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EDITOR'S LETTER

TRAVIS OKULSKI



There's an old cliché that warns against meeting your heroes. The thought is that you've built this person, place, or thing up so much that it'll invariably be a letdown, that you'll regret ever being a fan and wish you'd kept the fantasy in your head rather than gotten the chance to experience it in person.

If I may, I'd like to offer a counterpoint: that's lame. Meet every hero you can.

I've been lucky, particularly with BMW, to experience cars and meet people I've put on a pedestal my entire life. One day in 2018, when I met two of my automotive heroes, ranks at the very top.

The 2001 M3 GTR is my favorite race car of all time. I remember watching it on TV in the American Le Mans Series, those side pipes shooting fire on downshifts, the scream of the P60B40 V-8 silencing the flat-six cacophony of 911s nearby. There was something so wild, so audacious about that car that I couldn't help but love it. And then, after 2001, it was banned from American competition, relegated to the history books after that single dominant season, the V-8 seemingly silenced forever.

It became mythical. A rogue car that changed history. I started collecting models of it and dreamt of driving it. Of course, when it was on track, I didn't even have my driver's license. I thought it'd be a dream left unfulfilled. But life is a funny thing.

I became an automotive journalist about 10 years later, and immediately started having experiences I never imagined. I was excited by everything, even driving a new Ford Escape. It allowed for travel, and—thanks to my background in karting—eventually I started being able to test race cars. A few years into the job, I found out BMW had a running, drivable P60 GTR. I saw it at events and crawled all over it. It was absolutely perfect. My hero, in real life.

After years of casually mentioning it to anyone who would listen at BMW or otherwise, I was told I could drive the GTR at a June test day at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course for a story. Still, I thought I was being pranked. I didn't believe it until I arrived at the track and the M3 was there, in the garage. It didn't seem real. They dug this car out of their warehouse and brought it to the track so a nobody like me could drive it. I was freaking out.

And that's when I noticed Bill Auberlen standing next to it.

Auberlen is a legend, now in his 30th year as a BMW factory driver. He's won everything that matters, one of the all-time greats in sports car racing. He was also one of the GTR's drivers in 2001. His name is on its door. Not only did I have the pressure of driving a car that I had deified since it debuted, but I had to do it in front of one of the drivers who made me love the car. Intimidating, to say the least.

Auberlen shook the car down, the sound reverberating around Mid Ohio, flames spitting out the side exhaust, just like I remembered. He then showed me how to drive it, explained what it liked and didn't, and I got to go out. I've never been so nervous; my foot was shaking at full throttle. But there was no way I was going to waste the opportunity. I took every lap they'd let me have.

That is still the best day I've ever spent in a car, and one of the best days of my life, behind getting married and having kids. Yes, I consider driving the GTR a major life event, and it's an anniversary I still mark every year.

The GTR was as magical as I hoped, a curb-jumping, fire-breathing, V-8 screamer that wants you to push and go faster. And Auberlen was great: friendly, funny, smart, helpful, complimentary, and appropriately laid-back. It was anything but disappointing or frustrating, and it's a day that made me realize the cliche about heroes really isn't true—and it holds people back from great experiences and lifelong memories.

There are heroes everywhere you look across the BMW spectrum, from folks in Munich and elsewhere who have had a tremendous impact on the cars we love to drive and race, to those who are doing their own thing modifying and restoring models both new and old. There are classic models like the E30 M3 that have become icons with an outsized impact on the automotive landscape, and newer ones like the M5 Touring, a hot-rod wagon that has finally made its way to America after decades of enthusiast cries.

This issue of *BimmerLife* celebrates just a few of the hero cars, events, and people in this BMW world that are worth getting to know. I know that meeting them won't be a disappointment.

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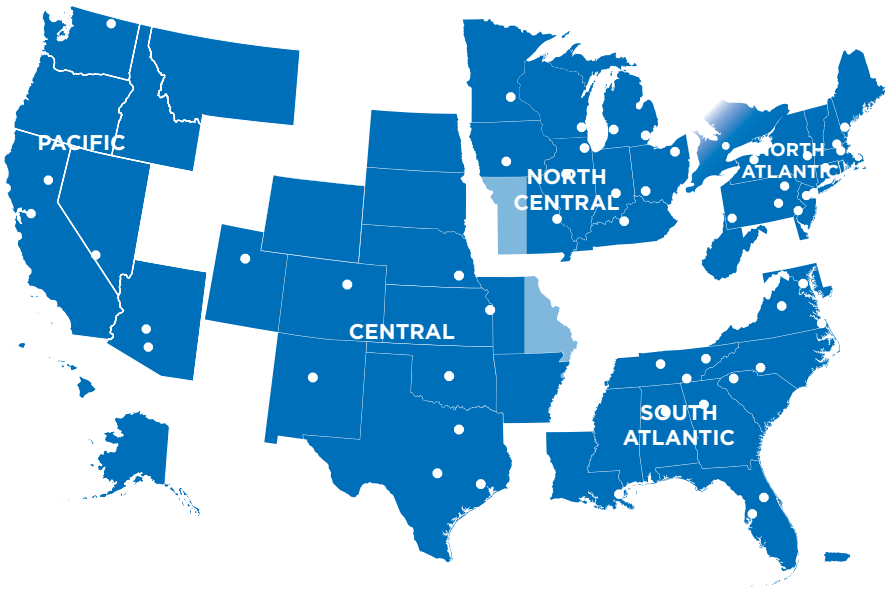

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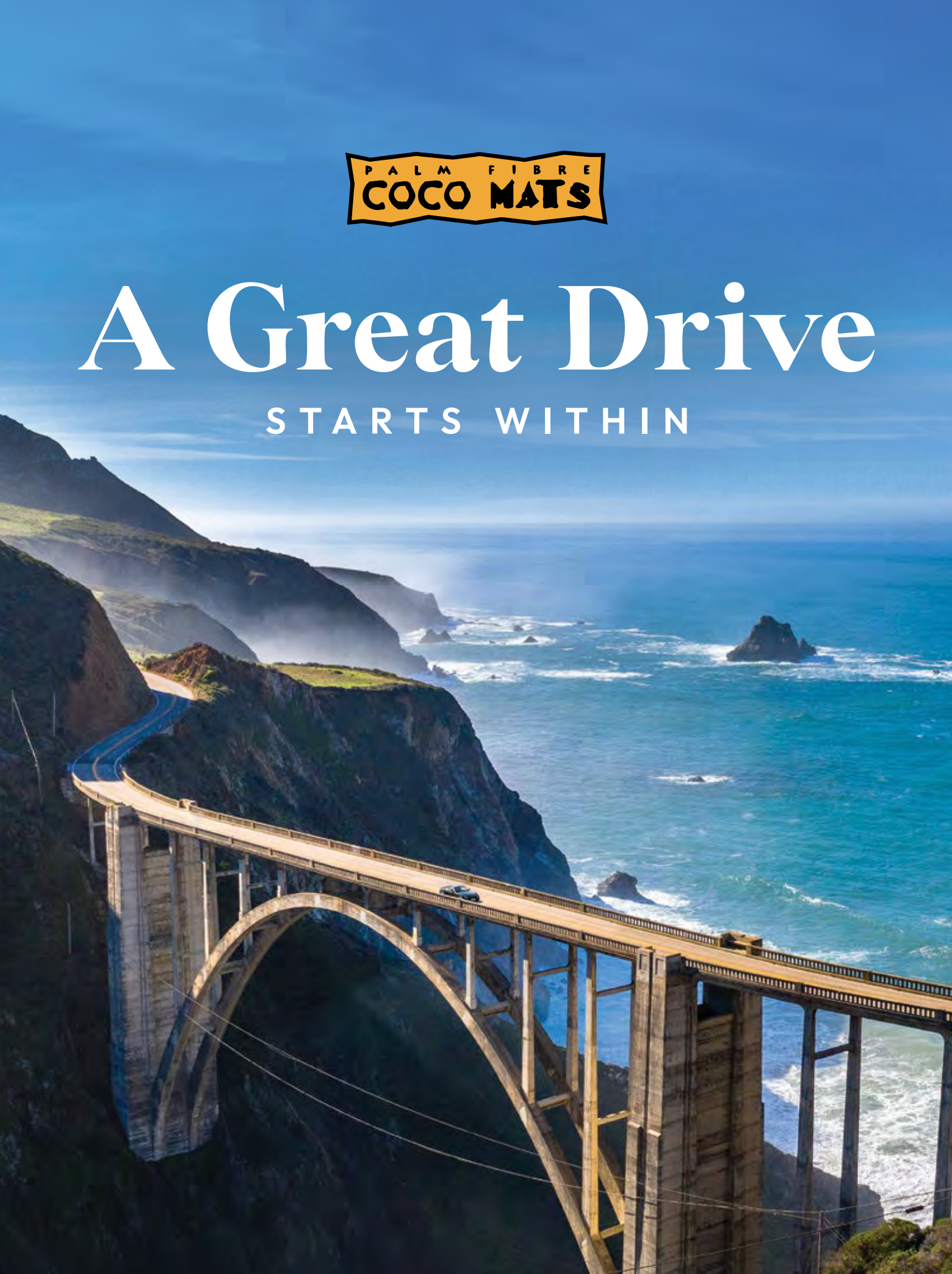


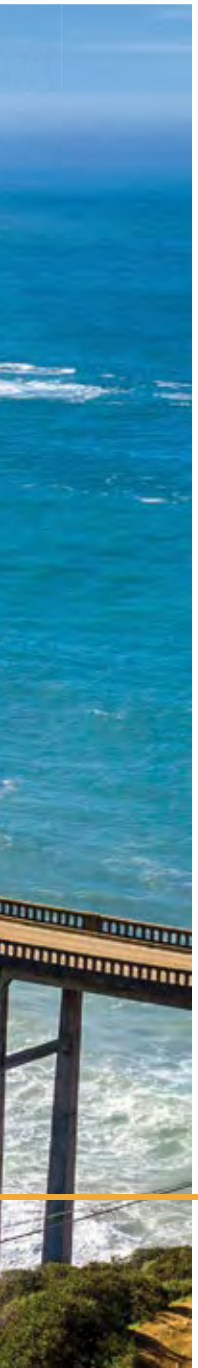
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AFTER BMW TEASED—THEN RUG-PULLED—THE Z4 M COUPE SUCCESSOR OF OUR DREAMS, ONE OWNER SCRATCH-BUILT HIS OWN VISION OF HATCHBACK PERFECTION.

WORDS: KYLE KINARD
PHOTOS: NATE HASSLER



The best cars are pure.

Not in the sense of lightness or performance or handling intangibles, but as totems to singular expression. Need an example? Think Gordon Murray and his McLaren F1. Or Shelby and Remington and their all-conquering Cobras. Or the BMWs borne of Paul Rosche's genius. That's all to say: Great cars are inseparable from the dreamers who brought them to life.

Enter "The Zhupra." Its name—a compound of "Z4" and "Supra"—is easily decoded. However, a name cannot tell the whole story. Only Mario Chan can do that.

"This [car] explains who I am and what I love," Chan said, waving an arm at the Zhupra and tying the neatest little ribbon on our interview. The conversation flitted between a hundred different inspirations, from the relative merits of 1x1 carbon weave, to tuner-car magazines and building the ultimate set of BBS wheels. (It's always three-piece mesh with polished lips. Thank you for your attention to this matter).

As a seventh-gen Celica fanatic, Chan steeped his taste in the import tuning culture of the era, which itself bled into the BMW scene of the Aughts. The pipeline led Chan to a Z4 coupe of his own, sparking a lifelong affection for BMW.

When the new Supra debuted in 2018, BMW built it alongside the Z4. Even with a Supra badge on the "boot" and some seriously sinuous curves, everyone knew the Toyota sported lederhosen under its frock, earning it the nickname "Zupra" on social media. Chan was caught dead center in the car's crosshairs, a long-time Supra admirer whose head turned to the Z.

So Chan pulled the trigger on a Downshift blue Supra, one of the first in the Pacific Northwest. He tore into the car in short order, as you do, dropping the body, bumping the boost. Chan built up, broke down, and rebuilt several iterations of the car, but still yearned to return to the Roundel.

"Being a Supra owner since the very beginning, it's been helpful," Chan said of the Zhupra's gestation. "I mean, I've torn apart this car, many iterations of trying different things... I felt confident going into the new project. This isn't my first rodeo."

The finished product reflects that confidence and Chan's earned experience.

When I met the Zhupra, it was lit by the eerie pallor of blue tube lighting, sitting in the back corner of Aerowerkz Motorsport's cavernous shop. The shop lives where Los Angeles thins into scrubland that stretches its dusty toes north toward the San Gabriel Mountains. Canyon country.





ENTER “THE ZHUPRA.” ITS NAME—A COMPOUND OF “Z4” AND “SUPRA”—IS EASILY DECODED.







Aftermarket and custom details mix with OEM parts so seamlessly that it all feels as intentional as something entirely factory built.

Even under Blade Runner-esque lighting, the Zhupra's body looks like it rolled straight out of the factory and headed for the dealership. Head-on, it's inch-perfect OEM; Like the car just always was. Every last line trailing down the length of the car looks equally considered. The more you stare, the more correct it all seems, like it was supposed to exist all along.

'Well, duh, it's the Z4 coupe,' you think. 'I see these at every stoplight around town.' That's all intentional, said Chan. "The goal with this car was totally different from anything I'd done before: The goal here was to build a factory BMW."

Social media speculation held that a Z4's front clip—among other key parts—would more or less bolt right on. Remember, the modern Z4 not only rolls from the same Graz, Austria factory as the Supra, but the cars share a platform, chassis, engine, and many dimensions. Anyone who's torn into a Supra has seen dozens of BMW part numbers stamped into the parts. BMW logos are everywhere.

Encouraged, one day Chan sketched the Zhupra in cocktail-napkin fashion, continually evolving the design. "What would a modern Z4 coupe actually look like?" he wondered. Chan connected with a good friend, automotive designer Xavier Cuevas, who was drawn to the project by both its clean-sheet novelty and by Chan's passion for completing the build.

"Xavier was on board because it's a unique project. There was just so much ambiguity, so much possibility, that you really could kind of just go with it," Chan said.

Cuevas and Chan settled on an initial design after weeks spent iterating. With a plan committed to paper, Chan leaped headlong into the project. At the parts counter of his local BMW dealership, a befuddled employee happily punched a five-figure hole in the would-be Zhupra owner's pocket.

"The process of starting the build was quite scary because there wasn't a good place to start. I pulled up the parts list and I just tallied up everything and went to the dealership with a list." The parts were special-order, nonrefundable, nonreturnable, Chan said. "It was all a guess, and you hoped you guessed correctly."

In a blitz, everything from the Z4's fancy LED lights to the bumper and its associated hardware was headed to the shop.

"The front end was fairly easy," Chan said in a way that, after all that buildup, was so matter-of-fact I audibly chuckled. "The air structure bolted on, everything went on very, very straightforward. That was awesome. The parking sensors even work, but the wiring needed to be extended with custom wiring looms all around."

Ah, yes, just your average everyday custom wiring loom. Yawn. I yanked one from a Wheaties box on Tuesday. Chan relates the story of the front-end

assembly with such modesty, it betrays his attention to doing things right, alongside the huge effort from the team at Aerowerkz, and the many partners involved in completing the build.

If you haven't read between the lines, Chan runs Golden Wrench Supply Co., which among other aftermarket parts, specializes in billet oil caps and other odds and ends to spice up the engine bay of your go-fast BMW, Mini, or Toyota. He's deeply connected in the BMW and SoCal tuning scenes. Chan leaned into those connections, sure, but mostly he drew from a well of personal experience—and a fierce attention to detail—to get it right.

Take the hood, for example. It's totally custom. After the stock Z4 hood proved too complicated to massage into a shape that bridged the gap between Z4 and Supra, Chan stitched together an OEM hood skin with custom-shaped fiberglass inserts so the new hood's character lines (designed by Cuevas and Chan) blend seamlessly into the car's OEM+ identity. The end result: an entirely custom hood that looks factory-fresh, down to the neatly latticed support structure underneath.

Chan applied that same diligence to every decision.

Pop that hood up and you'll find a sea of finicky plastic clips. Typical BMW. But nearly none of them are in their stock location. Most of the panels lining the fenders and engine bay are mounted differently between the Z4 and Supra, owing to their wildly disparate shapes. So fitting engine plastics became another mountain to climb, figuring out which pieces to modify, salvage, or simply fabricate. Most people wouldn't have bothered to get this bit right.

"Before we even designed these fenders, we were wondering, 'Hey, can we reuse some of the Z4 fender pieces?' And the answer was 'No,'" Chan said. "So, how do we design a new fender that can take the Supra's fender plastics, or for the fender plastics to sit a certain way so it looks factory? That was very challenging."

There's even a new vent on the front fenders that, when you look at it, you'd swear was just ported over from the Supra... or maybe it's from the Z4? Yeah, you've definitely seen that on an OEM rig somewhere. (It was in fact inspired by the E92 M3, but completely custom).

If the finely fettled front end was "easy," I can't imagine the frenzy over the Zhupra's haunches. Chan and Cuevas aimed to bring some of the E86 Z's broader, more muscular language to the Supra's bubbly, rounded rear. It looks both complicated and natural, a tangle of sleek cutting lines that never looks overworked but always feels exciting.

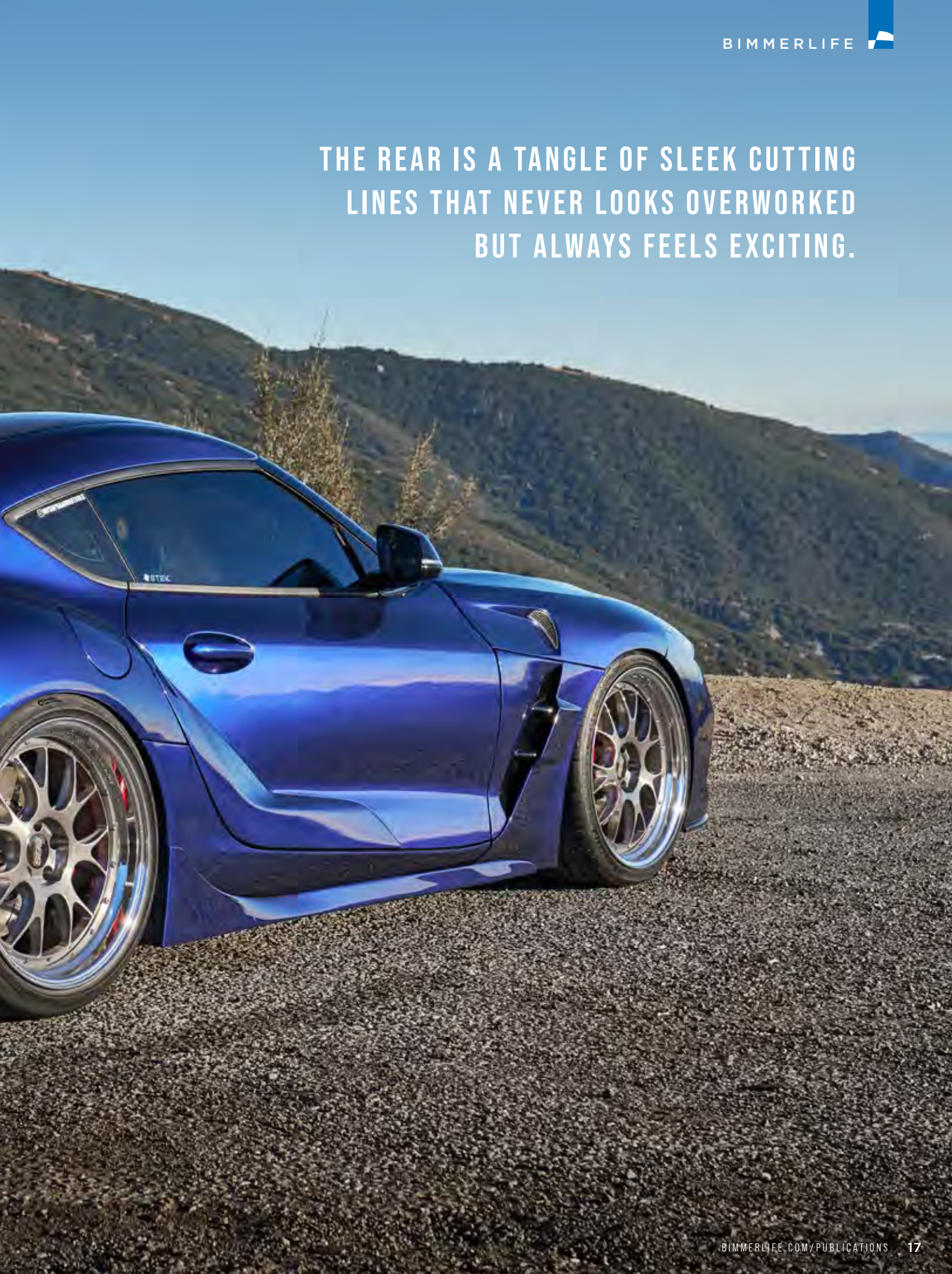
The Zhupra's interior follows Chan's OEM+ gambit, but goes about it much more effortlessly. It looks absolutely bone-stock BMW in the cabin. A G80 LCI steering wheel looks the part but adds a premium flourish. Of course, every single button on the wheel functions correctly. The rest of the Supra's interior was



The engine cover might say M Power, and it might be tuned, but this is still a B58 straight-six, and not a true M-car engine. Chan says an S58 and manual swap might be in the cards down the line.


ZHü PR4

THE REAR IS A TANGLE OF SLEEK CUTTING LINES THAT NEVER LOOKS OVERWORKED BUT ALWAYS FEELS EXCITING.







already OEM BMW—literally—from the shifter to the switchgear to the dash material.

Then there's that pair of Recaro buckets. These look thoroughly at home in the Zhupra, but represent an intentional departure from Chan's mission of a 100 percent showroom-floor BMW. Those non-OEM touchstones are meted out carefully across the car. The handful of additional aftermarket bits offer nod to Aughts-BMW tuning: Those godlike three-piece BBS LM-R alloys, the dropped-just-so coilovers, and especially the custom German license plate. (Every modified BMW in America had one, circa 2007).

The Zhupra's OEM-look remit didn't stop Chan from following—and celebrating—the taste he'd developed coming up. If you were there in the Aughts, you'll know every reference to the era in your bones. But in spite of the car's mishmash of influences, all the eras and places and memories, the Zhupra looks resolved. Whole. As a result, you'd never mistake it for anything but itself.

The Supra's interior was already mostly BMW anyway, so a few badge swaps completed the transition.



Well, sort of.

"A lot of people just... walked by it at first," Chan laughed, reflecting on the car's SEMA debut in late 2025. "But a lot of them did a double take and came back to stare at it for a minute. It was really wild to see reactions from people who knew the Supra well enough to know the 'Zhupra' memes. They were like, woah, 'Someone finally built one!'"

After a knee-jerk glance, the Zhupra's finer details pop. You find the car lives in an uncanny valley between staid OEM design and a concept car's daring, but can lean either direction depending on the angle. There's literally nothing else like it.

So the car is finished, Chan claimed, just months after that visit to the parts counter. But then again, is any project really finished?

"I'm a very obsessive-compulsive thinker. So this was the perfect project for me to really dive into. I mean, this project has been on my mind every single day of the last year. I still think, 'How do we make it better?'"

It's the statement ringing through my mind long after the Zhupra's straight-six fired against the corner of the shop, its exhaust valves open and blasting through the Meisterschaft's four tips. Chan pointed the car north, and I watched the car roll from L.A. proper up into those famous canyon roads.



SHARE THE WEALTH

The Supra and Z4 were created as part of an alliance between Toyota and BMW to ease development costs. This practice, platform sharing, is exceedingly common. Here are just a few notable examples.

FERRARI ENZO / MASERATI MC12 STRADALE





Ferrari's ultimate supercar of the Aughts spawned a gorgeous Maserati that shared nearly everything but the body, 6.5 liter V-12 included.

CHEVROLET CORVETTE / CADILLAC XLR





The C6 Corvette and Cadillac XLR don't look alike at all, but they share a common chassis. The Cadillac has a different engine, a folding hardtop, and more angular looks.

SUBARU BRZ / TOYOTA GR 86





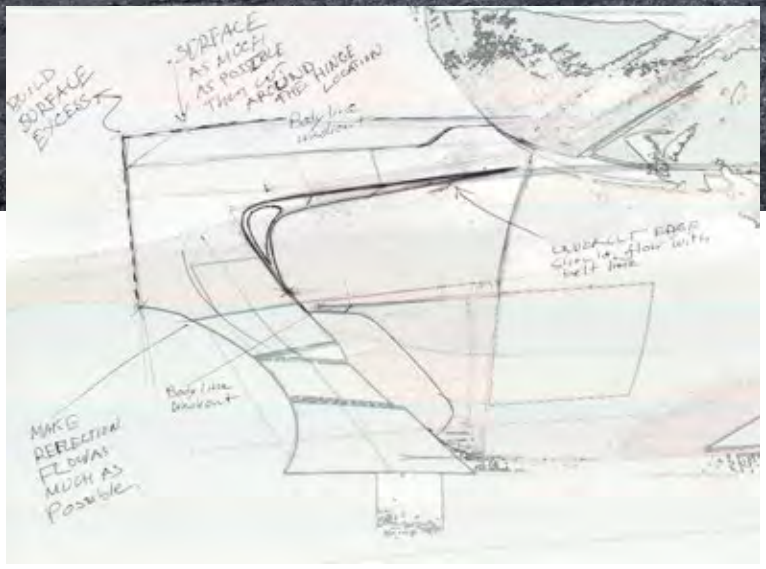
Another joint venture, this time Toyota and Subaru worked together on an inexpensive sports car. The two cars look nearly identical, have the same engines, gearboxes, and everything. The main visual difference? The badges.

MAZDA MIATA / FIAT 124 SPIDER

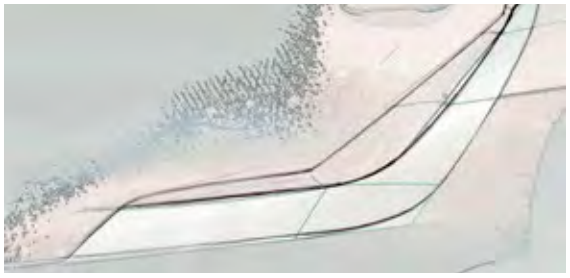




When the ND Mazda Miata was being developed, a Fiat variant helped offset the price. The Fiat was longer, heavier, and had a turbo engine and different gearbox. It was only slightly less delightful to drive than the Miata.







These sketches from designer Xavier Cuevas show how the Zhupra's vents and profile came together to form something that looks factory, but is custom.

About 20 miles and 1000 hairpin corners later, where San Gabriel Canyon Road dead-ends and a pair of swinging metal gates force all comers to a horseshoe overlook, we parked. Every eye present snapped to the Zhupra as it crept toward the rim.

I marveled at the car itself, but mostly at a slice of genuine ambition come to life. That's so rare anymore. Always was. I'm sure most readers can relate to my unlimited capacity for dreaming, paired to a measly rate of follow-through. All my projects inevitably ride that path of compromise between aspiration and execution. The Zhupra does not.

What started as an obscure web meme has reached its illogical and beautiful conclusion. Up here on a picturesque Californian mountain, gliding down a canyon two-lane bathed in the syrupy light of a winter sunset, there's exactly nothing like the Zhupra.

At a cutout maybe five miles below that false-summit parking lot, we stopped again to capture the last embers of light flitting on the Zhupra's curves. A pair of ratty Gixxers screamed down the hill. We heard them for miles before they arrived, throttles cracked wide and unwavering. The riders caught the Zhupra in their periphery, nodded curiously, then pinned it into the gathering darkness.

What's beautiful about California car culture lives in the canyons. There's a breadth of expression out here, a notion to break from convention. That means unique cars are not the exception here. But the Zhupra is something rarer still. It's a product of singular vision, outright ambition, and masterful execution. It is purely itself. And that's worth celebrating.

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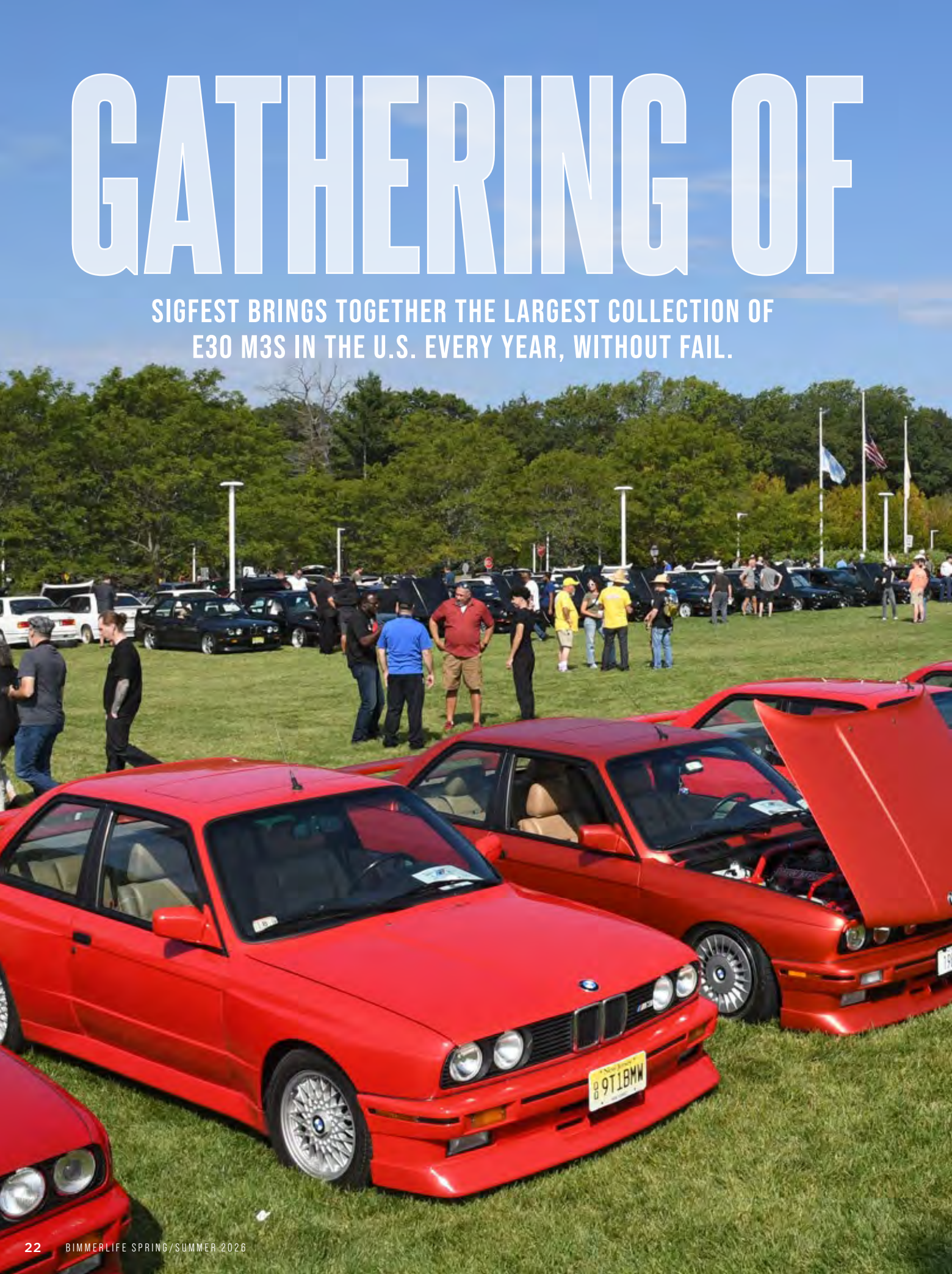
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LEGENDS



WORDS AND PHOTOS: DAVID HAUETER

The E30 M3 had a huge impact on BMW's reputation. On track, it won everything, with more than 30 touring-car championships around the world to its name. It won both the Spa and Nürburgring 24-hour races multiple times. It even won rally titles. Since the E30 M3 road car was built to homologate the race car, it's fantastic to drive. Today, the model has reached mythical status.

In the U.S., E30 M3 owners keep the legend alive with the annual SIGFest. What started as a special interest group—that's where SIG comes from—with owners trading emails has grown into a gathering that drew 85 cars to the 2025 24th annual gathering. SIGFest wouldn't happen without the efforts of organizers Tony Rausch, James Liu, and John Henriquez.

"We started the event in 1999, and it was purely to connect people who knew each other by email," says Rausch. "We only got seven or eight cars at the first SIG event; the next one we got 12 or 15, and it's been growing ever since." Now, it's the largest gathering of E30 M3s in the U.S.

SIGFest is usually held in New Jersey, and the 2025 edition was extra special because it was

on the campus of BMW of North America during BMW NA's 50th anniversary. BMW held technical workshops on everything from M Performance engines to electric battery tech, while BMW author and historian Steve Saxty gave talks on BMW design.

"BMW NA hosting the event gives it more provenance," says Rausch. "They understand the history of the cars and why they existed—to win races. We're thrilled to hold it here."

BMW NA also brought out several cars for display, including a rare U.S. appearance of the Andy Warhol M1 Art Car, which was in the country before heading back to the museum in Munich. But the star was the E30 M3 in all its forms, running the gamut from highly modified cars with engine swaps to completely original examples, race cars, and painstakingly recreated tributes to icons.

Given its racing history, the E30 M3 race cars held special significance. Scott and Fran Hughes brought their 1987 M3 (chassis 001) from South Carolina. This was the first E30 M3 in the U.S., brought here to race in the IMSA Firestone Firehawk Endurance Series by Ray Korman.



Despite being down on power compared to some competitors, chassis 001 won a six-hour race at Watkins Glen with Korman and BMW factory driver Davy Jones. It also got on the podium at Summit Point and Lime Rock Park. The Hughes have owned the car since 2007 and still exercise it regularly.

It's extremely fitting that Scott and Fran Hughes's E30 M3, chassis 001 and the first one in North America, is a race car, not a road car.

Another significant race car on display was Jimmy Pettinato's ex-British Touring Car Championship racer, an early chassis built in 1986 for the 1987 racing season. The car was campaigned by Prodrive in 1987–1988 and continued to race with privateer teams through 1992, before going to Spain, where it competed in hill climbs. Pettinato has owned the car since 1998 and still races it today.

"The car finished its career as a two-liter with the Super Touring rules," says Pettinato. "When it

Lined up by color as more E30s piled in, the M3s looked at home outside of BMW of North America's HQ.







An unusual way to create front downforce on Jeff Burgess' M3.



Come for the cars, stay for the people.

raced with Prodrive, it was a 2.3-liter, so I put in a 2.3 and it's much closer to the way it ran in BTCC. I tried to change as little as possible, but had to make a concession to put a more modern engine in."

Eric Heinrich has been racing his M3 since 2003. Heinrich has won BMW CCA Club Racing and SCCA championships over the years, with the car receiving significant updates under his ownership, yet remaining true to its origins.

"The way it is right now is almost to a full Group A specification," says Heinrich. "It has super-modern electronics and is pretty high-strung, but it's a win-or-break-it-trying type of car. It's been a lot of fun. It brings joy to other people and is still so much fun to drive."

Other M3s featured tributes to some of the most famous to ever hit the track, with some incredible recreated liveries. Craig Harmon's Listerine-sponsored car was a fitting ode to a BTCC legend.



Jimmy Pettinato's ex-BTCC racer looks out of place sitting still. It should be jumping over curbs and landing on two wheels.



Everything about Craig Harmon's Listerine BTCC tribute is spot on.

"I bought it in 1998 in Atlanta for $300," says Harmon. "It was trashed by a college student, and I restored it as a Listerine replica, the way Ray Bellm raced it in BTCC. Had I known the values would be where they are, I may not have done something like this. But when I see the joy that it brings to everyone, it's a treat."

Then there was "VilMMA," an M3 owned by the late Mark Woolley for many years. When Mark unfortunately passed away in 2018, he donated his M3 to the BMW CCA Foundation. A BMW CCA member since 1998, Mark was an instructor for the Tarheel Valley Chapter, an ambassador for the BMW CCA Foundation, and instructed at Street Survival schools for teens. Mark was also a lover of the color yellow, which is prominent on his M3.

Despite being a regular sponsor of SIGFest over the years, Bimmer-World owner James Clay attended the event for the first time in 2025.

"SIGFest was amazing," Clay said. "Even though it was the first one I've been to, it was a homecoming of sorts for me. The E30 M3 was how I got my start with BMW, and to see that many E30 M3s in one place was awesome. I saw a lot of old friends and made some new ones. I really enjoyed it and look forward to being there again."

Awards were given out at the end of the day, with this year's trophies featuring an E30 M3 silhouette that was created by James Liu. It's nice to get a trophy, but SIGFest is more about fans of the E30 M3 coming together to enjoy the passion they all have for this special BMW.

As the E30 M3 gets older and more valuable, and as it becomes rarer and replacements get harder to find, we can only hope that people keep celebrating and driving the model. It's important to show the next generation why this M3 is a legend.

Whle the 2025 event was huge, the 2026 event coincides with the 40th anniversary of the M3's introduction and promises to be even bigger.




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INFRANGERE LE REGOLE



THE 320is SKIRTED REGULATIONS TO CREATE A TAX-DODGING M3.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: MIKE BEVELS

The E30 320is does not have motorsports provenance. Its name is mundane. It doesn't hold the same legend as its iconic brother, the M3. On the outside, this is a plain E30 coupe with a body kit and a random M badge, one anyone could've slapped on there. Don't be fooled. Underneath the nondescript shell hides a rule-breaking E30. One that cleverly circumvented a tax code penalizing cars with more than 2.0 liters of displacement to give M3 performance at a lower price. This car, dubbed the "Italian M3," is the Ultimate Tax Evasion Machine.

The 320is engine bay houses a de-stroked 2.0-liter version of the M3's famous 2.3-liter S14 four-cylinder. Rated at 192 horsepower, the 320is' 2.0-liter unit is only a few ponies shy of the M3's 2.3-liter version. And since the 320is' 2600-pound curb weight is more than 220 pounds lighter than the M3's, the 2.0-liter S14's lower torque doesn't make the 320is any slower in a sprint to 60 mph. For drivers who prefer to row their own gears, both the 320is and M3 send power to a limited-slip differential through a Getrag 265 manual transmission, with the classic dogleg shift pattern. A three- or four-speed automatic was also available for the 320is, while the M3 offered no such thing.

Though it doesn't have the glorious wide-body boxed fenders, improved rear-window aero, or the M3's raised trunk lid, the 320is came equipped with a full factory M-Technic II body kit that transforms the standard E30's appearance. While the M3's wider track, bodywork, and motorsport-specific suspension make all the difference on the racetrack or rally stage, the 320is' narrower track and standard E30 sport suspension make it more playful on the road, like a lightweight special. The E30 M3 Superleggera.

As the 320is was originally sold in Italy and Portugal, seeing one stateside is a rare treat—especially considering production numbers. Only 3745 of the 320is were



THE 320is' NARROWER TRACK AND STANDARD E30 SPORT SUSPENSION MAKE IT MORE PLAYFUL ON THE ROAD, LIKE A LIGHTWEIGHT SPECIAL.

THE E30 M3 SUPERLEGGERA.



produced from 1988 to 1990 compared to the M3's nearly 18,000 units from 1986 to 1991. It could also be ordered as a four-door sedan, unlike the M3.

Given its rarity, you can imagine the surprise of enthusiasts attending Katie's Cars and Coffee in Great Falls, Virginia, when Jeff Harvan's 1990 320is rolled up on a frigid October morning. Those in the know flocked to the car. Those who didn't know soon figured out something was up.

"A lot of people haven't heard of a 320is," Harvan says. "It's kind of a neat experience."

Harvan took delivery in September 2025 after placing the winning bid on online auction site Cars & Bids. "It's funny. Am I the only one who was stupid enough to pay more than everyone else was willing to?" he jokes.

But, similar to how the Italians and Portuguese avoided the M-car tax in the late Eighties and early Nineties, Harvan was able to avoid paying the modern E30 M3 tax by purchasing this wolf in sheep's clothing at a nice discount.

This 320is was imported to the U.S. from Italy by none other than Josh Miller of the Chicagoland area. Miller, a









BMW CCA member, is well known in the BMW community for his YouTube channel devoted to working on rare and classic BMWs. "I bought that car from one of the most passionate BMW owners I've ever met. A gentleman, Davide, living outside of Rome who had owned that car for over 20 years," Miller recalls. "He absolutely adored it, to the point where there were tears when it got picked up to come to the U.S."

The 320is was in good shape, with a documented engine rebuild in 2019, but it needed Miller's touch to address a number of issues. Miller says, "The car is fantastic; however, it sprung quite a few oil leaks that I had to fix. And of course, while you're in there, you may as well tackle some other important maintenance items such as a valve adjustment, ignition components, seals, hoses, and so on."

After producing a series of videos on this 320is, Miller took the special E30 to the 50-year celebration of the 3 Series at Amelia Island. BMW only approved 50 cars to be part of the display. Naturally, the 320is was a shoo-in.

"It hurt to sell that car, especially with the rarity and the service records," Miller says. "But once I met Jeff Harvan, I was very comfortable with the decision and felt it was truly going to the best home it could."

"I've always been looking for an E30," says Harvan. "Even before my 2016 Yas Marina blue M3 [F80], I've always wanted an E30. I recently met up with a college friend, and he remembers that I was even looking at E30s back in college. We even went to look at one once, but it was in such bad shape that I decided not to get it.

"I knew nothing about the 320is until I was scrolling through Cars & Bids and saw it listed as the Italian M3



SOME MAY CALL THE 320is BY ITS OTHER NICKNAME, THE "BABY M3," BUT NOBODY PUTS THIS BABY IN A CORNER.



Glistening in Delphin Metallic paint, Greg Harvan's E30 320is is the perfect car for the E30 fan who loves the M3, but wants something different.

and said, 'Wow, that's kind of interesting.' So, I started reading more about it, and I'm thinking, 'This is the perfect car.' It's not an E30 M3, which I of course would love—those would cost a lot more money. It's definitely more interesting than a regular E30. It's rarer than an E30 M3 as well. So, for me, it seemed to be the perfect car. Just something different from what everybody else has around from that era.

"I've only had it for two months, so I haven't actually driven it too much, but I just love the driving experience. I love the feel. I love the visibility of the E30—it's just amazing. It's a fun car to drive. My F80 definitely has more power, but this E30 puts more smiles on my face."

On the street, the driving experience is very similar to an E30 M3. After I miss a few shifts and retrain myself to the gear placement of the dogleg Getrag 265 transmission, it feels and sounds like being behind the wheel of an M3. Some may call the 320is by its other nickname, the "Baby M3," but nobody puts this baby in a corner. Even with 137,000 miles on the clock, the S14B20 engine pulls just as hard to the 7000-rpm redline as its big brother, the tach framed perfectly by the three-spoke M-Technic II steering wheel. The steering and suspension feel taut and sharp, and a near-perfect anthracite cloth interior holds me firmly in the well-bolstered manual E30 sport seats as the speeds increase. Harvan is right: this 320is is all about smiles.

Of course, there's always room for improvement, but Harvan has no plans to modify his new E30. "I'd like to keep it as stock as possible. There are a couple of little issues that need to be addressed. Just small things, like better speakers that aren't so crackly," he says. Aside from the aftermarket Ronal LS wheels and a retro head unit, this E30 is as it came from the factory.

"I would love to take the 320is on a fun road trip," he adds. "In the meantime, I'd like to do some stuff with the National Capital Chapter when my schedule allows for it." One thing is for certain: this Italian, which still wears its original Roma plate, will be staying in the Harvan family. "My middle son is a big fan of BMWs. I could see this car staying in the family—maybe forever."

It's said that if you don't look back at a car when you walk away, you have the wrong car. Harvan has the right car. "I've just always liked the boxy look of the E30. It's just such a cool-looking car." That's also something that previous owners Josh Miller and Davide fully recognize through their own experiences. Not all heroes wear capes—or boxed fenders—and the E30 320is is a prime example of just that.





