

What's Inside

INSIDE FRONT COVER _____

NEW CENTURY BMW

2 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Kurt Helm

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Einfahrt Oder Ausfahrt

by Jean Helm

3 SAYING GOODBYE TO AN OLD FRIEND

by Bill Blowers

4 WHERE HAS ALL THE FEELING GONE?

by Mark Buehler

5 BAVARIAN WORKSHOP

6 DIVA'S WORLD

"Spargel"? I thought they said "Sparkle"!

by Diva Moose

7 NEW MEMBERS

8 5 QUESTIONS WITH DAN TACKETT

10 JUST RIGHT!

2017 BMW X3 xDrive2.8i

by James Chew

12 AN ACCIDENTAL BIMMERPHILE

by Mike Buhbe

13 BMW CCA FOUNDATION BUY-A-BRICK CAMPAIGN

Kurt Helm,

BMW CCA Foundation Ambassador

14 JUMBO SHRIMP

2016 Mini Cooper S Clubman

by James Chew

INSIDE BACK COVER _____

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

15 50 YEARS OF BMW ALPINA AUTOMOBILES

by Benjamin Shahrabani

16 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLASSIFIED

BACK COVER _____

THE JEFF KOONS BMW ART CAR

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COVER:

The BMW GINA model at the BMW Museum in Munich – The GINA Light Visionary Model is a fabric-skinned shape-shifting sports car concept built by BMW. GINA stands for "Geometry and functions In 'N' Adaptations". It was designed by a team led by BMW's head of design, Chris Bangle, who says GINA allowed his team to "challenge existing principles and conventional processes." GINA has just four panels — the bonnet, the two side panels and the boot. Its skin appears seamless, but it can "grow" a higher rear spoiler for stability at high speed. Its doors open in a butterfly style, and are each covered by a fabric piece reaching all the way from the nose of the car to their trailing edge which when closed leaves a perfectly smooth surface. Access to the engine can be gained through a slit that can open in the middle of the bonnet.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Kurt Helm

Welcome to a season of BMW activities. I'm sure that you've read and heard that this is BMW's 100th Anniversary year. It's a great opportunity for BMW fans to look back on BMW's history and to look forward to BMW's future vision, "The Next 100 Years."

The BMW CCA will be celebrating this anniversary with three major events over a ten-day period in Monterey.

First will be Legends of the Autobahn on August 19th at the Nicklaus Club in Monterey. This is an all-German marque Concours d'Elegance with judged and display classes featuring BMW, Mercedes Benz, and Audi. There will be spectacular cars, supplier exhibits, and lots of fellow enthusiasts. Admission is free.

Second will be the Festorics event (presented by Michelin.) The BMW CCA will be presenting a celebration of 100 years of BMW. BMW North America regularly brings classic BMW Motorsport cars to race during the weekend – often driven by famous drivers such as Jackie Stewart and Bobby Rahal. The Festorics kicks off on the evening of the 19th and will run through the 21st of August at Laguna Seca Raceway in Monterey.

Finally, our annual Oktoberfest will take place in Monterey (August 23-28). This is a weeklong celebration of our favorite marque with exciting social and driving events planned around the Monterey Peninsula.

If you're interested in learning more about the European delivery process then feel free to send me an email or look me up at any of the three Monterey events in August, I'll be there! I just returned from our 3-week tour with a group of fellow BMW enthusiasts and club members where I picked up a new M2 (one of eleven ordered by our group, along with two M3s and two M4s.)

Getting access to a new model is a challenge, particularly one with high demand such as the M2. Thanks to our tour leader, Dan Tackett (San Diego Chapter); Ludwig Willisich (BMW NA CEO) and the folks at BMW NA European Delivery Group; Frank Patek (our BMW CCA Executive Director); and Mickey Belt (my Client Advisor at Rusnak BMW), it all came together. Keep your eyes open for in-depth articles in an upcoming Roundel magazine written by members of our group. I'll write up a more in-depth article for the next issue of the Whispering Bomb (the editor is mentioning something about "deadlines" at the moment).

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

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Einfahrt Oder Ausfahrt

(translation: on ramp or off ramp) OR Thoughts About Cars Wandering Around in My Head

by Jean Helm

Am I in or am I out? Am I a BMW enthusiast or just along for the ride? That seems to have been the burning question at our house these past months.

While driving around Europe in May, I noticed that all off ramps led to the town of Ausfahrt. Guess that three years of German in high school and college didn't help much, did it? * As most anyone knows who has driven in Europe, "ausfahrt" stands for off-ramp. I cracked the code in about 3 days. After that everything was a cinch!

Having just arrived home from our new M2 European Delivery, I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the entire experience. We were a group of about 31 picking up 15 cars in total; 11 M2's, 2 M3's and 2 M4's. The entire experience was wonderful. We got to know many other BMW enthusiasts (yes, it has rubbed off on me – I am already planning my own BMW European Delivery a few years from now – and without any prompting from the "motorhead" to whom I am married). We drove through six countries and stopped to stay for a while in five of those. It was a whirlwind trip of just under three weeks, but worth all the moving from hotel to hotel as we saw many, many wonderful sites and shared M car performance information amongst all of us.

When I signed onto this gig as WB editor, little did I know that I would actually become a mini-me motorhead. Just yesterday the latest Auto Week came in the mail and I sat down to READ AN ARTICLE! What the heck has happened to me??? I usually don't touch the car magazines, just shuffle them around until they disappear into the garage.

I don't think I'll be working on the cars in the garage anytime soon – I'll leave waxing, polishing and cleaning brakes to the esteemed Mr. Helm, but I am starting to come around.

*Ich kann meine gummi sheue nicht finden (I cannot find my overshoes) is the only phrase I really can remember – not something that is very useful to me today!

Saying Goodbye To An Old Friend

by Bill Blowers

Well, I finally did it. I sold my favorite toy. My beloved and pampered Z4 is gone, on its way to a new home in Louisiana. After nearly twelve years, 61,200 miles, innumerable smiles and flawless performance, the time came to move on to newer technology. The space in my garage, once the dominion of that sterling gray BMW 3.0i roadster, is now occupied by a Tesla Model S 90D and a 240-volt charging outlet.

I was careful, did my research and homework before making the move, and I know I made a good decision—the Tesla is a great car. But there is a place in my heart that will forever remember my E85 Bimmer. I suppose it's like the memories of my growing up years in a small town in Southwestern New York State. Yeah, it was time to leave when I finally went off to college and I knew I would never return, but the formative years spent in that tiny little piece of heaven are a part of me to this day.

When Joe (not his real name), the new owner, drove away from my house, there was a lump in my throat. No amount of trying to explain to myself that it was just a car, or that it was going to a great new owner, or that I had bought a Tesla to replace it, could undo the sense of abandonment I felt at that moment. Maybe like giving up a family pet that you can no longer care for. Would he maintain it like I did? Would it get detailed each year, its oil and filter changed every 5000 miles? Could anyone possibly appreciate its finer points like I did?

That car had been cared for like none other, only the best service techs worked on it, I kept it inside and covered when not being driven, and for the first two years, it was never even in the rain. It was detailed by a family friend who gave it a little extra care and kept its extended leather interior and exterior clear coat looking like new.

Because of that Z4, I will always know what it feels like to drive a truly great car, one designed and built with the pure pleasure of driving as its foremost reason for existence.

Of course, there's the envy factor. You know, the way you feel when a neighbor or acquaintance comments on your car, and share their desire to own one like it. I was particularly proud when others would look at that roadster and be totally surprised to learn that it was over eleven years old. On the day it sold, it looked like it could have just come off a showroom floor.

