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Stay Informed!! - eBlast Signup

Once a month the Chapter emails an eBlast to all members who have indicated they want to be kept abreast of Chapter activities and events, as well as news and information involving the Chapter. If you wish to receive this information and are not already signed up you may do so on the website at www.houston-bmwcca.com. The eBlast request is located at the lower left on the front page.



David R. Dalton
President - Houston Chapter

If you missed our Annual Dinner & Banquet, make it a point to attend the 2014 event. At this event we hold our annual membership meeting, announce the results of the elected Board members for the new year, recognize the front-runners for the various autocross categories, acknowledge new Road Monkeys, and celebrate the year in review. Kathy Lee and the volunteers that stepped-up truly did a wonderful job in coordinating the gala again this year. And thanks to James Weaver who again put together an innovative slide show. He just keeps getting better at this.

For 2013, Members of the Executive Committee are:

- President - David R. Dalton
- Vice President - Dennis Nowak
- Secretary – Pam Johnson
- Treasurer – Sarah Nowak

The Executive Committee voted the following members to the appointed Board positions:

- Newsletter Editor – Jim Robinson
- Webmaster – Jeff Thomson
- Membership Chair – Jim Moffitt
- Social Events Chair – Pam Johnson
- Autocross Chair – Chris Stokes
- Driving Events Coordinator – Donovan L. Brown

Those acting in a liaison roll are:

- Jeff Otten – Chapter Tech Advisor
- Tor Taklo – Chapter Facebook Coordinator

The Board wishes to thank Aaraj Thyagaraj, Kathy Lee, James Saynay and Mike Williams for volunteering in 2012 as appointed Board members. Those that step-up to help with the different functions are what keeps the Chapter aimed at the many different member interests.

Congratulations go out to the following autocross trophy winners in their respective categories:

| |
|--|
| DRIVER OF THE YEAR: |
| Chris Stokes |
| ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: |
| William Hoy |
| MOST IMPROVED DRIVER OF THE YEAR: |
| Karl Hermann |

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| C CLASS |
| 1. 1st Place: Chris Ward |
| 2. 2nd Place: Nolan Otten |
| 3. 3rd Place: James Weaver |
| D CLASS |
| 1. 1st Place: Karl Hermann |
| 2. 2nd Place: Peter Fry |
| 3. 3rd Place: Tor Taklo |
| E CLASS |
| 1. 1st Place: Thad Davis |
| 2. 2nd Place: Doug Meinen |
| 3. 3rd Place: Gerald Anderson |
| F CLASS |
| 1. 1st Place: Barry Norman |
| 2. 2nd Class: Walter Phillips |
| 3. 3rd Place: Benjamin Ongoco |
| G CLASS |
| 1. 1st Place: Chris Stokes |
| 2. 2nd Place: Donovan Brown |
| 3. 3rd Place: Jeff Otten |

For those not signed up to receive our monthly eBlasts you are encouraged to do so. The eBlast will keep you current each month with activities as they are developed and scheduled throughout the year, ranging from dinners to monthly coffees, drives, overnight trips, fun rallies, tech sessions, autocross events, driver schools, and Chapter events at the Circuit of the Americas F1 track. I'm sure a number of members maintain their membership for the Roundel, as well as the rewards and benefits available through BMW CCA. But you should also consider the various activities the Chapter has to offer as yet another benefit as well. Our Chapter has grown into a social group of BMW owners that gather to simply enjoy the camaraderie as well as all things BMW and we really would like to see more of you join in on the excitement.

See ya on the back roads.

M6

3 Generations

By Dennis Nowak and special thanks to Tor Taklo

Have you seen the picture BMW put out a while back that shows all 6 generations of the 5 series produced so far? From the first E12 to the current F10 parked diagonally alongside each other on an immense span of concrete, all silver and all looking like they just rolled off the assembly line. I find it interesting to see the design changes from one generation to the next, some subtle and some not so subtle and the huge difference from the first model to the current. It's a pictorial history of "how did we get here."

Well, all this started me thinking about how cool it would be to do a similar photo shoot with a car that Sarah and I own. Since the two newer models we own have a histori-

cal lineage as long as an Isetta's drivetrain, I resorted to the older models in the stable. Immediately I thought of our 1984 E24 M635CSi, it's the 1st generation of the M6. (BMW badged the Euro version the M635CSi and the North American version the M6) Just so happens, we recently traveled with our friends, Tor and Adriana, to Germany to experience their Euro delivery of a new 2013 F12 M6 convertible, the 3rd generation. Now, there are only 3 generations of the M6 produced so far and all I needed was to find someone with the 2nd generation E63/64 M6. Not so difficult to find when the person who just picked up the new M6 decided to keep her old one, a 2008 E64 convertible.

