cognac Dakota leather with contrast stitching and piping. The interior trim was a dignified shiny burl walnut wood with an important looking anthracite headliner. There was ambient lighting along the dash and door interiors. I've been a sucker for this feature

each new iteration of iDrive seems to be easier to use, more intuitive and more up to date. New to this version is wireless integration of Apple CarPlay. There is no comparison to the level of fussing and figuring out that I usually must do when I rent a Volvo XC90 or a Jaguar F Pace from Hertz.

What I found fun was the gesture control feature. When you want to turn up the volume you simply twirl your finger to the right in the air near the radio, or twirl it to the left to turn the volume down. I felt like Harry Potter performing some kind of Alohomora spell, using my finger instead of a magic wand. Since I love gadgets, I also enjoyed using the same swirly finger gesture to control the camera for a virtual 360-degree view of the car. Somehow this simulates what it would look like if you were standing next to the car. It's kind of a mind-blowing totally out-of-body experience and I don't quite understand how it works, but it is a very cool. You can also use a remote function that utilizes the surround cameras to allow you to see your car's surroundings from your mobile phone. I, for one, would love the ability to "spy" on my car when it is parked!

But here is what I absolutely loved most about this car. Driving it made me feel like the King of the Road. Or the Pasha of the World. Or the Emperor of All Things. I don't think I've every driven a car where the sea seems to part in front of you like you are Moses. As you come sailing along in this regal machine, and I'm not talking about trudging along here, you could be carrying some significant speed, traffic seems to magically move out of the way. Does it? No, of course not, but it certainly feels that way.

And since one is so incredibly comfortable in the driver's seat with the steering wheel heater and seat heaters on, gesturing away to the satellite radio like a conductor leading an orchestra, one couldn't give



(Above) Updated LED taillights and discreet chromed exhaust ports lend to the overall sophisticated look of the 530i.

a fig what the traffic is doing. You could be stopped in bumper to bumper traffic on the beltway or inching along the parkway. Who cares? Are you stressed? Heck no. You rule the world. You can sit back, relax and enjoy the ride. Because you are more comfortable in your car than nine-nine percent of any other driver anywhere. So just enjoy it and when the traffic eases, floor it and leave them all in the dust.

Truth be told, this car is not a sports car but despite all its cushiness, it handles great. It barely leans into the corners, and you hardly feel any throttle lag as it gets up to speed. At the end of the day it is the ultimately comfortable highway cruiser. I even found myself loving the way the steering felt. Believing I was not a fan of electronic steering, in this car, I really couldn't tell the difference. Steering felt precise, firm and snappy.

The car also comes equipped with something called Integral Active Steering which steers all four wheels. I'm going simply quote it the way I've read about it and the way BMW describes it. "Integral Active Steering is a combination of Active Steering and rear axle steering. Active Steering varies the

steering angle of the wheels in relation to the steering wheel movement as a function of the speed. At speeds up to approximately 37 mph, in curves, the steering angle is increased, i.e., steering becomes more direct. The rear-axle steering acts to increase maneuverability by turning the rear wheels slightly in a direction opposite to the front wheels. At higher speeds, the steering angle is increasingly reduced. The rear wheels are turned to the same angle as the front wheels. In critical situations, Integral Active Steering can specifically steer the front and rear wheels to stabilize the vehicle before the driver intervenes, e.g., when braking where road conditions differ on the left and right sides of the vehicle."

Let's not forget the Active Protection System and Remote Services. Remote Services includes Stolen Vehicle Recovery, Remote Door Unlock and BMW Connected app. Active Protection System detects imminent accidents, then prepares by automatically pretensioning safety belts, closing windows and moonroof, and activating post-crash braking. This includes something called the Fatigue and Focus Alert feature. The research I did on this gleaned no

precise description. But I believe in the case of BMW it analyses driving behavior such as steering input and throttle pressure and braking patterns, and, if necessary, advises the driver to rest. The advice to take a break is provided in the form of graphic symbols shown on the Control Display.

Yes, there are a lot of bells and whistles, and I can only imagine how much all these integrated systems cost to fix if/when they go wrong. I wasn't expecting to love this car as much as I did. Although big, it handled nimbly. It allowed me to glide through the hellacious traffic of the DMV effortlessly. I felt zero stress while at its controls. It was almost laughably easy to drive. All in all, this car is comfortable, fun, supremely quiet and quick. Pretty much everything in the cockpit is intuitive and easy to operate. Oh, and did I mention the amazing 16-speaker Bowers and Wilkins sound system (or the less expensive but nearly as good Harmon Kardon setup)? Crank up the volume and sink back into the 20-way adjustable cognac Dakota leather seat. If you happen to take a tight corner the dynamic seat bolsters will gently inflate to counteract the rising G-forces to envelope you in cloudlike comfort. Super Uncle, I miss you already.

(Below) The thresholds light up with the words 'Sport Line' when the doors are opened.





