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2018 FALL EDITION





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TORQUE OF THE TOWN

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COVER PHOTO

Photo By: Chris Stokes

Winding down a scenic back road, Chris Stokes got a great shot of a BMW doing what they do best: enjoying the twists and turns of a beautiful drive.





Dont forget to let friends know how great the Houston Chapter is!

The Board is looking for input from members to contribute ideas for next year

chris stokes

president

I pondered quite a bit about what to share in this newsletter. I could have provided a list of all the high-quality events that this chapter hosts or co-hosts. I could have called out names of individuals that are always there to lend a helping hand. I could have turned this into a 3-page article about what it is I like best about the Houston Chapter and its members. Then I thought, that's what the newsletter does each quarter. I then began to think about if I am going to write something worth reading, let's make it a staple to the newsletter and provide details you could only get from the Chapter President. I have decided to use this column to broadcast out our state of operations.

As we are wrapping up the 3rd quarter of 2018, our financial foundation is very good, but our membership target is not where we would like it. Due to the great leadership before me, we are a financially stable chapter, which provides us with a wide range of financial freedom. Our membership growth curve has hit an inflection point in the last year or two and is starting to show a declining trend. My focus during my term is to get our membership grown to over 2000 members. I will need help, lots of help.

I like to say "If we have members that can dream it and lead it, we can do it!". We are doing such a thing as we are trying out a new Karting program to see if that is something you and potential new members would enjoy. I would also like to see us continue to host events that range in appeal to the diverse demographics of our membership, maybe some seemingly culturally diverse outings. The Museum of Fine Arts 'Sculpted in Steel' exhibit and the Yellow Rose Distillery tour come to mind as examples of some previous club outings. What really makes these types of events great is that we get to experience it together.

Something else we want to focus on more is Chapter brand recognition. We are taking advantage of a mandatory image update from National and as we purchase a new Tent and event Flags, we are working on finding an apparel partner to help us produce chapter branded clothing and accessories. If there is someone out there that does this for a living, we'd love to hear from you. As I close out this column, I want to remind everyone that membership growth/retention is always a challenge for any membership organization. Our chapter is no different. With a chapter board that is just a small representation of the entire membership, we have a finite number of ideas and are always looking for new thoughts.

If you have an idea, no matter how big or small, please share it. Email: board@houston-bmwcca.com



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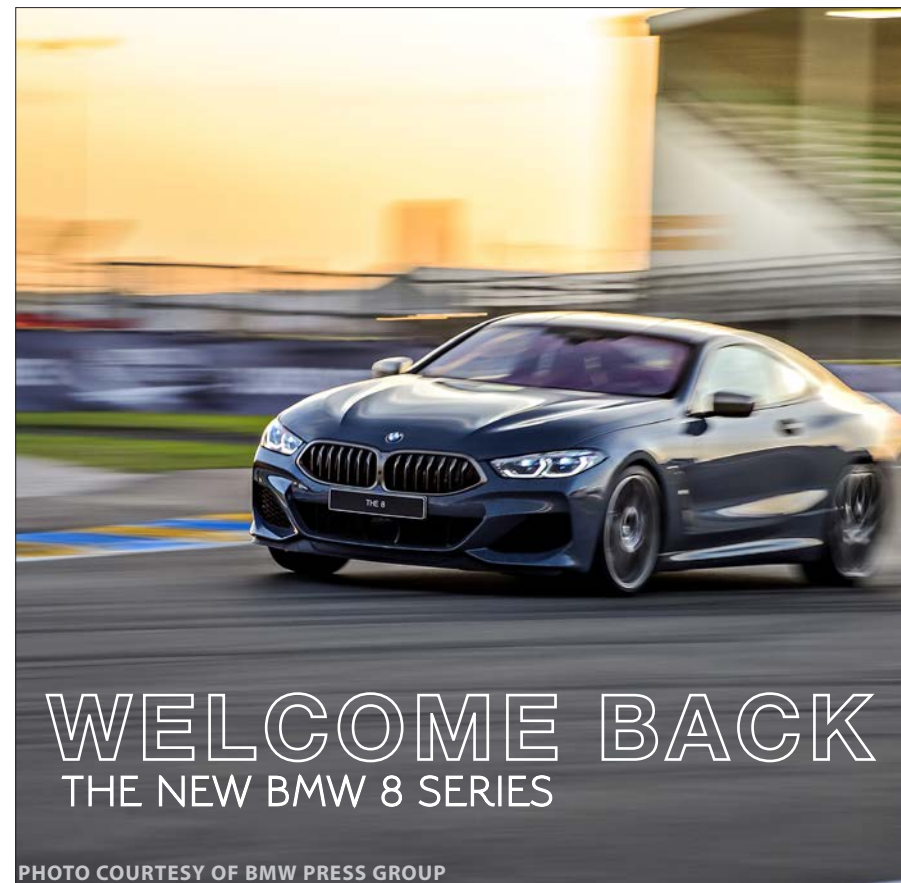
Christopher Hilton
ADVERTISING EDITOR

The Torque of the Town is the quarterly publication, mailed to all members in good standing of the HOUSTON BMW CCA (the club), a chapter of the BMW CCA and is not connected with BMW Na or BMW AG.

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Club Calendar of Events

A list of upcoming driving opportunities and social events.



WELCOME BACK THE NEW BMW 8 SERIES

PHOTO COURTESY OF BMW PRESS GROUP

November

- 11.10 Coffee Meet @ Cedar Creek Cafe
- 11.13 Board Meeting @ TBA
- 11.18 Autocross @ Houston Police Academy

December

- 12.8 Coffee Meet @ Cedar Creek Cafe
- 12.16 Autocross @ Houston Police Academy

January

- 1.1 Hair of the Dog
- 1.12 Coffee Meet @ Cedar Creek Cafe
- 1.20 Autocross @ Houston Police Academy
- 1.23 - 27 Houston Auto Show

THE RETURN OF A BEAST: Over the summer, BMW launched the new 8 series. BMW of Clear Lake hosted a fantastic coming out party for the next Bavarian machine to inherit the 8 series badge. The M850i xDrive Coupe M Performance model will come with the new V8 engine developed by the M division. The second, the 840d xDrive Coupe will come with a diesel powered inline 6. This car will not be available till next year, BMW Motorsport raced this car in the 2018 24 Hours of Le Mans. This is the second 8 series produced, the first was the E31 1989 - 1999. A soft top convertible will also be available later in 2019.