OK, I have my 3 generations of M6's for the photo shoot. I know what some of you purists are thinking, "it's not the same, cause not all of them are convertibles or coupes." Yes, the two newer models are convertibles and the old one isn't, there is a reason for that. The 1st generation E24 M6 was only produced by BMW as a coupe. There were some attempts by aftermarket companies to chop the top and add a ragtop with little success. More importantly, the car was not designed to be a convertible, therefore cutting the roof off also took the rigidity out of the frame, not ideal for an M car. I could have searched for someone in the club with M6 coupes, but hey, these cars are not as prevalent as other BMW models.





M6

3 Generations

Beginning with 6:

BMW created the sleek 4 passenger, 2 door E24 6 series as range of executive coupe models in 1975 with the 630CS, 630CSi and 633CSi for the European market, being derived from the E12 & E28 5 Series 4-door sedans. They were the successor to the E9 3.0CS and 3.0CSi that ended production that same year. In 1977 the 635CSi was introduced and the 628CSi in 1979. There were several derivatives of the E24, with the more prevalent being the European version

and the North American version. American versions added hundreds of pounds of luxury appointments, like more leather inside, and rear seat heating and air conditioning, plus the thicker US DOT 5mph bumpers. For the uber leather lovers BMW even had the L6 model which wrapped the passengers in yards of cowhide. Most enthusiasts consider the Euro version to be more desirable since the American version had a detuned engine

with catalytic converters leaving about 30 less horsepower to heft the extra weight. Early Euro versions didn't have all the electric accessories either, seats were manual and a simple armrest was installed between the rear seats instead of the A/C unit. Sleeker and thinner chrome bumpers were less obstructive, letting the styling of the body come to the forefront.



Another subtle yet interesting difference is that Germany during this time period, required motorists to carry first aid kits in their cars. Euro versions had this kit tucked under the left rear speaker cover attached to the rear window deck. Great idea one would say, although the drawback was instead of large 6x9 rear speakers as in the American version, one was left with tiny 4x6 speakers to deliver your kickin 80's hits. 14 years later, in 2004, BMW released the all

new E63/64 which was available as a coupe and convertible, based on the chassis of the E60 5 Series sedan. Models were the 645Ci (later replaced with the 650i) and the 630i, while the highest performance model is the BMW M6. The third generation F12/13 6 series was released in 2011 for the 2012 model year, sharing a platform and some engines with the F01 7 Series and F10 5 Series. Again, the highest performance model is the BMW M6 along with the all new M6 Gran Coupe.

E24 M6/M635CSi (1983–1989) 1st Generation



E24 M6/M635CSi (1983–1989) 1st Generation

The M635CSi arrived on the market in October of 1983. BMW's M-Technik Group, now known as the M Division, gave birth to a sleek, fast, sport coupe with a luxury twist. They were eager to make a statement after refining the 3.0CSL "Batmobile" to a dominating, race winning, competitor at the track and their success at building the incredible M1 mid-engine machine. BMW already had a great car in the 635CSi, but to make it an M they installed a modified 3.5 liter M88 engine from the M1, larger brakes, stiffer suspension with Bilstein shocks, limited slip differential, 5 speed manual gearbox and front and rear spoilers put this car near-supercar territory with 286hp and 251 lbs-ft of torque.

It was critically acclaimed throughout its lifespan for its elegant, aggressive "shark-nose" styling, its luxury equipment, and its performance. A limited top speed of 158 mph makes the European version the second fastest BMW ever built next to the M1. This is due to all other BMW models being electronically restricted to 155 mph.

Today, considered just technical bragging rights. However, Rug Cunningham BMW ran a bone stock 1987 M6 in the La Carrera Classic Race of Mexico in 1989 and reportedly recorded a top speed of 176 mph. An M6 can be distinguished from other E24 models by a larger front air dam, a rear spoiler,

3-piece BBS wheels (415mm in Euro version, with Michelin TRX metric tires), color matching side view mirrors, M badges (no number on Euro version) on the grille and back, and slightly larger front brakes.

In North America, the E24 M6 was fitted with the catalyzed S38B35 motor, producing 256hp and 243 lbs-ft of torque. The non-catalyzed version produced 286hp and 251 lbs-ft of torque. The non-catalyzed versions were only available in Europe, though there were 538 catalyzed M635csi models sold in Europe in 1988 and 1989 for those more environmentally positioned rather than speed enthusiasts. 1988 and 1989 saw the versions of M6 transformed into a "world car" with the same bumpers and aerodynamic treatments in all markets.

In North America, the E24 M6 was fitted with the catalyzed S38B35 motor, producing 256hp and 243 lbs-ft of torque. The non-catalyzed version produced 286hp and 251 lbs-ft of torque. The non-catalyzed versions were only available in Europe, though there were 538 catalyzed M635csi models sold in Europe in 1988 and 1989 for those more environmentally positioned rather than speed enthusiasts. 1988 and 1989 saw the versions of M6 transformed into a "world car" with the same bumpers and aerodynamic treatments in all markets. The M6 achieved 0–60 mph time of 6.0 and 6.8 seconds for the European and American versions, respectively. Quarter mile times for the European version have been recorded at 14.5 seconds while

100 mph is achieved in 15 seconds. However, Car and Driver Magazine tested the U.S. M6 in July 1987 and achieved a 0–60 mph time of 6.1 seconds. Also in 1987 Road and Track featured the U.S. M6 as one of the 10 fastest cars in America. Production of the M6 ended in 1989, with 5,859 cars sold globally, 1,767 of which were North American models.