By Steve Tenney

IMSA Sebring

Motorsports in 2018 brings us some new and exciting developments to follow. We have BMW's #Mission8 effort to develop a new purpose-built GTE or GT Le Mans car to race in the IMSA championship in the USA and to compete in the WEC (World Endurance Championship) in Europe and other parts of the world. Most notably BMW plans to enter this car in the Le Mans 24 Hour race, perhaps the largest most famous race in the world. BMW continues to support the M6 GT3 race car that is intended to be a customer effort and will continue for the next few years. Turner Motorsports will run their familiar M6 in GTD in the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA); teams throughout the world will compete in various series as a customer to BMW. The new M8 will be the basis for the new GTLM car that the factory will use as its competitive machine and take to Le Mans in 2018.

to the overly restricted Turbo boost ratios of the BoP. The BoP has been the topic to begin each of the last few seasons. The fact is, IMSA has a December test, as well as the Roar Before the 24 in January where the BoP can be seen for how it limits the performance of the car and adjustments can be made. In conversations with team members it was clear that the M8 was in trouble since the M6 was passing it on the banking at Daytona.

So again, to start this year at Daytona, BMW Team RLL knew that they were not going to compete for a win. Unlike last year where not much was said in public, this year there were loud complaints and even the suggestion that BMW might not continue with the IMSA season. So changes were made for the February test at Sebring and then a second set of adjustments after the results of the test were reviewed. IMSA is supposed to have telemetry so



(Above) Part of the Sebring 12 Hour celebration, electric palm trees outside Turn 3 (Kristensen Corner). (Right) The new M8 GTE.

We saw the debut of the M8 at Daytona and that it struggled for speed on the banking, but in the end both cars finished and that was a significant accomplishment. If you read the comments after the race, it was clear that from the top down everyone at BMW was pointing at what they described as a very unfair Balance of Performance (BoP) that the IMSA applied to the M8 GTE to start the season. Obviously, the drivers and teams know how fast their cars are and the BMW Team RLL team was quite clear that they didn't have enough speed due



12-Hour Weekend

they can tell if the team and driver are sandbagging and holding back to trick the BoP system. It's hard to prove that they do since they take some time to make the appropriate adjustments to the engine power map for the BMW. After the second BoP adjustment for Sebring it was with much interest that we approached qualifying and the race.

In addition to the new M8 GTE in IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship (WSC), we

are also seeing the debut of the M4 GT4 in the Continental SportsCar Challenge, GS class, a supporting event to the WSC at Sebring. Numerous manufacturers from Chevrolet and Ford to Porsche and BMW have adopted the Federation Internationale De L'Automobile (FIA) GT4 classification for sports car competition. The Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge (CTSC) once saw success of the E92 M3 as it was competed by many

teams still participating. In the times of the E92 M3 the race teams had to build and develop the car themselves. There was some help from BMW, but generally the teams conducted the development of the cars. When the F82/83 M3/M4 platform came along, the development costs were felt to be far too high for the teams themselves to build their own cars and conduct the development. There was even a plan for the teams to work together to





Grohovec won the championship in 2016. Classic continued to field cars in the Pirelli series in 2017 but they have embraced the M4 GT4 both in the PWC and now in the CTSC. Bimmerworld has acquired cars, as has Turner Motorsports, so a couple of our traditional BMW teams may return with the new customer GT4 platform. This will become very interesting for us BMW enthusiasts.

Practices were interesting with so many new cars to follow both in the WeatherTech Series and the

(Above) The M4 GT4 as driven by Toby Grohovec & Jason Clunie. (Below) The Bimmerworld M4 GT4.

develop the car but that still didn't come about. With the development of the FIA GT4 set of regulations and the adoption of the GT4 platform for the CTSC the acquisition of a factory-developed racecar became a viable approach for the teams to take. Last August at VIR, James Clay (Bimmerworld) told us how different it would be to spend a large amount of money to purchase the car, but almost no development work. They would have to learn how to exploit the car, but any development would come from the factory and they would have factory support. James Clay also suggested that Bimmerworld would be interested in the M4 GT4.

Where the CTSC has been less interesting (to those of us following



BMW), for 2018 it would be very different and there will be another championship to follow. US teams have purchased a number of cars. Classic BMW in Plano, Texas has

been an enthusiastic participant racing these new BMW customer program racecars. They began racing the M235iR in the Pirelli World Challenge (PWC) where Toby

Continental Challenge. In the CTSC, where the M4 GT4 didn't qualify well at Daytona, but the Bimmerworld car with James Clay & Tyler Cooke driving finished an impressive 2nd

(Below) Connor De Phillippi in the #25 M8 GTE, shown here in night practice.





viding the car sufficiently more horsepower at higher engine speeds. The cars seemed in the mix throughout the practices starting at 6&7 in practice 1, in practice 2 4&5, then in night practice 2&6 followed by 1&2 in the last practice before qualifying. The first clue of the speed to come was Connor De Phillippi placing the #25 in 2nd in night practice. It looked like they were on the right track, but even the team was looking for the other teams to bounce back with more speed. In qualifying, Connor De Phillippi put the #25 M8 GTE on the pole with Jesse Krohn putting the #24 car in 3rd.

Competition was coming from the Ferrari with the two Ford GTs not far behind. With the Corvettes and the Porsches at the back of the group. There was only a second across all nine cars, so this was a very competitive class. One would have to acknowledge that the BoP was working.