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2018 NEW MEMBERS

The Houston Chapter Board would like to welcome the following new members & thank the renewing members:

J. Rodney Whetstone	Richard Gordon Meninger	Josh Kane	Teresa Grace	Christophe Chung
Ken St. Aubin	Stephen Laney	Jenna Kabot	Garth Denyer	San Cheng
Chris Wright	Thomas Srnka	Evam Harris	Nick Janssen	Alfredo Garcia
Donald W Bond	Brian Simons	Claire Folwell	David C Finklea	David A Kaczynski
Kyle Watson	Karianne Yost	Dustin Dreisbach	Travis Milner	James Alan Andritsos
Brian Kidwell	Shawn Raymond DeMerse	Gabbie Davis	Tommy Bueno	Dragos Mihail Dorobantu
Patrick Foley	Pau Konikowski	Lauren Davies	Shady Omran	Timothy M. Donoghue
Brian Waller	Jason Paul Sharp	Nicolas Corredor	Grant Farrelly	Ian Carrillo
Robert Paddison	Samuel L Kong	Isabelle Bendele	Stefan Woloshyn	Nikoi Kotey
Sammer Alzien	Brian Nietfeld	Kaylee Auguillard	William Elmer Bowman	Caleb McCollim
Richard Nguyen	Alden Paras	Antonio Lewis	Christopher J Hilton	John N McIntyre
Jeremy Zeitler	David P Snelling	Brad Eric Marks	Claire Gregory	Luis Alvarez
Donald Edward Lacombe	Jon Ruder	Harold Ross Smethills	Zachary Taulbee	Lynn Ketcham
Scott Warner	Jeff Beard	Christopher M Marks	William Maddox	Jeff Anderson-Lester
Travis Hill	Ashley Starks	Christopher Gonzales	David Arnett	Ilya Lashkou
Jeffrey Parker	Alejandro Juarez	Jarron Syh	Ed Norris	Lonnie Howell
Carlos Acosta	Arnaud Desalos	Peyton Justin Luu	Teri Little	Isak De Eskinazis
Nick Crowder	Stephen M. Boone	Leo David Baca	Tony MacNeil	Clint Morgan
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David Plumb	William Beckenbaugh	Ramin Nosrat	Greg Burmeister	Walter Sonne
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Andrew Cochrane	Mike Logan	Nicholas McLain	Laurie McCelvey	Jon Conaway
Mark McFarlane	Ryan Wind	Bethany Spurrier	Matthew S. Young	Keith Teague
Chris Appier	Ignacio Bincaz	Adriano Deigo Evans	David McCarthy	Alan Moore
Stuart William Falknor	Clinton Brooks Herman	Burdador	Peter J Cass	Syed Quadri
Rey Astraquillo	Evgeny Makarov	Dawn Harrington	Troy Alan Jackson	Mike Chang
James Patrick Redmon	Jerry Blanchard	Titus Song	Chris Cavanaugh	Richard Voisinet
Astin Thomas	Natalie Soord	Corey Phillips	David B. Frank	Benjamin Ongoco
Tobin Joseph	William Scott	Brandon Michael Bergeron	George Tsolfias	Renita Ellis
Jay Blackman	Evan Schweikhardt	Bartlett G Moore	Rick F Carlson	Kemal Farid
Chris R Younger	Joseph Prichard	Jonathan Frey	David Lindsey Cargle	Fred Ellis
Alexander James Graham	Austin Norris	David Johle	Chris Humphries	
Ky Nguyen	Lottie Parada		Frederic Samuels	
Roy Eid	Melissa Lee		Daniel McCelvey	

Our purpose is to provide members with an opportunity to meet other BMW owners, to promote the enjoyment of ownership of the BMW automobiles, to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relations with organizations with similar objectives, such as manufacturers, dealers and other car clubs, and to promote activities which are in keeping with the above objectives and non-profit nature of the club. But most of all we have fun!

Your participation in the club's various monthly events is the best way to fully appreciate your membership. There are several membership drives each year which we encourage you to invite friends to the following: autocross events, monthly coffee meet ups, tech ses-

sions, and driving schools. As a member of the Houston Chapter you will receive this magazine quarterly and will find reviews of past events, details about upcoming events, and editorial articles from members. All members are encouraged to submit articles to the editor that relate to the BMW brand, ownership, and personal experiences.

The Torque of the Month is our monthly e-blast. Check this for updates on upcoming events and additional content for members. As always all information is posted on the club website: www.houston-bmwcca.com and the BMW CCA Houston Chapter facebook page.

If you have any questions feel free to contact the Houston Chapter Board at board@houston-bmwcca.com.

Houston BMW CCA Annual Banquet Dinner

JANUARY 19, 2019 at the HOUSTON RACQUET CLUB



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You can have the power to fix Check Engine Lights in your own driveway

jeff otten

tech advisor

It's mystical, perhaps dangerous, indecipherable? When it appears, owners, like moths to the flame, immediately navigate to the Wizards in Service Land who control the force of the OBD2 (On Board Diagnostic) and blast the light away. Can the owner him/herself, possess the knowledge of the OBD2 and become a Wizard of Service capable of deciphering the red light? YES, YES, YES! The force can be yours!

What is an OBD2 reader and where do I get one?

Scanners are available on Amazon, at car part stores or a phone app. A simple history is it's been around awhile, because we have been putting computers into cars for a while. However car computers do not have screens so you need a reader to decipher the 0s and 1s. It does not FIX. It identifies only. So, the problem might have a solution that perhaps the newly empowered Owner can solve or only a trip to the Wizards of Service Land can resolve. When next the dreaded Check Engine light pierces your retinas, harness the power of the OBD2, meld your mind with your engine and destroy the code without leaving the driveway. The codes can identify anything from crankshaft and camshaft position to manifold pressure to ignition misfires but in my case, my check engine light was triggered by the elusive P0441 engine code. Usually from one of the following parts malfunctions: it's an emission leak from a gas cap, purge valve, purge pump or cracked hose.