The E24 M6 models weren't considered extremely fast on the track and didn't corner that well, but get them on the highway or Autobahn and you will understand what owners of these cars already know. Like a well conditioned race horse "she just wants to RUN!" and she doesn't disappoint.

The normal life cycle for BMW Models is 7 years, but that the E24 was produced for 13 years (1976–1989) making it the longest production run for any BMW model to date?

For more information about the E24 6 series go to: www.bigcoupe.com.





E63/64 M6 (2005–2010) 2nd Generation

BMW skipped production of the M6 for 14 years, from 1989 to 2006, in order to pursue the all new 8 series, so the differences in style and technology are huge from the 1st to 2nd generations. As you can see from the pictures this newer model has xenon headlights, LED turn and tail lights, larger kidney grills and large 19 inch wheels and tires. The M6 badges are now on the sides and rear. Heated memory sport seats with nappa leather adorn the interior along with a host of electronics, including iDrive, navigation and Harman-Kardon sound system. Safety features include traction control, multiple airbags, anti-lock brakes, huge brakes and on the convertible, rear head rests that pop up in a rollover.

The styling of the E63/64 6 Series has generally received a warm welcome from the BMW community. This model 6 Series was designed to look like a shark, similar to the E24, although more subtle. Some see the resemblance, some don't, either way the design of the car is much more rounded corners, still keeping the low and wide stance. The controversial rear styling by Chris Bangle (Bangle Butt) is considered to work somewhat better on the shapely E63 than on other BMWs designed by Bangle, such as the E60 5 Series and E65 7 Series models.

The new BMW M6 concept made its debut at the 2005 Geneva Motor Show. It is based on the BMW E63/E64 6-Series platform, introduced in 2004. It shares the same 5.0 L V10 S85 high revving engine and SMG III gearbox with the E60 M5, and produces 500 hp and 380 lbs-ft torque. BMW claims it accelerates from 0–62 mph in 4.4 seconds. Road & Track (Feb 2006) measured the

0–60 mph time as 4.1 seconds. The top speed is 207 mph, but it is electronically limited to 155 mph.

It was offered as both a coupe and a convertible. A lightweight CSL version of the M6 was expected to be released, but was never built as there was no projected market for such a model. Both the M6 coupe and convertible can be visually distinguished from the 630i, 645Ci and 650i by their deeper front valance with air intakes, more contoured side sills, aerodynamic side view mirrors, an additional rear valance with diffuser, dual twin exhaust tips and the absence of front fog lights.

The M6 has the same 'power button' as the M5 which modifies the throttle response. From ignition, the car delivers 400 hp, but engaging the M button allows the full 500 hp. It weighs 3,909 lbs (owner's manual) compared to the 3,650 lb E92 BMW M3 (Road & Track, Dec 2007) thanks to a carbon fiber reinforced plastic roof panel as well as thermoplastic front wings, aluminum doors and bonnet and compound boot lid. The carbon fiber and other light materials are used in places like the bumpers and roof that are far from the center of gravity and/or high up, so that they not only reduce the overall weight, but improve the handling by reducing mass and lowering the center of gravity height. Like most of the M cars of this period, the power of the V10 comes in at higher RPM, once above 4500 you better hang on. Again, similar to the E24 M6, this generation just wants to run and music of that V10 engine will sing you a glorious song.

In the 2010 model year, the M6 was the second-most expensive BMW sold in the U.S. after the \$137,000 760Li, with an MSRP of \$108,150 for the convertible and \$102,350 for the coupe. Production of the M6 ended in mid 2010, with sales over the five year run totaling 9,087 for the coupe and 5,056 for the convertible.





F12/13 M6 (2012–present) 3rd Generation

Details for the new generation M6 were announced in February 2012, with it being shown at the Geneva Motor Show the following month. This model M6 follows the more, straight up, nose and faceted hood design BMW has already incorporated in the 3, 5 and 7 series. New are the led headlights, larger openings in the front supply air to the turbo inter-coolers and gone is the Bangle Butt rear end. The new styling is wider, longer but keeps the low and wide setup with an aggressive “attitude” styling.

The interior has been refined from the previous model giving a more luxurious feel. The iDrive system has been improved, the NAV screen is widescreen and the optional Bang & Olufsen sound system is nothing short of spectacular. The instrument panel has LED gauges that illuminate when power is on and the color Heads Up Display is just fantastic.