In GTD, the class for the FIA GT3 cars, we also had Turner Motorsports returning with their M6 GT3 lead by Markus Paltala (FIN) with Don Yount (US) and Dillon MacHavern (US). We can always count on Will Turner to do his best to put a well-prepared car on the circuit.

The race began under clear skies under almost perfect weather

after qualifying 19th. Bimmerworld struggled with handling at Sebring, still qualifying as the highest placed BMW, placing them in 7th. The Classic BMW M4 GT4 driven by Toby Grahovec & Jason Clunie qualified in 15th with the second Classic M4 driven by Mike Vess & Jason Hart unclassified.

For the 2-hour race the Bimmerworld and Grahovec Classic M4s did well competing at the front. James Clay told me that the M4 GT4 has good power and they are working out the handling. Their results have been very impressive with the

Clay/Cooke team being a very well matched performing very closely. At Sebring, the Bimmerworld car looked like it was headed for a podium finish, but they were given a penalty for "avoidable contact" and fell back to finish in 11th. The Grahovec & Clunie #26 BMW came through with another podium for BMW in the CTSC finishing in 2nd. This was a great result for BMW and Classic BMW.

Drivers for BMW Team RLL during the long distance races at Daytona and Sebring would be: #24: Jesse Krohn (FIN), John Edwards

(US) and Nick Catsburg (NED), #25: Bill Auberlen (US), Alexander Sims (UK) and Connor De Phillippi (US). Bill Auberlen longtime celebrated driver for BMW will reduce his role this year driving the long-distance races and acting as a BMW NA Brand Ambassador. Connor De Phillippi is coming to BMW from Porsche & Audi where he has spent the last five years in Europe most recently co-driving a win in the Nurburgring 24 and at Petit Le Mans. For the WSC, we will be watching the comparative performance of the M8 GTE with a new BoP hopefully pro-

(Above) The #25 in turn 1 as the sunsets on night practice. (Below) The Turner Motorsports M6 GTD car.





conditions. Connor De Phillippi lead the GTLM group as the race started. Jesse Krohn was able to get by on the first lap and the order after the first lap showed the two BMWs in front of GTLM, but with Krohn in first and De Phillippi in second.

This continued until the first yellow at 12 laps where De Phillippi pitted leaving Krohn in the lead which he held until he pitted under green at 28 laps. It's a long race, for the first full stint, Krohn had held the GTLM lead for BMW. It was a really good start. The first major incident

(Top) The De Phillippi M8 GTE leading GTLM. (Above) De Phillippi leads GTLM with the Ferrari and Porsche just behind. (Below) Jesse Krohn pressurizing Alessandro Pier Giudi.



affecting the BMW was a collision between the #24 car and the #66 Ford GT, which caused a water leak and required extensive repairs costing the #24 nine laps that, could not be regained. The car would return and run well only to retire near the end.

At about mid-race we saw a train of GTLM cars headed again by the #25 car driven by Connor De Phillippi followed by Toni Vilander in the #62 Ferrari, Nick Tandy in the #911 Porsche, Laurens Vanthoor in the #912 Porsche and Scott Dixon in the #67 Ford GT.

There were also some of the other GTLM cars laps down, but in the mix with the lead lap GTLM group. This included John Edwards and later Jesse Krohn in the #24 car some eight laps down but doing very competitive lap times. Watching in turn 5, I could see De Phillippi beginning to struggle with tire grip until he finally got offline enough for Vilander to get by him and into the GTLM lead. It was interesting to watch De Phillippi working the steering trying to hold onto the position, only to eventually lose grip and end up offline, nearly off track in 5 and Vilander made the pass. Toni Vilander is one of the top GT racers in the world. This caused De Phillippi to drop to second. Following this Nick Tandy also got by and then a pit stop by De Phillippi as well as Tandy, I can only assume to change tires. Eventually Vilander also pitted and Alessandro Pier Guidi took over the Ferrari. Jesse Krohn, even though 8 laps down, began pressurizing Pier Guidi as he had similar problems with grip from the tires. In the heat of the day, at about half race distance, they all seemed to be having grip problems with the greasy Sebring track.

It made for interesting racing and spectating. Maybe it was the greasy nature of the track, but the two Porsche's began to show some strength here and playing a strong part of the GTLM mix. Bill Auberlen took over the #25 car and began to

do good lap times in the sub 1:59 range. It was Bill who began to take up the chase of the two Porsches with the Ferrari and Vilander back in the lead.

Auberlen pitted with about 1 hour and 55 minutes left in the race and Alexander Sims got in the #25 to take up the chase to the end. The course was under yellow until about 1 hour and 35 minutes remaining. Once the restart happened, you could see the spacing between the #911 and the #25 cars decrease as Sims went to work. I was watching the live timing and Sims laps were just below 2:00 and Tandy in the #911 were slightly above. The gap began to shrink. However, with the race coming to an end, Tandy (in the #911 Porsche) was able to create a gap between himself and Sims and the race came to an end. Tandy and Porsche taking the GTLM class with Sims and the BMW in second.



(Above) Alexander Sims presses forward as the sun sets.

