

# Mobile Tradition live

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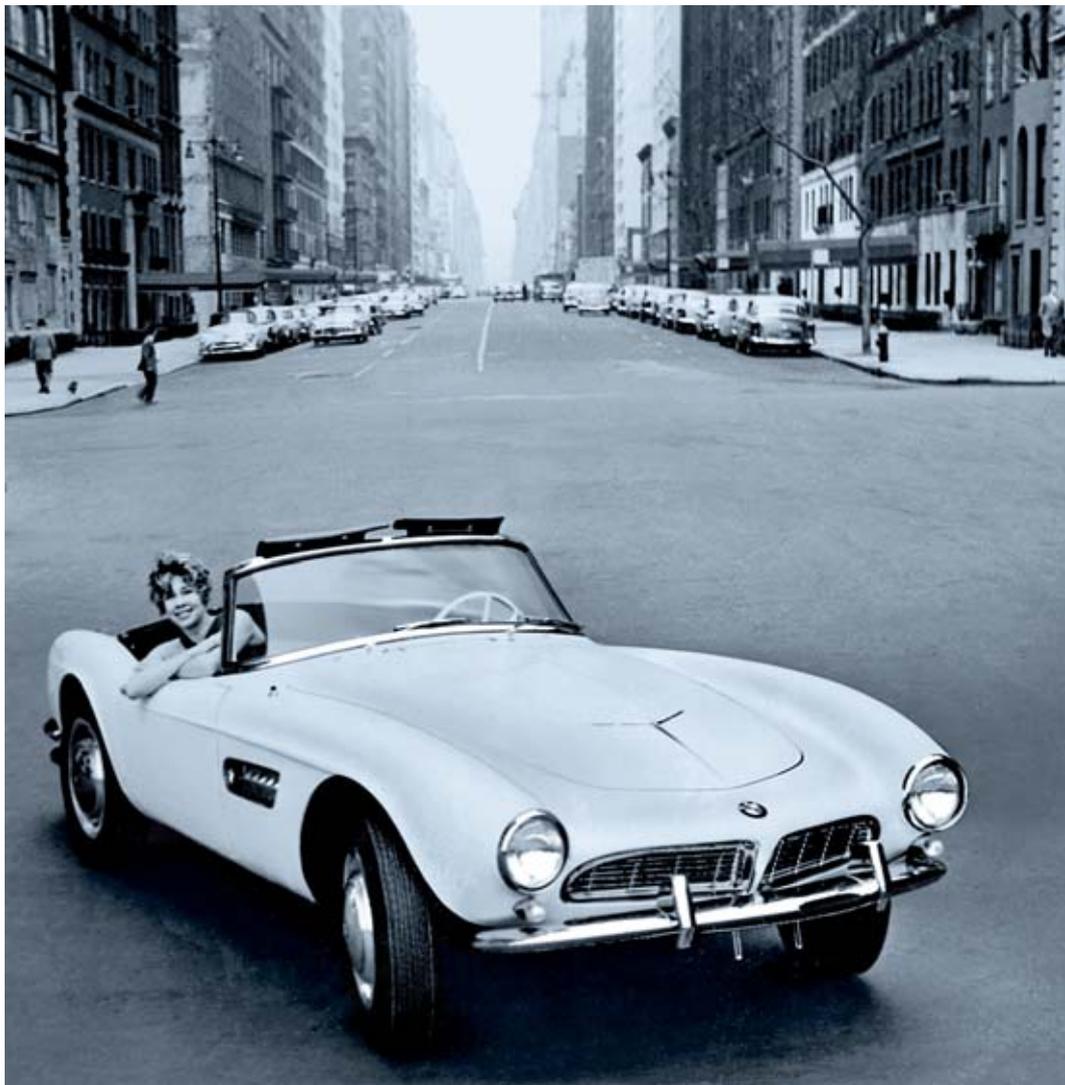
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## The indefatigable Bobby Kohlrausch

100 years ago a man was born in Eisenach who, in a matter of months, would make it into the elite of German racing drivers with his BMW sports car. Thanks to his spectacular successes, Bobby Kohlrausch not only advanced motor racing in Germany, but together with his BMW Wartburg he also founded the motor sport tradition of the Bayerische Motoren Werke. His urge to get across the finishing line was so great that he even continued a race after suffering a heart attack shortly after the start. His many triumphs formed the foundation of BMW's sporting image.



Typical Kohlrausch: en route to victory in a BMW Wartburg.



Dear Friends of the BMW Group,

2004 promises to be a good year for classic fans. The opening events of the classic season – the Winter Marathon at Madonna di Campiglio and the Techno Classica in Essen – both posted record attendance and participant figures. It's a sign of the continuing growth of enthusiasm for classics and for our mobile heritage. Your response to the presentation of our own main themes for this year – a retrospective of 75 Years of BMW Automobiles and a tribute to the achievements of Ernst Jakob Henne in his centenary year – has confirmed to us that the heritage of the brands is a past that can be palpably experienced, which is why it exerts such a fascination.

Another legend of BMW's past also celebrates a "big 0" birthday. This prompted us to devote the cover story of the current issue to Albrecht Graf Goertz, who turned 90 this year. His role in the history of BMW is of crucial significance, with many claiming that, in the BMW 507, he created one of the most beautiful designs of automotive history. Read more about his career path and achievements starting on page 10.

As always, in this issue too we endeavour to provide you with a broad range of topics from BMW's past. So tune in to a wide bandwidth of reading matter in this, "your" BMW Mobile Tradition live.

Read and enjoy!

**Holger Lapp**

Director of BMW Group Mobile Tradition



BMW Art Car designed by Roy Lichtenstein.

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## Dates and events

### May 2004

**06 to 09 May 2004 / Brescia (I)**  
**Mille Miglia**  
 Rally  
 Organizers: MARVA,  
 Dottore Costantino Franchi.

### June 2004

**25 to 27 June 2004 / Goodwood (GB)**  
**Goodwood Festival of Speed**  
 Exhibition, demonstration race,  
 concours d'élégance  
 Organizer: Lord March.

### July 2004

**02 to 04 July 2004 / Garmisch-Partenkirchen (D)**  
**4th International Bikers Meeting**  
 Parade, excursion  
 Organizer: BMW Motorrad.

**08 to 11 July 2004 / Montafon (A)**  
**Silvretta Classic**  
 Rally  
 Organizer: Motor Presse, Stuttgart.

**17 to 25 July 2004 / Germany**  
**2000 km through Germany**  
 Rally  
 Organizer: Günter Krön.

## Facts | Fakten | Faits | Fatti

### Accessories Catalogue 2004

BMW Mobile Tradition kicks off the 2004 collectors' season with a revised edition of its Accessories Catalogue. New and familiar products from BMW Group Mobile Tradition are presented across 150 pages. This year the catalogue for collectors' items and accessories focuses on the two anniversaries: 75 Years of BMW Automobiles and 100 Years of Ernst Jakob Henne.

By way of an introduction, the first few pages present twelve milestones of BMW's automotive past. These twelve cars, which range from the BMW 3/15 PS of 1929 to the BMW Z1 launched in 1994, have been specially selected to exemplify specific eras and development stages of car production at BMW.

To mark this anniversary, BMW Group Mobile Tradition has brought out a range of new accessories and collectors' items.

Foremost among them is the recently published book *From Vision to Success. The Development History of BMW Automobiles 1918–1932*. It marks another volume in the Dimensions series and contains previously unpublished details about BMW's corporate history.

The model of the legendary Steiff teddy bear, available again in 2004, has been specially dressed up for the 75th anniversary. Unusual poster and postcard sets depict images of the twelve automotive milestones, some of which have also found their way into the limited edition of mousepads on offer.



Also for sale are new scale models and accessories, including three new models from the highly popular BMW Art Car series, this time designed by the artists Penck, Fuchs and Nelson; coconut footwell mats for the 02 Series models; and a stylish compact umbrella with line drawings of BMW models.

A special section on the subject of BMW motorcycles, offering high-quality two-wheeled scale models, posters, card games and other accessories, begins with a brief illustrated biography of Ernst Jakob Henne. The famous motorcycle racer, who also successfully competed on four wheels for BMW and claimed significant racing triumphs and speed records in the first half of the last century, celebrated his 100th birthday in February.

The Accessories Catalogue is published in a German/English and a French/Spanish edition and has been available through BMW dealers since mid-April.

### Mille Miglia 2004: over 350 celebrated classics

Hundreds of thousands of spectators, spectacular landscapes, unique historic sports cars – in early May the Mille Miglia once more cast its spell on participants, visitors and fans of vintage motor racing from all around the world. First staged 77 years ago, the Mille Miglia today enjoys an outstanding reputation as a premier event in the international classic car calendar. 2004 saw BMW strongly represented again with a total of 21 teams. Eight of them were fielded by BMW Group Mobile Tradition and they delivered an exceptionally successful performance. Giuliano Cané with his co-driver and wife Lucia Galliani won the Mille Miglia Storico for the eighth time, while Franca Boni and Monica Barziza, contesting the rally in a BMW 328, won the Ladies' Trophy for the ninth time. These successes were complemented by BMW's victory in the Manufacturers' category. This year's Mille Miglia was overshadowed by the fatal accident of American competitor Harlan Schwartz in an Alfa Romeo. Due to this tragic incident, the organizers cancelled the final trials.

## BMW Museum closed for refit – special exhibition in the BMW Globe

**Munich.** Though the architecture seems timelessly modern, the passing of time has left its mark on the BMW Museum. The “Museum bowl” along with the BMW Tower are undergoing comprehensive



BMW Globe next to the Olympic Tower.

refurbishment, which is why the BMW Museum is closing its doors for three years. It will reopen in mid-2007 as the New BMW Museum.

For 30 years, the BMW Museum together with BMW’s “four-cylinder” head office has been an architectural hallmark of Munich’s north, designed by Viennese architect Prof. Karl Schwanzer. His vision was to bring streets and squares into an enclosed space. During the refurbishment the concept of the BMW Museum will be reworked and its exhibition space extended. Since the museum first opened in 1973, BMW has emerged as a global player. Expectations of museum-goers have also changed during this time. The current display area of 900 square metres

will grow to 4,500. Schwanzer’s vision will be systematically adhered to and the exterior of the listed ensemble on Petuelring will remain largely unaltered.

In its concept, the New BMW Museum will pick up the threads of such successful exhibitions as “Zeitsignale”, which set international benchmarks. It is to become more emotional, more fascinating and more personal, thus building bridges between technology and culture to become “a museum of the two cultures”. So that visitors can continue to view BMW’s heritage while the Museum is closed, BMW Group Mobile Tradition will stage an external exhibition in the Olympic Park opposite, scheduled to open on 18th June 2004.

## Concorso d’Eleganza Villa d’Este 2004 – car design past and present

**Cernobbio.** Visitors to the Concorso d’Eleganza Villa d’Este 2004, held from 23rd to 25th April, were able to celebrate three anniversaries in one: the most traditional of beauty contests for exceptional car design was marking its 75th anniversary, while the BMW Group, under whose patronage the event has been held for six years, was celebrating the centenary of Rolls-Royce as well as 75 Years of BMW Automobiles. Featuring 52 historical models and 10 contemporary concept cars, the event again boasted record numbers. In the grounds of Villa d’Este and Villa Erba, the jury and the car-loving public gathered to judge the cars on display. Since the revival of the Concorso d’Eleganza, public interest has been growing year by year in the event.

This year’s main prize by the jury for the most beautiful car in show went to the Ferrari 250 GT Cabriolet Pinin Farina built in 1957. The public award, Coppa d’Oro di Villa d’Este, went to a Lancia Astura Double Phaeton with 1933 bodywork by Castagna. This car had already won the same prize in its debut year. In a tribute to Carlo Felice Bianchi Anderloni, the Chairman of the Jury who died early this year, a special prize was presented for the first time to the most elegant car body. This was won by the Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 Coupé Villa d’Este Helvetia 1951.

Every year, the Concorso showcases a specific designer. This time it was the creations of Zagato, with a special exhibition presenting the work of the Italian company over the last 85 years. To mark this anniversary, the Jury awarded the Trofeo Zagato to an Alfa Romeo 1900 SSZ Coupé Zagato of 1954.