The new model is based on the BMW F12/F13 and shares its 7-speed M-DCT gearbox, BMW S63tu Twin Turbo V8 engine and other technology with the F10 BMW M5. This remarkable engine produces 560hp and 500 lbs-ft torque. Amazingly, 500 lbs of torque is more than most diesel pickups have!

The M6 coupe has a carbon-fiber roof and other weight saving measures, making it 44 lbs lighter than the M5, however it is 346 lbs heavier than the previous M6. The M6 convertible is 110 lbs heavier than the previous M6 convertible. The torque curve ramps up from idle and delivers ALL the 500 lb-ft of torque from 1500 RPM on straight across the power band. One could say this car is too heavy and it is heavier than the previous models, but this car also has the muscle to pull itself off the line VERY quickly. If you aren't hanging on with both hands when you plant your foot on the gas pedal you'll end up in the back seat. The power of this M6 is just phenomenal! BMW has again hit the mark and built a luxury performance coupe.

The official performance figures claim acceleration from 0–62 mph in 4.2 seconds. There is no “M Driver's Package” for the M6 (neither E6X nor the current F1X). The current F1X M6s all have 560hp / 500ft.lbs torque standard. Top speed is limited to 155mph in the US (190mph in Europe) due to Federal regulations.

The design style is similar to all recent M cars. The front of the car has a newly designed M kidney grille with an “M6” badge – a homage to the 1st generation M6.

So there you have it, a little history in how we got here with the BMW M6. Enjoy the pictures! BTW: all of these cars are bone stock, what you see is how BMW made it.

It would be interesting to see the same kind of pictorial history done with the other BMW models. I can quickly think of other club members with 3 series M cars that could do the same thing. At a recent coffee meet I snapped a picture of three generations of Z cars, red, white and blue no less. So it wouldn't even have to be M cars either. And now for disclaimers: Some of the information in this article was gleaned from internet sources and the authors give no guarantee on absolute correctness, however, since it was on the internet, in big bold RED letters, it must be true. They can't put anything on the internet that isn't true right? What we can guarantee is that there is absolutely no horsemeat in this article. Now what comes out the backside of the horse?...no guarantee! Bonjour!



Chart showing specs for all generations

| MODEL | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| | E24 M6 | E63/64 M6 | F12/13 M6 |
| Production | 1983 - 1989 | 2006 - 2010 | 2013 - present |
| Assembly | Dingolfing, West Germany | Dingolfing, West Germany | Dingolfing, West Germany |
| Body style | 2 door coupe | 2 door coupe and convertible | 2 door Coupe, Convertible and 4 door GrandCoupe |
| Engine | 3.5 liter, Inline 6, 286hp EU, 256hp NA | 5 liter, V10, 500hp | 4.4 liter, V8, 560hp |
| Transmission | 5-speed manual | 6-speed manual, 7-speed SMG | 7-speed M-DCT |
| Wheelbase | 103 in. | 109.5 in. | 112.2 in. |
| Length | 187.2 in. EU, 193.8 in. NA (larger bumpers) | 191.8 in. | 192.8 in. |
| Width | 67.9 in. | 73 in. | 74.87 in. |
| Height | 53.3 in. | 54 in. Coupe, 54.2 in. Convertible | 53.9 in. |
| Curb Weight | 3200-3400 lb (depends on version) | 3,909 lb Coupe, 4,398 lb Convertible | 4,255 lb Coupe, 4,508 lb Convertible |



Have Beer - Will Travel

Tony Sakkis



First point: travel is based on seasons.

You don't go to Paris in February; you don't visit Italy in October. And St. Moritz isn't a destination in August. Not if you're planning a once-in-a-lifetime trip.

There's nothing wrong with going off-season, it's just not the best time for the ultimate first experience. For most people, you go to Paris in May or June; Italy is best in the summer. St. Moritz in March.

If you're like me, though, and have been to Europe a dozen times, your seasons may change. Oh, sure, you'll still want to go to France in the spring and Italy in the summer but for different reasons. St. Moritz? No interest. Sorry. The reasons are simple: Monaco or Le Mans in May and June and Monza in September.

Car people want to go to Europe to see cars. You can go with the spouse and kids, but when you see a short-wheelbase Audi Quattro Coupe or a Renault Alpine or a tricked out Alfa or BMW that you've never seen before, you stare like it's Megan Fox/David Beckham (take your pick ladies or gentlemen) walking naked right down Brompton Road.

The whole place is lousy with cool cars. And seeing an auto race on one of the world's great tracks is like going to Mecca. Monza, for example, is not just a race; it's hallowed ground for some of us. It's where Ascari died, when Andretti set pole in a one-off ride when Ferrari lost its team leaders.

It's where Phil Hill basically won the title, where Jochen Rindt died, where Von Trips was ... well you get the picture. And all older tracks have this kind of background. Silverstone. Monaco. Spa. Le Mans. If you're like me -- even a little bit -- you just have to see them.