It was great to watch and both drivers expressed later how much fun it was to compete with one another. Even though the #24 M8 was out of

the top finishing positions due the early collision, Jesse Krohn recorded the fastest GTLM lap of the race at 1:57.622. We can hope that

we will see more of this speed & competition and that BMW comes out on top.

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The 2018 BMW 430i M-Sport with 6-speed Manual



What's Not To Love?

By James Chew

Having not driven this particular road for some time, the upcoming curve came as a bit of a surprise. Traveling at a rapid (but safe for the conditions) pace, I had to slow down significantly to take the curve safely. My driving instincts suddenly kicked in:

- Apply the brakes with the properly positioned right foot. Braking action continues throughout the remaining four steps
- Depress the clutch pedal with left foot
- While still on the brakes, roll right foot to the right and onto the throttle pedal to "blip" the throttle to match the engine's rpms with the expected wheel speed
- Move the transmission shifter to shift simultaneously into a lower gear
- Release the clutch pedal
- Quickly repeat if needed

Smoothly accelerating out of the curve to get back up to speed, I glanced over at my 88-year-old father who was in the front passenger seat. He was enjoying the scenery along the side of the road to Laguna Seca. Not in the least did he notice my perfect "heel-and-toe" action.

But the smile on my face communicated all of that for me at that moment, it was good to be alive. To be stretching the driving legs of a



*(Opposite page) It's best to drive a BMW when you're meeting with BMW!
 (Above) For all BMW enthusiasts, this should be a VERY comforting view.
 (Below) Smooth, sleek, and tasteful, the 430i has a timeless side profile.*

perfectly balanced rear-wheel-drive 430i with M-Sport package and a six-speed manual transmission is about as close to heaven as a BMW enthusiast can get.

As we drove by the entrance of the Laguna Seca raceway, I thought

that it was a shame that Laguna Seca did not operate like Nurburgring. Having the ability to pay a fee to drive the Laguna Seca track with that 430i would be pure joy. But there was the matter of what to do with my father while I was

navigating the corkscrew, along with that clause in the loan agreement that I am not allowed to drive the vehicle on a race track.

While there is a certain romance in manual shifting, the practical reality is that today's driver would rather use their driving "workload" to either find the perfect tune, chat on a phone, watch a video, experiment with the car's telematics features, eat, drink, or change clothes. The practical reality for the auto manufacturers is that, despite their professed love for it, Americans in general don't know how to drive a manual shifter, which results in high warranty costs, and later high maintenance costs, which ultimately creates ill will toward the manufacturers.

Every time I drive a manual-transmission car, everything I both love AND hate about manual shifters comes back. The bottom line is that the typical American roads and typical American daily driving conditions are not "manual-transmission" friendly. Even the most experienced of us has stalled a manual transmission car while avoiding an auto accident.

Nonetheless, for one joyful week the wonderful six-speed manual shifter on our 2018 430i REAR-WHEEL-DRIVE M-Sport package test vehicle helped us realize the full driving potential of the "Ultimate Driving Machine."



The attractiveness of the exterior and interior caught me off guard. The “Snapper Rocks Blue Metallic” exterior with the Cognac Leather with dark brown highlights interior is simply stunning. Looking more like vehicles that are three to four times as expensive, the color combination showcases the 4 Series’ timeless design, performance, and beauty. The M-package, which adds the very attractive M star-spoke wheels and dark carbon exterior trim, added to the connoted performance.

Using the now familiar double-pull to unlatch the hood, I was not surprised to see the large plastic covers that dominated the engine bay. Someday, I’d like to ask a BMW engineer or BMW designer why they now feel the need to cover the entire compartment with hard plastic. If it’s for aesthetics, they clearly failed. Frankly, I think most BMW enthusiasts would rather see an engine and the powertrain components when they opened the hood rather than large hard-plastic covers.

Then again, I can’t think of anyone other than myself who regularly opens the hood when fueling a vehicle.

Underneath all that plastic is the now tried and true 2.0-liter TwinPower Turbo four-cylinder engine. Producing 248 horsepower and 258 foot-pounds of torque (with



(Above) The truck lid open high and wide to reveal a large, practical cargo area (yes, that’s a BMW suitcase).

a nice, wide, and long torque curve) this engine will make even the biggest “Me Drive Fast” lugnut wondering if this is an M-vehicle. Assuming, of course, the lugnut knows how to drive a manual shifter.

The 4 Series Coupe doors open wide, allowing the rear passengers to enter and exit gracefully. Once inside, the rear passengers will find an inviting and comfortable seating environment. While designed to accommodate up to three adults comfortably, we found the maximum accommodations much better suited for two and a child.

Trunk space and rear cargo accessibility have always been the Achilles heel of coupe design. BMW

managed to develop a trunk design in which the lid opens high and out of the way, revealing a large opening to a cavernous cargo area. The rear seats also fold individually to accommodate those weekend “big box warehouse” shopping trips.

While practicality is a major reason why people buy German designed and engineered vehicles, the driving experience is why people buy BMWs. And as expected, this is another area where the 430i Coupe excels.