For the last three years there has also been a design award for the best modern concept car. This year ten models were on show, including a Nissan, marking the first involvement of a Japanese company. The award by public referendum – the Concorso d’Eleganza Villa d’Este Design Award – went to the Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione which debuted at last year’s Frankfurt Motor Show. This model also received the Trofeo BMW Italia Design Award.

The Design Talk event initiated by the BMW Group last year focuses on contemporary car design. Participating in this year’s discussion were Dr Jean-Marc Droulers, President of Villa d’Este S.p.A., BMW

Group Head of Design Chris Bangle, Andrea Zagato, furniture designer Carl Magnusson (Knoll Design), Ian Cameron, design chief at Rolls-Royce, and Chris Dercon, Director of Munich’s Haus der Kunst. The theme was the interplay of design and marketing and design past and present.

Chris Bangle emphasized that modern car design was by no means just a marketing instrument. Only design that did not slavishly follow the fashions of the day would survive through the years and was worthy of being presented at future events such as the Concorso d’Eleganza, he concluded.



BMW Group Mobile Tradition at the Concorso d’Eleganza Villa d’Este 2004: Holger Lapp in a BMW 328 MM Touring Coupé.

# Exhibition on “100 Years of Ernst Jakob Henne”

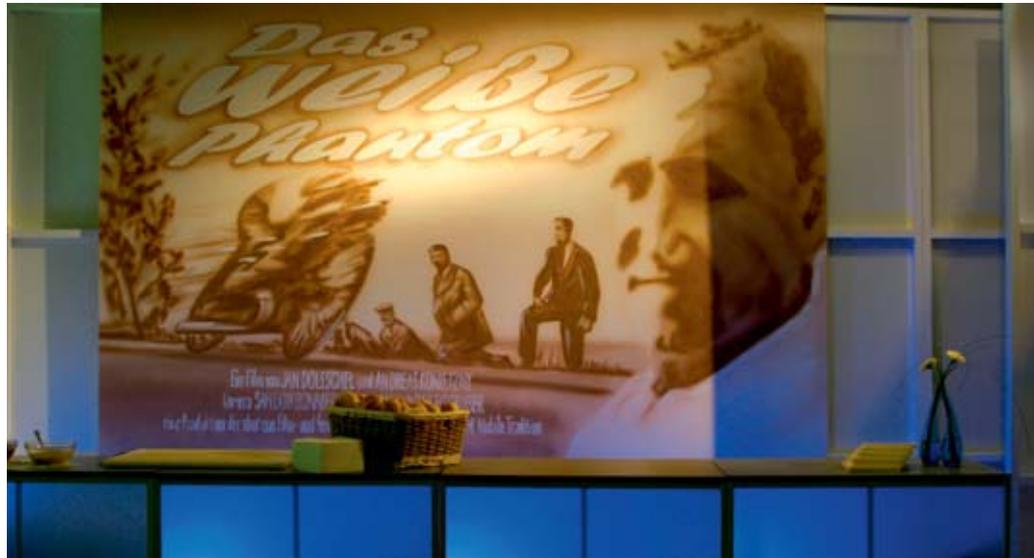
On 22nd February 2004, world record-breaker and BMW racing driver Ernst Jakob Henne celebrated his 100th birthday. To mark the occasion a special Henne exhibition was opened at the BMW Museum – a fascinating retrospective on the life of the racing legend before the BMW Museum closed in April 2004.

The focal point of the exhibition was Henne’s world record-breaking machine of 1937, along with the R 37, R 17 and R 63 motorcycles. Information pylons elucidated the stages and successes of the racing driver’s career. In addition, BMW Group Mobile Tradition displayed the collection of trophies and medals which Ernst Jakob Henne had presented to the heritage division last year.

BMW Mobile Tradition marked the opening of the exhibition with an event on the evening of 19th February 2004. The highlight of the celebration, attended by some 200 VIP guests, media representatives and the interested public, was the premiere of the documentary *Das weiße Phantom* (The white phantom) in the BMW Museum cinema. The film portrays the career of the racing legend through interviews, original film footage and contemporary shots of the relevant motorcycles. This documentary is available from BMW Mobile Tradition for certain exhibitions, museums and events. Those interested should e-mail Sinja Lohse at [sinja.lohse@bmw.de](mailto:sinja.lohse@bmw.de).

In addition, visitors attending the evening’s event were presented with copies of the Mobile Tradition live special on Ernst Jakob Henne, hot off the press.

Ernst Jakob Henne, who lives in Gran Canaria, was unfortunately unable to take part in the occasion, though he sent a message of greeting to the guests celebrating at the Museum.



Dr Diess, Director of BMW Motorrad (left), drew an arc from historic motorcycles to the latest models. Ernst Henne’s daughter Irene Kunze with BMW archivist Fred Jakobs next to her father’s trophies (right).



He himself spent his birthday with friends in Gran Canaria. Holger Lapp, Director of BMW Mobile Tradition, and Fred Jakobs of the BMW Archive were invited to the party. We are delight-

ed that Ernst Jakob Henne is still in rude health despite his advanced age and that he even managed to trip the light fantastic on the dancefloor at two in the morning.



The many guests at the BMW Museum enjoyed a birthday party that did credit to such an outstanding sportsman as Ernst Jakob Henne.



Holger Lapp congratulates the centenarian racer.

## Anniversaries of BMW's past

85 years ago

### First altitude world record for BMW

On 17th June 1919, test pilot Franz Zeno Diemer took off from Munich's Oberwiesenfeld airfield on a record-breaking attempt in a DFW F 37/III. His aim was to fly higher than anyone before him had done.

The aircraft, a two-seater prototype frequently also referred to as the C-IV, was powered by a BMW Type IV aero-engine.

The six-cylinder unit, with a displacement of 23 litres and a continuous output of 250 horsepower, was designed by Max Friz in 1918 and built in a limited production run.

Franz Zeno Diemer soared to 9,760 metres, marking a new absolute world altitude record and, at the same time, the first world-best performance achieved by the newly fledged BMW company, which had been founded in 1917.

However, as Germany was then no longer a member of the FAI – the international aeronautical governing body – as a result of the war, this record was initially not ratified.

On 28th June 1919 the Peace Treaty of Versailles was signed, marking the official end of the First World War.

As a consequence of the Treaty, the Bayerische Motoren Werke were forced to close down their aero-engine production – just 11 days after Zeno Diemer's world record of 9,760 metres.



Higher than any human being before: on 17th June 1919, Franz Zeno Diemer took off from Munich in a DFW F 37/III powered by a BMW Type IV aero-engine to achieve a world altitude record of 9,760 metres over the sea. However, this record was not internationally ratified.



75 years ago

Victory in the International Alpine Rally

The International Alpine Rally held in 1929 was an event for drivers and cars made of pretty stern stuff. It covered 2,650 kilometres across the Alps in five days, with four or five passes to be negotiated on each day.

95 mainly German competitors, as individual drivers or part of 16 teams, rose to the challenge. Among them was the BMW works team, fielding three small BMW 3/15 models driven by Max Buchner, Albert Kandt and Willi Wagner. This tortuous rally, which showed no mercy to man or machine, went from Munich via Villach to Merano, through the Dolomites and via Lugano to Como.

Accidents and retirements soon separated the sheep from the goats. But wherever things got too steep or too narrow, the small BMWs got through without any problem. Averaging a speed of 42 kilometres an hour, they posted

the best times in each of the five stages. By the end of the rally they were the only team to reach the finish without incurring any penalty points, and were pre-

sented with the coveted Alpine Trophy. It was the first major victory for the young car company and an achievement they were deservedly proud of.



Proud winners (from left): Willi Wagner, Albert Kandt and Max Buchner.



Grand reception for the winning team at the BMW's Eisenach factory.

25 years ago

Marc Surer in a March BMW 792 is European Formula 2 Champion



Using a thoroughly innovative vehicle concept based on the Formula One-inspired "ground effect" chassis, March BMW entered the 1979 Formula 2 season with their 792 racer. The previous year had already seen Swiss driver Marc

Surer busy collecting points in the newly established BMW Junior Team.

Now he was the number one driver in the works team alongside three new team-mates, and thus a potential title winner. But the season started off disas-

No flying start despite a "ground effect" chassis: Marc Surer (right) had to battle hard for his European Championship title.



trously: three retirements in three races weren't exactly the best of beginnings.

Then at the Nürburgring and in Vallelunga, two first places finally allowed for some cautious optimism. But further setbacks followed, bringing a drop in the rankings to a discouraging fifth place. Now Surer had to struggle to glean points from the lower echelons. But his efforts bore fruit, and in the final race a second-placed finish proved sufficient to secure him the European Championship title.

# World Champions: Wilhelm Noll and Fritz Cron

50 years ago, the two BMW works riders Wilhelm Noll and Fritz Cron claimed the first World Sidecar Championship title for BMW. All six of the championship races saw the duo make it onto the podium. Despite the fact that they benefited from the injury of title defender Eric Oliver, by the end of an exciting season they had emerged as well-deserving World Champions.

by Fred Jakobs



Acrobats on three wheels: Wilhelm Noll and Fritz Cron on the as yet unfaired BMW sidecar combination in 1953.

**Monza, 12th September 1954.** At the Italian Grand Prix, Wilhelm Noll with Fritz Cron in the sidecar were the first to take the chequered flag in their fully faired BMW sidecar combination. For the two competitors from Kirchhain in the Taunus, who had known each other since early youth, it was the third win of the season. Prior to that, car mechanic Noll and telephone engineer Cron had taken two World Championship rounds when they won the German Grand Prix and the Swiss Grand Prix.

Their successful season was complemented by two second places – one at the Ulster Grand Prix in Belfast and

the other at the Belgian Grand Prix in Spa-Francorchamps – as well as by a third-placed finish in the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy.

## World Champions!

That meant Noll and Cron not only stepped onto the podium in all six races of the World Championship, but the BMW



Evolution of the fairing: the combination at the start of the 1954 season and in 1955.

pairing had also broken the longstanding dominance of Norton motorcycles in this discipline and took the World Championship title to Germany for the first time.

### No easy start

At the outset of the season, however, things looked very different. Englishman Eric Oliver, four-times World Champion and title defender, along with his sidecar man Les Nutt claimed victory in the first three races with their faired works Norton combination.

However, in the Feldbergrennen hill-climb, which was not part of the World Championship, Oliver had a serious accident, as a result of which he was unable to compete in the German GP at the Solitude track near Stuttgart. Noll and Cron seized their chance and, riding their fuel-injected RS, achieved the first ever BMW victory in a World Championship race.

At the Swiss Grand Prix, the fifth race of the season, Noll and Cron were again the first to cross the finish line. Their rival Oliver gleaned just two points, and with the final race in Monza to go, both riders were joint leaders with 26 points each. But Oliver, whose arms had to be reset in plaster again, was unable to compete in Monza either, which meant Wilhelm Noll and Fritz Cron needed a single point to win.



Wilhelm Noll and Fritz Cron first competed as BMW works riders in 1953, and by 1956 had won their second World Championship.

But the German duo, lining up at Monza in a fully-faired sidecar combination for the first time, had somewhat higher ambitions than that. From the off they attacked the race in superior style, carving out a more than four-second lead per lap over the Norton duo of Smith and Dibben.

### The showdown that never was

The press were disappointed that the great showdown between the two leading combinations did not materialize. But with a new lap and a new track record, Noll and Cron had proved themselves worthy World Champions. Moreover, Oliver would certainly not have had a chance of outpacing the now fully



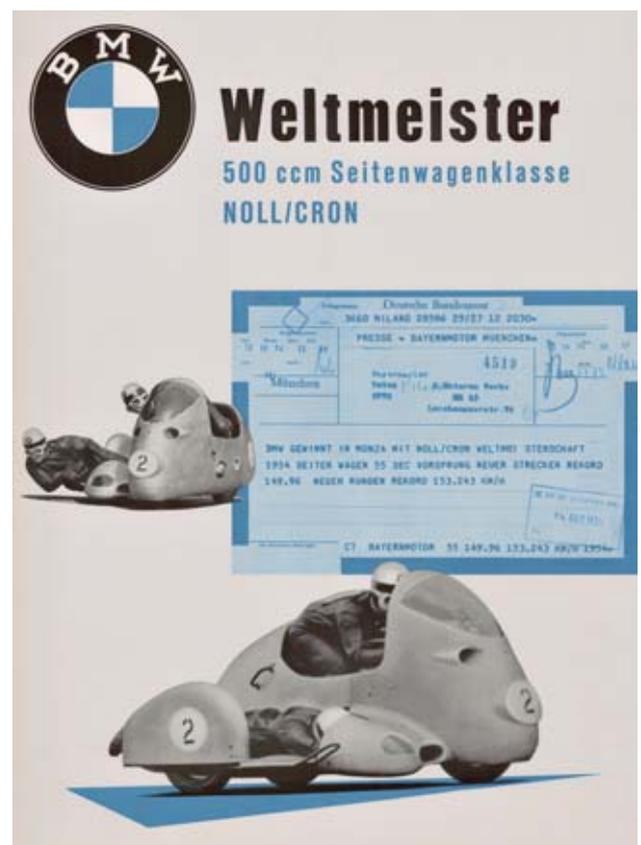
faired and thus considerably faster works RS fielded by BMW.