1990 BMW 320is

Engine:	2.0 liter I-4
ICE Output:	189 hp @ 6900 rpm, 155 lb-ft @ 4900 rpm
Transmission:	Five-speed manual
0 to 60:	6.8 seconds
Weight:	2685 lb (mfr)



iDRIVE EVOLVED



BMW DITCHES THE ROTARY KNOB FOR A TOTALLY NEW INTERFACE. WE GOT BEHIND THE TOUCHSCREEN.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: TIM STEVENS

With the iX3, BMW isn't just ushering in a generational shift for electric vehicles. Yes, there's plenty to talk about when it comes to the Neue Klasse's new EV architecture, with more energy density from its battery pack, finesse and efficiency from its motors, and higher-speed charging from all the wires and other bits in between.

But all that's under the skin. There are many more changes afoot that you can spot as soon as you slip behind the wheel. The iX3 is the debut platform for an entirely rethought infotainment experience that BMW is collectively calling Panoramic iDrive, powered by its latest Operating System X. Let's dive a little deeper into what it's like to use.

KNOBLESS

We'll start with what's missing: the iconic iDrive rotary controller. Love it or hate it, the spinning interface device has been an integral part of the BMW infotainment experience since its introduction in the 2002 E65 7 Series. The simple four-way rotating knob has since been imitated by everyone from Audi to Mazda, but it is no more. That frees up precious space in the central console for bigger, more logically placed cupholders than those found in the iX.

The absent rotary controller means the focus necessarily shifts to using the touchscreen, and that's a substantially different affair than the curved and conjoined gauge cluster and infotainment display found across much of BMW's lineup. For the iX3, BMW is instead going with an oddly trapezoidal touchscreen. With a bit of a lean to the left that gives a distinctive look, the design also makes the upper portion of the display easier to reach from the driver's seat.



The unique screen shape of the latest iDrive contains the functions we've seen before, but without the iconic rotary knob controller.

The new infotainment experience was written to leverage the unique shape of the screen, with the upper-left point on the touchscreen featuring a car icon. Tap on that, and you'll get a quick overview of the vehicle status, including any warning messages and your trip info. There's also a shortcut to toggle the headlight mode.

A little lower but still on the left side lives a button to quickly bring up the 360-degree parking cameras. From here, you can look around the SUV in any direction or activate the self-parking mode. But, it's worth noting that you don't need to dig through here if you're looking for help with parallel parking. The iX3 is always looking for spots, and will automatically prompt you when it spots one.

FAMILIAR TOUCHES

The rest of the interface, though, is much the same as found in EVs like the iX. There's a home button in the center of the display. Like with OS 8.5 or 9, this gives you a view of the navigation with overlays for things like media playback or ongoing phone calls. There's also a small floating window showing your most frequently used apps.



Debuting in the iX3 along with Panoramic iDrive is a new steering wheel. It's all change at BMW these days.



The Panoramic Vision screen across the windshield base takes some getting used to, but is an entirely new way to interact with vehicle info.

Climate settings live on the lower left and right for driver and passenger, and they're largely the same as other BMWs, with the major exception that the vents in the iX3 lack physical controls. If you want to move them, you'll need to tap your way through the touchscreen. This feels like an annoying hindrance at first, but if you share your car with someone else, you'll quickly appreciate not having to fiddle with the vents every time you swap. Their position is saved with your profile.

Swipe down from the top, and you'll find a grid of eight shortcuts that you can customize to jump to wherever you like in the interface. From here, you can also choose the content displayed in the 3D heads-up display or in the expansive Panoramic Vision panel.

iDrive has always excelled at personalization, and this new version will continue the tradition.

WIDESCREEN

Panoramic Vision is certainly the most conspicuous change compared to the current generation of BMW's iDrive. It's appearance and how it works makes a striking first impression, but in practice it's easy to use and very quickly becomes part of the experience.

It's split into two sections projected onto the bottom of the windscreen. The leftmost is the gauge cluster, which offers a number of different views with more or less information but always has basic details like speed and active safety settings. At first, it's odd to have the gauge cluster positioned so high, but I quickly learned to love it. I like the steering wheel positioned low, often blocking my view of the gauge cluster. That's no problem here.

The rest of the Panoramic Vision contains six sections customized by tapping on widgets in the central







Interacting with a mobile phone will be a key part of the next iDrive experience.

touchscreen and dragging them into place above. It's quick and easy, and you can have completely different sets of information for each drive mode. Want the weather forecast and a Spotify playlist in Personal mode? You got it. Want motor RPM and a G-meter in Sport mode? You can do that too.

The entire interface is extremely customizable, both in terms of functionality and color scheme. Your selected hues not only seep through every digital interface on the touchscreen but are also splayed across the dashboard and the rest of the car's ambient lighting. It's a subtle but refined effect.

AI INTERACTIONS

The final piece of the puzzle is the voice interaction, which is orders of magnitude more comprehensive than what has come before. An integrated large language model means you can not only find points of interest by name, but get reviews, menu recommendations, and even book table reservations all by voice.

You can ask what that mountain range is off in the distance, get a snow report, and find out if they offer rental equipment, all without touching your phone. BMW's integrated agent is quite impressive, but if you need more, Amazon's Alexa+ is also available, further expanding your options for voice interactivity.

Artificial intelligence is easily the most over-hyped tech offering on the planet right now, but in the iX3, it really feels like a substantial quality-of-life improvement. That's especially true if you're someone who needs to know everything and know it now.

But the beauty of the entire Panoramic iDrive system is that you can tone it all down if you like. You can simplify or even disable the Panoramic Vision displays, simplify the gauge cluster, and pick muted colors for the touchscreen. Do so, and you have an understated experience when you just want to relax, yet still have all the power and smarts of a modern machine waiting to be unleashed.



Semi-autonomous cruise control in the iX3 will showcase even more of the Neue Klasse's tech features.

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HEAVY

AMERICA'S FIRST M5 TOURING MAKES THE CASE FOR



WEIGHT

A WAGON RESURGENCE.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: KYLE VAN HOFTEN

Charging up Southern California's Angeles Crest Highway, I moved over for the Ferrari behind to pass. He waved me forward. I pressed on, gliding into corners and powering out, slightly gapping the Ferrari until the "respect the crest" mantra applied a mental mountain-road speed limiter.

When we rolled into Newcomb's Ranch, a now-closed roadhouse and the de facto gathering spot for car enthusiasts on the Crest. The Ferrari driver shot from his car and hurriedly approached as if I'd stolen his lunch money. "Is that the new M5 Wagon? That thing is amazing!" He proceeded to lead the throngs in an hour-long scrutiny parade around the car.

The next day, I averaged 24 mpg on a drive more spirited than I care to admit out to the BMW Performance Center West at Thermal Club, just outside Palm Springs. An hour after I arrived, I reluctantly concluded 10 laps on Thermal's Desert South course, hitting speeds up to 135 mph on the back stretch. Moments later, the instructors were drifting the same car, loaded with passengers, through the slalom course. A multipurpose vehicle in the truest sense of the word.

It's never happened before. For all the fantastic cars the U.S. has enjoyed, an M5 Touring hasn't been one of them. While other markets got to enjoy the E34 and E61 M5 Touring, we had to go without. Until now.

Was the wait worth it? Sales numbers and owner feedback indicate a resounding yes to both. As 2025 wound down, M5 Touring sales outpaced the sedan. Perhaps those of you who already have





The M5 Touring is a dream fulfilled for many M5 and wagon fans in America. The only question left is why it took so long for it to make it here.



an opinion of this car might be asking another question: "Was the weight worth it?"

There's no getting around it: the new M5 is heavy. At 5456 pounds, it weighs a little more than a base Chevy Tahoe. And while a Tahoe can fit seven passengers, it's not catapulting to 60 in 3.1 seconds, and certainly not leading a charge up mountain roads—or even averaging a respectable 24 mpg like I saw in the M5.

Many keyboard ninjas have cried that the M5 Touring weighs hundreds of pounds more than the Audi RS6 Avant, its direct competitor. They're not wrong. But our four-ringed friend launched seven years earlier and was certainly planned and designed long before that. When a hybridized or electric next-generation RS6 appears, don't be surprised when that curb weight balloons.

The latest Touring from Munich includes Integral Active Steering ("four-wheel steering"), xDrive, and BMW's plug-in hybrid (PHEV) system, replete with its high-voltage lithium-ion battery pack. That hybrid system, combined with the 4.4-liter twin-turbo S68 V-8, means the new M5 has 717 hp and 738 lb-ft of torque. Substantial numbers for any car, let alone a wagon.

When pushed on canyon roads, the M5 did an admirable job masking its weight. It felt planted, the low-mounted battery pack sticking me to the ground like slot-car magnets. The Integral Active Steering does duty like the slot car's pin, planting the M5 firmly in its lane. The electric motors provided instant torque to spring the out of turns. I felt the same on the track, leading to increased confidence and lap times much better than I had achieved in the past in other cars. I did not experience excessive body roll, and even if I had, we're carving up a track in a wagon. How cool is that?

We're in a different epoch of automotive evolution right now. Don't hate the player; hate the game. But as a player in this game, the G99 is at the head of its class.

[redacted]

I have long claimed that the reason BMW did not sell wagons in the U.S. was only because... BMW did not sell wagons in the U.S. It turns out there were a few more data-centric reasons beyond that.

Many believe that BMW must not understand the U.S. market if it's not bringing wagons. At the 2024 launch of the M5 Touring, Daniel Schmidt, BMW M product manager, offered some insight.

"We would have loved to have brought the M3 Touring to the U.S.," Schmidt says. "But, by then, it was quite late in the life cycle. When you consider all the regulations, crash testing, homologation for the U.S. market, and certain development requirements, the time frame to offer the M3 Touring would have only been maybe one to two years."

"We decided against it once, but that does not mean that will be a no forever," Schmidt says.

The theory that wagons were displaced by SAVs does have some merit, though.

"The U.S. market is well known as the best X market," says Silvia Neubauer, BMW M's vice president, customer, brand, sales. "For a long time, the thinking was that a wagon would not be in strong demand in the U.S."

The M5 Touring might be the answer. "We dig into data to try to understand what new buyers want, learning about different mindsets and clusters of customer groups, working to understand which products and offerings are best for each market," Neubauer adds.

"We believe that perhaps people in the U.S. who had the X5 and X5 M for a long time might want something new. People might be thinking, 'I want to stand out from the crowd, I want something different.' This car is a lifestyle statement."

As her team saw it, the market did include SUV owners, but also current M5 owners. "The target market includes people who want an M5 but need more trunk space, so they might go with a high-performance M5 Touring," she continues. "'I could take it to the racetrack, but probably would not.'"

[redacted]

I stole—I mean, was loaned—"my" G99 Touring from the BMW Performance Center. "We have 12 sedans and four Tourings," Matt Misko, Performance Center West general manager, shares. "I was blown away by the power delivery. The Touring makes one hell of a grocery getter. I've used it for road trips for five people with luggage and it was quite impressive. But then when I got it on the track, I was surprised at how well it handled the big Thermal track on a 115-degree humid day."

Mike Gessner and his wife, Bessie, have been to at least 25 Performance Center programs. While they have not driven the M5 Touring there, they've driven their own G99 more than 11,000 miles since picking it up at Performance Center East. From there, they drove their Daytona violet beauty to their home in Northern California. "When it was first announced, we saw it and thought, 'We gotta have one of these!" he says. "I thought it looked pretty damn cool. I like the hybrid aspect of it. We can't really complain about more than 700 hp in a car that can do almost everything you want it to do."

Gessner, a BMW product specialist and BMW CCA Golden Gate Chapter vice president, has seven BMWs, including an F80 and G80 M3 CS. "I love the storage capabilities with the



The last 5 Series Touring to make it to the U.S. was the E61, in 535i xDrive form. The years have made the 5 Series bigger, heavier, more luxurious, and far more capable than anyone could have imagined.







M5 Touring," Gessner continues. "I can put in all my wheels and tires from one of the CSs or Bessie's M2. I've taken the car on an autocross course, too. I'm not the best autocrosser, but the car handled really well. You can feel the steering work, and it gets back on power immediately. The acceleration in general is ballistically quick. Out on the open roads, you can hit 120 instantly without even realizing it."

It was around the time the Gessners were picking up their Daytona violet example that I took the Performance Center's G99 up Angeles Crest Highway on a crowded Friday morning. BMW CCA LA Chapter treasurer Sergio Keusayan was part of the crowd.

"That was the first time seeing the M5 Touring," Keusayan tells me. "I was two or three cars behind you heading up the mountain, trying to figure out what it was. So glad BMW finally brought it to these shores.'"

Keusayan has owned a handful of BMW motorcycles and 3 Series models but was not bothered by the size of the G99. "I didn't think it was too big, nor that it could be smaller," he says. "Like Goldilocks would have said, just the right size. And, compared to our family SUV, it didn't bother me. I thought, 'It's smaller than an SUV but more practical being a wagon.'"

"I'm a wagon fan and this M5 Touring checked all the boxes for a dad who wants a head-turning and neck-breaking grocery getter," says Parick Estrella, who was on the mountain in his E46 Touring. "I was impressed with the cargo space and figured it would make an amazing daily driver. It's a big car but presents well, and isn't overwhelming or awkward. With us all going down the hill together, I got to see it on the road for a while. It seemed like the ride was really balanced, with excellent road manners. It's like a super wagon that blends supercar abilities with practical applications."

Another BMW wagon owner, Stephen Jones, was in his S52-swapped E30 rather than his 1994 E34 525i Touring. "I had seen the M5 Touring plenty of times online, but seeing it in person was pretty awesome," Jones says. "It comes across as a very well-executed performance wagon. It definitely has a strong road presence."

The M5 Touring is made of massive numbers, and those bring huge expectations. For BMW enthusiasts, wagon geeks, and those who are done with SUVs, it exceeds them all. This is the new standard.

2026 BMW M5 TOURING

Engine:	4.4 liter twin-turbo V-8
ICE Output:	577 hp @ 5600–6500 rpm, 553 lb-ft @ 1800–5400 rpm
Electric Motor Output:	194 hp, 207 lb-ft
Total System Output:	717 hp, 738 lb-ft
Usable Battery Capacity:	18.6 kWh
Transmission:	Eight-speed automatic
0 to 60:	3.5 (mfr)
Weight:	5456 lb (mfr)
Base Price:	$129,350

YOUNG GUN





TURNER HILLIARD IS USING YOUTH TO HIS ADVANTAGE IN BMW CCA CLUB RACING'S POPULAR SPEC E46 CLASS.

WORDS: DAVID HAUETER PHOTOS: DAVID WILLIAMS

ETech Photo

Turner Hilliard started young. In 2017, at just 16 years old, he caught the racing bug after a standout performance at the BMW Performance Driving School. A competition license came soon after, followed by his first season of BMW CCA Club Racing in Spec E30 in 2019. In the years since, Hilliard has become one of the fastest drivers in Spec E46, now racing a 323Ci sponsored by Morehead Speedworks. In the final Club Racing weekend of 2025 at Roebling Road Raceway near Savannah, Georgia, Hilliard took class wins in three out of four races. I caught up with Hilliard at the end of the season to talk about his fledgling racing career and what's next.

David Haueter: *How did you get started in racing? Where did that influence come from?*

Turner Hilliard: My dad was into racing when he was in his twenties. He had a BMW and Porsche and had been out to Roebling Road a number of times. He won a few competitions and I saw his trophies; I thought that was just so cool. I can remember asking him about go-karting or dirt bikes, but he always said maybe when I got older.

When I was just about to turn 16, my mom was buying a BMW X5. The dealer asked if my mom and dad wanted to do the BMW Performance Driving School in Spartanburg when they picked it up. I thought it sounded awesome, and my dad thought that it would be a great idea if I did it. So, we went to Spartanburg to do the school. I had just gotten my driver's license, and they had us driving the new 3 Series. I did the school's different competitions and ended up winning all of them.

The chief instructor was Mike Renner, and after the school was over, Mike said he wanted to talk to my parents. I thought I damaged the car or something, but Mike told them that I was the best 18-year-old they had ever seen and had really great skills. He thought I should be racing.

My parents were like 'well, he's not 18–can he actually race cars?' It turned out that I was in an 18 and over school and wasn't even supposed to be enrolled. There's a teen driving school, but because my parents had signed up and we switched when I got there, I guess nobody double-checked. Mike told us about BMW CCA Club Racing, and when we drove home I talked to my dad about getting into racing. All the pieces fell into place after that.

Our local mechanic had a son who raced Spec Miata with the SCCA (Sports Car Club of America). We told them we really wanted to race a BMW, and they had a local customer with a Spec E30 for sale. The car looked great. We bought it and started racing with anybody who would take us.

DH: *Did you know how to drive a manual before you started racing the E30?*

TH: I had a dirt bike when I was growing up, so I knew the theory of using a clutch, but when we bought the Spec E30, I had never driven a manual car.

We went to my first track day at Roebling Road in January 2017. There's a lot of open space in the paddock there, so we went out and I learned how to drive it. I remember my instructor that day kept having to tell me not to look down when I was shifting gears. It was trial by fire, but I remember that everything felt right. I just wanted to keep driving.



I still have a soft spot for Spec E30. Back then, we had 15–20 cars at every event. My first race was at Roebling Road, and I think I qualified fifth or sixth. I couldn't believe it. I didn't really know any racing moves at that point, so the goal was just to finish.

DH: *Did you have any coaching help as you were learning to race?*

TH: I learned almost entirely on my own. The E46 has the AiM data-logging system, but I think I've pulled the data off the system once. The AiM system is helpful for seeing comparative lap times, so you can see where you lost time, but I've never studied the data. It never felt like the sort of thing that was going to make a difference for me.

What I ended up doing instead was take the seat cushion out of my car. I want to really feel where I'm going to get faster, not dig into a computer screen. I'm a software engineer in my day job, so I'm technically capable, but it really came down to more laps and more feel.

DH: *Is there any other advice you would give to someone who wants to get better at driving a car on the track, whether it's racing or just track days?*

With plentiful parts, relatively low cost, and a compliant chassis, the E46 is the perfect platform for a race car.





Everyone takes a different route into racing, but Hilliard's move from a brief BMW Performance Center school to BMW CCA Club Racing winner is one of the more unconventional ways to get there. He's making the most of it.

TH: Some of the best advice I ever got was when I was still doing track days with the E30: you're going to learn a lot more driving around on worn tires and drifting the car, having it move around, than if you just drive on new tires all the time.

We took it to heart, and to this day we don't put on new tires unless we really have to. You learn so much about car control and setup by going out on beat tires, especially in learning how to manage understeer and oversteer and what the limits are. I think that's what developed my racecraft.

DH: *How did it go transitioning from a Spec E30 to the E46?*

TH: For the Spec E30 class in general, the writing was on the wall with the E30's spike in value. With the price of street cars going up, getting parts, donor cars, and engines was starting to get difficult. The E46 had been around for a while and were starting to get less expensive, and a few guys started testing them out.

A good friend, Sandro Espinosa, had both the E30 and the E46. He told me that I really need to drive an E46. I tried it out at a track day and it felt more like a real race car than the E30.

The E46 is much faster and way more refined, and the chassis is so much different. In the E30, we were always chasing things that the car wasn't designed around.

DH: *How competitive is Spec E46?*

TH: For the money, BMW CCA Club Racing is perfect for us and perfect for any driver who wants to get into racing, and it doesn't get more competitive than Spec E46 right now. There are so many good drivers out there, and a lot of good cars.

When we raced at VIR in March, I think we had close to 40 cars, and there would be nearly 10 of us going down the back straight in a big line. That's just incredible. Racing that close for that many laps with so many in the mix—that's what makes it.

A lot of us have raced together for a while. We can trust each other and keep the racing clean and fair. That's a big reason why we love racing with BMW CCA. They let us race close and competitively, but it's pretty rare for someone to put other drivers in danger. We're all friends, are all on budgets, and want to be at the next race.

DH: *Do you have any aspirations to get into pro racing, in a series like IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge or SRO TC America?*

TH: Once I got into college, that was really the focus. I made the decision that I'd rather get my education and get a good job and stick with racing at a club level rather than trying to drum up a bunch of money to make a go at professional racing. I'm really happy with it now. I'm not sure I would enjoy racing any more if I was trying to make it as a professional.

GET ON TRACK

Want to be part of the action? The 2026 BMW CCA Club Racing season is getting underway. Check out the full schedule and come on out for a race soon.

March 27–29:
Virginia International Raceway | Alton, VA

May 1–3:
Summit Point Raceway | Summit Point, WV

May 15–17:
Watkins Glen International | Watkins Glen, NY

June 1–2:
New Jersey Motorsports Park, Thunderbolt | Millville, NJ

June 20–21:
Roebling Road Raceway | Bloomingdale, GA

June 27–28:
Canadian Tire Motorsports Park | Bowmanville, ON, Canada

July 11–12:
Summit Point Raceway | Summit Point, WV

August 1–2:
New Jersey Motorsports Park, Lightning Circuit | Millville, NJ

August 14–16:
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course | Lexington, OH

September 25–27:
Watkins Glen International | Watkins Glen, NY

October 8–10:
Road America | Elkhart Lake, WI

October 23–25:
Carolina Motorsports Park | Kershaw, SC

BEST KEPT SECRET



The F82 M4 GTS deserves more credit.

By Travis Okulski

Illustration by Brooks Brackett

Photos courtesy of BMW AG

Before I got in an M4 GTS for the first time, the driver getting out said six words: "You're going to hate this car." Not a great start, though I couldn't blame him for saying that. The F80-chassis M cars came in for their fair share of criticism when they debuted, admonished for tilting toward outright power and torque rather than M's famous balance. There were even reports that M didn't want to create a car based on this chassis, that it wasn't up to par.





The factory roll cage replaces the rear seats, and it's wonderful.

Being told the GTS was bad, though, was heartbreaking. It had all the ingredients of a very special car. It looked great. That big wing, an adjustable suspension, a front lip that could be extended for track work, and a stripped-out interior with a roll cage all shouted that it was a different F80. And then there was the engine: the S55 had a trick water-injection system and a power bump to 500 hp. If there was going to be an M4 to impress, it was this one.

Thankfully, I found that the other driver was wrong. This was the 911 GT3 RS formula applied to an M4. It was loud, raw, and in many objective measures, a worse road car than the base M3 or M4. But on the right road, it was pure joy—fast, accurate, engaging. A real weapon. The seats are low, the steering chattery and direct, the gearbox quick to shift, and the S55 sounded menacing through its titanium exhaust. Over the course of this group test, I ran for the GTS's driver seat at every chance. It felt like someone put plates on a GT4 car.

On track, the adjustments and changes made even more sense. It felt at home hopping curbs and late-braking into fast



That copper lip spoiler can be manually extended for track day duty, or if you need somewhere to put a coffee.

corners. I spent far more time than anyone else behind the wheel. I walked away from that time with the GTS impressed and excited. Now, it wasn't a GT3 RS-level of refinement—it felt more like a tuner special—but there was something charming about how all the parts worked together to transform the F82 chassis coupe into a real precision track instrument. What a thing.

In the decade since that experience, the GTS has rattled around in the back of my head. I loved the car, but I recently realized I've never actually seen one on the road after that test. Granted, just 300 were sold in the U.S., but you'd think one would pop up at a track event or a cars and coffee. The scarcity also hasn't made the $133,000-when-new GTS appreciate in price, with most lightly used examples on the market for $100,000 or less.

I find that all very surprising. Appreciation for rare, factory-tuned, and polarizing cars tends to grow over time. The market for the F80-chassis M cars has turned in the last couple of years, with prices rising and a new generation enjoying them for their tunability. I figured the M4 GTS would at least be worth what it left the showroom for, if not more. That there are some listed for $80,000 shocked me.

Then I wondered if I got it wrong. Was this car that made such an indelible impression on me the first time actually not very good? I decided to find out, and during a visit to South Carolina, I snagged one out of BMW's warehouse.

IT'S THE MOST HARDCORE F82-CHASSIS CAR.



Of course, the days that I had the car were also some of the wettest the Spartanburg area saw the entire year. Roads were rivers; standing water was everywhere. The GTS rides on Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tires, which are intended for dry-weather track use. Not ideal. Most of my drive time was spent scanning for puddles and trying to avoid lakes that formed on the shoulder, but in the brief, dry moments, I got reacquainted with the car I fell for 10 years ago.

I'm pleased to report that I was not wrong. It's the car I remember, great bits and flaws together. The S55 is a monster in this tune, and in this weather, able to spin the tires through the first four gears. That DCT gearbox is excellent, better



The kidney grilles feed an S55 with a trick water injection system meant to cool intake temps and make more power.



Menacing in matte grey with copper accents, the GTS is rare, with just 300 in the U.S.

than I remember and not far behind Porsche's PDK in terms of how it reacts and shifts. Yet it's never out of control, never feels like it's going to huck me off into the woods or down a ravine. The suspension is stiff and the chassis is hard, which is what I imagine most people would complain about. But this car isn't meant to be comfortable. It's the most hardcore F82-chassis car.

So why the depreciation? It does not have anything close to the breadth of use that an M4 or M4 Competition has. It has no back seats. It doesn't have stereo speakers in the doors, in the name of lightweighting. To ensure it's making full power, the water injection tank needs to be full of distilled water. The M4 appeals because



These cars aren't appreciated in the used market quite yet, but their time is coming. You'll see. I hope.



it can do a school drop-off and then comfortably road-trip to a track day. The GTS can really only do one of those effectively. If you're buying a six-figure track car, chances are you're going to go after a 911 GT3 or something like it.

I think that's a shame. The GTS is playful and brings a lot of that touring car tradition to a track-day machine. It's not overly serious, sounds great, and uses interesting technology and engineering that other cars don't. If you're only interested in overall lap times, then you'd go for a 911 GT3 or a Camaro ZL1 1LE—but there aren't any trophies in the track day world championship. The GTS is something different, something fun, something engaging, and it should be appreciated.

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- **Deductible Reimbursement** from the 'at fault' party's insurance company.
- **Cost of Damaged Personal Items** caused by the negligence of the 'at fault' party.

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Steven G. Calamusa, Esq. (Pictured w/ Nico Calamusa)
Attorney/Shareholder – Gordon & Partners, PA
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MAKE A WISH

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE, THANKS TO THE BMW COMMUNITY.

WORDS: DAVE ORTOLI, CONNECTICUT VALLEY CHAPTER
PHOTOS: COURTESY JULIETTE BUTLER AND BMW OF RIDGEFIELD

Juliette Butler loves cars. As a teen, she was obsessed with the Pixar movies, but she also spent a lot of time helping her father, Jim, work on his various American vehicles, which ranged from a 1967 Ford Fairlane to a 1998 Jeep Wrangler.

That inspired Juliette—who couldn't even drive yet—to find a project car of her own. She started to hunt, looking everywhere for the perfect candidate. After a Nissan Z fell through, Jim's boss told them about a 1990 E30 convertible, his father-in-law's car. The car had been sitting for many years, the victim of a failed timing belt that caused internal engine damage. However, that 3 Series spoke to Juliette. It was the perfect project.

After getting the car home in October 2021, the first order of business was an extensive cleaning. Soon a Haynes repair manual appeared under the Christmas tree, and Juliette began studying. Besides the known engine problems, there were many other issues, the sort that come with a 30-year-old car that's been sitting for a while. Juliette and Jim attacked the engine first, pulling and completely rebuilding it.

With that sorted, they were ready to address the rest of the car. But life had other plans. In November 2022, Juliette was diagnosed with lymphoma. The E30 hit the back burner as the family tackled Juliette's health challenge together. In spring 2023, Juliette thankfully entered remission. Work on the E30 immediately restarted.



Juliette and her dad, Jim, with the neglected E30 before the hard work of resurrecting it began.

Attention moved to the interior, starting with a thorough cleaning, followed by repairing the cracks in the seats and re-dyeing them. There were also some body repairs, including the replacement of the passenger front fender. The fuel system gave them a particularly difficult time, as the fuel line kept clogging and starving the engine. It turned out that the tank was rusted on the inside, so it had to be replaced, a difficult job on an E30.

It was at this point that the first of several soon-to-be heroes entered the picture.

Make-A-Wish is a national foundation that helps grant life-changing wishes to critically ill children. The hope is to create a positive mental change for the family as a break from all of the day-to-day stress of the situation. For most children, the wish entails a desire to visit some destination or attraction, such as Disney World, or to meet an athlete or celebrity. Juliette's wish was different. She wanted help finishing her project.

One of the Connecticut Make-A-Wish board members, James Barnett, took on the responsibility of trying to make one of Juliette's wishes come true. James, a BMW owner and BMW CCA member, thought the best plan might be to go right to the source. James is a customer of BMW of Ridgefield, so he stopped in to talk with them. He met with Andy Ventresca, the new vehicle sales manager, to explain Juliette's wish.







A project in progress. The E30 received a thorough overhaul and refresh to become a car better than Juliette's dreams





The team at Keeler didn't take the easy route, instead making sure Juliette's car was restored the right way, the hard way.

Andy immediately agreed to get involved. "The unique and genuine nature of the wish she was requesting was so one-of-a-kind, I knew right away we needed to do this project. During the project there was this constant energy around Juliette's car. Everyone kept pushing to get to the next step. We certainly could not wait to reveal it to her."

The project kicked off at Keeler Collision of Ridgefield in April 2024. The task? Transform the multicolored, tired-looking 1990 325i into a stunning fulfillment of Juliette's vision.

What ultimately became a five-month effort started with the disassembly of the trim and other parts in order to repair the body panels and then prepare the car for paint. Many trim pieces were not available anymore, even from BMW NA, so a great deal of effort went into refurbishing existing pieces to like-new condition. Working on the convertible top became a Herculean effort as the old, tired fabric was glued to the metal frame. This meant that every bit of the old top had to be removed from the frame pieces—some of which needed repair themselves—before the new top could be fitted.

Almost every technician at the collision center had their own involvement in the project, be it sanding, painting, or reassembly. "Our team was greatly honored that Juliette shared her wish with us and we helped achieve her vision," says Cindy Palanzo, Keeler Collision's manager. "Each one of our team members contributed, and we all wanted to go beyond her expectations." For Cindy, it was especially meaningful to work on this project, as her family had been helped by Make-A-Wish some years earlier.

Juliette was shown multiple paint samples, but she had a very specific color in mind. Her dream was a deep wild cherry, and it took several attempts for Sherwin-Williams to create the exact right shade. The final paint is striking; it changes color in the light, sometimes even looking black or dark purple. Once paint was complete, installation of the lights, along with the metal and rubber trim pieces, and a new windshield, could start.

Now, with the bodywork complete, the project shifted to the BMW of Ridgefield service department. Jim Nenning, the parts and



The amazing shade of wild cherry Juliette chose pops no matter the light.





service director, oversaw sourcing needed components, while making sure that Josh Smith, the technician who was primarily responsible for the mechanical work, had the support he needed. "We were all excited when we heard about Juliette's car," Jim says. "The issue that took the most effort was the convertible top. The existing one suffered the effects of age, with tears and a broken rear window. John, our parts manager, started looking for a new top. Service Manager, Walter Modeen Jr., made calls to BMW NA for assistance. The search ultimately led the team to Germany—where the last top that existed in the entire BMW system was found."

Juliette's first glimpse of the completed car came at the Keeler Collision facility where the bulk of the work was done.





The restoration was a true group effort from Make-a-Wish, Keeler Collision, and BMW of Ridgefield. Everyone involved was on hand to hand off the car to Juliette when it was ready, an emotional experience for all.



Preparations were being made for revealing the like-new car to Juliette. On the big day in September 2024, a large crowd of Juliette's family and friends gathered at BMW of Ridgefield's showroom. The delight, awe, and appreciation in Juliette's face as the car was unveiled could not be hidden and brought great satisfaction to everyone who played a part in making the wish come true.

The car immediately became Juliette's daily driver in the warm-weather months, with another car handling duty when car-destroying salt takes over Connecticut's roads. Because of its sentimental value, Juliette never plans to sell her dream E30. Now a high school graduate, Juliette is attending classes with the goal of becoming a radiology technician, her own way of giving back.

The finished car far exceeded Juliette's wildest dreams, thanks to the efforts and hard work of a large group of heroes, all of whom felt enriched just by being part of this amazing experience.

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A TALE OF TWO CARS

WORDS AND PHOTOS:
MELISSA CUNNINGHAM



ALLEGHENY CHAPTER BMW CCA MEMBERS WORK HARD TO KEEP ICONS IN THE FAMILY.

Every year, the major event for the Allegheny Chapter of the BMW CCA is the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix (PVGP), the nation's largest vintage street race. More importantly, the PVGP raises money for charities; since 1983, more than $7,000,000 has been donated.

Volunteering at BMW CCA events is hard, tiresome work, but being involved has generated friendships and connections that I would not have thought possible.

These connections helped two cars—a 1987 635CSi and 1998 M3—find new owners who would continue their care in the chapter family for years to come. Their transition to new ownership took place through connections to the PVGP—and the new stewards of both of these cars are women.

THE SHARK

Michael Meehan obsessed over his 635CSi for 34 years. He kept meticulous spreadsheets documenting all upgrades and maintenance. He held on to every paper receipt, organizing them neatly in a folder that stretched to four inches thick. He kept the original Schwarz black paint shimmering. If detailing questions arose among Allegheny Chapter members, Michael had the answer. Michael was also a key member of the team of volunteers who worked the PVGP every year.

But right before the 2024 edition of the PVGP, Michael received devastating news: a terminal cancer diagnosis. Michael started to make arrangements, and that included parting with his beloved 6 Series. That's where Tiffany Nolan comes in.

Tiffany volunteered at the registration table at PVGP for 10 years without even owning a BMW. She worked very closely with Michael to make sure every aspect of the PVGP ran smoothly. They became fast friends.

When Michael decided to sell the 635, he went to Tiffany. She knew everyone who came through PVGP registration, and Michael hoped the next owner would be local, ideally staying within the chapter. Rather than recommend someone else buy the car, Tiffany decided to buy it herself. She fell in love when she saw it in Michael's garage. The deal was done.

Michael planned to keep the car until the spring of 2025, but Tiffany had garage space waiting if he was willing to let it go sooner—and if the questionable late-fall Pittsburgh weather would accommodate them.

It would.

The weather was rainy and around 45 degrees when Tiffany drove the 635 home. She had to complete the drive with the windows down, since she didn't yet know how to turn on the defroster. Thankfully, she learned quickly that the car had channels above the windows to keep the rain out. Once home, Tiffany washed the car and then pulled it into the garage to dry, making sure all of the road grime was washed away. It's exactly what Michael would have done.

Soon after Tiffany took the car home in December 2024, Michael's condition worsened. He passed away a month later.

That first drive after Michael passed was full of worry for Tiffany. She wanted to be a good caretaker. She wanted to maintain the original condition of the car. She was wary of accidents. Michael spent decades keeping the car in perfect condition; Tiffany wanted to continue that tradition. She wanted to honor Michael.

But as soon as she got behind the wheel, worries faded and she enjoyed the journey. It was like she was traveling with an old friend. Tiffany felt like Michael was riding shotgun, asking how her day was, how life was going, telling stories about his wife and their cats, and talking about the next edition of the PVGP.





Everything about how Michael Meehan cared for his 635CSi spoke to his attention to detail. Tiffany Nolan has maintained the tradition.







A clean E36 M3 is a wonderful thing, especially one that's had a chance to get time on some of the finest tracks in the country.

During Michael's memorial service, Tiffany learned that Michael told several family and chapter members that Tiffany was the daughter he never had. Tiffany looked at Michael as a father figure, so she will always feel some anxiety around the car. She wants to keep his memory alive through it.

Tiffany took the 635 to the first PVGP after Michael passed. For the first time attending—and not volunteering—at the event, Tiffany felt that she truly belonged. The volunteers working the main gate let her pass without question. After she parked the 635 in the show, she felt a flood of emotions. Other club members came up to her and were extremely supportive of her being the new owner. They were happy to see the 635 at the event, and everyone felt Michael was there in spirit.

DREAM E36

My journey to owning a 1998 M3 started more than a decade ago when longtime BMW CCA member Tom Wettach and his wife, BJ, graciously opened their home to host the annual Allegheny Chapter holiday party. While every corner of the house was full, the best place to be was in the attached garage, chatting while admiring Tom's BMW collection. His E36 caught my eye. One day, I wanted to add a beautiful M3 like that to my garage.

About 18 months later, on a sweltering July day at the 2016 PVGP, I heard that Tom might be selling his cars, E36 included. A few days later, I worked up the courage and gave Tom a call. I had to know. The rumors were true. The E36 was for sale.

My husband and I drove to Tom's and took the M3 on a brief test drive. In that short time, we knew it was the car for us. We immediately struck a deal. Tom told us he was glad the car would stay "in the family" and remain a presence at local track days. That was close to Tom's heart, as he helped start BeaveRun, the racetrack north of Pittsburgh that was later known as Pitt Race.

I told Tom I felt honored to be the second owner and would always take care of the M3. I saw him tear up as we prepared to drive the car home. Letting go of a car like that—what is essentially a family member—is an emotional experience. But I hoped he knew the car was going to a loving home, that he helped fulfill a dream, and that the M3 meant the world to me.

It really is a gorgeous car, finished in the factory Arctic silver paint over Dove gray leather that still looks new. In the last 28 years, it's covered only 68,000 miles, and we've been obsessive about maintenance and upgrades, just like Tom was. The cooling system rebuild filled time during the pandemic. The worn bushings have been replaced with new polyurethane pieces. We added new camber plates, shocks, and springs after the rear shock towers were reinforced and the rear trailing arm reinforcement welding was completed.

I even added some cosmetic flourishes, like BMW Motorsport door handles from Poland, as well as a late-model European steering wheel from Ukraine. I've also kept Tom's tradition alive and continued taking the M3 to the track, with events at Barber Motorsports Park and Pitt Race.

Unfortunately, Tom passed away in 2023. I never got the chance to show him the car in its current form. I did hear that his family saw the car when I had it on display at an invitational car show on Walnut Street in Pittsburgh. I hope it brought them fond memories and that they believed Tom's legacy was preserved.

Now, the 635CSi and E36 M3 have owners who continue the tradition of taking these picturesque cars to local and national events. As the cars pass from generation to generation of CCA members, the stories from the previous owners live on—and new stories are made.

I know that Michael Meehan and Tom Wettach would appreciate having their cars shown on the Schenley Park golf course during PVGP. Tiffany Nolan and I continue to wax, clean, and maintain these cars to keep up our end of the bargain.



Melissa Cunningham (left) and Tiffany Nolan with the fantastic BMW's they found, all thanks to relationships formed within their own BMW CCA chapter.

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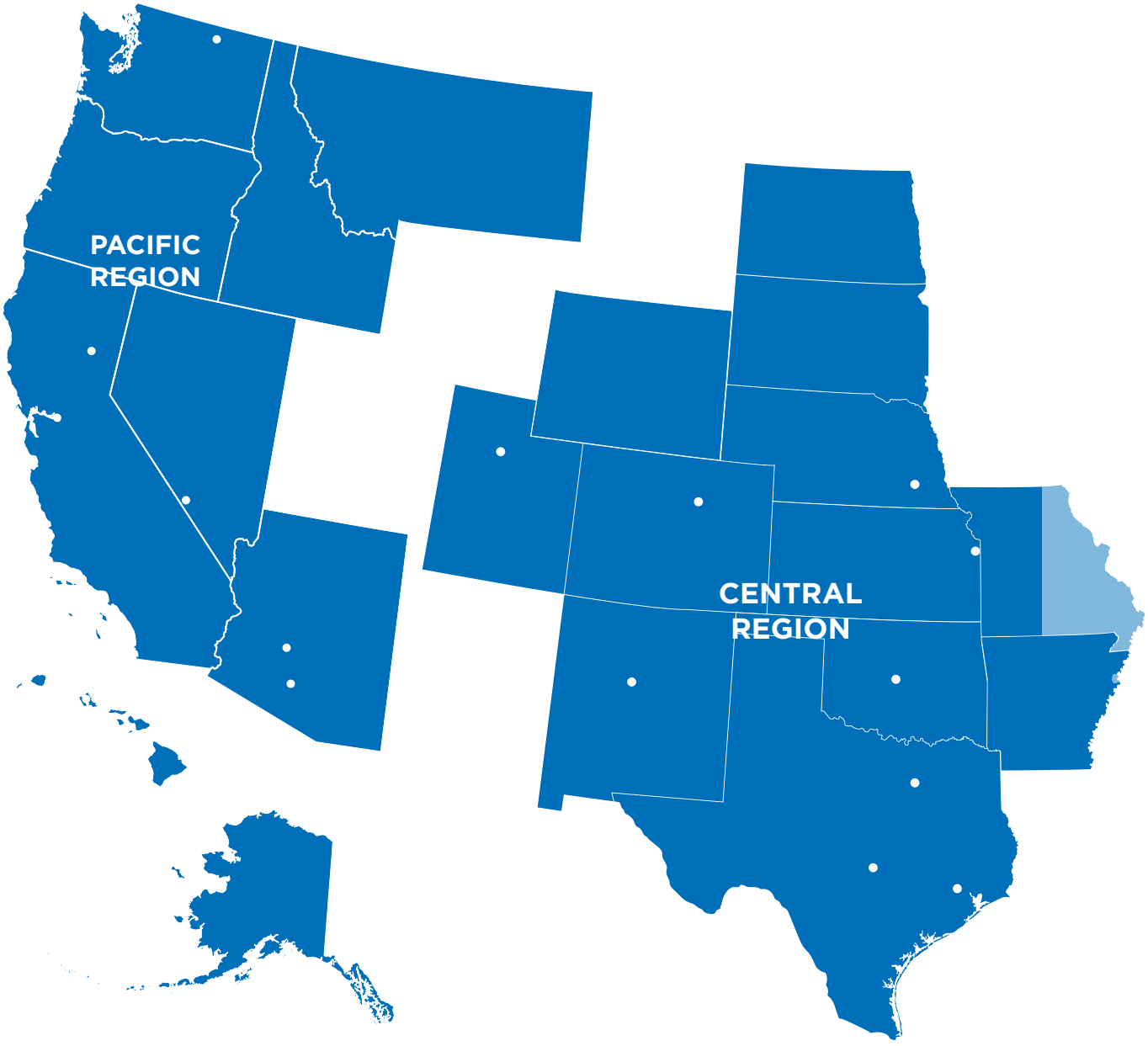
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BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

REGIONS AND CHAPTERS



BMW CCA's chapters are organized into **five geographic regions** and offer events and activities for members living nearby. Our **non-geographic chapters** welcome members from across the country and are focused on **enthusiasm for specific BMW models, including M and X**.

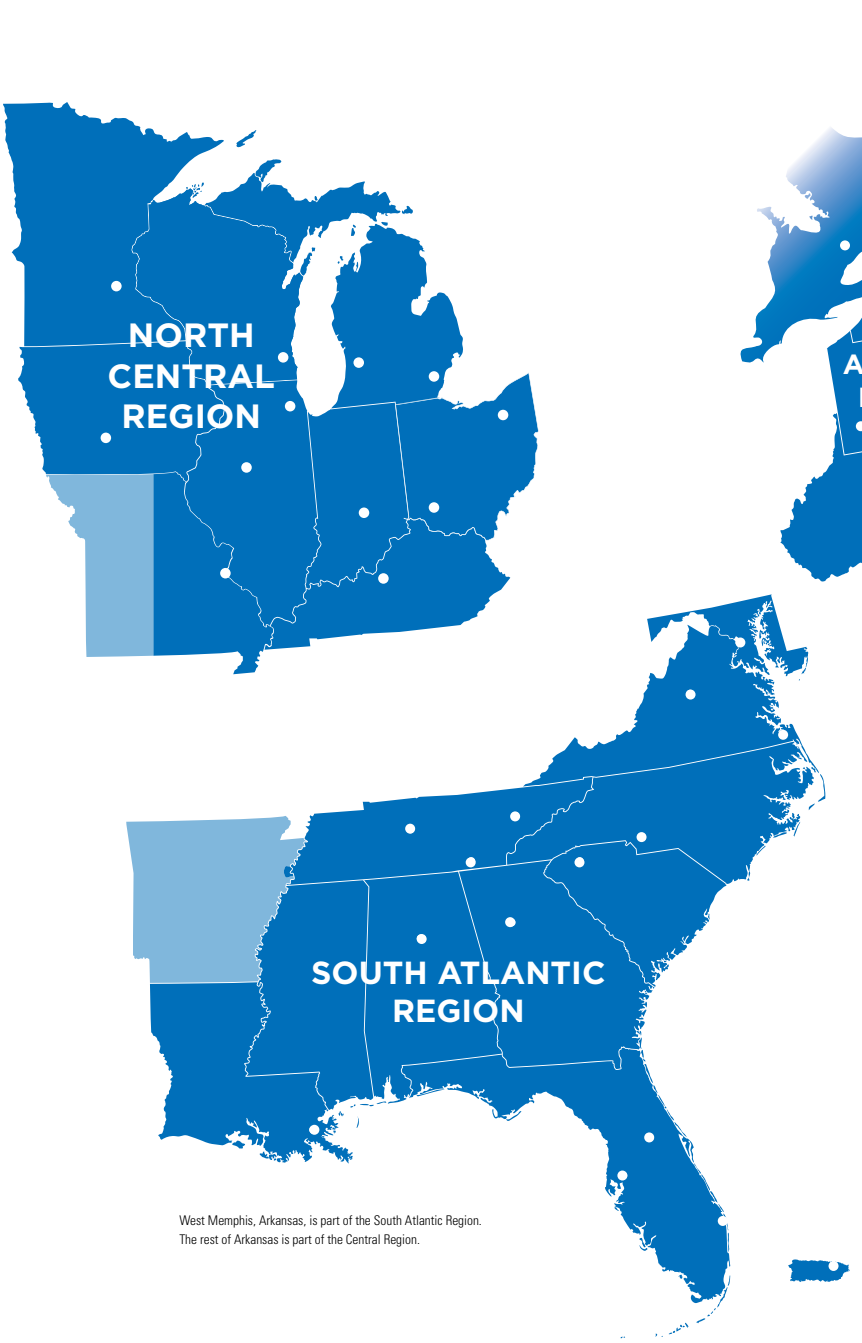
The majority of the each issue of ***BimmerLife*** is dedicated to **news and events directly from the chapters themselves.**

In the following pages, you'll get a taste of some of the **fun and benefits members enjoy by being in the BMW CCA**!