This is no exaggeration – you don’t sit in a 430i, you wear it. Seldom have I sat behind a wheel of a sports car and felt as comfortable. All the drivers’ controls, climate controls, and

iDrive were at the correct, instinctive location. Don’t waste money on a heads-up display – interior and exterior vision is outstanding. The driver’s seat and the steering wheel needed a little adjustment to feel “right.” And the locations and height of those blessed three pedals allowed for instinctive “heel-and-toe” driving.

And every driving enthusiast will want to DRIVE this car. The near 50/50 weight distribution, responsive throttle, and outstanding handling will always have you seeking the longest way to drive to a location. Driving the streets of San Francisco was a joy – parallel parking was a breeze. You and your passengers won’t feel exhausted after long drives. Because of all of our driving, we appreciated one of the seldom-mentioned benefits from the 2.0-liter TwinPower Turbo engine; its average fuel economy. Even with spirited driving, we averaged close to 30 miles per gallon during our 1000-mile evaluation.

Following our evaluation period, two things struck me. First, not once did I yearn for the 4 Series convertible. Second, the last time a car left such a favorable driving impression was in the mid 1980s- with the Porsche 944.

When I was younger, I noticed



(Above from Left) This inviting view is NOT found in most cars; the rear passenger area is easily accessed and can fit two “American-sized” adults.



(Above) So WHY is this called "heel-and-toe?"

that most experienced car enthusiasts enjoyed driving the "ultimate" performance versions of vehicles, but tended to own the "approachable" versions. In my younger days when I was a dyed-in-the-wool Dodge enthusiast, I owned a Shelby GLHS, a Shelby Lancer, and a Dodge Durango R/T. After buying more than a few sets of very expensive Goodyear Gatorback tires, replacing some very expensive, exclusive-to-that-model parts, and paying at the pump while enduring overly harsh rides, I saw the light. The final insult was that these exclusive, "ultimate" packages barely increased resale value.

Our 2018 430i Coupe M-Sport package test vehicle with six-speed manual was equipped as how the

"typical" BMW enthusiast would configure his or her vehicle. With the "Essentials" package (keyless entry, park distance control, satellite radio, "Premium" package (heated front seats, navigation) and "M-Sport" package, our evaluation vehicle had a retail price of \$52,695. This is one of those types of vehicles that you would rather purchase than lease. So, the sticker price is a rather reasonable starting point for the final sales price negotiation.

Maybe it's called "growing up". While I really enjoy driving the BMW M-Series vehicles at the BMW performance centers and at

BMW driving events, thoughts of ownership never crossed my mind. Now, if I come across a 2, 3, or 4 Series with the M-Sport package and manual transmission – that's another story.

Despite a strong desire to return to Southern California, it appears that I'll be in the mid-Atlantic region for the foreseeable future. So, I'll need to augment my 135i convertible, most likely with a certified pre-owned X1. But if my search locates a rear-wheel-drive 4 Series with the M-Sport package and a manual transmission, I'll take it.

One More Thing:

Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking with a fellow BMW CCA member about BMWs. After a while, he told me that he was seeking a "pre-electronic-steering" BMW. When I asked if he's ever driven a BMW with electronic steering, he said no. Having read all the "buff book" reviews on BMWs equipped in this manner left him with a bad impression.

For all of you who read my articles, I first thank you. But let me make one thing clear: my "reviews" are for entertainment - providing my driving impressions while I travel to interesting places and get to experience interesting things. As far as I'm concerned, the pioneering auto journalists, who know both journalism and the auto business, who created the "buff books" have long been replaced by the millennial "me like cars, me drive fast" hacks who are readily influenced with trips, shrimp, and chips. If you want to know how a certain car feels, drive one. Then make your own decision.



(Above) There's a proven TwinPower Turbo 2.0 4 underneath all that plastic!
(Below) If you don't just want to get in and drive, you need to check your pulse.



(Top) and Above) Underneath the trunk floor panel are some handy storage areas. And the many BMW tools are easily found.



2018 Mini Countryman Cooper S E ALL4

Mini to the Max

By James Chew



In 1994, BMW AG did something that left the Auto world scratching its collective head. BMW purchased the Rover Group from British Aerospace. While the Rover Group had both Land Rover and Mini, both were considered uncompetitive has-been brands. This perception, coupled with a rather high price tag and the questionable business case, cost the BMW CEO and the BMW President, both considered rising stars in the Auto world, their jobs.

Based on real results of that acquisition, BMW AG may owe Mr. Pischetsrieder and Mr. Reitzle an apology and a word of thanks. Even though BMW sold Rover in 2000, the resulting X5 started a sea change within BMW, creating the “SAV” market. These popular and highly profitable SAVs, all made in America, will soon account for more than 50% of BMW’s world-wide sales.

BMW kept the Mini during the 2000 sale of Rover Group. Mini not only provided a much-needed innovation spark within the BMW product development, marketing, and sales organizations, but has resulted in a new, profitable modular powertrain platform design that ensures that no matter the driver wheel configuration – rear, all, or front; or the type of engine – internal combustion; hybrid electric, or fully electric – the resulting products will drive like an Ultimate Driving Machine and be profitable. What may be a hollow victory for Mr. Pischetsrieder and Mr. Reitzle, their bold purchase may ensure that BMW stays an independent company for the rest of this century.