The first World Championship title in 1954 marked the start of a unique winning streak for the company: by 1974, no less than 19 Drivers' Championships and 20 Manufacturers' Championships had been claimed with BMW sidecar combinations.

In 1956 Noll and Cron were able to take another title victory after having to settle as runners-up in 1955. In autumn of 1956 they both hung up their helmets after the final World Championship race.

### Outstanding successes by Wilhelm Noll and Fritz Cron

Year	Win
1950	1st national win: Feldbergrennen, Taunus
1954 and 1956	German Grand Prix
1954	Swiss Grand Prix
1954 and 1955	Italian Grand Prix
1955 and 1956	Belgian Grand Prix
1956	Ulster Grand Prix
1954 and 1956	Winners of the World Championship and German Championship



Post-victory poster: marketing offensive based on the first World Championship title.



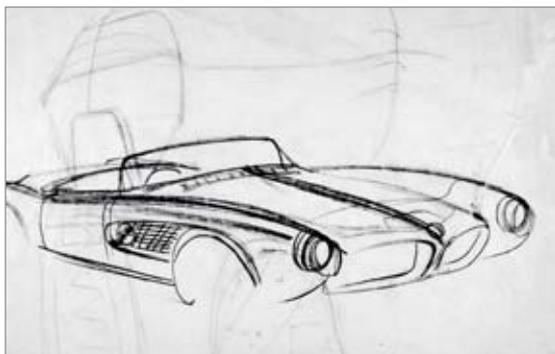
## You´ve got to be lucky

That's the title of the book in which designer Albrecht Graf Goertz tells his own story. The diffident count and versatile industrial designer, who celebrated his 90th birthday in 2004, is clearly reluctant to admit that his success was not just down to luck. The fact is that a number of famous products bear his name, not least the BMW 507, which many regard as the most beautiful sports car of all time.

by Melina Aulinger and Walter Zeichner

Albrecht Graf Goertz in his New York studio with a model of his most celebrated creation, the BMW 507.

Right: Sketch of the body of the BMW 507.



The product portfolio that carries his signature is an extensive one. It embraces products from New York to Tokyo. For Agfa he designed cameras, for Fuji 8mm movie cameras. Rowenta commissioned irons, toasters and cigarette lighters from him. In supermarkets, customers selected food from his Linde chiller cabinets.

Aesthetes wrote with his Mont Blanc fountain pen, and his designs could be found in thousands of households: German housewives loved their Constructa washing machine, prepared their cakes with a Starmix and fed their families with the aid of Fissler saucepans on Neff cookers. Tennis star Martina Navratilova refused to go out on court in anything but a Goertz-designed outfit.

Throughout his career as a designer, Goertz never specialized in any specific product groups. His universality and ability to get inside the mindset and philosophy of a wide variety of companies while also taking account of national preferences was enough to persuade corporate customers in Europe, North America and Asia.

On 12th January this year, Albrecht Graf Goertz celebrated his 90th birthday at the headquarters of BMW Mobile Tradition, together with the company with whom he made the breakthrough to the top of the designer elite in 1955 as the creator of the legendary BMW 507 dream roadster.

### A passion for life

On 12th January 1914, Albrecht Graf Goertz became the second son born to an old aristocratic German dynasty in Brunkensen near Hanover. His father was Rudolf Graf von Schlitz, named von

Goertz and Baron of Wriesberg and an officer of the German Army. His mother was the daughter of a wealthy Frankfurt banker.

Along with his siblings, Goertz spent his childhood and youth on his parents' estate in Brunkensen. By the age of just five or six, Goertz had already discovered a passion that would not let go of him for the rest of his life: cars.

But the family had a different career path plotted out for him. When he left school as an 18-year-old shortly before taking his school-leaving exams, he began a traineeship at the Deutsche Bank in Hamburg in 1933. A year and a half later he moved to the private London bank of Helbert Wagg & Company. But Goertz could never work up much enthusiasm for banking and in 1935 decided to turn his back on Europe.

He applied for a visa to enter the United States, where he hoped to fulfil his dream of working in the motor industry. In autumn of 1936 he left Europe for the land of unlimited opportunities.

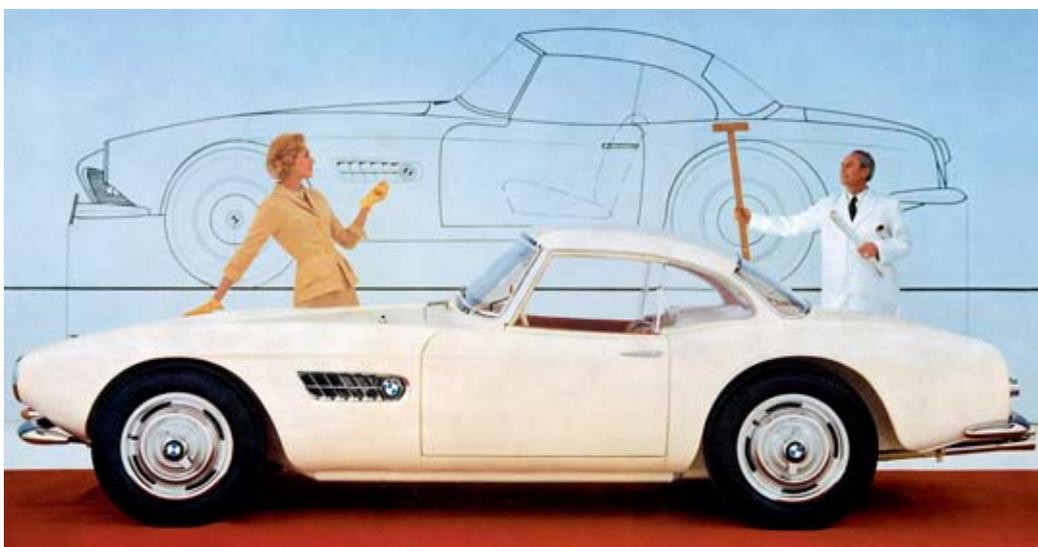
When he got to New York, Goertz was initially supported by a distant relative. He worked as a car washer, for an airline service and at an aero-engine factory. But soon his restless spirit drove him to the south of the US. Down there, a movement was just getting under way that would grip the whole of America after the war: "hot rodding" with souped up, rebodied and brightly painted cars.

In 1938 the count hired a small garage with a showroom on Rodeo

**"Design is international, it has no boundaries."  
Albrecht Graf Goertz**

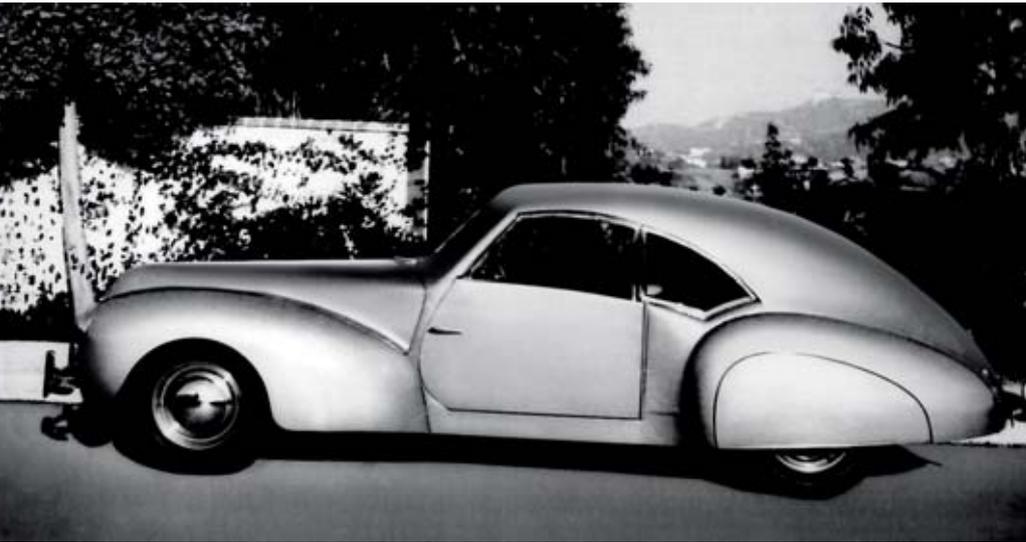
Drive in Los Angeles and began to "chop" Ford A and B models. He also revived a childhood passion and started designing cars.

In 1939 he "built" his very first self-designed car when he mounted onto the chassis of a Ford Mercury the sweeping bodywork of the Paragon.



*Die großen europäischen Achtzylinder*

Cover of a sales brochure for the large BMW models of 1957.



The Paragon: based on a Ford Mercury, this car was designed in 1939 by Albrecht Graf Goertz, then aged 25.

This two-door coupé with enclosed rear wheels and eccentric rear quarterlights went on show at the 1939 World Fair in San Francisco for several weeks. Then in 1940, Goertz was called up into the US Army and served on the Pacific front for five years.

Following his return to civilian life in 1945 his first, now remarried wife helped him out, got him a room in the exclusive Hotel Waldorf Astoria and introduced him to New York's social scene.

### A creative encounter

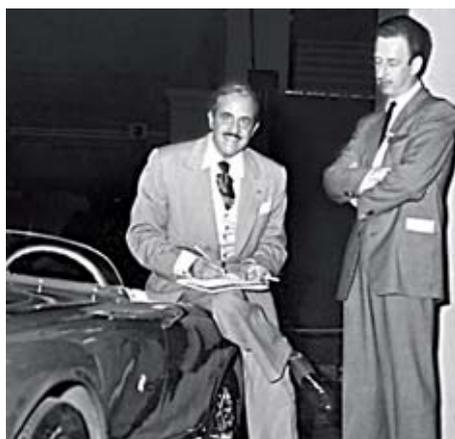
And that was how fortune came to smile on the count after a chance encounter in the car park of the Waldorf Astoria. Goertz had parked his Paragon behind an elegant, similarly personalized Lincoln Continental and got out to take a closer look at the car. He struck up a conversation with its owner, who for his part was admiring the unusual Paragon. The man turned out to be none other than Raymond Loewy. At the time Loewy was regarded as the high priest of industrial design. Apart from American high-speed locomotives, ships, aircraft, tractors, office machinery and much more besides, his New York studio was also responsible for designing the Lucky Strike cigarette packet, which remains virtually unchanged to this day, as well as the famous Shell logo. The Loewy studios had also designed the Studebaker automobiles.

The renowned stylist invited Goertz

to his office for a chat. He helped the young man get a place to study at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and subsequently gave him a job as junior designer in his Studebaker development department, where Goertz and a colleague designed the successful facelift of the Studebaker Champion – the so-called “bullet nose”.

### Moving on

Two and a half years later, however, Loewy parted company with the young stylist, predicting that he would never become a decent designer and would do better to marry a rich woman. Whether it was an internal disagreement that led to this falling-out or Loewy's own vanity, which could not tolerate any other stars around him, Goertz took it all in his stride, found



Goertz (right) with the high priest of American industrial design, Raymond Loewy.

work with Carl Otto and later with Norman Bel Geddes, and finally in 1953 set up his own design studio: Goertz Industrial Design, Inc. New York. Now he could take full responsibility for his own products, which suited him better than working for a large organization and the restrictions which that entailed. In addition to further small assignments, Goertz drew car illustrations for the New York magazine *Motorsport* and worked as a freelance designer of plastic toys for Arnkurt Associates.

Two or three times a year, Goertz would travel back to his home country to offer his services there. But selling design in Germany in the 1950s was no easy task. The demand for functional consumer goods in the aftermath of the Second World War was so high that product design was of subsidiary importance to the majority of manufacturers. For his first German client, the Hohner musical instrument company, Goertz would design accordions and harmonicas for the US market.