OBD2 – don't leave home without it.

The light is on, but you're not home, don't lose your mind, don't call a tow. You've got the power in your glove box. The OBD2 device will connect via a plug in port, usually on the left side of the dash by the steering column. You may need to feed the OBD2 information such as make, model and the dreaded VIN number (located on your car

DRIVE CYCLE

The drive cycle takes about 60 - 75 miles driving on boulevard type driving. For the quickest full reset try:

- Idling about 2 - 3 minutes
- Start and stop the engine at least 3 times after at least 15-20 minutes running each
- 0 - 30 and 40 - 60 mph operation with red lights
- Resetting the system favors varying engine rpm and engine RPMs up to about 3500rpm
- The fuel tank should be about ¾ to ½ full, not completely full or near empty.

Highway driving is the least effective and will take the longest to completely clear the code allowing the car to pass the inspection test. Use the code reader to check STATUS but DO NOT RESET as that will force you to initiate a drive cycle from the beginning. Check the internet www.instructables.com for a more detailed and entertaining Drive Cycle reset instructions.

in various locations). The code that pops up will be coded; B is for Body and covers power seating, seat belts, airbags; C is for Chassis related, brakes, axels, wheel pressure, suspension. The ALMIGHTY P code is for emissions system, ignition system, fuel system, transmission, and engine. Once you identify the code's code, you can decide to drive home or to drive to the dealer. There are hundreds of codes and most can be discovered on the internet or by calling your favorite Wizard in Service Land. The P0441 emissions code plagued our 2005 X5 for two (2) state inspection cycles. Of course, it popped up right before an inspection due date. If your Check Engine Light (CEL) or Service Engine Soon (SES) light is on you automatically fail emissions testing. I also learned (the hard way), once you repair the car, the light is off but if you don't complete a "drive cycle", it will still fail the inspection test. The inspector will say, "It isn't ready". Under federal law you are allowed one and possibly two codes not ready depending on the year and on how many are monitored. I think the state computer knows by VIN and should pass your car even though one is not ready.

Blasting P Codes with the Power of the OBD2

P0441 is a standard code for all cars and means evaporative emissions incorrect purge flow. If you check for this prior to taking

the Texas State Emission Test, clear it, complete the required drive cycle, you should pass the test, ONE VISIT, which saves time and money.

To prep the Mini Cooper S, I used the Schwaben BMW/Mini code reader in the OBD2 mode. I found the OBD2 code portion reads faster, so it was generally all I needed. It also resets the OBD2 codes and has a "readiness" status report.

The evaporative emissions system applies via a pump, a pressure test of the gas tank and the components. There are other codes as well. Prior to the problem on my X5, the 2005 Mini Cooper S had shown the P0442 code. Typically, that one would clear but after a long period, would return. I never figured out why this error came and went on this Mini. One of those mysteries included with a previously owned vehicle.

Evaporative Emission System Demystified

The evaporative emission system is designed to capture hydrocarbon vapor from the fuel tank. The system on 1996 and later vehicles has these primary elements:

- Charcoal canister to store the vapor when the car is not running
- A purge valve to open a flow path to the fuel tank and allow vapor to be pulled into the engine intake manifold to be burned. This also pulls the stored vapor in the charcoal tank into the intake.

• A pump to pressurize the emissions circuit to determine if there is a leak. This test is programmed into the engine ECU (engine control unit). The frequency of the test is not generally available, but it must be as frequent as the "drive cycle".

• Many tubes, hoses, and seals.

• Electrical connections at the purge valve, the purge pump, and pressure sensor if not integrated to the others items.

So many possible failure types and locations of possible failures. Since the code on my X5 was P0441 only, it meant electrical, all the devices were probably working, but something in the system was out of tolerance, maybe a plugged passage. For the Mini Cooper, the only code was P0442, indicating everything 'works' but there's a small leak which actually has a definition. A 'Small Leak' is defined as equivalent to a 0.02" or .5mm orifice. And it's an emissions test fail, repeat, pay again. Small is a big deal but not necessarily an expensive one.

For either of these codes the most common failures are:

- Gas cap (about \$25)
- Purge valve (about \$100 for most cars)
- Pump (about \$150)
- Cracked hose or failed o-rings (this can be difficult to find).

Trouble Shooting the P0441 Code on the X5

For the X5, the code lased my corneas when I was scheduling my time to do the inspection. I concluded after a couple clears and return of the SES, that the easiest fix was to change the purge valve and the gas cap. The purge valve on the M54 inline six-cylinder engine, is located below and at the front of the intake manifold. By removing the air box, it is reasonably easy to access and remove. It was the weekend and I didn't have time to go to the dealer. Checking Autozone online, I found the purge valve with lifetime warranty for about \$100 and though it was at a different location it was possible to get it that day. They also had, in stock, a gas cap that they said fit. It so happened that the part number listed also fit the Mini Cooper, so I bought one for each car.

Putting the cap on the X5 and clearing did nothing, the light came back quickly. So I put the original cap back on and turned my efforts to the purge valve. After

installing the new purge valve and clearing, the light seemed to stay off. I drove the car about 30 miles and all seemed OK, and, since I was already past inspection due date, I went into the first one I passed while on the 'test' drive. The car failed due to 'not being ready'. The guy suggested to drive 75 miles and then bring it back. So I said WTF (Well That's Fun) and went home and rechecked the status using the Schwaben tool. For the next 3 days I checked each day and each day 'all were ready'. I went straight back to the station and the car passed, all good. (Hello! Read section on Drive Cycle again.)