And who can forget the “hip” way Mini created a new youth market when it was launched? Launched at the same time as Toyota’s Scion brand, the Honda Element, and the Nissan Cube, the Mini brand is still going strong. On the other hand, Scion, the Element, and the Cube have all gone to the big car lot in the sky.

The 2018 Mini Cooper Countryman S E ALL4 is a prime example of how Mini stays relevant and keeps its leadership in the premium small-vehicle market. Other than having the same type of ridiculously long, run-on name as their BMW products, the Countryman S E ALL4 is all Mini.

When it was launched, the market overwhelmingly approved of a German-engineered English compact car. BMW knew that it had to broaden the appeal of the Mini brand in order to build on this new-found brand equity and

retain these loyal buyers. So they looked through the Mini history books and found one of the first, larger Mini products – the Countryman. As with the 1960’s era Countryman, the first generation “modern” Countryman featured barn-style rear doors. As you may recall from our “Jumbo Shrimp” article, we rather enjoyed that generation Countryman.

The all-new Mini Countryman serves as much as a technology and engineering showcase for BMW as it does the to retain Mini owner and to capture new Mini buyers.

The Mini Countryman shares the same “modular” chassis with the BMW X1. Drive both the Mini Countryman and the X1 and you’ll immediately appreciate the design and engineering used to create two distinct products from the same chassis. The successful development of two distinct products from this modular chassis architecture must have been a shot in the arm to both the BMW and Mini product development teams. As discussed in the Los Angeles Auto Show article, the tsunami of new BMW and Mini products is due to the confidence the BMW and Mini design teams have in this new chassis architecture.

Using this new chassis resulted in a larger Countryman. Growing close to nine inches in length and three inches longer in the wheelbase, the new Countryman has a more compliant ride than the previous generation, but still has the trademark Mini “tossability.”

Minis have always appealed to the young and the young-at-heart. Today’s young and young-at-heart expect their vehicles to have the latest in technology. The Countryman S E ALL4 does not disappoint.



(Opposite page) The “Green” Mini now comes in “Large.”
(Above) The driver’s area is a study in space-efficient design.



(Right) There is NO mistaking this powertrain for anything but a hybrid!

To satisfy the “Green” and the “green-at-heart,” the “E” is the plug-in hybrid model. The “green at heart” is because the “all-electric-only” range is about 12 miles. But the total fuel economy gains from this hybrid powertrain are impressive. During our evaluation, we visited the gas station only once. And that was to top off the tank before returning the car!

The Mini designers cleverly integrated the aesthetics from the hybrid plug-in into the exterior design. Rather than using the “stealthy” design used by other plug-in hybrids, the left fender plug door is instead an “e” badge. There’s a matching “e” badge on the right fender.

The “ALL4” connotes all-wheel drive, but here’s where it gets a little tricky. The gasoline engine powers the front wheels while an electric motor powers the rear ones. The “ALL4” system normally distributes the power 50/50 to both the front and rear wheels. Under certain conditions, the ALL4 system

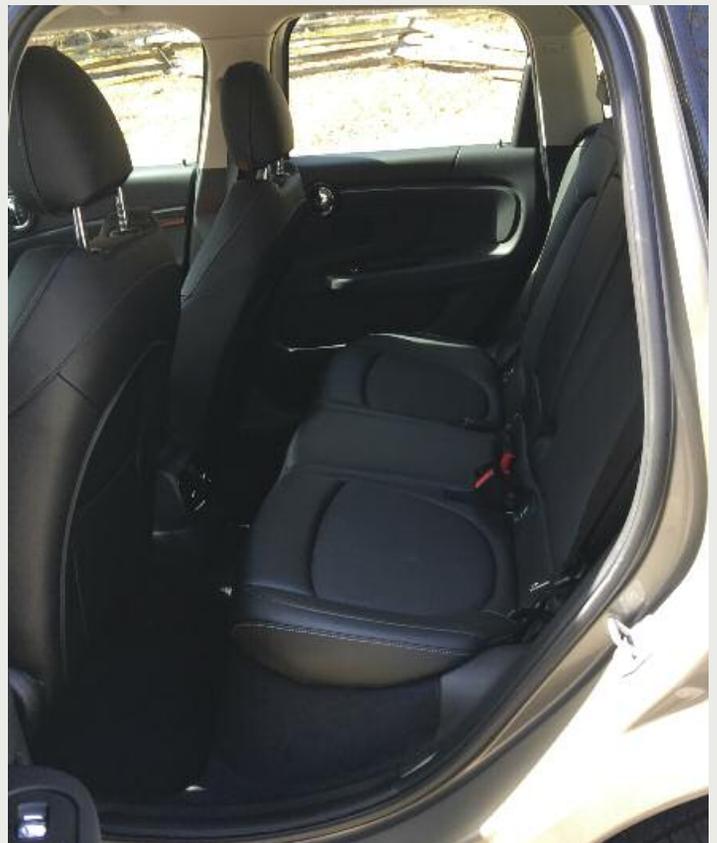


|(Above) It may be called “Mini”, but it is quite roomy!

distributes 100 percent of the power to the front wheels. If the All4 system senses that front wheels have no traction, it distributes 100 percent of the power to the rear wheels.