### Fresh start against the odds

After a very humble post-war revival as a bicycle manufacturer, BMW took everyone by surprise when it launched another large luxury car in 1951. The BMW 501, which was still partially based on pre-war technology, had put the brand back into the limelight of the automotive world, though it did nothing for the company's economic prosperity.

An even more exclusively classed model offering V8 engines – the 502 – managed to make an impression with all its variants from 1954 onwards, but likewise could not help BMW out of its dire straits.

Yet despite persistent financial problems, the company continued to pursue the path it had set out on. It was hoped that launching a luxury sports car in the USA, the only marketplace of the time that had any buyers for more expensive automobiles, would help the company get back on its feet.

The initial sketches for a sporty V8 roadster which, it was hoped, would prove a successful export and trigger an upswing were presented to Max Hoffmann. Austrian-born, Hoffmann was New York's biggest car dealer and ranked as the preeminent importer of European luxury cars overseas. It was



Another Goertz design: the BMW 503 Coupé with a 140 bhp V8 engine.

he who paved the way into the American market for prestige marques such as Mercedes, Porsche and BMW during the difficult post-war years. So great was his influence that he even had

an impact on the companies' model policies. Accordingly, BMW also invited him to appraise their sports car venture. Hoffmann was not keen on the initial sketches, however, and advised the

company to consult Italian body stylists.

It was from Hoffmann, whom he met at a motor show, that Goertz found out about the Munich carmaker's plans, and it was at Hoffmann's urging that



Goertz put his signature on a wide range of products, from the BMW 507 to harmonicas by Hohner.



BMW model builder Johann König in 1954, working on a clay model of the BMW 507.

Goertz submitted a few sketches on “what a sports car for the US market should look like” to Munich, where he was a complete unknown as a designer.

His designs met with instant approval, and two weeks later Goertz received an invitation from Hans Grewenig, BMW’s Sales Director, to come to Munich. He flew out for negotiations and an agreement was quickly reached. Goertz knew that this could be the chance of a lifetime, and in January 1955 the contracts were signed and exchanged.

### Designing a show car

That left exactly eight and a half months before the Frankfurt Motor Show in

autumn. It was here, in the previous year, that Mercedes-Benz had unveiled its 300 SL sports car with gullwing doors to great acclaim. This had also been developed for the American market on the advice of Max Hoffmann. Grewenig’s aim was to present a competitive car bearing the blue and white propeller badge at the forthcoming Frankfurt Show.

Apart from instructions to use the chromium ashtrays from the 502 Saloon, of which there was a large stockpile, Goertz was given no more specific brief than that. The technical basis was the chassis, curtailed by 35.5 cm, of the 502 3.2-litre Super Saloon. Other than that the designer was given

carte blanche for the project, in which he was backed up by a team of 30 to 40 assistants.

In parallel with the sports car, Goertz was soon also given responsibility for a further project. Based on preliminary work by Kurt Bredschneider, he developed the 503. This was also a luxury tourer primarily targeted at the American market and available as a convertible and a coupé.

### Doubts in the boardroom

Thus, in less than a year the BMW 503 was joined by the 507 roadster, and the first prototypes were presented to the company board.

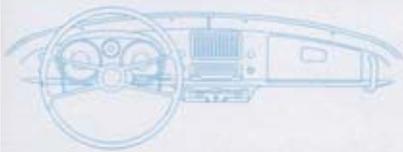
Apart from Grewenig and Technical Director Fiedler, who were backing Goertz up, the initial response of the management was rather indecisive. The gentlemen of the board had difficulty accepting the horizontal kidney grille of the 507. A BMW without the upright kidneys familiar from the 328 simply wasn’t a genuine BMW. Right up to the last minute the project seemed threatened by this stumbling block, but then time had run out: the Frankfurt Motor Show at which both models were to celebrate their debut was impending. Goertz could no longer cope with the pressure of the premiere and fled to New York to be as far away as possible from the presentation.

### The car’s the star

A few days later he received the crucial telegram. “The 507 is the star of the show! Congratulations” wrote Grewenig. The BMW 507, that elegant



Count Goertz at a designer’s most important task: committing ideas to paper.



*Aus der Reihe der großen*  *Achtzylinder*

V8 roadster with an output of 150 bhp, had indeed emerged as the undisputed highlight of the motor show.

The dynamic appearance of the 507 evoked spirit and energy. The exterior lines reflected its performance curve: to the observer of the stationary car, its sweeping contours suggested the sheer power delivered by a high-performance V8 engine with two twin carburetors and an output of 150 brake horsepower at 5000 rpm.

#### **BMW 507: the breakthrough**

Newspapers wrote of it as having “a magical attraction” and as “the most beautiful car ever built in Europe”. There was recognition from Pinin Farina too, one of Italy’s most famous designers: “The 507 is good, but the 503 is simply wonderful.” For BMW, however, this sensationally successful premiere didn’t generate much profit. Even the new top-of-the-range models failed to propel the company out of its crisis

when the hoped-for orders from the USA did not materialize. Compared to some competitors, the Goertz roadster did not provide enough engine power. And so by the time the model was phased out in spring of 1959, production had yielded just 251 BMW 507s with standard bodywork which could be ordered with a choice of three different final drive ratios, giving the car a top speed of between 190 and 220 km/h.

Most of these exclusive and rare sports cars, in many eyes the most beautiful BMWs ever designed, have survived down to our day. The 503 was no sweeping economic

From a BMW 507 brochure: the eight-cylinder roadster was in the tradition of the large pre-war sports cars, earning both the company and its creator major international recognition.



success either. With a price tag of around 30,000 marks it was competing with a number of far more powerful rivals, and production was phased out in early 1959 after a total of 412 cars (including 139 convertibles) had rolled out of the factory.

### Versatile projects

For the creator of these now legendary luxury models, on the other hand, these designs brought the international breakthrough and swept him to the pinnacle of his career. The sensational BMW premiere made Goertz an international name overnight. The new star designer was now being compared to Bertone,

Pinin Farina and other world-class stylists.

“If I can touch somebody emotionally with a car I can do the same with other products,” was Goertz’s conclusion. And he was to be proved right as commissions began flooding in from all sectors of industry.

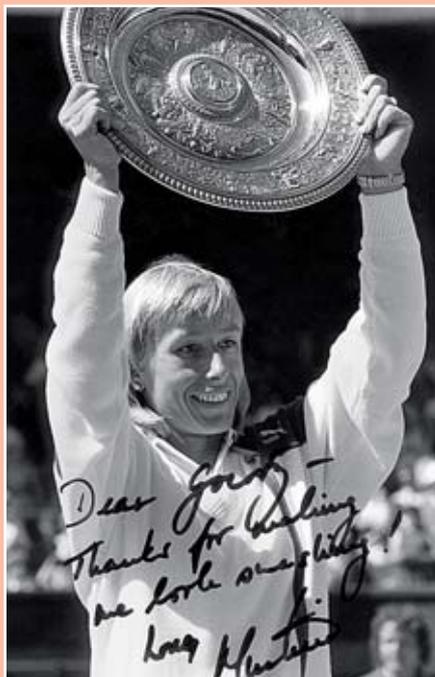
Working from his studio in the USA, which is still Goertz’s main place of residence, he would subsequently travel around the globe designing a variety of commodities. One completely different challenge from designing cars, for example, came with a commission from Mont Blanc. Goertz was to design the

Classic Line fountain pen for this premium manufacturer of writing instruments.

It was an unusual task for the designer since “the hand is far more sensitive than the eye”. That was why he had the prototypes tested in the dark as well. Contrary to the general trend in this area, he focused on the key functional element: the nib. Entirely visible, its butterfly shape lends itself to flowing handwriting while the body of the pen sits comfortably in the hand.

Yet cars were and would remain, in his opinion, “arguably the most appealing challenge for a designer”. When he

### A selection of product designs by Albrecht Graf Goertz



Product	Year
BMW 503 and BMW 507	1954/55
Agfa cameras	1955–1960
Kienzle clock	1957/58
Rowenta irons, lighters, coffee makers, toasters etc.	1957–1963
Mont Blanc fountain pen, ballpoint pen, disc pen	1958/59
Custom Craft fibreglass sports boat	1959
Polaroid camera	1960/61
SABA radios, televisions etc.	1960–1966
ACCO office equipment	1960–1974
Datsun Silvia, Datsun 240Z	1963–1968
Fuji cine-camera, film projector	1965–1970
Bicicletas Monark bicycle	1966
School furniture	1966–1970
Oxford Filing office furniture	1967–1968
Jensen jewellery	1972/73
Rolodex office supplies	1975
Puma sportswear and accessories	1983–1987



stopped working for BMW in 1957, Porsche commissioned him with producing a successor model to the 356. But after Dr Porsche himself pronounced, "That is a very beautiful car, but it is a Goertz, not a Porsche", it never got beyond the prototype stage.

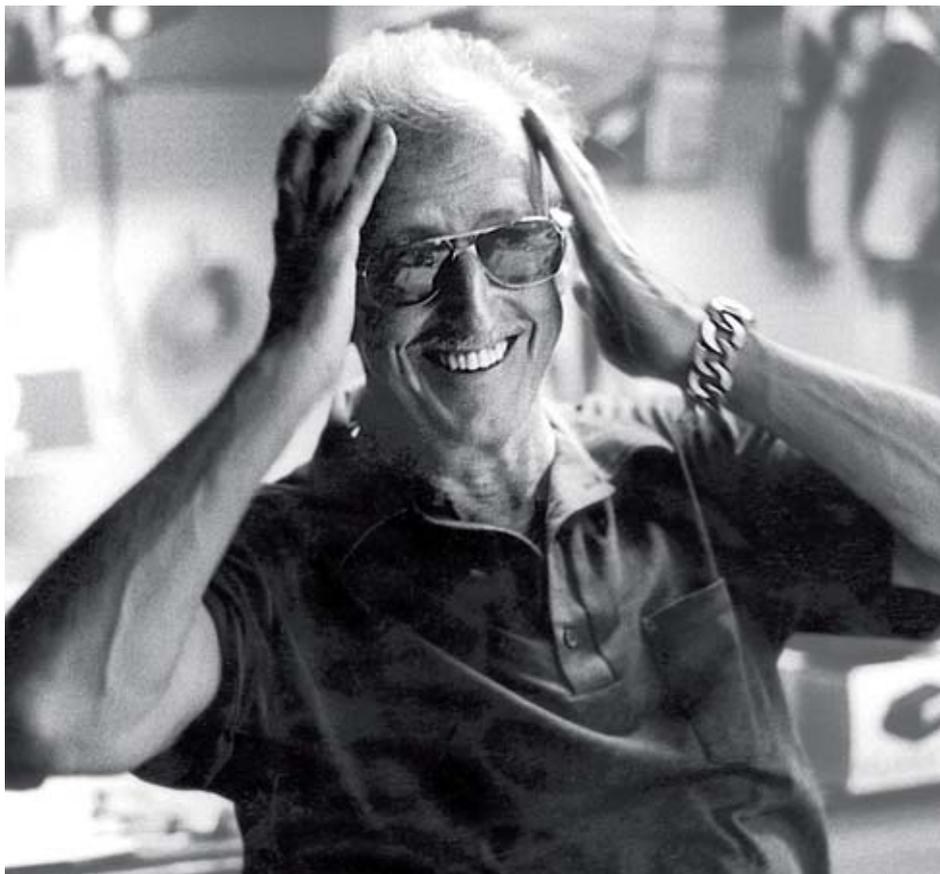
### And once again, a sports car

In 1962 Goertz decided on a sudden whim to go to Japan. He flew to the land of the rising sun, hired an interpreter and introduced himself to several companies. After further visits and correspondence, he signed a contract with the Nissan Motor Company in Tokyo.

A few years later he designed two models for Nissan: the Datsun Silvia and Datsun 240Z. The latter was a compact two-seater sports car with a classic elongated bonnet and stubby tail. When Nissan finally raised the nerve to launch the car onto the market in 1969, it broke all records within a few years to become the bestselling sports car in the world.