A couple months into the next year, P0441 code returns to haunt me. Frustrated, I research the forums, mostly XOutpost because I am working on the X5. One guy claims only a genuine BMW purge valve solved his problem. Another claims the exhaust recirculation valve can cause the same code. I am told the same thing about the recirculation valve by a local dealer, so I buy one, as they had it in stock. It's always a bad sign when the dealer stocks this type of part because it means they probably sell a lot of them. At 160k miles for this car, I didn't mind replacing it. Its most likely exhausted.

Next I considered the pump. The pump is a pretty complex item that is essential to pressure flow. My logic was if it's working, but weak, the code for a bad pump won't yet trip. I searched online, found a great deal for a genuine Bosch pump (about \$85), not BMW but the same as original and substantially less.

A friend's E90 also lost this pump after a negligible 80k miles. The X5 had almost double that mileage, thus I accepted it's probable demise.

The pump is located about the driver rear wheel on the X5. The full fender liner must be removed to access. These liners are held on with one time use plastic pop rivets. To complete the repair, I would need to purchase a set of pop rivets and a way to set them. Harbor freight sells a tool for about \$20 that will set them, however the BMW rivets are better than the ones in the kit. I replaced the pump in the X5, cleared codes but after about a week the code came back.

Still suspicious about the gas cap and empowered with success on the Mini (read further), a new genuine BMW gas cap was ordered for the X5. The lanyard on it was long since broken, so I figured what the heck. The genuine cap did not clear the code for the X5.

At this point I was getting at wits end with the X5. So I decided to order a genuine BMW purge valve. I was careful to lube all connections with silicone grease to help insure a good seal. I cleared the codes and completed the Drive Cycle over three days of back and forth to work and felt ready to attempt the emissions test. It passed. The code has never come back on since! While this was a frustrating period of car ownership, in the end it was resolved.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Emissions codes are very fickle, it is not worth trying after-market clone parts for the gas cap, purge valve or pump, stick to genuine BMW or original manufacturer only.
- The last codes to be ready are the evaporative emissions.
- Check the readiness indicator (complete a Drive Cycle) of a code reader before going to the inspection station.
- The major components can be difficult to locate on the car, use the BMW parts database (dealer or online like realoem.com) to help find them.



QUESTIONS?
CONTACT JEFF OTTEN
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SUMMER 2018 TRAVEL JOURNAL

Here to There
and
Back Again

Open Roads & Good Friends
By Dan McLaughlin

The Annual Pilgrimage
By Tish Otten

A Family that Drives Together
By Katie Otten

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS STOKES

OPEN ROADS WITH GOOD FRIENDS

article by: "austin" dan mclaughlin
club member

The 4th of July! Independence Day! Picnics! Fireworks! Ummm... not so fast! Rain, wind and check engine lights! What!? That's what greeted us intrepid explorers as the Road Monkeys hit the highways and byways for our the annual trek to BMWCCA Oktoberfest, this year held in Pittsburgh, PA.

Meeting up in Splendora, TX just northeast of Houston, we started out in the pouring rain heading northeast on our back roads jaunt to O'Fest. First destination, a lunch stop at The Cajun Landing in Alexandria, LA where we caught up with the Walton's. But the whole group was plagued with problems on that first day. A couple of "check engine lights" from what we thought was bad gas, to a faulty voltage regulator, to the ABS/traction control going out on my M5. This was just a sign of things to come. After lunch, with the rain behind us and skies clearing, we headed on to Vicksburg, MS where we stayed at the Cedar Grove Mansion B&B. An old home built in the mid 1800's which survived despite having been pummeled with cannon shot during the Civil War. Some of which were left in the wall! And since it was the 4th of July, we had dinner at the 10 South Rooftop Bar and Grill with a fabulous, 10th floor view of the fireworks over the Mississippi River.

Day two had Barry's Z4M with the bad voltage regulator on Bud's trailer as it had become undriveable. Numerous phone calls were made trying to source a replacement somewhere ahead of us as we continued east. Our lunch stop was at Oby's Deli in Starkville, AL. As we headed to Gunthersville State Park Resort for the night but again, car problems plagued us as we had to deal with a flat tire. WalMart came to the rescue and got them back on the road quickly.

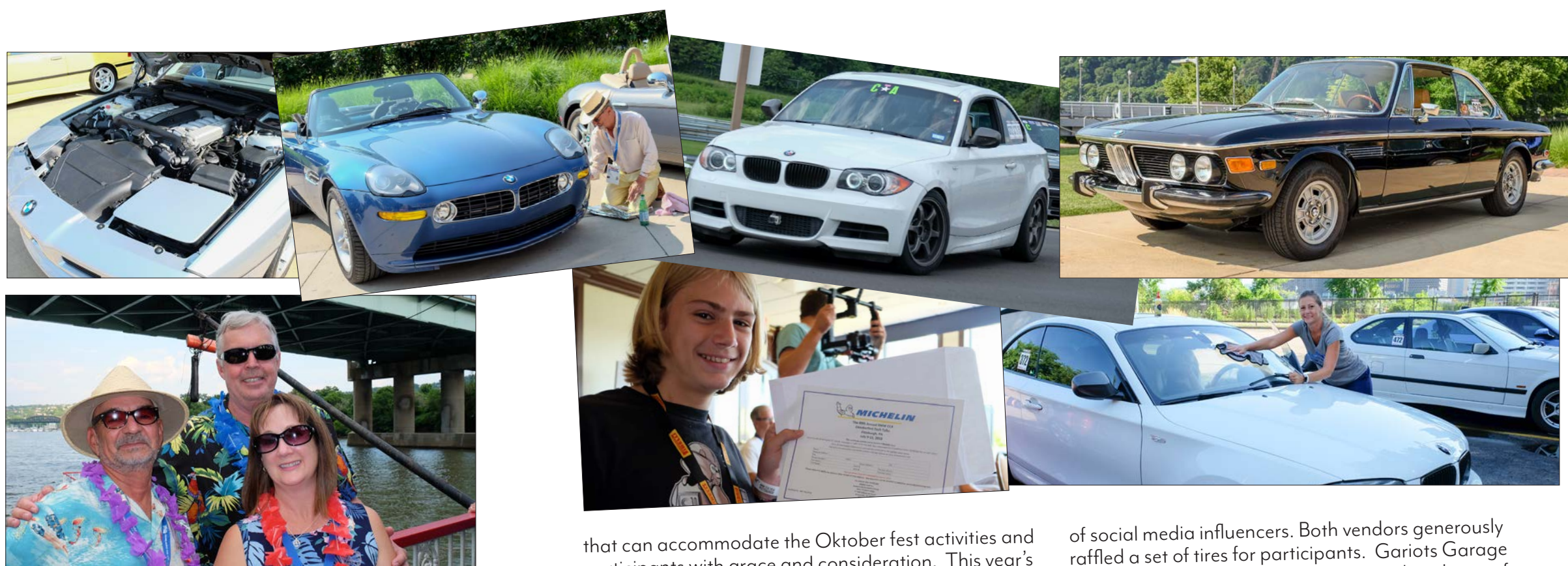
Waking up the next morning to fabulous views of Lake Gunthersville with rising mist, we looked ahead to Tennessee and the Kentucky mountains. Several of the group took off early to go shopping at the Unclaimed Baggage Center in Scottsboro, AL. Yup, the place where lost and unclaimed airline luggage and their contents are sold off. Of course, that precipitated another flat tire. The group eventu-