For years, I never travelled anywhere there wasn't a track or a race. It still happens today, albeit not as much as before. Am I going to Southeast Asia? I'd try to get to Malaysia in March. Brazil? Make it a November trip. Japan? Go in the fall.

And so should you. If you're there, you might as well get the most out of it. And if you're reading Torque; that means you should hit a car race.

I know all this stuff, and it makes my epiphany all that much more dramatic. Which brings me to my second point: If there's one thing I've learned about international travel, if there's one constant in planning travel, it's this: beer helps develop itineraries.

Yes, I've always known this. Or, okay, maybe I haven't really been so aware there's a correlation between good travel and fermented malt and barley added to a few roasted hops.

But most of my great trips have been planned in such a way. A few beers and the words, 'Hey, you know where I'd like to go ...?' have gone together like, well, like beer and pretzels.

Since I was 21 and sitting in various seedy pubs and crappy bars and grimy living rooms playing pool or poker or watching football, I've been completely aware that a few beers does wonders for figuring out where you'll wind up. More, it promotes creative insight into what you'd like to do while sober. And even if you're completely beer-less when you arrive, the vacations usually turn out pretty damned good because they've been born by way of a brewery. I'm not so sure I'd endorse this line of thinking for normal people, by the way. This is my way, and you should find your own.

But it came to me at the January BMWCCA Banquet that I like to plan travel after a couple of cold ones. Actually, it came to me when Houston BMWCCA President David Dalton proclaimed -- innocently enough -- at the microphone that he was a little 'buzzed.'





**And, BAM, it hit me.
Cars.**

**Travel.
Racing.
BMW?**

**And ... ‘Hey, lemme have another Corona,
barkeep...’**

My wife complains that I become sentimental when drinking. More than once, she’s heard the words “Ya know thomthing? I lobbbe you.” Drinks talking. I don’t say such silly things sober. Before I had an actual person to direct these type comments toward, the words back then were, “Ya know thomthing? I lobbbe racing. Les’ go ta Moneee Crarlo.” Or Mexico, or Silverstone. Wherever. And I’d start planning.

That evening at the Houston City Club I found myself saying those words ... to my wife. , “Ya know thomthing? I lobbbe racing. Les’ go ta Moneee Crarlo.”

Again, I don’t say such things without beer. And said, like the proverbial bell, they can’t be unsaid. And thus the seeds were planted. Better yet, they were endorsed by my better half (and I use this reference to my wife free of any alcoholic encouragement).

Monaco, the Nurburgring, the Autobahn, and the BMW factory. Maybe Le Mans. In May. Maybe June.

Okay, yes, I am the European Delivery guy. And this perhaps should have occurred to me without the assistance of drink. Alas, I am often as dumb as a stump.

But as a guy who’s gone to Monaco, Mexico, Detroit, Silverstone, Estoril, Mugello, Hockenheim, Nurburgring, Daytona, Le Mans and a bunch more places from such talk, this makes perfect sense.

“Ya know thomthing? I should seth thomthing up ta Moneee Crarlo Grann Preee.”

So I started the kernel of a new plan on that night at The Houston City Club. BMW. Factory. Nurburgring. Monaco.

Yes, it was formed while I was drinking. But it’s a pretty good plan. I’ve had a couple more beers since then and have gotten up the next morning with the same enthusiasm.

I’m thinking Monaco. I’m thinking the Nurburgring. I’m thinking pick up a new BMW – or go with somebody who is – and drive up that beautiful no-limit road, then meander down to the south of France for the Monaco GP and maybe the Cannes Film Festival.

So third point: Go to the store and buy a six pack of a nice imported beer. This helps set the stage. I mean, how much wanderlust are you going to develop with Bud Light? Drink a couple and think about where you’d want to go on the ultimate car trip. If you wake up and it still sounds good, drop me a note (tesakkis@hotmail.com) I’m thinking of doing this next May, 2014. Enough people want to go, I’ll set the whole thing up. I know how it’s done.

After all, I’ve been to enough foreign races to know what to expect. And I’ve drunk enough beer to get it right.



A Tale of Two Buddies, Two Roadsters and Three Sisters...



By James Saynay

South Texas Winters – you just gotta love ‘em! Especially if you own a drop top; I mean where else in the country save California can you drop the top and cruise until your heart’s content in the mid of January? Unfortunately Texas Winters also bring the occasional unpredictable weather. Such is life I suppose; we have to take the good with the bad. And so our story goes....