On the other hand, I've never enjoyed the whole car-buying/selling scene. The hassling about price, the games played as salesmen run back and forth to get the sales managers 'approval,' the attempt to add features you don't need during finance discussions, the empty promises that are never put in writing, and the fake fawning and butt kissing. Why not simply put a good final price on the car and be done with it?

As a seller instead of a buyer, I quickly learned that everyone approached me as if I was a used car salesman. There seems to be the attitude that all car sellers are shysters, that all used cars have some deep terrible secret, and that listed prices

are at least 25% higher than the bottom line.

All told, five people took a serious look at the car. Two were out of state, one from Nevada, and the other, the buyer, from Louisiana. Most others made offers that were pathetic to say the least. They were comparing it to other Z4s from the 2004-2006 era with well over 100,000 miles, with body damage and questionable service records. My baby had all its records, had been maintained according to Mike Miller's (If you aren't familiar with Mike Miller, check his monthly section in Roundel) "Old School Service Procedures", was loaded with extras—including a built in radar detector, and a sound system that sounded like a concert hall. It was an enthusiast's car, and few buyers appreciated its true value—except Joe of course. I got top dollar and he got a really good car.

What's that old saying? "You get what you pay for."

I'll never forget the guy who called and wanted to buy the car for his 18-year old son as a high school graduation gift. The kid had never driven a standard transmission, would I be able to teach him? I suggested he go find a nice used small pick up with an automatic transmission. Then there was the guy who offered to find me a buyer. He only wanted a 10% commission, and of course I would have to lower the price, a lot, to guarantee a quick sale. I respectfully declined.

The turn-over was handled at my local AAA office, much better than going to the DMV, and more secure for me, the seller. They even arranged for the registration to be transferred to Louisiana.

Next time I'll talk about the Tesla Model S 90D. I'm just getting familiar with the car's unusual characteristics, like dynamic regenerative braking, unbelievable torque and acceleration (it weighs 4800 lbs.) and unusually nimble handling. It's strange to get into a car with no place to put a key, no need to start anything, totally quiet operation, and a dash board dominated by a computer display measuring fourteen inches tall by nine inches wide ... My wife describes it as an iPad on wheels. ■

Calling All Chapter Members

In the past, we have published guidelines for contributing to the Whispering Bomb. (See Summer 2015 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.

The Position of

Driving School Coordinator/Registrar is vacant.
if you would like to apply please contact:

KURT HELM - president@losangeles.bmwcca.org

Where Has All The Feeling Gone?

by Mark Buehler

As a guy who learned to drive on a two-tone, beat-to-crap 1968 Ford Custom 500 with a manual steering rack, manual brakes, manual windows, and bias ply tires, let me tell you that the value of steering feel cannot be overrated. That car had a ton of inputs, but none of them had anything to do with what the car was actually doing. It was noise, vibration, and harshness, all for the sake of noise, vibration and harshness. When it came to control, I may as well have been calling down to the engineering deck to have the rudder adjusted. For all of the information I got back, it may as well have been transmitted by a limp string between two tin cans, albeit a string run through a Cuisinart.

Since that time, most of our cars have had a decent amount. Even the Dorkwagon, the '98 Mazda Minivan, the four-wheeled embodiment of mush, had a modicum of feel. You may not have been able to do anything about the terminal under steer, but you damn well knew it was happening. Surprisingly, the last two cars I drove that really should have had some feel just didn't. They had power in abundance and a bunch of grip, but I was never sure what they were actually gripping. Or when they would stop.

The first was the new Mercedes C63S, a 505 horsepower beast that actually has a setting called "Race." It was scary fast, handled great, and had a seat you could spend the day in. No matter how hard I threw it at entrance ramps,ⁱ it just went. No drama, no unruly hooliganism, and no undue tire noise or smoke. Which is a good thing, because if the tires ever did break loose, there wasn't going to be any warning, at least not through the steering wheel.

The second was a BMW 650i Gran Coupe X-Drive. It too was a great carⁱⁱ, and I had it on a wet, rainy weekend. It too had zero steering feel. On the road, and due in part to the electro-nannies, it never lost its composure. So me being me, I found a big empty parking lot and told the electro-nannies to go have some nachos. It did lose its composure when pushed hard, and it did so without any warning through the wheel. Maybe it would be different on dry pavement, but I think the same result would occur, just at much higher speed. In fairness, it was the all wheel drive variant and all of that extra machinery down below that took its toll. Also in fairness, both of these cars had great chassis and the butt dyno approved, but there was sub-diddly coming through the wheel.

Not to go on with a rant that you've heard before, but at least with the BMW, I blame the damnable run flat tires. Since they ride so rough due to the stiff sidewalls, my moderately educated guess is that the noise, vibration and

harshness guys had to dial out the feel to keep the noise, vibration and harshness down and the bulk of the consumers happy. When you look at the sticker on that 650iⁱⁱⁱ, you can see where a buyer might get a little cranky if they actually wanted to know what their car was doing. I was just the borrower and I was beyond cranky. On the other hand, maybe the 650i demographic wants a 1976 Cadillac El Dorado, just without that wallowing, floating, booze-cruise-to-Ensenada sensation.^{iv}

Sure, part of it is the transition between manual, hydraulic, and electric steering racks, and part of it is that the technology is emerging, but is this really the best we can do? Just so you know, it isn't. The rack in Nikita, our M235i, was much better than either of the other two, so it can be done. Maybe if the racks were at or near that level early on, there wouldn't have been the prior backlash when the conversion started. To start with, as the consumers, we need to let the manufacturers know how we feel. But there should be an internal force as well.

But how would that work? Of course, I have a solution.

BMW needs to create a new position, Corporate Curmudgeon. He^v only needs to master one phrase and be given the power to back it up. That phrase is, "Oh, *hell* no!" It needs to be uttered and enforced when some weenie tries to slide some half-assed engineering, electronic, styling, design, or marketing idea through to production.

Think of the time, money, energy and effort that could have been saved: No Bangle Butt or the rest of the moderately crappy e65 Seven Series that came with it. No iDrive. No self-destructive window regulator and door lock actuators. No plastic cooling system components. No cooling fans integrated with power steering pumps. No stupid slogans like "Joy."

I may not be the right person for the job, but I can certainly fill the vacuum until someone better comes along.

ⁱ Within the bounds of prudence, traffic, run-out room, and fear.

ⁱⁱ Despite the Teutonic preference for brown interiors on grey cars

ⁱⁱⁱ A bit north of \$100k.

^{iv} I don't, but I'm not in that market segment anyway. Besides, if I wanted to go there, a mid-90's Bentley Brooklands would be just about perfect.

^v Or she.