ally all gathered up at our lunch stop that day at Calhoun's, Oak Ridge, TN for BBQ on the lake. We welcomed Scott Bowman to the Road Monkeys with his introduction to his riding partner, Vanessa. A 4 foot tall, inflatable monkey that would ride with him for the next day or so. We continued on to Pineville, KY for our evening stop. One speeding ticket later and then some more rain, we really started getting into the mountain roads which made reading the little signs to the resort difficult. One or two wrong turns plus, a U-turn or two, we all finally made it. The rain didn't dampen our spirits as the resort hosted an evening of bluegrass music and BBQ dinner. And then drinks flowed as many gathered in the lodge for an appetizer dinner and chat.

The fourth day of the trip really had us hit the windy back roads as we headed into West Virginia mountains. Here you'll find some of the most fabulous driving roads around. Picturesque at times, challenging at others. Lunch stop was at a little, back street eatery called Janet's Park and Eat in Logan, W.Va. Kinda run down looking from the looks of things but the food made up for its lack of décor shall we say. After lunch we really hit some more challenging back roads. At one point prompting the question, "how much longer on this road?", as I looked at my gas gauge and no gas stations to be found. Minor problems continued to crop up as I got a Tire Defect warning. Just an overheated tire from the spirited driving we were doing, and a Tire Pressure Sensor failing on Scott's IM. We did make it back to a semi main road and our lodgings for the evening, The Blennerhassett Hotel in Parkersburg, W. Va. Everyone enjoyed dinner and drinks on the patio with local musicians and a pleasant, but bright, sunset. Plus Barry had finally had his voltage regulator replaced and was back on the road!

Our final day of driving saw us split up into small groups as opposed to the 20 car convoy we had most of the journey. Tire problems continued to plague the group as Ky's M4 picked up a nail in each rear tire. Scott and I took a leisurely journey along a scenic road by the Ohio River before turning east into Pittsburgh, our final destination being the O'Fest host hotel, The Sheraton, Station Square, Pittsburgh.

Though we were beset by numerous obstacles this year, we soldiered on, helping each other in Road Monkey fashion. "We'll leave you behind but we'll never leave you stranded". Many thanks go out to Ken Finley for the great route and roads. Valerie Baker for the hotels and lunch stops. LaRita Godbey for T-shirts and group coordination. And an extra shout out to Bud and Lori Van Rooyen for carrying spare tires and trailering Barry's Z4M while it was disabled.



THE Annual PLIGRimage

article by: tish otten
club member

Ahh Oktoberfest – the mecca of all trips BMW Club related. That once a year adventure which combines all the aspects an owner loves, driving, sight-seeing, information, participation and meals any foodie would be proud to experience. O'Fest also features a TSD rally, gymkhana, driving tours, receptions and banquets.

One can take out across the open road alone or join together in a merry band of like minded travelers, put together a planned course that could restrict using interstate roads, chain hotels or chain restaurants. Last year's drive included such highlights as fireworks in the historical town of Vicksburgh, MI, staying in a pre-civil war bed and breakfast complete with a cannon ball still embedded in the wall. A stay in a Lake Guntersville State Park, AL, which included beautiful windy roads and a true blue grass performance with an all one could eat cat fish fry complete with desserts and soda pops. Oktoberfest is an opportunity to show the entire family what a beautifully, diverse country America truly is.

BMW National has proven success in choosing extremely generous sponsors and hotel destinations

that can accommodate the Oktober fest activities and participants with grace and consideration. This year's Pittsburgh Sheraton, located in the heart of old town Pittsburgh was an excellent choice. The hotel provided separate, free parking for club members, a daily car wash station and comfortable accommodations. The first night's welcome dinner, hosted by Shell Oil, was a Gilligan's Island dress up event, hosted on a three decker river boat and included a sunset cruise on each of the connecting rivers, the Alleghany, Monongahela and the Ohio. Pirelli Tires hosted a four course dinner in the Museum of Natural Science which included round trip transportation to the venue on a modified, historically accurate paddle-wheel boat. The annual concourse event held in Heinz Field, home for the Steelers, parking lot was a picturesque background for all the beautiful cars parked for viewing. Yokohama Tires sponsored an incredible Robber Barron themed dinner at the Grand Concourse Restaurant, the historically preserved Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Station. Please keep these generous sponsors' products in mind during the coming months.

Both Pirelli and Shell Oil sponsored tech talks. Pirelli stayed true to product technical information and Shell ventured out on a limb presenting a panel

of social media influencers. Both vendors generously raffled a set of tires for participants. Gariots Garage kindly showered the attendees with an abundance of product samples and answered some pointed questions on application techniques and user satisfaction. Shell Oil once again collected all gas purchase receipts from attendees picking one who received a hefty gas card to help get them home.