### Homeward bound

A collaboration with Jaguar in the late 1970s resulted in ten special versions of the Jaguar XJS for the USA to mark the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. And the success wouldn't let up: at least 60 companies were now working with Count Goertz on design projects, and the stylist circled the globe more than 50 times. In 1989, at the age of 75, the adoptive



Count Goertz, now 90, supports designers through the Graf Goertz Foundation.

American returned to his German homeland and the family estate in Brunkensen. But there were no thoughts of retirement. Apart from acting as a consultant to various companies, Goertz continued to attend international exhibitions and trade fairs. One fundamental concern of the designer

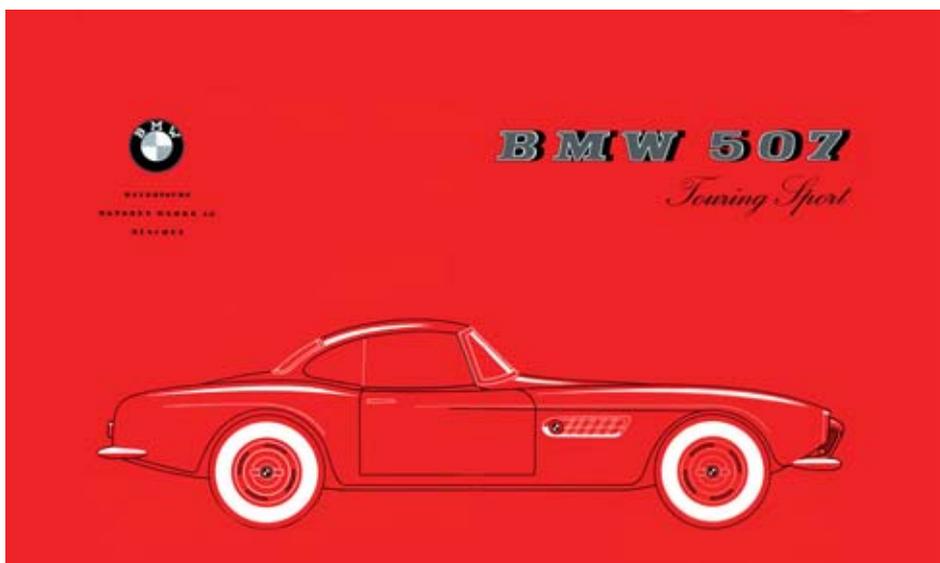
was to pass his knowledge and experience on to up-and-coming young talent in the sector.

### Order of Merit

As a consultant to design colleges in the USA and Europe, Goertz today continues to urge upon students one thing above all: to gather practical experience, and on an international scale. In early 1996 he founded the Albrecht-Graf-Goertz-Stiftung. The first competition organized by this international foundation went under the slogan "In search of creativity". The foundation's aim is to promote young designers who, it is hoped, will breathe life into industrial production with practically oriented designs.

On 29th February 2000, Albrecht Graf Goertz was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, 1st Class, of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

On 12th January of this year, Goertz celebrated his 90th birthday among his family and close friends. We are honoured that he chose to spend this great day at the home of BMW Group Mobile Tradition.





# Hallowed halls of classics

As in previous years, the Techno Classica exhibition in Essen was one of the highlights of the year for BMW fans. Beyond the usual comprehensive coverage for the benefit of brand devotees, this year saw BMW focus on two special anniversaries: the beginning of BMW car production three-quarters of a century ago, and the 100th birthday of racing legend Ernst Jakob Henne.

For years, the Techno Classica in Essen has been a barometer of the growing interest in classic vehicles. In 2004, the exhibition organizers in Essen once again posted several records. Exhibition space had grown to 110,000 square metres, after the 85,000 of the previous year. More than 850 exhibitors from 15 countries turned it into the world's biggest fair of its kind and the largest trading hub for classics old and new, which include not just cars but motorcycles, fire engines, utility vehicles and prestige cars as well.

For BMW, which has been strongly represented at this classic forum for years, the 16th Techno Classica came under the banner of two anniversaries: 75 Years of BMW Automobiles and the 100th birthday of BMW motorcycle racer and world record-breaker Ernst Jakob Henne. These two occasions dominated the concept behind the exhibition stand and the presentations during the Techno Classica.

By tradition, the BMW stand in Hall 12 is always one of the outstanding displays at the Techno Classica, and there can be

very few among the more than 100,000 visitors who did not make a point of visiting it.

The centre of the stand was a huge pillar representing the BMW Tower in Munich, the famous "four-cylinder" head office designed by the architect Prof. Karl Schwanzer. Around this central structure, the various exhibition areas were grouped.

On approximately 2,000 square metres of display area, the tour began with the very first BMW car, the BMW 3/15 PS, and then led past the legendary cars of the 1930s – such as the BMW 328 – and on into the difficult post-war years represented by BMW's much-loved "bubble car", the Isetta. There followed the 1960s and the company's upswing with the New Class, along with the unforgettable models of the 2002 Series, then the realignment of the model range in the late 1970s and the introduction of the model designation system which has remained in place to this day. Among the more recent exhibits were models from the new 5 Series, the prestigious 750iL and the BMW M3, bearing impressive witness to the crucial model policy decisions made during these years.



As every year, a visit to the BMW stand was de rigueur for the majority of visitors. Their enthusiasm was much in evidence.



Panoramic view of the BMW stand in Hall 12, with the "four-cylinder" in the middle along with some of the exhibits.

The theme of 75 Years of BMW Automobiles was flanked by exhibitions of BMW engines, including Formula One units, which got the pulses of many visitors racing. For the duration of the exhibition the BMW film *Der Scheunenfund* (The Barn Discovery) was shown, a documentary feature fusing the heritage theme and 75 Years of BMW Automobiles with the relevant historical background of the time. That approach went down well not only with the public: a number of museums and organizers showed a keen

interest in being able to screen the film themselves.

A further highlight was the evening event to mark 75 Years of BMW Automobiles and the official presentation of the first of three new volumes in the Dimensions series, entitled *From Vision to Success. The Development History of BMW Automobiles 1918–1982*. This book covers in detail the early years of BMW car production and was in such demand at the event that its authors, Walter Zeichner and Rainer Simons, were being pushed to the limit with all the copies they had to sign. The event, which took place on the spacious exhibition stand amid so many legendary vehicles, began noisily with a little horn concert featuring early BMW models. Holger Lapp, Director of BMW Group Mobile Tradition, then addressed the authors, witnesses of the past and BMW executives about various aspects of the company's motoring heritage, and about the future of BMW.

### Hippie days and Henne's "egg"

The first official screening of the film was the highlight of the evening and sparked some lively discussion as well as plenty of nostalgia, reviving as it did personal experiences – with or without BMW – among many of those present from the eras depicted: the 1950s and the first holidays in Italy after the war, the hippie days and the roaring seventies, sporting enthusiasm for the M1 and M3, or the days of one's own career achievements and the first company car.

The second anniversary theme also received comprehensive coverage. The original "Henne egg", the world record-



breaking machine of 1937, was on display with a cutaway section of the cladding on one side that bore impressive testimony to the courage it took to travel at more than 270 kilometres an hour in such a constricted vehicle in pursuit of the absolute world speed record – on a motorcycle which would today be illegal on safety grounds. An appropriate look of awe and reverence was reflected in the faces of those standing before this exhibit, embodying as it did the countless successes of the legendary world record-breaking rider Ernst Jakob Henne and his invaluable contribution to the sporting profile of BMW motorcycles.

### A wealth of information

For those interested, there was an opportunity to pick up more detailed information. Covering the topic at hand were copies of the newsletter *Mobile Tradition live Special Ernst Henne*. In addition, alternating with *Der Scheunenfund*, the film *Das weiße Phantom* (The White Phantom) was shown in honour of the 100th birthday of racer Ernst Jakob Henne. It depicts the life, career and successes of Henne in original footage, interviews with witnesses of the time, and contemporary scenes.

Other displays, on such themes as the MINI, coordination of the BMW and MINI club scene, advice on the BMW archives or parts supply, rounded off the services offered by BMW Group Mobile Tradition and made the *Techno Classica* a hugely successful experience for visitors and exhibitors alike.



Top to bottom: The BMW 3/15 PS "Dixi". Author Rainer Simons talking to Dr Karlheinz Lange. PR chief Richard Gaul and Holger Lapp, Director of BMW Group Mobile Tradition. Holger Lapp and Michael Stück in the Wartburg motor car of 1898. Bottom: Authors Walter Zeichner and Rainer Simons signing copies of the first edition of *From Vision to Success. The Development History of BMW Automobiles 1918–1932*.

# “Auto-nom” – the car in contemporary art

Retrospective: an exhibition by the NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft Düsseldorf examined the question of how cars relate to art and artists. From 27th September 2003 to 4th January 2004, all 15 BMW Art Cars were assembled together in a public place for the very first time.

by Andreas Jancke



Since its inception, the car has been a firm fixture of the world of art – in every conceivable shape and form, in pictures, as stylized sculptures, in installations, as models or as furniture. The creation of art with cars and the application of art to cars has taken on a significant role in recent art history.

The countless examples range from 19th-century visionary drawings to critiques of the car as a mass-produced phenomenon in the 1950s, all the way to the automobile as an object of reflection for various art movements at the close of the last century. In the exhibition rooms of the Düsseldorf NRW-Forum, the “auto-nomous” aspect of the car in art was a recent subject of investigation.

### Exhibition at the Düsseldorf NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft

If one talks about the art of car production in the narrower sense of a manufacturer’s design and technical ability to create a car based on design and vehicle concepts and the application of highly complex production processes, then art in relation to a car can mean commissioning an artist to take the product and rework it in his or her own style, to play with its symbolic power and to open up entirely new fields of interpretation.

At the NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft in Düsseldorf, the capital of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, an impressive exhibition recently endeavoured to showcase this relationship between fine arts, the everyday commodity commonly known as the car, the artist and his or her interpretation of the four-wheeler.

Playing a special role in the exhibition were BMW’s Art Cars. It was the first time the complete range of these unique automobiles – 15 in all – was on display together. As an essential constituent of BMW Group Mobile Tradition, they are also regularly dispatched to a variety of exhibitions, events and motor shows. At the end of

last year, visitors to the “Auto-nom” exhibition were able to see for themselves the distinctive character of these vehicles following their creative transformation at the hands of leading artists.

In this exhibition, the NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft aimed to illuminate social issues and everyday phenomena such as fashion photos, architecture, design and media against their cultural background. But the real innovation was to be found in the exhibition concept. Its title “Auto-nom” (Autonomous) was not so much a play on words as a desire to underline the artistic originality involved in dealing with such a seemingly transparent yet ultimately highly complex object.

The maxim of the curators was that the automobile should not be experienced merely as a status symbol or a design product, as a construct or structure, nor as a piece of technical machinery or a means of transport.

### A different perspective on the car

Through a “different perspective on the automobile in modern and contemporary art”, according to the exhibition concept, the car should instead be exhibited as an independent object and the interplay of form and content pre-



Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco used his artistic skills to reduce this Citroën DS to an undrivable single-seater.

sented in a thematically unusual way. In their works, the artists see the significance of the car as a formal and independent – in other words “autonomous” – object. If, as an ordinary means of transport, the car fails to convey this since it can no longer serve as an art object on account of its mass dissemination, it ultimately has to make its mark through variations of alienation and estrangement, by means of highlighting details or through particular deconstruction.

This manifestation of the car’s autonomy is clearly no longer possible in traffic situations dominated by congestion and gridlock. It can only come



Left: “Everything you look at looks back at you,” said Sandro Chia of the BMW 3 Series racing touring car he designed in 1992. Right: Alexander Calder’s BMW 3.0 CSL marked the inception of the Art Car series in 1975.

into its own through the escape from routine and a relocation into an “art-ificial” space. This the exhibiting artists have succeeded in achieving primarily through segregation and a play with the obvious symbolism of the car.

The car, so say the ideas people behind this exhibition, takes on a broader meaning as a cultural asset by virtue of its associations with mobility and dynamism, but also with eroticism and power. It should be seen in contexts that take the viewer by surprise, presented in what appear to be highly unusual relationships that can even extend to the physical distortion of the art object itself.



Among the works on display at the exhibition were examples by famous artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Sylvie Fleury, Julian Opie and Erwin Wurm. The exhibits mainly comprised sculptures and installations, illustrations, photographs and videos from European and North American galleries and collections.