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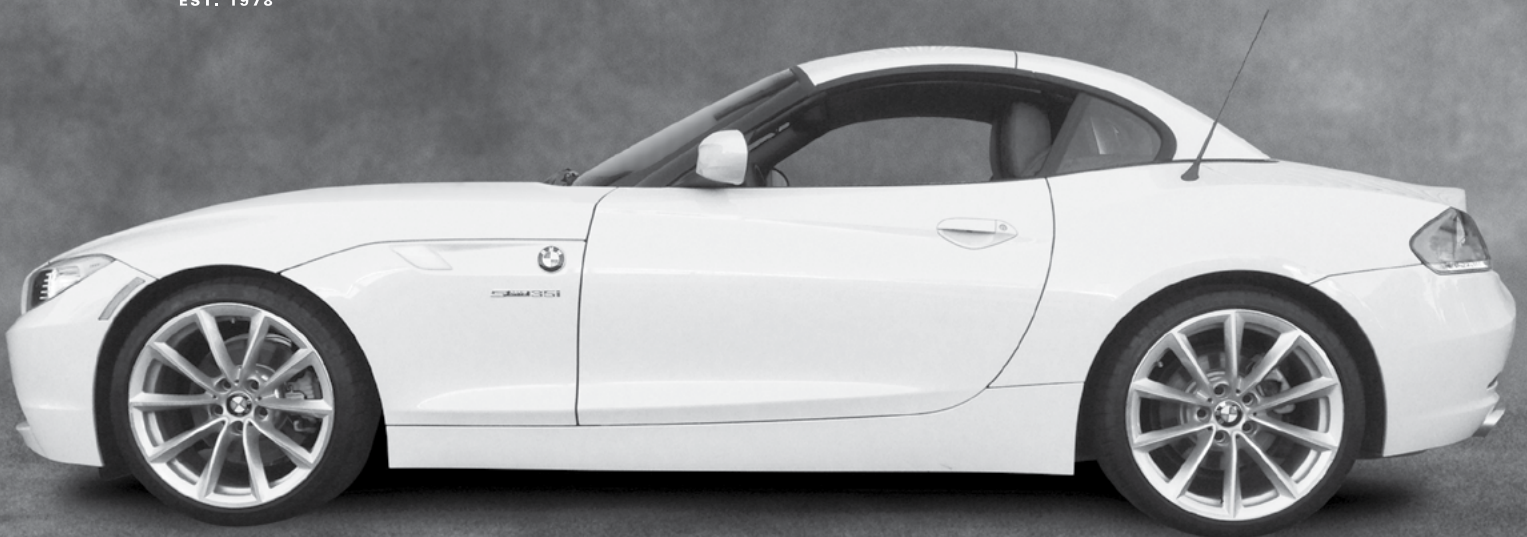


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Diva's World

"Spargel"? I thought they said "Sparkle"!

It's spring – when a young Moose's fancy turns to travel. This spring, the travel would be to Europe to pick up a new BMW at the Welt. (Along with 30+ of our closest new friends who were picking up an additional 14 new BMW's.) Since I'm not allowed to drive, I asked "What's in it for me?" The answer I thought I heard was "Sparkle" so I immediately start thinking of jewelry.

Sadly, we were only in Germany for less than 6 hours when I found out that it wasn't "sparkle" (or jewelry) but rather it was "Spargel". Unbeknownst to me, Spargel is white asparagus in Germany and the surrounding area. At that moment, I began to realize that this trip would be focused on cars, food, and touristy activity rather than the jewelry shopping that I so richly deserved.

****Sigh****

Well, since I couldn't drive, I figured it was best for me to just focus on the food and touristy activities.

While three weeks in five different countries does not constitute an in-depth study of European cuisine, I'm hoping that I can stimulate your appetite for some new dishes.

Most of us are used to a breakfast in the US that is eaten on-the-run, usually something just light like a yogurt or bagel and coffee as we dash out to our daily activities. Not so in Europe. Breakfast was very similar in each of the countries that we visited; typically an extensive buffet that was included in the price of your hotel room. The choices we had included pastries, breads, juices, fresh fruits and vegetables, coffees (including lattes, espressos, and teas for you that get your caffeine a different way), hot and cold cereals, sliced meats and cheeses, hard-boiled eggs, scrambled eggs, spec (a very thinly sliced bacon), sausages and wursts, and yogurts. Did I mention pastries?

We ate most lunches in small cafes while on the road and they were often lighter versions of dinner. Offerings included a small hot meal, sandwiches on hearty breads – including open-faced sandwiches, or meat and cheese plates. If we ate a large lunch, sometimes some of the group went out for a dinner that was just gelato or a small crepe. I like gelato.

Dinners were usually very hearty, although it was always possible to eat a lighter meal at dinner. Pork is plentiful and well prepared in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, while Belgium cuisine is heavily influenced by the French (think heavenly croissants and fresh pastries), and Italy danced to their own flavorful tune.

As I mentioned, we were fortunate to be in Europe during spargel season, which runs from the end of April through June 26th each year. We found it fascinating that June 26th is the exact cut off date for spargel season. After that date, no one serves it. Spargel was deliciously prepared in numerous ways including asparagus soup, a platter of asparagus served with a poached egg, Hollandaise sauce, and diced pancetta, a

stew of asparagus & diced potatoes, as well as simply steamed with butter.

The restaurants in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands offered a mix of food that will be very familiar to Americans as well as foods that are more regional in nature. A typical menu would include soups such as liver dumpling soup and Munich potato soup with bacon. Starters without meat might be mushrooms in cream sauce; spatzel with cheese, fried onions and salad; and home-style Matjes herrings with boiled potatoes. Grilled and fried main courses include pork steak with mushrooms and spaetzle, Wiener Schnitzel (breaded pork or veal scallop) with fried potatoes and stewed cranberries; pepper steak; and mixed meat platter (fillets of pork and beef served with mushrooms and spaetzle with grilled cheese topping). Sausages rate their own separate section in the menu and include Viennese sausages, Nuremberg sausages, grilled ham sausages, and veal sweetbread sausages; each typically served with a warm German potato salad.

Bavarian specialties include Bavarian ravioli (filled with veal and spinach) served on sauerkraut with onions; roast pork (or crispy roasted pork knuckle – that thing was as big as me!!) with potato dumplings and cold cabbage bacon salad, Munich style braised beef in gravy with bread dumplings and crisp-roasted suckling pig.

A group favorite dessert was apple strudel with vanilla sauce (or ice cream), a sweet dumpling with vanilla sauce, or a strudel filled with sweet cream cheese and raisins. We found strudel in most of the countries we visited, except Belgium. There it was crepes – a French favorite and certainly a favorite of some of our group.

Restaurants in Italy offered a variety of pastas, gnocchi, risottos, fresh fish, pizzas, cured meat & cheese platters and grilled meats. Gelatos and tiramisu seemed to dominate the dessert selections (that's not necessarily a bad thing.)

Belgian restaurants contained some Bavarian items but really seemed to specialize in French dishes such as steak frites, moules frites, roasted chicken, nicoise salad, wonderful soups, and duck confit. Sorbets, gelatos, a variety of tarts or chocolate mousse were always on standby to help our diners round out the evening.

Go in with an open mind and I'm confident that you'll enjoy some great meals. If you have food allergies, talk to the waiter, our group found each establishment willing to adjust menu items to accommodate specific dietary requirements such as gluten intolerance, soy intolerance and a someone in our group who is a vegetarian.

Engage your waiter by asking for their recommendations. They practice their trade with pride and would be pleased to help you. Try the regional specialties, including local beers and wines. We discovered new tastes and made new friends everywhere we went by simply eating and drinking locally.