Many of the chapters took this opportunity to celebrate the issue's theme of **Heroes**, showcasing the many facets of heroism that exist within the BMW enthusiast community.

Learn more about **BMW CCA** and membership at **bmwcca.org/jointoday**!

Founded in 1969, **BMW Car Club of America** has over **60,000 members in 67 chapters**, making it the **largest official BMW enthusiast group in the world**. Learn more at **bmwcca.org/jointoday**!



West Memphis, Arkansas, is part of the South Atlantic Region. The rest of Arkansas is part of the Central Region.

NON-GEOGRAPHIC CHAPTERS

The BMW CCA also includes **non-geographic chapters** created for enthusiast groups that have a very specific focus for their Bimmer lifestyles.

M CHAPTER
X CHAPTER
E31 CHAPTER
E30 CHAPTER
2002 FOREVER CHAPTER

72	98	128	154	174	197
NORTH ATLANTIC REGION	SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION	NORTH CENTRAL REGION	CENTRAL REGION	PACIFIC REGION	NON-GEO CHAPTERS

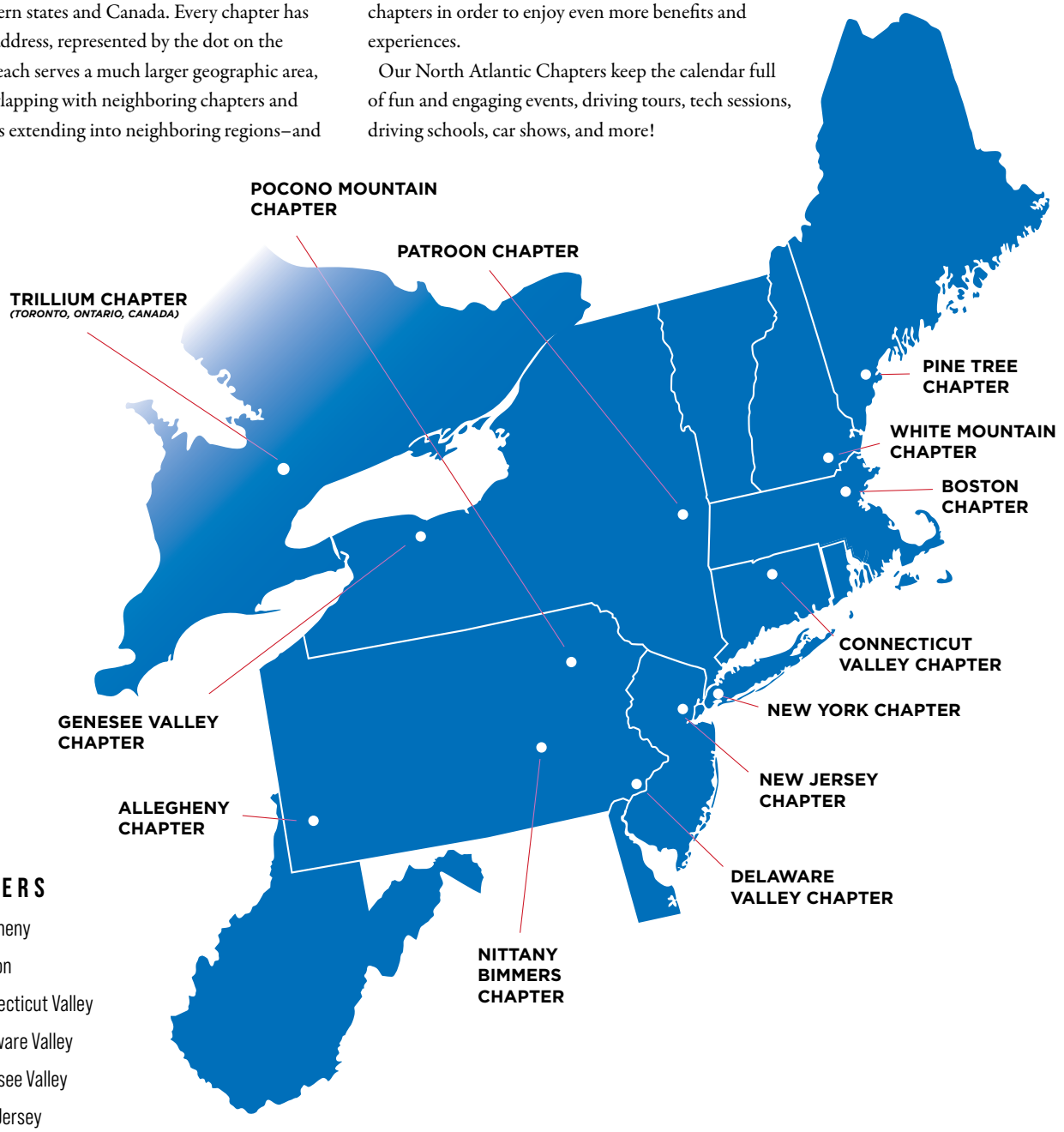
The following pages contain photos and articles submitted by BMW CCA chapters and collected from BMW CCA chapter online assets, including social media accounts and newsletters. Photo credits have been used when available. Send any questions to regionseditor@bimmerlife.com.

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

NORTH ATLANTIC REGION

The BMW CCA's North Atlantic Region includes 13 local chapters for members to enjoy in the northeastern states and Canada. Every chapter has a central address, represented by the dot on the map, but each serves a much larger geographic area, often overlapping with neighboring chapters and sometimes extending into neighboring regions–and in the North Atlantic Region's case, neighboring countries! Many BMW CCA members join additional chapters in order to enjoy even more benefits and experiences.

Our North Atlantic Chapters keep the calendar full of fun and engaging events, driving tours, tech sessions, driving schools, car shows, and more!



CHAPTERS

74 Allegheny
76 Boston
78 Connecticut Valley
80 Delaware Valley
82 Genesee Valley
84 New Jersey
86 New York
88 Nittany Bimmers
90 Patroon
92 Pine Tree
94 Trillium
96 White Mountain
97 Pocono Mountain

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 15-16

BIMMERS AT CARLISLE

Import and Performance Nationals

store.carlisleevents.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=2026%2D039

June 28

BOSTON CHAPTER CONCOURS

boston-bmwcca.org/socialize/concours/

July 18-19

PITTSBURGH VINTAGE GRAND PRIX

We'll be back on German Hill in Schenley Park for the biggest BMW CCA gathering in the east! Join us for an unforgettable weekend of vintage racing and camaraderie!

pvgp.org/car-show-overview/bmw/







REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Larry Engel,
North Atlantic Region
Vice President

Have you ever had the urge to stretch your BMW's legs and see what it will do on the road? If you're like most people, you've probably resisted the urge to do that because you're a responsible adult and a) you don't want to run the chance of getting a big speeding ticket and b) you have concern for other people's safety. Thanks for that!

Do you want to feel like a hero in your BMW and learn how to drive it skillfully at its maximum capability? Do you want to become a better driver?

I'm sure many of you lament the fact that you don't live in Germany with unrestricted speed on the autobahn. If you feel like you lack opportunities to feed the need for speed, perhaps you're not aware that BMW Car Club of America High Performance Driver Education (HPDE) provides precisely that chance. Many of our chapters host HPDEs at top road course racetracks across the country, and practically anyone who has ever attended one will tell you they feel safer on the track than they do on the interstate. Schools focus on safety and highly qualified instructors ride with every student. While we're talking about heroes, I want to thank some of the heroes of the BMW CCA -our hard working Driving Events volunteers.

Just about any BMW car is built to withstand the rigors of HPDE. You'll need to have the car checked out by a qualified mechanic and fresh brake fluid and good brake pads, but most chapters will loan or rent you a helmet. Also, most chapters will limit SUVs to autocross events for safety reasons. Autocross is another great skill building activity!

If you've always wondered what it would be like to experience your BMW's full performance capability, check out the driving schools in your or nearby chapters. They'll all welcome you and you'll have a thrilling experience!



ALLEGHENY **CHAPTER HEROICS**

BY MELISSA CUNNINGHAM

A hero can be an illustrious warrior or soldier or a person admired for achievements and noble qualities. These heroes from the Allegheny Chapter match the aforementioned definition by volunteering at events held at Pittsburgh International Race Complex. The Allegheny Chapter may be known for its signature car show event during the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix (PVGP), but there were other events at Pitt Race that shaped the history of the chapter. The events at Pitt Race included the club racing weekend preceding the large PVGP car show event at Schenley Park, high performance driving schools, and Street Survival events. In fact, chapter volunteers were responsible for starting the car show events for the PVGP at the facility when it was still known as BeaverRun.



The heroes from the Allegheny Chapter need to find new ways to soldier on as Pitt Race closed in 2025. There were so many great memories provided by all of the events held at Pitt Race which could not have happened without the chapter's volunteers. The BMW CCA may be the largest single-marque car club in the world, but it's the club's volunteers that are the engine of the events. There are countless volunteers that are not be named specifically in this article, but rest assured their efforts shaped the history of the Allegheny Chapter.

The club racing weekend at Pitt Race had BMW races interspersed with other



vintage racing classes. The club racing weekend in the past was coordinated by Jeff Taylor, Brett Sutton, and Ron Vivian, who coordinated every aspect of the event with the track to make sure the racers and their teams had everything they needed. The racers enjoyed the camaraderie and competitive spirit thanks to Pitt Race and the Allegheny Chapter volunteers.

Pitt Race also served as the location for high-performance driving events, which provides a great opportunity to learn a race track in your own car with an instructor in the passenger seat to assist you. Jeff Taylor, Chris Williams, and Tom Wettach coordinated these events with the track. These track events gave the participants a great experience to learn more about their car in a safe environment.

The Allegheny Chapter hosted the Street Survival event at the vehicle dynamics area and the conference room at Pitt Race. Street Survival is an event that teaches teenage drivers real world driving skills in their own car and in the classroom. The vehicle dynamics area was set up with orange construction cones in patterns to teach the teenage students how the vehicle feels during a skid, an emergency lane change and threshold braking. The volunteers would set up the cones the day before the event, be the in-car coaches instructing the students, check each student's car for safety and run the classroom and on-course instruction. In addition to the countless in-car coaches, heroes from this event include Kent Beaver, Tiffany Nolan, Jeff Taylor, Melanie Maslo, Rob Morelli, Greg Calvimontes, Michael Meehan, John Toal, Chris Williams, Jim Williams, and Glen Beatty.









BMW Car Club
of America
Allegheny Chapter

Allegheny Chapter

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March:
Indoor Karting Event

April:
Cars & Coffee

May:
West Virgina Focus Event

June:
Spring Drive

July 17-19:
Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix / Schenley Park Weekend / Celebrating 40 years of the E30 M3

ABOVE AND **BEYOND**

BY LARRY BARIERI

We've all heard the expression "above and beyond" many times, usually applied to our young men and women fighting in the far corners of the world or the co-worker who goes that extra mile to make the project a success.

However, you don't hear it much at a High Performance Driving School, even though we have a large cadre of qualified instructors and our students normally bestow positive comments about them after the event because they've had a great track day. But that's just what we do. It's not normally extraordinary; it's just the way we do things.

Let me tell a story of "above and beyond" from an HPDE held at New Hampshire Motor Speedway a few years ago.



With more than 30 instructors and 55-60 students, everyone worked hard to keep up with student run groups. Cristina Silva, a last-minute addition to the school, was to share a car with another friend also attending the school. That car, a stripped-out Le Mans race-prepped BMW, is not something you would normally expect a first timer to drive, but Cristina and her instructor Jonathan Katz were game and got into the car for her first session of driving.

Cristina had never driven the car previously and she had a hard time getting the car moving, as the racing clutch seemed to be difficult for her to modulate. After a few stalls she and Jonathan made their way on to the track. If you've ever been in a stripped-out race car you understand the noise level inside the car. If you haven't been in one, go into your kitchen, fill your blender with ice cubes, turn it on high and then try to have a conversation with someone. You'll get the idea. Instructing in a car like this is difficult at best. Jonathan did his best to communicate with her and guide her safely around the course.

When the session ended Jonathan had a talk with her about the on-track experience and the car, and he suggested that using that car just wasn't going to be productive. I'm sure her first reaction disappointment, but Jonathan had brought his new-to-him 2012 Porsche Cayman R to drive at this event. He found this car only a month before, tucked away in a garage in Maryland with only 500 miles on the odometer. It was essentially a brand-new car. What happened next was truly wonderful. He offered to let her drive his car—not once, not twice, but for the next three sessions of the day!

Instructors as a bunch are normally quite picky about who they let drive their cars. You have to be a close friend and also willing to sign over a parcel of land and make the car owner the beneficiary on a large insurance policy. Not so in this case! Jonathan willingly put his new Porsche in the hands of a student he had known for all of about 30 minutes. After 35 years of working with students at car club events, he evidently felt that Cristina was a safe bet.

I'm happy to say the Cristina had an amazing day at the track. Jonathan told me she made progress in his car that she never would have made in the Le Mans car. Cristina called him "incredibly patient and generous" and gave him "extra points for not giving up on me and being smart enough to ban me from the Le Mans car for the day."

Kudos to Jonathan for going above and beyond to help a new student turn a potentially disappointing day of yelling over the in-car noise at the track into a great day of learning and fun. I am confident that when our instructors read this story, they will give Jonathan a hearty round of applause. He demonstrated the highest degree of professionalism in making sure his student was safe and had a good time. We in the Boston Chapter are proud to call him one of our own—even if he does drive a Volkswagen!

BMW Car Club of America
Boston Chapter

Boston Chapter

Boston, Massachusetts

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Get more information and events at boston-bmwcca.org.

CHAPTER EVENTS

Late April:
Road Trip to Lime Rock with CVC

May 15-16:
HPDE @ Club Motorsport w WMC

July 11:
HPDE @ Palmer Motorsports Park w/ WMC and CVC

July 31-Aug 2:
HPDE @ Le Circuit Mt Tremblant



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STORY BY DAVID WHITE • PHOTOS BY PAUL FRICKENHAUS



David White, Brandon Small and their elves with hundreds of toys.

Every year, the holiday season brings out the best in our car community—and nowhere is that more true than at Dents 4 Kids, an annual toy drive and door-ding repair event that has grown into one of the most heartfelt traditions in Connecticut. What started as a personal moment inside Connecticut Children's Hospital has now become a full-scale charity event hosted by New Country BMW of Hartford and supported by BMW enthusiasts, local families, and PDR (painless dent repair) technicians from all over the northeast.

Years ago, I found myself sitting in a room at the Children's Hospital with one of my daughters. Like many parents who have been there, I watched as nurses comforted frightened kids with small toys—simple gestures that went a long way toward easing their fears. As a parent, and as someone who spent a week in the hospital as a child myself, I know firsthand how scary it can be. No matter the injury—a broken bone, a stitched-up knee, or something more serious—kids deserve a moment of comfort. These toys truly help. When I learned those toys came entirely from donations, something clicked.

As a PDR technician, I realized I could turn my craft into a way to give back. I had seen other techs across the country run toy-drive repair days, and I knew this was my chance to do something meaningful for the children and families in hospitals every day. Dents 4 Kids was born!

I put the word out to fellow technicians and in no time at all, I had a team. We've had technicians show up from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Maryland, donating their entire day to repairing door dings for anyone who brings

Dozens of dents were fixed in exchange for donated toys.



a toy. Most techs return every year all for the same reason: It's all about the kids.

Last year marked our sixth annual event and our fifth consecutive year partnering with New Country BMW. What started small has since expanded into a full-energy Cars & Coffee–style day with volunteers, food trucks, families, and BMW enthusiasts coming together for one mission: Collecting toys to spread joy. Over the years, we estimate the community has contributed over $50,000 worth of toys—all delivered directly to the Children's Hospital. The warehouse staff is always blown away when our overflowing truck arrives.

One of the most inspiring parts of Dents 4 Kids is how many people come to get involved. Car enthusiasts, their families, and friends show up smiling and enjoy watching the team of PDR techs work their magic. The coffee truck brews nonstop, and the food truck keeps everyone fueled. It's busy, it's chaotic, and it's beautiful.

My own kids—along with friends' kids—act as "elves," sorting toys and helping keep the energy high. A massive thank-you goes to Brandon Small, GM of New Country BMW. Brandon is not just a manager; he's a dad who understands the importance of what we're doing. Each year, he and his team rearrange the service area, help collect the toys, and stay energized from start to finish. The smiles are genuine and contagious.

Every Christmas season, we're reminded that giving brings its own reward. At Dents 4 Kids, that reward is doubled—someone gets a dent repaired, and a child receives a toy that brightens one of the toughest times of their life. Some donors don't even have dents to fix—they just want to give and enjoy the Cars & Coffee vibe!

Whether someone comes for a repair, to donate a toy, or simply to enjoy the cars and camaraderie, the atmosphere is full of gratitude and holiday spirit. It's a day each year when what I do for a living becomes something bigger—something that directly impacts kids who need a spark of joy the most. Whether participants arrive in a BMW, a family SUV, or on foot, they'll leave knowing they made a difference. After all, Christmas is about giving and children are the spark of the season.



Making holiday magic during Dents 4 Kids toy-drive repair day.



PDR Techs hard at work

BMW Car Club of America
Connecticut Valley

Connecticut Valley Chapter

Hartford, Connecticut



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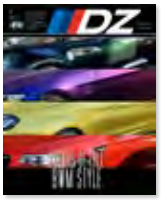
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CHAPTER EVENTS

For an up-to-date view of the CVC calendar, visit ctvalley.org/ct-valley-events/

Read the latest issue of *DZ* at ctvalley.org!



UNCONVENTIONAL **HEROES**

BY BEN GREISLER

We get bombarded with stories about heroes through the news, social media and any form of communication we pay attention to. Sometimes the term gets overused to catch people's attention to generate clicks and page views. To me, "heroes" are people who step up in quite ordinary ways with extraordinary results. And of course, these heroes are members of BMW CCA, a place they never expected to be crowned a hero. We are a car club, a place for like-minded people to enjoy cars and not trying to change the world—but we have members that have changed other people's worlds.



It would be easy to talk about the charity fundraising chapters do, as this has helped people tremendously. We should be proud of those efforts and applaud them, but those are overt efforts to help.

Our chapters are filled with "inadvertent" heroes, people who do good because it is second nature for them. What truly makes a hero is when we go beyond simply handing money over to charity and giving of ourselves, for example, such as bringing families with children who are fighting cancer to the racetrack to give them rides as part of an HPDE event, showing them something that very few people get to experience—to welcome them as honored guests and share our joy so they can experience something out of their normal routine, which is often hospital visits and an uncertain future. We are humbly aware that our level of "hero" can't match that of the parents, family, doctors, scientists and organizations that do the real work of making their lives better.

If you look at the demographics of BMW CCA, we are not generally a young group. Sure, there are some younger folks, as there were when I joined the BMW CCA over three decades ago, but youngsters are not the rule. When I see one of our established members bring a young person into the fold, they may not realize the impact they are having. We've been around these cars for ages. We have experienced people and places others haven't and when we make the simple gesture of bringing a young enthusiast into the fold and open options, choices and pathways for them, it is more



than just "Hey, look at this cool car!" I know this for a fact; people did this for me when I was a teen in college and my career and life path were directly impacted by others having the patience and grace to share something that would otherwise have been inaccessible to me at that age.

We also have people that enjoy their BMW addiction so much they drag people along for the ride, both figuratively and literally. "You have until 8 pm to decide to buy a plane ticket to come to Germany with me to drive the Nürburgring"—an actual situation I was put in by a friend who pushed, prodded and cajoled me to step out of my comfort zone and as a result, I fulfilled a car enthusiast's dream trip that I would have never done by myself. The act of a hero? It was to me!

Once answering a call from a member asking about doing the One Lap of America in his pride and joy, a custom supercharged E38. I explained even though I had plenty of rally experience, I had zero One Lap experience but hey, I knew a guy. Next thing you know three of us are hoofing that supercharged E38 across the USA with the car's owner having the very best time of his life in an experience he still holds dear to his heart. With just a simple phone call and a connection, we helped someone achieve an automotive life goal. Little did we know we would be the ones to be the hero to someone else.

As a club we are lucky to have the Street Survival program at our fingertips. It's a familiar formula: Parents drag an unhappy teen out to a parking lot way too early on a weekend morning. Said teen wishes they were anywhere other than where they are and barely acknowledge their volunteer instructor. We all know that the teen is likely to have a huge smile on their face by the afternoon and new skills that will stay with them the rest of their driving lives. That isn't the win—the win is when that student avoids a road incident based on what they learned in the Street Survival program. The entire club is the hero, from the founders of the program to the sponsors, volunteers, the location staff, parents and everyone else that made it happen. Real lives are being saved and protected and maybe that isn't so inadvertent.





BMW Car Club
of America
Delaware Valley Chapter

Delaware Valley Chapter

Flourtown, Pennsylvania

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CHAPTER EVENTS

August 1-2:
DelVal HPDE/Club Race at
Lightning Track,
NJ Motorsports Park

Get more information and events at delvalbmwcca.org.

THE **HEART** OF THE DRIVE

BY SHERRIE TSEN

Beyond horsepower and track times lies something deeper: friendship, purpose, and the quiet heroes who keep the BMW community spirit alive. Behind every car story lies a story about people, purpose, and connection.

It might surprise some that a Bimmer wife is writing this, but when I spotted an email in my husband's inbox with the words "heroes" and "culture," it felt like an invitation to tell a story that's been unfolding in front of me for years.

You can find stories about engines, lap times, or the perfect line through a curve on YouTube, in glossy magazines, or in endless social media posts. What drew me in as an observer wasn't the roar of the cars; it was the humans behind the wheel. They're the real heroes holding the culture and the community together with quiet conversations between friends leaning over open hoods and laughter echoing through the paddock at dawn.

When my husband Gerry (Chan) first took me to a track event, I expected fast cars, big egos, and fierce competition—like F1. Instead, what I found was something more powerful. It was friendship, laughter, and a passion that ran far deeper than fuel and torque.

I remember the smell of fuel in the morning air, the sound of tools clinking against metal, and the way seasoned drivers greeted newcomers like old friends. There was no hierarchy or pretension, just genuine connection. People from every walk of life—young, retired, engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, mechanics, architects, dreamers—all united by a shared passion and a willingness to help each other out.

It's rare to see that kind of community anymore. Outside the track, the world often feels divided by titles, politics, or simply the rush of everyday life. But here, titles or status didn't matter. Everyone was simply welcome. It was a rare kind of belonging that's hard to find in today's world.

As a practitioner of Positive Psychology, I couldn't help but see the deeper beauty in this. Meaning and social connection are at the heart of human well-being, and this community lives that truth. Over the years, I've watched members rally around one another through the loss of a spouse, the grief of saying goodbye to a longtime driving buddy, and the silent heartbreak of watching age or illness take away the speed they once knew by heart.

Something remarkable happens in those moments of loss. The same people who once shared track tips and torque specs now show up with meals, calls, and open arms. They listen. They drive long distances just to be present. They carry



one another through the grief—not with grand speeches, but with the steady hum of friendship. The racing might bring them together, but the relationships keep them coming back. I see what true community means in those quiet moments. It's not just about driving fast—it's about holding each other close when life slows down.

The heroes aren't breaking lap records or winning trophies. They teach a rookie how to handle a curve or stay late to help someone fix a stubborn problem. Heroes share stories and jokes that lift the mood when a race doesn't go as planned and appear when life veers off course. They're also the ones who remind each other that





no one drives alone, on or off the track.

These quiet heroes keep the culture alive. They are the reason people return year after year—not for the thrill of competition, but for the comfort of community. They remind us that meaning doesn't always come from grand gestures. Sometimes it's found in small, steady acts of generosity, kindness, and shared joy.

At its core, BMW culture isn't just about the ultimate driving machine. It's about the ultimate connection. It's a reminder that even in a world racing ahead, what truly drives us is not speed or status, but belonging. When I watch my husband with his track friends, I see more than camaraderie. I see a group of people who've found their tribe, who can be themselves without judgment, who show up for one another through every twist and turn, and who celebrate life one curve at a time.

To the Genesee Valley BMW community and to all the quiet heroes who make it what it is, thank you for showing the rest of us what the heart of the drive truly looks like.

BMW Car Club
of America
Genesee Valley Chapter

Genesee Valley Chapter

Fairport, New York

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Buffalo Spring Drive

May 15-17:
Springfest HPDE with Club Race at Watkins Glen

August 5-6:
Summer Lovin Lapping HPDE

September 4-6:
End of Summer HPDE



FROM A **DREAM** TO A **HERO**

BY JERRY CHAPUSETTE



I'm a 35-year-old professional photographer born and raised in New Jersey that believes the best time to be alive will forever be the 1990s. BMW created the best car ever—the E30—in the late '80s just so it could be driven in the '90s. Then again, the 8 Series was a hidden gem during that decade, but that's another story for another time.



Who would've have thought my hero would be a car. In the early '90s, I use to go to Long Island, New York to my favorite uncle's house. My uncle was one of the hardest working and selfless figures in my life. I did not think he was a flashy type of person, He did always wear a gold chain and maybe a gold bracelet. At the time, it was a staple in the Caribbean culture. Other than that, he was a simple man.

There was one thing I remembered he gifted himself, a red BMW E30. I use to go to his house, see his E30 in the driveway and it was always clean! I would immediately go in the car and sit inside and imagine I was on the road driving around the neighborhood with the windows down. I thought I was really cool. Yes, the car had a manual transmission!

A few years later, my older cousin got his driver's license and my uncle passed down the E30 to him. I was jealous for sure, even though I was in elementary school. But I knew if this car was being passed down to the son of a great uncle, maybe it would be passed down to me since I was a favorite nephew.

My hopes were still at an all-time high up until I found out the Brillantrot E30 was being sold. Man, was I upset. Funny thing is, that secret buyer ended up being one of my other uncles. This car was being treated like an orphan and all I wanted to do was be the one to adopt! This uncle lived in Essex County, New Jersey. What went from an hour and a half drive turned into 15 minutes. My dreams were just getting brighter and brighter since the car was getting closer to me.



That excitement didn't last long. My uncle sold that car fast to someone who made a great offer. I was heartbroken.

I grew up always measuring my success to that E30. I worked hard all my life thinking I haven't reached success.

In 2015, I saw a 1986 BMW 330e for sale and all I could remember was my time as a child fantasizing about owning one. I immediately reached out to the owner and bought it! Once I got the car towed to my house, you wouldn't believe the first thing I did.

I immediately got in the car, sat inside and imagined I was on the road driving around the neighborhood with the windows down. I thought I was really cool!

BMW CCA HERO: **MARK MALLORY**

BY JAMIE KAVALIEROS

Mark Mallory was an avid BMW CCA member for over 35 years. I met him when we both were autocrossing with the New Jersey Chapter 25 years ago. Our lap times were within thousandths of a second of each other and we instantly became friendly competitors. We both became part of the autocross committee and helped configure the courses.

We were like Yin and Yang, Mark wanted fast flowing courses and I wanted tight technical courses. We always valued each other's thoughts and input and designed fun challenging autocrosses. Mark also became active on the chapter's board, serving as Treasurer for many years.

Mark's passion was always for performance and driving. He started doing HPDE and quickly jumped in with both feet buying an E36 track-prepared car. Once again Mark and I had a friendly competition with each other on track. He quickly made his way up the ranks from beginner, intermediate and advanced. The next HPDE hurdle was to become a HPDE instructor, which of course he did. When I stepped from HPDE Registrar to Driver School Chairman there was only one person I could think of to handle the Registrar position, Mark. Beyond his official duties, Mark was always willing to lend a hand when needed from bringing the griddle to our track-side pot lucks to going to a chapter member's house to help fix a mechanical issue. A good day for Mark was when he could help someone else. He simply never said no.

Mark Mallory, just on his dedication and love of the BMW CCA alone warrants his Hero of the NJ Chapter nomination, however that is not why he is my hero. Mark was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer over five years ago. When others would give up and retreat, Mark took his competitive attitude and spirit to face his prognosis head on. Early on he asked me not to bring up his illness. He said when he was at a BMW event and with friends he was in his happy place and didn't want to ruin it.

This diagnosis happened right at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. Mark started his swan song. He was able



to work remotely and packed up his RV and drove to see his first granddaughter's birth. He then traveled the country with Jackie, his beautiful wife. Mark loved competition and defied the expectations of his illness. He was always setting goals for himself, always striving not to give in to the disease. He stayed on as HPDE Registrar and continued to drive his RV to the track along with Jackie and his track car. I remember at our last HPDE on Shenandoah, one of his favorite tracks, Mark came in with an ear-to-ear smile and said to me, "that was a great run!"

Mark's health was starting to deteriorate and he was proud he could still go out on the track and be as fast as he always was. He still came to autocross right up through this season, I can only guess to keep me from making the courses too technical. Mark was on an oxygenator at this point and you could tell he wasn't able to do anything too physical. Mark still persevered. At the 2025 NJ July Summit Point Main event, Mark loaned my son his track car. He drove down in his Shellby GT 350 to do his Registrar job and was continuing on to meet up in North Carolina to meet Jackie, his daughter and her husband along with now two granddaughters. This was a huge ask to borrow his car, but secretly I believe he wanted just one more chance to get out on track in his car.

He came to the DelVal NJMP August event with Jackie in his Shellby GT 350 for the day. When they asked for volunteers for parade laps on course for charity, Mark couldn't pass up being on the track one more time, even if it was just parade laps.

Mark unfortunately succumbed to his illness on November 21, 2025, just a few days before his 63rd birthday. He leaves a huge void in all our lives, but we are better for having known him as a friend. As we go on driving, we will see him sitting by us in the right seat with a huge smile on his face and pushing us forward.



BMW Car Club
of America
New Jersey Chapter

New Jersey Chapter

Westfield, New Jersey

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CHAPTER EVENTS

HPDE Driver Schools

April 11-12:
NJMP Thunderbolt

April 26:
Autocross - TD Bank Ballpark Bridgewater Township

Visit njbmwcca.org for more.

UNSUNG HEROES OF THE NEW YORK CHAPTER:

OUR AUTOCROSS TEAM

BY MIKE ALLEN



Every chapter has its heroes, the people who quietly make magic happen behind the scenes. For the New York Chapter, those heroes are the dedicated members who keep the Autocross program running like a finely tuned M car. They don't just organize events; they build a community, foster friendships, and create experiences that keep members coming back for more. Their efforts have transformed our chapter's Autocross program into a model of consistency and excellence, and it's time we give them the spotlight they deserve.

Autocross isn't just about cones and run times—it's about camaraderie. It's about that shared thrill when each run starts and the satisfaction of knowing you're part of something bigger. Thanks to this team, our chapter has earned a reputation for hosting events that are not only well-run but also welcoming and fun. Membership has grown, friendships have flourished, and the buzz around our cone dodging events speaks volumes about their hard work.

Let's meet the champions behind the curtain:

- **Gabby Cord Cruz**, Event Chair. The focused coordinator who keeps everything on track. Gabby's leadership ensures every event runs smoothly, from planning to execution. Her vision sets the tone for the entire program.
- **Tony Howell**, Course Layout. The artist of asphalt. Tony's creative layouts challenge drivers while keeping safety and excitement front and center. Every course feels fresh and exhilarating thanks to his skill.
- **Edwin Cord-Cruz, Barry Howell, Andre Noel, and Arvin Sahagun**, Course Setup and Breakdown. The muscle and precision team. These





folks turn empty lots into thrilling playgrounds and then restore them to perfection. Their hard work makes the magic possible.

- **Chris Butera, Mike Sweeney, and Jonathan Ruiz**, Timing. The keepers of truth. Accurate timing is the heartbeat of Autocross, and this trio ensures every run is recorded flawlessly. No drama, just precision.
- **Jim Siegel and Chris Puleo**, Equipment. The guardians of gear. From cones to communication and timing systems, they make sure everything is ready and reliable. Without them, the show doesn't go on.

These individuals don't just run events—they create experiences that strengthen our chapter's reputation and bring members closer together. They are the reason our Autocross program is thriving and chapter membership is growing, and they deserve every bit of recognition.

Next time you're grinning ear to ear after a perfect run, take a moment to thank these unsung heroes. They've earned it.



BMW Car Club of America
New York Chapter

CHAPTER EVENTS

Apr 25:
HPDE with Patroon & Connecticut Chapters at Lime Rock Park

Sept 1:
Brooklyn Social,
Sheepshead Bay Municipal Lot #1

Sep 27:
Annual Concours d'Elegance,
Morgan Park-Glen Cove.

New York Chapter

Williston Park, New York

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2026 Autocross events will take place at Nassau Coliseum in Lot 2 unless otherwise specified on the following dates: May 16, June 6, July 18, August 8, August 22, September 12 (Lot 6), October 4 (Lot 6)

BMW Car Club
of America
Nittany Bimmers Chapter

Nittany Bimmers Chapter

Cornwall, Pennsylvania

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CHAPTER EVENTS

May 15-16:
Carlisle Import & Performance Nationals

For current event information, please visit our website at nittanybimmers.org.

LEADING FOR **GROWTH**

BY LARRY ENGEL



Heroes take all shapes and forms, but in the context of the BMW CCA you can see heroes every time you attend an event or read a chapter email. No event on the calendar or chapter newsletter appears out of thin air. There's always a driving force behind them, and that's where you'll find some of our heroes.

For the past three years, Nittany Bimmers has worked to build the BMW CCA presence at the Carlisle Import and Performance Nationals. Barry Natwick has served as the driving force behind the revival of Carlisle, and he's a real hero for leading the effort. I've attended the event since 2023, and it's a great way to kick off car season. Held in mid-May, the weather is usually warm enough for shirtsleeves, although we've endured some rain every year. It hasn't diminished the fun and excitement of the event.

Thanks to Barry's leadership, BMW's presence has increased every year, and our location within the event has improved, too. During the first year we were assigned a corral spot in the outfield because expectations were low. Everyone was pleasantly surprised after the first year and we were awarded a bigger tent in year two. In 2024 we moved into the center of the action with a corral spot near the stage and much higher spectator traffic.

Every year there seem to be more and more interesting cars. For example, 2025 featured the E31 8 Series, and eight or nine of them attended. We were also treated to BMWs from every era, represented by everything from rusty beaters to shiny customs. The Carlisle Import and Performance Nationals is a bucket list item for anyone on the east coast who appreciates imported cars, and you'll see almost every marque represented.

Speaking of our hero, both Nittany President Andy Miller and I searched for pictures of Barry Natwick, but could only find one. We concluded that it was because Barry was always either running around making sure everything was good or quietly working in the background to make sure everyone else was having a good time.

While we're very happy that Barry volunteered to revive our Carlisle presence three years ago, we're saddened that he has recently moved from Nittany to his retirement beach house and National Capital Chapter. Nittany's loss is NCC's gain, for sure! Thanks for three great years at Carlisle, Barry!

If you're a Nittany Bimmers member and interested in becoming a hero, drop me or chapter president Andy Miller a line and let us know!













SHIFTING **ATTITUDES**

BY BILL BURKHARDT

"I'll give you $2,900 for it," the middle-aged stranger who had come up to us said, as my wife and I looked at a 1987 BMW 325i convertible with a stick shift on a side street in Brattleboro, Vermont. I thought to myself, buddy, this is not cool, can't you see we are looking at this car ourselves? It was November 2010.

My wife, Sandy, was giving herself a 50th birthday gift. I had already taken the car for a short drive to assess its condition. Cosmetically, the car was not great. The carpet was terrible, with brake fluid in the driver's footwell from a previous leak. The things I could fix included original, but sun-faded interior panels, missing trim pieces and non-original seats.

The main selling point was that this was a west coast car without a bit of rust. The car ran great and the mechanicals were solid. We made a deal with the seller, Sam, a nice young man in his 20s, and the eager stranger went packing. Perfect winter project, I thought to myself.

Cut to 10 years later and I said to my 16-year-old son, Bryce, "Mom wants to sell her car."

"So? What does that have to do with me?" he replied in a monotone, not bothering to look up from his iPhone while he perched on the couch with our dogs, Claude and Benny.

"I think you should drive it before she sells it," I said.

"Why would I want to drive that old car? I hated riding in the back seat with the top down!" he responded.

"I know," I said, "but it is different from the driver's seat. The E30 is an iconic BMW meant to be driven! I'm not sure when you'll get another chance to drive one. You don't see them that often anymore. Mom's car is basically stock, so you can really feel what it felt like back in 1987 when this car was new. You can appreciate how much better it was than other cars of that era."

"How long is this going to take?" he grumbled.

"It won't take that long, we can just go around the block, I know you are really busy."

The "block" was a 10-mile loop of country roads, with curves that are fun at any speed. My son knew it well, as we used it when I was teaching him how to drive an E90 sedan (a stick shift, of course). It was a picture-perfect June day for a top-down ride, with a blue sky and temperatures in the mid-70s. I advised my son that the clutch engagement is lower than in the E90 and that the 325i was a five-speed, not six.

"Um, yeah I can see that Dad," he said.

At first, Bryce drove cautiously, so I told him, "This is an old car, but it was meant to be driven. No need to baby it."

"Oh, good to know," he replied.

"Let it rip if you want, that's when this car shines," I said, as he began to drive more enthusiastically.

"Now remember this turn is a double apex," I said as we approached the end of the block loop.

"I know Dad, we've done this like a thousand times."

As we approached the turn to our road and driveway at the end of the block, Bryce turned to me and said, "Can we keep driving?"

I just smiled and said, "Of course we can, you can drive it as much as you want."

From watching his shift in attitude, I guess it's all true what they say about the driving dynamics of an E30. Out of all of the BMWs my son has driven (E12, E30, E46, E90, F30) the E30 remains his favorite. We did sell the car in 2020, after 10 years of enjoyment, but my wife sometimes wishes we didn't, But I'm sure the next owners, Mario and his girlfriend, are enjoying it!



CHICO'S **2002**

BY ANDY CORONA (NEW JERSEY CHAPTER)

David—we called him Chico—and I shared an on-campus apartment with two others at Clarkson College (now University) back in 1981-82. Chico came from an affluent family in Puerto Rico, and his parents bought him a very low-mileage 1976 Chamonix. They had the car shipped to New Jersey, and Chico somehow managed to get down there from Potsdam, New York, to pick it up.

I had only seen a few 2002s at that point in my life. When he returned with the car, I was overwhelmed! Everybody got treated to rides in the 02 regularly. When Spring Break of 1982 came along, Chico and I drove the car to Florida, where we both had family. We pretty much drove straight through from Potsdam to Miami. I remember the car had a clutch slave cylinder fail while Chico was in Miami—better there than on the way down! Then we drove the 02 all the way back to Potsdam, again pretty much straight through.

When I got out of college, it was a year or so before I could buy a car for myself. I had a VW Super Beetle given to me, which I later sold. Then I bought a 1982 320i which I drove for several years.

I drifted to other marques, and it wasn't until many years later that I got back into the roundel. When I did, it was with a vengeance. Over the last 15 years or so I have had as many as 15 BMWs in my garage at one time. Most were survivors I found, brought home, and brought back to life. Today I am down to only 10 cars, which seems to be how many I can manage fairly well. Up until last year I had three 2002s, from 1969, '74, and '76. I sold the ones from the '70s and kept the '69 because it was originally a white car. Thanks Chico!





BMW Car Club of America
Patroon Chapter

Patroon Chapter

Albany, New York

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Visit our website at patroonbmw.org for more!

CHAPTER EVENTS

Monthly Meeting, date and time posted monthly on Facebook and website.

April 25:
HPDE at Lime Rock Racetrack

August 29:
HPDE at Lime Rock Racetrack

(TBA)
Cruise to Basin Harbor on Lake Champlain

TOM MILLER: BUILDING A GOLDEN ERA OF BMW CRAFTSMANSHIP IN MAINE

BY NIGEL OSBORNE

Every BMW chapter has enthusiasts who bring energy, skill, and camaraderie. But every so often, someone comes along who elevates the entire community through their dedication, talent, and genuine love for the marque. In the BMW Pine Tree Chapter, Tom Miller stands out as that kind of member—a technician, entrepreneur, and lifelong BMW fanatic whose work is already shaping the next generation of enthusiasts in Maine.

As a lifelong BMW owner, I first met Tom about four years ago. We have often talked at the gym, and what has always struck me is his tenacity, his focus, and his determination to carve his own path. His knowledge of the brand, the engineering, and the specific needs of each project is exceptional. Tom brings a level of integrity and craftsmanship to his work that any BMW owner would appreciate.

While most of his high school classmates planning their weekends, Tom was drawn to engines, drivetrains, and the mechanics of what makes a car feel alive. He followed that passion from the classroom into vocational school, spending two years immersed in hands-on automotive training. From there, he continued on to a two-year associate's degree program, deepening his technical foundation while completing an apprenticeship at Autowerkes Maine, the respected European specialist shop.

That early experience introduced Tom to the precision and engineering philosophy behind European performance cars and he never looked back. After Autowerkes, he broadened his expertise further, working as an Audi technician before stepping into what would become the core of his career: nearly a decade at a BMW dealership, where he earned BMW Member Level Technical Training and mastered both mechanical and modern diagnostic systems.

Tom accumulated 12 years of professional experience working on world-class European vehicles, but the story that makes him a true chapter hero began outside normal work hours. Like many great technicians turned entrepreneurs, Tom's transition to running his own business started with moonlighting—spending evenings



and weekends working on cars for friends, fellow enthusiasts, and eventually a growing circle of loyal customers. These after-hours pro-jects gave him the freedom to take on different kinds of jobs dealership schedules don't always allow, including performance upgrades, light restorations, custom troubleshooting, and other deep mechanical work.

It was in this period that Tom developed not just technical ability, but the business instincts, communication style, and trust-based customer relationships that would form the backbone of his future shop. Along the way, he also owned and built several project cars, each teaching him something new. His current pride and joy, which is an E39 M5 and one of BMW's most iconic performance sedans, reflects both his taste and his technical depth.

In late 2024, everything came together when Tom opened Golden Era Motorsport in Saco, Maine. The shop is the perfect





expression of who he is: quality-driven rather than volume-driven, enthusiast-focused, and technically skilled across repairs, performance upgrades, services, and light restorations.

Golden Era Motorsport is not a big-box service center; rather, it's a place where craftsmanship comes first. Tom approaches every job as if the car belongs to him, guided by the belief that excellence comes from the details, whether it's torquing fasteners correctly, following BMW procedures, diagnosing root causes instead of symptoms, or respecting the emotional connection owners have with their vehicles.

The shop name—Golden Era—is more than clever branding. It reflects Tom's belief in the engineering purity of BMW's most iconic models, cars built during an era when balance, feedback, and mechanical integrity were paramount. That philosophy has already made his shop a natural gathering point for enthusiasts who care deeply about their machines.