### BMW and the art of the automobile

In its 75-year history of car production, BMW has always produced vehicles of a particular worth and featuring innovative design. These progressive impulses also benefited the car manufacturer's involvement in the cultural sphere, where they stimulated artists in the 1970s to tackle the issue of automobiles in art.

The cultural commitment of the BMW Group today is expressed, among other ways, through the sponsorship of contemporary art. This involvement, which began around three decades ago, is a firm element of the social responsibility consciously embraced by the BMW Group. Constituting the spearhead of this involvement is a unique art collection: the BMW Art Cars.

### BMW Art Car Collection: “Art that sets the pace”

At the Düsseldorf exhibition, Art Cars by various artists, ranging from Alexander Calder and Roy Lichtenstein to Andy Warhol, Sandro Chia and Jenny Holzer, were assembled together for the first time last year. The 15 BMW Art Cars painted by well-known artists took up prominent positions in the exhibition rooms.

The history of these cars is as unique as the concept that gave rise to them in the first place. Since Alexander Calder first painted a BMW racing car back in 1975, each year saw more artists bestowing on BMW cars their own designs and imagery, which were seamlessly integrated into the style of their own oeuvre.

In the mid-1970s, French racing driver Hervé Poulain, in collaboration with BMW and his friend Alexander Calder, had suggested that his BMW 3.0 CSL be given an artistic bodywork design. For the American sculptor this request would turn into a serious artistic experiment since he saw himself faced with an existing design and, furthermore, had to take the technical brief into account.

That meant he was primarily able to alter the appearance of the car only through a creative application of colours. Yet that in itself allowed the car to develop a design of its own and, thanks to this novel concept and colourful execution, it became one of the most innovative “sculptures” of the 20th century.

With his racing car resplendent in bright primary colours, Poulain caused a sensation in the Le Mans 24 Hour Race and could be certain of attracting looks of amazement from spectators as he flew past them in his number 93 racing car.

Race cars as medium: the designs by Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella and Jenny Holzer (top to bottom) present very different interpretations.



In 1979 Andy Warhol was the first artist who, rather than applying his design to a scale model which would then be transferred to the original, applied paint directly onto the BMW M1. His colour scheme was designed to be a visual expression of speed.

The Le Mans circuit became the central “arena” for the Art Car experiment, since all the painted racing cars of the 1970s went on to battle for victory in the Le Mans 24 Hour marathon.

**The list gets longer**

Calder’s CSL was so well received that work on the Art Car project continued. American artists such as Frank Stella and Roy Lichtenstein began to design their own Art Cars and sign them in prominent places.

Andy Warhol was the first artist to add his autograph directly the paintwork of the car, in this case an M1. Whereas the other artists had previously committed their artworks to a 1:5 scale model before the design was transferred to the actual car, Warhol insisted on painting straight onto the Art Car itself in 1979.

**Art car with words**

In the 1980s and ’90s, further artists joined the ranks of the Art Car designers and BMW production models were also included. The last Art Car to date was a another racing model which competed in the Le Mans marathon: the BMW V12 Le Mans sports racer, to which Jenny Holzer added maxims from her “Truisms” work in 1999.

With its Art Car Collection, the BMW Group is pursuing its goal of bringing technology and art together with a view to sparking new creativity from the tension between the two areas. It also endeavours to make the relationship between culture and technology transparent and comprehensible. This illustrious collection, moreover, is meant to exemplify the

cultural commitment of the company as a whole. In future, BMW Group Mobile Tradition will continue to be responsible for the safekeeping and exhibition of the Art Cars and will thus remain actively involved in this project. The aim, after all, is to keep these valuable four-wheeled works of art moving beyond this particular exhibition in Düsseldorf.

Artists at the exhibition	Artists of the Art Cars
Peter Cain Tamara Grcic Jan Dibbets Sylvie Fleury Alan Graham Jenny Holzer Rita McBride Christiane Möbus Bertrand Lavier Julian Opie Gabriel Orozco Robert Rauschenberg Santiago Sierra Stefan Sous Frank Stella Wolfgang Tillmans Rubén Ortíz Torres Carel Visser Erwin Wurm	Alexander Calder Frank Stella Roy Lichtenstein Andy Warhol Ernst Fuchs Robert Rauschenberg Michael Jagamara Nelson Ken Done Matazo Kayama César Manrique A. R. Penck Esther Mahlangu Sandro Chia David Hockney Jenny Holzer



# Kurt Donath: the manager behind BMW's rebirth

"Germany has been occupied and power now lies with the occupying forces." Grand Admiral Dönitz announced the unconditional capitulation of the German armed forces in his radio address to the nation on 8th May 1945. This came into force one minute after midnight the next day. The armed struggle in Europe had been brought to an end, and the National Socialist regime had been crushed. The task now was to restructure public life in the defeated state of Germany. Kurt Donath was at the helm of the Bayerische Motoren Werke during this challenging period.

by Manfred Grunert

The Allied occupation took the Bayerische Motoren Werke to the brink of extinction. Concentrating on aero-engines had turned the company into one of the most significant armaments manufacturers in Germany. This meant that BMW was a prime candidate for the demilitarization plans of the American military government

that was in charge of Bavaria and hence the BMW headquarters as well.

Immediately after the Americans marched into Munich on 30th April 1945, the troops occupied BMW's Munich plants in Milbertshofen and Allach. Employees were prohibited from entering the factory complex. The executive man-

agement was detained at the Milbertshofen plant for four weeks. The military government divided the provisional management of the company among three men: Otto Lampertsdorfer was appointed head of the personnel department, Heinrich Krafft von Dellmensingen was given responsibility for the commercial

Kurt Donath (right) with one of his successors, Wilhelm Gieschen, behind a prototype BMW Isetta hunting car.

side, and Kurt Donath was put in charge of technical issues. This article focuses on the role that Donath played during his time with BMW.

### The rapid recovery begins

Kurt Donath was born in Berlin in 1902 and spent his childhood and youth in the nation's capital. As a 20-year-old, he decided to study mechanical engineering at the national engineering academy in Wismar. After obtaining his degree, he applied for a job at Siemens & Halske in Berlin.

Apart from electro-technical products, the company had also been manufacturing aero-engines since 1917 and was subsequently one of the pioneers in the construction of air-cooled engines in Germany.

Donath's first job was as an operating technician, but he then quickly ascended the hierarchy of the company. The production engineer was soon appointed head of work preparation, and then senior engineer with general power of attorney. The initial high point of his career was his appointment as operations director at the aero-engine plant in Berlin/Spandau.

### From Berlin to Munich

When BMW took over the plant in June 1939, it quickly became clear that the new company management wished to benefit from the knowledge and experience of the production specialist. After he had proved his capabilities with the expansion of production plants, he was soon entrusted with new functions. Fritz Hille (see Mobile Tradition live 01/2004) had been Chairman of the Board of Management since 1942 and he was looking for a man who could improve and restructure the production systems at the main plant in Munich, bringing them up to the standard required to manufacture the volumes demanded by the Reich Air Ministry in Berlin.

Donath left Berlin and became Managing Director of BMW Flugmotorenbau GmbH in Munich. He was head of aero-engine manufacture in Milbertshofen until 1945. He held the post of director and was already one of the leading managers in the company.

When he was appointed to the provisional company management at the end of the war in 1945, he was 42 years old. As the man responsible for technical issues, he had to address two key matters: what products could and should BMW manufacture and how could the consequences of dismantling be compensated.

The choice of products with which to sustain BMW was not difficult – the American military government granted the first production licence to BMW in July 1945, which only permitted the company to repair Army vehicles and to manufacture any spare parts that were necessary. The occupying forces had

come to preserving the relevant machines from dismantling and setting them up for the new requirements. However, the position was not so good with regard to securing orders. The 72,000 units originally agreed were quickly reduced to 32,000. In fact, the volume had not reached any-

**Donath didn't see himself as just taking orders issued by the Americans. He robustly pursued his aim of improving the situation for BMW**

where near this amount by the time American troops withdrew in 1955.

Although Donath and the plant management in Allach succeeded in rescuing a large proportion of the machines that were not required for aero-engine production, the qualitative specifications of the military were high and this meant that the few financial resources available to BMW had to be used to procure new machines. When the orders failed to materialize, the new machines stood idle and personnel levels had to be quickly reduced. This latter measure was criticized severely in the public arena.

### Cooking pots and mixers

However, Donath didn't see himself as just taking orders issued by the Americans. He robustly pursued his aim of improving the situation in Allach for BMW and its workforce. In a speech at the Bayerischer Hof hotel, he addressed the "Gentlemen who are responsible for American concerns. You should avoid (...) basic mistakes in the way you treat the workers and entrepreneurs who are working for you, because trust and goodwill have traditionally been the basis for successful industrial cooperation."

Donath was less constrained by outside influences at the Milbertshofen works. The production permit was gradually made less restrictive so that BMW was soon able to build up new production.



Donath giving a speech at the launch of the BMW R 24.

selected the plant in Allach as the service workshop. The machinery had been largely spared in the Allied air raids and started up operations again in October as the "Karlsfeld Ordnance Depot" (KOD).

Donath was able to count on the cooperation of the Americans when it



Donath in conversation with a representative of the Confiscation Committee in 1946.

Although the range of products didn't sound very edifying for a technology company like BMW, Donath regarded the production of cooking pots, mixers and potato cultivation machinery not as demeaning but as a challenge.

#### **New start with the BMW R 24**

The ordinary Board of Management had been set up in June 1947 and it quickly developed precise production processes and output plans as it had already done for aero-engine production in Spandau and Munich. However, emergency production was scarcely more than an academic exercise for Donath and the specialist workers, acting as a means of

preparing themselves and the mobility company for the return to traditional products.

Shortly after the production permit for motorcycles was granted, Donath commissioned the design engineer Alfred Böning to design a completely new motorcycle in June 1946. The BMW R 10 was already being tested in spring with a 125 cc two-stroke engine. But Donath favoured a different solution. He regarded the biggest requirement as being with the German authorities, who preferred 250 cc machines.

Just one year later, the development engineers had put Donath's ideas into practice. BMW launched the BMW R 24 at the Geneva Motor Show as a development of the single-cylinder pre-war models. The response to the new motorcycle was astounding, but first of all it was necessary to set up the facilities for volume production.

A look at the number of production machines that had been dismantled at the Munich plants gives an indication of the enormity of the task Donath was confronted with. More than 4,200 BMW units had been dismantled, which represented 28 percent of all the dismantling that had taken place throughout the entire state of

Bavaria. Another factor was due to a mistake from the past that now came home to roost. Apart from automobile production, BMW had also transferred motorcycle production to Eisenach, and the relevant machinery and plans had therefore been confiscated by the Red Army after the war. This meant they were no longer available to Donath and his planning team.

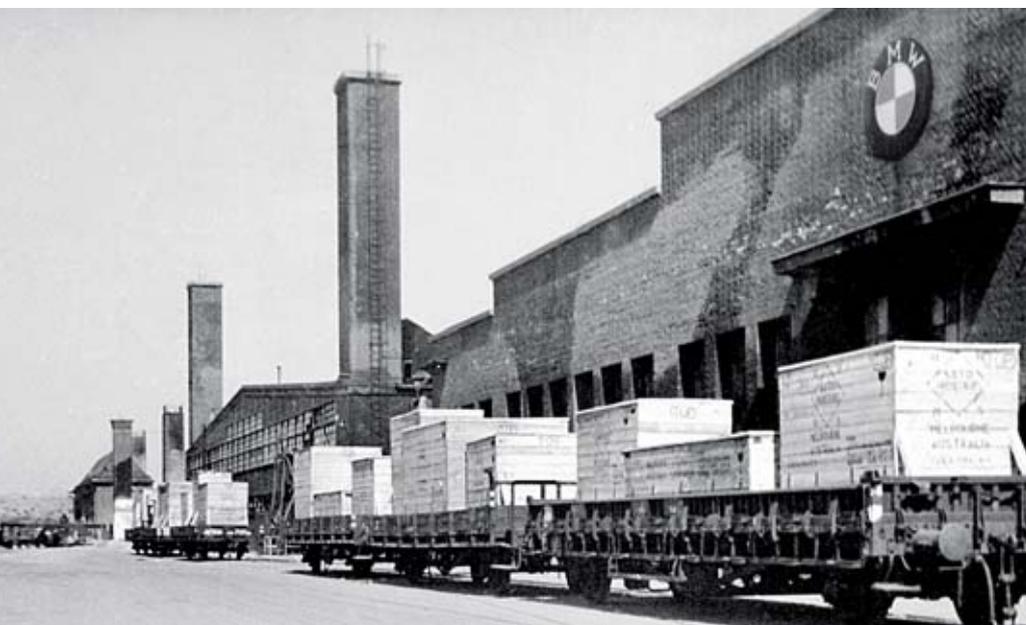
The strategy Donath adopted in order to solve this difficult problem proceeded in a number of different directions. One initiative he took was to comb through the plant and equipment that was up for sale the length and breadth of Germany with the aim of purchasing suitable machinery at cheap prices. He also turned to the Bavarian Ministry of Economics in order to hire machines to be used for production. Using these methods, he succeeded in building up a volume production line in Milbertshofen within a year to produce more than 9,000 units of the R 24.