Well, now I'm hungry again... Sheesh! ■

NEW MEMBERS

John Acker	Jaysen Estrada	Martin Leslie	Brett Sciuto
Larry Addison	David Feuerhelm	Roman Lezo	Manuel Segura
William Adrian	Garret Fields	Karen Liang	Christin Servin
Antonio Alexanyan	James Fisher	Yu hung Liao	Katie Shannon
Sharif Alkatib	Tom Frecentese	Matei Lichtl	Layla Shuayb
Eric Almeras	Miguel Frontela	James Liebenguth	Brian Siegrist
Razi Amrani	Rajan Gaglani	Eric Lin	Andrew Smith
Tyler Ayalin	Nina Gardner	Monica Lopez	Rod St. Amant
Anna Ayvazyan	Shahar Gil	Martin Lotman	Butch Stallings
Jason Baghdassarian	Daniela Gonzalez	Michael Louie	Thaddeus Starkey
Gregory Baker	Martell Gonzalez	Christopher Lowe	John Stremel
Erik Bakker	Paul Gordon	Marcus Maldonado	Saksit Suetrong
Dana Bateman	Artur Grigoryan	Mannie Matus	Rattanaporn Suetrong
David Beck	Bryan Hakola	Tobi Mayers	Andrew Suruchlyan
Justin Beitler	Jon Ham	Terry Mayers	Amy Takamoto
Miguel Beltran	Noam Hameiri	Andrew McGovern	Calvin Tan
Ronald Bergmann	Alexander Harris	Malcolm McVickar	Martin Teng
Brian Bosley	Doralyn Harris	Russell Melanson	Jose Toral
Robert Burow	John Hashimoto	Joshua Melanson	Tony Torres
Bernie Cal	Nate Hassler	Jorge Menendez	Canaan Treadway
Allison Carlson	Dimart Hedges	Tim Miller	Robert Upton
Kenneth Carrasco	Holly Heimbruch	John Milliken	Raniel Valerio
Donald Carter	Peter Helton	Richard Moreno	Robert Velazquez
Jorge Casillas	Lisa Helton	Alex Morrow	Scott Vervynck
Gene Chang	Ronald Henderson	Erik Nathan	Gagik Virabyan
Andrew Chen	Joe Herbert	Robert Neapole	Jose Virgen
Melisa Chester	Nathan Hicks	John Nelson	Ryan Warnken
Arman Chivichyan	Jeffrey Hobgood	Dmitri Novikov	Shane Warnken
John Chow	Brian Homsangpradit	Robert Ortlund	Mark Warshauer
Eric Chun	Grant Howard	Sercan Oyuntur	Cari Washington
Evan Clark	Hunter Howey	Elian Paiuk	John Watkins
Brad Clarke	Jonathan Huerta	Galit Paiuk	Ryan Wessler
William Cole	Gary Hutto	Kevin Park	Jason West
Bryan Cooke	Asad Ibrahim	Palak Patel	Leslie Whigham
David Cops	Daniel Iskander	John Payne	Steve Wikle
Fallynn Cox	Fredrick Jacobs	Nicholas Pineschi	Dave Wildes
Sissi Cruse	Vachik Javadian	David Preston	Amith Wiyemanne
Christopher Cuban	Craig Jewell	Shanaya Pudumjee	Emily Wolfe
Dennis Cunningham	Terrence Johnson	Kui Qin	Christopher Wright
Ken Dale	Michael Jones	Steven Raihl	Jennifer Yang
Kevin Davis	Robert Jones	Maurice Ratliff	Robert Yee
Colton Day	Anthony Joseph	Juan Reyes	
Jonathan Day	Alan Kante	Allen Reyno	
Andy Dechartivong	Hao-Tso Kao	Steve Riffel	
Krutal Desai	Alex Kavcioglu	Rebecca Rinck	
Nicholas Dominice	Joe Khajadourian	Tony Rios	
Scot Dorsey	Daniel Kiang	Bryan Robaina	
Jeffrey Dos Remedios	Roger Klemm	Alma Rodriguez-Flores	
Erik Ebrahemian	Leon Kodabakshian	Fausto Roman	
Mark Erbach	Avinash Koul	Peter Ross	
Nathaniel Eskridge	Cindy Kraus	Madeline Salvatierra	
Skyler Eskridge	Jeff Kreager	William Sayre	
Katie Espensen	Bon Kumsang	Mark Schmitt	
Cristina Essex	Mason Lazar	Edward Schmitt	

Five Questions with Dan Tackett

In May, 20 people picked up 14 M cars at the BMW Welt in Munich (there were 31 people in the group – not all picked up cars – and one of our group had to forego the trip at the last minute, but still got his car). Dan Tackett, from the San Diego BMW CCA Chapter, led this group (Editor's note – I liken it to herding cats) for a nearly-three-week tour of Europe, both before and after we picked up our new cars.





1. How did this particular group come together?

Many of the people on this 2016 Centennial M Tour were fellow BMW Club driving instructors whom I have known for years, had picked up cars as a group in 2002, and indicated that they were interested in picking up a new BMW sometime soon. Others were personal friends who told me they wanted to do European Delivery and knew of my experience. We actually started planning this trip 2 ½ years ago, in September 2013. The original plan was to partner with a local San Diego-area BMW dealer; half of the group would be loyal dealer clients and the other half would be people I knew from the 2002 tour. At some point about a year ago, the person with whom we had been communicating left the dealer and that half of the tour exited the planning. There were many more Club people I had wanted to invite, so this was a chance to make it a 100% Club event. The invitation list grew organically from there (Editor's note – we are glad they did, as we were part of the group). We capped the number of cars at 17, the number of delivery turntables at the Welt Delivery Center.

2. Have you arranged a group trip like this before?

Yes, in 2002, and it was the trip of a lifetime that I never expected to repeat. But opportunity knocked again, and lots of people were excited for another M Tour. A trip like this is not planned in a vacuum and I have to recognize several people without whom this Centennial M Tour would not have been successful. George Phemister is a seasoned world traveler and volunteered to research and book our hotels for us. George has travelled to well over 100 countries around the world so has an encyclopedic knowledge of lodging that would be suitable for our group, both from a comfort and cost perspective. For our stay in Switzerland,

Anne Littrell recommended a quaint hotel in Grindelwald where she had previously stayed. She also was able to convince them to open a week earlier than they normally do to accommodate our group. Thanks, Anne, for your persuasive ways! Ken Whitson was our route planner. Ken has taken nine previous European Deliveries (this one made a nice round 10), so was well versed in route planning and "pass bagging" in the Alps (as in "I've bagged another pass today"). Ken has extensive experience and expertise in planning interesting and challenging routes for our drivers, so we knew that everyone would be fully engaged in each day's routes. Tom Fota helped us a lot in our first days in Munich by arranging dinners for the two evenings before we picked up our cars. Blaine McNutt arranged a group buy and shipment of track brake pads so we could fully exercise our new M cars on three amazing race tracks (Nürburgring, Zandvoort, and Spa-Francorchamps). Finally, I'd like to recognize Lisa Goehring and Greg Uhler. They designed the shirts and stickers for our Centennial M Tour and ensured we had them before the trip.

3. What challenges did you have both before and during this trip?

The challenges to create this trip took years to work out. We coordinated private tours at several BMW facilities, affiliated with a group for the track days, and arranged our first M service at a BMW dealership in Stuttgart. The toughest task was arranging the purchase and delivery of so many hard-to-get M cars through BMW AG, BMW NA, and BMW European Delivery. Once the long-lead planning was in place, there were other challenges before the trip, including coordinating with everyone who helped with the planning, ensuring that everyone had set their travel plans, and make sure we would

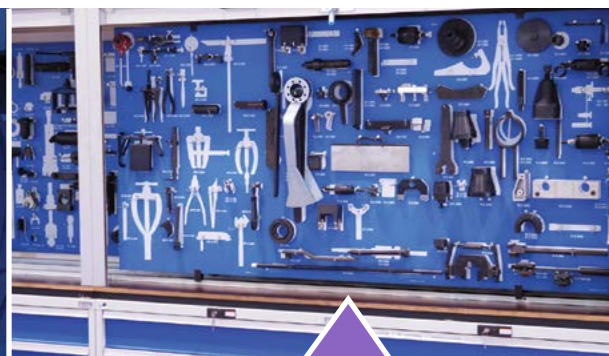
meet at our first hotel in Munich. Once we got to Europe, almost everything was already in place. It seemed that the biggest dilemma was where to go for dinner. I specifically designed this trip as a "cruise" – hotels were booked in advance, breakfast was included with each hotel stay, routes were planned, and we knew which days were travel days to the next locale or which could be "free" days to do whatever anyone in the group wanted to do. I wanted to make sure that there was some flexibility in our schedule so everyone in this diverse group had options.