Beyond the professionalism and technical mastery, what makes Tom a true chapter hero is his humility. At just 29 years old, he carries himself with the grounded, generous spirit of someone who recognizes that skill means little without service. He's always willing to answer questions, lend advice, help new owners understand their first BMW, or talk shop with long-time members about VANOS systems, S85 maintenance, classic M suspension setups, and more. Currently his project car is an E39 M5, the best four-door sedan of them all.

For a club that aims to inspire younger enthusiasts and strengthen the future of BMW passion in Maine, Tom is exactly the kind of member we are proud to spotlight. His dedication, his craft, his entrepreneurial courage, and his genuine enthusiasm for the community make him not just a talented technician, but a builder of culture.



Andrew Wilson's 1988 M5 winning The Caffeine & Octane Award at the 2025 Misselwood Concours.





BMW Car Club of America
Pine Tree Chapter

Pine Tree Chapter

Portland, Maine

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April 5:
North-East Regional Conference

May 3:
BMW Pine Tree Chapter Spring Summer event at Maine Classic Car Museum

BMW Car Club
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Trillium Chapter

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The BMW CCA Trillium Chapter is a non-profit, volunteer-run club that exists to actively promote the varied interests of BMW owners and enthusiasts from across southern Ontario. At our core is a passion to create better drivers, in the safest way possible.

CHAPTER EVENTS

April 24-26:
HPDE and Club Race School

June 12-14:
HPDE

June 27-28:
Club Race

July 11-12:
IMSA BMW Corral at CTMP

Sept.11-13:
HPDE

HEROES BEHIND TRILLIUM'S WHEEL

BY LAYLA D. THOMAS



Within the Trillium Chapter, heroes surround me every season. Some are easy to spot, as they're behind the wheel of finely tuned race cars, standing on podiums, or competing in professional environments. The heroes I admire most aren't defined by lap times or trophies; they're defined by the hours they give, the responsibility they carry, and the passion that keeps them coming back year after year as volunteers.

Trillium is built entirely on volunteer power. Every instructor, every committee member, every person standing on a skid pad in unpredictable weather, every organizer who arrives before sunrise, are all donating their time. No one here is paid to show up. They show up because this community matters to them in the same way it matters to me.

Our instructors are the backbone of everything we do. Many are competitive drivers with experience at the highest levels. You'll find them on CASC podiums, behind the wheel of purpose-built race cars, and commanding every form of BMW performance machine. But on driving school weekends, they trade trophies for radios and logbooks. They strap into the passenger seat to coach new drivers through their first laps at speed, helping to calm nerves, correct bad habits, and build confidence one corner at a time. Watching that transformation never gets old.

That same volunteer spirit carries through every layer of Trillium. Registration doesn't run itself, skid pads don't operate on autopilot, and students and instructors aren't magically paired. Every piece is driven by people who could be anywhere else, yet they choose to be here. I see that sacrifice up close every season.

What makes Trillium special isn't just the cars—it's the relationships and the quiet moments in the paddock when one member helps another fix a problem (always broken cars) before the next session. It's the instructor who stays late to walk a nervous student through a tough situation. It's the executive member attending a community event to invite complete strangers to come hang out at the track. These moments stop me in my tracks, time and again, in admiration.

Safety has always been the foundation of Trillium's mission. Every decision, rule, and policy exists to protect drivers while helping them grow. Our volunteers take that responsibility seriously. They manage risk, make difficult calls, and hold high standards. They do this not because anyone is watching, but because they care deeply about the people here. That level of care earns my highest respect.

On paper, Trillium's calendar of four major driving schools each year at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park and a few social events in between looks simple, but behind every one of those weekends are months of planning, coordination, and problem-solving. It's easy to enjoy the experience as a participant. It's far harder and far more heroic to be one of the people ensuring that experience exists at all.

There's humor too, the kind that only emerges in volunteer-driven communities. Personalities shine while long-running jokes form, and someone always saves the day at the last minute. These moments become part of Trillium's shared history, and I wouldn't trade them for anything.

Perhaps the most powerful part of Trillium's story is that everyone has a place. You don't need a race license, a brand-new car, or years of experience. You just need a willingness to participate, and when that participation grows into volunteering, you become part of the engine that keeps the chapter alive. Watching that evolution year after year is one of the most rewarding parts of being here.

For 2026, Trillium's guiding idea is simple: Be part of the story. It's more than a slogan. It's how this chapter works. Every volunteer, instructor, organizer, and member who steps forward becomes part of something larger than themselves.

In a world where recognition is often tied to wins and records, Trillium celebrates a different kind of heroes: the ones who arrive early, leave last, teach, organize, guide, clean up, solve problems, and come back to do it all again next month.

These are my heroes. These are the heroes behind Trillium's wheel.





BMW Car Club
of America
White Mountain Chapter

White Mountain Chapter
Londonderry, New Hampshire

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CHAPTER EVENTS

May 15-16:
High Performance Driving School
at Club Motorsport w WMC

July 11:
High Performance Driving School
at Palmer Motorsports Park

Get full details at
www.wmc-bmwcca.org/events

HERO OF THE **AUTOBAHN**

BY STANLEY CHAMALLAS



It's funny how life can change on a dime. I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2002. Luckily, they caught it early and, after major surgery, doctors were convinced they got it all. After 24 years in remission, I agree!

As I recovered, I decided that "someday" was now, so I started to pursue an E9 coupe. It is the most beautiful car BMW ever made and I wanted one from the first time I saw one. After a lot of searching I stumbled on what would later be The Great White. Mario Langsten at Vintage Sports and Restoration (VSR) in Bedford, New Hampshire, cautioned me to get a pre-purchase inspection as these cars are known to be "rust buckets." The unrestored car was in San Pedro, California, and the owner, Peter Sliskovich, was coincidentally the person who Mario recommended for PPI.

To make this purchase more of an adventure, I decided I would fly to Los Angeles and drive it home. What could go wrong with a 30-year-old car that hadn't been driven since 1995? Surprisingly, very little went wrong, but I did learn about how tires with acceptable appearing tread can age out. A blowout in Ohio slowed my progress, but a fellow member whose information was in Friends of BMW hosted me at his house, fed me and escorted me to a local tire shop the next morning. It was really amazing how well this car performed even with the original, albeit tired, engine. I cruised at 80 mph for most of the trip.

The car had been originally sold in Beaverton, Oregon, where I assume some executive had it. From there it went to Precision Motors run by Wolfgang Nauscel in southern California, where it sat for some time. Wolfgang raced BMW coupes, but not this one.

From the time of my purchase, it has been a constant restoration project that included a new red leather interior, bare metal repaint, upgraded engine components and many other small details to make the car a joy to drive. I have tried to keep the car as original or at least original looking as possible with many upgrades invisible to the casual observer.

In the 23 years I have owned this car, my experience has been a metamorphosis from the







IN THE 23 YEARS I HAVE OWNED THIS CAR, MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN A METAMORPHOSIS FROM THE RESTORATION PROJECT, TO THE JOY OF DRIVING, TO MEETING MANY OTHER E9 COUPE OWNERS, TO COMPETING IN CONCOURS EVENTS.

restoration project, to the joy of driving, to meeting many other E9 coupe owners, to competing in concours events. Lately, the best part of ownership other than the thumbs-up from other motorists is the camaraderie between the E9 family withing the BMW CCA and BMW CCCA. I have been blessed with "coupe friends" from my home in New Hampshire and as far away as California, Washington and Hawaii. This community was instrumental in my parts search and restoration efforts.

I have driven this car to BMW CCA events as close as Boston and as far as Hot Springs, North Carolina. The car has taken first place in the BMW CCA Boston Chapter Concours, BMW CCA O'Fest Concours, Best in Class at Misslewood and first place at the Vintage at Saratoga Concours.

I have a poster on my garage wall of the Heroes of the Autobahn. It's not a formal, fixed list of members, but rather a descriptive phrase often associated with the "Legends of the Autobahn" event, a prominent German marques concours and show a few years ago. The cars on the poster include the legendary BMW E9 "Batmobile." While my own coupe is not a Batmobile, it very much remains a hero in my eye.

BMW Car Club
of America
Pocono Chapter



Pocono Mountain Chapter

Wyoming, Pennsylvania

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Welcome to the Pocono Mountain Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America, named for the Pocono Mountain Range area south of Wyoming, Pennsylvania.

Our members enjoy the many natural preserves and mountain roads in the area. Travel into the Appalachians and drive along the Susquehanna River!

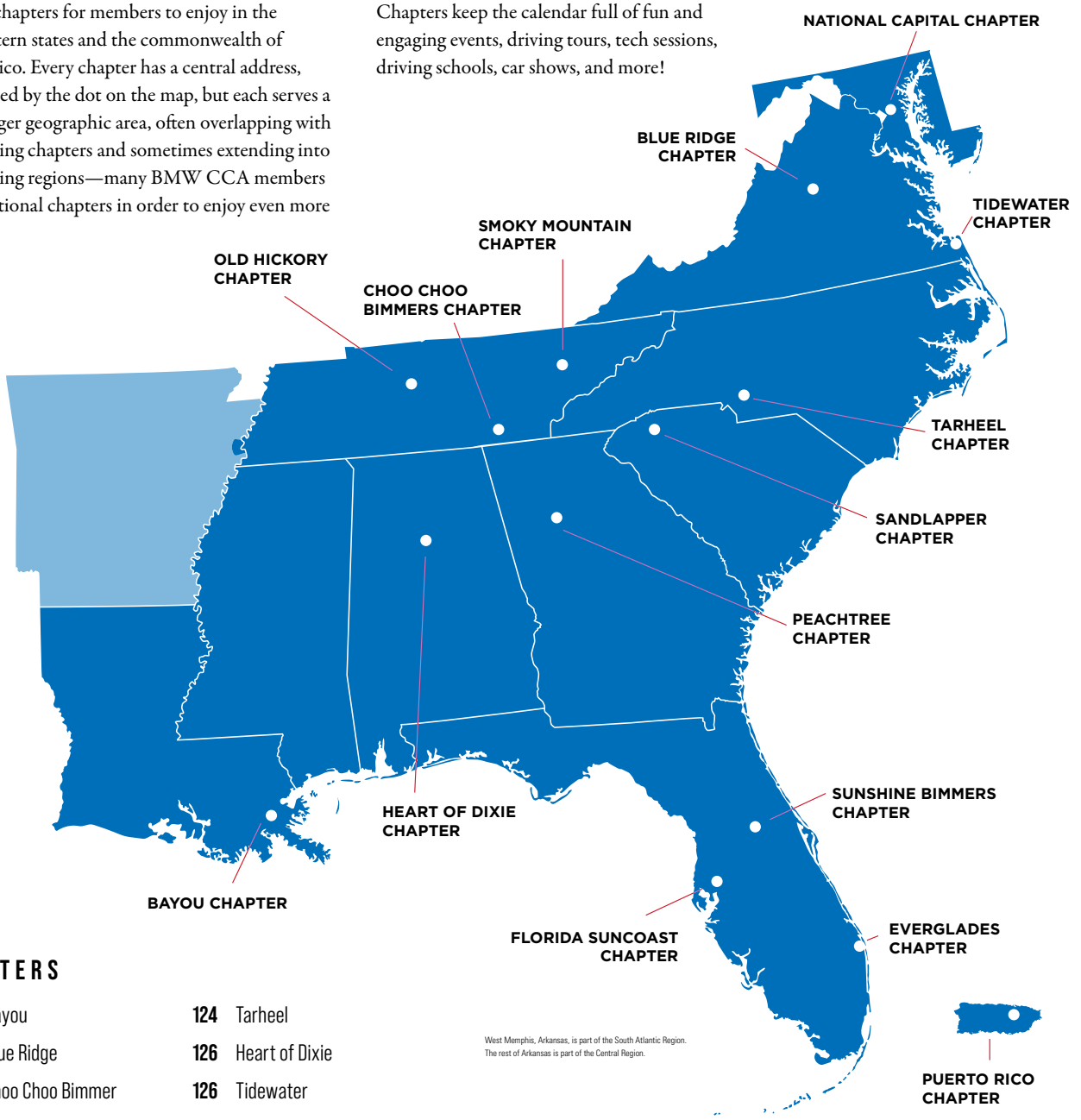
The Pocono Mountain Chapter hosts several annual activities and events for members, including our annual banquet and regular chapter meetings. Contact us today to learn more about the Pocono Mountain Chapter.



BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

The BMW CCA's South Atlantic Region includes 15 local chapters for members to enjoy in the southeastern states and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Every chapter has a central address, represented by the dot on the map, but each serves a much larger geographic area, often overlapping with neighboring chapters and sometimes extending into neighboring regions—many BMW CCA members join additional chapters in order to enjoy even more benefits and experiences. Our South Atlantic Chapters keep the calendar full of fun and engaging events, driving tours, tech sessions, driving schools, car shows, and more!



CHAPTERS

100 Bayou
102 Blue Ridge
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106 Everglades
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110 National Capital
112 Old Hickory
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116 Puerto Rico
118 Sandlapper
120 Smoky Mountain
122 Sunshine Bimmers
124 Tarheel
126 Heart of Dixie
126 Tidewater

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 5
BIMMER INVASION / West Palm Beach
bimmer-invasion.com/events/west-palm-beach-2026/

April 23-26
TOURINGFEST 2026 / Peachtree Chapter

Aug. 21-23
MICHELIN GT CHALLENGE at VIR Corral

May 15-16
THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MUSEUM
EXHIBIT OPENING
BMW CCA Foundation Museum
BMW M3: 40 Years of Evolution
ultimatedrivingmuseum.com



102 BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER
EVERYDAY HEROES



104
CHOO CHOO BIMMERS CHAPTER
SHARKFEST 2025



120
SMOKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER
OUR BMW HERO

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Welcome to 2026! Here in the South Atlantic, we have many events worth marking your calendars for. Our Rolex 24 At Daytona corral may be wrapped up, but be sure to come out for our VIR corral in August, our booth and member cars at Bimmer Invasion West Palm Beach on April 4th, and some of our region's incredible HPDE events. Visit www.bmwcca.org/2026-hpde for a complete schedule.



Afshawn Towfighi
South Atlantic Region
Vice President

Chances are you're enjoying the warmer weather that comes with Spring by the time this is printed. As I'm writing, however, a large snow storm is forecast for Northern Virginia. My special BMWs are tucked safely away in the garage, but since I have a hoarding problem (as many BMW CCA members do) three remain outside in the driveway. One of these in particular being an E46 that is the 'Hero' car for our family. My mother referred to her as Bessie – and it stuck. A plain non-sports package Alpine White/Sand Beige 325i with an automatic that has seen it all. In Florida, it was my mother's commuter car, family grocery hauler, moving truck, beach cruiser, and hurricane withstander. Our family couldn't part ways with Bessie, so I took over the keys and brought her to Northern Virginia where she's rightfully become our go-to car. You'd think I would give the Hero title to my 1M or M3cs, but Bessie has done it all. Through snow, ice, mountains, hockey practice, and school car lines, she's the one getting the job done without attention and keeping our busy schedule on time.

All of this to say there are those whom I consider to be the heroes of this club—our dedicated member volunteers and officers. These folks quietly dedicate hours of their time weekly (and sometimes daily) to plan events for members and BMW enthusiasts all over the country. They do the boring paperwork, have planning meetings, and show up in all conditions to put on driving and social events for others, often not even getting to experience them fully themselves. You all are my heroes of the BMW CCA. Thank you for what you do. I hope to see you and your bimmers at an event soon!



BAYOU CHAPTER **FUN**

BY DEVIN CAGNOLATTI



In July, we kicked off our Breakfast Run with a hearty breakfast at Frank's, then hit the road for an unforgettable ride through some of the most beautiful roads in Louisiana. The scenery was breathtaking and the open roads gave us the perfect chance to enjoy what we love most—our BMWs. We made some new friends who share the same passion for riding and adventure. It was a day filled with great food, stunning views, and the kind of camaraderie that makes these rides so special.

In August, our team hit the road for our annual Poker Run, and once again, it was a huge success! Thanks to everyone's participation and generosity, we raised $1,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, marking our second consecutive year supporting this incredible cause. The event was filled with fun, friendly competition, and a shared commitment to making a difference. Every card drawn brought us closer to helping children and families in need. A big thank you to all riders, volunteers, and donors who made this possible. Your support truly matters!

We're proud to keep this tradition alive and look forward to making next year even bigger and better. Together, we're proving how we ride for a purpose.

In September, our BMW team gathered for a fantastic BBQ hosted at Don's house. It was an afternoon filled with great food, laughter, and camaraderie. The event gave everyone a chance to relax, connect outside of work, and enjoy some well-deserved downtime.

A big highlight of the day was the door prizes, which added an extra layer of excitement for all attendees. We look forward to more opportunities like this to celebrate our team spirit and strengthen the bonds that make BMW such a great brand to champion.



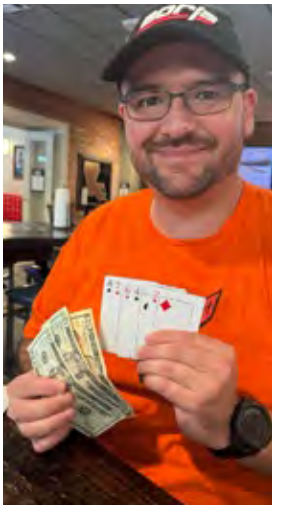












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Bayou Chapter

Bayou Chapter
Kenner, Louisiana

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Cars & Coffee, Street Survival and Bayou Breakfast Run. Dates are TBD.

bayoubmwcca.org

MY HERO, JOHN "UNCLE STEVE" WENTER

BY MARY JO SAPP

A hero for the Bayou Chapter of BMW CCA is John Wenter. He was a long-time member of the Bayou Chapter, following his Coast Guard transfer to the New Orleans area in the mid-1970s. John and his wife Betty settled down in Metairie, Louisiana. During his time off, he continued his hobby of working on cars, becoming more involved with German cars.

John and Betty were my uncle and aunt. This is most likely the main reason my parents let me transfer to college in New Orleans—since they lived in the area and close enough to the university. Before he joined the military, our family always called him Steve, so I had to get used to hearing his friends call him John. I attempted to say Uncle John, but it didn't sound right, and I'm sure he got tired of explaining why I called him Uncle Steve. When the time came, he determined the car that I would like, and would best suit my needs. He then went over all of the basic car maintenance with me: how to check the fluids, change the oil, check the tire pressure, change a tire, etc.

After he retired from the Coast Guard in 1984, he opened Wenter's Munich South, a car repair shop specializing in German cars. He had a 1930s BMW coupe that he was restoring and displayed at the grand opening of the shop. He was a highly respected shop owner in the area, partly because he kept searching for the problem(s) that had been reported by the customer and stood behind his work. They sold the shop and moved to Colorado in 1993, where he continued to work on cars.

Sadly, he passed away suddenly on September 2, 2025.

THE BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER'S **EVERYDAY HEROES**

BY JOHN HARTKA

The Blue Ridge Chapter is fortunate to have members and supporters who are always willing to step up to put on great events. They put in many hours planning and leading driving, technical, and social events to help us enjoy our BMWs and the company of our fellow enthusiasts. A look back at the last few events of 2025 illustrates the contributions of these everyday heroes.



Our "Hazy Shade of Winter-green" driving tour took place on November 1, 2025, a perfect fall day. We started from Glen Allen, Virginia, with five cars for a "no interstate" drive to Charlottesville, then added seven more cars and split into two groups for some spirited driving through North Garden and Nellysford.

The route took us past Devil's Backbone Basecamp, over the mountain, across 11 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and down past Crabtree Falls. We finished with a group of 20 at Hazy Mountain Vineyards & Brewery. It was a fun drive and a great group to share it with. We are grateful to Chuck and Linda Wood for organizing the drive and making the arrangements, and to Dave Danek for leading the second group out of Charlottesville.

On December 6, we held a Tech Day for members of Blue Ridge Chapter and ZSCCA. Despite cold and dreary weather, an enthusiastic crowd turned out for coffee and presentations from knowledgeable BMW technicians. Topics covered included maintenance, troubleshooting, and repairs for everything from classic to modern BMWs.

We are thankful to General Manager Alex Utz, Sales Manager Aaron Mason, and the entire Richmond BMW Midlothian team. This was their fourth enthusiast-focused event of 2025, and they have been incredibly generous supporters of our community.

Our final event of 2025 was a Christmas Party on December 14. Linwood and Joy Mingis graciously hosted the party in their home, providing an incredible spread of food and beverages. It was a fun afternoon of laughs and holiday cheer.

We are also grateful to Mitch and Marty Mitchell, who assisted in all aspects of the event. The Mitchells have organized and led several major events this year and always do an outstanding job.

These are just a few of many examples of our chapter members stepping up to contribute to the success of our chapter. To all who have helped, we appreciate what you do! Cheers to the everyday heroes!









BMW Car Club
of America
Blue Ridge Chapter

Blue Ridge Chapter

Charlottesville, Virginia

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Spring Driving Tour

June:
Le Mans Breakfast

Sept.:
Fall Festival Polo and Bimmers

Check our website blueridgebmwcca.org more information and upcoming events!

ANOTHER FANTASTIC **SHARKFEST**!

BY ROB MITCHELL

Last year was one of moderate growth for the chapter and despite being one of the smallest CCA chapters, it has a corps of regulars who meet faithfully every month for dinner at one of Chattanooga's many eating establishments to share friendships as well as the latest BMW news. Weekend country drives to lunch spots was the next most popular event and our roster of destinations included such local delights as The Cookie Jar, Uncle Gus's and Top of the Rock.

For the fourth time since Southeast Sharkfest, has held its annual gathering to celebrate the big BMW coupe, the organizers chose Chattanooga, Tennessee, to be the site of the three-day celebration honoring the E9, E24 and E31 BMWs. While it's not required to have one of these models to participate, the turnout for these three models and their owners was an excellent representation of this niche of BMW passion.

Chattanooga is ideally located in the southeast region of the country and is surrounded by mountains, valleys and waterways, all connected by beautiful scenic back roads. With the added benefit of a police escort out of town, the entire group was able to depart the headquarters downtown Marriott hotel and be on the backroads in less than 10 minutes! The Friday drive to lunch in Dunlap, Tenn., included hundreds of curves as well as elevation changes both up and down.

Saturday's highlight is the annual concours with classes for E9, E24 and E31, plus a People's Choice award. There was also a new award introduced this year for the best performance by a young enthusiast, an award designed to encourage these drivers and showcase passing the torch to the next generation of BMW enthusiasts.

Finally, the awards banquet on Saturday evening concluded a perfect weekend with promises all around to "see you next year!" The 2026 SESF will be in Richmond, Virginia. For more information, visit bmwsharkfest.org.











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Choo Choo Bimmers

Choo Choo Bimmers Chapter

Chattanooga, Tennessee



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CHAPTER EVENTS

Monthly dinners are second Tuesday of the month and announced via email to chapter members and posted on our Facebook Group.

Lunch drives and weekend drives are announced via email to chapter members and posted on our Facebook Group.

PALM BEACH LEGENDS: BRIAN REDMAN'S TARGA 66

BY RENNIE BRYANT

The heat rolled across Palm Beach International Raceway in thick waves, shimmering above the asphalt and drifting through the palm trees that lined the perimeter. PBIR had a special energy that day—the unmistakable buzz of Brian Redman's Targa 66, where racing history, modern performance, and true motorsport legends come together in one roaring, story-filled celebration.

I arrived expecting impressive machinery, rare BMW classics, and maybe a glimpse of a legend or two, but Targa 66 is never that simple. It's a living museum with exhibits that rev to life, drivers as storytellers, and a blurred line between past and present. At the center of the scene were four pillars of BMW's racing heritage: Brian Redman, David Hobbs, Bill Auberlen, and BMW Classic's Tom Plucinski.

As the host, Brian Redman moved through the paddock with a calm authority earned over decades of world-class competition. Fans gathered around him as he shared stories stretching from the grueling 1970s endurance racing to the evolution of BMW's motorsport identity. His voice carried the kind of understated wisdom that comes from thousands of laps and countless battles fought at the edge of traction.

"BMW has a soul," he said, gesturing toward the rows of cars gleaming in the Florida sun. "That's why we're all still here." Redman didn't need to drive a single lap to command the day. His presence alone shaped the event.



Yes, Brian Redman and Jochen Neerpasch at Sebring 2025. (In 1972 Neerspasch founded the BMW M team)

A few tents away, David Hobbs held his own court. Even at Targa 66, which is filled with rare cars and racing icons, Hobbs' personality stole the spotlight. His stories, delivered with his familiar British wit and charm, drew crowds in waves. He moved from group to group with the ease of a man who has been entertaining fans for half a century. Hobbs wasn't scheduled to drive during the demo sessions, but nobody seemed to mind. His voice, humor, and storytelling were attractions all their own.

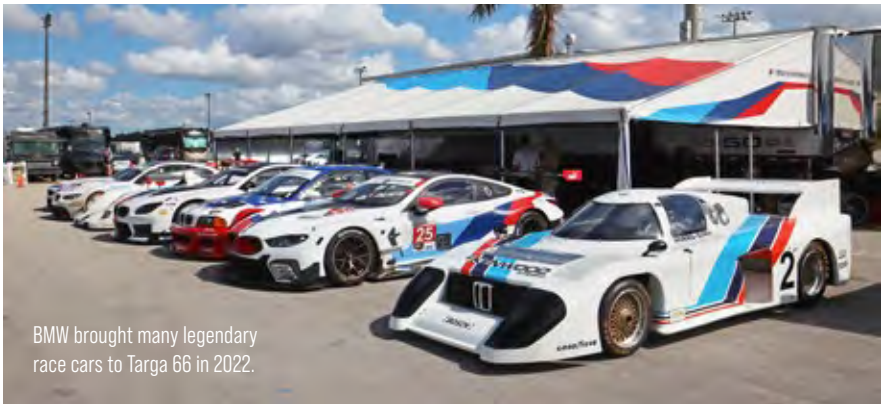
Then there was Bill Auberlen, the most victorious BMW driver in history. Where Redman represents the heritage and Hobbs the heart, Auberlen embodies the precision of modern BMW motorsport. He had the energy of a man who lives and breathes the brand—part athlete, part ambassador, part machine. Auberlen spent part of the day chatting with fans, sharing insights with Redman and Hobbs, and talking shop with BMW owners and fans. While he enjoyed the banter, everyone knew he had come to PBIR to show what modern BMW performance looked like at full speed.



Standing beside Auberlen was Tom Plucinski of BMW Classic. Tom's knowledge of BMW's heritage is as deep as the machinery he preserves. Tom's role at Targa 66 was to bring the history alive. He spoke passionately about the evolution of BMW engineering, the importance of preserving legacy race cars, and the responsibility of sharing authentic history with the next generation. Together, Plucinski and Auberlen represented the perfect balance between heritage and modern performance, history and momentum.

The loudspeakers crackled to life as the afternoon sun baked the pavement. Fans drifted toward the fences, cameras came up and engines warmed. It was time for the Targa 66 demo laps, and this part of the event belonged solely to Bill Auberlen and Tom Plucinski.

Auberlen took to the track first, his driving a flawless display of modern BMW performance. Every corner was sharp and deliberate, every acceleration crisp and exact. Watching him was like watching BMW engineering translated directly into motion—fast, controlled, almost effortless.



BMW brought many legendary race cars to Targa 66 in 2022.

Then came Tom Plucinski, bringing BMW Classic to life with equal command. His laps showcased not just speed, but a deep respect for the machinery's heritage. Where Auberlen's driving was razor-edged modern mastery, Plucinski's was a dance with history—smooth, balanced, and soulful.

Side by side, the two of them painted PBIR with contrasting eras of BMW craftsmanship. Fans cheered, cameras clicked, and the sound of six cylinders echoed against the palm trees.

As the sun dropped lower, casting golden light across the paddock, Redman, Hobbs, Auberlen, and Plucinski came together in the cooling evening air. They shared stories, laughed easily, and posed with fans who knew they were witnessing something rare: four pillars of BMW excellence in one place, each representing a different chapter of the brand's enduring story.

Standing there among them, I realized something simple and true: BMW doesn't just build machines, they build eras carried forward by the men who race, preserve, and celebrate them. At Targa 66, those eras stood alive, loud, and unforgettable.



Brian Redman and Bill Auberlen



David Hoobs with Thomas Pulsincsky

BMW Car Club of America Everglades Chapter

Everglades Chapter

Palm Beach Gardens, FL

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Second Sunday, Cars & Coffee at Xtreme Action Park, Fort Lauderdale

Third Wednesday, Social at Coconut Creek Duffey's, Coconut Creek

Last Sunday, Fuelfed Coffee & Classics at Thrive Art District, Fort Lauderdale

Please Check bmwccaeverglades.org, For upcoming events

THE TAIL OF THE **DRAGON**

BY LARRY COBB AND PV ARCHER

For years I have heard the legends and seen the videos of the Tail of the Dragon. Four years ago, my son Ryan and I—along with 50 from the Florida Suncoast Chapter—traveled to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Every October we take in the amazing fall colors while driving great curvy roads. Ryan and I have made this journey with the chapter every year, with our reservations secured for next year as well.







U.S. Highway 129 offers 318 heart-pounding curves in just 11 miles of North Carolina and Tennessee roadway. The road offers a double yellow line the entire run, and disaster waits for those that cross it. There are no driveways or access roads, but safety or courtesy pull-offs allow slower traffic to yield to faster traffic.

The cars we drive are perfect for this road. I have had the privilege of three visits to the BMW Performance Center driving school this year and after each visit my lines become cleaner and my drive is much more fun. Applying the lessons from the Performance Center to the mountain drive has multiplied the fun-factor. Ryan drove on one of our runs. The smiles between us were contagious.

We drive this section in small groups as a lead and follow. Our leaders drive at a safe pace and knowing where to brake by following our group leaders adds to a safe experience. If you have not had an opportunity to drive the Tail of the Dragon, place it on your bucket list. My only advice is have fun and drive at a safe pace for your abilities. As they say in the movies, "I'll be back!"

The Tail of the Dragon drive is admittedly more intense than most of our drives.



During a recap meeting, somebody suggested looking at ways to make the duties of our lead, relay and sweep drivers easier. During the next morning's drivers meeting, a sweep vehicle passenger enthusiastically volunteered to take over sweep radio duties.

Taking radio responsibilities off the shoulders of the driver only enhanced the abilities of the sweep vehicle driver. It turns out that there were early performance hiccups along the way, mostly due to lack of radio experience and the change in role from sightseer to active participant. After some quick corrections, we experienced quicker repeats of lead driver instructions to all cars, more direct involvement by the radio operators on the drive (no longer just sitting and watching), while adding another set of observant eyes watching the behavior and performance of the participating cars, and lastly, a better organized drive group.

Adding the club's ladies to the to the radio duties contributed to the overall enjoyment of the drive and enhanced the safety for all participants. Thanks to all the ladies that stepped up and accepted radio duties in the relay and sweep roles. Fantastic job!

2025 TOM KLEE MEMORIAL DRIVE
THE CHEROHALA SKYWAY

BY ANTHONY FORTE



The annual Florida Suncoast Chapter Mountain Drive is always a special event. Our fourth annual drive in 2025 was even more special because we memorialized Tom Klee, an incredibly special, highly active member we lost to cancer in 2024. Most people with a Z8 roadster would simply admire it, but Tom loved to drive it and did so every chance he could.

Prior to his passing, Tom and I had discussed organizing a drive across the mountainous Cherohala Skyway, a smooth, sweeping, scenic 43-mile route between Robbinsville, N.C., and Tellico Plains, Tennessee. Unfortunately, we never had the opportunity as Tom suddenly took ill during the planning phase.

As we planned the 2025 Mountain Drive, I was committed to include this drive in our itinerary. It proved so popular with our participants we needed to organize three departure times to maintain a safe driving environment for the 30 participating vehicles and 50-plus participants. It was a wonderful day filled with memories, stories, and experiences we all enjoyed with Tom. We all knew Tom was right there with us in spirit, with a big smile on his face, driving that Z8 with his little dog Edison right by his side.

Florida SunCoast Chapter

Tampa, Florida

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Spring Drive to the Mountains of Boone, N.C.

The Florida Suncoast Chapter hosts Cars & Coffee events and dinner meetings throughout the month.
We have Cars & Coffee on the first Saturday (Sarasota), second Saturday (Lakeland), second Sunday (Gainesville and Napes), and third Saturday (Ft. Myers).

We host dinners on the first Tuesday (St. Pete/Clearwater) and fourth Tuesday (Jacksonville).

Please visit our website for details and for Track Night, Autocross and other events.

NCC GIVES BACK:
DRIVING TOURS, SOCIALS, HURRICANE RELIEF AND BMW DEALER RECOGNITION

BY BRIAN HUNT

I have written about many of our driving tour events and thought this article would be pretty easy. Nothing could be further from the truth though, as so much has transpired lately.

Where were you, and what were you doing in October of 2024? We all saw the news about Hurricanes Helene and Milton that made landfall in the southeast United States and severely damaged or destroyed whole communities, infrastructure, and displaced families from Florida to North Carolina The devastation was especially severe in the mountainous region of western North Carolina, where entire communities washed away in the raging floodwaters.

I was at home, looking over our upcoming "Pie Run" Driving Tour and the menu for the post-tour lunch. That's when it hit me—there were thousands of people who lost literally everything, and had no home, no food, and no hope. I had an idea to conduct a fundraiser and leverage the NCC's large membership to raise some money for relief efforts. A quick phone call to the Salvation Army was all it took, and we were up and running in short order.

We held the Pie run in November 2024 and our Lights on the Bay Drive and Dine in December. The Drive and Dine is a slow drive through the incredible light displays in Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis, Maryland. Our group then motored over to the Glory Days Grill, in Edgewater, for the "dine" portion of the event. This restaurant is also the location of our monthly Annapolis Social, so we were able to use their private room. Our good friends and social sponsor, BMW of Annapolis, provided a bag of accessories for us to raffle off, but there was one very special surprise forthcoming, from a very special guest.

As the donations continued to grow for our NCC Hurricane Relief efforts, we saw a need to include some recognition through the presentation of a very large check representing the total amount



donated. The date was December 14, 2024, and the amount was $6,759. Let that sink in for a moment, and know that the Salvation Army did not charge an overhead or admin fee for this, so every dollar went directly to support and feed people in dire need. The Salvation Army's cost to provide a hot meal in a disaster area was $1.67, so the donations the NCC raised fed about 4,047 people!

Michelle Wolfe, my contact at the Salvation Army D.C. Headquarters office, was our guest of honor. The remarks she made stunned many of us, since we have never been in a massive disaster zone before. She described that in addition to feeding the victims and providing diapers and baby food, they also feed the first responders, as grocery stores and restaurants were wiped out, too. We were all visibly moved by the enormity of the situation, and our hearts warmed in the knowledge that the NCC made a big contribution to the recovery efforts. This memory will be with us for the rest of our lives.

The story would end there, except that this was mid-December 2024 and the website for donations remained active until the end of December. On December 31, I was driving down to Florida in my X3 when a call came in. Ms. Wolfe said she had some news for me and that I might want to pull over and stop. What she then told me made my day and continues to inspire me—the final donation total was $12,287!!! Unbelievable! Outstanding! If all of these funds went to meals, then the NCC provided about 7,357 meals to people impacted by this disaster. Our friends, our citizens, perhaps even some cousins were fed, given shelter, provided baby supplies, and more. THANK YOU, NCC members who donated, and also for the outreach to organizations and individuals outside the club that donated. Together, we made a big difference and our 2024 NCC season ended on a high note!







BMW Car Club
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National Capital Chapter

National Capital Chapter

Arlington, Virginia

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March 27-29:
HPDE @ Jefferson Circuit

May 1-3:
HPDE and Club Race @ Main Circuit

May 17:
Coaches/Volunteers – 2026 TRSS NCC BMW CCA

Sept. 11-13:
HPDE @ Shenandoah Circuit

The National Capital Chapter hosts Socials in Maryland (Gaithersburg, Woodstock, Annapolis, Columbia) and Fairfax, Virginia throughout the year. Please visit our website at nccbmwcca.org for date and location details.

HEROES IN OUR BMW COMMUNITY

BY JOHN HULBROCK

Two individuals have inspired me to become a better person, to help others selflessly and to be a role model for our younger members. They are Scott Hughes, gentleman racer, philanthropist and collector and preserver of BMW heritage models, and Fran Hughes, a true visionary regarding saving lives and initiating a program to teach safe driving skills to save young (and old) lives on the road- Street Survival. I had the privilege to interview Scott and Fran at the Foundation during the Alpina exhibit.



Scott and Fran Hughes

I met Scott Hughes at the Saratoga Vintage Festival. I was a newish member of the BMW classic car club (CCCA) and exhibiting my 1991 M5. As I wandered around the festival, I stumbled across a 1973 CSL Batmobile! This was like running into an old friend, as I purchased this very same car in October 2003 and embarked on a six- month refresh of it. Someone pointed out Scott to me as the current owner of the car; I introduced myself and proudly claimed to be the previous owner. Scott did not believe me until I pointed out a few details on the car that only owners would recognize. He was gracious and welcomed me into the CCCA's fold. I had no idea of his notoriety! We kept in contact and ran into each other again at the 2015 Oktoberfest in New Jersey when I gave him the restoration folder for the car. We have since become well acquainted and he has selflessly assisted me in my repair and restoration of my current cars.



Scott joined the BMW CCA NJ chapter in 1968 after his purchase of a 1600 for a friend. He had long been racing in the SCCA. He recognized that our car club needed their own series, and he and Fran founded Club Racing within the BMW CCA in 1980 and he is still out there racing!! He has raced at Sebring, Daytona, and Classic Le Mans to name only a few venues. Our club racing program has spawned several pro racers including Will Turner, James Clay and Don Salama to name a few.

BMW Car Club of America
Old Hickory Chapter

Old Hickory Chapter

Brentwood, Tennessee

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CHAPTER EVENTS

May 1-3:
Springtime in the Smokies

Sept.:
Annual Old Hickory Chapter Picnic

The Old Hickory Chapter hosts dinner meetings and driving events throughout the year. Please refer to our website for details on dates and locations.

Scott told me that racing is the only place where you must be totally focused to the exclusion of all other day to day distractions.

He has dedicated his involvement with our marque to preserve and restore our vintage history. He has a collection of cars that rival BMW Classic.

More importantly, he is a role model for all of us. Scott is modest, hard-working and always there with a smile and a helping hand. His philanthropy included founding the BMW CCA Foundation, our very own museum and historical collection of technical information and resources, annual museum exhibits and periodic meets. He is currently a Trustee of the Foundation and instrumental in guiding its stewardship of all things BMW.

Fran Hughes is the visionary behind our Street Survival program that has saved countless teenagers—and all of us older drivers as well. The first thing I did when my daughter received her driver's license was to enroll her. This should be mandatory for every licensed driver!

Fran is front and center at our events. She has described our CCA members as her family and her attitude is that family helps each other. She is an avid and skilled autocrosser—I never want to be competing against her time.

She has graciously welcomed me to her home and has introduced me to many fellow club members. On the latest drive she was out there on the corner waving drivers onto the correct street.

Scott and Fran represent the very best of what our club can be as well as what it should aspire to be. Their passion is about people, community, safety, history, and giving back without seeking recognition. Through racing, preservation, education, and simple acts of kindness, they have shaped generations of enthusiasts and drivers, often quietly and always with purpose. Their legacy is not just measured in trophies, restored cars, or programs founded, but in lives influenced and lives saved. I am grateful for their example, their friendship, and their unwavering commitment to doing things the right way. Our club is better because of heroes like Scott and Fran.





TRACK HEROES: HIGH SPEED MENTAL HEALTH

BY QUINN HARRISON

For most of us, a day at the track is a welcome escape, a place where life narrows into focus, the world quiets, and everything comes down to speed, competition, and adrenaline. For the men and women behind Track Heroes, that sensation isn't simply a thrill. It's a form of treatment. It's a way back.



Founded in 2020, Track Heroes began with a simple but profound realization, high-performance driving could be a lifeline for veterans and first responders living with the invisible wounds of service. Its founder is a combat veteran and discovered the mental health benefits of high-speed driving almost accidentally. After a track event in 2017, he felt something clarity, calm, and emotional quiet, then became determined to understand why.

That experience led him into more than 1,600 hours of neuroscience research, mapping the trauma-affected brain and studying how high-performance driving activated, stimulated, and strengthened the regions most impacted by chronic stress. What emerged was the Adaptive Control Program, a structured, science-backed approach to using motorsports as a therapeutic tool.

"We're not just giving these heroes a great day at the track," he told me. "We're delivering proven mental health support one lap at a time."

The power of the program comes from the science and a sense of belonging. High-performance driving places the brain into a unique cognitive state. With eyes up, vision long, and subconscious working ahead of conscious thought, the brain begins processing information at a depth similar to advanced mindfulness, but in a way that resonates with the active, mission-oriented personalities of veterans and first responders.

Research also showed that the areas strengthened during high-performance driving are the exact areas that often atrophy due to PTSD and chronic occupational stress. "Sometimes the most peaceful place in the world is the driver's seat of a race car at full throttle," the director said. For many of his participants, that is literally true.

Track Heroes delivers its experience through what the GEAR model, a four-stage progression which builds confidence, reinforces mental patterns, and eventually returns participants to a sense of mastery. It begins with "Get Ready," an immersive program at the BMW Performance Center where the heroes work directly with professional instructors and spend a full day behind the wheel of new M cars. They learn car control, vision discipline, and the mental lap techniques that lay the foundation for adaptive control.

From there, participants move into "Engage," a weekly schedule of iRacing events that keeps the cognitive pathways







active. The virtual training reinforces the same racing mindset they accessed on track, helping the brain maintain the patterns that reduce stress and sharpen focus. Next comes "Achieve," where the heroes take part in HPDE events alongside local CCA chapters. Here, the skills and mental strategies learned in the earlier phases are put into practice in the real world, surrounded by supportive instructors and a community that understands their journey.

Those who wish to go further can enter the "Race" phase, which provides access to competitive racing seats through Track Heroes' partner organizations. It's the final step in a process that blends science, structure, camaraderie, and speed. All of it is aimed at restoring the sense of purpose and capability that many veterans and first responders lose after service. The track environment mirrors the structure, teamwork, adrenaline, and shared mission that many V1Rs long for after they transition to civilian life. It reminds them of who they were and who they still are.

The emotional impact is just as undeniable. The director described moments in which participants said the program had literally saved their lives. One Veteran admitted he had already chosen the day and the method, but after being accepted into Track Heroes, he delayed the plan "just to attend the event." Afterward, he realized he had something else he wanted to do. Then something else. Eventually, he no longer wanted to die.

Every program has its data, but few have stories that explain why the organization is determined to expand across the country. Their clear goal is to bring High-Speed Mental Health to every region, connect the BMW community with the V1R community, and continue bridging science, service, and speed.

For CCA members and enthusiasts, supporting Track Heroes represents more than goodwill, it's the opportunity to change lives in a way only motorsport can. Because on the right day, with the right people, and the right car beneath you, the track isn't just a place to drive.

Please consider supporting the Track Heroes program through trackheroes.org and help them provide high speed support to more Veterans and First Responders!



BMW Car Club
of America
Peachtree Chapter



Peachtree Chapter

Roswell, Georgia

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CHAPTER EVENTS

June:
Roebling Road Raceway

Third Sunday of Every Month,
Cars and Coffee

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Puerto Rico Chapter

San Juan, Puerto Rico

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WELCOME TO **PUERTO RICO**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUTOGERMANA

Welcome to the BMW Car Club of America Puerto Rico Chapter. We strive to be a thoroughly engaged chapter, working to promote BMW enthusiasm and be actively engaged in building and improving our communities.

Check out our Facebook page for the latest about the chapter, its members, and events, such as our recent participation in the Super Heroes Poker Rally for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.











BMW *M3*: 40 Years of Evolution

BORN ON THE TRACK. BUILT FOR THE ROAD

The BMW M3 isn't just a sports car—it's an automotive legend. Developed by BMW's in-house motorsport division, the M3's roots are pure racing, starting with the iconic E30 M3 (1986–1991), a purebred racer built to satisfy the rules of homologation. For decades, the M3 has consistently set the benchmark for performance.

