

WINTER 2016

Whispering Bomb

BMW Car Club
of America
Los Angeles Chapter



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OF THE BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA
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COVER/BACK COVER:

BMW headquarters known affectionately as the '4-cylinder' in Munich; with the BMW museum rotunda entrance to the lower right. See full article on pages 10-11.
Photos by Baabak Afshar

The Path Best Traveled...

by Kurt Helm, President

Welcome to 2016! I hope that each and every one of you had a great holiday season.

The start of a new year always seems to bring resolutions for everyone and I'm no exception. Some resolutions require a lot of effort to reach our goals, while other resolutions are considerably easier.

For your Chapter Board of Directors and volunteers, one of our resolutions is to fill the 2016 calendar with activities that we hope our members will participate in and enjoy over the coming year. Many of these activities have opportunities for you to become involved as a volunteer and we encourage you to do so – it's a lot of work but it comes with a lot of fun as well.

I'm sure you've heard about the 2016 Oktoberfest in Monterey next August. The Whispering Bomb, Chapter E-Blasts, and communications from the National Office will continue to remind you as the event draws closer. This will be a spectacular event as BMW will be bringing in some very special cars for us to see at Legends of the Autobahn and Oktoberfest as they celebrate their 100th anniversary. If you haven't been to O-Fest before, just jump right in. There is a

first-timers meeting on Day 1 so you can find out about each event and, of course, you can always ask someone who has attended in the past as we're all happy to share our stories.

Our events are designed to help you enjoy your cars – be it on a track, at a High Performance Driving Event, detailing clinics, meet-and-greet events at local businesses that support our cars, car shows, wine tours, and driving tours. We also strive to give back to our community by hosting Tire Rack Street Survival classes to help our newly-minted young drivers become safer and more aware drivers.

Cars are always a common theme; that's why we're a car club. Yet as you read the preceding paragraphs, you noticed that I used a lot of inclusive words such as "you", "our", "we", "everyone", "members", and "their".

These inclusive words should serve to remind us that we are people first and car owners second. Come and include yourself in some of our events and meet the people. You, your fellow participants, and the volunteers are what make this chapter and this club great. We are, to a large extent, car people, and if you're at one of our events and happen to park next to an enthusiast driving a BMW or one driving a Mercedes, you're still parked next to an enthusiast and that's the path best traveled.

So until next time, enjoy your Club and enjoy your car.

Book Review: Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic

Author: Rob Siegel

Pages: 432 pages

Publisher: Bentley Publishers

While Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic is author Rob Siegel's first book, he should be well known to BMW enthusiasts through his long-running monthly column in Roundel, the official magazine of the BMW Car Club of America, and more recently a weekly online column in Roundel Online. While the dictionary defines the word "hack" as meaning "to cut irregularly or inexpertly," other extensions of the word – hack job, hack writer, and so on and so forth – carry for the most part connotations of sub-par quality or amateurishness. However, when it comes to the title the writer has given to himself, it is a bit of a misnomer. Siegel, a former geophysical engineer who developed technology to safely find unexploded shells and ordnance, self-identifies as a hack, and even provides guidelines of what might make "a good kludge" repair, but upon reading his book it becomes clear that the author might better be viewed more along the lines of a modern day MacGyver that can fix something with almost anything than just a mere hack, while at the same time imparting poignant life lessons along the way. Just like MacGyver, actually!

The sub-title of the book states that this is "a memoir with actual useful stuff." While there is a prodigious amount of the aforementioned actual useful stuff, and the author marks certain chapters as such - "besides a flat, the things that are most likely to cause a car to die and leave you

stranded on the side of the road are pretty mundane and fairly predictable: "battery and alternator, cooling system, belts, fuel supply, ignition-related issues, and ball joints" is one piece of practical advice. And there are chapters on air-conditioning repair, finding clunks and rattles, car insurance, and rust repair, amongst others – knowledge that can only be acquired from actual doing over a lifetime. This is not a comprehensive how-to fix manual on BMW's, or any other particular car for that matter. That's not what keeps you turning the pages. No, it is through the author's attempts to keep his often expanding menagerie of mostly Bavarian beauties in operational order, finding more garage space, do-it-yourself advice, and moreover, the anecdotal stories that often involve his wife and family, that Siegel dishes up with humorous overtones that enable the book to deliver insight and ensures it delves far deeper.

Siegel's book is published by Bentley, probably best known for their well-produced automotive reference manuals. The choice of publisher might seem an odd fit for a book with a voice and tradition more akin to Robert Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, but it's not. It's a perfect fit because Memoirs of a Hack Mechanic IS a reference manual of sorts – for what makes the average-Joe car guy "tick." In "Siegel's Seven-Car Rule", he says "Well, if I can't be a role model, at least I can be a perfect example of wretched excess and utter lack of self-control." This might sum up the mental picture that Siegel sees himself, but I disagree. He is a role model to all of us that love the automotive hobby. Read it as you WILL learn something. Long may you run...errr...write, Rob!

Highly recommended.

I've (Almost) Become an Enthusiast – Give Me Time

by Jean Helm, *Editor*

Although I am not the “motorhead” that the esteemed Mr. Helm is, nor am I a daily BMW driver (but I do enjoy taking the Z4M out when he’s not looking), I have come to appreciate the German engineering that comes with every BMW (did I mention that I am half German and I work with engineers on a daily basis or that the company I work for – that shall remain unnamed – built a test facility for BMW in Germany a few years back?).

This issue, we are featuring articles about how your “baby” is born and a comparison between BMWs and Jeeps. Additionally, we see an article or two about your love of the German engineering that goes into our BMWs, as well as some humor surrounding our cars. Finally, I had fun interviewing Renee Norris, a Service Advisor over at Rusnak BMW, who shares her view of the BMW world in “5 Questions”.

Miss Diva’s social schedule was very busy last October. In this issue, she shares her perspective on the annual wine tour. We were a group of 32 this year – our largest yet from what I hear – and we all had a great time. There were a variety of BMWs, some other automotive brands

thrown in for good measure (we do not discriminate – who doesn’t like wine?), and some very good wine. Despite touring in the Z4M with the teeny tiny trunk, we were able to make it back home with some pretty nice bottles of wine to try – how come I get a feeling my next BMW will be something with a larger trunk?

Just to let you know, our National Board of Directors will be “test driving” a regional newsletter here on the West Coast soon. It will arrive as a supplement to your Roundel. I have selected a couple of articles that have previously appeared in a Whispering Bomb for this test run. We will still publish our local chapter newsletter on a quarterly basis, so please continue to send in your articles. We all enjoy reading them when our WBs come in the mail or by email. Speaking of...

We have finally figured out how to PDF the Whispering Bomb, so for those of you who have indicated that you would like your WB electronically, we are delivering on our promise. If you find after receiving it electronically that you still want that hard copy to read, just email me at editor@losangeles.bmwcca.org, and we will return you to your snail mail choice.

Little by little, I’m learning to love the BMW brand – to the point of wanting my next car to be one. Kurt will be happy... he thinks that the whole family should drive one... and I’m beginning to agree with him.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Below is our current calendar of events.

You can also find information on our website at <http://www.losangelesbmwcca.org/events-calendar-2>.

- **MARCH 6 and/or 13**

The LA Chapter will be out at the BMW Performance Center West Experience in Thermal, CA (just past Palm Springs). This is a good time of year (not too hot, not too cold) to join your fellow chapter members to spend a half-day trying out the new track. Watch for future emails with details and sign up information.