My good friend Howard, who has contributed to this newsletter from time to time, found himself this past November with a long awaited 2013 Boxster S (that’s a Porsche for you non-enthusiast folks). It’s a gorgeous customized Riviera Blue color, sports a PDK transmission (i.e. DCT in BMW-ese) and includes a launch control feature that will be discussed later. As some of you may know, the new Boxster is a much more masculine beast of a car, while also being well mannered in the corners as a mid-engine design. So naturally he was eager to get it out on the road and give it a test run (after the recommended break in period of course). I had commented to Howard that I would take him on some of the best roads that Texas has to offer – the 3 Sisters: FM’s 335, 336 & 337, located up in the Texas Hill Country northwest of San Antonio. Okay, so for those of you who thought the title of this article implied some salacious misadventures, you can stop reading; for you car enthusiasts, read on. Of course representing the BMW marque would be me, driving shotgun in my ‘03 Z4! Having recently added the new 2 Supercharger upgrade to my car, I was equally eager to get on the back road with the new Porsche with a few horsepower cars up

The weekend we chose was perfect – the weather looked crisp and clear in the mornings, warm enough to drop the top in the afternoons and wonderful nights. As life can sometimes do however, as we neared our weekend, all that changed. The weather was forecast to be rainy and cloudy – and downright COLD at night! Committed to the ultimate driving experience, and to a non-refundable hotel deposit at La Cantera, we chose to press on and take our chances with the fickle fate of winter weather. Our plan was simple – we would leave on a Friday night, spend the evening in San Antonio, then the next day run up through Boerne, Bandera, and Medina and pick up the 3 Sisters, a spectacular 90-mile loop throughout the Texas Hill Country. In fact, FM 337 has been named as one of the top 10 roads in America to drive by Jalopnik. If you can find the time, the drive is really worth the effort. The 3 Sisters offers the driving enthusiast the opportunity to witness spellbinding mountain views, some serious high quality pavement, enough turns to make you pray for a straightaway; but tempered with enough slow, winding turns and rocky debris in some sections to allow you to catch your breath from spirited driving and just take in the scenery with the top down at a casual pace. Truly something for everyone.

After completing the loop, our modest plan was to swing through Kerrville to Fredericksburg for lunch; then over to Marble Falls and back down FM 1431 through Lago Vista and Jonestown only to end our twisty adventure on the famed Lime Creek Road outside of Austin. From there, we would make our way home to Houston, a staggering 600 miles in one day and over 780 miles within 24 hours!

If that did not break-in the new Boxster and give us a few thrills, then nothing would. Well maybe tres senioritas, but I digress again.

Friday finally arrived and off we went – in one fell swoop we made it safely to San Antonio despite heavy traffic, black clouds, state troopers with radar everywhere and the occasional raindrop.

One of the nice things about car enthusiasts is that we all tend to share a common bond – the love of mechanical stuff. For some reason that is how we all seem to be wired. For Howard and me though, we share a bond much stronger than that. I met Howard about 10 years ago in a place called the Firehouse Pub and Grille on Chimney Rock and Hwy 59. He was playing in a band and I was in the audience.

The band was pretty good but being an old musician myself, the sound seemed to be lacking somewhat. So during one of the breaks I spoke to Howard about tweaking the sound system and we just seemed to start chatting about music in general. Eventually, over the course of a few months, I was asked to join the band and we have been having fun making music ever since.

So musicians and petrol-heads – two things in common. However, Howard and I also share the love for food – good unique and somewhat esoteric food. So on our way to the hotel in San Antonio, we decided to try out a place called The Cove, a restaurant Howard saw on the famed show Diners, Drive-ins and Dives. The Cove is a Zagat rated hole in the wall; literally sandwiched between a fully functional car wash and a small bar! So we hosed down the cars, grabbed a burger and downed a beer all in one pit stop! The Red Bull Formula One pit crew had nothing on us! Seriously though, the Cove served some of the best burgers I have ever eaten; with the Lamb and melted Cotija cheese being their signature! (Hint to Sherman Watters for the next Fiver-Fest!).

Ironically there was also a band setting up as we started our meals and we started laughing about all of the stupid things we have done in prep for and during a gig. We decided to not stick around for the band as we wanted to get an early start the next morning – after all some 600 miles in one day is a pretty huge agenda. So off we went to the hotel for a good night’s rest.





The next morning at 6 AM we headed out towards Bandera and onward to the 3 Sisters. The roads were still damp from the rain the night before, so we had to watch our speed even more than normal. After a quick round through the hills, we headed off to Kerrville and then to Fredericksburg, stopping for lunch and yet another car wash. Now my car is grey normally, but after four hours of high speed, wet road driving in the arid mountains, both our cars were a matching shade of hill country, mudslide tan. For those of you wondering, the Z4 and its newly installed Stage 2 supercharger did a wonderful job of keeping up with the new Porsche. Both cars pull hard and inspire confidence. I had decided to “build” the Z4 after much contemplation and I am happy so say that all of my efforts have been worth the ride (although my accountant might disagree!). After lunch the sun had come out and it was finally “top down” weather; Marble Falls here we come. What a great set of back roads available to us from Fredericksburg to Marble Falls. Not a lot of traffic, smooth surfaces and no shortage of corners made the time fly. Upon arriving in Marble Falls, we to stopped at the local Starbucks that overlooks the Marble Falls Bridge and Horseshoe Bay from the highest point in the city. Great scenery and great drives plus some good coffee – it doesn’t get much better. The sun was strong, the temperature was nice and the roads were dry – truly the