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Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 5:00pm | Saturday, 10:00am - 4:00pm
Closed Sundays | *Last admission one hour before closing each day*

BMW Car Club of America FOUNDATION
Saving Lives, Saving History

DISCOVER South Carolina

STREET SURVIVAL HEROES

BY NEIL BAER · PHOTOS BY NEAL MUNN

What do we do as a club that would qualify as heroic? Yes, thrashing a car on the track is awesome fun. You might come up with a hero move, keeping yourself out of the wall in a sideways skid, but this is probably not what we are going for. Many of us volunteer for the club and we all have our individual reasons, whether it's the cars, the people, or fun with cars and people. Many folks do little, and some do a lot, but is any of it heroic?

Then it hit me: Tire Rack Street Survival. Of all the things that we do, this is arguably the most noble. This is the one place where we consistently give back to a group of strangers (for the most part, unless a coach brings a kid or grandchild), sleepy teenagers and their parents who are paying the bill, two Saturdays a year at the Michelin Proving Grounds in Laurens, South Carolina. According to the NHTSA (2023), drivers 20 and under made up 5.1% of licensed drivers in the United States, yet they made up 8.5% of total drivers in all fatal crashes and 12.6% of drivers in all crashes. If this is



not enough to convince you, I know for a fact that the current head of the NTSB brought her own daughter to our spring school in 2025.

For those not familiar with the flow of the school, it is about an equal mix of classroom instruction and driving in the car the student arrived in, with the coach riding in the passenger seat offering coaching and encouragement. Some of the exercises are ABS stop, emergency lane change, braking while turning, slalom, curved road section, skid pad, and two wheels off-the-road recovery. Then we will have a graduation exercise and send the class on their way, hopefully safer and more savvy drivers.

Any discussion of the Sandlapper sessions of Street Survival would be remiss not to thank the coaches who rode shotgun this past year. Some special recognition is in order as well. Brett Baker and his family have been instrumental in running this program for as long as I have been helping with occasional coaching. Neal Munn has come online in recent years to help Brett out and take more of a lead with the program. Ted Theodore is our longtime classroom instructor; I believe he taught his last class this past year.

We know as a club that we have the go-ahead to increase our number of classes in 2026 from two to three at the Michelin facility. The dates and details are to come, but if you would like to coach or start a class if you don't currently have one, please reach out to one of the club officers, and we will get you going in the right direction to help everybody have a happy and healthy 2026.









BMW Car Club
of America
Sandlapper Chapter

Sandlapper Chapter

Greenville, South Carolina

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youtube.com/@SandlapperChapterBMWCCA



CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Street Survival

May:
Cars and Kaffee at
the Plant Car Show

May:
Bimmers and Baseball

July:
Cars and Kaffee
at the Plant

Visit sandlapperbmw.org for details and dates of events.

OUR **BMW** HERO

BY BOB COTTINGHAM

As a Mechanical Engineering undergrad at the University of Washington, one of my classmates asked if I could help replace the shocks on his BMW 1600. Up to that point in 1972, I was only vaguely aware of BMWs. He didn't have a manual, but he had sourced the replacement parts from BMWCCA members in the Boston area. When he opened the hood and I got my first look at everything, I was impressed by how well the car was engineered. Replacing the shocks turned out to be surprisingly easy, and that experience became my first very positive impression of BMW.

A few years later I moved to Houston for a new job and a bought a 320, my first BMW, and joined the Houston Chapter. I've owned almost nothing but BMWs since. Driving across vast, open Texas was a new experience, and chapter events held jointly with other Texas groups brought even more fun. I met my future wife, Martha, at an event. She is also a longtime BMW owner.

We moved to France for a few years. When we returned to Houston in the early 1990s, we decided it was time to move into the 5 Series. We bought matching 5 Series and began our long-standing trend toward Alpine White cars (cooler in the southern heat and better at hiding dust). Later, we replaced one of them with a new E34 528i. That car was unfortunately totaled in a rear-end collision, but we replaced it with a year-old 1998 E39 528i that had only 7,000 miles on it. In 2009, after moving to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, we added a new E60 528i. That car would later prove to be a true lifesaver.

We dropped our daughter off at the University of Alabama in September 2014 and soon encountered a massive downpour on the freeway just north of Birmingham. I hadn't realized how much water was on the road until we suddenly hydroplaned, spinning backward off the freeway. The car slid hundreds of feet into a large gully and slammed sideways into the concrete wall of a huge culvert.

The side airbags protected Martha and she remained conscious, but I was knocked out for a few minutes. When I came to, I heard what I thought was an angel asking if we were okay. It was the people on the integrated emergency response system that automatically connects and communicates with occupants and emergency personnel in the event of a collision. They had already contacted local emergency services.

As I became more aware, I realized outside there were also Good Samaritans who had reached us, and moments later the EMTs and fire department arrived. They could open the doors on my side,







IT BECAME CLEAR THAT BMW'S ENGINEERING SAVED OUR LIVES.

but were considering cutting the roof off to get us out safely. Martha insisted that would damage the car too much. From the inside the car looked fine except for the deployed airbags. The responders managed to get me out on a backboard. Martha, maintaining she was fine, got out on her own.

Apparently, accidents in that gully didn't usually end well and the EMTs said they were surprised we were alive. Other than aches and pains and a sling for my dislocated shoulder, we were okay and quickly discharged from the hospital. It became clear that BMW's engineering saved our lives. We remain eternally grateful.

We found a hotel for the night and got a rental car. The next morning we decided to go see our car at the tow yard. As we walked through the gate, we didn't see our car anywhere; then the manager pointed directly in front of us. There it was, unbelievably mangled, with one wheel torn off and another twisted beyond recognition. From inside, the car looked almost normal. From outside, it was a completely different story.

We will forever be thankful to the engineers and builders at BMW responsible for creating such a safe, high-quality vehicle, one that unquestionably saved our lives. Even though I now drive a '22 M240i xDrive and Martha an X2, our hero will always be the '09 528i.

BMW Car Club of America
Smoky Mountain Chapter



Smoky Mountain Chapter

Knoxville, Tennessee

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CHAPTER EVENTS

The Smoky Mountain Chapter holds board meetings, socials, and drives every month. Please see our website for details.

March 14:
Annual Meeting and Banquet

April 9-11:
The Vintage in Maggie Valley, N.C.

April 25:
Knoxville BMW Enthusiasts Volltorgt at Aspire Park, Clinton Tenn.

June 13:
Pisgah Inn Overnight on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Sept. 26:
Chapter M Day (TBD)

Find more information at smokymtnbmwcca.org

BMW Car Club
of America
Sunshine Bimmers

Sunshine Bimmers Chapter
Windermere, Florida

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March 14:
Micanopy Back Roads Driving Tour

April 8:
Caravan to the Vintage

June/July (TBD):
Summer Beach Picnic & Trash Clean-Up

August (TBD):
North Carolina Run

For more information and events, visit sunshinebimmers.org.

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE A **HERO**?

BY CLARA LOOSE



It's not always fame, fortune, or a fearless leap into danger that makes someone a hero. Heroes don't always stand on a stage; sometimes they stand in the shadows, quietly making things happen. In the Sunshine Bimmers chapter, our heroes aren't wearing capes; they're holding wrenches, sending texts, and turning dreams into reality. They're the heartbeat of the organization, the people who keep the wheels turning and the members engaged.

Over the past few months, I've realized that the hero of the Sunshine Bimmers chapter isn't a single person. It's a team of unsung champions working tirelessly behind the scenes to grow member engagement and another group ensuring our cars stay on the road. These heroes carry toolboxes, send reminders, and make magic happen when no one's watching.

They say the squeaky wheel gets the grease, and in our case, it gets the worm too! Not long ago, our events were modest—two or three members gathering here and there. Fast forward to today, and we're hosting 80-member strong events, with smaller meetups drawing a solid 10 enthusiasts each time. This incredible growth didn't happen by accident. It's thanks to a few dedicated members who turned their phones into powerful tools of connection. Through texts, calls, and dedicated outreach efforts, they've transformed casual interest into a thriving community. Their persistence has created a ripple effect, with new faces at monthly dinners, lively conversations, and friendships that go beyond the cars.

Speaking of cars, these dinners aren't just social gatherings, they're a chance to meet the people who keep our beloved BMWs humming. Mechanics, restorers, and enthusiasts mingle with drivers, sharing stories and expertise. It's a reminder that this chapter isn't just about machines; it's about relationships.

It's no secret that our chapter loves vintage BMWs, but older cars come with mechanical quirks, hard-to-find parts, and moments when you wonder if saving a car is even possible. That's where our silent heroes step in. These are the mechanics and independent shops who breathe life back into our classics. They don't just fix cars; they restore hope. They tell us the hard truths when repairs are tough, and they deliver the sweet sound of a perfectly tuned engine when the job is done.

Every time you hear that smooth purr of a vintage BMW, it's because someone refused to give up. These miracle workers perform restorations, routine maintenance, and even the occasional resurrection of a car we thought was beyond saving. Names like German Motorwerks, PSI, and WTF Motorsports aren't just businesses—they're lifelines for our community. Each shop has its own specialty, its own magic touch, and together they keep the heart of Sunshine Bimmers beating strong.

Join us at the next Sunshine Bimmers event and take a moment to thank these incredible people. Shake a mechanic's hand, share a story with a fellow member, and keep building the community that makes owning a BMW so special. Check our event calendar, bring your passion, and be part of the movement—because every hero deserves a cheer.









BMW Car Club
of America
Tarheel Chapter

Tarheel Chapter
Charlotte, North Carolina

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THE WONDERS OF **WILMINGTON**

BY RICHARD DAUGHERTY

The Dining Club with a Driving Problem once again embarked on an adventure in the Old North State on Saturday, November 15, 2025. It proved to be a perfect day to get out and explore highways and byways, while stirring the oil in a terrific collection of Bimmers from across the generations. By the time we were done, 11 BMWs carrying 22 of the Bavarian faithful were in the old port city of Wilmington, roughly two hours south of Raleigh. It's an old town with a rich history worth exploring. It has also become something of a foodie town, so no one needs to worry about going hungry—or thirsty!

After a bracing drive to the historic district, we quickly booked ourselves into a parking deck along the banks of the Cape Fear River and hit the bricks for a walk along the river to meet up at a relatively new German restaurant called Prost Biergarten. The staff was terrific, making quick work of orders for Wiener Schnitzel, Bratwurst, Spaetzle, und Bier. It was all fantastic, with clear memories of the Black Forest dancing in our heads and leaving our crew ready for a more detailed walk-about town.

A place like Wilmington puts our heroes on display in some fascinating and thoughtful ways. Just before we got to town, a fire broke out in one of the large, beautiful, old homes in the historic district. The local firefighters put up a valiant effort to contain the flames. Sadly, the building was lost, but the neighboring ones were saved. Heroes come in all shapes and sizes.

Perhaps one of the great opportunities to visit with American heroes in Wilmington is found at the Battleship North Carolina Memorial. The World War II battleship was the first of the U.S. Navy's fast battleships and was a stunning, new, design when her keel was laid down in 1937. A beautiful ship even now, it is not hard to see why her nickname was "Showboat." It was decommissioned in 1947 and placed in reserve.



By the late 1950s, she faced the threat of being scrapped, but a grassroots campaign in North Carolina saved her. Through donations from schoolchildren, veterans, and citizens, she was relocated to Wilmington in 1961 and opened as a museum ship the following year.

During the war, the USS North Carolina earned 15 battle stars, more than any other battleship in our fleet. The list of battles waged is both long and thought provoking. The stories of her crew, the places they went, and the things they accomplished are sobering, and provide a wonderful reflection on the remarkable things that collective action can lead to. The crew of this great ship were clearly heroes who are worthy of retaining in our collective memories. That ship is one of the great tourist attractions in the State, recording roughly 250,000 visitors per year, shows they are remembered.

Our exploration of Wilmington included a long walk through the historic district before the sun began to fade for the afternoon. Some of our number stayed on in a lovely bed and breakfast close to downtown. Others needed to spool up the Bimmers and head for home. Either way, it was a brilliant day that offered good food, terrific friends, great perspectives on American history, and a chance to plan for future adventures. There are many great roads to explore, and life is clearly better in a Bimmer. Let's roll!

CHAPTER EVENTS

The Tarheel Chapter hosts monthly events throughout the area. Please visit our website for details.

May 14-17:
Beach Bimmers 2026

Sept. 12:
Bimmer Performance Center Open House





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BMW M5 (G90, G99)



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WELCOME TO THE **HEART OF DIXIE**

BMW Car Club
of America
Heart of Dixie Chapter

Heart of Dixie Chapter

Birmingham, Alabama

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CHAPTER EVENTS

See events at
www.albmwcca.org.

The Heart of Dixie Chapter was formed to promote the enjoyment and fellowship of owning, driving, and maintaining BMWs. We have a diverse and active membership who participate in our monthly events. At our events, we always welcome new members and those from other chapters.

Our chapter is fortunate to be able to take advantage of Alabama's wealth of unique destinations and history. Over the years we have traveled to historic homes, covered bridges, wineries, museums, and movie locations. Alabama is also the home of Dinan Engineering. We always find fun rural routes for our events, avoiding Interstates with a passion.









WELCOME TO **TIDEWATER CHAPTER**

BMW Car Club
of America
Tidewater Chapter

Tidewater Chapter

Virginia Beach, Virginia

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Visit twbmwcca.org/events/ for more information and events.

Founded in 1971, the Tidewater Chapter is celebrating its 55th anniversary in 2026 as the seventh-oldest chapter of the BMW CCA! The Tidewater Chapter is an association of people with enthusiasm for the BMW marque, dedicated to enjoying BMWs in all their aspects and sharing their enthusiasm with others.

We serve 700 members in eastern Virginia, the Eastern Shore of Virginia and the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Our chapter is very active and typically holds 20 events per year, publishes a newsletter six times per year and can be found on the web and on Facebook. Our events include driving events, socials, dinners, tech sessions and charity events. If you have an interest in BMWs, we are the right place for you!







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E36 M3	5 seconds per lap quicker	
Z3 M Coupe	5 seconds per lap quicker	- Nurburgring 34 seconds per lap
E46 M3	5 seconds per lap quicker	
E9X M3	3 seconds per lap quicker	
F8X M2,3,4	2 seconds per lap quicker	
G8X M2,3,4	2 seconds per lap quicker	

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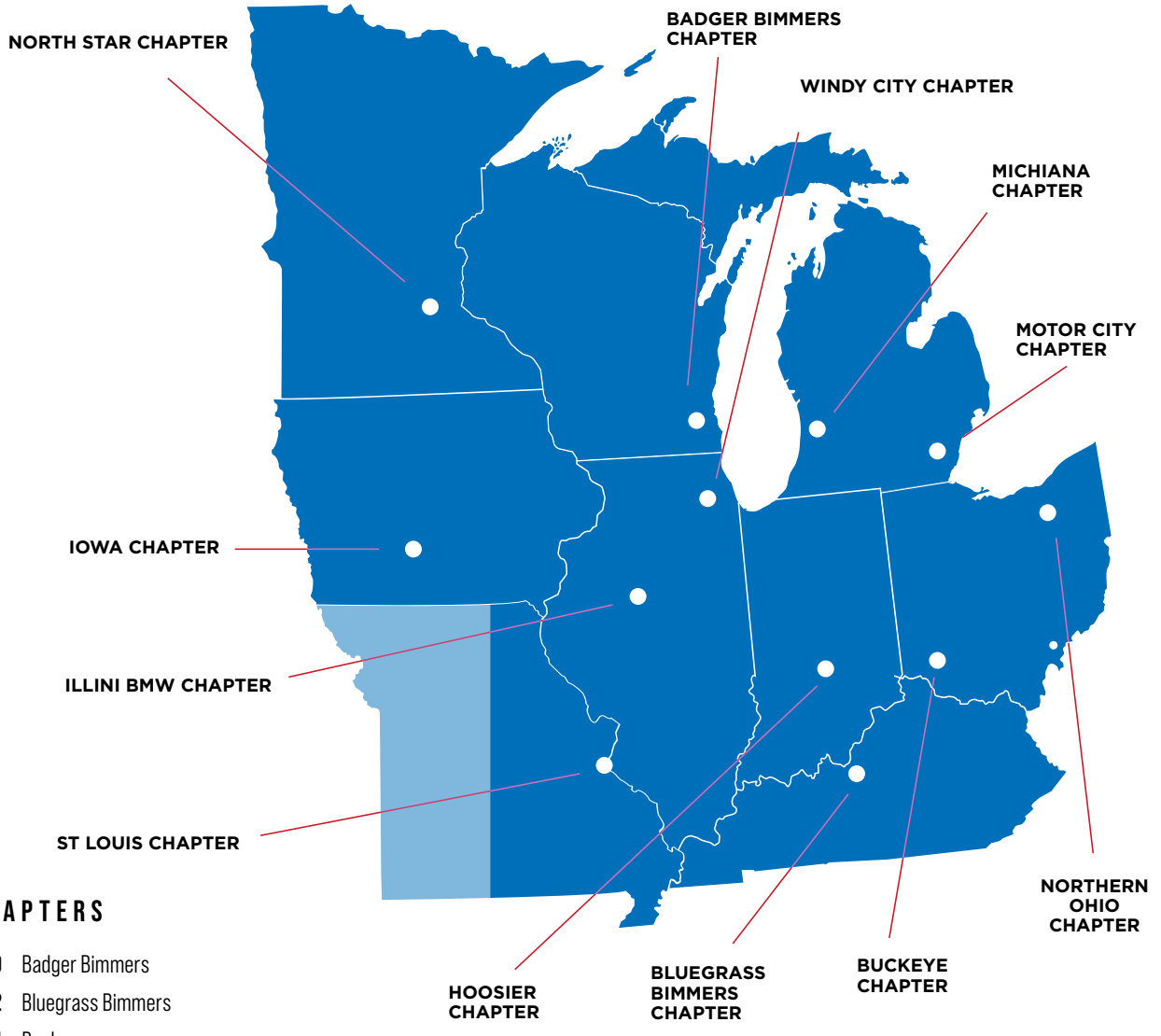
Uncompromising BMW Performance

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

The BMW CCA's North Central Region includes 12 local chapters for members to enjoy. Every chapter has a central address, represented by the dot on the map, but each serves a much larger geographic area, often overlapping with neighboring chapters and sometimes extending into neighboring regions—many BMW CCA members join additional chapters in order to enjoy even more benefits and experiences!

Our North Central Region Chapters keep the calendar full of fun and engaging events, driving tours, tech sessions, driving schools, car shows, and more!



CHAPTERS

130 Badger Bimmers
132 Bluegrass Bimmers
134 Buckeye
136 Hoosier
138 Illini
140 Iowa
142 Michiana
144 Motor City
146 North Star
148 Northern Ohio
150 St. Louis
152 Windy City





130
BADGER BIMMERS CHAPTER
BADGER BIG EVENTS



140
IOWA CHAPTER
OUR HEROES



142
MICHIANA CHAPTER
GILMORE CAR MUSEUM

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The North Central Region of the BMW CCA covers the upper Midwest with 12 chapters in nine states, covering several large metropolitan areas as well as smaller cities and vast amounts of rural countryside.

As we leave the indoor activities of winter, chapters are now busy planning car shows, autocrosses, driving schools, driving tours and summer picnics. Many chapters coordinate with each other for joint or regional events.

Be sure to join us this spring and summer for driving tours, driving school track events, club socials, car shows and social gatherings.

Besides local chapter events, there are large national events sponsored by the National Office such as Legends of the Autobahn in Monterey, California and the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix.



David Brighton, North Central Region Vice President

The upper Midwest has a wide range of geography and inviting back roads which makes this area ideal for the multitude of activities we incorporate into our yearly schedule of events, which include several other multi-chapter regional events.

Our region has a very dedicated and supportive network of BMW dealers scattered throughout the region who show strong support from the BMW CCA. If you have not become a part of our club yet, we invite you to check out all the events which we offer to our members and hope to see you soon.



BMW Car Club
of America
Badger Bimmers

Badger Bimmers Chapter

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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CHAPTER EVENTS

May:
Spring Picnic

June:
Blackhawk Farms Raceway
Driver's School

August 1-2:
IMSA Car Corral at Road America

August:
Blackhawk Farms Raceway
Driver's School

Sept.:
Fall Picnic

Early October:
OctoberFAST Driver's School at
Road America

BADGER BIMMERS **BIG EVENTS**

BY JEFF FAITA



Summer was great at Badger Bimmers! We hosted three Cars & Coffee events. Odne was co-hosted with another club to benefit Make-A-Wish Foundation, and the other two were held at the Milwaukee-area BMW dealerships. All were well attended and a heroic number of doughnuts were consumed!

August began with our annual IMSA car corral at Road America. Nearly 100 BMW CCA members from several states came out to watch some great racing and enjoy some great company and see how the BMW race teams make it happen.

The Badger Bimmer Chapter capped off the summer by hosting the annual BMW CCA OctoberFAST national event held in Elkhart Lake and at Road America. Hundreds of CCA members from across the country had four great days of socializing and track activities. We had a record 224 drivers participate in our high performance driving school. Many of our chapter members volunteered their efforts to make this a spectacular event.

We'd like to single out David Burman, our outgoing Driving Events Coordinator, for making a heroic effort to herd all the cats from the start of planning to the execution of the event in a truly professional manner.




VICTORY LANE
96
TURNER




23

PINPOINTING HEROES

BY EDDIE BROCK

What do you consider a hero? For each person, this answer can be either tangible, or very abstract. It can change and shift with age and experiences. Really there is no wrong answer. It's as individual as a finger print.

I have heroes in cars, people, and driving meccas. Sometimes it's just the admiration of them due to their unattainability, but sometimes it's the ability to have a full immersion in an experience of them.

For me, my vehicular heroes are probably pretty common for BMWphiles, the M1s, 3.0 CSLs, and Z4 GT3. Being lucky enough to become friends with some car collectors, I have had the opportunity to have some up-close, personal interactions with these cars. While currently financially unobtainable, just being in their presence either at car shows, friend's houses, or at BMW's own Ultimate Driving Museum in Greer, South Carolina, will have to suffice. Also being lucky enough to own the domesticated version of the Z4 GT3, the E89 Z4 35is, I get a little taste of this love. Whether it's vintage, new, track weapon, or comfort oriented, everyone's idea of a dream car is different.

People as heroes can be a little more difficult for some to pinpoint. As someone who always attempts to do my own car maintenance, modifications and repairs, I'd be remiss not to name all the amazing mechanics I know as my heroes. I even wrote a whole article about it in the Spring 2023 BimmerLife about some I know. Whether it's one of the many Indy shops here in Louisville (Germantech, Zakspeed, Mike Johns, and Pinnacle), the talented mechanics at the local dealership, or some of my friends who I consider pure genius when it comes to wrenching on their BMWs, I'm always in admiration of those who can achieve such high proficiency on these cars we love.



Driving meccas are dream locations for those looking to push their cars. Hands-on driving experiences are what having the "ultimate driving machine" is all about. Living in Louisville Kentucky, I'm lucky enough to be only 4 to 5 hours away from some of the nation's greatest driving roads. Out of Lynch, Kentucky, Highway 160 (The Dragonslayer), is a scenic and quite technical route that isn't saturated with drivers. For 26 miles you get quite an addictive thrill.



Just this past month, I took a trip with a few friends down to the renowned Tail of the Dragon and Cherohala Skyway in the Appalachian Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina. While an absolutely amazing tactical driving experience, the notoriety of 318 curves in 11 miles draws a HUGE number of drivers wanting to tempt fate. Going in mid-November apparently was the perfect time since the erratic weather at this time of year fends most off. We happen to have an amazingly warm surge of autumn weather for a few days to tackle it. Running back and forth many times as well as part of the Moonshiner 28, Fontana Dam and other routes we found on the Backroads of Appalachia app.

I will say the Z4 did amazing. Running with my two buddies (E36 M3 and modded turbo Porsche 718 Cayman GTS), it did excellent for being on all-season tires. I was apparently so tense, my biceps ached for three days after. My driving gloves left their two-colored imprints on the Alcantara steering wheel from my death grip. I guess I need to work on my core muscles before I tackle this road again. This trip really did satiate my need for an



unbelievable drive. Having to get back home to a run of 20° days and more snow, I needed to get this out of my system. The Tail of the Dragon is one of the true meccas of driving. It attracts drivers from all over the world. While there, we met a guy from the Dominican Republic who came, rented a sports car in Atlanta, and trekked through the mountains checking his bucket list off as well.

I guess the ultimate hero would be a driver of a 3.0 CSL who wrenches on their own cars and has abs of steel. I guess it's time to start doing crunches!





BMW Car Club
of America
Bluegrass Bimmers

Bluegrass Bimmers Chapter

Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER EVENTS

In addition to our Spring Drive, Keeneland Concours and Fall Drive, we will host Socials in both Lexington and Louisville throughout the year. Check the Events tab on our Facebook page.

BACK TO THE TRACK: **HEROES** WHO HELPED ME DISCOVER MY **PASSION FOR BMWS**

BY SCOTT SCHARADIN



From an early age, I was drawn to anything cool with a motor. My priorities eventually shifted from motorized fun to family and career, and for over a dozen years cars were relegated to the background. A new job took us to Dublin, Ohio, and a couple years later my son came home announcing, "Dad, the race car is for sale!" Twelve-year-olds are hard to ignore when prodding becomes a daily reminder. Since the car was literally around the corner, I gave in to walking over and just taking a look. Little did I know I was headed into a hot spot of the BMW CCA.

Our neighbor selling the car turned out to be Scott Hughes. His car was a white 1996 318ti, but it looked different than when I first saw it. Scott explained the recent change was a conversion from a track setup back to stock. This was the first BMW I drove, and I was immediately impressed by the responsive handling. I offered to buy the car and was unsure if I was disappointed or relieved to learn it was already sold.

Our conversation broadened to BMW CCA, track days, and the local Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course. Sensing my interest, Scott said he knew of another 318ti just like his that had not been returned to stock. The next day I was introduced to TC Kline.

TC Kline Racing had modified a series of 318s to use for track day cars in '96 and '97. The car he showed me was a '95 model, white with red interior, 12,000 miles on the odometer, and the last one left. The car was equipped with a roll bar and competition belts. This 318ti was obviously lowered, with suspension mods and added negative camber. I drove the car but only agreed to buy if there was a local mechanic who could service it. Next day I met Tom Hatem and the deal was done. Over the years Tom, TC, Scott, and I became good friends.

Literally days after registering the 318ti, I joined BMW CCA as a member of Buckeye Chapter and enrolled in the next HPDE at Mid-Ohio. I was experienced driving sports cars, but had not driven any that responded like this one. This car had all the fun characteristics of Scott's stock 318, but offered total control and confidence at the limit.

I was hooked. I registered for more HPDEs, only to be recruited as an in-car instructor. So much for keeping cars in the background! There was no turning back. I acquired a '95 M3 and engaged Tom to prepare the car for track use. I discovered Tom, with all his racing experience, had never driven on a track. Next HPDE we shared my M3, which started Tom's track driving. The M3 added speed and power to the 318ti, with the same great BMW feel. The E36 M3 served multiple years, until a career change forced its sale.

Tom's business specialized in servicing BMWs and preparing race cars. When customers retired their cars, Tom often bought them back. For several seasons, knowing I was without a car for driving schools, he generously loaned me one of



his vehicles for the weekend. My favorite? His E30 M3.

In 2002, BMW released the Mini Cooper. I couldn't resist and besides a wheel and tire upgrade, kept the "S" stock. Following the Mini, I experimented with different marques but ultimately missed BMW. E46 M3s were scarce but I fell into an '08 E92 M3 with 7500 miles.

The E92 with its V8 was exhilarating, but I knew TC Kline Racing could make it even better. A double-adjustable coil-over suspension transformed the car, enhancing its control at the limit and solidifying it as one of the most memorable cars I was ever privileged to drive.

In over 20 years, I instructed for six chapters and facilitated classroom sessions for three. My love of track driving never diminished, but the true highlight of my journey has been the people—staff, instructors, and especially the students. Watching drivers, from novices to advanced participants, grow into safer, more confident drivers has been immensely rewarding. BMW CCA is more than a club; it's a community. Among the hundreds of people I've met, I've been fortunate to form lasting friendships. Those relationships are priceless, and I wouldn't trade them for anything.







BMW Car Club
of America
Buckeye Chapter

Buckeye Chapter

Dayton, Ohio

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Area socials are in Cincinnati (2nd Wednesday), Columbus (4th Thursday), Dayton (4th Tuesday) and Toledo (3rd Thursday).

Sept. 18-20:
IMSA at Indy Car Corral

Sept.:
Ohio/West Virginia Driving Tour

October:
Hocking Hills Driving Tour

Nov.-Dec.:
Go Karting Tour

For more information and events, visit buckeyebmwcca.org.

THANKS TO RICHARD, I'M A **CAR JUNKIE!**

BY RENEE PALIN

I came from a family where Mom and Dad had one car each and thought of them as appliances, so it might not make sense for me to become so fascinated with automobiles. My interest in cars began as a teenager and had a firm hold on me by the time I got my driver's license at 16. My first car was a hand-me-down 1967 Pontiac Le Mans with a manual four-speed transmission. The stories that car could tell!

While in Mechanical Engineering school at Michigan State, I began working in a co-op program in Chicago. One day, I saw Richard pull into the employee lot in a Camaro. Before that, I had seen him pulling in with other cars or on a motorcycle. Of course, I had to ask if they were all his vehicles. They were! I was fascinated when he described his five cars and two motorcycles—it never occurred to me that one person could own multiple vehicles. I wondered if I would ever have the means to own more than one car. Whenever I'm asked about having so many cars, I recount the story of my hero, Richard.

I bought my first new car after graduating. As my working career developed, I realized I could afford a second vehicle and purchased a Jeep CJ-5. Living in an apartment, both cars were parked outside. After returning from work one day in my CJ, I saw someone had written "Wash Me" in the pollen on the hood of my sports car. I immediately set out to look for a house.

Finding a house I could afford with a driveway was no easy task. There was no way I could sleep at night if my cars were parked along the street. Ultimately, I found a house for sale with a detached garage. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. The house was 942 square feet and the garage was about 700. That two-car garage became a four-car garage thanks to some reorganizing, a short CJ, and a narrow Triumph Spitfire.

I started doing track events in 1994 with my Mitsubishi 3000 GT. It was a great car, although didn't have the attributes to be a good track car. After three track events, I sold the 3000 and started looking for a rear-wheel-drive sports car that was better suited for the track. One of many cars I test drove was a Porsche 944. I knew instantly that a 944 would be my next car purchase. A few months of searching landed a 1989 944 S2 in my garage. I joined the BMW CCA in 1995 solely to participate in BMW track events, although it would be 10 more years before I bought my first BMW.

By 1998, I had driven Road Atlanta several times as it was one of my favorite tracks. I was excited to watch professionals race there when a 10-hour race was announced for 1998, Petite Le Mans. 1998 was also the year the Z3 M Coupe was introduced and BMW had a display in the infield that included a silver '99 M Coupe. I had first seen the M Coupe in various car magazines, although this was the first one I had seen in person. I swore that someday I would own an M Coupe.

In 2005, when owners and car lots were struggling to sell them, I bought my 1999 S52, which brought my vehicle count to seven. At the time, there were five M Coupes for sale within 50 miles of my home. Now, I wish I had bought all five!

Comically, about the same timeframe, my husband was in our over-sized garage working on his car, when a neighbor stopped by. They were astounded by all of the cars in the garage. They asked him how he convinced his wife to let him have so many cars. He had to tell them, "The majority of them are hers."

I have since relocated to Indianapolis, and currently own 11 vehicles representing a variety of makes and models, including two BMWs of course. I facetiously say that my most valuable car is my 1995 Subaru wagon that goes to Lowes, hauls loads of dirt, and comes out in the snow when all my other vehicles stay in a heated garage.

I occasionally think about Richard and the notion of locating him, so I could show him the influence he had on this unsuspecting car enthusiast.









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Hoosier Chapter

Hoosier Chapter

Indianapolis, Indiana

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Spring Scenic Drive

June:
Tire Squeal Charity Drive

July:
Deutschmarques

Sept:
Artomobilia
Kash BBQ Pool party

IMSA Buckeye/Hoosier BMW
Car Corral

Visit the Hoosier Chapter Facebook page for the latest information about chapter events.

TRSS VOLUNTEERS ARE OUR HEROES

BY BRUCE HUBER

Tire Rack Steet Survival, the driving class for teens, has been the premier annual event of the Illini Chapter for 15 years. Early on, we realized that when the volunteers were all in town and the cones were set on a Saturday, why not run another class on Sunday? We pioneered the back-to-back weekend now practiced elsewhere too, and thanks to having two dozen coaches volunteering, we typically graduate over 70 better drivers every weekend.



It takes over 40 volunteers total to run our TRSS, and they are our heroes. Without them, there is no school! In late winter, our TRSS Chairman tabs a summer weekend unlikely to conflict with the car club and racing calendars of our coaches. Then Coach Marty Urbanc, a manager at Caterpillar Inc., gets Cat's blessing for free use of a huge parking lot and A/V-equipped auditorium. He orders food for 150 people per day from Cat's caterer. This Cat campus has its own fire department, so Marty schedules firemen to water down our skid pad. On class weekend, he parks a Cat 18-wheeler for our truck lessons, and then coaches in-car. Marty's pictured instructing a student in a VW Bug. He's a hero!

With dates set and Cat's OK, Lead Coach Terry Quinn gets busy recruiting coaches. By emailing, texting and phoning over several months, he assembles the instructor team that's the heartbeat of our school. Like herding cats, Terry must backfill during the lead-up as some early commitments drop out. Terry's pictured looking back at the camera as he conducts his drivers' meeting, then he instructs four students every weekend. He's a hero.

Our TRSS Chairman writes and speaks to groups and the media about TRSS to stir up publicity, and then assigns the registrants to coaches as they enroll. That data is fed to Past Board Member Steve Hyland, now retired to Arizona(!) but essential every year. He formats badges loaded with not only student's name but coach assignment, his day's schedule and run-group. Steve wires those files to James and Sherrod Moses, who print and stuff the badges into holders on lanyards. It's an iterative process, with changes up to 12 hours before class! But Steve, James and Sherrod are on it, and they are heroes. On class day, you'll find VP James pulling cones from under a car and Coach Sherrod looking through a windshield, instructing a young driver.

Two special talents enrich our classes. Former TRSS Chair Rick Largen led our program for a decade, and he's a retired State Trooper. He conducts an informal Q&A session called "Ask a Cop Anything." The students find his 25-plus years in a patrol car to be an invaluable source of wisdom. When each student climbs into the semi-truck, they meet Coach Nick Brandt. A professional trucker with over 20 years on the road, Nick has seen it all—and he's eager to share what he knows. Rick and Nick are heroes.

The workhorse of our weekends is past



president and current TRSS Field Marshall Rick Roudebush. On Friday, Rick hitches his trailer—loaded with tools, brooms, shovels, an air compressor and more—to his pickup. He picks up bags of cracked corn, beverages, coolers, ice, banners, tents, tables, chairs and so on. When it's all over, he supervises clean-up. Rick's a hero!

These are just a few of the fine people who volunteer to make our TRSS a success, year after year. They're proud to wear the yellow shirt, and dedicated to making the streets safer for these teens and for all of us. They're all heroes.









BMW Car Club of America
Illini Chapter

Illini Chapter

Peoria, Illinois

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March 7:
Quad Cities Regional Auto Show

April:
Springfest

May:
Cars & Coffee

June:
///M Madness

July 19:
Wine & Shine

August:
Tire Rack Street Survival

Sept.:
Indy IMSA

Find more events on our website at illinibmw.com!

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Iowa Chapter

Iowa Chapter

Urbandale, Iowa

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March:
Joint Dyno-Days Event with DMVR SCCA - Off the Line Performance, Des Moines

March 14:
Annual Dinner/Social – Pin Seekers, Tiffin

April 18-19:
Spring Drive – Field of Dreams, Mont Rest Inn, Bellevue

May:
Drive to Antique Airfield/Air Power Museum, Ottumwa/Blakesburg

June 13:
Summer Picnic, Easter Lake, Des Moines

July 12:
Iowa Cubs – Principal Park, Des Moines

August:
NE Iowa Drive

Sept. 13:
Des Moines Concours, Des Moines

Visit bmwia.org for more events and information!

OUR **HEROES**

BY GEORGE AND MILES BRIGHTON WITH HELP FROM DAVID BRIGHTON



Our grandparents like to go to the IMSA races at Road America. About four years ago, they decided it might be fun to take us along. The first year we attended the SRO races at Road America in August, we didn't really know much about car racing at that time but enjoyed seeing the cars and the drivers up close.

Since then, we have attended IMSA and SRO races at Road America every year. It is a good track to watch from many locations. Our favorite corner is Turn 1, since there is a large family area with a playground we can play on during the races. We like to watch the start of the races, go play for a while and then check in from time to time to see how the race is going. There is also a large video board where we can watch the other parts of the track and see the current standings in the race. It is also close to the Porsche Corral, (Grandpa Brighton likes to look at the Porsches).



Canada Corner is a good place to watch since it is shady and we can get cooled off there. Sometimes we go to Turns 3 and 4 because it is by the Corvette Corral and we can look at cool Corvettes there.

The Badger Bimmer Car Corral on the front straight and across from the entrance of pit lane is a really good spot and we spend a lot of time there. There is usually a lot of action there. The Car Corral is cool because we have met many people from other car clubs there and get to see them every year when we go back to the races. We get to eat lunch there and watch the races on the big TV located in the tent. George really likes to help Darcy Yench with registration and likes to









see what Larry has in his pocket. We really don't like posing for pictures for Larry, but we do it anyway.

We usually arrive on Friday afternoon. When we get to the track, we get to wander the vendor area and pick up lots of free swag (Grandma Brighton really likes the swag). Grandma also takes us shopping in the Track Store. She always gives us a budget to buy something we like.

We also get to play on the video driving simulators. We are now getting tall enough to reach the pedals and are better at staying on the track.

After doing those things, we visit the paddock and look at and sit in the race cars and talk to the drivers and crew. Miles is always looking for Ferraris and Lamborghinis, but probably our favorite place to visit is the BimmerWorld area. We got to know James Clay during our first visit to the SRO races several years ago. He always talks to us and gives us a hat. One year, he gave us the hats they wore on the podium after placing in a race. We really like to go to the podium ceremony because the drivers always throw their hats into the crowd. That year, James gave us hats that had the #3 on them for placing in the Saturday race. He told us to come back on Sunday and he would trade the hats for #1 hats if they won. We got #2 hats on Sunday, still wet with the champagne from the trophy ceremony.

We met Bill Auberlen a couple of times. He is really nice and a really fast driver.

One year, when we were racing each other down the hill going to the Carousel, a team owner and driver stopped us and gave us team jerseys for Ruckus Racing. We still have those jerseys and wear them at the races every year.

Maybe the coolest part is sitting in the race cars and getting autographs from the drivers, like Samantha Tan, Robby Foley, and Patrick Gallagher. George always reads the race program and learns the teams and the drivers so he can recognize them when we walk through the paddock. It is always fun to go to the races and meet the heroes we see driving on the track.

A HOME FOR **STEEL, STORY, AND SOUL**: WHY WE CELEBRATE **THE GILMORE CAR MUSEUM**

BY SCOTT HICE

Every once in a while, a place comes along that does not just preserve cars, but preserves culture, memory, and identity. For many in the enthusiast community, the Gilmore Car Museum represents exactly that. It is not a static showroom frozen in time, but a living tribute to automotive history and the social journey that carried it forward.

The story begins in the early 1960s with Donald S. Gilmore, a Kalamazoo businessman and philanthropist whose fascination with vintage cars started modestly. A single Pierce-Arrow restoration quickly grew into a serious collecting passion. When Gilmore purchased a 90-acre farm in rural Hickory Corners, Michigan, the foundation for something larger took shape. Encouraged by his wife Genevieve, he made the decision to turn a private hobby into a public gift. On July 31, 1966, the museum opened with just 35 cars on display.

Today, the Gilmore Car Museum is widely regarded as the largest auto museum in North America. Its collection includes more than 500 historic vehicles, displayed across a sprawling campus of restored barns, period buildings, and exhibition spaces that feel authentic rather than staged.

Walking the grounds feels less like touring a museum and more like stepping into the American story itself. Cars and motorcycles are grouped thoughtfully by era, allowing visitors to trace the arc from early horseless carriages to muscle cars, from steam-powered experiments to postwar icons. Each building reveals a different chapter, and together they show how rapidly transportation reshaped daily life.

The details matter here. The museum houses one of North America's largest collections of automotive mascots and name badges, more than 1,500 in total, alongside classic pedal cars, advertising memorabilia, and period artifacts. Vintage gas stations, diners, and signage help place the vehicles in their original context. These displays go beyond metal and mechanics to explore how cars influenced travel, style, industry, and social change. At Gilmore, you are not just looking at vehicles—you are looking at lived history.

What truly sets the museum apart is that it is not entirely static. Visitors can experience the collection in motion by riding in an original Ford Model T. With its hand controls, unusual pedal layout, and crank-start engine, the ride delivers a firsthand sense of the mechanical simplicity and challenge that defined early motoring. It is one thing to see a car behind a rope. It is another to feel it rumble down the road.

The campus itself deepens that sense of immersion. Restored 19th-century barns, a working 1940s diner, a recreated 1930s Shell station, and an 1890s train depot make the visit feel like time travel.

For those of us who belong to car clubs or simply live for the joy of driving, the Gilmore Car Museum offers an important reminder. Every restoration, polished





fender, and mile driven comes with context. Automotive design reflects craftsmanship, and transportation reshaped freedom and community. Cars evolved not just mechanically, but culturally; Gilmore captures all of that in one place.

The museum is also home to two long-running German-themed DeutscheMarques events each year. BMW, Porsche, Volkswagen, Audi, Mercedes-Benz, and more are welcome, with events typically held in July and October. Check for dates in 2026.

For anyone who loves cars, it is hard to imagine a better way to connect nostalgia, driving passion, and historical appreciation. Put the Gilmore



Car Museum on your must-see list. Supporting places like this is more than indulgence. It is stewardship, honoring the past and preserving it so the sound of a 1927 engine can echo for generations to come.



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Michiana Chapter

Michiana Chapter

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Spring Dust Off

May:
Cars & Coffee, Driving Tour

June:
Cars & Coffee, Driving Tour

July:
DeutscheMarques & Gilmore Car Museum

August:
Cars & Coffee, Driving Tour

Sept.:
Cars & Coffee, Driving Tour

CELEBRATING OUR **HPDE HEROES**

BY BRAD RUMMEL

The Motor City BMW CCA chapter's flagship HPDE event returned to Grattan Raceway in September 2025, set against the backdrop of Michigan's spectacular fall weather. Crisp mornings gave way to great driving conditions in the afternoon, with the track bathed in golden light and the trees just beginning to show their autumn colors. This event may have focused on fast cars and technical corners—but was powered by an incredible team of volunteers, instructors, and one standout pro driver who made the event unforgettable.

With an entirely new event leadership team taking over at the helm for 2025, there were many long days and nights of planning (and learning) leading up to the event. On the weekend of the event there were countless volunteers that stepped up to help. From early morning check-ins to tech inspections and paddock coordination, volunteers kept the weekend running smoothly. They managed registration, ensured safety compliance, and handled countless behind-the-scenes details. Without their dedication, the event simply wouldn't happen. These unsung heroes worked tirelessly and invested over



200 hours of combined planning and execution so participants could focus on learning and enjoying the track.

Our instructors were the heart of the educational experience. They rode shotgun with novices, coached intermediates, and guided advanced drivers toward precision and confidence. Their ability to balance safety with fun created an environment where every participant could grow. Our instructors donated their time and expertise, reinforcing the community spirit that defines BMW CCA events. The positive feedback from attendees was overwhelming. First-time participants described feeling welcomed and supported, with one noting, "I was skeptical at first, but you made it comfortable and enjoyable. The driving instructions and professional guidance helped me realize a dream." Instructors received special praise for their patience and encouragement, with students highlighting how post-session feedback helped them improve with each lap. The classroom sessions were described as "fun and informative," keeping everyone engaged even when not on the track. Safety was a top priority, and participants appreciated the emphasis on both fun and responsibility. Many expressed their gratitude for the volunteers and instructors who made the event possible, and several offered to help with future events, eager to give back to the community.

A special shout-out goes to Anthony Magagnoli, professional driver and coach. Anthony led Friday's Advanced Performance Driving Seminar, sharing insights that transformed how participants approached Grattan's technical layout.