4. How different was this trip from other trips you have taken?

I used our 2002 M Tour (see archived Roundel July 2003) as a template, so in some ways it was easy – just follow the template. In other ways it was very different. This is my seventh European Delivery, and the rest of them have been just my car or much smaller groups, so there were not as many people and cars to track. With fewer vehicles in a delivery, I generally do not book all lodging in advance, and it's certainly easier to find garage space for fewer vehicles.

5. Would you do this again? What are the lessons learned?

Asking me so soon after coming back home if I would do this again is kinda like asking a new mom right after giving birth if she wants to have another baby. I need to give it awhile to have some perspective. My one lesson learned is that I would ask someone to volunteer as our tour group "maitre d'hotel" who, during the trip, would recommend restaurants as well as research before the trip things like which restaurants in our travel areas do/do not take reservations, can accommodate food allergies, or would be able to accommodate our entire group if we all want to dine together.



To wrap up, I have to say that the one thing I enjoy about every group trip I take or lead is taking new people someplace I have been, but they have not been before. I love to see their smiles as they experience these new places. It makes me feel as if I am seeing it through their eyes for the first time all over again, and I enjoy that very much. ■

Just Right! 2017 BMW X3 xDrive2.8i

by James Chew

Our oldest daughter graduated from college and was moving from home to her first “real” job. One of her gifts from us was my wife’s 2007 BMW X5 3.0. Custom ordered and purchased new from a fellow BMW CCA member almost ten years ago, the X5 had less than 73,000 miles. We knew that vehicle had plenty of miles left - especially seeing as how we recently replaced the rear differential! Not buying in to the “lifetime fluids” claim, all where regularly changed – including the automatic transmission fluid. Fully loaded with her possessions and giving her hugs and kisses for luck, she and HER 2007 X5 left for Northern New Jersey. Ironically she moved to a location close to BMW NA’s headquarters. I suspect finding a reputable independent BMW shop to service that vehicle would not be an issue!

So, it was time for new car shopping. For a “car guy”, there’s nothing more fun than embarking on this adventure. And because we were not certain if we would replace the X5 with another BMW, this made the adventure even more fun (for me).

Once a stagnant industry, the pace of technology, design, and manufacturing changes in the auto industry rivals that of consumer electronics. The major difference between these two technology-driven industries is that for the most part, the average consumer ACCEPTS two-to-three year lifetimes from their consumer electronics. Such a lifetime for a vehicle is deemed unacceptable.

Even though I see plenty of older BMWs still on North American roads (ever see 1990’s era Lexus, Mercedes, Audis, Cadillacs, Lincolns, Acuras, or Infinitis on the road today – I didn’t think so), I felt an obligation for my wife and I to evaluate a sampling of today’s SUV offering before making a selection.

Sport utility vehicles are the second most popular and second most profitable segment in today’s North American market – light trucks being the most popular and most profitable. And while there are now SUVs for every purpose and purse, the performance – luxury and near performance luxury segment has become quite crowded.

The Cadillac Escalade and GMC Yukon Denali are the “dreadnought” class of the luxury SUVs. Unapologetically the symbol of American success/excess, both SUVs are surprisingly nimble in urban driving environments and are the ultimate Interstate “cruise mobile” for any road trip. I was surprised to see the large number of them used for kid carpool duty. Based on my observed durability, these vehicles will most likely still be extremely dependable transportation after the last child graduates from college. But our family was downsizing – so as fine a luxury SUV as they both are – they were too big for our needs.

There’s a good reason why the Lexus RX and NX sell well. First, there’s nothing quite like the Lexus dealership environment. Exhibiting customer courtesy that rivals Nordstrom, the dealership personnel go out of their way to make every customer and shopper feel special. Second, the fit and finish of Lexus products cannot be rivaled. However, my observation is that once the new car shine fades on a Lexus, the product feels and drives like well-optioned Toyotas. In terms of driving dynamics, both the Lexus RX and NX seems to have tuned the suspension and handling to “darty”



rather than responsibly predictable. And the Ninja/Transformer exterior design was simply not our cup of tea. So for those reasons, the Lexus products were eliminated from consideration.

When fully loaded, the Nissan SUVs would make any shopper think twice about shopping for the Lexus, Acura, AND Infiniti SUVs. Having upscale interior and exterior designs, the Nissan SUVs are the reason why they have quietly surpassed Honda in terms of North American sales. For us, the crossover front wheel drive chassis were just too cushy and wallowy for our tastes. We had the same feeling for the Buick Enclave and Cadillac SRX. Both products are great family luxury SUVs, just not for us.

The Ford SUVs – the Explorer, the Edge, and the Escape – were quite intriguing. All three Ford offerings are very, very good. What eliminated the Ford products was their new hood design. Neither my wife nor I could see the front of the vehicles. Our oldest daughter learned to drive in our 2007 X5 and we knew that our youngest daughter would learn to drive with the replacement vehicle. If we couldn’t see the front, we could only imagine how nerve racking that would be for a student driver.

We also considered the Jeep Grand Cherokee, and the Jeep Cherokee. If we lived in an area where off road capabilities were often needed, it would be a no-brainer – the Jeep Grand Cherokee diesel would be our new vehicle. However, the Grand Cherokee’s interior didn’t feel nearly as upscale as one would expect (especially for that MSRP). And while we didn’t mind the Cherokees’ funky front end design, the nine-speed automatic transmission’s propensity to be constantly searching for the right gear in most every driving conditions became quite irritating.

We did drive the Mercedes GLS, GLE, GLC, and GLA. This again proved that BMW people are not Mercedes people. These Mercedes SUVs are fine vehicles. But for most BMW owners, the Mercedes products simply drive and feel strange.

In the end, we judged the BMW SAVs as the best for our needs. We experienced the ecosystems and, being our eleventh BMW, we appreciated the driving dynamics, durability, and dependability of the product, as well as courteous and professional treatment from every BMW dealership that visited. But which one to select?

Even though the X5d is a wonderful SAV and a wonderful value, it was simply too big for a family of three. Because we felt the X5 was too big, waiting for the even larger (and much more expensive) X7 made no sense. After spending a significant amount of time in the X1, it was just too small. And for some reason, BMW does not offer the heated rear seat option for the X1.

The X3, however, was just right. The driver’s seating position was high enough for my wife having the same “feeling of command” she had our X5. The X3 seemed to have almost the same interior space as our 2007 X5, while still having a smaller exterior. The exterior, freshened in 2015, has the traditional BMW timeless aura. In my opinion, with the redesigned front end, the X3



exterior design will have the staying power of the E36 and the E46 BMW designs.

Our sales professional and I quickly configured the X3 to my wife's preference. After a quick discussion with the sales manager, a fair deal was negotiated. After placing the order, our sales professional provided the order number. He also informed us that because of the build date, ours would be classified as a 2017 model year vehicle. While initially delighted, I later learned that because of changes to the BMW free maintenance program, this was a double-edged sword. Using the "My BMW" section of the BMW website, we traced the assembly progress. After a little over three weeks, our 2017 BMW X3 was delivered to BMW of Alexandria (I was tempted to have the vehicle delivery experience at the Spartanburg facility, but having a rather active daughter, we had no free time for such an event. I guess we'll have to wait to be "empty nesters" to take advantage of such an experience).