perfect environment for “top down” driving. An uneventful but spirited drive down FM 1431 we had with the two roadsters just chomping up the dips and curves. FM 1431 is by far my personal favorite road to drive as it offers several off camber turns, varying radius corners, and even one corner that is 160 degrees. All coupled with breath taking Austin scenery that can all be enjoyed safely at relatively good speed. I just cannot tell you how much fun it is to drive these roads in these cars. During the drive on this road, Howard actually called and suggested we turn around at the end of it and go back the other way again and back! If you ever are in Austin, it’s a must drive road! Another reason this is my favorite road is because it’s the road that will take you to the Flat Creek Winery off of Singleton Bend Road. A great Texas Winery that serves up some of the best food in the Hill Country, but that’s for another story. After hitting the end of 1431 and passing through Lago Vista and Jonestown we made our way to the final twisty of the day – Lime Creek Road. This road can only be described as 8 mile of autocross. Today however was different. There was more traffic than normal and more road debris than normal – likely from the previous day’s rain. We took it slow and just enjoyed the view with Howard following me about a quarter mile back to avoid rock chips on his new paint!

At this point, we were both in need of fuel and some additional caffeine before the not so exciting Highway 71 drive back to Houston. However, before we got out of Austin, we did have one smaller bit of excitement. As we pulled out on the service feeder road of Highway 183 in Cedar Park, Howard pulled up to the front spot at the traffic light next to an Audi S6. Given that traffic was light and there were no real crossroads along the feeder,

I was suddenly greeted by the sound of a 3.4L Boxer six cylinder at 7000 rpm as the light prepares to go green. Howard had engaged his Launch Control. When the light turned green, I couldn’t decide who was more surprised, the guy in the S6 whose jaw dropped as the blue Porsche became a blue streak or me as I struggled to control my wheel spin and clutch slip. The Porsche vanished in a cacophony of mechanical bliss and hot rubber. Let’s just say if you don’t have a double clutch, don’t play around with a Porsche that does. It’s sort of like bringing a knife to a gunfight. All in all it was a great day across this great state of ours and we enjoyed every moment. On the drive home we were welcomed with more traffic, more state troopers and more rain and drizzle. With the tops back up, we at least stayed warm and cranked up the tunes! If any of you are interested in a full map of all of these roads, please let me know, as I would be happy to share!





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Z3 SUBWOOFER REPAIR

We have a 2000 Z3 2.8 Roadster that we put an aftermarket radio in shortly after we got it. The speakers have gotten worse lately, to the point that with top down my wife would just turn it off. It became apparent that the subwoofer was rattling pretty bad. I decided to work on it first. Our car has the “upgraded” Harman Kardon system.



FIGURE 1 GRILL AND SUBWOOFER COVER

Normally what happens is the foam rots or cracks on the edge of the speaker. The first thing is to check the condition of the foam by pulling the grill. The grill snaps in at the bottom and hinges out at the top. Figure 2 shows the tabs.



FIGURE 2 BACK OF SUBWOOFER GRILL

Use a plastic trim tool and pry on the sides at the bottom, then it lifts out. A little of the speaker can be seen. I could tell the foam was damaged on ours.



FIGURE 3 SUBWOOFER IN ENCLOSURE

I then ordered new foam for the speaker. A company called Simply Speakers sells a kit (www.simplyspeakers.com). They also advertise in the Roundel. I thought I had also seen these on ebay. I went there and was able to buy it cheaper than from the web site. I found a buy it now for \$20, shipping included.

Here's the kit. It includes the foam roll in the right size, a special adhesive, and some well written detailed instructions.



FIGURE 4 SUBWOOFER REPAIR KIT

Next the challenge is how to get the speaker out? I searched Google and some forums without much success. The Bentley manual is no help at all. Looking in the old TIS there is a BMW procedure on how to remove the top. The top of the subwoofer enclosure snaps on. There are four (4) clips, two at the back and two at the front near the center. The factory procedure says to pull up in four (4) places at the same time. That doesn't seem possible as there is no room to grip. Some forum letters suggested using a putty knife and prying. This type of one way snap connectors are always a lot easier to get a part if you know what they look like. Figure 5 shows the removed panel.



FIGURE 5 BOTTOM OF SUBWOOFER COVER

The clips at the back are the hard ones to remove. The clips at the front are similar to door panel clips. With the grill removed the front clips can

be reached to push up. A straight pull with a push pops them out. Put a plastic trim tool in the gap so they do not re-latch.

Figure 6 is a close up of the back latches. Note that the tang hook faces forward, so if you use a putty knife on the back, and push it in too far, the latch will be locked tighter.



FIGURE 6 REAR TANG CLOSE UP

I considered trying to spray lube on the latch to help it release, but it does not appear there is any way to do this. Since BMW says a straight pull will release it, I carefully positioned a putty knife and lifted up. The difference is the front clips were already loose.