~ THE BIG EVENTS ~ AUGUST 2016

Friday, August 19

Legends of the Autobahn

Friday, August 20 - Saturday, August 21

16th Annual Festorics at Laguna Seca Raceway

Tuesday, August 23 - Sunday, August 28

47th Annual BMW Oktoberfest

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A Pretty Typical BMW Owner

by Dan Watson

I'm probably a pretty typical BMW owner and member of the BMW-CCA. I don't go to the track or race. I haven't worked on my cars since I got to the point I could afford to pay an expert to do so about 30 years ago. But I enjoy BMWs and membership for many other reasons.

I first drove a BMW in 1972 when my then-brother-in-law loaned his new 2002 to me and his sister for our honeymoon. My car was a '65 VW Squareback and my bride's was a '63 Chevy II. I'd grown up in a family where my mom drove station wagons and my dad had a variety of company cars, mostly Pontiac Bonneville's. His best car was a '60 Cadillac convertible, white over black with red interior. That was a sports car in his mind.

Needless-to-say, driving a new 2002, which cost him just under \$4,000 out the door, was quite a step up from my VW. Over several days we drove up Hwy 395 to Lake Tahoe, over to San Francisco and down Highway 1 to our new home in Glendale. I fell in love with the 2002 and it's smooth engine and transmission, handling ability, and visibility. And I realized that there was a BMW fraternity when other BMW drivers flashed their lights at me as we approached.

Unfortunately, my brother-in-law sold the BMW a couple of years later for a pickup truck. That was the only time I drove his car, but I never forgot the experience.

Many years and one divorce later, I was single and got interested in old Mercedes Benz's. I owned a couple of '58 220 Pontons and then gravitated to a 1970 280 SL roadster. It reminded me of driving the MGB roadster I had briefly in college. By now I was engaged to wife number two and we enjoyed the top down driving, but wanted something



a little more reliable that had air conditioning and a top that didn't leak. So, in August 2003 I special ordered a BMW Z4 in sterling gray with black leather interior, performance package, heated seats and of course, a manual transmission.

The Z4 was a weekender that gave us 10 good years and 55,000 trouble free miles. My employer provided me with Fords and we had a Tacoma pickup and a variety of other cars until we moved to Mammoth Lakes in 2010. The wife switched to Subaru's (three red ones) and I went to a 4X4 Frontier for the snow. But we kept the Z4 and driving it in the Eastern Sierra with its mountain roads and blue skies made me appreciate the roadster even more.

After 10 years, and a knee operation for each of us, the Z4 was losing its practicality. It was an ideal car at age 52,

but was a little difficult to get in and out of at 62 with bad knees. And, to put it bluntly, my wife doesn't pack light. The small trunk and no back seat space limited how long a trip we could take it on. So, it was time to pay a visit to Monrovia BMW where we traded the Z4 in on a special ordered 2013 128i convertible, vermilion red, tan interior, with a black top, performance package, heated seats, and of course, a manual transmission. Essentially, the same car with a bigger trunk, non-usable back seat that's good for more luggage, a little higher ground clearance, and an extra gear. We've had it for two years now and 10,000 miles, and I enjoy driving it even more than the Z4. It handles just as well with a slightly softer ride. It's a rare color combination and I've not grown tired of it.

I still have no plans on racing or tinkering with my BMW. I avoided the technical packages and extra electrical gizmos which means I'll have fewer problems over the course of time. While I may not be the target audience of the CCA, I suspect that other owners like me enjoy driving a BMW as much as anyone.

Calling All Chapter Members

In the past, we have published guidelines for contributing to the Whispering Bomb. (See Summer Issue page 3). From that we had several new chapter members write articles for this issue. I would like to encourage more of you to contribute to the next issue. Basic rules are that you should be kind, not use foul language, and not speak unkindly of anyone. If you have a picture that relates to your article great! We just need it in 300 dpi or better. If you don't have a photo, no worries. Write something amusing, informative, or show your love for your BMW. We look forward to hearing from more of you.

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Trading Places

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

by James Chew

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

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

In 1983, when AMC (remember them?) began the development of the Grand Cherokee, they noticed that most Grand Wagoneer and Cherokee owners drove BMWs and Mercedes so they made a concerted effort to give the new vehicle the driving refinement and luxury that European sedan owners expect. As Jeep’s first new product under Chrysler ownership, the Grand Cherokee launched the modern American SUV market, instantly becoming the benchmark in this segment. The sales success and profits from the Grand Cherokee has been a significant contributor to the Chrysler, then Daimler, and now Fiat bottom line.

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

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

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

Both manufacturers must have heard nothing about their product being outstanding, but not being as nice as the other in their respective areas of strength. It must be the reason for BMW X5 hill climbing demonstration during the “Ultimate Driving Experience” and the performance oriented Jeep Grand Cherokee “SRT” model. Having driven both, it was clear that both products have the underpinnings to be credible in each other’s areas of strength.

However most X5 owners aren’t going road racing in their X5 and most Grand Cherokee owners aren’t taking their Grand Cherokee off-road. For all purposes, the X5 and the Grand Cherokee are 21st century Chrysler Town and Country/Buick Electra station wagons. So we tested the fully loaded “upscale performance luxury suburban/urban” equipped versions. You’ll see these versions “uptown”, downtown, the gated suburban communities, the upscale shopping malls, and country clubs. They’ll be used in school and work carpool duties, support kid’s afterschool and weekend activities, and carry the weekly “haul” from the big box retail/warehouse store shopping trips. And they’ll be used to support their owner’s hobbies.

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

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

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

In terms of exterior design, even the casual observer will never mistake the X5 for being nothing but a BMW and the Grand Cherokee being nothing but a Jeep.

The X5 has the famous Hofmeier “kink”, familiar BMW dual kidney grill, and several aerodynamic features from their “Efficiency Dynamics” research. The two most obvious





features are the functional front end vent and fender gill for the front wheel well “air curtain”. And you’ll notice the subtle features on the X5 rear give it a nice aerodynamic boat tail. All of these features combine to give the X5d exterior a quiet, refined, precision presence.

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

The X5d and Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel interiors provide a case study on two different interpretations of luxury.

In both vehicles, the driver’s areas are ergonomically designed, refined, luxurious, comfortable, and feel durable. We noticed the higher Grand Cherokee fenders sometimes obscured the driver’s sightlines when turning left, but that simply required adjusting how we looked before and during the turn.

The leather upholsteries provided an interesting design contrast.

Owning a 2007 X5, the durability, comfort, and luxury of the Dakota leather is unquestioned. However, when compared to BMW’s Napa leather, the Dakota leather seems much more like the entry level “SensaTech” vinyl.

The Jeep leather felt thicker than the BMW, but had the shiny softness of the material found in a Chrysler 3000 and Dodge Charger. Not bad, but for a Jeep, one would expect leather that’s a little more distinctive.

Our passengers had no complaints with either vehicle. While both vehicles have outstanding rear seat entry and access, it was interesting to see how much bigger the X5’s rear doors were than the Grand Cherokee.

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

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

The X5d engine idle was a bit smoother than the Grand Cherokee EcoDiesel.

When driving the X5d, it seemed as if the vehicle was seeking a curvy mountain road to attack. When driving the Grand Cherokee, the vehicle seemed to have an urge to find a mountain trail to climb.

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

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

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

While both are very nice and should be considered for those shopping these respective products, there are four reasons why both models may never sell well.

First is the price premium. The X5d is \$3800 more than the comparably equipped 3.0i gasoline model. The Grand Cherokee is \$4500 more than the comparably equipped 3.6 V-6 model. And as the current and past X5s and Grand Cherokees have stood the test of time, the growing popularity of leasing makes the diesel models unattractive for that growing market.

Second is the price of diesel. Even in California, the price of premium gasoline is now less expensive than that of diesel. While the diesel models will achieve better fuel economy than their gasoline versions, the fuel costs more, eliminating one of the previous major attractions of owning a diesel-powered vehicle.