#### **The first post-war model**

But Donath had more ambitious plans. In addition to developing a 500 cc motorcycle, he envisaged the first BMW automobile rolling off the Milbertshofen production line in the foreseeable future. This represented a particular challenge, because the company had been producing cars exclusively in Eisenach before the war.

Böning first directed his attention towards developing a car with an 1100 cc engine, but this idea was rejected by the Board of Management. They were in favour of building a top-of-the-range car to emulate the big models from the pre-war era, the 326 and the 335. Donath also objected that profitable production of the necessary volume of small cars was not realistic with the capacities currently available. The first development steps for the BMW 501 were taken in August 1948. Because the project progressed well, the Supervisory Board decided to build up volume production in mid-1950. Two years later, Donath had succeeded in establishing volume production.

Donath was now at the peak of his career with BMW. He had succeeded in warding off closure of the Munich facilities and instead set up small-scale manufacture of emergency products. He had



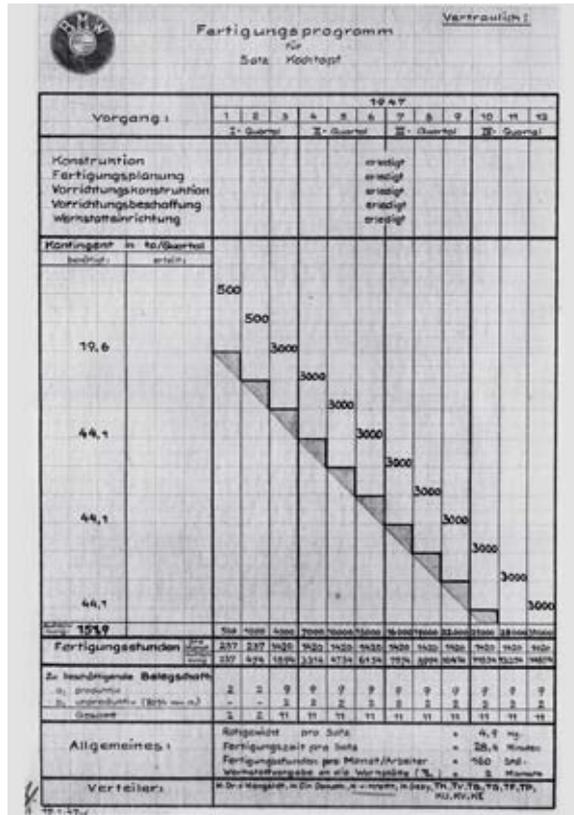
After dismantling in Munich, BMW machines were dispatched across the world to 16 different countries.

then succeeded in developing a new motorcycle and establishing effective production. Finally, he had started up automobile production again and thereby reinstated the full BMW product range.

**Financial straits**

The sad thing was that the BMW 501 and its successors never brought in any profits for the company. This was partly due to the poor response from customers. The other factor was that the development costs and production costs were too high and the quality of production was not up to scratch. Production of the Isetta and falling motorcycle sales did nothing to ameliorate the increasing financial difficulties of the company.

Donath and his staff had simply spent too much money. It had been important to retain or regain the professional staff and production workers from the pre-war era to preserve BMW's know-how, but it was now equally difficult to get out of old ways and habits. Staff had been used to the aero-engine business with its high sales volumes, and cost-consciousness didn't come particularly easily to personnel. This was a fact which was now having a negative effect



Whether cooking pots or mixers, Donath still insisted on precise production plans.

given that the name of the game was to make savings.

Donath repeatedly resisted solving these problems by means of comprehensive reorganization. Quite the

contrary, he attempted to appeal to the individual responsibility of his personnel, but these appeals largely fell on deaf ears.

**An excess of power**

The position of the technical director was also beset by deep-seated problems. Donath was a respected production specialist, not a designer or development engineer. Yet it was precisely on the development side that he needed an opposite number of equal status in order to achieve a balanced relationship between the two areas of expertise. Donath's power was necessary at the start of reconstruction in order to ensure that the technical requirements could quickly be implemented in order to put the brand back on its feet. When it came to moving the company forward, however, such concentration of power became a hindrance. What was required was a finely tuned relationship between production and development.

**Departure from BMW**

On 28 February 1957, Donath accepted the consequences of his unsuccessful product policy and resigned from the Board of Management of BMW AG, though he continued to work for the company as a technical consultant.



Donath entering the Milbertshofen plant on his 50th birthday in 1952 (left).



Right: Donath flanked by fellow Members of the Board Heinrich Krafft von Dellmensingen (left of Donath) and head of development Fritz Fiedler (right of Donath).

# From vision to success – the first BMW cars

The Bayerische Motoren Werke were late developers when it came to cars. Although the possibility of creating a car of their own was already being mooted in 1918 and various vehicles with BMW engines appeared in the years that followed, car production proper did not start until 1928 when BMW took over the Dixi factory in Eisenach and launched the BMW 3/15 PS in 1929. But it was a beginning which, despite the looming economic crisis, marked the inception of a stunning success story that has continued to this day and brought forth a succession of unforgettable automobiles.

by Walter Zeichner

It was a sunny spring day in Berlin-Johannisthal when the first BMW production car rolled out of the factory on 22nd March 1929. The small saloon had beige paintwork and a bright red decorative stripe running below the windows. In their haste to line it up in front of the cameras, the staff concerned had forgotten to mount the company badge on the radiator grille. Two men can be seen squinting amiably into the sun beside this first BMW 3/15 PS model – Hubert Johnson, adviser to the Bayerische Motoren Werke during the setting up of their car production facilities, and an employee – unfortunately anonymous – in a white overall.

It was to be 70 years before the pictures were discovered that documented this event in pin-sharp focus. It is likely that Gotthilf Dürnwächter, manager of the BMW assembly plant in Berlin-Johannisthal, had pressed the shutter release himself. In the late 1990s, images and documents were found amongst his estate which suddenly brought this long-forgotten chapter of BMW history to light once more.

But BMW's automobile history had begun much earlier, if only in the form of proposals and prototypes. Correspondence dating back to 1918 shows the first use of the term "automobile" in BMW history. But no details, let alone images have come down to us regarding this four-

Gotthilf Dürnwächter, one of the fathers of the first BMW car, during a test drive.

wheeled primogenitor. Subsequently, BMW manufactured various built-in motors with four and two cylinders that powered a wide variety of agricultural vehicles in the early 1920s. The spectrum of machinery driven across the land by BMW units ranged from single-track cars to huge farm tractors.

Around 1925 two specially hired BMW designers, Max Friz and Gotthilf Dürnwächter, both former employees of Daimler-Benz in Stuttgart, were commissioned by BMW's Managing Director Franz-Josef Popp to design a BMW production car. From this first, demonstrably operational BMW car – though as yet lacking any bodywork – at least a photograph survives showing Chief Engineer Gotthilf Dürnwächter during a bitter-cold test drive near Bavaria's Tegernsee lake.

Left: The shape of the 1928 Rosengart saloon served as a model for the design of the first BMW.

Centre: Gotthilf Dürnwächter test-driving one of the first prototypes near the Tegernsee around 1925.

Right: The first BMW car sees the light of the world. In the rush, it appeared without the company badge on the radiator.





Well wrapped up, the chassis designer undertook this excursion himself on a test model whose front wheels were driven by an air-cooled transverse four-cylinder engine - as the classic Mini would be many years later.

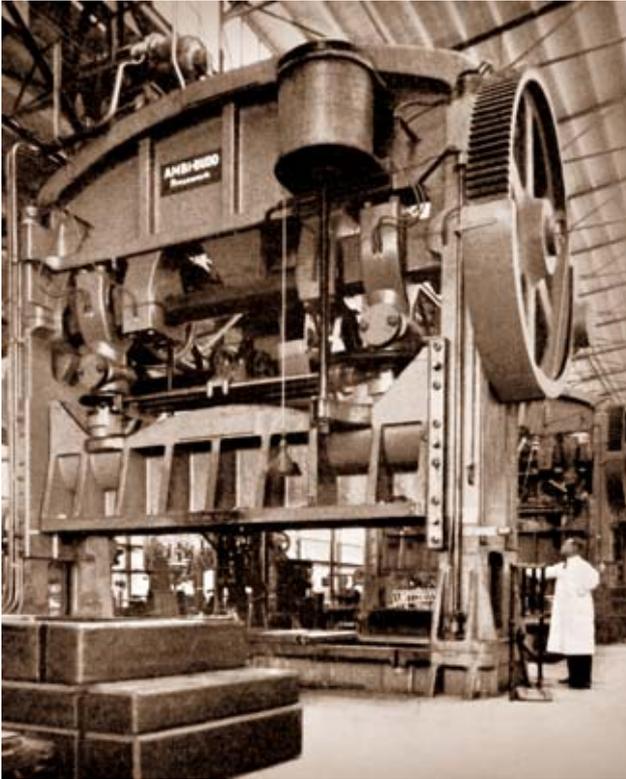
In the years that followed, BMW's car designers tackled an amazingly diverse range of automotive concepts, creating design sketches for cars in the small, medium and, following the BMW Chairman's visit to the USA, the luxury category.



The salient feature of all these concepts and test models was a drive concept that is hardly unusual today and, but in the late 1920s was positively exotic – front-wheel drive. Whether as a small car with a transverse front-mounted engine or a large saloon with an eight-cylinder V engine, these designs invariably displayed this elaborate front-wheel drive, a detail with which BMW caused a sensation in the car market at the time.

But, as we know, history turned out to be completely different. The takeover of the Dixi manufacturing plant at the end of 1928 gave BMW the chance to enter the car sector almost instantly with a tried and tested model that had been well received by the public. Alongside its in-house designs, BMW had long also been considering the possibility of producing licensed versions and had investigated various models with this in mind, including the Dixi 3/15 PS small car from Eisenach, itself a licensed version of the eminently successful Austin Seven from England.

As a decision in favour of this model seemed ever more likely, the aim was to systematically turn this small car into a “new BMW automobile”. That brought BMW into contact with the Rosengart company in Paris, who for their part had recently begun manufacturing a licensed version of the Austin



Presses like these at AMBI-BUDD in Berlin shaped the body panels for the first BMW cars.

Seven. The French company had, among other products, developed their own, spacious saloon body in modern, attractive styling, which lent the proven technology a more appealing packaging than was the case with the rather primitive and already dated-looking Dixi small car.

BMW negotiated with Rosengart and secured the rights to more or less take over this modern design. But at the same time the company went a signifi-

cant step further and designed the superstructure as an all-steel car body. It was only recently that the first cars to feature such an all-steel body had been launched onto the German marketplace. The only company in Germany at the time to offer this production method, which dispensed with the traditional use of a wooden frame and was thus particularly suited for volume car production, was the AMBI-BUDD bodywork factory in Berlin-Johannisthal. Arthur Müller, a Berlin business magnate, had followed the American example and installed the necessary large presses for the individual components at several work-

shops in the northern part of the old Johannisthal airfield. In the meantime, companies such as Adler and Hanomag had joined his clientele, and now BMW executives were also negotiating with AMBI-BUDD about a possible collaboration.

In the course of these talks it was also decided to transfer the assembly of the first BMW cars to Berlin. It was probably cheaper to transport the chas-

sis from Eisenach to Berlin than to deliver the unwieldy and sensitive bodies, which were also receiving their paintwork at AMBI-BUDD, to Eisenach.

And so BMW hired a medium-sized assembly workshop from AMBI-BUDD not far from the press plant and set it up in the winter of 1928/29 as the first assembly site for BMW automobiles. The man chosen as manager of this plant and thus of the first serial production of BMW cars was Gotthilf Dürnwächter.