The National Committee picked Pittsburgh in July to embrace the annual Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, held in Schenley Park and to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the iconic BMW 2002. Situated on a golf course, the PVGP constituted one giant car show made up of many separate shows hosted by the Grand Prix and included one heck of a lot of different cars. Special guests at Ofest included, Bill Auberline, BMW Motorsport Driver and Mike Renner, a BMW Performance Instructor. It was a damn hot day but one not to be missed.

If you haven't attended an O'Fest, I think you'll find it family friendly, enthusiastically satisfying and a great way to see the USA





PHOTO COURTESY OF M PERFORMANCE SCHOOL



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATIE OTTEN

A Family that Drives Together Stays Together My Family's Late Summer Vaca to Palm Springs for 2 Day M School

article by: katie otten, newsletter editor

I grew up around racing. First, my dad would take my sister and I to the annual Houston Supercross race. Then as we got older, he signed us up to race mountain bikes. Once I turned 16, my Dad and I started autocrossing. You could say my family is kinda competitive. So, when the opportunity presented its self to attend the 2-day M school with my Dad and brother Nolan Otten, this was the perfect Otten Summer Vacation. A week in California (my parents are originally from SoCal) taking a break from the Texas heat, that all leads up to weekend filled with jumping from one M car to the next using up some else's tires — sounds perfect to me.

The BMW Performance center M school is offered at both the South Carolina and the Indian Wells locations. If you choose to travel to the Spartanburg location, the performance school does pick you up at the airport and take to you to your hotel. Definitely an additional convenience. Because there are so many different airports within driving distance to the Palm Springs facility BMW does not offer this service. We were able to rent a car affordably from the airport. By having a car and flying out a few days early, I was able to spend some time enjoying Los Angeles. Palm Springs is a relatively painless not bumper to bumper two-hour drive from LAX.

The days leading up to the driving school I checked out Griffith park. On the 3rd Sunday of every month Walt Disney's barn is open to visitors who want to learn more about the history of trains and their ties to Walt and the theme parks. This is a great 2-4-hour activity.

For those who have more time, you can spend time at the Griffin observatory and see some great views of the Hollywood sign. If you are interested in trying to spot some movie stars, Hollywood Blvd is a great spot. Grommets Chinese theater is open daily for tours and to catch a new release movie. There is plenty to keep you busy before heading out to Palm Springs.

Included in the two-day M school covers your dinner on Friday night, breakfast Saturday morning at the hotel and the vouchers would cover dinner and breakfast for at least two people.

The driving school is definitely focused on maximizing seat time. The school does include some classroom time to review seat position, driving lines, braking, and traction. The classroom time is well organized and fast paced enough for an experienced driver but detailed enough for a novice to get a good understanding of the information. Once out on the track the instructors are good at referencing the concepts that were introduced in the classroom in the morning.

On the first day, driving exercises include time on the skid pad, driving various configurations of the "spaghetti bowl" aka an autocross track, and a hard braking and turning exercise. The Performance center provided a wonderful lunch and dinner after we finished driving. During dinner the instructors passed out awards for the different competitions that took place during the day.

On the second day, students shift into high gear. Day 2 is all about the track. The morning starts with a short review of the concepts from the first day but quickly moves to introducing students to the Thermal Club Track. The Thermal Club Track is a private race track that provides the ideal racing environment in a country club setting. There are 3 different circuits at Thermal, for the M school we drove on the South Palm Circuit. In the morning we drove the track in sections. After lunch we went back out drove the track as a complete circuit. I can definitely say that I left the school a better driver. The instructors corrected some bad habits and motivated me to get out of my comfort zone to consistently improving my driving skills. I saw first-hand what my ultimate driving machine is capable of doing. For anyone that feels like they are stuck in a rut, defiantly check out the M driving school.



PHOTO COURTESY OF M PERFORMANCE SCHOOL



PHOTO BY: Katie Otten

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Every Great Driver Started with Karts



Fastest way around the track is to stay on the racing line. Every track has one. The optimal line that a driver follows around a track. Being able to see the line through the different elements on a track can be challenging, especially in Autocross when the track layout changes month to month. One way to improve this

skill is driving go karts.

Walter Phillips is the most experienced go Karter I know, here he offers some tips for club members who are interested in getting into competitive driving.

#1 Look ahead. Look all the way to the next corner.

Most drivers typically just stare at the car in front of them when driving in traffic. When driving competitively you need to look way beyond the front bumper of your car. A great way to practice is to start by looking for the entrances into turns then move to not just the turn entrance but look all the way to the turn exit.

#2 Look where you want the car to go.

This sounds simple. I want to the car to go forwards so I should look straight in front. Wrong. Go kart tracks have lots of turns usually pretty close together which means as a driver you need to turn your head and look out your side windows or where the window would be if go karts had windows.

#3 Go karts have small engines and no ABS.

A fast lap means maintaining momentum throughout the lap. Go karts do not come with twin turbos to give you that little extra boost out of the corners. Look ahead so you can brake early, maybe even earlier than you think you should. The earlier you brake the earlier you can turn into a corner the quicker you can get back to the throttle. Always be smooth transitioning from brakes back to the throttle.



POINTER CONES

After a long hot summer... *It's back to the track!*

AUTOCROSS CURRENT STANDINGS

2018	B CLASS		C CLASS		D CLASS		E CLASS	
	1ST	Nikola Dragojlovic	1ST	David Taylor	1ST	Josh Ronan	1ST	Walter Phillips
	2ND	Chris Ward	2ND	Katie Otten	2ND	Chris Augustine	2ND	Jeff Thomson
	3RD	David Taylor	3RD	Terri Little	3RD	Kemell Kassim	3RD	Chung Ying
	F CLASS		G CLASS		x1 CLASS		x2 CLASS	
	1ST	Aaraj Thyagaraj	1ST	Michael Anastasio	1ST	Edward Morfe	1ST	Jeff Goji
	2ND	Chris Stokes	2ND	Blake Lagrone	2ND	Jim Hedderick	2ND	Grant Farrelly
	3RD	Jeff Otten			3RD	David Hedderick	3RD	Terry Price
	x3 CLASS		x4 CLASS		x5 CLASS		CONE KILLER	
	1ST	Lonnie Howell	1ST	Mike Klaybor	1ST	Zach Taulbee	1ST	Jim Hedderick
	2ND	Michael Schnetzer	2ND	Ken Corenti	2ND	Kelan Captain	2ND	Christopher Stokes
	3RD	Ricardo Barnes	3RD	Shannon Saxby	3RD	David Duxbbury	3RD	Walter Phillips

katie otten
newsletter editor

After dusting off those race tires, after a long hot summer, we are headed into the final events to finish off the 2018 Autocross season. In order to be eligible for a trophy, drivers must participate in a minimum of six events.