Third is the availability of diesel. Many neighborhood service stations still don’t have diesel. And when they do, the pumps are generally messy. And most light vehicle drivers are not too keen on sharing diesel pumps with a big rig.

BMW has engineered enough “Jeep” in to the X5d to give the drivers the confidence that can “go anywhere”. Jeep has engineered enough “BMW” into the Grand Cherokee to have their drivers look right at home next to the Land Rovers and Mercedes.

Who says competition isn’t good!?

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

Five Questions – Renee Norris, Rusnak BMW Service Advisor

Whispering Bomb (WB) – What do you do as a BMW Service Advisor?

Renee Norris (RN) – My job is all-encompassing. I do anything that's needed – from the time our customer drops their car off to when they pick it up. I'm the primary customer interface for the dealer. I make sure repairs are done right, ensure that recall notices are addressed, help the customer by letting them know about future services that may be required on their car, as well as addressing any warranty issues.

WB – How long have you been a service advisor?

RN – I've worked for Rusnak for eight years; I was first hired to staff the phones – which I did for two years. I was lucky that the Service Manager at the time recognized that I would be good as a service advisor, so I moved into a position for 18 months where I in-processed all certified pre-owned and leased BMW returns. I would prepare any repair orders, ensure the repair orders were properly completed, and make sure the cars were ready for resale. Before that I worked for Australia Post for nearly 20 years – a very different job.

WB – What do you like about your job?

RN – I really like the people I work with. I work with a great team and I have great management. I respect them and they are incredibly smart. Also, I get to meet a really diverse group of people – from a first-time owner to someone who has owned their 10th BMW. I like that our customers trust me to get their car back to them in great shape. I also LOVE to drive! I drive to relax, oddly enough. I get to drive a wide range of high end/high performance vehicles and every day I say "I am so lucky."

WB – What is your greatest job challenge?

RN – My job is very stressful. I have to manage my time well so that each of our customers has the excellent customer service experience we want them to have. It's sometimes a real juggling act attending to the details and making sure everyone has my attention in a timely manner.

WB – Is it easier to work with customers who know a lot about cars or someone like me who knows next to nothing?

RN – It's good in different ways for different reasons. Those customers who have a good knowledge of automobiles are very, very helpful. Knowledgeable customers not only know that there may be something wrong, but can be very specific in describing what it is and where it may be. I learn from those customers and value that they trust me. For those customers who are not as knowledgeable, it can be a challenge, but I appreciate that they want to learn about their car.

WB – Thanks for your time today. We've enjoyed speaking with you and learning more about your role as a BMW Service Advisor.

Electronic WB Delivery - An Update

This is the Whispering Bomb edition where we are delivering to those of you who have asked to receive yours by email. We are publishing in PDF, which gives you a good read and is a cost value to us over other publishing packages. Should you decide after receiving your first electronic WB that you still want a paper copy to read and study, please let us know by emailing the editor at editor@losangeles.bmwcca.org.



New Members

Arman Ajamian	Sharon Jennings	David McMichael	Eric Schwettmann	Angelica Velazquez
Reymon Almazar	Thor Jonsson	Gregg Miller	Ravi Sharma	Tony Vicari
Robert Ameele	Ari Kalfa	Roberto Miranda	Alec Sharpe	Jason von Dinger dem Baden
Dieter Busenhardt	Wei Kang	Matthew Mojo	Scott Shivner	Aleksandr Vydrug
John Carpenter	Brendan Kennelly	James Morris	Sergio Shkurovich	Stanley Wachs
Deon Colchester	Ali Khwaja	Amanda Nguyen	Brent Sprenkle	Greg Weiss
David DeKriek	Kunjumon Koshy	Amin Nikakhtar	Ian Stamp	Pamela Wells
Grant Farrell	Shelvin Koshy	Hiten Patel	Darrell Stipp	Daniel Wernicke
Beatrice Fu	Susan Kuzma	Mike Pelly	Ana Stipp	Terrence White
Wendy Gardner	Roy Kwon	Gene Peng	David Takamoo	Enrique Wong
Mark Harold	Alexander Latteri	Jon Peng	Steve Tedesco	Walter Wong
Lisa Haws	Tri Le	Adam Rosenblatt	Romer Telemi	Mohammad Yaseen
Tsengting Hsieh	Francis Lee	Aimee Rostamo	Renard Thomas	Anthony Yip
Jason Hymes	David Levaton	Richard Schmitz	April Thomas	David Zhang
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Hadi Jayaputra	Sophie Mai		Carlos Torres	



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A LA CCA member submitted this photo of flooding in Europe last summer, showing that even BMW's are not immune to extreme weather.



And a BMW is Born

by Baabak Afshar

For the German automobile fans one may look no further than BMW Welt in the state capital of Bavaria. Munich is the home of BMW World and sort of an epicenter of all things "Beemer". Along the patch of road up from Olympiazentrum is a nondescript street, Lerchenauer Strasse, which crosses the middle beltway around the city, the Georg-Brauchle-Ring. In that intersection lies the many institutions that together make up the BMW World. These include the mother of all showrooms, the BMW Welt, which is free to enter, the pay-only Museum across the way, the BMW 4-cylinder building corporate headquarters, and last but not least, one of the BMW factories. Other than the largest factory in Dingolfing and the smaller one in Regensburg, the BMW Group Plant Munich is the parent factory and lies in the heart of the BMW Welt complex.

The BMW plant in Munich employs nearly 8,000 workers and since its inception in 1922, has produced engines of all types including airplanes, motorbikes, and most recently automobiles. Among the various models that have been made here, their claim to fame is having produced over 13 million 3 series BMWs. All visitors to BMW Welt can opt to take a tour of the factory plant across the way. Let's take a quick look at some of the production areas that help deliver that BMW to your local dealership.

Before entering the factory floor visitors are taken through the main BMW Welt section where you can see various classic cars and the latest models on display. The micro-sized BMW Isetta is sure to capture your attention at this point (figure 1). Entering the main factory floor, the visitor tour begins where the BMW production begins, at the start of the metal

fabrication area where robots are busily cutting and bending what will soon become the body of a future BMW. Body parts are made here (figure 2) and placed in bins for

sections such as right and left panels, hood, doors, and so forth. The fabrication robots are further programmed to start the body assembly process and put the pieces together to build each specific model for which their CPU is pre-programmed. They can be instructed to switch to a different software program on a moment's notice to build any other body for which parts have been fabricated at this plant. They often change as production needs change. At the end of the fabrication and assembly section, the fully assembled body (figures 3 and 4) comes out ready to be sent to the painting area. After passing through the rust corrosion and body paint areas of the factory, all BMW bodies get stacked in the factory "Closet" (figure 5) which can hold upwards of 200+ BMW frames. It is important to note that at this point any frame can become any type of model for that given body. In fact, this is the last point at which none of the 'cars' have a specific delivery destination or recipient. As soon as the frames leave this "closet" they will have a name and a final destination attached to them but while still inside this "closet" they have the potential to end up anywhere on the planet in anybody's garage. So all special orders really start at this point – not at fabrication or painting. Leaving "the closet", the cars are moved out by the massive orange colored robotic arm that sits in the center of this room and sent to the subassemblies for further completion. These subassemblies are where the frame is taken down onto the factory floor where it comes face to face with human hands for the first time.