There is no mistaking the Countryman for anything but a Mini. The exterior design has the classic Mini-design cues. Looking like a Mini Cooper on steroids, the Countryman has the classic Mini front and rear design. Even though it’s long enough to accommodate four doors, the Countryman still has the classic Mini profile. The new Countryman no longer has the rear “barn doors” – they’ve been replaced with a conventional upward swinging rear hatch.

The interior has all the modern Mini design cues. A large circular dial dominates the dash. For the first generation “modern” Mini, the speedometer was located in that area. The speedometer and other gauges have since been relocated to be in front of the driver. But that large center dial now houses the “smart screen” to include the



|(Above from Left) Roomy and airy, the driver’s and front passenger area is quite inviting; the rear passenger area is just as delightful.



|(Above) The “e-Badge” is prominently displayed on both front fenders.



|(Above) But the power plug is located only on the driver's side fender.



|(Above) Now THIS is a “kid-activity-friendly” cargo area!



|(Above) The rear seats fold down or the weekend “big box” warehouse store shopping runs.

infotainment system, navigation systems, and screen for the rear camera.

With the practicality that we’ve come to expect from a Mini, the Countryman’s seemingly small exterior cleverly hides the large, useful interior. This vehicle can be driven easily in any urban setting, while be just as handy for the weekend suburban “big box” warehouse shopping trips.

Even with an automatic transmission, the Mini Countryman is a blast to drive. The “Let’s Motor” attitude seems to be prevalent with Mini drivers and the Countryman does not disappoint. A Mini Cooper driver would feel right at home driving this new Countryman. Best of all, the driver could comfort-

ably fit three friends and their luggage for an adventuresome road trip.

The 2018 Mini Countryman S E ALL4 is a technology wonder that will retain the loyal Mini owner while attracting small families that are seeking a practical, fun to drive family vehicle that they won’t readily outgrow, or the empty-nester couple that is looking to downsize.

Hopefully, Mr. Pischetsrieder and Mr. Reitzel will look at the vehicle and feel proud.





Straight from the Students' Mouths!

Every year, NCC Autocross hosts a Novice School at the beginning of the season for those new to the driving event. Experienced and seasoned autocross drivers explain the rules, the ins and outs, and teach students how to read the course, as well as provide ample seat time to give everyone a hands-on approach to learning.

This year, the committee decided that hearing directly from students about their Novice School experience would be the best way for you, the reader, to better understand just what autocross is all about and what our events can offer!

Below are a handful of the answers we received. Take a look and see that whether a long-time member or brand-spanking new, everyone can have fun, learn new skills, and better understand their car in a controlled environment!

Student: Mark Luesse

Q1: How long have you been a BMW CCA member?

A1: I joined shortly after taking delivery of my 2018 M2 in October.

Q2: What other club activities have you or do you normally participate in?

By Jaclyn Heck | Photos by Jaclyn Heck



(Top) **Blue beauty.** A novice turns loose his beautiful blue BMW on the course after a day of learning. (Above) **One with your car.** Autocross gives even the best drivers the chance to learn the feel of their car and how it handles.

A2: So far, this was my first, but I intend to join in for some of the Summit Point HPDE events as time and money permit.

Q3: What made you want to register for and take the NCC Autocross Novice School?

A3: I wanted to learn to better handle my car in a safe environment and was curious about whether I could be competitive. I thought coming out before a points event would be a lower-key way to give it a try.

Q4: Now that you have been through the school, do you think that you will participate in future NCC Autocross events?

A4: This fed an already budding addiction and after posting the best time on Saturday, it has become acute. Now I want to come out and play with the big kids - in other words, I'm hooked!

Q5: Was Autocross what you thought it would be when you signed up?

A5: Pretty much. I liked the participants I met and the volunteers were awesome. All that was missing was warm weather!

Q6: What, if any, other thoughts, insight, or comments do you wish to



(Above) **Off to the races.** With an instructor riding passenger, our novices learn to look ahead and properly read a course.

make about autocross or the school?

A6: The best part about the schools was enough seat time to really work on skills. The fact that the morning allowed sessions on two separate tracks was great.

Student: Rick Lee

A1: I have been a BMW CCA member for twenty years. As a matter of fact, I just received a '20-year' pin about a month ago.

A2: Over the years I have been to a number of HPDE events, mostly at Summit Point with three different cars.

A3: I really enjoy driving, especially in a BMW, but I had never seen or attended an autocross. I know several guys that do autocross and it sounds like something that would be fun. The novice event was perfect because we were all basically in the same boat so you don't feel like you're the only person that doesn't know how it all works or what to expect.

A4: I feel certain that I will do it again.

A5: Honestly, I wasn't sure what to expect. In the emails that came describing the event they say it is a low speed event. That may be true but, honestly I was so busy with

the course there is no time to look at the dashboard so it sure seems like you're going faster than the actual speed. I like the fact that it requires quick reactions and it makes you look ahead to anticipate. Unlike the track, there is no time between maneuvers to get settled, it is all happening right now!

A6: All the people that I met both from the club and the other participants were very friendly and anxious to help. It would have been nice if the weather was just a touch warmer but we all survived. The day was handled very professionally and it was a fun time.