Class A once again only had one participant the whole year and based on lack of entries and participating in class A the club will not be presenting any trophies for class A.

Class B Nikola Dragojlovic currently has over a 20 point lead on second place, Chris Ward. However with two events left, there is possibility for Teri Little to move onto the podium. But you know what they say about being on the podium, its just a fancy way of saying you didn't get first.

Class C While having several participants, few have participated in multiple events. David Taylor has unusually switched classes mid season into C. He does face some competition by Newsletter editor Katie Otten. This class looks like it will come down to the last event in De-

cember.

Class D Aka: the M division. This is one of the most competitive classes in Houston Autocross. Cars in this class range from an e30 M3 to more modern M3s. To earn a trophy in this class is no easy feat. Currently, Josh Ronan leads but Chris Augustine is only 12 points down. If the next two events have courses that favor an e30 he could pull ahead. Thats not the only battle in class D, Danielle Meyers and Gary Fickert are tied in fourth, both having the potential to move up into 3rd bumping Kemell Kassim into fourth.

Class E The battle of the M2s. Walter Phillips and Jeff Thomson battle against Chung Ying for their respective seats on the podium. While Chung has not shown up to many events, when he does show up: he finishes first. Four different drivers have finished first through out the season, so this division is shaping up to be very competitive. Less than 10 points separate first place from fourth. Walter Phillips, Jeff Thomson, and Chung Ying need to do their best driving at the next two events or Benjamin Ongoco could bump someone off the podium.

Class F has some of our most dedicated racers,

these are the racers who not only spend 1 Sunday a month working on their driving, they spend all the other Sundays working on their cars. Jeff Otten, our club tech advisor can tell you everything there is to know about his F80 M3 and pretty much every other car in the grid. Currently, Aaraj Thyagaraj has done well over the season winning 4 events, giving him a sizable lead over second place, Christopher Stokes. Jeff Otten currently holds third, if he can make the last two remaining events.

Class G Michael Anastasio has met the minimum requirement to trophy by driving at 6 events and won five out of the six events, giving him a strong lead over second place, Blake Lagrone. However, with 36 points still available for 3 first place finishes, Blake could take first place if he drives well at the upcoming events.

Class X1 A close battle is taking place in the x1 class. Jim Hedderick is only 3 points behind, first place, Edward Morfe. However, David Hedderick has a habit of out driving his Dad, Jim taking points away that could have put Jim into first.

Class X2 Jeff Goji is unbeaten in class x2 this

year with four first place finishes which puts him into first place. Martin Gremm's second place finish at the September autocross has moved him into a two way tie with Grant Farrelly for third place. Terry Price should keep a close eye on both Gremm and Farrelly, Price currently holds second by only one point.

Class x3 Leading class x3 Michael Schnetzer holds the first place seat by just one point over Lonnie Howell. Veteran autocrosser Ricardo Barnes currently holds third.

Class x4 Both first and second place drivers have completed six events this season and have driven well. Ken Correnti is currently in first place and Mike Klaybor is in second.

Class x5 Kelan Captain and Zach Taulbee are tied for first in class x5 with 34 points each. David Duxbury earning 27 points put him in second place.

To all drivers, may your shifting be smooth and your tires keep traction. Best of luck for the rest of the season and we look forward to seeing all members at the Autocross Banquet in January,

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After 34 years, ProAm Auto Accessories continues top of line service

jim robinson

senior reporter

Jim Rawson had been a gear-head since the fifties. Realizing there was such a strong interest in club racing, upgrading and customizing street rods and track cars; the natural course of events led Jim to open a store specializing in performance parts and accessories. On June 27th 1984 ProAm Parts became the first of its kind, serving Houston area enthusiasts of sports cars, European sedans and American Muscle Cars.

While attending Lee High School John Rawson began working in the shop after school with his dad. Specializing in name brand accessories such as Recaro, PIAA, Koni, Redline, Momo, Corbeau, and Simpson; ProAm, located in the heart of Houston's Galleria Area became known as the "Go To" place for enthusiasts. In 1998 after graduating from Texas A&M John began working full time with his dad helping to bring ProAm into the computer age and creating their online business. But they not only sell parts and accessories. The service department specializes in performance suspension builds for BMW, Mercedes and Porsche, Nissan and others.

John's been involved with racing for a long time, racing a 240SX and now campaigns a 1997 M3 and he also owns a 2003 330ZHP 6 speed. The No. 92 M3 was on the lift in the shop when I interviewed him for this article getting ready for the World Racing League Concorso Day-

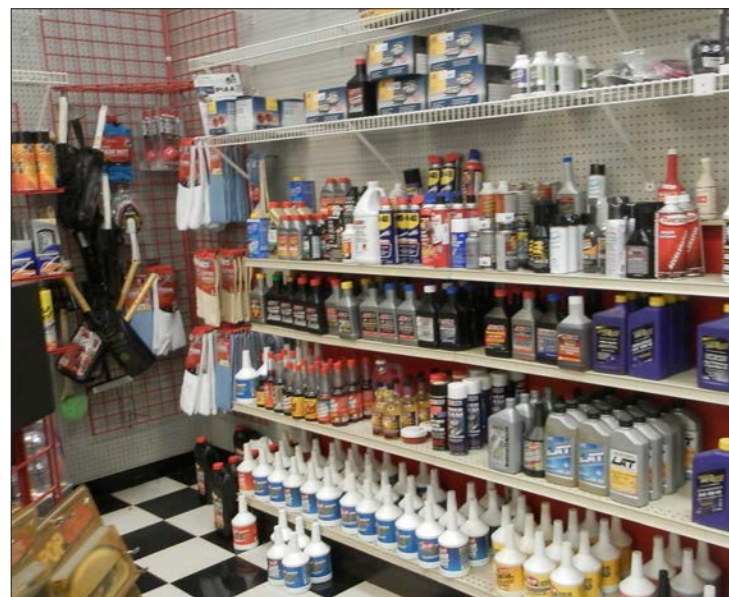
tona 14 hour endurance race on June 9th.