The floor is where human workers, in conjunction with robots, place the various cables and components that make up the

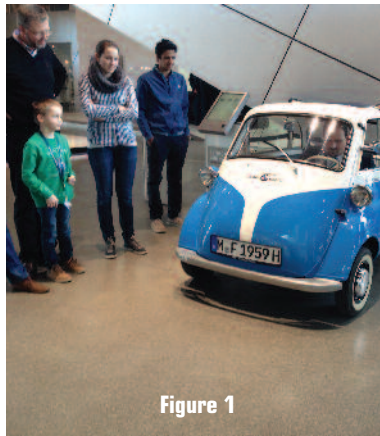


Figure 1

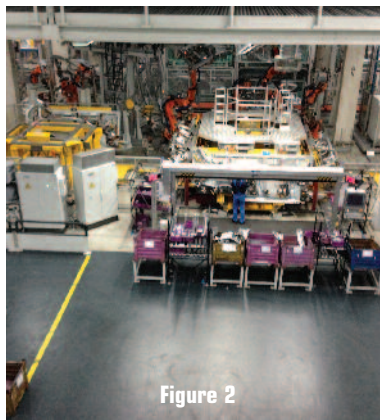


Figure 2



Figure 3

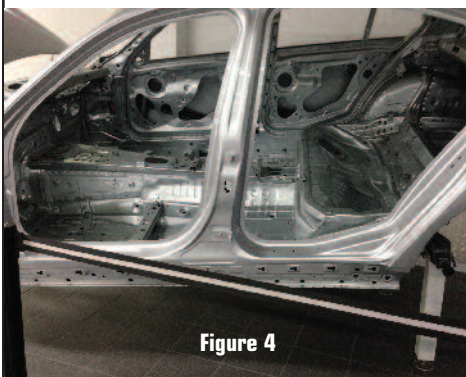


Figure 4

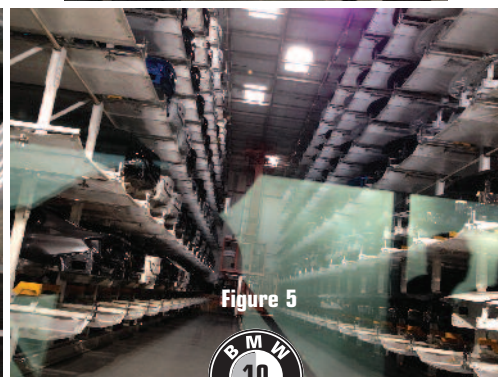


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

electro-mechanics of the BMW (figure 7). Everything from the lights, to the infotainment system, to the seats, dashboards, all the way to the engine, is placed into the car in this multi-lane assembly line. The robotic arm that holds the frame in the air rotates around to make the worker's job easier, depending on whether they are working on the top or bottom of the frame. As the technician (figure 6) is placing the gas tank into place, the car is rotated to its side. The assembly line is followed by the area which the locals call the 'wedding.' The wedding is the point at which the chassis meets the body (figure 8). This area includes a German phrase which is clearly visible to all visitors; and it reads "Leidenschaft ist unser Antrieb" which loosely translates to "Passion is what Drives Us." It has a deeper meaning in spoken German which is something like "Passion is our Engine," but that gets a bit lost in translation.

After wedding the chassis and the body, the new BMW starts its final journey to quality control. Upon leaving the main assembly line area, the car is placed on the floor, moving along on its own wheels. The final checks are done on the assembly process and the famous white and blue roundel is hammered into place at the end of this section (figure 9). Leaving the

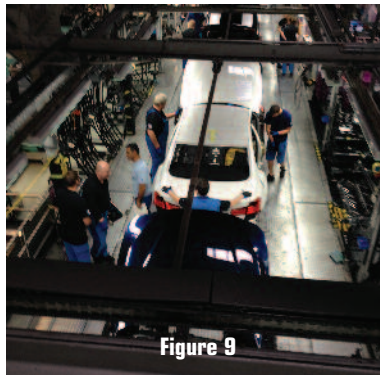


Figure 9

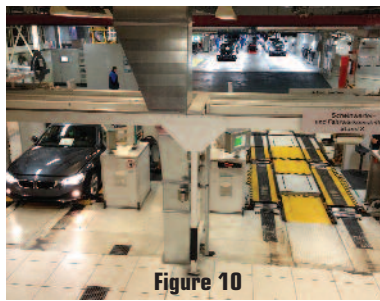


Figure 10



Figure 11

assembly line, the engine leaves the robotic arms for the first time to enter the final calibration area. In this final stage inside the factory, various systems such as the suspension and lights are calibrated (figure 10). The entire process from fabrication to calibration takes less than a week to complete. Leaving the calibration area, the engines are revved and the final quality control tests are performed on a very short drive outside the factory floor and the car is finally placed in temporary storage to be sent out to its final destination (figure 11). All local deliveries can be picked up across the street at the BMW Welt building and international orders are further sprayed with a special foam to protect against the salty moisture and weather on their international shipping journey to all destinations from sea level beaches of the Riviera to the peaks of the Alps (figure 12). Thus is the journey your BMW takes from fabrication to your garage. ■

The Position of
Driving School Coordinator/Registrar

is vacant.

If you would like to apply please contact

KURT HELM

president@losangeles.bmwcca.org



Figure 12

The BMW CCA Ecosystem

by James Chew

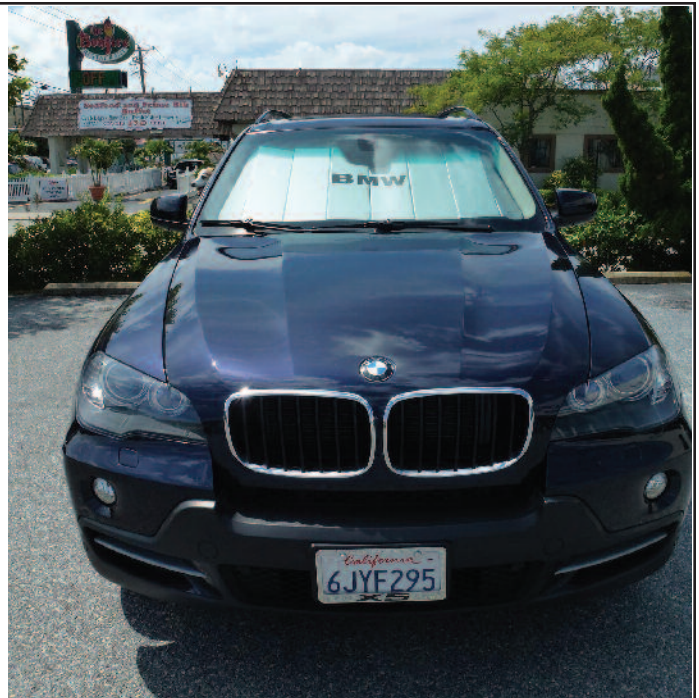
During an interview for a business publication, the former Apple CEO, John Scully, was asked if the then, all new, feature-laden Samsung Galaxy phone would overtake the iPhone in terms of sales. Scully replied that even with all the impressive features on the Galaxy, Apple should not be worried because iPhone users appreciate and take full advantage of the Apple "ecosystem". The most visible part of that ecosystem can be seen at any Apple Store. When one sees Apple's benchmark service after the sale such as free advice, as well as assistance and repairs, no matter the age of the Apple product, at their famous "Genius Bar", one can see why the loyal "Apple Corps" grows and gets stronger with every sale. And that ecosystem is something that Samsung, nor any of the other smart phone manufacturers, can match.

In fact, BMW contributed to Apple's ecosystem. How many of you remember BMW being the pioneer for integrating the iPod into the vehicle entertainment systems?

Much the same could be said about BMW. While the BMW products have proven to have timeless designs and be reliable, the BMW Car Club of America helps provide a wonderful ecosystem for the BMW owner. What many BMW owners may not realize or appreciate, is that BMW North America and the BMW dealership network contribute significantly to this ecosystem. Here's a recent personal example of my using this ecosystem to address a significant product issue.