The beautiful fall weather, the camaraderie among drivers, and the tireless work of the event team created an atmosphere that was safe, educational, and









Watch Motor City Chapter's HPDE Video on YouTube!

exhilarating. Whether enjoying dinner at the local pub with fellow enthusiasts or sharing stories in the paddock, the sense of community was palpable.

As the Motor City Chapter gears up for future events, one thing is clear: The heroes behind the scenes will continue to define the experience. Whether you're a first-time participant or a seasoned track veteran, take a moment to thank the volunteers, instructors, and special guests who make it all possible. They're the reason you can chase apexes with confidence and leave the paddock with a smile.

Special thanks to Ken and Dee Rutyna for their decade of leadership in planning and execution of this event. Ken and Dee passed the baton to the new event leadership team in late 2024. The Motor City Chapter is forever grateful to Ken and Dee for being the true heroes that paved the way for future events. And finally, a special thanks to Nathan Bush Media for capturing photos of the 2025 HPDE event.

BMW Car Club
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Motor City Chapter

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Ann Arbor, Michigan

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March:
Tech Talk at TBD

April:
Dust off Dinner

August:
Annual Summer Picnic

Sept.:
HPDE at Grattan Raceway

Visit motorcitybmwcca.org!

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North Star Chapter

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CHAPTER EVENTS

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WELCOME TO **NORTH STAR CHAPTER**!

Whether it be a Pizza Run or a group drive to find the source of the Mississippi River, members of the North Star Chapter always have something fun going on. Keep up with everything we do by visiting our website and reading our monthly *North Star Bavarian* at https://www.northstarbmw.org/newsletter.













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MY FIRST **SHOW N SHINE**

BY CLAUS (PAPA) DOERSEN · PHOTOS BY WINTER DOERSEN

My hero is someone who expresses joy or amazement, keeps the motoring spirit alive, and extends their enjoyment to others through her photography. Whether she is at an Indy 500 race with her Dad or a CCA car event with her Nana and Papa, my granddaughter Winter composes her photographs in a way that evokes a response. I still cannot pinpoint why, but her photo of the Z4 Coupe with gazebo in the background just make me feel "sports car" every time I see it. Indeed, that picture was the impetus for this article. She's still several years away from getting her driving license, so I hope that Winter continues to inspire others through her growing love of cars and photography.

In July 2025, I attended the 6th Annual Show N Shine event hosted by Northern Ohio Chapter and its members with my grandkids while my son Chris and his wife were somewhere tropical celebrating an anniversary. I have been a guest of my son at several CCA events and once I greeted Cynthia at the starting point of the drive, everything seemed normal – except the planned route had been scrapped thanks to road construction projects. The midpoint of the drive was the Fairport Harbor Museum and Lighthouse, with our destination being the home of Ron and Mary Ann Schanfish.

Touring the museum and lighthouse was a pleasant surprise. The view of the harbor and Lake Erie on a sunny July day was worth the drive. The museum is privately run by the Fairport Harbor Historical Society since 1945; its large collection of photographs, documents, paintings, and other artifacts is 100% donated by local residents. Part of the museum highlights the history of the Great Lakes maritime commerce and features models of steam ships, cargo vessels, and iron ore barges. A definite highlight for us was the intact pilot house from the SS Frontenac, complete with steering wheel.

We arrived at the Schanfish residence after a leisurely drive through Lake and Ashtabula counties. I parked the car at the bottom of the incline leading toward the house and walked up to the residence. When Mary Ann greeted us, I asked about the parking situation, she said that everyone should park on the lawn in the back yard and pointed out a less congested back entrance. I parked in an area across from the row of immaculate 3, 4, and 5 Series cars next to the vegetable garden. The Z Roadsters and Coupes were grouped in another lawn area with a gazebo.

I suddenly realized that everyone was working on the final "shine" on their cars, and mine looked like it had been on a four-hour road trip through thunderstorms, mainly because it had been the prior day! Fortunately, I had an opened water bottle, a towel, and a microfiber cloth in the car. I did manage to clean up the rain splatters on the especially egregious tailgate and make the car somewhat presentable.

When my wife Doreen found me cleaning the car, she asked me to fill out the information on my car and place it on the front windshield. She also handed me a People's Choice ballot for favorite entries in the Z model category, BMW 1991 or older category, and BMW 1992 or newer category. Wait—after all these years, was this my first car show entry?!

Doreen and I enjoyed the time just viewing the cars in a garden setting and filling out our ballot. We found it hard to pick the cars we liked best. Congratulations to the People's Choice winners!



The Z4 Coupe is rarely seen in a tranquil garden setting.



Thankfully, the Z4 roadsters have more luggage space than an Isetta ... barely.



Standing in the SS Frontenac pilot house stirs the imagination—full speed ahead!

SHOW N SHINE EVENT:
WINTER DOERSEN (AGE 11)

I finally finished walking up the I-don't-know-how-many-stairs of the light house right outside the small but interesting marine museum. The wind carrying the scent of the lake hit my face like a cold wall. The drive there was beautiful and peaceful with my grandparents. We chatted away about quite a lot of things like cars, the gorgeous trees, and anything that we would think of. We saw a lot of things that I will always remember.

For a place we have never been to before, this was a magical experience. With all the BMWs lined up on the side of the road, the fluffy little clouds in the sky, the American flag painted on the grass—it all felt so calm and relaxing. It was heartwarming and definitely fun. Every corner we turned was like a mini adventure. My grandparents made this even more enjoyable, and I won't ever forget this car ride because of them!

BMW Car Club
of America
Northern Ohio Chapter

Northern Ohio Chapter

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March:
Social visit to Auto Reserve, Beechwood

April (late):
Spring West Side MetroParks Drive

May (mid):
Winery Drive

July:
Gervasi Cruise-In

August:
Save the Manuals Drive (around Hudson)

Sept. (mid):
Brewery Drive

Visit nohiobmwcca.org for more information

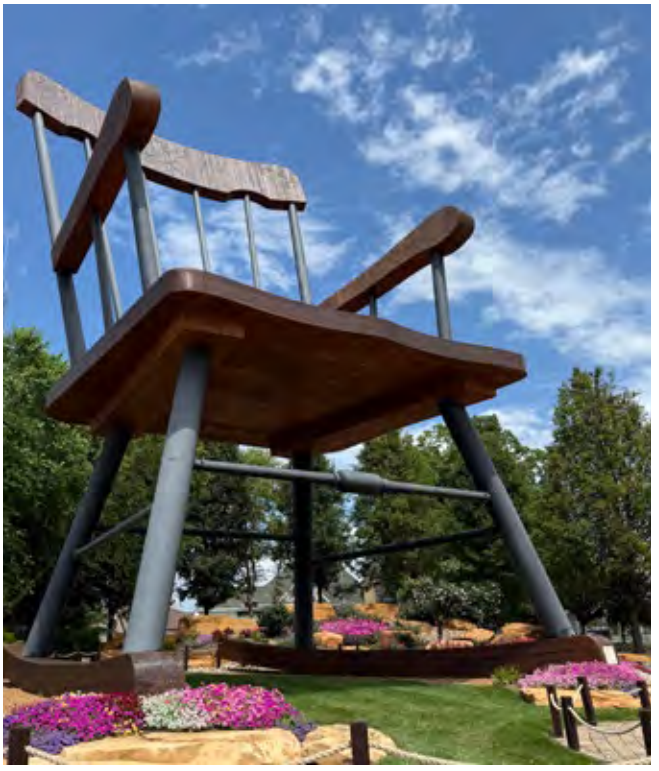
GOING BIG FOR ROAD TRIPS

BY BOB MARSH

On the eastern edge of Illinois, close to the middle of the state along I-70, lies an old, small farming town you will most likely miss if you blink. Casey, Illinois—pronounced Cazee as we were quickly corrected—is a stone's throw from Terra Haute, Indiana. Our club drives normally take twisty, rural highways and county roads. This time, however, the back road to Casey from the St. Louis area was a U.S. highway that paralleled the interstate with few exceptions. With a three-hour-plus travel time for the St. Louis group, the rural route made for a very long day, so we opted for the interstate route—boring, but entertainingly fast! The drawback with the interstate route is missing some quaint rural Illinois towns. The group from the Illini Chapter was mostly Bimmerphiles who lived closer.

Casey was a thriving town back in the day fed by several railroads, along with a major national road coming through in the 19th century. Like many small communities in the U.S., it started slowly dying as the railroads were leaving years ago. A local craftsman and businessman named Jim Bolin became the town's unsung hero. Jim felt the town needed something to resurrect his town and bring Casey back to life. Enter "BIG" things; big pencil, big rocking chair, big antlers—you get the idea. Tourists started coming to see the big things, and with those tourists came their money. Small shops and cafes sprang up, breathing new life into Casey, which has now become a must-see destination! Casey claims 12 Guinness World Record "biggest" things, including the biggest golf tee, the biggest barber pole, wooden shoes (filled with money to support a local food pantry), mailbox and rocking chair. There are about 25 other big attractions, most of them in the easily walkable downtown area.





While our chapter Treasurer and VP were heading to a regional leadership meeting in Indianapolis, they decided to stop by to see what the hubbub was all about. They decided Casey would make a nice club trip destination. Being in the Illini Chapter's backyard, we gave them a shout-out, inviting them to join us. BMWs were arriving from several different directions; we watched nice Bimmers drive into the downtown area to the meeting location. A handful of BMWs invaded this wonderful town in July 2025,

BMW Car Club of America
St. Louis Chapter

St. Louis Chapter

Chesterfield, Missouri

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Members Lounge



CHAPTER EVENTS

Monthly meetings are on the first Tuesday of the Month at Maggie O'Brien's/Speakers.

May:
Annual Jack Brimmer Concourse & Picnic

June 6 (tentative):
Illini Chapter's M Madness event

June 7:
St. Louis European Auto Show & local BMW display

and we parked on a private lot, along with a sign threatening that we'd get towed at our expense if they weren't moved! Our gracious host, Chuck Mason, said we'd be okay as long as we were nice. A brief local history lesson from Chuck and we were on our walking tour with maps in hand as a few more BMWs trickled in.

After about an hour or so—with the tour complete—the two clubs rendezvoused at Richard's Farm Restaurant on the northern part of town, just a stone's throw from downtown. We had a great lunch and had plenty of time to become acquainted with our CCA neighbors across the river and of course, learn about everyone's cars (not only BMWs). Just outside Richard's Farm is the world's biggest pitchfork, which made the best prop for our group photo. The St. Louis Chapter and the Illini Chapter partnered for another drive to Hannibal, Missouri, but that's another story. Joining with a neighboring chapter provides greater diversity along with more destination options and expanded camaraderie.



BMW CCA
GOLF
BUNDLE

GET READY FOR
SPRING AND TEE TIMES WITH
THE BMW CCA GOLF BUNDLE.

NEW! DOUBLE-LAYER GOLF TOWEL
THE DESIGN OF THIS RPET GOLF TOWEL KEEPS THE OUTSIDE CLEAN.

GOLF TEE SET
INCLUDES ONE BMW CCA LOGO GOLF BALL, 5 TEES, AND POKER CHIP BALL MARKER

BMW CCA WATER BOTTLE

BMWCCA.ORG/SHOP



MY HEROIC **528i**

BY DAVE FARNSWORTH



When I think of heroes in my life, I'm drawn to those who've impacted my life, so the list includes my wife Rosemary, my parents and on down the line to my AP physics teacher in high school and my mentor when I spent a quarter at St. Jude Children's Hospital working with children with acute lymphocytic leukemia. But this is a BMW publication and while those people were a very important part of my life, they were not part of my Bimmer universe.

Logically I decided to head into that specialized vortex of people, places, vehicles and experiences to raise a glass to the hero that introduced me to this world we all share, my 1979 BMW 528i.

I was an automotive acolyte from early on, beginning as a scissors-wielding four-year-old cutting car pictures out of magazines, followed by accumulating a fleet of toy cars, then building model cars and inevitably progressing to the real thing. My journey began with British sports cars—Triumphs, MGs, a couple Jaguars—then onto domestic rides, a midyear big-block Corvette and a Trans Am (sans screaming chicken) with a Datsun 280Z sneaking in there after my Trans Am was stolen.

As an avid reader of *Car and Driver* and *Road & Track*, I was very aware of BMW. I even took a brief drive in a 2002 while I was in Memphis—I was the only one of our cadre of medical folks at St Jude who was enthusiastic about its purchase by one of the docs. Everyone else saying something along the lines of "You could have gotten a Caddy for that," so in gratitude she flipped me the keys.

Many years and a goodly number of cars passed through my hands, but still nothing from Munich. But one fateful February in 1981 I came across an ad for a three-year-old 528i at Fields BMW. It was the first year for that model following the 530i, which had gotten mixed reviews. The 528i, however, was widely loved by the automotive press and much preferred to the oft-maligned 320i of the same era. In those days BMW offered four models and four models only, the 3, 5, 6 and 7 Series, each supplied with one specific engine. The only substantive option was an automatic transmission.

My 528i was a four-speed—subsequent model years had a five-speed, but never mind, it was glorious. The sound and smoothness of the engine was impressive. It was fast, comfortable and reliable. All the electrics worked—no Lucas boogeyman waiting to pounce. The handling was a revelation, especially for a staid, boxy, upright sedan with rock-solid composure into the triple digits and the stealthy appearance to get away with it. It felt like it had been

carved out of a solid block of metal. After spending one winter as my daily ride, with my Corvette snuggled quietly in the garage, I decided that made no sense at all and the Vette went away, never to be missed.

I was thrilled with the car, looking forward to every drive and thinking things couldn't get better—but they did! The 528i led me to the BMW CCA and literally changed my life. You see, after years of owning enthusiast cars at a time when they were pretty rare and the internet/YouTube/Google machine didn't exist, I learned early on to join a club that dotes on that particular vehicle or brand for access to parts and even more valuable knowledge. I pulled out my latest Road & Track, thumbed to the ad section in the back pages and joined the BMWCCA—no space back then!

Joining the CCA in turn introduced me to the Windy City BMW Chapter and a great group of fellow enthusiasts who remain among my best friends today. Joining Windy City brought me to local and national driving events, which introduced me to more lifelong friends across the country and beyond, and ultimately to racing, all of which have enriched my life well beyond any measure I could have imagined back in that cold, snowy February nearly 45 years ago.

What more can you ask of a hero?



BMW Car Club
of America
Windy City Chapter

Windy City Chapter

Glenview, Illinois

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CHAPTER EVENTS

May 16-17:
HPDE at Autobahn Country Club

August 21:
HPDE at Blackhawk Farms Raceway

Take a closer look at Windy City Chapter:
flickr.com/photos/windycitybmw/albums/

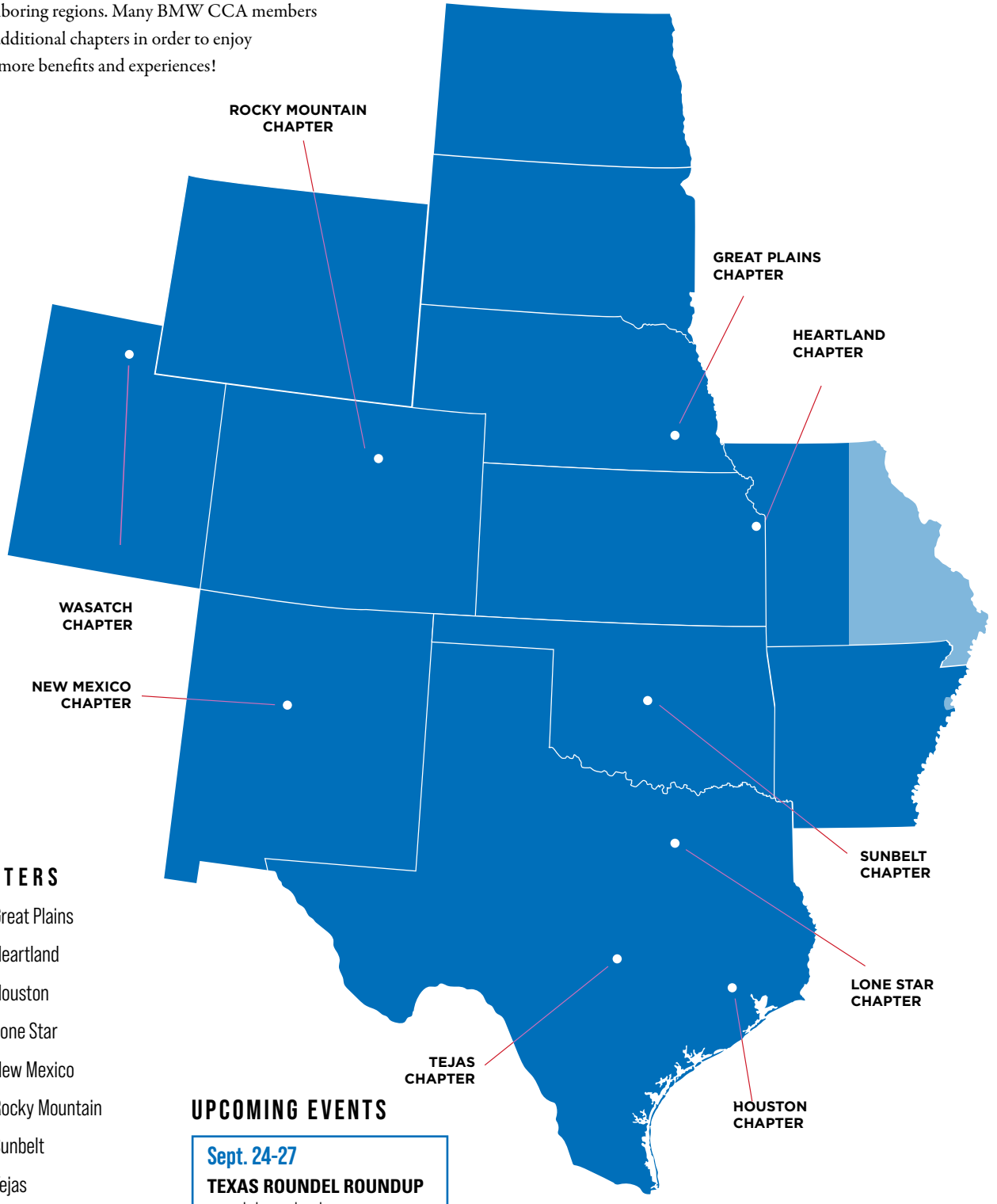
Visit windycitybmw.org for more information and our latest schedule of exciting events!

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

CENTRAL REGION

The BMW CCA's Central Region includes nine local chapters for members to enjoy in the central states from Texas all the way to the Dakotas. Every chapter has a central address, represented by the dot on the map, but each serves a much larger geographic area, often overlapping with neighboring chapters and sometimes extending into neighboring regions. Many BMW CCA members join additional chapters in order to enjoy even more benefits and experiences!

Our Central Region chapters keep the calendar full of fun and engaging events, driving tours, tech sessions, driving schools, car shows, and more!



CHAPTERS

156 Great Plains
158 Heartland
160 Houston
162 Lone Star
164 New Mexico
166 Rocky Mountain
168 Sunbelt
170 Tejas
172 Wasatch

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 24-27
TEXAS ROUNDEL ROUNDUP
roundelroundup.bmwcca.org







REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Welcome to the 2026 Central Region section of *BMW Car Club Magazine: BimmerLife*! Please enjoy our theme of "Heroes".

Our region is comprised of nine geographic and five non-geographic chapters. Looking at the region map, the territory spans from western Colorado to eastern Nebraska and from southern Texas to the North Dakota border with Canada. That is a lot of real estate with an almost unlimited amount of opportunity to find spectacular locations for events.



Jeff Gomon, Central Region & Non-Geographic Chapters Vice President

As the region moves from winter to spring and summer, the 2026 events are filling the calendar. I see more and more HPDEs, Autocrosses, Club Races, Driving Tours, Cars and Coffee, Picnics, Tech Sessions and Street Survival as well as chapter meetings and membership growth events on the various chapter calendars. Last year ended strong as far as membership numbers go. Our goal this year remains expanding events, growing and retaining membership, adding more value to your experience as a member.

Now is the time to invite other BMW owners who are not members of the club to share the experience, comradery and discounts BMW CCA brings. There is something for everyone. Further, if your renewal date is approaching, please consider renewing with us so there is no break in your discounts or services.

If you are reading this from inside the waiting room of a BMW Center, I encourage you to reach out to a nearby chapter or even a non-geographic one, and see what they have going on, and join them. I guarantee you at some point you will thank me.

Special thanks to all the chapter leaders, volunteers and event organizers who volunteer their time ensuring each and every member has a wonderful experience and, in turn, look forward to attending the next event. I am honored to represent the Central Region on the national board and cherish the many friendships this club has rewarded me with.

Have an amazing, successful and fun 2026

D. Jeff Gomon

BMW Car Club
of America
Great Plains Chapter



Great Plains Chapter
Lincoln, Nebraska

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CHAPTER EVENTS

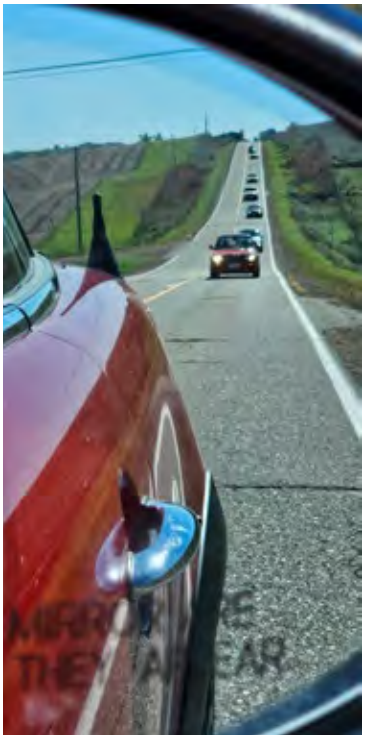
Oct. 19
Fall Driving Tour

Get more information and events at gpcbmwclub.com!

WELCOME TO THE **GREAT PLAINS CHAPTER**!

Our club welcomes BMW enthusiasts in Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and western Iowa. We promote driver education, social, driving skills, and charity events designed around our common love, fascination, admiration, and appreciation of BMW automobiles.

Join us and enjoy or many fun events, ranging from dinners to picnics to our annual Fall Drive!













BMW CCA

2026 DREAM CAR RAFFLE

2026 GRAND PRIZE

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M2 CS



EXTERIOR: BLACK SAPPHIRE METALLIC
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1 ONE OF THE FIRST M2 CS MODELS TO BE DELIVERED IN THE US.







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BOB LUTZ: A HERO OF THE MARQUE

BY HUGO BECKER



Bob Lutz (far right) talks with Jay Leno and Gary Cowger, former president of General Motors.

I was at the GM proving grounds and someone left the keys in a brand new C6 Corvette with a section of the Lutzring cleared for testing—a faithful recreation of the Nürburgring's Karussell, right here in North America. I wasted no time hustling the Corvette through it.

Remembering the sensation of being sucked into the bottom of the seat upon entry to the Karussell still brings a smile to my face. That an American car company would spend serious money to recreate a specific corner from a track located halfway across the world is mind boggling. General Motors did it thanks to Bob Lutz.

Around that time I also attended a GM meet and greet in the Detroit area. In the parking lot was some serious automotive hardware. After ogling the parking lot gems, I reached the door just as it opened. Out stepped Bob Lutz, larger than life. He stuck his hand out and said, "I'm Bob Lutz." I half expected the follow-on to be, "Who the hell are you?"

Being an avid consumer of automotive buff books, I was aware of Bob Lutz, but his impact as a car guy really hit me when I had the opportunity to drive a Dodge Viper GTS. Anyone that could bring that monster to market had to be the ultimate car guy.

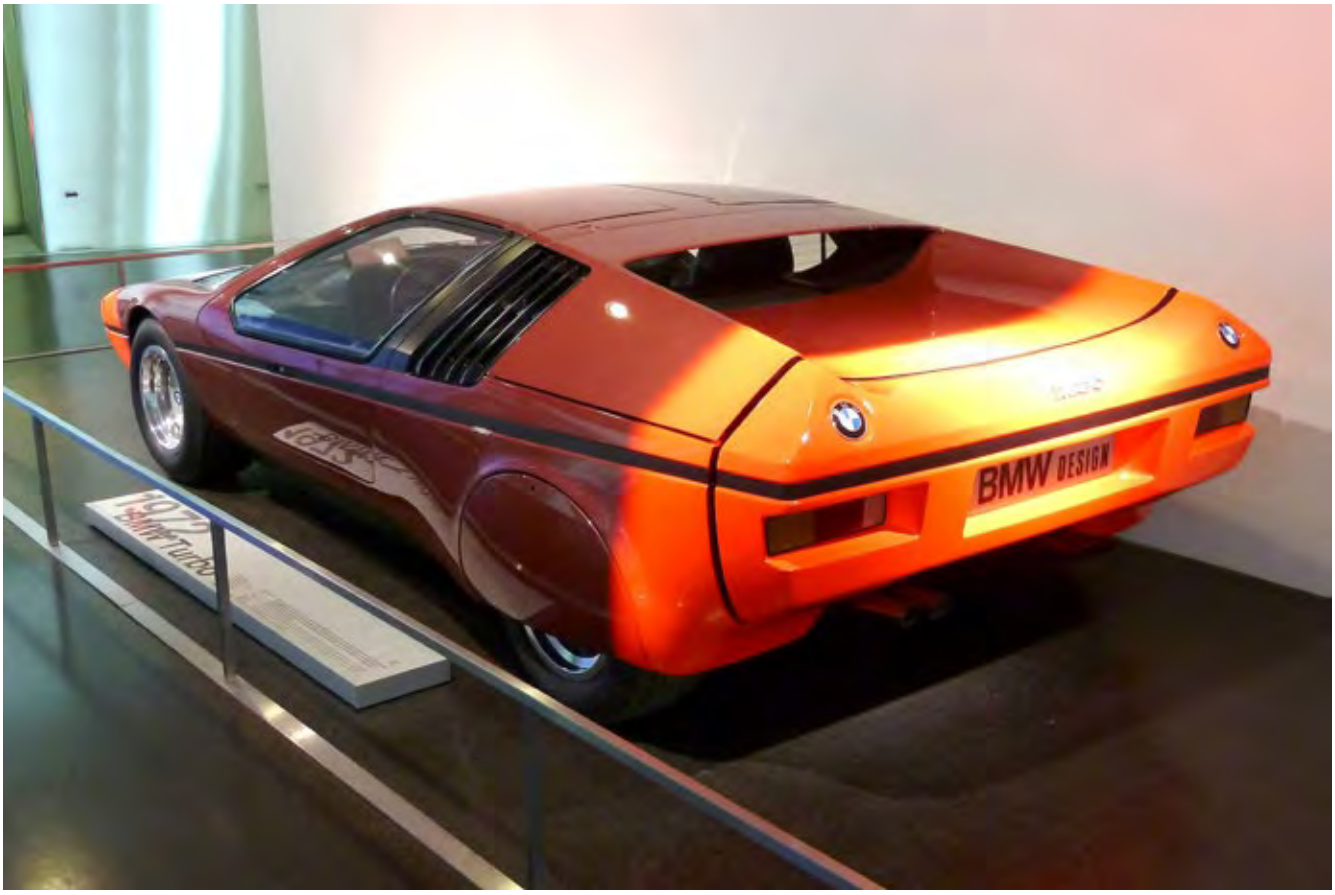
Lutz flew A-4 Skyhawks, known as "Heinemann's Hot Rod," with the U.S.



Marine Corps, which may be a key to understanding his personality. After active duty he found himself with GM of Europe. He also had stints at Ford, both in Europe and North America.

During his time at Chrysler the LH platform came into being. The LH project successfully introduced platform engineering to Chrysler, but eventually Lutz went back to GM, where his leadership revived GM's car culture. He enlivened Pontiac's lineup with Holden products in GTO and G8 guise, two great driver's cars with manual transmissions and brutish V8s.

The story of Lutz's career at BMW begins on January 1, 1970, two years before he joined BMW. Herbert Quandt brought Eberhard von Kuhnheim on to be the chairman of BMW. He clashed with Paul



Hahnemann, then the head of BMW sales and Hahnemann was gone within two years. Lutz replaced him.

Under Lutz, the modernization and rationalization of BMW sales began. He brought to light the less-than-ideal financial arrangements with national distributors, leading to BMW taking on the role of importer in as many countries as possible in order to protect their earnings. In addition, he influenced the E21 3 Series for the better by objecting to the original design. A drawing in Steve Saxty's book, *BMW's Hidden Gems*, showed what was planned and that a full-scale model had been built for executive sign-off. The 3 Series would not have been as great of a hit if that original hatchback version had gone to market.

Also worth mentioning is Lutz giving the green light to Paul Baracq's Turbo concept. Lutz's impact on the BMW in his short stint was huge; his ability to clean up sales and marketing along with the founding of BMW Motorsports cemented his star in BMW's pantheon of executives.

I heartily recommend Jackie Jouret's books, *BMW in the 20th Century*, *BMW in the USA*, and *Max Hoffman and BMW* to gain further insight into Lutz's role with BMW. One other highly recommended read is Richard A. Johnson's *Six Men Who Built the Modern Auto Industry*.

Looking back on Lutz's career it often seems that he was in the right place at the wrong time. He should have been the CEO of a major automotive corporation, but the timing never worked to his advantage. He often worked with bosses who had little appreciation for cars or car buyers. His blunt manner also played a part in that, but his instincts were always sound.

His role at BMW highlights his vision and personal integrity—points that I very much admire him for. The golden age of BMW would have been quite different without Bob Lutz's presence for those short three years.

BMW Car Club
of America
Heartland Chapter

Heartland Chapter

Overland Park, Kansas

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Web: heartlandbmwcca.com
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CHAPTER EVENTS

1st Saturdays – Kansas City, 9 am, 1201 W. 103rd St. Kansas City, MO 64114

1st Saturdays – Springfield, 8:30 am, 3500 E Sunshine St. Springfield, MO 65809

2nd Saturdays – Wichita, 9 am,11000 E 13th St N. Wichita, KS 67206

See more events at: heartlandbmwcca.org/club-calendar

SPARKING A **HEROIC JOURNEY**

BY ZOE BENJAMIN

Turning the key of my 2011 VW Jetta resulted in a guttural rumble paired with the immediate fear of my car exploding into smithereens. I didn't realize it at the time, but this random, heartbreaking moment changed my life forever.

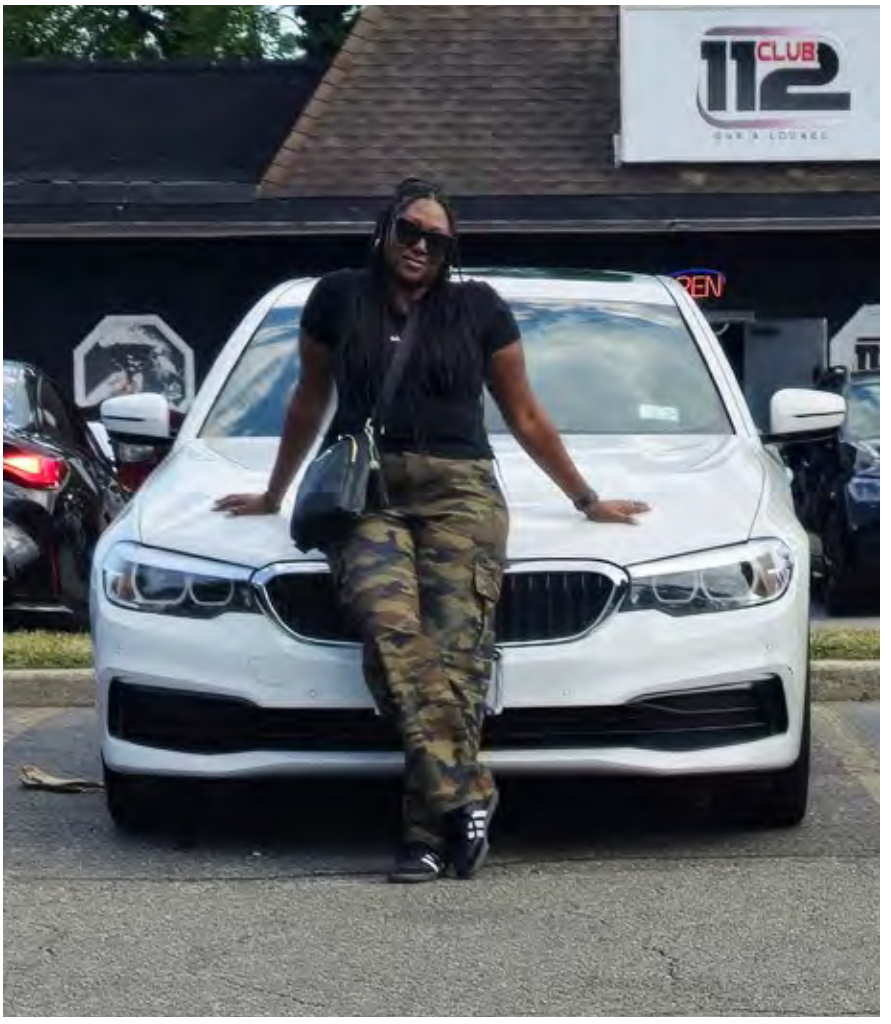
Picture a woman already depleted by the chaos of Flatbush, Brooklyn, now met with the reality that her car of 12 years had been violated, its oxygen sensor and catalytic converter ripped away in the middle of the night. Replacing the parts would cost more than the car itself, so it only made sense to say goodbye to Lil' Red, my companion across half of the United States for over a decade. Through college. Through loss. Through change. In that moment, my whole world shifted.

"This is for the best," they said. "You don't even need a car in New York." What they didn't understand was that my car was more than transportation—it was freedom. The ability to go wherever I wanted, whenever I felt called. I listened to the peanut gallery for four months, until I finally learned to listen to myself. I was never meant to live without freedom on wheels.

Then came car shopping—time-consuming, stressful and downright feral. I felt like I was in the Hunger Games for a prize I was paying someone else to win. The 2024 Acura Integra initially called to me; its revival stirred childhood nostalgia and the possibility of a manual transmission sent chills down my spine. But the price wasn't right and the salesman had me twisted. I walked out with a flip of my hair and my head held high.

My cousin said, "Why don't you check out a BMW?" I never thought a Bimmer would be an option for me, but the suggestion lingered. My family was full of proud BMW owners who spoke about their cars with cult-like devotion. If I'm being honest, I spent most of my life trying—and failing—to convince my uncle to pass down his beloved E39 to me. I still pitch the idea from time to time.

Then I saw a white G30 5 Series. I took her for a test drive and within three minutes I thought, "Oh sh**—they got me!"



With precision engineering beneath me, I felt a confidence I couldn't quite explain. She was elegant, strong and poised, so I named her Princess Diana. The perceived prestige came with a realization: Wait... isn't there a BMW Car Club? I joined that same day and something quietly shifted.

My love for cars has existed for as long as I can remember. Once upon a time, I wanted to be an automotive engineer, then a journalist for *MotorTrend* or *Automobile* magazine. Life took me down a different path, and somewhere along the way, I convinced myself that cars were a dream meant for others, not for a girl like me.

Fast forward 15 years. Now a producer and brand marketing professional, I asked myself why cars couldn't be part of my everyday life. Through BMW CCA, I began attending events solo, found mentorship in the automotive space, and became intentional about a transition into the industry. Today, I serve as the Digital Communications volunteer for the Houston chapter, and opportunities in automotive and motorsport have continued to appear once I began betting on myself again.

Princess Diana isn't my hero, but the journey she sparked is. Through her, I found a version of myself that was parked in a cold, dusty garage for far too long. Now, with her engine humming, my shades on and our destination still calculating, I'm ready for the road ahead.







BMW Car Club
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Houston Chapter

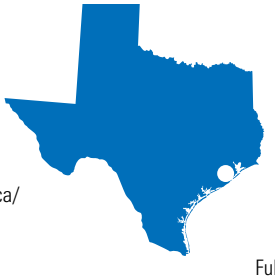
Houston Chapter

Houston, Texas

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March 14:
Cars & Coffee at Wolfsmiths in the Heights

March 28:
Houston BMW CCA Annual Meeting

Sept. 24-27:
Texas Roundel Roundup

Full calendar of events on our web page: houston-bmwcca.com.

WELL-TRAVELED ENTHUSIASM

BY RAYMOND MIMICK (CHAPTER PRESIDENT AND TOURMEISTER)

Looking back on 18 years as a BMW CCA member and 10 of those years as Chapter President, there have been quite a number of people that have influenced my experience with this group and as a BMW owner overall. I look back fondly at my first Autocross ever and the first tech session—boy that 2008 535i will be a heavy car!—and wondering what they were talking about. After a few more autocross events where I got to talk to various participants and hear how this is their equivalent to "golfing," it made more sense to me about what a car is beyond just transportation.

My first out-of-town trip was from Dallas/Fort Worth to Hot Springs, Arkansas. Marc Leediker was our Tourmeister and we had eight cars for the journey. I didn't have a radio to hear the inter-group communication, but I liked following along with the cars and going someplace I'd never been. At that first dinner, I got to really see what a car club is all about - friends sharing stories and life experiences. My first questions was "What is this thing about taking the Beemer?" Jim Doutre, who had some



Our 2015 Big Bend excursion with Michael Nied, Jack Rogers, and Brian George.

earlier life experience in France, said that a Beemer refers to BMW motorcycles while a Bimmer refers to BMW cars and that made a lot more sense. Of course when I watch movies and they reference their BMW as the "Beemer," I think back to that conversation.

Over the years, and a few more out-of-town trips with Marc and his tail gunner, Joe Sullivan (who once declared, "We are going so slow the butterflies are passing us!"), it really made a lot of sense about the power of these trips to really get to know someone. Yes, an in-town trip with the local chapter will show you some awesome roads or an interesting destination, but it's the bio-breaks and the meal stops that really open the experience.

Let me share with you someone that I consider an amazing friend and travel companion. Michael Nied has been a longtime member of the BMW CCA and started his journey in the late 1970s with BMW motorcycles. He and his new bride, Joy, took weekend motorcycle trips all over Texas. As a successful salesman for Grand Openings, he bought his boss's grey M3. Becoming member 20384, he found a group of people that traveled all over and made quite a few connections. He even became our Tourmeister from 2001-2004, leading the group to special themed destinations. After driving the M3 over 300,000 miles, he eventually purchased a 2010 1M to replace his beloved M3. For those not familiar, the 1M is a skunkworks project where the engineers used a few different components from various M cars on a 1 Series platform, creating a reliable and awesome handling car.

He has been a reliable tail gunner for me, a sounding board and a great right-hand assistant on our trips. There is not much that phases Michael and we work through the issues as they come up. As tail gunner, he has had a few warnings from local law enforcement while he watches our back for potential issues; he'll also stay with disabled cars if any have issues during our trips. There was a time that he was a popular Trip Advisor restaurant recommender and had thousands of followers, but an update by Trip Advisor lost all his recommendations for all the different restaurants he has visited.

Today, Michael has now traveled to all 48 contiguous states with the 1M and hoped to add Alaska to the list in 2020, but we all know what happened. The 1M has over 210,000 miles and you might find Michael

Michael Nied at Bridge Walk Fayetteville, W.V., 2025





Members visit Galveston in 2022.

at an interesting destination on your travels at destinations like Frank Llyod Wright homes, Road America, the Grand Canyon, Boston Mountain Tour and other places. With over 1,000 photos in his collection, Michael has been documenting his journey. It's always interesting to hear where Michael plans to go and what's next—BMW M Ice? A new scenic byway? Another trip to the Left Corner via a Dustball rally? Who inspires you? We hope you get to meet your local chapter members and hear their stories and connect with them at one of our upcoming events.



Lone Star members visit Sun Spot, N.M., in 2017. From left: Michael Nied, Mark Williams, Jim Doutre, Jyl Miller, JO Miller, Raymond Mimick, and Don Hula.



BMW Car Club
of America
Lone Star Chapter

Lone Star Chapter

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March 28:
Frisco to Van Alstyne Tour
(Train Day)

April 4:
Cranfills Gap Tour
(weather permitting)

May 16:
Trip to Pittsburg…Texas, that is!

May 23:
High Performance Driver's
Education at Cresson

June 19-21:
Twisted Sisters in Summer

July 11:
American Freedom Museum Tour

August 8:
Denton to Sherman Tour

Sept. 5:
Muenster (TX) Tour

Sept. 24-27:
Texas Roundel Roundup

Please visit the Lone Star BMW CCA website for more 2026 events and details on the events listed here. Get more information at: https://lscbmwcca.org/

JIM PRICE, MY BMW HERO

BY MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

Every BMW enthusiast has a story about the person who drew them deeper into the world of BMWs. For me, that person is fellow New Mexico Chapter member Jim Price, someone I consider my BMW hero. Jim's path to BMW passion has had its twists and turns, beginning with a youthful mishap that has long since become local legend. He grew up in Albuquerque and claims to be the first in New Mexico to total a 2002, when he was just 16. He says Gerhard Roskosh, owner of Gerhard Motors, threw him out of the shop in disbelief. The story always ends with Jim's laugh, a preview of the mix of humor and generosity he brings to everything he does.



Jim's first BMW of his own was a $300 1980 BMW 320. After replacing the radiator, and alternator and doing a long list of other repairs, he turned the tired little car into a fun companion. He lent it to a friend who could not afford a rental car, but fate repeated itself and the car was totaled. Through the years, Jim has owned several BMWs, putting more than 100,000 miles on a 2013 328i he loved and eventually gave to his son. More recently he has focused on Z3 and Z4 models. His first E85 Z4 was a white example his wife adored. That car went to a friend who soon became active in local BMW Z events, proof that BMW enthusiasm spreads easily through the right hands. Jim then acquired a blue E89 Z4 for his wife and an Orion Silver Metallic (Champagne) E89 Z4 for himself. Most recently, he bought a Z3 for $2,600 and performed extensive work to bring it back to good running condition.

Jim's enthusiasm grew into something larger when he became the Z Series Car Club of America Albuquerque Area Group Coordinator. He revitalized a quiet group of owners into an active and welcoming community. Under his leadership, the group now enjoys regular drives, social gatherings, and overnight tours across northern New Mexico and southern Colorado that have created life-long friendships. When I first joined the ZSCCA, I barely participated. That changed when Jim became Area Representative. He emailed me right away and explained that he would communicate with me primarily by email rather than relying on Facebook, which had been the previous custom. That simple courtesy made all the difference. My first drive with the group was to the Original Owl Bar and Café in San Antonio, N.M., where I met wonderful people and immediately felt at home.

Jim is also a strong supporter of the BMW CCA New Mexico Chapter. He participates in many chapter events and encourages other ZSCCA members to attend and join the chapter. He promotes participation in the "Z Corral" at the annual BMW CCA New Mexico Chapter Clean Car Show fundraiser, held at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial, and encourages donations to support the memorial.



Beyond leadership and camaraderie, Jim is a source of technical knowledge and hands-on help. He enjoys detailing BMWs and has held sessions on claying, polishing, and waxing. He has helped BMW Z owners repair air dams and splash shields, remove paint swirls, replace coolant reservoirs, and troubleshoot convertible top mechanisms. His willingness to help extends to anyone who needs it, including me. I bought new seat covers for my Z3 and carried them in my trunk for months because installation costs were high, and I doubted my ability to do it myself. Jim simply said we can install them in his garage, and we did, with great results.

The moment Jim became my hero happened after the BMW CCA New Mexico Chapter tour of Acoma Pueblo. While driving afterward, I had a blowout in my Z3. My compact spare was the wrong fitment and there was no cell service. After using a satellite connection, I managed to get a tow truck, but it could not go to Albuquerque. I ended up stranded on a Sunday evening in Grants, N.M., almost 80 miles from home. When Jim heard what had happened, he displayed his typical generosity and leadership, bringing me a wheel from his own Z3–over an hour's drive and in the dark. Although we could not break loose the overtightened lug nuts that night and I spent the night there, the tire shop used Jim's wheel and tire the next morning to get me home safely. That level of kindness and unwavering support is rare, and I will never forget it.







BMW Car Club
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New Mexico Chapter

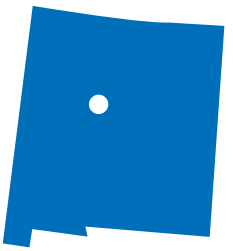
New Mexico Chapter

Albuquerque, New Mexico

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Spring Tour

May 24:
Clean Car Show
Fundraiser

August:
Ice Cream Social

Sept.:
Fall Tour

Visit nmbmwcca.org for more information and events!