WRL is a "club level" racing series program where participants can race any properly prepared car in endurance races lasting 8 to 24 hours. Go to: www.racewrl.com for more information.

Sales Manager Cliff Gardner is the Mercedes / Nissan advisor. Starting out as a muscle car fan running a Dodge Super Bee and other Mopars, he turned his attention to Datsun's 240Z going so far as to installing convertible tops on several Z cars. Cliff has been a member of the Z Car Club for 25 years and is the only one to be named Lifetime Member. He has several Mercedes' in his stable; 380SL, 450SL, and his red 500SL to name a few. He specializes in customizing, accessories and hard to find parts.

While in high school David Cruz took classes in auto shop and never looked back. Now, with 15+ years' experience repairing European and domestic cars and he's picked up several certifications along the way. From refurbishing transmissions, track preparation and typical maintenance; he's the one to see for any automotive need. In addition David has built Low-Riders and other custom cars.

Pro Am Parts offer friendly enthusiastic service. Stop by to stoke your need for speed and see the Volkswagen beetle in the midst of restoration.





Do Road Cars and Race Cars still need to share a close connection?

katie otten

newsletter editor

Race cars have always been desirable to enthusiasts and collectors. The competitive drive motivates builders to accomplish the impossible. Cars like the e30 M3, Audi Sport Quattro, Ferrari 250 GT represent the rewards that are rapt from unrestrained passionate development. Fortune favors the bold but at what costs? Modern car manufactures are no longer independently owned and have a Board of Directors who ask an important question every quarter, "What is my return on investment?" As the cost of racing continues to exponentially increase, is racing the best way to promote a car or just another form of weekend entertainment?

Newspapers started sponsoring races in 1895 to promote the newly invented internal combustion engine powered by gasoline. At this time enthusiasts drove on dirt paths in perilous conditions and even more perilous for spectators. Authorities got involved, shutting down several races forcing participants to begin building dedicated racing tracks in 1901. Dedicated race tracks also provided a safe vantage point for spectators to watch races.

In the early years, drivers raced next year's prototype, allowing motor heads to get a sneak peak of upcoming features

and updates. With the first season of 24-hour races in 1929-1931, many of these early forms of racing could be considered reliability trials. Fans could watch prototype models compete as a way to demonstrate their reliability and also show consumers that automobiles were a viable form of transportation. Not just a trendy luxury.

As the race cars continued to cross the finish lines the drivers demonstrated what true relentless ambition could accomplish. Development improved year after year showing consumers, automobiles could transport people into the future. As the years passed engineers optimized cars to be faster and more reliable which only drove race cars to become more sophisticated. As racing continued to evolve, manufacturers and fans both hold fast to a simple phrase: "racing is relevant because the technology trickles down into mass produced cars." According to history this is true. BMW uses carbon fiber to build hoods, roofs, and trunk lids in different M models. Using carbon fiber in the body pieces was pioneered by McLaren in the MP4/1 used in the 1981-1983 Formula 1 seasons. Building the monocoque out of carbon fiber quickly became ubiquitous because carbon fiber is both light and strong. The strength was tested in 1991 when John Watson wrecked his car at the Italian Grand Prix. The carbon fiber monocoque is credited with saving the drivers life.

The strength and lightness come at a cost. Carbon fiber

is not cheap. The addition of carbon fiber in the M3, 2019 8 series and the i8 comes with a noticeable bump in the price tag. While using carbon fiber makes the car light and fast; but is the increase in price worth it?. As consumers, we have a choice. Use our purchasing power to promote cost savings or innovations.

The days of building large v10 engines are slowly coming to an end. I personally enjoy every minute of driving the naturally aspirated v10 M5 (e60 S85) sitting in my drive way, the e60 is a large souvenir of BMW's Formula 1 partnership with Williams. The development of this engine was driven by BMW participation in racing. As special as the e60 M5 is, a true super car, I continue to write the eulogy of the v10 weekly in gas receipts. A v10 will never be fuel efficient. So I can truly understand why BMW and many racing series have shifted their focus from not just building fast cars but energy efficient cars.

At the end of 2009 BMW left Formula 1 because the future of production cars is not building large over powered engines. The future is electric. BMW announced in 2017 joining Formula E as an official manufacturer wanting to use their involvement in the all-electric racing to fuel the development of their next generation electric cars. Racing generates unique conditions that push the development of the electrical technology to its limits. Just like the early years of racing, the race car is blazing a path for the production version to follow. The lessons

learned from the motorsport division will make the production electric cars more viable solution for the everyday driver. By pushing to eliminate the car changeover during races, the electrical power units will have to last longer, be more efficient, and provide enough power to make racing interesting. History has shown, with time, these innovations should trickle down to their production counterparts.

It will never be enough to just build cars. Fans need a method to compare cars to each other. For many years, racing production and modified production cars was the only way fans judged cars. That was then and this is 2018. Today, a car's 0-60 time is just as important as its Bluetooth connectivity. A car that safely gets me to and from the grocery store has very little in common with a LMP1 car and yet I need them both in my life. Not because they are dependent on each other but because of the creativity that comes from the differences. Severing the connection between race cars and production cars would hinder the future development of both. I want a car that has a connection to the track but also keeps me safe while I drive and is fuel efficient. My lag free sporty transmission with paddle shifters clearly comes from countless hours of track research; while features like my back up camera, hands free system have more in common with my iPhone than a track car. Fortunately, I can have the best of both worlds.

TWILIGHT OF THE ROAD RELEVANT RACECAR



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