Student: Andrew Caden

A1: I am only 16 years old and joined the BMW CCA through our family membership when I got my driver's license.

A2: I have attended the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix for the last few years and I have also attended the Oak Tree Grand Prix ALMS race a few years ago. I have been attending autocross events as a passenger riding with my dad for the last four years. Now that I have a license, my dad and I intend to share a car as co-drivers at upcoming autocross events.

A3: Being my dad's autocross

passenger for the last few years has been an amazing experience. I have gotten to ride in a lot of cool cars at speed that I would have never otherwise experienced - like a Ferrari 430, Noble, Lotus, M2, M3/4, and even a classic 2002. While I wasn't yet a driver, being a passenger helped teach me some of the fundamentals of car control such as understeer, oversteer, and trail braking. It also helped me learn how to memorize an autocross course and find the fastest line. If you aren't ready to autocross yet, come out and watch an event and ask someone for a ride along!

A4: Yes, I plan to drive the entire season of autocross events.

A5: Everyone at an autocross event

becomes part of a community that is constantly encouraging each other to find a way to improve their driving skills. Advice is always friendly, helpful, and can come in many forms.

A6: At just 16 years old, I was the youngest participant at the autocross school by a pretty large margin. Young drivers like me stand to gain the most from autocross because we can learn car control skills at an early age and in a safe environment. In autocross, you drive on a wide-open parking lot and about the only thing you can hit is a traffic cone. Getting to learn the limits of my car in a safe environment makes me feel better equipped to handle real life emergency situations that I could encounter on the open road.



(Above) **Come one, come all.** Old or new, longtime member or brand new, all members and cars are welcome as long as you have fun!



(Above) **Speeding through the course.** After drills and instruction, novices are let loose on the course and pick up speed.



(Above) **Quick reflexes.** Autocross teaches quick reaction time and how to anticipate for maximum efficiency.

I would encourage parents to sign their young driver up for an autocross - instructors are available to teach at every event. And, as my dad and I have found out, it is a fun parent/child event that can be enjoyed together.

Student: Eugene Warren

A1: Seventeen years.

A2: DIY, Chapter Fest, Annual Dinner, tours.

A3: While in the Army and stationed in Germany I ran an Italian version of the Mini Cooper in Sports Car Club of Stuttgart events. Life kept me from picking it up again. I did send my wife and daughter to one of your schools four years ago. My wife drove her Z4M and my daughter drove her Mini Cooper S.

A4: Yes, I believe I will.

A5: Yes. It was a chance to play with my very modified M235i!

A6: I appreciate you guys volunteering to hold the school and events. My wife and I are the Maryland Reps for the Z-Series Sports Club of America (BMWCCA SIG) and fully understand what it means to volunteer!

Student: Art Mitchell

A1: Under one year.

A2: This was my first event.

A3: I wanted to learn more about driving and autocross in general before trying it out.

A4: I plan to participate in everyone I can make!

A5: It was better than expected. Despite being 'slow speed racing,' the driving skill and reflexes needed are fast. It was a total thrill.

A6: The event was great. All the

support staff and instructors I met were friendly and helpful. I'm looking forward to the next autocross event!

Student: Adam Sharp

A1: About five months.

A2: Social dinners. I plan to do the DIYs too.

A3: I wanted to learn some high-performance driving skills and see what autocross was all about.

A4: I absolutely will be doing more!

A5: It was mostly what I expected. I thought I'd get less runs in. My instructor, Eric, was far better than I expected; he was excellent.

A6: I'd love it if instructors could also educate on modifications for the car, especially after riding in it. That would be helpful. Same with explaining the basic effects on handling of inflating tires, adjusting sway bars, etc.

Upcoming Schedule

- 5/12 - Points Event #2 - Summit Point, Washington Circuit (Chapter-wide event)
- 6/2 - Test and Tune - Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf
- 6/9 - Points Event #3 - Bowie Baysox Stadium, Bowie
- 8/5 - Points Event #4 - Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf
- 9/9 - Points Event #5 - Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf
- 10/13 - Points Event #6 - Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf



(Below) **Radiant in red.** Novices are taught how to read an autocross course, and then get to put that knowledge into practice.



(Below) **I feel the need, the need for speed.** Autocross allows drivers to have fun, drive fast, and do so in a controlled environment.





NEW MEMBERS



The National Capital Chapter of the BMW CCA now has 5,063 members. We continue to be the largest chapter in the U.S.

Do you know someone who owns a BMW, but is missing out on the rewards of belonging to the BMW CCA? They probably don't even real-

ize what great benefits they are missing, including parts discounts at local BMW dealerships and select independent service centers, the *Roundel*, the club's award-winning national, monthly publication, the Membership Rewards Program sponsored by BMW NA, and all of

our local chapter activities. Please do them a favor and share this with them – after all, the more the merrier!

To our newest members listed below, you joined the club, now join the fun! Check out our Web site at for the latest event details.

Note: If your name is spelled

incorrectly, please use the address change form found under the "Join and Renew" menu item at www.bmwcca.org to correct it. And, for those whose memberships are about to expire, it's easy to renew online at this Web site as well.



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