GRATITUDE FOR THE UNSUNG

BY JANET KIYOTA

Heroes abound in every organization and in our daily lives. It is important to spend time reflecting on the unsung heroes that make or break an organization. An unsung hero is someone who performs valuable, often challenging work without receiving recognition or praise for their contributions. Most often, they work quietly behind the scenes or in everyday situations to make a significant positive impact. They are motivated by a desire to help, not driven by fame, and their efforts are too often taken for granted.

There is a long list of unsung heroes for the Rocky Mountain Chapter, starting with our elected officers. They spend countless hours in meetings, ensuring bills are paid, scheduling, and keeping things running smoothly. This year is the first for our interim president, Doug Young. One of Doug's major accomplishments has been creating and overseeing event registrations in Motorsportreg. It is a tough job to stay on top of requirements, revisions, and reporting for everything we do as a chapter. Treasurer Grady Hurwitz and Secretary Derek Johnson join him as our Executive Committee. We appreciate retiring board members Bryce Kliewer, Julie Moody, Dave Jobusch, and Jesse Shapiro for their enormous effort over the last few years as they made positive, long-term changes that will define how this chapter will run in the future.





There's no event without equipment and reliable volunteers. Here are just a few of the countless people who have made contributions. Going back to 2002, when the Autocross program was resurrected, "first in, last out" members like Michael Feldpusch, Steve Hamilton, Eric van der Heide, David Walz, Jared Corace, and Doug Beuerman have moved countless pounds of equipment so our cars have a place to run. The longtime announcer of Driving School, Jim Jenkins, recently retired from this position. Jim and his wife Leslie have been mainstays since 1976, giving of their time in every capacity at the local level. Our teen driving school, Tire Rack Street Survival, is our legacy project. In recent years, Lynda and Brian Love led 2 sold-out schools, acted as our PCA liaisons, and generated sponsorships for our local program, contributing a minimum of 150+ volunteer hours. Without fail, when it comes to TRSS, you can bet that Kris Lee, Matt Johnson, and Dave Jobusch are the first volunteers to register. They have been at every school as instructors, photographers, event leads, and recruiters. You can count on them to be there to fill in every gap whenever it is needed.

Details, details, details! It's often the small, meticulous touches that bring our events together—whether it's confirming venue logistics, managing registration lists, or tracking down supplies at the last minute, these behind-the-scenes efforts keep RMC running smoothly. From ensuring cones are in place to double-checking schedules and communicating last-minute changes, every hidden contribution adds up to a seamless experience for members and guests. Let's remember that the most memorable moments at our chapter's events are made possible by those who handle the countless details with care and dedication, embodying the spirit of our unsung heroes. Gary Odehnal (DS), Rob Coe (DS), Naveen Viswanath (Tours), and Jesse Shapiro (AX) oversaw each driving event in 2024-25 and they are superstars! Their work allowed the rest of us to have a place to test our abilities behind the wheel.

Last but not least is the team led by Angela Mitchell to produce several of our largest social events, including Oktoberfest, a partnered toy drive/car show with the Denver District 9 Fire Station, and the first-ever car marquee area at the Lafayette Cars and Coffee. She, along with Freddy Guiles, Elle Pappas and Fox Chung, worked tirelessly to engage the wider car community, sponsors, and marketing efforts so the rest of us could laugh and spend time with our car family.

There isn't enough space to list every volunteer who gives of their energy and time so we can continue to thrive as an organization. Let's make a pact to send our gratitude to an event volunteer sometime in 2026. The commitment and generosity shown by these individuals exemplify the values that make our chapter strong. Their willingness to step up—often on short notice and without expectation of recognition—fosters a culture of teamwork and respect. By celebrating their contributions, we inspire others to follow in their footsteps and ensure the continued success of RMC for years to come.







BMW Car Club
of America
Rocky Mountain Chapter

Rocky Mountain Chapter

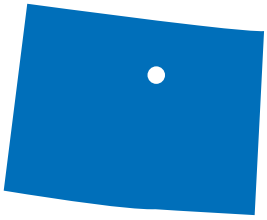
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CHAPTER EVENTS

July 18:
Summer Driving School at HPR

August 15:
Tire Rack Street Survival, Flatrock Regional Training Center

October 3:
Fall Driving School at HPR

Monthly Board Meetings are on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.



A NATIONAL **OKTOBERFEST TREASURE**: JOHN RAY (JR) SCHNEIDER

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY
STEVE JACKSON

WITH BUDDY BUTLER AND
CHARLIE SNYDER

For the BMW CCA, the term hero is maybe best defined by our founding members and those who set the standard for how the club and chapters should operate. JR Schneider was one of those people. He moved—in a 1967 1602—from Indiana to Oklahoma City in 1978 to attend law school. He was a driving force in the founding the Sunbelt Chapter in 1979. He was tenacious about establishing and planning new Sunbelt Chapter events, most notably, the Choctaw O'fest car show, driving tours, autocrosses, Hallet Motor Racing Circuit driver schools, and the annual Sunbelt Chapter Holiday Dinner.

JR and Pat Griffis (another founding member) traveled to Boston to convince the National Board to allow the relatively new Sunbelt Chapter to host the 1987 BMW CCA National Oktoberfest, in Tulsa. He based the theme on a song called "Living on Tulsa Time," and almost single-handedly set up and ran the event, with help from his wife Cindy. He coordinated with all of the chapters, arranged for hotels, display areas, vendors, and did the myriad other tasks that are required for a large event. This was a much more difficult and time-consuming task in the days before everything was just a click on the internet. Another founding member, Buddy Butler, remembers JR working on setting up the vendors area very late a couple of nights before O'fest started. He flopped down in a chair, exhausted, saying he had no idea it was going to be this much work, and it wasn't going to all be done in time. Buddy, Pat and a couple of others jumped in to help. About 36 hours later, with little sleep, everything was ready just as the participants started to arrive. The event was a great success, and many commented that it was the best O'fest out of the 17 of them so far.

JR became the volunteer National Oktoberfest Coordinator until 2004, advising the host chapters on what needed to be done, applying the lessons learned from each successive event, but most importantly the need for a core group of people to make it all happen. After 2004, National decided that TWO paid employees were required to plan and run O'fest. JR's dedication and leadership were instrumental in growing Oktoberfest into the event it became.

What I remember most about JR was the "Wrath of Grapes" wine tours he ran for Sunbelt Chapter. He usually picked three wineries. To get to the first one and then from there to the next, he provided driving instructions which might have been more suited for advanced TSD rally teams rather than folks on a wine tour. There was always at least one instruction that sent drivers the wrong way if misinterpreted, the real Wrath of Grapes (emergency instructions to the destination were provided). For the last tour I remember him running, the final destination was a BBQ dinner in a barn. I asked JR to move his car so it was part of the group photo. He tossed me the keys to an older E30. I was surprised to find the whole interior full of boxes and file folders of papers from his work, the club, and who

2008 Wrath of Grapes Tour, JR Schneider's car rear left.



knows what else—and it was dirty. He was not a concours type of guy! I "inherited" the wine tours when JR got leukemia, but he continued to advise me until he passed away in 2012. In 2014, Cindy joined us for the first "JR Schneider Memorial Wine Tour."

JR was an excellent autocross driver and mechanic, so another part of his legacy was his extensive tool collection, and stash of parts for older BMWs. Several club members got together to sort, and sell the inventory for Cindy. I bought a few of JR's tools, including a couple of specialized ones he made himself. I think of him every time I run across them in the toolbox.

JR might be gone but he is definitely not forgotten, and he still influences BMW CCA locally and nationally.



Cindy Schneider, front right, with the first JR Schneider Memorial Wine Tour.

BMW Car Club of America
Sunbelt Chapter

Sunbelt Chapter

Bethany, Oklahoma

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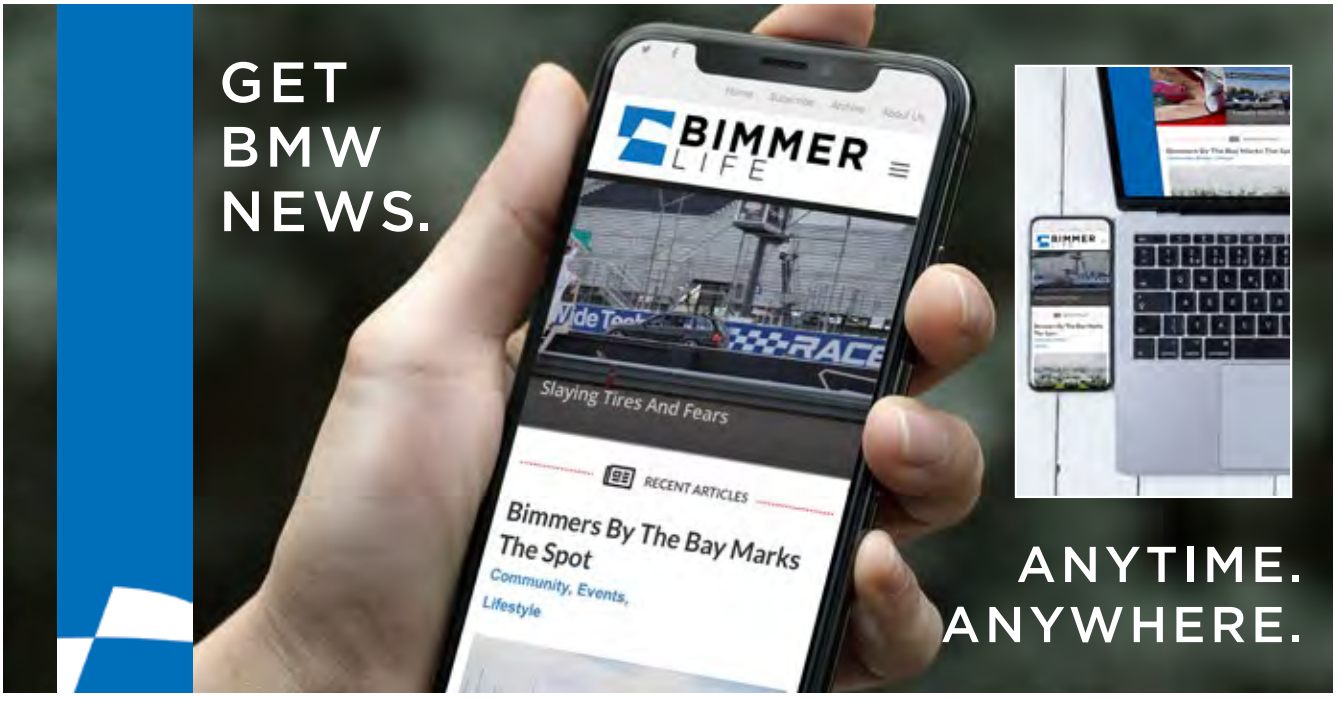
Facebook: Sunbelt Chapter BMW CCA



CHAPTER EVENTS

Member Meeting on the third Wednesday of each month.

We host breakfast or lunch meet ups, please check our Facebook page.



BIMMERLIFE

Get up-to-date at **BimmerLife.com** and stay informed even when on-the-go by subscribing to our curated **weekly email newsletter created exclusively for BMW CCA members**.

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BMW'S **HERO CARS**

BY JOSH BUTTS
Z3 PHOTOS BY BILL WENDE

Some cars appear in movies; BMW gets cast. The distinction matters. A hero car isn't background dressing or product placement. It's a character, one that earns screen time and stays in your head long after the credits roll.

BMW has built a filmography that most automakers would kill for, and really ramped up when *GoldenEye* hit theaters in 1995. The Z3 had under two minutes of screen time. It didn't matter. The car was sleek, it was new, and 90 seconds was all it needed to make an impression. Bond was entering a new era, and BMW made sure everyone knew it.

Two years later, *Ronin* set a standard that almost nothing has matched since. The E34 M5 chase through Paris routinely lands on "greatest car chase" lists. On a rewatch, it looks as good now than it did in 1998. Most action sequences from that era have aged poorly. Early CGI is embarrassing to watch, but *Ronin* was shot with real cars, real drivers, and real speed on real streets. There's nothing to age; the physics are correct because they're not simulated.

The Bond franchise, meanwhile, kept pushing the spectacle. *Tomorrow Never Dies* gave the 750iL a proper showcase. Remote-controlled via cell phone, loaded with gadgets, and driven backwards through a parking garage while Bond sat in the back seat, it was peak Bond absurdity, and the 750iL sold every second of it. The car was big, powerful, and sophisticated enough to make the tech fantasy feel plausible.

The Z8 in *The World Is Not Enough* was pure theater. BMW had just unveiled a stunning retro-futuristic roadster, and dropping it into a Bond film was a master class in timing. The car didn't need gadgets or gimmicks. It just needed to exist on screen, all curves and presence, looking like nothing else on the road. Of course they cut it in half, but for a few glorious minutes before that, the Z8 announced itself to the world in the most expensive commercial ever made.



BMW's Z3 was only on screen in *Goldeneye* for under two minutes, but made a lasting impression.a

The Transporter took a different approach entirely. Frank Martin's 7 Series wasn't remote-controlled or gadget-laden. It wasn't selected because it looked dramatic. It was selected because it looked like control. Quiet, composed, smooth at speed. Where the Bond 750iL was a fantasy, *The Transporter's* E38 was a professional tool, an extension of the character rather than a statement piece. Same platform, completely different message. Both hero cars.



The *Mission: Impossible* films found a middle ground. Be it i8, M5, or whatever BMW threw at Ethan Hunt, these cars get used hard and look spectacular doing it. The situations are absurd, but the cars stay composed. It works because BMW has spent decades proving these machines can handle whatever a screenplay demands.

Then there's *The Hire*. BMW Films' original series from the early 2000s wasn't product placement. It was BMW saying, "We're going to make actual short films with actual directors, and the car is going to be the star." No apologies, no pretense. Across wildly different stories and styles, the message was consistent: the driver matters, and so does what they're driving.

All these examples only scratch the surface. These are the big hits, bu t this doesn't even begin to cover the decades of TV appearances, from *Moonlighting* to *The Hunting Wives*. One thing however, is for sure: Not all heroes wear capes. Some wear roundels.





BMW Car Club of America
Tejas Chapter

Tejas Chapter

Austin, Texas

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CHAPTER EVENTS

March:
Annual Blue Bonnet Drive

April:
Street Survival

Sept. 24-27:
Texas Roundel Roundup

Find more information and events at tejaschapter.org

A COMMUNITY OF HEROES

BY DAN ERNST



It was late 2005 when I purchased my first BMW, a 1999 E46. Shortly after the purchase while attending an event with my wife, I mentioned the car in conversation with a friend. He was excited and encouraged me to join the Wasatch BMW CCA Chapter. Doing so led to new friendships; the list grew and is long now, but what is more pronounced is the overall community of enthusiasts that span all BMWs and the support and friendship these members have extended.

The community—whether directly or indirectly involved—are the true heroes. It is our community that more than once has come to the rescue to keep my cars running and reliable. I'm a particular fan of the manual transmission E36 and E46 chassis. Having owned a number of them, I learned over about 20 years how these cars can become needy. This no way takes away from the ownership or driving experience, but in a way enhances the driving pleasures.

There have been times when my needs were beyond my skills or tools. I could always find members who were able and willing to assist with the service adventure at hand. One member and friend stands out: Ray Carrier, a chapter founding member who assisted me with subframe issues. Ray is an auto sports enthusiast with exceptional skills and knowledge as well as great passion for early BMW chassis. He helped with these challenges as well as other members with their car needs, questions and discussion.

Shortly after joining, I got involved with the chapter board. I viewed it as way to support the community and events. As all chapters recognize, it is through our volunteering that our club and community continue to exist. Looking back to my early years, two members stood out to me—Craig Hawe and David Engelston. Craig took on being Chapter President during a period of transition and David Engelson joined after attending a chapter Christmas party. David quickly volunteered to assist and subsequently became a board member. It has been noted that David was a key person who ensured the club's viability through his steady and consistent support as a board member over the last 14 years.

We now have an active, enthusiastic and motivated group of board members. David inquired this last year if I would agree to run for a board position again in the next election. I agreed and was elected; upon attending my first meeting, I was encouraged by the energy and enthusiasm of the board and how this is translating to fresh activities, supporting the members of the club and encouraging membership.

In September 2025, the club participated the Eurofest car show in Midway, Utah. We set up a BMW CCA chapter booth to field questions and encourage membership. Eric Bishop, Conner James and I manned the booth. I ended up standing back and watched the two of them engage, explain club benefits and talk up the events and activities and answer questions. It was amazing to watch them. Five new members joined that day and attended our next event scheduled for the following Saturday. It was our fall color drive over the Monte Cristo pass (Utah SR39) to Evanston, Wyoming, for a well-attended BBQ picnic I hosted.



These are just a few examples of who makes our club what it is today. I'd also like to send a shout-out to the national organization and *Roundel* magazine. I cannot count how many times over the years during events and the conversations that are struck up where *Roundel* is quoted. Two segments in particular stand out, "Tech Talk" by Mike Miller (rest in peace), now supported by Nick Owen, and Rob Siegal's "Hack the Mechanic." The fun part is how these have been cited and used to resolve issues with our own cars. Not just fixing them, but providing a realistic view and expectations.

Mike Miller's Lifetime Maintenance Schedule is used by many of us. Don Stevens, a member who encouraged me to join some 20 years ago, uses it to meticulously maintain his vehicles. His wife's E39 540i has about 230,000 miles on it and still runs strong and looks great.



Our passion is not limited to the more senior segment of our club, but includes new and younger enthusiasts who are the future. It is so much fun to see the new enthusiasts and what they bring to our community!



BMW Car Club
of America
Wasatch Chapter

Wasatch Chapter

Salt Lake City, Utah

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CHAPTER EVENTS

April:
Big Cottonwood Canyon Drive

May:
East Canyon Drive

June:
BBQ Picnic

July:
Summer Drive

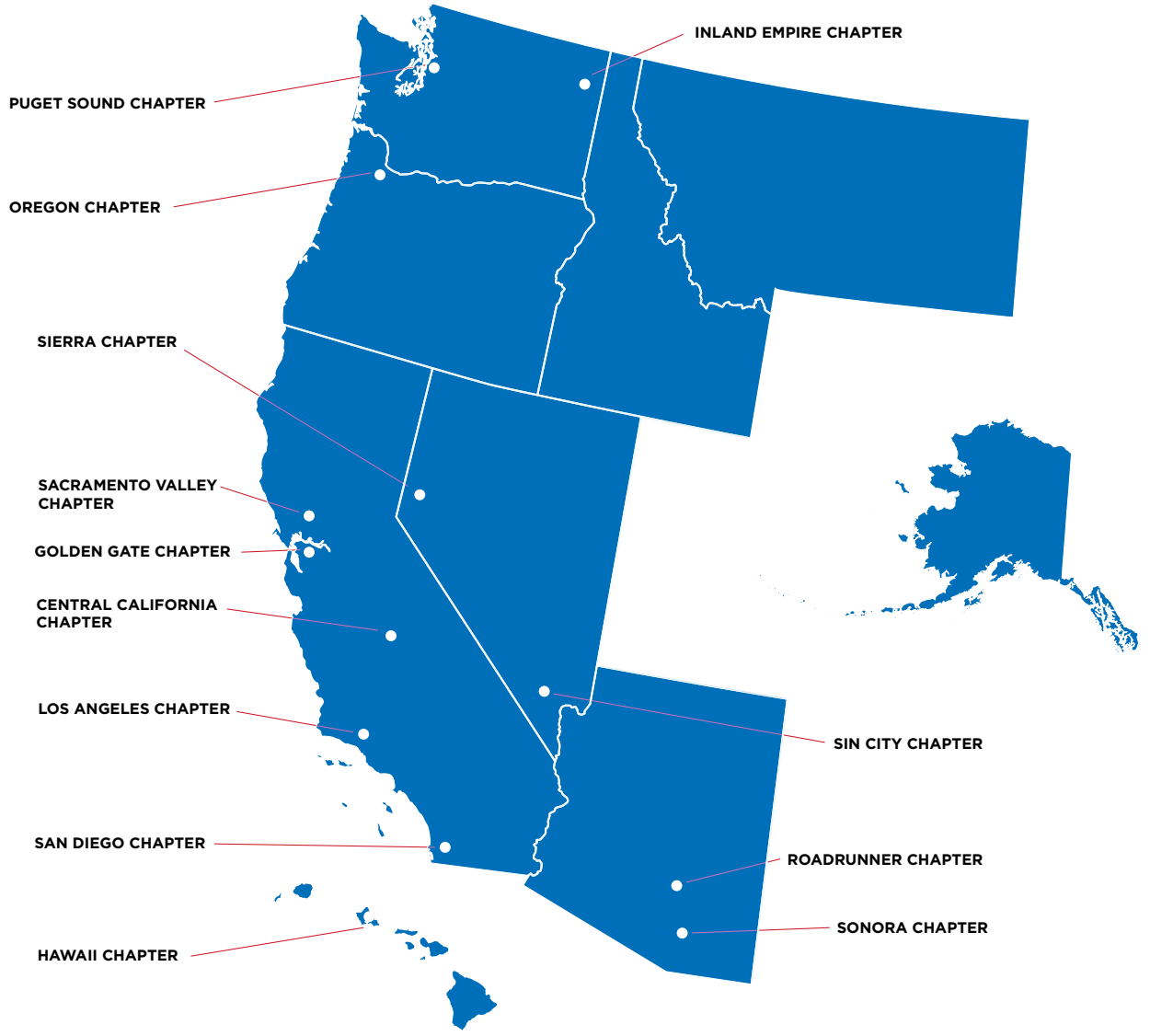


BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

PACIFIC REGION

The BMW CCA's Pacific Region includes 13 chapters for members to enjoy in the western states, as well as Alaska and Hawaii. Every chapter has a central address, represented by a dot on the map, but each serves a much larger geographic area, often overlapping with neighboring chapters and sometimes extending into neighboring regions. Many BMW CCA members join additional chapters in order to enjoy even more benefits and experiences!

Our Pacific Region chapters keep the calendar full of fun and engaging events, driving tours, tech sessions, driving schools, car shows, and much more!



CHAPTERS

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188 Sacramento Valley
190 San Diego
192 Sonora
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194 Los Angeles
195 Sin City
195 Sierra

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 28	**TUCSON MURAL TOUR** / Sonora Chapter: bmwccasonora.org/events/tucson-mural-tour/
April 16	**NATIONAL EVENT: CENTRAL COAST WINE RENDEZVOUS** California Chapters: ggcbmwcca.org/events/central-coast-wine-rendezvous
April 25	**WE SPEAK SPEED AT CARBAHN** / Golden Gate Chapter: ggcbmwcca.org/events/we-speak-speed-at-carbahn







REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Heroes: How One Engineer Changed Everything

BMW has produced some truly insane machines over the years, but the Bavarian automaker has also partnered with equally remarkable people who build exceptional cars. One such individual is Gordon Murray, a British-South African engineer whose influence on automotive history cannot be overstated.

If you've never heard of Gordon Murray, I promise his work has crossed your path—perhaps on screen or, if you're lucky, in person.

Gordon began his career as an F1 designer in the late 1960s with Brabham Racing, continuing his passion for motorsport innovation until 1991. That year, Ron Dennis called with an offer: join McLaren as Technical Director for the F1 team.



James Crivellone,
Pacific Region
Vice President

But Gordon had other ambitions. He wanted to build another road car. He'd already created the Rocket—a 1000cc Yamaha-powered oddity shaped like a vintage F1 car Sir Jackie Stewart might have driven. While reviewers praised its driving dynamics, the tandem seating and compact dimensions didn't exactly draw buyers into showrooms (not that any existed, with just 55 built).

At McLaren, Gordon pitched an idea: build a no-compromise sports car using the most advanced technologies available under the McLaren marque. His design philosophy was elegantly simple—as light as possible, 100% driver-focused, and powered by a V12 mated to a manual transmission.

He initially drew inspiration from the Honda NSX, a car Gordon respected immensely. He even approached Honda to develop a bespoke V12 for his project. While Honda expressed interest, they weren't willing to invest in the tooling required for a low-volume, bespoke engine—especially for a car outside their brand.

Undeterred, Gordon contacted Paul Rosche, BMW M's legendary engine designer (the man behind the E30 M3's S14, the M88, and numerous other masterpieces). Both Paul and BMW agreed, and the S70/2 was born—a 48-valve V12 based on a heavily modified M70 block paired with dual Euro S50 cylinder heads.

With that extraordinary engine, the McLaren F1 came to life: center driver's seat, six-speed manual, BMW V12 powerplant. A car that fundamentally changed how we view automotive performance and remains one of the most important vehicles of the 20th century—a monument to uncompromising engineering.

Gordon Murray is my hero. He built exactly what he wanted and showed the world what was possible.

And here's the beautiful part: our own CCA members are doing similar work. They're building exactly what they want. While the results may not be McLaren F1s, we've welcomed some incredible machines into the CCA family—S85 V10-swapped E31 8 Series, V12-modified E30s, and countless "insert M engine here in small BMW here" projects, with many more currently under construction.

If you ever find yourself in Munich, I highly recommend visiting BMW Classic. Walking through their collection reveals amazing one-off machines built simply to explore what's possible—experiments that ultimately make our dealer-ordered factory cars even better.

Thanks, Gordon.

BMW Car Club
of America
Central California Chapter



Central California Chapter

Visalia, California

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Visit our website for more information and events:

www.cencalbmwcca.org

WELCOME TO **CENTRAL CALIFORNIA**

The Central California Chapter, located in the heart of California, has been part of the BMW Car Club of America since 1985. It serves BMW CCA members from Modesto in the north to Bakersfield in the south, and from the Central Coast mountains to the Sierra Nevadas.

We hold regular events, including monthly Cars & Coffee gatherings open to all enthusiasts to come, kick tires, and brag on the latest modifications to their rides. We held our Bimmers at the Park event in late October. Winners are pictured below.

Events we participate in include 2026 Legends of the Autobahn during Monterey Car Week, as well as a St. Patrick's Day parade and other social events. Wherever your BMW home may be, please drive safely as we all try to navigate the slow roads to normal!











EXCLUSIVE GEAR

Members-Only BMW lifestyle gear,
available at bmwcca.org/shop



















BMW CCA members can purchase exclusive official BimmerLife and BMW CCA gear for BMW enthusiasts at bmwcca.org/shop.

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BMW HEROES THAT **SHAPED A GENERATION**

BY ALEKSEY KADUKIN

When I think about car heroes, I don't picture unattainable exotics reserved for collectors and velvet ropes. I picture machines that you can touch, drive, and fall in love with through lived experience — like BMWs! BMW is my hero because there is something almost mythic in the way the company has dared, again and again, to blend art with engineering, culture with competition, and dreams with reality.

From the moment you see the rainbow-swept lines of the M1 hand-painted by Andy Warhol in 1979, you understand that BMW views cars differently. That M1 wasn't a static artwork meant to sit under museum lights; it was a living, roaring promise. It went straight to the 24 Hours of Le Mans and finished sixth overall and second in class after nearly 3,900 kilometers. The M1 is the perfect embodiment of BMW's heroism, featuring fearless creativity, unapologetic performance, and the courage to treat a car as both a sculpture and a weapon.

Decades later, that spirit didn't fade, it transformed. Julie Mehretu's BMW M Hybrid V8 art car returned the tradition to Le Mans in 2024, not as a nostalgic nod, but as a modern endurance machine wrapped in an artist's vision. Watching a hybrid prototype streak down the Mulsanne Straight in full artistic livery feels like something only BMW would dare to make real. It's proof that the company still believes a race car can also be a moving work of art.



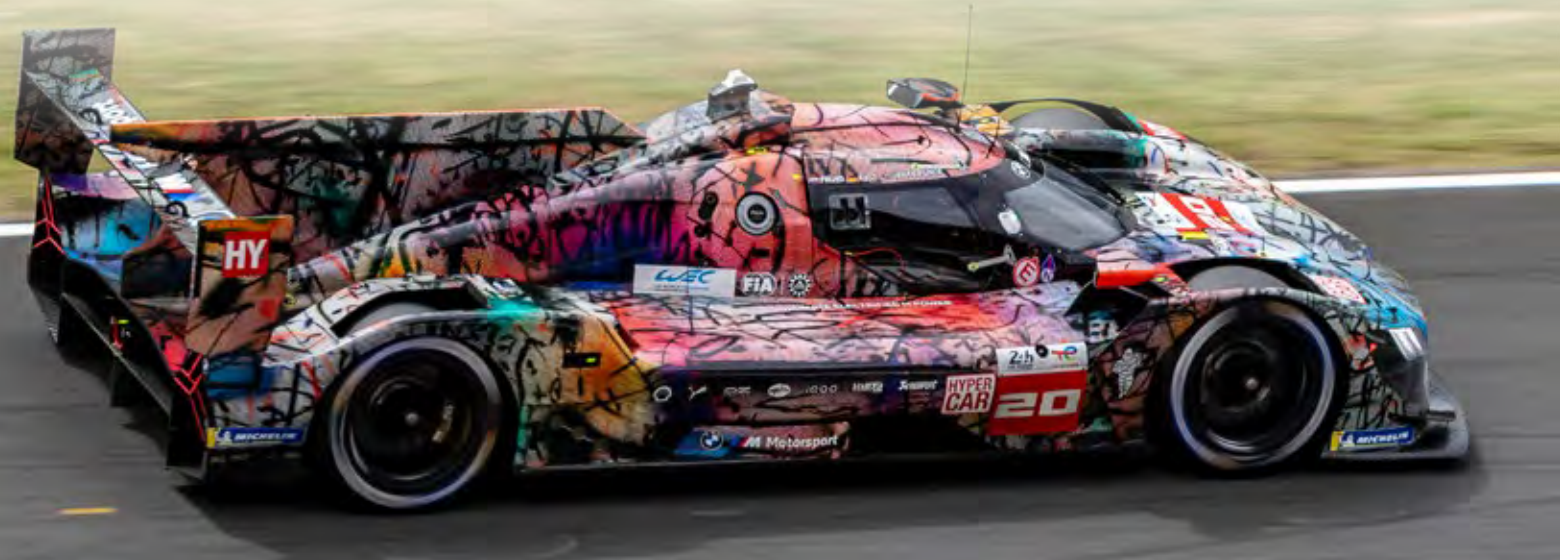
BMW M8 GTE at 2025 Pebble Beach Gooding & Christie's auction.

BMW's heroic streak doesn't stop with the art cars. It courses through the M cars, which are street-legal machines shaped by motorsport and devoted to driving. Consider the stripped down and sharpened 1995 E36 M3 Lightweight. One sold for $179,200 at Monterey in 2025, and that number isn't just a price — it's recognition. It's a tribute to a car designed with such purity of purpose that it still commands reverence decades later. These cars are everyday heroes, built not to sit in storage but to be driven, pushed, and loved.

The BMW M8 GTE stands tall as another true hero. It is a purpose-built endurance racer out of a luxury coupe that carried BMW colors through the IMSA battles and the world's toughest endurance stages with unmistakable presence and power. Perhaps an unconventional approach, but now for sure a legendary car.

The BMW E46 M3 GTR is a transcendent hero. It began as a fierce competitor in the American Le Mans Series, a raw V8-powered machine that proved BMW could dominate on a new level. But its second life came on millions

BMW M Hybrid V8 Julie Mehretu's Art car at 2024 24 Hours of Le Mans.





BMW M1 Andy Warhol's Art Car at 2025 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

of screens. As the star car of the Need for Speed: Most Wanted video game, the M3 GTR became the hero vehicle of an entire generation, a digital icon recognized even by people who had never heard of endurance racing. The enthusiasm around it grew so massive that reality bent back toward the fantasy. Fans and builders created real-world versions inspired by the game, completing a full circle in which a real race car became a virtual legend, then returned to reality because its myth became too big to stay digital. Only BMW could inspire that kind of cultural loop.

Whenever I drive or even think about driving, M cars remind me that true heroes thrive on purpose, pedigree, and passion. They need to be real, mechanical, and a little bit wild. They need to be a challenge on a circuit or a back road, or simply in the way they make your heart beat faster.

BMW does that, over and over. From a Warhol-painted M1 thundering around Circuit de la Sarthe or a modern hybrid prototype glowing under Le Mans lights, to Lightweight M3s cherished by devoted owners or video-game legends made real, BMW has never hesitated to push boundaries. The brand has always believed in the beautiful tension between art and horsepower, culture and torque, imagination and asphalt. BMW is my hero because it doesn't just build cars—it builds legends.



BMW E36 M3 Lightweight at 2025 Monterey RM Sotheby's auction

BMW Car Club of America
Golden Gate Chapter

Golden Gate Chapter

Greenbrae, California

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Autocross events on March 29, April 18, June 13 and August 29.

Teen/Adult Car Control Clinics on May 30 and Sept. 19.

See more events at ggcbmwcca.org/events

HEROES HAND OVER THE KEYS

BY IVAN JOYCE

In the summer of 2022, at 23 years old and on a rare Sunday when I woke up early, I decided to check out Manito Park'd, a new cars and coffee event I saw online. I hopped in my E39 540i six-speed and headed up to the park, where an incredible mix of local enthusiast cars greeted me. Classic BMWs, Porsches, and even a Ferrari 308 showed up. While talking with friends, a car pulled in that stopped me dead in my tracks. It was something I had only ever seen in photos, a BMW 2000 Touring.

I had heard whispers about a local BMW enthusiast with a legendary collection, and that Touring was always part of the story. As the car rolled closer, I knew it had to be him. Sitting on Alpina wheels, wearing classic BMW Motorsport livery, and covered in rock chips that told stories of past lives, it was a real driver's car. When it parked, a tall, white-haired man stepped out. I walked over, awkwardly asked if he was John Barlow, and just like that we were deep into conversation about classic BMWs.

That conversation led to an invitation to his house for a Barlow family tradition called Sunday Bloody Sunday. It was a chance to talk more BMWs, drink some of the best Bloody Marys I've ever had, and see one of the best BMW collections in the Northwest. The collection was overwhelming in the best way. There were 2002s, E30s, built Bavarias, all beautifully maintained and clearly driven. These were not cars hidden away. They were alive. I felt like a kid in a candy store, surrounded by cars I had only seen in magazines or dreamed about owning through late-night Craigslist searches.

One car stood out immediately, a black E9 3.0CS. As a car photographer, the E9 had always been at the top of my bucket list. I asked if we could photograph it sometime. John said yes without hesitation, then added that he wanted me to drive it. I thought he had to be joking. I barely knew him. But he wasn't joking.

A few weeks later, the day came. Even riding along in the E9 felt unreal. The car was rolling art. Along the way, John told me its story. Years earlier, he had bought someone else's stalled dream, an E34 M5 and a black E9 coupe. The plan had been to combine them. He drove the M5 for years, sold it, and focused on what he really wanted, the E9. Eventually it received a Korman stage 3 3.2-liter engine with triple Weber carburetors and a five-speed. It turned the car into something demanding



and wild. John loved it. His wife Alexis still jokes that he is banned from her vehicles for fear they will come back faster than before.

Then it was my turn behind the wheel. I was used to old manual BMWs, but this car hated idling. The road sloped downhill toward a river; the parking brake barely held. I stalled it three times. Somehow the battery survived and I kept the car out of the water. A tractor appeared, then cyclists. Then more cyclists. Hill starts, nerves, and more throttle than I wanted followed. Finally, with the road clear, I opened it up. The sound of all six cylinders breathing through triple Webers was unforgettable. John was right—the engine was a beast!

Back at his place, John invited me to Los Angeles for his show, SoCal Vintage BMW. Over 500 cars, he said. I booked a flight that night. That trip became an annual pilgrimage and over the years our friendship grew. Through John, my involvement in the BMW community deepened in ways I never expected.

On a recent shoot with the 2000 Touring, I asked him why he was so open about sharing his collection. He said these cars are magical, that no two are alike, and that they all have stories. Putting people behind the wheel teaches them something every time, and teaches him too.

That is what makes John Barlow a hero. It's not because he owns incredible cars, but because he shares them. He opens his garage and is free with his time and his trust. Looking back, I can't imagine how different my life would be if he hadn't done that for me.

Heroes do not always wear capes; sometimes they hand you the keys.





BMW Car Club
of America
Inland Empire Chapter

Inland Empire Chapter

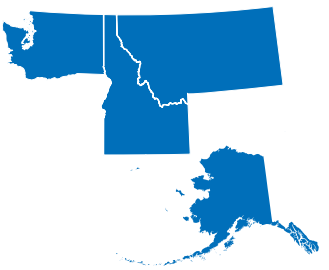
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CHAPTER EVENTS

Spring Driving Tour, TBA

Summer Driving Tour, TBA

Barlow Ranch Club BBQ, TBA

Sept.:
Grant Park Club Car Show

THE **MECHANIC WHO WOULDN'T QUIT**: **ERIC EDWARDS** AND THE ART OF SHOWING UP

BY PATRICK PROTHE

Eric Edwards lies on his back under a BMW E30 wagon, concrete cold against his shoulders, wrestling with a transmission for the third time in as many years. On the ground beside him, his wife Kayley guides the German gearbox into alignment. Most marriages might not survive one catastrophic rebuild, let alone three. Then again, most mechanics don't take over a failing family business during a family medical crisis.

"How many women do you know who would willingly crawl under your car on jack stands in the driveway and lie with you on the concrete, shoulder to shoulder, and help you muscle out a transmission?" Eric asks with genuine wonder. The answer, in his case, is precisely one.

In 2019, Eric's mother suffered a stroke. His father, who ran Boyd Motor Werks for over a decade, could either keep the business or care for his wife. There was no debate. Eric stepped up, transitioning from part-time help to full owner of Portland's BMW specialist shop. His father hasn't been back since. This wasn't Eric's plan. He'd deliberately tried to avoid making cars his career, pursuing construction and machining instead. "Cars have always been a passion. I just tried not to turn it into a career," he admits. "It just didn't work for me."



The shop survived the 2008 financial collapse, when the full-service automotive facility his father had envisioned became "a lube shop at that point" just to keep the doors open. Now Eric was inheriting a business still finding its footing, in an industry facing unprecedented challenges, while his father devoted himself to his mother's recovery.

Heroes don't always choose their moment. Sometimes the moment chooses them.



Around the time Eric took over Boyd Motor Werks, he connected with an importer who made annual trips to Germany, filling shipping containers with cars for the American market. When photos arrived of the exact E30 wagon Eric wanted, he didn't hesitate. "Yeah, that's the one. This one right here."

What rolled off the container in Portland bore little resemblance to those photographs. "Everything was rusted underneath the car," Eric says. The fuel tank wouldn't hold fuel. Brake lines had corroded beyond function. The imported dream had become a nightmare of hidden damage. Most people would have cut their losses, but Eric saw an opportunity.

What followed was an 18-month COVID-era restoration on evenings and weekends. Eric and Kayley embarked on a complete ground-up rebuild—replacing the subframe, fuel tank, all fuel and brake lines. When the initial test drive revealed a slipping clutch, he installed a brand-new crate engine he'd been saving since 1997.

When that engine's rings collapsed from decades of storage, he pulled it again.

Custom oversized pistons. Multiple machine shop visits. Countless hours



wrestling with German engineering while his wife held flashlights and steadied transmissions. "Might have been close to a divorce a time or two on that one," Eric admits with the rueful laugh of someone who survived both mechanical and marital challenges, "But we got through it." The wagon became proof that things worth saving are worth the effort no matter how many times you have to pull the engine.

Running Boyd Motor Werks today means navigating challenges that would have seemed unimaginable to his father's generation. COVID brought an epidemic of abandoned vehicles—cars left in the lot for years, owners unreachable, requiring legal lien processes to clear. One vehicle has sat for five years, its owner presumed dead from COVID complications.

Even more challenging is the parts availability crisis. Working on an E39 M5 engine, Eric discovered that BMW discontinued the essential timing tensioners and has no plans to reintroduce them.. The economics are brutal: $30,000-$40,000 just to start the machining process, serving a limited market. "It's kind of hard to invest into something like that when you don't have thousands of people waiting for it," he explains.

Cars sit in his shop, waiting for parts that may never be manufactured again. Owners face impossible choices. Eric maintains honest communication, treating people with respect even when delivering bad news. That's what heroes do—they tell the truth.

Eric and his father are collaborating on restoring a pickup truck that's been in the family for decades—a three-generation project that brings together grandfather, father, and Eric's 10-year-old son around shared mechanical challenges and family history.

"We're gonna put a 350 small block with a 400 transmission behind it. Just make it a driver, you know, nothing special, just a driver that my son and my dad and I can enjoy."

His son has already announced his claim on the E30 wagon, threatening to be "mad" if Eric ever sells it. Eric, remembering wrecking three cars and blowing up two engines in his own first year of driving, plans to wait considerably longer before handing over those keys.

From spotting a BMW 1600 through a chain-link fence to running an amazing and respected shop that does right by its customers, Eric's story illustrates what happens when automotive passion meets genuine responsibility. Through family crisis, failed engines, and impossible parts shortages, he shows up and does the work. Every day. Because that's what heroes do—they keep showing up.





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Oregon Chapter

Portland, Oregon

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CHAPTER EVENTS

We hold monthly drives. Please check our website for the dates and details.

Visit our website for more information and events!

bmworegoncca.com

BMW **RENAISSANCE MAN**

BY ANDY WIEST

"I think a hero is any person really intent on making this a better place for all people." — *Maya Angelou*

It is not an exaggeration to say that David Lightfoot is a beloved pillar in the Pacific Northwest BMW community. I do not use the term "pillar" lightly. Being a self-described car guy from high school, he discovered BMWs in 1978 and joined the predecessor club to the BMW CCA, the BMW Automobile Club of America. In 2000, the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the ACA joined the BMW CCA, where he simply continued his active contributions to the BMW community for 44 years in various capacities.



What David liked first about the BMW club was simply the cars' native appeal—conservative exteriors coupled with sports car performance. He also enjoyed the events the club held, but his favorite was High Performance Driving Events. These remain his biggest passion as a club member and instructor to this day.

Since then, he has owned multiple BMWs, including an E21 320i, E28 M5, 2002 Touring, E30 325ix, E36 328i, and an R53 Mini Cooper S JCW. He currently has an i3 as a daily driver, an F87 M2 as his track car and a Z1 as a show/fun car.

Once in the club, he began writing for *Zündfolge*, the chapter's print magazine, which is still online at bmw-club-psr.org and includes an archive of all the print copies; it's a fascinating historical library. He ultimately became its Editor-in-Chief, but I am getting ahead of myself. He joined the chapter's board in July 1982 as the vice president, and only a year later he was serving as chapter president. Since then, he has been a board member in various capacities with only a one-year gap until the present. A short summary of his service is truly in order: President, Vice President, Activities Director, Track Program Director, Treasurer, Secretary, Driving Events Coordinator, and *Zündfolge* Editor (for over 24 years). A mere cold listing of his official positions does not do him justice.



He has also been an HPDE for the club since 1983, teaching numerous drivers (including this author) how to fully enjoy their BMWs. He has also led many driving tours, and directed multiple successful club events large and small, including the chapter's recent 50+2 celebration.

Beyond his direct social and leadership contributions to the club, David is also an accomplished author, writing the book *BMW Z4: Design, Development and Production: How BMW Creates the Ultimate Driving Machines* in 2004 (It's still available on Amazon, BTW!), a great deep dive into how the E85 was developed. He has also written for *Roundel* since 1984. This is all beyond the innumerable articles he wrote for *Zündfolge*.

David is an avid BMW collector, specifically models and books. He has an amazing collection of over 600 1/43 scale models, but his defining pride and joy is his library of over 1,000 BMW-related books, which is allegedly more than BMW Classic has! He has an entire section of his house dedicated to it and it is an awesome

sight to see and experience. David generously shares these collections with his friends at social gatherings he regularly hosts at his house. If anyone has a question about BMW history or wants to win at BMW trivia, David is the sage to consult. He will answer your question with personalized stories, pithy humor and comfortable aplomb.

David's affable, approachable, and friendly nature—not to mention his great sense of humor—are at the heart of what he has added to the BMW community and the BMW CCA. He does not just contribute to the club; he contributes to the lives of others in a positive way. BMWs and the club are just his conduit. David is a true BMW hero!



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Puget Sound Chapter

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CHAPTER EVENTS

We will hold HPDEs on March 8, April 16, May 21, June 24, July 16, August 21 and September 24. All are at Pacific Raceways except the July event, which is at Ridge Motorsports Park.