This was the first BMW we've had delivered since BMW initiated the "BMW Genius" program. As my wife was patiently walked through all the features of her new vehicle, I met with the finance manager. I was rather surprised to learn that the BMW free maintenance period had been shortened to three years, and that brakes were no longer included. I am hoping that the uproar from my fellow BMW CCA'ers and the decreasing BMW sales in North America will have BMW NA leadership retroactively re-instate the BMW free maintenance program back to four years AND again include brake service!

Driving home from the dealership, it seemed as if someone turned the rain faucet to "high" the moment we entered I-95. But my wife felt confident driving home. Under these adverse weather conditions, the higher seating position, xenon headlights (frankly, I can't see a reason for the LED headlights), X-drive, and heads up display came in quite handy. As for me, I had adjusted the Mocha Nevada leather with orange stitching power front passenger seat to a very comfortable position to read the owner's manual during the drive home. An added bonus was that the 2.0-liter TwinPower turbo four-cylinder engine achieved 28 miles per gallon during the trek home. I suspect that we will appreciate the fuel savings from owning a smaller SAV, powered by a smaller engine.

Being our eleventh BMW and third BMW SAV, we had strong opinions of the must have options. As much as we liked the "Surround View", it seemed that an X3 is small enough and has such outstanding visibility that having the rear view camera was all that was needed for parallel parking and maneuvering in to tight parking spaces. We had manual rear window sun shades in the

X5, which we never used during the last three years of ownership. But we did think the "X-line" trim makes the X3 look like a true premium performance-luxury SAV. As for all the extras the finance manager felt obligated to discuss, he knew that after owning eleven BMWs, the likelihood of our selecting any of them was quite poor.

After thirty years working in the car business, I appreciate that the best vehicle is the one you like – and it will change over time. For this time in our lives, the 2017 BMW X3 xDrive2.8i is "just right".

Now, where is that BMW CCA Rebate application?

One More Thing

I planned to immediately "detail" our new X3 the moment we arrived home, even if we hadn't driven home in the pouring rain. With all due respect to the outstanding dealer personnel, there is no way they'll pay the same level of attention to my vehicle as me.

The first time detailing a new (or new to me) vehicle gives me a change to carefully inspect it. I learn which areas to inspect during fueling as well we areas to pay careful attention when I take the vehicle for service. As an example; I once took our 2007 X5 to a local Costco for the complimentary tire rotation. Picking up the vehicle, the cashier informed me that one wheel was missing two lug nuts. Having checked the air pressure on all four tires prior to taking it to Costco for service, I knew that all the lug BOLTS were present and accounted for. Even a terse discussion with the Service Manager failed to convince them that there was no way a long-time BMW CCA member, who had checked the tire pressure prior to taking the vehicle in for service, would have NOT noticed two missing lug BOLTS on one wheel. But the way, I now take photos of all the wheels prior to using that particular Costco to rotate the tires!

No matter how hard they try, the typical dealership new vehicle prep will not achieve the same level of care as a typical car guy. So, I check all the fluids (except for the oil, grr...) the tire pressure, carefully wax and wash the vehicle (including the door sills), and clean the engine compartment. From experience, I've learned that when your vehicle is the victim of an accident or vandalism, the insurance adjustor notices if your vehicle has been well care for – and it will be reflected in the payout.

I'm a big fan of the Mother's line of car care products. After washing the X3's exterior with the Mother's California Gold carnauba wax and wash solution and applying two coats of Mother's California Gold Carnauba Wax, I washed the wheels using Mother's wheel and tire cleaner. The tires are treated with Mother's "Back to Black". I then treat all the weather stripping with a coating of silicon spray.

As for the interior, all the windows, windshield, and mirrors are washed (using Mother's re/vision glass cleaner). You would be surprised how dirty that are, even right after vehicle delivery. The carpets and the floor mats are carefully vacuumed and the appropriate Scotchguard products are applied. The leather will be "cleaned/treated" at the end of summer using the BMW leather cleaner/conditioner.

In my opinion, starting your ownership experience with such an inspection and cleaning regimen learn about your new vehicle as well as setting up a cadence to keep your new vehicle looking brand new. It's also an effective way to show your neighbors that you have a new BMW! ■

An Accidental Bimmerphile

by Mike Buhbe*

You may have heard of the dangers driving to and from Las Vegas. The people driving to Sin City are eager to start the party as soon as possible, and full speed ahead. The people driving home from Las Vegas – some of them - have been on binges at the bar, the craps table, or other activities and substances. What is supposed to “Stay In Vegas” is sometimes brought to the highway. Returning folks can be angry or sleep deprived. Although the road now has multiple lanes, fresh paving, good signage, and wide medians, these improvements cannot prevent individual drivers from endangering the rest of us. And in my own trip I became one of those dangerous drivers.

Knowing this well in advance, I weighed the advantages and disadvantages, mostly costs, of flying versus driving to Sin City. Flights were in the hundreds of dollars, and then there is the amount of time it takes to fly counting all the hassles of getting to the airport, going through security, and then renting a car upon arrival. For my brother-in-law’s memorial I would need a car. The whole point of the trip was his final party in Boulder City, so this was not going to be a fun-filled fling at Cirque du Soleil and the fabulous restaurants. Since we needed a car anyway it made sense to drive, and the amount of travel time was nearly equal.

We have a pretty nice road car: Maria’s 530i, a 2005 E60 Five series. For a relaxed drive the slightly more powerful six has plenty of reserve with reserve scoots for emergencies. The car is roomy. The standard audio system is fine. I bought a blues collection of two CDs. I’m in that generation that considers CDs new technology, and in some cases the LP disk offers better sound quality. With some new tunes, a check of the dipstick, and a full tank we were rocking.

Once out of Los Angeles (meaning past Victorville), the scenery becomes one long sweeping vista. There, hills rise and fall varying in color from cinnamon to almost salty white with cloud patterns casting dramatic shadows on the hillsides. It is easy to imagine a Disney animation, a giant brush sweeping over the landscape with time compressed to yield the vast panorama. As a kid I hated driving through the desert; it was boring. As an adult I take great pleasure in the rolling camera of the mind searching for natural beauty or quirky breaks in the ribbon of hill and highway. Among those quirky breaks are the mad men and wild women attempting to set land speed records.

Driving comfortably in the fast lane I observed in my rear view mirror a black SUV approaching me at near autobahn speed. A check and a double check of the center lane showed

I could move over, then flicking my turn signal I changed into the middle lane still monitoring the three lanes behind me. A white SUV even faster than the black one, flying at warp speed, came up behind me and immediately rocketed into the slow lane to go around me. Luke Skywalker and Han Solo flew past, one on either side.

A CHP car over the next rise witnessed the contest and immediately began pursuit. Hah! I thought in quiet triumph. Both road racers slowed and the chippie soon caught his prey, nailing the white speedster since he was going faster. Justice was served, or at least one driver was being taken off the road, even if temporarily.

Barstow still maintains a patina of the glory days of Route 66. Choruses of Willie Nelson singing “Kingman, Barstow, San Bernardino...” play in my head, marking motels along the main street of the town, each name reflecting a part of the song. We stopped for our lunch of sandwiches from home and used the Jack In The Box bathroom. A pawnshop nearby drew my interest. Its contents of dusty stereo equipment, electric guitars that belonged in honkytonks, and a table scattered with

“Choruses of Willie Nelson singing ‘Kingman, Barstow, San Bernardino ...’ play in my head.”