After less than 73,000 miles, the rear differential on my wife's 2007 X5 3.0 failed. Purchased new in 2007, we had dutifully followed the recommended BMW service intervals, which included NOT servicing the transmission and differentials because they had "lifetime fluids". During the extended free maintenance and warranty periods, all services and repairs were performed by my preferred BMW Center. When they expired, I used both my preferred BMW Center and a trusted independent BMW service center for these services.

My local independent BMW service center, which diagnosed this problem, informed me that the rear differential failing after so few miles was quite unusual. He also suggested that I contact BMW North America to see if they could help with the repairs.



From past experience, I knew that I could approach BMW North America to discuss this issue and ask that they provide some "good will" to help cover the costs of this repair. Before I approached them, I decided to exercise the BMW "ecosystem".

I first emailed Mike Miller, BMW CCA Roundel magazine Technical Editor, to discuss this issue. Within an hour, he replied to my email. He relayed a few interesting bits of information, including (1) a BMW rear differential catastrophically failing before 73,000 miles is quite unusual, (2) he is aware of premature drivetrain failures attributable to BMW's insistence that certain operating fluids not be changed, and (3) work with my preferred BMW Service Center and with BMW North America to request a "good will" repair. He also advised reminding both the dealer and BMW North America that BMW IS considered a premium brand. In my mind, BMW is on par with Nordstrom. And that is my expectation for service after the sale.

Even though we purchased the 2007 X5 new and had followed the recommended service, this vehicle was well out of its warranty period. So I emailed the BMW CCA Ombudsman to discuss this issue and ask for advice on increasing my chances of BMW NA and my preferred BMW Center providing some

(Continued on page 18)



Splendor in the Vineyard...

by Diva Moose

Once again, our Chapter held its annual Wine Tour Weekend on October 17th & 18th for our members who enjoy a nice drive, a weekend away, good wine, good food, and great people.

Our fearless leader, Gerhard Fehrmann, continued his tradition of arranging visits to interesting wineries, lodging at a nice hotel, and some really good meals.

We hopped in the Z4M around noon on Friday, the 16th and pointed it north. On a normal day, the drive from home to Santa Maria is 2 ½ hours. As (bad) luck would have it, a rainstorm on Thursday resulted in mudslides that shut down Interstate 5 in the Grapevine area which left Highway 101 as the only viable route from Los Angeles to points north. Simply put, the 101 from Ventura County through Santa Barbara was a parking lot. Instead of the 2 ½ hour drive we were expecting, we found ourselves spending 5 ½ hours looking at a vast selection of tail lights from the cars in front of us. (So much for my afternoon "moose" nap!)

We arrived at the Santa Maria Inn, a long-standing hotel of local character and a wine bar! We quickly unpacked and headed off to dinner, stopping on our way to the car to look at the other BMW's taking prominent positions in the hotel parking lot.

Saturday morning we all met in the lobby and Gerhard provided maps, a winery guide, and itineraries for everyone. Our focus on Saturday was on wineries in the Santa Maria area. We were divided into two groups this year, each group visited the same wineries, but at different times

so we didn't overwhelm the wineries. Lunch was held at Wolff Vineyards (a catered affair of traditional Santa Maria barbecue (tri-tip) with both groups dining together and sharing stories of what we had seen and tasted that morning. We then visited the remaining Saturday wineries before heading back to the hotel to nap, clean up, (and if you're anything like Kurt, also touching up the car so it looks clean at dinner) and get ready for dinner.

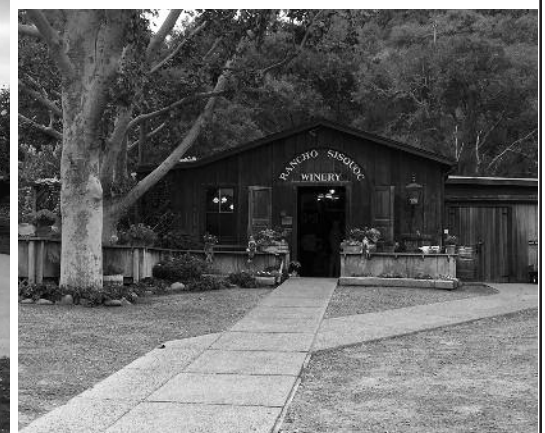
Gerhard had arranged for us to have dinner on Saturday at Jockos in Nipomo. They've been around for many years and are experts on grilling meat. The selection of cuts were spectacular, and with the exception of a slightly longer-than-expected wait (not an unusual occurrence at Jockos), the dinner was a real treat. (Just a quick tip – while they barbecue their meat, including ribs, over oak logs, they

don't provide any type of barbecue sauce, and truthfully, as good as their meat is, it doesn't need any sauce!)

Sunday morning we all checked out of the hotel and our two groups headed out towards Santa Barbara and Los Olivos to carry on our wine tasting. Zaca Mesa Winery was our final stop of the day with a catered lunch of barbecue ribs (sauce included!), a group picture, and the distribution of the commemorative wine glasses to everyone who attended.

So if you like wine and a relaxing weekend, I suggest that you keep an eye on the Chapter's 2016 activities calendar for next year's tour. Remember, you can make it a 3-day event, a 2-day event, or just join us for a day. It will be a great time, shared with great people!

A very special thanks to Gerhard and to his charming wife for all of their work in arranging this event. ■



BMW Ultimate Driving Experience visits the Los Angeles Chapter

by Fred Larimer

The BMW "Ultimate Driving Experience" (UDE) visited the greater Los Angeles area during the week of August 17th to 22nd, setting up shop at Santa Anita's horse racing parking lot.

An added bonus for us is LA Chapter's own Darren Young is a key member of the UDE traveling instructor corps, so you can bet a fair number of chapter members made it a point to sign up. And why not? A free opportunity to drive our favorite maker's cars in a closed-course environment, all at the expense of their gas and tires? What's not to love about this?!

Then again, a chance to hang out with Darren and soak in some of his coaching is always time well spent. Icing on the cake for this enthusiast!

I know fellow LA Chapter members Gary Hesse, Hani Thomas, and Ed Lovelace were signed up (although they attended on a different day); and I am reasonably sure other local club members attended. Myself, having just returned from the Monterey Festorics, I signed up for Thursday, August 20th.

The LA Chapter has held autocross events at the Santa Anita facility in the past so the route getting there was pretty easy and since I had signed up for a mid-afternoon session, that meant traffic to the event was pretty light — a pleasant experience to start things off for sure.

True to form, late August in the Pasadena area can be — and was — toasty warm (though not quite as warm as my mid-July visit to the BMW Performance Center in Thermal — that is another story altogether). Not such a problem really as the UDE program has a nicely furnished hospitality area that — thank you — was air conditioned and had a bountiful supply of bottled water.

After looking around at the cars that were on display inside and outside, the call to attend the orientation meeting was announced. Our group was escorted into the classroom area where we received a presentation on vehicle dynamics that also pointed out many of the features the current BMW line-ups have both as standard and optional equipment. When completed, we were introduced to the driving instructors that would be working with us and they escorted us across the expansive Santa Anita lot to our driving experience tent.

It quickly became apparent the UDE folks are enthusiasts in their own right — I had driven my E30 M3 to the event — the instructor escorting us led our group right over to my car, paused and explained its place in BMW history before altering our course to get us to our UDE station.

A quick introduction of our UDE instructor's team and an overview of the exercises we were going to participate in followed. In and amongst our instructor team happened to be this tall, mustachioed fella going by the name of "Bird", a.k.a. Darren. Gee, wonder who he is and why he looks so familiar? Raise your hand if you know him.