April:
Cascade Foothills Tour
May:
Stanwood to Edison Tour
June:
Sun Mountain Lodge Tour
July:
Tour to the Ridge
July:
Deutsch Marque Car Show
August 22:
M-Car Day at Griots Garage
August:
Whidbey Island Tour
Sept.:
Oregon Coast Tour

BMW Car Club
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Roadrunner Chapter

Roadrunner Chapter
Scottsdale, Arizona

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CHAPTER EVENTS

May:
Devil's Highway Tour – Spring Edition

Events and so much more on our website:
roadrunnerbmw.org

ZENTRUM AND PERFORMANCE CENTER **EXPERIENCE**

BY JOSH KREEGER

My heroes are the engineers, driving instructors, and all the staff who make BMW such an exceptional product and world-class experience. While BMW may be known for over-engineering their cars, it's their unmatched attention to detail, sound engineering, and rigorous testing that truly make a BMW the Ultimate Driving Machine.



Josh approves the Spartanburg performance center.

My introduction to BMW was a 1993 325i with a manual transmission, followed later by a BMW 540—both purchased by my father. I had the privilege of learning to drive in those cars, and I was instantly hooked. Whether it's an inline six, a V8, or a four-cylinder engine, BMW engineers have mastered the art of crafting silky-smooth powertrains that deliver exhilarating performance and inspire complete driver confidence. As a young man, I didn't yet appreciate the depth of engineering and quality that define a BMW. As an adult, I've come to truly understand and admire everything that goes into creating a BMW.

I was humbled to have the privilege of visiting (twice!) the BMW X plant in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where all X models are built for the world. The engineers who designed the plant and its production processes created nothing short of a masterpiece. Watching X models take shape at an astounding pace was mesmerizing. It remains one of the most unforgettable automotive experiences I've ever had.

After touring the Zentrum Museum in South Carolina and seeing the progression and history of BMW's iconic vehicles and race cars, I was able to experience their capabilities firsthand at the BMW Performance Center. I was able to drive multiple M cars as well as X vehicles on a variety of test tracks. The engineering behind the X lineup is second to none. The off-road course at Spartanburg demonstrated that these vehicles can conquer virtually any terrain, all while maintaining comfort, class, and composure. The result is a level of confidence and reassurance no other manufacturer can match.

Following that, I was fortunate to drive several M cars and other BMWs on a closed course with professional instruction. From the moment I arrived, the hospitality was nothing short of first-class. The driving instruction was clear, precise, and incredibly informative—elevating

At the BMW Performance Center, your F87 M2 Comp awaits.





The Zentrum features several incredible BMWs, including the LCI F80 M3 Competition in Yas Marina Blue Metallic.

the entire experience and deepening my appreciation for the engineering brilliance behind every BMW. From the engines to the transmissions, from the brakes to the chassis, no detail is overlooked before a finished product reaches the market.

Having driven other performance and exotic brands, including Porsche, McLaren, and Lamborghini, I can say that nothing is as satisfying or as exhilarating as a BMW. With proper instruction and in the right hands, these cars can truly do it all.

BMWs not only perform exceptionally well; they also provide sophistication, comfort, and an unmatched driving experience. For that, I'd like to thank my heroes: The engineers, employees, and staff who make the BMW experience truly world-class.



The Zentrum features the No 56 BMW M3 GT2.


Paul Bracq signed E36

A **HERO** AMONG US

BY MIKE AGRAAN

My BMW racing heroes are Bill Auberlen, Will Turner, and Samantha Tan. Bill for his longevity as a BMW race car driver and being the IMSA Sports Car Championship all-time win leader, Will for his unwavering support and commitment to having a BMW race team, and Samantha for breaking down barriers as a team owner and driver for a championship race team. Samantha has improved as a driver every season and taken brand awareness to a whole new level via social media.

My hero car is a 2024 G87 M2 owned by Sacramento Valley Chapter's Carlos Fernandez. The G87 is a tribute to the Warsteiner sponsored E30 M3 DTM racecar that ran in the series from 1987 to 1992.

Every hero has an origin and Carlos' story started by enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in 2003. Carlos served from 2003 to 2007, and was stationed in Twentynine Palms, California. He was deployed twice to combat in Iraq in 2004 and in 2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with Marine Support Squadron 374.

Carlos acquired his first BMW while he was in the Marine Corps. Recently returned from his first deployment, Carlos was a Volkswagen guy and looking at a VW MkIV R32. The $30,000 price tag (in 2005!) had him looking elsewhere.



Carlos found an Orient Blue metallic 2004 BMW E46 325i with a beige interior and only 9,000 miles on it. Carlos loved the styling, craftsmanship, and refinement of the BMW. His second BMW was an Orient Blue (beige interior) 2006 E60 530i, which he had for about a year before trading it in for a 2008 E92 328i coupe with a six-speed in 2010. The E92 was Space Grey Metallic with a black interior. Carlos' mods included H&R lowering springs, a BMW performance exhaust, BMW Performance SSK, VMR wheels, and then later a set of AG wheels.

Carlos traded the E92 328i in on an Interlagos Blue E60 M5 with a black interior for the extra room and two additional doors, but the extra horsepower and intoxicating sound of the V10 were a plus! Carlos made OEM+ mods to his E60 M5, including H&R lowering springs, a stainless-steel Super Sprint section 1 and 2, a section 3 Eisenmann race exhaust, a tune from Fast Attack Motorsports, and 20" staggered DPE 3-piece forged aluminum wheels.

Carlos sold the M5 to make room for his next—and current—project, an Alpine White 2024 G87 M2, which he got in October 2025 and immediately set out to customize. He started with H&R springs to lower the stance, then 20" white mesh Variant wheels. The Variant wheels are wrapped with Michelin PS4s with 305s in the rear. Engine and performance mods include MST intakes, MAD oil cooler and skid plate, a Dahler tune, a Milltek single mid-section, and a MAD downpipe. Styling mods include Turner Motor Sports yellow daytime running lights, a TMS front lip, and a paint-matched Suvneer four-piece full carbon wing.

The white-on-white G87 looked stunning as it was, but Carlos was inspired by the E30 M3 DTM race car in Warsteiner livery. He began researching various companies to bring his vision to life. He worked with a company in Canada called Massive Brakes that also does race car liveries. Upon





completion, the wrap was shipped to Imperial Works in Sacramento for installation and additional details to complete the project.

The finished product is nothing short of spectacular, a modern homage to the great E30 DTM Warsteiner race car driven by Steve Soper. The car is a showstopper and favorite at local cars and coffees and events in the Sacramento and Bay Areas as well as bigger events like Bimmer Invasion. Carlos hopes to bring and showcase the car the next Legends of the Autobahn in 2026. His G87 exemplifies the modern sportiness of BMW while paying tribute to one of the greatest eras of BMW racing.

Carlos Fernandez has been a Sacramento Valley BMWCCA member since 2011 and was a member of the Chapter Board from 2019 to 2024. He enjoys attending cars and coffees, the monthly events (dinner meetings, Bimmers and Brews), and driving tours. Carlos enjoys hanging out with fellow BMW members, enthusiasts, and always likes talking about cars in general. I would like to thank Carlos for his service and his hero tribute G87 M2.

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CHAPTER EVENTS

We hold tech sessions, Bimmers Brews and driving tours monthly throughout the spring and summer.

August:
Delta Drive

Sept.:
Driving Tour to Lake Tahoe and Hellman-Ehrman Mansion Tour

DAN TACKETT: SAN DIEGO HERO

BY STEVEN HOVLAND

In every BMW CCA chapter, there are members whose contributions go far beyond showing up for events or polishing their cars on a Sunday morning. These are the people who quietly shape the culture of the club, elevate its programs, and inspire others to become better drivers, better instructors, and better stewards of the brand.

For the San Diego Chapter, one of those heroes is Dan Tackett. Dan's story isn't about a single heroic moment. It's about decades of dedication, leadership, and a deep belief that driving—when done properly—can be both exhilarating and transformative.

Dan has been a San Diego fixture for decades. His journey in performance driving began with autocrossing at just 17 years old, and those formative years set the foundation for a lifetime behind the wheel and instilled the discipline and enthusiasm that would define his career. Dan experienced Laguna Seca, Riverside, and Willow Springs as classrooms as much as racetracks, sharpening his skills and deepening his appreciation for precision, momentum, and respect for the machinery. Dan acknowledges he did not travel this path alone, crediting his development and success to Mike Dietel, the legendary Alpina importer in the 1980s. Mike's influence helped shape Dan's understanding of BMW performance, preparation, and philosophy.



Dan's matched his enthusiasm for cars with an equally strong commitment to education and the joy of driving. Though he earned plenty of trophies, Dan found it more fun to drift around the track with passengers. "You can either get a good time or have a good time," Dan likes to say.

In the late 1990s, Dan turned an insurance-totaled BMW E36 M3 into a full race car and went on to compete in BMW Club Racing. The effort culminated in a major achievement: winning the I Stock Class Championship in 2000. The project embodied Dan's hands-on approach to driving—learning by building, refining by racing, and always pushing himself to improve.

What began as participation quickly evolved into leadership, as Dan took on increasingly important roles on the organizing team for the chapter's autocrosses and High-Performance Driving Schools. Dan showed countless members what their BMWs could really do—and how to do it responsibly. His calm demeanor, clear communication, and focus on fundamentals helped turn nervous novices into confident drivers and instilled respect for the car, the track, and the learning process.

Dan embraced the logistics, coordination, risk management and steady stream of volunteers and instructors involved with HPDEs, and helped grow the San Diego Chapter's program into

Organizing the first ""King of the Hill" Autocross in 1986. Mike Dietel in the M1.





Scott Hughes presents the Club Racing jacket... at the Nürburgring!

one of the region's most respected. Safety briefings were thorough. Instruction was deliberate and progressive. New instructors were mentored, not rushed. The result was a program that welcomed drivers of all experience levels while maintaining high standards—exactly what BMW CCA driving education is meant to be. Dan's influence extends well beyond the driver's seat, shaping the next generation of volunteers and instructors who now carry the program forward.

Few tracks capture the imagination of enthusiasts like the Nürburgring, and Dan couldn't resist the annual BMW Club Europa Nürburgring School, where each 170-turn lap teaches something new. Each car demands a different approach. As an instructor for lead/follow laps, Dan learned how to drive the track precisely and at speed while mostly looking in the rearview mirror. These experiences didn't stay in Germany, though—they came back with him, enriching his instruction and storytelling at local events. For students, hearing first-hand insights from someone who has navigated the Green Hell across nearly two decades of visits adds depth and authenticity to the learning experience. Dan even volunteered to be the organizer for all international participants from outside of Europe for 10 years.

At the heart of Dan's BMW passion is the E46 M3. He cites its understated design, perfectly judged proportions and S54 engine as a high-water mark for BMW M. Dan frequently describes his F87 M2 as the spiritual successor to that formula, calling it "the E46 M3 reincarnated" for its compact dimensions, muscular stance, and driver-focused character. Dan is unapologetically a driving enthusiast first and a brand loyalist second, shown by his racing an Acura NSX for seven years and recently purchase of a Porsche Cayman GTS.

In 2008, after 15 years in finance, Dan's passion for driving inspired him purchase two driving schools. The American Driving School in San Diego has trained countless new drivers using some of the same concepts Dan taught (and was taught) on the track. has a talent for meeting drivers where they are, whether they just earned their learners' permit, are attending their first HPDE, or want to refine advanced techniques. He understands how confidence builds gradually and that the best instructors empower rather than intimidate.

The true measure of Dan's impact can be seen in drivers who discovered a lifelong passion for track events, instructors who found their voice and confidence, and events that ran smoothly because someone had already thought through every detail. Dan didn't seek recognition, but simply showed up, again and again, because he believed in the value of what the chapter offered. His leadership helped shape the San Diego Chapter's reputation for high-quality driving education.

Heroism in a car club isn't trophies or lap records. It's early mornings at the track, late-night planning, patient instruction, and a commitment to doing things the right way. Dan Tackett embodies all of that and more. Through decades of service, a lifetime of driving experience, and a genuine desire to help others improve, he has left an indelible mark on the San Diego Chapter. Dan stands as a reminder that the greatest heroes are often the ones who teach us how to drive—not just faster, but better.

How to have a good time in an autocross.



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CHAPTER EVENTS

May 24:
Driving Tour

August 9:
2026 Driving Tour

Visit sdbmwcca.com for more information and events.

SALUTE TO RETIRED BMW CCA NATIONAL & SONORA CHAPTER HEROES

BY QUENTIN PETERSON
PHOTOS BY JULIA OLSEN-PETERSON

Roundel and *BimmerLife* excel on so many levels and provide us with entertaining news about BMW, our club and individual chapters. There simply is no other car club's publication or trade journal that informs and engages with so much humor and insight while avoiding pretentiousness. Given the theme of Heroes combined with recent retirements (and one not-so-recent death) of long-time contributors, it's especially appropriate to recognize the same. Perhaps, given the depth of their labors over the years for our club, this recognition is inadequate, but it's imperative to mention that there are others who are staying on and/or have taken up the tasks who also deserve accolades. A listing of everyone who makes a difference at the national level would overflow these allotted pages, so here's a short list: Satch Carlson, Mike Miller, Rob Siegel, Jackie Jouret and Brian Morgan.

We cannot fail to salute our chapter's own heroes too, and this praise is also overdue.

Aloix Jobst was the original owner of a dealership, and as his son Chris like to recount, one day he came home and told his wife that he had found a car, the New Class BMW, which was practical enough to take the children to school during the week and sporty enough to drive on an autocross on the weekends. Chris became a sales associate and continued selling BMWs at the dealership long after his father sold to Bib Stilwell.

Bib Stillwell was a racing legend in Melbourne, Australia. From 1962-65, he won four consecutive Australian drivers' championships. He opened his first car dealership at the age of 22.





In 1966, he surprised the Australian motoring world by becoming a Ford dealer there. He learned to fly in the '60s and established an aviation business that distributed Beechcraft and Learjet aircraft. He sold so well that he rose in the Learjet hierarchy; in 1979, he left Australia for Tucson, Arizona, to be senior vice-president of Gates Learjet Corporation and three years later, the Learjet Corporation President. He bought the original Gran Prix Motors Dealership in Tucson. You could tell that this wasn't just another dealership when you entered his showroom: there was an open cockpit, a vintage pop-riveted burgundy F1racer (with skinny tires), an orange BMW M1 and a Ford GT40 in Gulf Motorsport colors on the showroom floor, alongside the current models of BMW for sale. Balfour Walker's era photographs of Formula One racers and events adorned the walls.

Bib hired Carola Myers to follow up sales and service with satisfaction surveys, and she edited the Sonora Chapter newsletter, *Die Zundkerze* (*The Sparkplug*), as well as initiated the Sonora Chapter Charter. Dave Lansing and Fred Gilmore provided mechanical expertise for the dealership, and they were so good at it that they each left to run their own independent BMW repair shop in town. Bib found a service manager for his dealership, John Horsman, from racing contacts. John provided engineering expertise to several European racing teams at famous circuits after graduating from Oxford with honors and was a gentleman through and through. Bib and John flew on a Learjet to weekend races, having the racing cars trailered ahead of time.

While there are too many general managers of BMW Tucson and far too many past presidents of the Sonora Chapter—not to mention other notable board members and HPDE instructors—to list here, we thank them all as the heroes of the Sonora Chapter.



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CHAPTER EVENTS

Chapter dinner is on the Second Thursday of each month, featuring a different location each time. Locations and rsvp details are on our website.

Board meetings are conducted on Zoom every other month (next will be April, 2026), and are open to all members. Contact us via our website for an invitation ahead of time.

Drive tours are scheduled for every month in 2026



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Hawaii Chapter

Hawaii Chapter

Honolulu, Hawaii

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The Hawaiian phrase *nō ka 'oi* appropriately describes what it's like living in Hawaii: It's the best!

The BMW CCA's Hawaii Chapter members hail from the four main islands of Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai, with BMW Centers located on each of the first three.

Hawaii is absolutely the perfect and most engaging place to take in ocean breezes, mountain air, sunny skies, and starlit evenings. It's truly *nō ka 'oi*—the best!


Charles Nestle

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Los Angeles Chapter

Los Angeles Chapter

Westlake Village, California

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The Los Angeles Chapter held its first meeting on April 17, 1970. Since then we have grown from the original 25 members to our current membership of over 4,000. In addition to driving schools and Tire Rack Street Survival classes, each year we traditionally organize a wine tour, a winter party, and a major museum event. We also host Pazifik Eskapades, a weekend getaway centered around a trip to the BMW Performance Center at Thermal. We hold smaller local events as well, and we often team with other car-centric organizations featuring BMWs—there are only so many weekends in a year, and sometimes it's fun to share one with another organization. We are always open to helping members organize driving tours, Cars & Coffee mornings, BMW dealership tours, and visits to local independent shops. If you have a great idea for an event, with or without our BMWs, contact a board member. We will help you make it happen!


Kyle van Hoften

BMW Car Club
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Sin City Chapter

Sin City Chapter

Las Vegas, Nevada

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Las Vegas is an amazing city. It never sleeps, and everywhere you look there are many entertainment options vying for your undivided attention. As a result, Sin City Chapter members have a lot of choices on what we get to do for fun. As a club, we work hard to create events that will capture their attention and get them to click YES on that RSVP!

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Sierra Chapter

Sierra Chapter

Reno, Nevada

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We are a bunch of BMW guys and gals who enjoy these great vehicles. The purpose of the BMW CCA is to enhance the BMW and MINI ownership experience. Our chapter's mission is simple: Have fun!

Chapter meetings occur monthly (strictly voluntary) to plan local events. The countryside we are blessed with here in the Sierra Nevada offers some spectacular driving scenery. Club road trips to the California wine country, scenic roads around Lake Tahoe and elsewhere



are all on the shopping list of the Sierra Chapter's activities. New friendships develop. Check out this year's activities on our events calendar!

This chapter emphasizes driving events that will improve your skills behind the wheel, make you a safer driver, and be lots of fun in the process.

Chapter meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at Bill Pearce BMW. We look forward to seeing you there!



BMW Car Club
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BMW CCA

The **Official** BMW
Enthusiast Club



OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP IMPROVES PERFORMANCE.

Meet fellow performance enthusiasts on the street and on the track with the benefits exclusive to members of the **BMW Car Club of America**.






As the **official BMW enthusiast group**, the **BMW CCA** offers exclusive opportunities to celebrate performance BMWs, including driving events, **Club Racing**, and the official **M Chapter**.

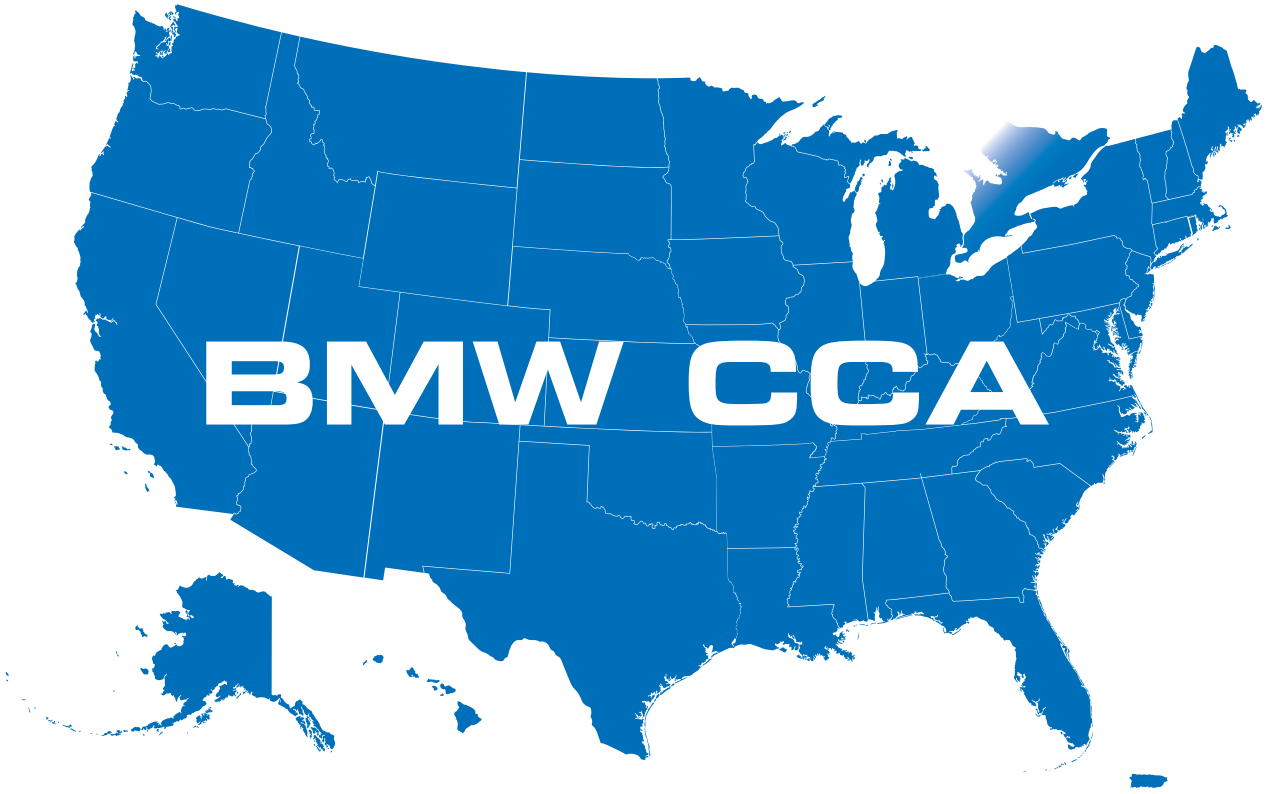
Plus, BMW CCA members receive award-winning **BMW Car Club Magazines *Roundel* and *BimmerLife***, BimmerLife online, chapter membership and programming, regional and national events, exclusive members-only merchandise, and much more!

- Exclusive **rebates up to $1,000** on new and CPO BMWs
- Discounts on **BMW service** at participating dealerships
- Discounts on **BMW Performance Driving Schools**
- Discounts on **BMW factory and museum tours**
- Discounts on a **wide range of car products and services**

WWW.BMWCCA.ORG/MEMBERSHIPBENEFITS

BMW CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

NON-GEOGRAPHIC CHAPTERS




E31 Chapter


X Chapter


2002 Forever Chapter


E31 Chapter


Sean Grove

M Chapter

Kyle van Hoften

BMW CCA features five Non-Geographic Chapters keyed to specific interests and BMW models for members to enjoy throughout the U.S. and Canada.

In addition to the original non-geographic chapters focused on the E31 and E30 BMW models, BMW CCA also has three non-geographic chapters to serve those whose interests focus on the M, X, or classic 2002 vehicles.

CHAPTERS

198 M Chapter

200 2002 Forever

202 X Chapter

204 E31 Chapter

206 E30 Chapter

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M Chapter

M Chapter

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Get the latest information and events at mchapter.org.

THE UNSUNG M CHAPTER HERO: KYLE VAN HOFTEN



For many years we've been lucky enough to work with some incredible people who do amazing things for this club. It takes special people to do what we do, to volunteer our time and efforts to ensure BMW CCA members have a fantastic experience.

With the theme of this issue being "Heroes," there's one person who epitomizes the definition: Kyle Van Hoften. I've known him for many years, running into him at countless CCA events like Oktoberfest, MiX, IMSA corrals, and Legends of the Autobahn. He's a great fitness buff, incredible family man, and faithfully dedicated to our CCA brethren. In the last few years, I was able to work directly with Kyle, running our CCA booth at Bimmer Invasion of LA and recruiting new members into our beloved club. Having one of the largest booths at the show takes a lot of coordination and vision to ensure we present ourselves well to prospective members. As the primary organizer, Kyle essentially volunteered himself to do quite a lot of the heavy lifting, including courting multiple display cars, vetting sponsors to partner with CCA, coordinating volunteers to staff our booth, and helping prep others on what to expect. This is all in addition to his main duties of media coverage for *BimmerLife*, where his impeccable photography and passionate writing skills really shine in every article.

Life as a volunteer can be draining, as we'll spend the entire day promoting the club and interacting with hundreds of BMW enthusiasts. Kyle's energy is so infectious, many have a hard time keeping up. But that's what makes him Kyle. All one has to do is listen to his passion, over and over again, when he talks about CCA. He's a hero to many, especially me, as no one can outwork him. He continues to impress in many ways, and one day when I grow up, I want to be like Kyle—a hero well defined.

Paul Seto



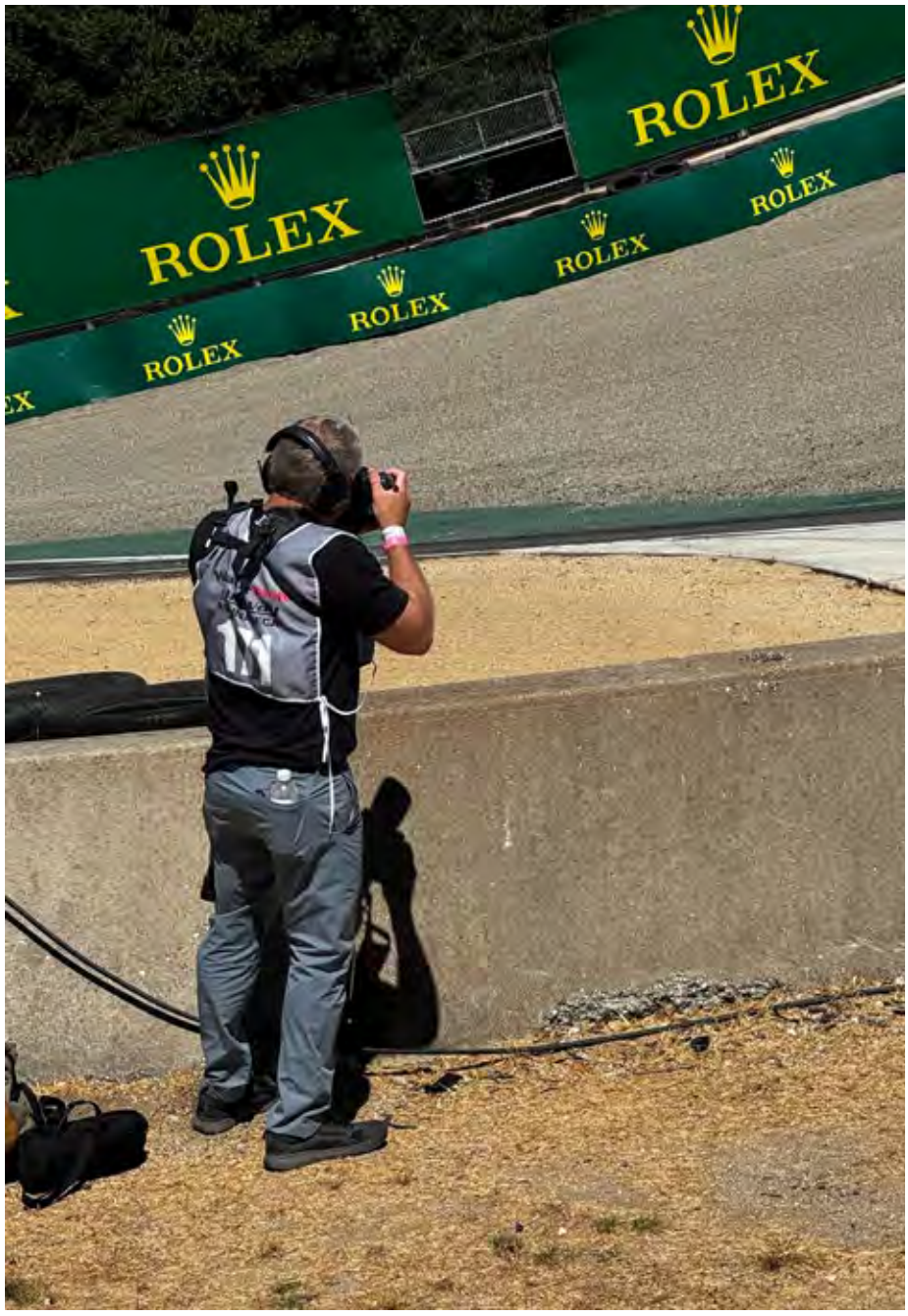




When the *BimmerLife* team shared that this issue will celebrate Heroes, it took barely a hot second for us in the M Chapter to determine exactly what, or in this case, who we had to recognize. As Paul highlighted above, Kyle is a familiar name to many of you even if you don't know it. He has such a passion for BMWs and the club that I'm certain he bleeds blue and white.

In 2023, the M Chapter hosted a special M car feature at CSF Radiators HQ in the Los Angeles area. It was a big event, attended by hundreds with big-name vendors present. We knew we had to come correct. Kyle was one of our first calls for help. Come the day of the show, not only did Kyle orchestrate a beautiful display of cars surrounding our booth, but Kyle also made the long drives back and forth through L.A. traffic to get the tents and tables, hauled in his gorgeous E60 Wagon (that also needed to be in the show), helped us set it up, break down—and captured the entire event through his lens—and wrote the article. And if all that wasn't enough, he somehow manages to go through the day shaking hands, telling stores, smiling, and making sure everyone is having a great time. I hope everyone has a Kyle in their life and can find a fitting moment like this to tell them how much they are appreciated. So Kyle, you are for sure, without a doubt, one of my heroes! Thank you for being the awesome person that you are.

Jeff Cowan



STRIVE TO DRIVE

EVERY 2002 DRIVER IS A HERO!

BY PETER H. BEREN

When you are driving cars over 50 years old, every 2002 driver becomes a hero. These cars are cranky, their parts are cranky, their drivers get cranky, and they endure poor gasoline quality and the distracted drivers that we share the road with.

While we know our cars fairly well, one never knows when the next part is going to fail. Ignition points, giubo couplings, wheel bearings, radiator hoses, brake lines, nuts and bolts that self-loosen, oil filter gaskets that seemingly leak on their own, carburetors that self-untune, and used parts giving up the ghost simply because they are no longer available, to name a few. We have all been there; the car is running great until you are 30 miles, 30 minutes, or three hours into a trip. Then the gremlins begin to procreate. If you are lucky, the diagnosis is quick and easy, requiring a quick turn of the wrench, a bit more oil, a fuse replacement, or a simple adjustment of something that you are sure you had taken care of at home prior to departure. If you're lucky enough to be traveling with a group of fellow 2002ers who have a spare part or two, have the perfect tool, have the expertise to fix the problem, or just plain old moral support for your situation. These are the heroes in my book.

Once you get past these pesky gremlins, you are in the 2002 world—a world all its own, a throwback to the OG Ultimate Driving Machine. By today's standards, the 2002 is a small, lightweight, underpowered car. The flip side is that the 2002 rewards momentum, handles fairly well, and is mostly predictable. They are analog masters from a time when cars were meant to be driven with a carefree attitude absent from modern cars—even modern BMWs. Yet they provide a huge amount of fun, finding their reward in cruising down roads most of us just blow by on the interstates, finding unusual eating establishments, being carefree while mostly ignoring posted speed limits, and grinning from ear to ear the whole time. Only heroes can and get to do this!



The camaraderie of a group drive zooming down the road, around corners, over hills and back down into valleys, creating memories and making friends with like-minded 2002ers. Sharing tales over lunch, crying about persistent problems and gremlins, how to rectify them, then jumping back the in the cars to do it all over on the next section of road, or the next day. Heroes get made time and time again.

If you are reading this, it is because you have been or will be bitten by the 2002 bug. I encourage you to join nearly 100 like-minded 2002ers at the MidAmerica 02 Fest in the Eureka Springs, Arkansas, in late April, 2026, or at The Vintage in the North Carolina mountains (not just 2002s, but we will forgive them) to see and meet all of the heroes that make up the 2002 world. If traveling is not in your plans, do not forget about your local BMWCCA chapters. Their cars & coffee events, drives and social events all bring these heroes together. Many local chapters have strong vintage groups as well.

Speaking of local groups, the 2002 Forever Chapter welcomes the Nor'East 02ers as a sub-chapter. We look forward to all of the heroes in that group promoting the 2002 lifestyle and growing with the 2002 Forever chapter.

Driving 50-year-old cars makes a hero out of us all, preserving, modifying, and creating great cars for everyone to enjoy.









BMW Car Club
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2002 Forever Chapter

Please visit the 2002FAQ for local '02 groups, Cars & Coffee events and auto museums.

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Monthly Zooms featuring people and topics near and dear to the 2002 world. See the BMWCCA calendar for updates.

April 9-11:
The Vintage in Maggie Valley, NC

April 27-29:
MidAmerica 02 Fest in Eureka Springs, AR

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CHAPTER EVENTS

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HERO X

BY SEAN TROY

A hero can appear to many in various different ways. My hero within the BMW brand is the first-generation E53 X5.

As a child growing up in a heavily involved BMW family, I'll never forget the first time my parents brought our new family vehicle home; it was a facelifted 2005 X5 4.4i Black Sapphire Metallic over Truffle. It was the coolest thing to me. The X5 embodied everything I loved about my parents' BMWs when I was a child, but in an SUV package that could also tow and carry our dogs.

My father modified this particular X5. My mother used it as a daily driver to take my little sister and me to school, and my father utilized it as an instructing tool. At the time, he volunteered his instructing services to numerous organizations, including the Ferrari Club, Porsche Club, and naturally, the BMW CCA.

He would load up the whole SUV with people and take them around racetracks and show them the "dos and don'ts" from his experience as a very successful race car driver. It was modified at the time with everything that was offered from Dinan. This includes their exhaust, throttle body, intake system, software etc. It was the ultimate "do-it-all" vehicle that I learned at a very young age, I couldn't live without owning.



My father used the X5 for driving instruction with the Ferrari Club, Porsche Club, and BMW CCA.

Not long after owning it, my mother suffered a traumatic heart issue that resulted in her life indirectly being saved by this E53 X5. From that point they grew even more special and I connected on a more sentimental level. Later, I owned my first E53 when in high school and my second shortly after, which was the exact same Black Sapphire Metallic over Truffle vehicle from my childhood.

That is where it all went downhill—or uphill depending on who you ask. My third E53 was my Imola 4.8iS, which to me was the ultimate of all of the E53s. I still have that one to this day; it is currently dismantled as I'm turning it into a tribute to the legendary X5LM (yes, including an engine conversion).



Ten years and 70 E53 X5s have passed. While visiting family, my wife was driving my daily-driver, a facelift six-speed 3.0 X5. An elderly driver executed an illegal U-turn in an intersection, colliding with my wife who was traveling at 45 mph. The impact sent the X5 airborne, where it tumbled before eventually landing on its side. This allowed her to be pulled out of the horrific accident with literally just bruises to her left side from the car's hard landing. It was at this moment I solidified my love and appreciation for the first generation X5's safety and build quality, but it solidified for my wife as well, as she now claims she will not daily drive anything other than an E53 X5.

As I type this, we are in the middle of restoring her one-of-50 Neiman Marcus Edition X5 to add to our current collection of over 20 currently owned E53 X5s of all model years and engine/transmission types—M54 to V8, auto and manuals alike.

A hero can be many different things to many different people. It can be a person, real or made up. It can be a brand, or more specifically a model within a brand. Though I have many loves within the BMW brand without a doubt, the one that I will never live without, and the one that my future children will not only be carried around in, but driving around in when that time comes, in nothing other than the first-generation E53 X5.







BMW Car Club
of America
E31 Chapter

E31 Chapter

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CHAPTER EVENTS

May 1-3:
Southeast Sharkfest in
Richmond, Virginia

HEROES: LONG-TERM OWNERS OF **BMW E31 8 SERIES** AUTOMOBILES

WRITTEN BY HENRY CHRISTOFF, E31 CHAPTER PRESIDENT
PHOTOS BY THE OWNERS LISTED



Jeff Zalkin – owned several E31s since 2001, 24 years of ownership

During the late 1980s and into the '90s, the E31 8 Series was considered the Ultimate Driving Experience and the flagship of the BMW automobile lineup. The E31 project began life in the summer of 1984. When considering the concept and development of the E31, the heroes start with Claus Luthe, Head of BMW Design at the time, who commissioned BMW designers under his command to produce exterior sketches for the new coupe. Of the many submissions presented to Luthe, he chose design drawings by Klaus Kapitza over other submissions for production in 1986. Hans Braun was responsible for interior design, so certainly Kapitza and Braun must be considered E31 heroes. As the project moved into production, the development team approached almost 1,200 staff—all unsung heroes to 8 Series owners.

The real heroes (can we say superheroes?) of the E31 8 Series community are the long-term owners, driving 8 Series automobiles for decades. These people brave daily commuting, long distance travel in a car that is 28 to 36 years old, and do it with style and bravery. They also quite possibly have a trunk full of spares or an AAA membership card in their wallet! These are a few of the modern E31 community's real heroes, out there driving BMW 8 Series automotive history.



Whitely, pictured here with his 850i and 850CSi, has loved his E31s for over 20 years.



Jenny Ford – 1992 850Ci, purchased in 1995, 30 years


Karl Eppel – 1995 850CSi, owned 19 years


Kelly Keel – Original owner, 28 years 1997 840Ci


Claus Luthe, Head of BMW Design for the E31.


Klaus Kapitza designed the exterior of the E31.



Don Dallenbach has owned this 1991 850i since 1996.

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CHAPTER EVENTS

Please visit e30chapter.com for chapter events and information.

ABOUT THE **E30 CHAPTER**

The E30 3 Series BMW has proved to be not only one of the best BMWs ever produced, but one of the great automobiles of all time. With arguably the most diverse array of enthusiasts across the globe, the E30 Chapter's mission is to promote a common bond: the fanatical passion for the marque's most revered chassis and its culture.

The E30 Chapter is represented from coast to coast and beyond. Our members call 34 of the 50 U.S. states and Puerto Rico home, along with three Canadian provinces, Indonesia, and the UK. We're regular participants at the Vintage in North Carolina; we're your hosts for the E30 Picnic in Tacoma, Washington; and we're well represented at many gatherings of all sizes in between.

Check us out on the web, follow us on Instagram, and tag us at #E30chapter.



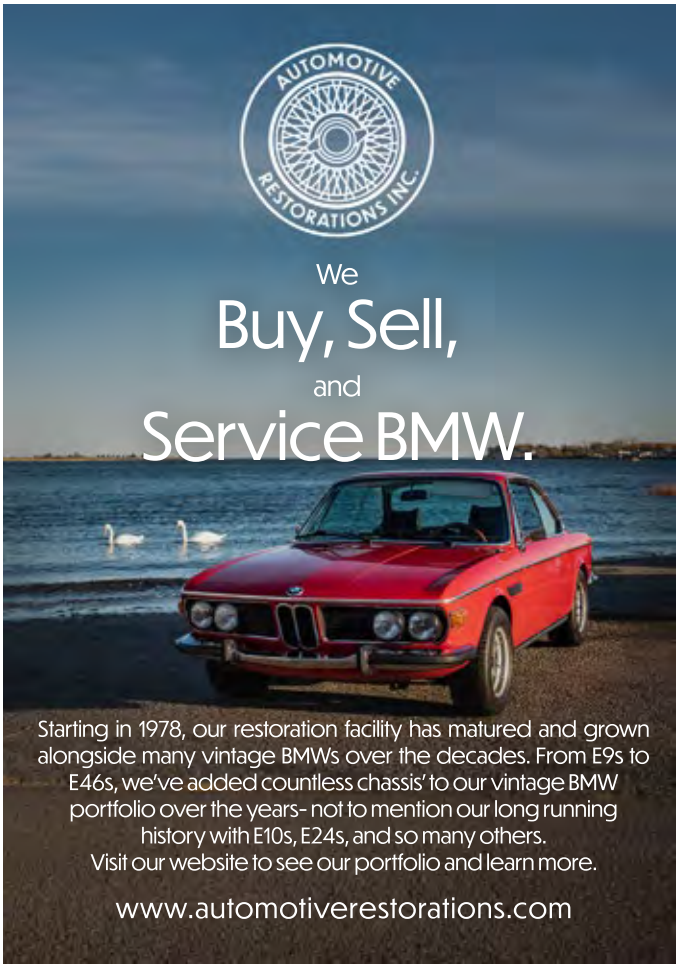
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BMW Car Club
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Jeff Caldwell
BMW CCA President

As you can probably imagine, I spend a good bit of time thinking about this great club. When I heard the theme of this *BimmerLife* issue was "Heroes," my job became exponentially easier. Why, you ask? Simply because I am surrounded by an incredible cast of heroes within the BMW CCA. I see your hard work and dedication every day. I'm thrilled with the opportunity to celebrate each and every one of you who give time and energy to make our club and community thrive.

I might be the President of the BMW CCA, but my job is relatively easy thanks to the efforts of our literal army of volunteers. It is no easy task to put on an event. First comes the idea. Then the planning calls begin, and it's time to start assembling a team. More calls and Teams meetings ensue. Then you gather supplies, get shirts printed, work with the venue, secure insurance, take time off work, travel to the event, execute, make sure everyone has a great time, clean up, pack up, load the car, travel home, and guess what...start planning the next one. Please understand that the list of tasks I just mentioned is woefully incomplete. There are a hundred other little things (and big ones) that go into making a drive, car show, track event, meeting, or dinner successful. I know this because I've been there. Regardless of all the events we've done, I'm continually in awe of the seemingly limitless energy and enthusiasm of BMW CCA volunteers. No one is getting paid. This is all done for the love of our community and a true desire to share the cars and friendship with anyone who might wish to join us.

Here's the deal, though. This doesn't happen alone. We're a team, and I can tell you without hesitation that the best is yet to come. From what I have seen all across the country, we are getting stronger. Membership is up, and the BMW CCA is growing for the first time since the pandemic. Why? Because our volunteers are out there every day promoting the club and showing others how special this community is. More importantly, they are inspiring the next generation of members by bringing people together for meaningful, fun, and rewarding experiences. From those experiences, friendships blossom, someone magically grabs you to volunteer, and the community reinforces itself from within. This has been the cycle in our club for nearly 60 years. We build our strength and the core of what we are as an organization on the hard work of our "army." It is really special to witness in action, and I am deeply grateful to do my little part hand-in-hand with all of you.

The BMW CCA is a club predicated on the love of BMW automobiles, but also equally on volunteerism. Any given weekend, all over the country, there are a host of BMW CCA events going on at the chapter, regional, or national level. What are you doing next weekend? If you aren't already...lend a hand at an event. Get involved. Help us make the club the best it can be.

With that in mind, I say to every volunteer, chapter leader, spouse, partner, child, member, or friend in our midst who continually pitches in to keep bringing us tons of cool stuff to do with cars. You all make the BMW CCA what it is. You are all my heroes.

Thank you, and I will definitely see you soon!





FROM CLASSIC TO CURRENT

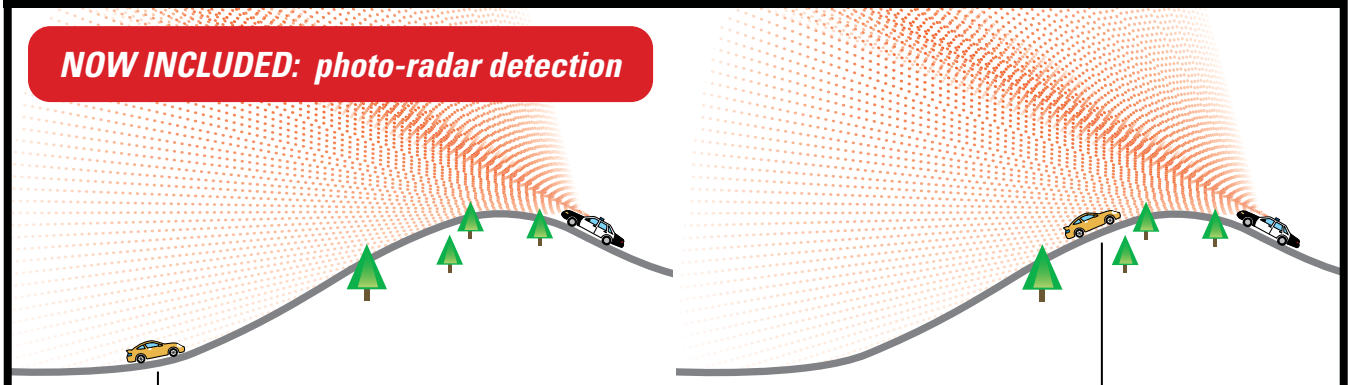
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SPRING/SUMMER 2026