The cover came free. Figure 7 shows a view of the back of the rear tab. Note the small tabs on each side, these engage slots to position the cover laterally.



FIGURE 7 BACK SIDE OF REAR TABS

The subwoofer assembly comes out easily once the cover is off. Disconnect the wires and remove the retaining screws.



On inspection of the cover latch area, the section is almost tiny that holds the cover. There was some damage, it didn't break but had a slight tweak, so I put JB Weld on it and left to dry.



FIGURE 8 SMALL SECTION FOR REAR CLIP

The speaker is removed with a T20 driver. With the speaker out you can flex the cone and really see the cracked foam. Note the location of the wire leads for each side of the speaker.



FIGURE 9 DAMAGED ORIGINAL FOAM

Remove all the old foam. A small metal putty knife worked well. The instructions suggested some isopropyl alcohol can be used to help remove the old glue. The cleaned speaker is below.



FIGURE 10 OLD FOAM REMOVED

The new foam fit well. Glue the inside first. Leave it at least an hour per the directions. I decided to let it dry overnight, then do the outside edge. There is plenty of glue provided, much more than is needed for one speaker.



FIGURE 11 NEW FOAM GLUED ON INSIDE



FIGURE 12 FINISHED SPEAKER

The plastic ring around the outside of the speaker had a fairly sharp edge where it touched the foam, so a little Emory paper was used to radius the corner slightly. Due to the dual speaker leads, it is difficult to find a proper replacement speaker for this speaker. This makes foam replacement the most practical alternative.



FIGURE 13 ASSEMBLED SUBWOOFER BOX

With the grill out, it was obvious the foam behind the grill was almost completely gone, so it was replaced with generic window air conditioner filter foam (Lowe's hardware a long time ago). The grill had some minor scratches, so a little Hi-temp flat black header paint was sprayed on after taping the HK logo.



FIGURE 14 DAMAGED GRILL FOAM

The grill separates from the plastic frame by carefully bending the tabs with a small flat blade screwdriver. The grill is aluminum so work gently, but the tabs can be bent out and back without breaking.



FIGURE 15 AC FOAM REPLACEMENT

Once the subwoofer box is back in the car the top cover is put back on. A little silicone spray or WD-40 on the rear clips will help them slide. Plug in the front pins partially; a plastic trim tool under the cover prevents them from latching prematurely. Carefully align the rear tabs, making sure the small tabs (Figure 7) on either side of the clip engage their slots (push the cover slightly left to right to feel them engage). Then remove the trim tool and push down evenly, it will pop in.

Figure 1 is my wife's car at the end of the job. The sound is much better, but now the front kick panel speakers can be heard to rattle, so they will be attacked next.

I found the Simply Speakers foam repair kit to be excellent. They also do the speaker repair if sent in. But once the speaker is out, it's a simple enough job. They have replacement foam for many speaker brands and sizes. Simply Speakers also has a product to coat the foam for longer life, costs about \$8. If I had read the instructions fully before starting, might have ordered it ... give it a try.



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Editor's Corner



Hello,

I'm Jim Robinson, the new guy. I'm grateful for being selected to take over editing the newsletter. I have some big shoes to fill. James Saynay has done a magnificent job creating a really first class documentation of the Houston Chapter's events.

First, a little about my background. I've been a member of BMWCCA for almost ten years. I was a member of the Bayou Chapter based out of New Orleans. I bought my first BMW, a 1994 740i and from that day, despite the omen of thenikasil engine and the problematic ZF transmission, I became immediately amazed with the power and handling of BMW's. I never had problems with the engine but the transmission failure broke my heart more than my bank account. From there I bought a 328i with a five speed and then moved on to a 2001 525i. I took that car in for an oil change and the guy asked me if I was thinking of trading cars. I told him that I hadn't really considered it but I asked what he had to show me. He showed me a CPO 2008 528i. They gave me my money back for the oil change and I drove the 528i home. And I've driven that car to a lot of new places since that day.

Back in Mississippi I worked in broadcast TV as an editor. I spent over twenty years in public television and afterwards I worked some commercial TV and at a production house doing commercials, client videos and hunting and fishing programs for cable TV. All that dried up with the recession and I came to Houston looking for work. I have yet to find TV work in Houston but I have found jobs here, where there was none to be had in Mississippi.

Therefore, I am delighted to be selected for the position of newsletter editor. From my background in TV I have a lot of graphic design, writing and editing experience. As I told David when I first heard about the opening, "Doing a newsletter is a lot like editing for TV but the pictures don't move...yet."

I have discovered that the Houston Chapter has a lot going on with a wide variety of events for all members.

So, I'm looking forward to maintaining the high standard set forth by James and in the months to come perhaps I can include new ideas and enhancements to make The Torque of The Town an even more outstanding publication.

Thanks again, for this wonderful opportunity to serve the Houston Chapter,

Jim Robinson



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