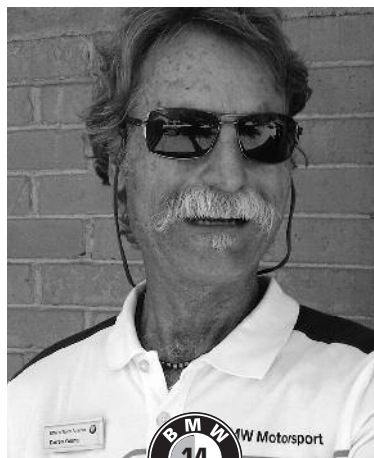
In fact, allow me to hand off to Darren for his explanation of what the UDE is all about.

Darren Young: The BMW Ultimate Driving Experience program is pretty much focused on high performance driving — after all, if you're touting your product as The Ultimate Driving Machine, the best possible proof-of-concept is to put butts in the seats. It's called "experiential marketing", and if you know anything about marketing programs, a 3-4% return is considered sterling; last year the UDE program produced a little over a 10% return (i.e., one of ten people that attended the UDE ended up buying a BMW!). Here's how this successful extravaganza works.

The participants begin with a brief classroom session, where concepts of braking, contact patch, understeer/oversteer, etc. are covered. Following that, they're led outside to any one of six different autocross tracks that are set up in these various large parking lots we rent in each city. The course is outlined with blue cones and chalk lines, with orange cones to reference the turn-in, apex and exit points to help guide and educate the drivers.

On our course, we have the 328d and the 428i Grand Coupé (there are also X4's available on two other tracks). After a short introduction of the instructors (all of whom are picked for their racing backgrounds and their teaching prowess), the participants get several laps in each of the cars, with their instructor riding right-seat and giving guidance. Finally, each gets a timed run (with their instructor on board) and once that's done, we have an awards ceremony with a "podium" and the presentation to the fastest driver of the session of the coveted Ultimate Driver Blue Cone trophy!

Besides the autocross events, there are demonstrations of the X-Drive hill-hold and hill-descent technology (a slow roller-coaster ride in an X5), a skid pad demo showing off the DSC (Dynamic Stability





Control), a fleet of new BMW's that are available for a short street drive, and various cool display cars — since this year is the 40th anniversary of the 3 Series, we have a pristine black E21 320i in the pavilion alongside David Hobbs' legendary McLaren 320i Turbo IMSA car for all to admire.

It's all great fun, both for the participants and for us instructors. Personally, I love the gig — I mean, here I am, getting paid decent money to pilot various Ultimate Driving Machines while teaching people high-performance driving. And as if that's not enough right-up-my-alley fun, at the VIP

events that we do several nights in each city, I'm compelled to give guests hot laps around our course in an M4.

I loooooove my job.

Speaking for myself, I greatly appreciate what BMW is doing with the Ultimate Driving Experience program. If you missed it this time around, keep your antenna up for when it comes to your area and do not hesitate to enroll. You'll have some fun, meet some great BMW representatives and, who knows, perhaps get an opportunity to stand in front of everyone as you receive a much coveted "Driver Blue Cone" of your own. ■

How I Got My First Z3 (Almost)

by Bill Blowers

Sherron (my lovely and lucky wife) likes to gamble, and she's good at it. She isn't reckless, never gets in over her head, and wins way more than casino owners want to believe. We make a few trips each year to visit Indian casinos, but the big times are always in Las Vegas. Sherron has beaten the odds at slot machines so often I am beginning to believe she has some type of sixth sense about which machine will pay and when.

It was 1999 and we were staying at the Monte Carlo on the strip. Sherron was in her element, and I have learned to pretty much leave her alone when she's fleecing a slot machine. She claims I make her lose her concentration. Hey, what do I know?! She wins—a lot.

I'm just the opposite. Give me a quarter poker machine, a twenty-dollar bill and I am good for the entire night. I just don't get a thrill out of pouring money into a machine when I know the odds are in its favor — the curse of being an engineer.

So I'm wandering around the Monte Carlo casino one night and what do I see, a BMW Z3 convertible surrounded by quarter slot machines! Win a new BMW for 25 cents! Now that's my kind of gambling. There was a sign listing recent winners. They gave away a car about every four weeks and it had been just four weeks since the last win—now I was getting really interested.

So I sat down, pulled a twenty from my wallet, and proceeded to try to win that beauty.

First off, I had to bet three quarters at a time, but still, a new car for seventy-five cents, that was still OK. The slot I was playing was like a two-edged sword. It kept paying me, over and over. Before long my original twenty dollars was well over a hundred, but no BMW. Twice I came within one point of winning, getting two out of the three symbols, but still the car wasn't mine.

The night wore on and I kept pulling that one-armed-bandit, but finally nature's call could be ignored no longer. Reluctantly, I took a much-needed break, and was shocked to see that it was three in the morning. I was exhausted, and decided to call it a night, or morning, or whatever it was in Vegas I'm never sure. The next day was Saturday; the car would be waiting for me. I went to bed.

After breakfast the next morning, and a kiss for good luck from Sherron, I was heading back to my lucky slot machine when a scream filled the casino. It was coming from the BMW area - in fact, it was coming from a woman who was sitting at the machine I had been using the night before: my machine. She had just sat down, and on her second set of three quarters won the car! My car!

Does the word deflated come to mind? I wanted to cry and laugh at the same time. Imagine, someone else was going to drive my BMW home.

Several months later I tried again, but still the gods of fortune failed to smile on me. Would my dream of a real live sports car ever be realized?

My loving wife finally suggested that I just go out and buy one. It wasn't so much that I needed her permission — I just needed a little shove to finally get something I had wanted for years; a really nice, high performance roadster.

So in June 2000, a brand new, Atlantic blue Z3 roadster convertible found its way to my house — with me at the wheel of course. It marked the beginning of an automobile love affair that continues to this day with my 2004 Z4. Both fantastic automobiles, both worthy of the title Ultimate Driving Machine.

The Z3, with just 23,000 miles was sold to my next-door neighbor. She drove it for another five years and claims she enjoyed every mile.

And by the way, Sherron is still lucky at slots, I still stick to the quarter machines, and we love to visit Las Vegas. I walk by those beautiful Z4s surrounded by slot machines; I pause, think about that night many years ago, smile, and continue on my way. ■

BMW 2016 Los Angeles Auto Show A Quiet Confidence

by James Chew

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

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

I called our friends at BMW North America, who confirmed that there was no scheduled press event. And at the show, we asked our friend Dr. Ludwig Willisch, why BMW had no scheduled press event. He said that they felt that they had nothing significant to present.

I begged to differ.

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

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

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

Here's a quick run down of the products shown at the BMW L.A. Auto Show display.

BMW eDrive: The X5 xDrive 4.0e is now available for sale. This all-new plug-in hybrid SAV features a 241 HP, 2.0 liter TwinPower Turbo four-cylinder engine and a 111 HP electric motor. Combined delivered HP is 309. Because of the li-ion battery pack, there is now third row seat option and a bit less cargo space. But, with full tie, all wheel drive and having a 19 mile "all electric" range, this all weather SAV may be an ideal "green" vehicle for most suburban households. A 3-series eDrive prototype was also on display. Powered by a 180 HP TwinPower Turbo 4 and a 95 HP electric motor, this vehicle has a combined HP of 245. And if it weren't for the eDrive badging and the charging plug in the front driver's side fender, you would never know that this 3-series is a plug-in hybrid.

i-Series: We've all seen the greatly reduced lease rates on the i3, with all of the deals offering a free charging station. That's all you need to know about i3 sales. As we reported, the i3 is a great car and is indeed the "BMW" of Electric Vehicles. But having had both the i3 and the Kia Soul EV for typical metro area commuting duty, range anxiety, the lack of charging stations (even in Washington DC/Northern Virginia) and questionable bad weather driving performance limits the appeal of EVs to all but the sunbelt states. That being said, the new "Fluid Black" color of the i3 shows that BMW is doubling down on the support for the i3. It would be interesting to see how many i3s are now being purchased with the range extender option. The i8, however, shows that BMWs knows how to make an EV very appealing. The long buyer waiting lists as well as the dealer mark-ups prove the popularity of this vehicle.