De Walt saws blaring trademark bright yellow and dark grey made me wonder what desperation had brought their owners here. Behind a glass display case were hundreds of sockets stacked on top of each other, glistening cylindrical reminders that many a mechanic had foundered in this hardscrabble town and traded the tools of work for the more immediate need of food and

shelter. Or more likely - their owners just wanted to cash out old and unwanted equipment.

Returning from Vegas I caught a sight for eyes of the innocent: Mongols. Four members of the notorious motorcycle club, rivals to Hells Angels among others, split the lanes riding at perhaps 60 MPH. The logo on the back of their jackets does not incorporate death’s head skulls but instead features a Harley Davidson with dangerously raked front forks, a symbol of risk and death I suppose.

My brother-in-law died without leaving any instructions for a memorial. “I’ll be dead,” is all Jack said with his usual laconic smile when the subject had been broached a year ago, “Do what you want.” My niece and nephew and their spouses came up with a wonderful plan: an afternoon in a retro bowling alley in Boulder City. A chocolate cake, our favorite, emblazoned with “Hit The Road Jack” sat among photos. Brief words were spoken. Stories we had never heard sprang to life. Eyes glistened and tears became salt on cheeks. Then everyone was thanked for attending. The full bar, next to the selection of bowling shoes, opened to start a grand time in the eight lanes at Boulder Bowl. My son and I tightened our laces, found balls big enough for our large hands, and bowled together for our first time. Nick managed three strikes in a row, which he attributed to the relaxing effects of a gin and tonic.

Sunday morning we got an early start on the day to avoid the crush of traffic leaving Las Vegas. That we did. And perhaps therein was the problem.

Cruising in the fast lane means dealing with the drivers who insist on tailgating in the hope that the endless line of cars in front will magically move out of their way or just melt. I almost always let these cars go around me if the traffic ahead is moving at a uniform speed. If the road ahead is empty and I am at a speed that risks a ticket I will courteously move into the next lane. Let the speeder attract the attention of the police.

Except once in awhile. Reptilian rage suddenly boils up and I think I am the *Force of Good* christened with a *Safe Highway Mission*. Bright lights flash **REPEL HIGHWAY EVIL!**

A pickup weaved in and out, sweeping past slower cars traveling at a sane speed. The safe space between me and the car in front was his next target. Hah! I would apply the gas pedal in teensy increments and close the gap, thereby forcing my rival into submission. He (yes, it was a man) would be forced to fall behind and I would be the victor. Only it didn't go this way. The pickup truck driver stomped the gas and plunged into the gap. My horn did not deter him, and Maria cried out a warning. Catastrophe, courted foolishly, was avoided.

A few minutes later, same pickup slowed at the California Fruits and Vegetables Inspection Station. The pickup pulled over to the sandy strip at the side and stopped. As the inspectors waved me past, my former rival leaped out. He took

a few steps forward, put his hands on his knees, and puked a generous stream of multi-colored liquid. For an instant there was an uninterrupted line of vomit between mouth and ground. Whatever created those vile fluids is anybody's guess, but it became instantly clear to me that the driver for whom I risked lives was operating at what anyone would say was a reduced capacity for rational decisions. Viewing the intimate act of regurgitation made me realize that my own vital fluids, much more precious, could have been splattered along the road.

I have made my memorial plans clear to my children and spouse. Scattering my ashes and hiring a band are not high on their wish list, and I'm not sure they would even follow my wishes. Like Jack, I know that it won't matter. What is important is remembering that there is no sense in driving like one of those crazy people. None of the crazies will attend my memorial anyway. ■

*Editor's Note – Last month we credited this column to **Mark Buhbe**, and Mike graciously brought it to our attention (his email was – "Mark Buhbe has taken credit for my writing! Who is this man, and how did he hack the computers of the dedicated staff of the Whispering Bomb?" I'd like to say that I had not had enough coffee while I was editing, but I have no excuse. Our apologies.

BMW CCA Foundation Buy-A-Brick Campaign

Kurt Helm, BMW CCA Foundation Ambassador

The BMW CCA Foundation has introduced its "Buy A Brick Campaign" to help pave the way for the Foundation's future, as well as support key Foundation initiatives such as saving lives through teen driver education and preserving BMW history. Purchased bricks will be located on the entryway to the upcoming new museum facility in Greet, South Carolina and will serve as a lasting tribute to the BMW CCA Foundation.

Bricks are available in two sizes with four styles to select from, ranging in price from \$50 to \$200. They may be personalized with a name or message and clipart on the attractive, laser-inscribed bricks. The bricks are a great opportunity to honor a family member or loved one, pay tribute to a favorite mentor, memorialize a special event or car, or to celebrate your passion for BMWs by helping educate teen drivers and becoming part of BME history.

In addition to helping support the Foundation's future museum facility, funds raised from the Buy-a-Brick Campaign will be used for the Street Survival teen driver safety program which is built upon the premise that safe driving is learned by doing. With the help of corporate sponsors Tire Rack,

Michelin, BMW NA, and Enterprise Rental Car, the BMW CCA Foundation has offered subsidized car control training to teenagers across the United States since 2003. The program is hands-on and is designed to go beyond the typical high school driver's education course. Street Survival is unique in that it offers students instruction in their own cars so that they learn the limitations of the car they drive daily.

**To learn more about the
Buy-a-Brick Campaign and leave your mark
by purchasing a brick, visit ...**

www.bmwccafoundation.org



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Jumbo Shrimp

2016 Mini Cooper S Clubman

by James Chew

Marketing types love to use oxymorons to describe their products. As car enthusiasts, we've heard a number of them: "manu-matic" transmissions; "real simulated" wood; "pleather" (plastic leather); and "environmentally friendly" electric/hybrid (do these folks have ANY idea how electricity is generated in the U.S. or the environmental unfriendliness of nickel metal hydride and lithium-ion battery manufacturing?). And recently, my X5 was the victim of "lifetime fluids".

So when we were provided the opportunity to evaluate a "Big" Mini, the George Carlin "Jumbo Shrimp" routine came to mind. For those of you under 30, please search the Internet for that routine. And to avoid going in to a "you kids don't appreciate genuine humor" rant, I'll stop here.

The modern Mini brand was launched at the same time as Scion. Both targeting the youth market, Mini decided to use a "hip/mod British" image to launch the brand by promoting the product's "fun to drive" characteristics while Toyota executed a "We know better" marketing campaign. The product development approach was also different, with the "new" Minis being modernized versions of the classics, but greatly improved with BMW engineering, design, and manufacturing processes. The Scion products were interesting designs on a Tercel/Yaris/Corolla chassis.

Today Minis are not only selling well, their monthly dealer inventories are always among the lowest in the industry. Recently, Toyota announced that they are terminating the Scion brand.

The success of Mini brand and products is that they built and nurtured a loyal customer base. Whether it's the clever, timeless styling, the BMW-backed engineering and assembly quality, or the high re-sale value, when a Mini owner decides to replace their Mini, it's generally with a different Mini.

After the 2001 re-launch of the brand, the Mini Convertible was launched in 2005, the second generation, larger Mini was launched in 2007, and "big" Mini Clubman was launched in 2008, the even bigger Mini, the Countryman Crossover launched in 2011, the three-door Paceman (a three door Clubman) launched in 2013, the third generation (bigger) Mini launched in 2014, and now the (even bigger) all new Clubman is being offered. Launched with one model, the Hardtop, Mini now offers five different products in three different versions (base, "S", and John Cooper Works). It's most ironic that to keep the brand and products popular and relevant, the Mini has become "Big".