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

7-series: My first BMW was a 1990 750iL. The flagship vehicle showed the auto world that BMW's "Ultimate Driving Machine" spirit could produce an ultimate driving performance luxury sedan. This performance luxury sedan was used for livery service, but passengers who were "car guys" wanted to drive it. BMW seems to have re-kindled that "Ultimate Driving Machine" spirit in the all-new, 2016 7-series. At its core, it's an "Ultimate Driving Machine", using carbon fiber that's produced at BMW's Moses Lake facility in Washington to reduce weight (the all new 7-series weighs less than it's predecessor) and increase chassis stiffness. In terms of luxury features, BMW seems to have combined some of the gadgets featured in the BMW "Mission Impossible" movie vehicles (e.g.: the hand gestures) and the rear seat design. It seems as if the 7-series interior was designed for successful young Silicon Valley millennials, though the people who are most likely to purchase one will take full advantage of the "BMW Genius" to learn all of the features (and to think that I finally got used to my iDrive).

M4 GTS: In 1996, I attended a North American Touring Car Championship race in Belle Isle, Michigan. For some reason, the BMW team M3 racecar didn't make the trip. So the team purchased an M3 from a local BMW dealer, installed a roll bar, and





was leading the race by quite a few car lengths when a couple of competitive drivers caused a wreck, resulting in the M3 being damaged beyond repair. That event proved to me that the M3 really was a street legal racecar. The 2016 M4 GTS raises the bar on street legal racecars. In a menacing “frosted” grey color with orange highlights, 19-inch wheel in the front and 20-inch wheels in the rear (featuring matching orange color highlights), and carbon-fiber rear wing, the M4 GTS looks road racing ready. To enhance its racing creds, the M4 GTS has a gold colored roll cage, fire extinguisher, no rear seats, a carbon fiber hood, 3-way manually adjustable coil over suspension, upgraded ceramic brakes, dual sport seats, and a speedometer that goes to 200 miles per hour. Carbon fiber and aluminum are used thorough the body and the chassis. The twin-turbo (don'tshoot me folks – that's how BMW refers to it), in-line six engine features water-injection to produce 493 HP and 443 foot pounds of torque, is coupled with the proven 7-speed M DCT. To make it street-friendly, the M4 GTS features OLED taillights, navigation system, air conditioning, a leather and Alcantara interior, and parking assist. And its rated fuel economy is the same as the M4. With only 300 available for sale in the U.S., look for these vehicles on the road in the Sun Belt and the Silicon Valley. The wise BMW enthusiast will either wait for the first wave of buyers to be tired of the “rough ride” and sell them, or notice a number of 1Ms for sales as those owners are forced to sell those vehicles in order to afford their new M4 GTS.

340i: This is the type of BMW that drives the competition crazy. When other manufacturers introduce a product mid-cycle enhancement, it's generally an exterior design “freshening” with some new exterior colors. They then invite the media to an event to convince the assembled masses that it's “new”. When BMW does a mid-cycle enhancement, it includes a new engine. And the media beg to be included in that launch event. The 340i uses the all-new turbocharged, in-line six that's part of BMW's new “modular” engine



architecture. Producing 320 HP and 330 foot pounds of torque (the 335i engine produced 300 HP and 300 foot pounds of torque) the 340i can be equipped with x-drive AND a six-speed manual shifter. Based on an all too short drive, I suspect the 340i will quickly become the preferred daily driver for BMW CCA members.

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

Leaving the 2016 BMW L.A. Auto Show display and walking into the media circus that characterized the other brand exhibits, the rationale behind Dr. Willisch's statement for why there was no BMW media event made sense. For 40 years, BMW has been making the Ultimate Driving Machine. So while all the displayed BMWs are significant to the market, for BMW, it's what they do every day.

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

(See more pictures on inside back cover.)



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The BMW CCA Ecosystem (Cont.)

“good will” to cover most, if not all, of the repair costs. John Gamel, one of the ombudsmen, quickly responded to my email. He asked for more information and included his phone number.

I decided to give him a call. Not only was it a pleasure to chat with a fellow BMW enthusiast, he provided some great advice on approaching both my preferred BMW Service Center and BMW North America to ask for “good will”. The best piece of advice was to be the typical BMW owner (e.g., be very detail oriented) and show all the service and maintenance records for the vehicle.

Armed with this information, I contacted the service manager at my preferred BMW Service Center (Alan Bettley at Richmond BMW). He asked me to bring my vehicle in as quickly as possible and he would work with BMW North America to see what could be done in terms of “good will”. When I informed him that I planned to independently contact BMW North America, he heartily encouraged me to do so.

Because the X5 is my wife’s car, I have diligently kept the BMW Assist service up to date. Contacting them very early on a Saturday morning, BMW Assist provided free towing to Richmond BMW, which is close to 50 miles away from my house. Speaking with the kind and courteous professionals at BMW Assist and BMW Roadside Assistance at such an early hour was quite comforting. The BMW Assist staff member connected me to a BMW Roadside Assistance staff member, and stayed on the phone during that call. The BMW Roadside Assistance staff member texted me with the tow company information and their estimated time of arrival. And the tow company service was outstanding.

When we arrived at Richmond BMW, the service manager was there to greet us. After unloading the X5 and some discussion (reiterating that the X5 is my “wife’s baby” and it was our 10th BMW), I was provided a car for use while our X5 was in their shop.

That Monday, both the service manager and I independently contacted BMW North American to discuss the issue and ask for some “good will” toward that repair. And while he had a response from the regional BMW North America rep late Monday, he advised that we wait until BMW North American responded to my request before moving forward. And thanks to Alan Bettley and BMW North

America, the provided “good will” covered over one-third of the cost of this repair.

Here are some of my lessons learned from this experience:

- If you are a BMW owner AND a BMW CCA member you are part of the strongest ownership ecosystems in the industry. If you have an issue with your BMW, you’re not alone. Not only is your preferred BMW service center backing you, you also have BMW Assist (that little “SoS” button near your rear view mirror) – just remember to keep it current, the considerable BMW CCA resources (Mike Miller and the Ombudsmen), and Customer Relations at BMW North America.
- Be the typical BMW owner, follow the maintenance schedule, and keep great service records. If you have your BMW serviced as a BMW dealership, the dealer can access these records electronically. But it’s still good to keep a paper copy.
- Be reasonable and courteous. It is at the discretion of BMW North America and your preferred BMW Center to provide any “good will” toward an out-of-warranty repair. I would have been reluctant to utilize the BMW ecosystem if the differential had failed after 200,000 miles. Use the BMW CCA resources to assess if your out-of-warranty, good will repair is reasonable.

While it would have been nice if BMW North America had agreed to cover the entire cost of this repair, I would be just as happy if they would provide this data to the decisions makers in Munich to reverse their use of “life time fluids”. As Mike Miller wrote, “The measuring life of lifetime fill is the lifetime of the component it lubricates. When the component fails because the fluid has never been changed, then the lifetime of the lifetime fill has ended, and it is time to buy a remanufactured component from BMW -- in this case, a differential. This does not make sense from an ownership perspective, because instead, you can just change the darn oil at reasonable intervals.”

This experience demonstrated to me the value of the BMW “ecosystem”. It’s most likely the major reason why most BMW owners aren’t just enthusiasts, they’re evangelists. ■

Upcoming Car Events • Events Sponsored by the National BMW Club

May 20-22

**The Vintage
BMW CCA**

Ashville, North Carolina
www.bmwcca.org

August 20-21

**Festorics
BMW CCA**

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca
Monterey, California
Festorics.org

August 23-28

**47th Annual Oktoberfest
BMW CCA**

Monterey, California
www.bmwcca.org

Concours d’Elegance Events

January 24

Arizona Concours d’Elegance
Phoenix, Arizona
www.arizonaconcours.com

April 8-10

La Jolla Concours d’Elegance

La Jolla, California
www.lajollaconcours.com

May 1

**Greystone Mansion
Concours d’Elegance**

Beverly Hills, California
www.beverlyhills.org/exploring/greystonemansionconcoursdelegance

August 21

**Pebble Beach
Concours d’Elegance**

Pebble Beach, California
www.pebblebeachconcours.net

Don't Worry. Be Yappy.

by Mark Buehler

I didn't mean to channel my father when I wrote this, but it seems to have gone that way. I'd apologize, but he was right far more often than he was wrong. He would have been this time too.

Over the last couple of weeks, I've noticed a profusion of yappy, whining brats in public places. Specifically, in restaurants. True, one of them was a beer and taco joint where they were hardly the loudest ones there, but they were clearly the most strident, entitled, and self-indulgent.¹ What made it bad is that their Parental Units were completely uninvolved and abdicated any authority they might have had with the end effect being that the balance of the diners were forced to endure ongoing shrieks that bypassed the auditory canal and went straight to the spinal cord.

Also over the last couple of weeks, I've had three different women between 35 and 45 lamenting the immaturity of the men in their lives. Or, more accurately, the absence of maturity of the men who wanted to be in their lives, including one soon-to-be-former spouse. Again, yappy, whining brats, albeit older yappy, whining brats.

Finally, over the last couple of weeks, I've listened to a procession of Millennial² speakers presenting in professional groups. With one exception, I was underwhelmed. There was a great deal of branding, opinion, and self-confidence, but a dearth of original thought or reliance on research³, and even less of . . . well . . . anything that was useable in a professional context. Not whining, but definitely yapping. While the experiences had certain similarities, and there were overlapping age groups involved, they were all too different for me to really nail down any over-arching theme.

It all came together over a bourbon with a friend who happens to be a superior court judge. In the world we work in, the true measure of a lawyer is a willingness to try a case. Even a bad case. Especially a bad case. Because that's what we do. As we talked, each of us could only come up with two young lawyers who really wanted to try cases. Even bad cases.⁴ We've both seen a lot of yapping, posturing, and chest thumping from young lawyers, but we've also seen an equal amount of back pedaling, nellypodging, and whining when, all of a sudden, trial was impending.

The reason? The polite synthesis of our conversation was that everybody out there seems to be afraid of speaking plainly and honestly. Of taking a risk. Of taking a stand. Of offending someone. Of being disappointed, or disappointing some one else. Of saying something or doing something that might be different from what others were saying or doing. Basically, we were talking about a set of sensitivities so overly developed that, when push came to shove, they prevented any original thought or effective action. The two of us were actually less charitable and politically correct in our assessment. Plainly put, we determined that it was neither the yapping or the whining that really put us both off, but rather what it was offered in lieu of. It was readily apparent and very obvious, at least to us, that a fear of getting a butt kicking, or alternately, a fear of giving someone else an butt-kicking, was an enormous obstacle to moving forward and growing as a human being.

Just so we're clear here, we didn't mean the butt-kicking part literally, at least not mostly. Beating the crap out of some one often sounds like a fabulous idea, but in reality, the resulting legal charges and medical bills rapidly take the edge off the anticipated endorphin rush. Assuming of course that you win. If you lose the fight, there are a whole bunch of other downsides. Instead, we were talking about a useful mindset in the approach to life.

If you're part of the group I was channeling my father to discuss, please don't take it personally. I didn't mean it that way. I only know a couple of you, and most of you that I do know seem to get it. You may actually be part of that group that seems to have their mud in a ball. Alternately, you may be never have been given the opportunity to make mistakes and have your butt handed to you as a result. The Club can fix that. Come out and play. We're here to help you, and your rear end.

If you're 16 to 22,⁵ Tire Rack Street Survival is painless, positive, and supportive way to come out, screw up huge, laugh about it, and learn how to screw up less huge the next time. By the end of the day, because of the risks you taken and because of what you've learned from them, you won't be screwing up at all. It's kind of a fun, supervised, self-administered butt-kicking. Except you don't even notice that it's happening.

If you're out of that demographic, a car control clinic is pretty similar, and a track school is more of the same, just faster and more intense. Everybody running these programs is there to help. You get to take make decisions, take action, make some supervised mistakes, and learn what not to do the next time. And, lots of other people are there watching you. Except they really aren't. Your instructor is; because that's his job and because he's sitting right there next to you and doesn't want to die. Everyone else? They're too busy processing the butt kicking they don't even know they're getting to even notice that you exist. Shocking, I know.

If you are one of those people, like me, who was given the opportunity to learn by doing stupid things and processing the aftermath, come and help those less fortunate than you. If they're willing to listen and learn, and to make their own mistakes, be supportive and give them the opportunity to do so. Knocking over a ton of cones at a Tire Rack Street Survival, a car control clinic, or an autocross is a great way to learn how not to do something. You can be a role model and help grow future generations into productive citizens.

On the other hand, if they're at something like an autocross and aren't willing to listen, learn, and grow, feel free to kick their butt. Preferably in a nominally slower car. That will help grow future generations too.

¹ Given that I live in Orange County, what may be the epicenter of self-entitled narcissism, that is saying something.

² Authors William Strauss and Neil Howe wrote about the Millennials in *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*, and they released an entire book devoted to them, titled *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*. Strauss and Howe use 1982 as the Millennials' starting birth year and 2004 as the last birth year.

³ Since real experience at that age is hard to come by.

⁴ The funny thing was, out of that four, three were women. We don't think that is statistically relevant, but it is food for thought, particularly in light of the other women's comments about their potential significant others.

⁵ Or know someone who is. ■

Los Angeles Chapter - BMW CCA Board of Directors & Staff

The **WHISPERING** bomb is published four times a year for the members of Los Angeles Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America (formerly the BMW Automobile Club of America, Los Angeles Region), and our friends in the BMW motoring community. Since October, 1970 it has been carrying information about our club and BMW's many successes throughout the world. The ideas and opinions expressed are those of the authors. The editor ... publisher ... BMW ACA ... BMW NA ... BMW CCA and authors claim no liability for authenticity or correctness. Modifications to a new BMW may be cause to void the warranties.

The Los Angeles Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America (BMW CCA - LA) was founded in 1970 as the BMW Automobile Club of America - Los Angeles Region (BMW ACA - LA). As a separate club, the BMW ACA - LA was affiliated with the International Council of BMW Clubs and BMW Clubs Europa eV. In 1997, the BMW ACA - LA merged into the national BMW CCA and became the Los Angeles Chapter of the BMW CCA. The BMW CCA continues to maintain those relationships with the worldwide BMW community. The LA Chapter has grown from a few charter members in 1970 to a current membership of over 3000, one of the largest BMW CCA chapters nationwide. The Chapter includes members from Santa Barbara, to Orange County to the Inland Empire. We invite Chapter members and all owners of BMW cars to join us at our various activities. General meetings/events are open to all and are held in various venues throughout the Chapter's territory. The time and place for each event is announced on the Chapter website. The Board of Directors also meets regularly, and members may attend those meetings as well. To attend a board meeting, you can contact any board member for additional information. Upcoming events such as autocrosses, driving schools, wine tours, open houses, are also announced on the chapter website, via eBlasts and in the **Whispering** bomb. Come join us at an event, you won't regret it.

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