We've always enjoyed driving the Mini products, so were delighted to receive a 2016 Mini Copper S Clubman S for a weeklong evaluation. When we evaluated a first generation Clubman in 2009, we appreciated how it still had the Mini Hardtop's "Lets Motor" attitude and added handy dual rear cargo doors, increased rear passenger legroom, and a



passenger side rear door to be "family friendly". In keeping with design trend, the new 2016 Mini Clubman is not only bigger than the previous generation, but is now a true four-door vehicle which makes it very family friendly.

To prevent the longer Clubman S from looking ungainly, the Mini designers cleverly maintained outstanding proportions by increasing the track, the wheelbase, and the height over the base Mini. The resulting exterior design exudes so much English character that you wonder if it will try to audition for a role in a yet to be planned "Cars 3" movie (voiced by the actor who plays Mr. Mosley on Downton Abbey). The Clubman S looks cute, fun, and practical. We found that the vehicle lived up to the fun and practical promise of its exterior design.

The Clubman S's interior has an upscale refined feel that was lacking from the previous model. All the controls and switches no longer look nor feel as if they were purchased from surplus Radio Shack stock. Integrating LED displays in the climate control temperature control dials is a rather nice touch.

The instrument panel has a modern, integrated look. The easy-to-read speedometer and tachometer have tasteful graphics. And the fuel gauge is a clever series of LEDs along the right side of the speedometer. The large center "Infotainment" screen, which is uses the same updated BMW "iDrive" controls to operate, is surrounded by a light circle that changes colors.

Our inner racecar driver heart was warmed by the location of the ignition switch. It's a large, red-lit switch located in the middle of the center stack.

The leather seating surfaces have an attractive, upscale diamond stitching that seems to have been borrowed from a Bentley. The overtly "English" interior design and features not only made us watch our manners; our younger passengers began speaking with an English accent while in the vehicle! And when just my mates and I were in the Clubman, we began speaking as if we were in the band "Spinal Tap".

The rear seat passengers will not only appreciate the refined seating area, but also the increased leg and shoulder room. This improved rear seating area as well as the addition of a fourth door will prevent a family man from NEEDING to purchase a bigger vehicle as his children get older. The Mini Clubman most likely one of the few family vehicles where the kids will be



eager to use for their drivers training.

For some reason, the dual rear doors attracted a crowd at the local “big box” warehouse and hardware stores. Many times, on lookers surprised us by saying, “Will you look at that!” “Isn’t that fancy”, or “Well I’ll be!” when that saw us open those dual rear doors and load what seemed to way too much cargo into the Clubman.

To say that we “Motor’d” for that week would be an understatement. With the “S” tried and true BMW B48 modular TwinPower Turbo 4-cylinder engine (tuned to 189 horsepower and 205 foot pounds of torque for Mini) , 8-speed “manu-matic” transmission (a six speed manual shifter is available), and performance-tuned suspension, we actively sought back roads to conquer.

The “Sport/Economy” settings switch is located on the road bezel that surrounds the shifter. While the Clubman is a fun drive in the Normal setting, once switched to Sport, the Clubman unleashes a carnal urge to conquer curvy roads. Fortunately, there are many such roads in the Central/Northern Virginia area.

Thanks to almost two decades worth of experience designing modern Mini products, the BMW drivetrain engineers have become expert at benchmark front wheel drive design (brace yourselves BMW faithful - the 2106 X1 is front wheel drive). In a past life, I worked with Shelby engineers and designers to realize the potential of front wheel drive performance vehicles. To say that the BMW/Mini engineers got it right would be an understatement. Strangely, I had two seemingly conflicting thoughts when driving the Clubman S on the Blue Ridge Parkway in the Clubman. One was while Mini’s paddle shifters couple with the 8-speed automatic transmission was nice, it would have been nice to see of the six-speed manual shifter would have enhanced the driving experience. The other took me back 30 years when I was driving the Shelby Lancer prototypes along Southern California’s Turnball Canyon Road. I thought how much more fun to drive the Shelby Lancer would have been with a “manu-matic” transmission with paddle shifters!

The Clubman S is a Mini. For those of us over 50, getting in and out of such a low sitting vehicle may get a bit tiresome. But once behind the wheel, the “inner car guy” takes over. And whether driving the freeways, the city streets, the suburbs, or mountain roads, your large smile will be proof that your “inner car guy” has been unleashed.

As an added bonus, we found that the Clubman S’s front wheel drive architecture was quite handy during the recent snowstorm. While others were wary to travel on the snow

covered roads, the Clubman S drove quite confidently in these hazardous road conditions.

Our fully equipped Mini Clubman S had an MSRP that was equivalent to a similarly equipped 2016 BMW X1; coincidentally the “Jumbo Shrimp” vehicles for both brands. The choice becomes a matter of personal preference – whether one prefers the personality and driving styling of a classic English road car or a precision German Ultimate Driving Machine. With either choice, the BMW/Mini enthusiast will be happy. ■

Title: OAL-BB 50: 50 Years of BMW Alpina Automobiles

Author: Paolo Tumminelli

Publisher: Delius Klasing

Pages: 464

by Benjamin Shahrabani

While Alpina has been recognized by the German Federal Ministry of Transport as an automobile manufacturer since only 1983, the company’s history dates back to 1965. In that year Burkard Bovensiepen would start his nascent tuning business in an outbuilding of his family’s original Alpina typewriter factory.

“For 950 DM, you can have 20 more horsepower,” stated Bovensiepen in a market campaign for his first tuning kit - a twin Weber carburetor that added 15% more power to the then current BMW 1500. While it might not sound like much today, with the Alpina “conversion” it was nearly as powerful as the company’s more expensive and powerful 1800 model. The little tuner didn’t go unnoticed by BMW for very long after that, and the company began to officially certify Alpina models with a full warranty in 1965.

For Alpina’s 50th anniversary, Delius Klasing produced this book containing 50 chapters on the history of the company. History, specifications, interviews with the people that made it all happen - it’s all there in blue and green. This is a bilingual book; German is in blue and English is green, just like Alpina’s favored colors.

There’s only one complaint – for a company with a storied history, and the weightiness of the volume, there is a relative lack of images. A pity.

Today, Alpina remains in the Bovensiepen family that started it all, and continues to operate from its facility outside of Munich. They produce their own variants of most mainstream BMW models with regularity, often with their signature Alpine twenty-spoke wheel, and blue and green accent colors. This book would be a good addition for a BMW fan who enjoys reading, and wants to know about the little tuner that could.

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.

CLUB DUES INFORMATION:

Membership - \$48.00 Associate Membership - \$10.00
(for spouses & significant others)
Sign up for 2+ years & SAVE!!!

FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Call (800) 878-9292

WEBSITE: <http://www.losangelesbmwcca.org>
CHECK THE CHAPTER WEBSITE FOR MEETINGS & EVENTS!

STAY UP TO DATE!!! ADD YOURSELF TO THE EMAIL BLAST LIST. SEND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO:
activities@losangeles.bmwcca.org

ADVERTISING and CLUB SPONSORSHIP CONTACT:

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CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: 1995 M3 (first year of the E36). White with black leather interior, sunroof, Euro sport wheel, original AM/FM cassette. 106,xxx miles with receipts back to 70k miles when purchased from 2nd owner in May 2010. TC Kline DA suspension with camber plates, Koni's, new springs, Dinan [smog legal] chip and intake, bigger brakes, water pump, exhaust, radiator, sway bar. New battery this year, refinished original wheels [5] with Continental tires. Old guy-owned with light track use. Looks and runs great. \$17,900
Steve **805-701-5511**