Despite the bitter cold, Dürnwächter and his team managed to put together the first BMW cars on 22nd March, and the following weeks saw hundreds of BMW 3/15 PS saloons turned out and stockpiled in Berlin to secure the supply of new cars to BMW dealers from July.

### Reputation as “Alpine winners”

This assembly plant, which has been preserved to this day, was divided into two sections separated by a wall. One half was a storage area for the chassis supplied from Eisenach and other components required for the completion of the first BMW models. In the assembly area, simple sliding ramps had been set up on which the chassis would be placed for final assembly – a kind of manually operated conveyor belt. The ready painted bodies were supplied from the neighbouring AMBI-BUDD pressing plant by dollies on tracks and then raised above the chassis by ceiling-mounted winches for final assembly.

BMW had thus made a virtue out of necessity, for, in the sum of its features, this first BMW 3/15 PS saloon of 1929 was the most modern small car in Germany’s automotive industry.

Meanwhile, the production of further models was being prepared in Eisenach using the classic “Weymann” mixed construction method. This involved planking a wooden frame with metal panels and then covering it with lined leatherette. This was a far cheaper method for smaller production runs as it did not require expensive sheet-metal mouldings. By spring, a few sample versions of the tourer, or phaeton, were produced, and the summer then saw volume production of BMW cars begin in Eisenach as well.

Not long afterwards the affordable tourer was joined by a sporty, open-



BMW assembly plant in Berlin-Johannisthal in early 1929 during production of the first BMW 3/15 PS DA 2 saloons.

topped two-seater which had already won the International Alpine Rally across challenging mountain passes in August of 1929. In advertising, the small BMWs were thenceforward celebrated as the “Alpine winners”.

But the first new BMW model, the all-steel saloon, was unveiled before the public on 9th July 1929. Throughout Germany, the BMW “auto representatives” displayed this small car, which initially featured mainly ivory-coloured paintwork with a red decorative line. In Berlin, BMW had even opened a new, smart, modern exhibition and sales venue in a central location, opposite the Memorial Church on the city’s main thoroughfare. On 9th July, newspaper reporters, invited guests and curious onlookers thronged around the small cars that sported the BMW logo on their radiator grille. The manager of the Eisenach factory even gave an address on this occasion.

The response to BMW’s small cars was entirely positive, and soon motor-ing magazines were publishing favourable reviews.

New technology with teething troubles – the swing axle of the 1931 BMW 3/15 PS DA4.

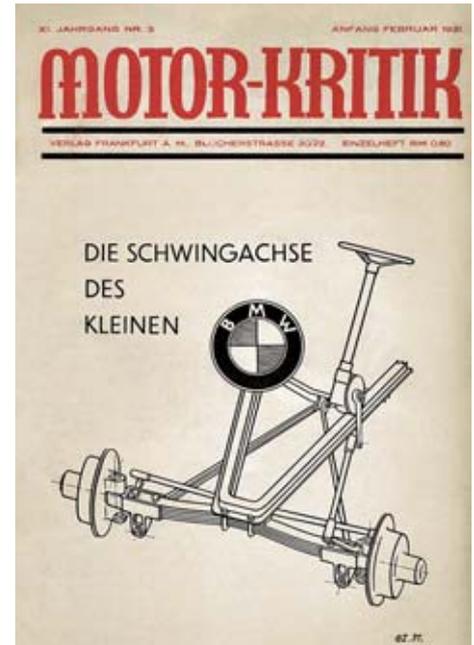
BMW began turning out new variants in quick succession, such as a convertible, an express delivery vehicle and the Wartburg sports model generating 18 bhp. There was little in the way of competition within this automotive class in Germany at the time. Only Opel, Hanomag and DKW had comparable models on offer, but the small BMW seemed the most attractive answer to the need for small cars.

It wasn’t long, however, before the flourishing sales of the BMW 3/15 range were thwarted by a development that led to economic catastrophe around the world – the Great Depression. From late 1929, new car sales rapidly declined and numerous companies were fighting for survival. These developments also had a deep impact on BMW. The company had just taken the bold step to becoming a car manufacturer, and now it was already having to consider stalling production or selling off

the car factory it had recently acquired. Yet despite heavy losses, the company held onto the Eisenach factory and in the course of 1930 also transferred the assembly of its all-steel saloons and convertibles to Eisenach. Despite these difficult times, a significant model revision was even carried out, and February saw delivery commencement of the new BMW 3/15 PS “swing-axle model”. Replacing a rigid front axle, the front wheels were now merely attached to a transverse leaf spring, which made for a softer suspension but at the same time a certain instability in wheel control.

### The success story begins

A furore eventually broke out when the respected magazine Motor-Kritik published a critical report on the matter, which BMW vehemently countered. In the end the



BMW designers were compelled to iron out the problem, and the storm blew over. The most important benefit of the new models was also a spacious body which really did afford room for four adults.

Despite the horrendous economic crisis, BMW had managed to hold its own in the marketplace. Though the first BMW car wasn’t entirely an in-house design, the BMW engineers had lent the Austin or Dixi model its very characteristic stamp.

If, in retrospect, one compares the Austin Seven and Dixi 3/15 PS with any of the first BMW four-wheeled models, it soon becomes clear why this automotive “adventure” led to success for BMW and very soon became a passion. In Munich and Eisenach the weaknesses of the original model had soon been recognized and were systematically eliminated.

When the last BMW 3/15 PS small cars left Eisenach in spring of 1932, there was not only an independent successor model waiting in the wings, but a modern six-cylinder car was already taking concrete shape. Within the decade that followed, cars were to emerge that included the legendary 328, 327 and 335, forming the foundation of a revival of BMW’s car manufacturing tradition after the war – a success story which to this day has the power to enthral anyone with the tiniest drop of petrol in their veins.





In hot pursuit through an icy headwind: two BMW 328s gunning for points. In front, the Cané/Galliani team, who finish fifth.

## Classics brave ice and snow

Classic cars enjoy a very special regard. They are cherished and cosseted, and frequently command six-figure sums. Not surprisingly, they are afforded the best possible protection from inclement weather. For that reason alone, the Winter Marathon held at Madonna di Campiglio in Italy is a true curiosity. In this event, which is reminiscent of the Monte Carlo Rally, exclusive vintage and classic models chase each other along snow-packed roads, through 15 high Alpine passes and the occasional mid-January snowstorm in fierce pursuit of points and overall victory.

The Winter Marathon at Madonna di Campiglio has its unique features. To begin with, the first car traditionally sets off on the late afternoon of 16th January. Seasoned Winter Marathon aficionados won't be surprised by that. The drive takes place overnight and ends at 4 o'clock on Saturday morning for the first finishers. The list of starters bears eloquent testimony to the fascination exerted on classic car fans by the concept of this event, involving as it does driving through the snow-covered backdrop of the Dolomites in the middle of the night in deepest winter.

150 intrepid motorists rose to the challenge of icy switchbacks, steep gradients and plunging descents. Well-

known drivers took part, as did highly exclusive classics. The spectrum of cars stretched from a pre-war Bentley to Maseratis, Porsches, MGs and Jaguars from the 1950s all the way to 1968.



Night start: the BMW 1800 of the Labate/Ferrari team finished 97th.

The Italians fielded the vast majority of cars, but there were also a number of participants from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

In terms of the outbound journey, however, they were put in the shade by cars that came all the way from Britain, Holland, Russia, the USA, and even one from Venezuela. All this clearly demonstrates that the Winter Marathon at Madonna di Campiglio has long become an institution that has made its mark on an international scale as well.

What has made this event such a success is undoubtedly the specific challenges that man and machine have to face up to. The drivers at the wheel of the frequently open-topped pre-war

models have to put up with freezing temperatures, hold their own on ice and snow, and master steep inclines and endless serpentines.

BMW was represented by a total of twelve vehicles, including two BMW 328s dating back to 1938 and 1939, three BMW 3000 CSi models as well as a 3000 CS, a BMW 1800, four BMW 2002s and, confident of the special attention and affection of fans, a BMW 700 Coupé.

Mille Miglia series winner Giuliano Cané with his co-driver Lucia Galliani took the best placing for a BMW to finish fifth overall, followed by 16th place for the Marani/Colfi duo in a BMW 2002 and 21st for Lena/Mair with a 3000 CSi as the third-best BMW.

Of the twelve BMWs entering the marathon, just one failed to finish the race, reflecting an exceptionally low retirement rate for a rally: of the 150 starters, 139 crossed the finish line to complete the rally.

### 15 passes and 500 kilometres

The 15 passes in the longest of the trials have to be covered within twelve hours during the night of Friday to Saturday. Between the starting and arrival points in Madonna di Campiglio, the route traversed the stunning world of the Dolomites, past the picturesque Lago di Fedaiia and the mighty Marmolada glaciers, the imposing sheer rock faces of Pordoi and Sella, across passes at altitudes of more than 2,000 metres and through the romantic Adige Valley dotted with fortresses and castles.

### Racing on a frozen lake

But the drivers had little time to take in the beautiful scenery. After all, only very few had any daylight at all during the rally, and it was also a question of focusing on times and points in the 25 individual trials, which included a special one held on the frozen lake of Madonna di Campiglio after

## The first ten finishers in the 2004 Winter Marathon

Place	Winners (Team)	Car
1	Ferrari/Ferrari	Abarth 750 Zagato, 1957
2	Oberti/Viario	Alfa Romeo Giulietta, 1960
3	Prugger/Kofler	SS Jaguar 100, 1938
4	Fontanella/Malta	Porsche 356 A, 1955
5	Cané/Galliani	BMW 328, 1938
6	Bresciani/Bresciani	Jaguar XK 120, 1952
7	Camilli/Grisci	Jaguar XK 120, 1953
8	Damiani/Damiani	Porsche 911, 1965
9	Jolly/Jolly	Renault 4CV, 1957
10	Tresoldi/Del Corno	Porsche 356 B, 1963

completion of the 500-kilometre or so round trip.

This year marked the 16th edition of the Winter Marathon. Since it was first staged in 1989, the fraternity of classic devotees has grown no less strongly than the community of Winter Marathon fans watching from the sidelines. The uniqueness of this event has been attracting an ever-larger following over the years, both in terms of participants

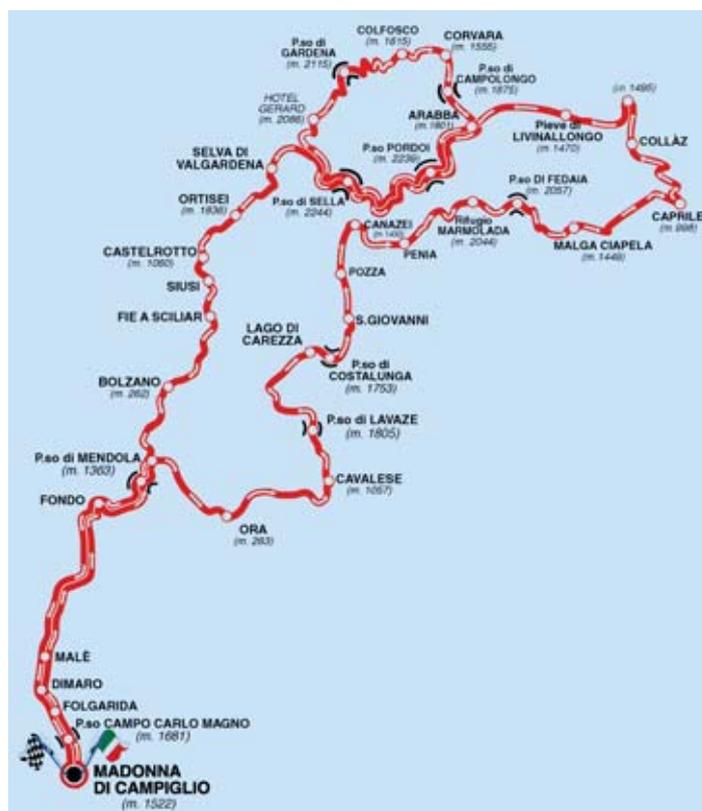
and of spectators. At the beginning the cars were barely older than 20 years. Today the rally features such rarities as the BMW 328 or the pre-war Bentleys with their 4.5-litre engines.

Whereas in previous years the number of participants was around 125, the organizers posted a new record this year of 150 competitors.

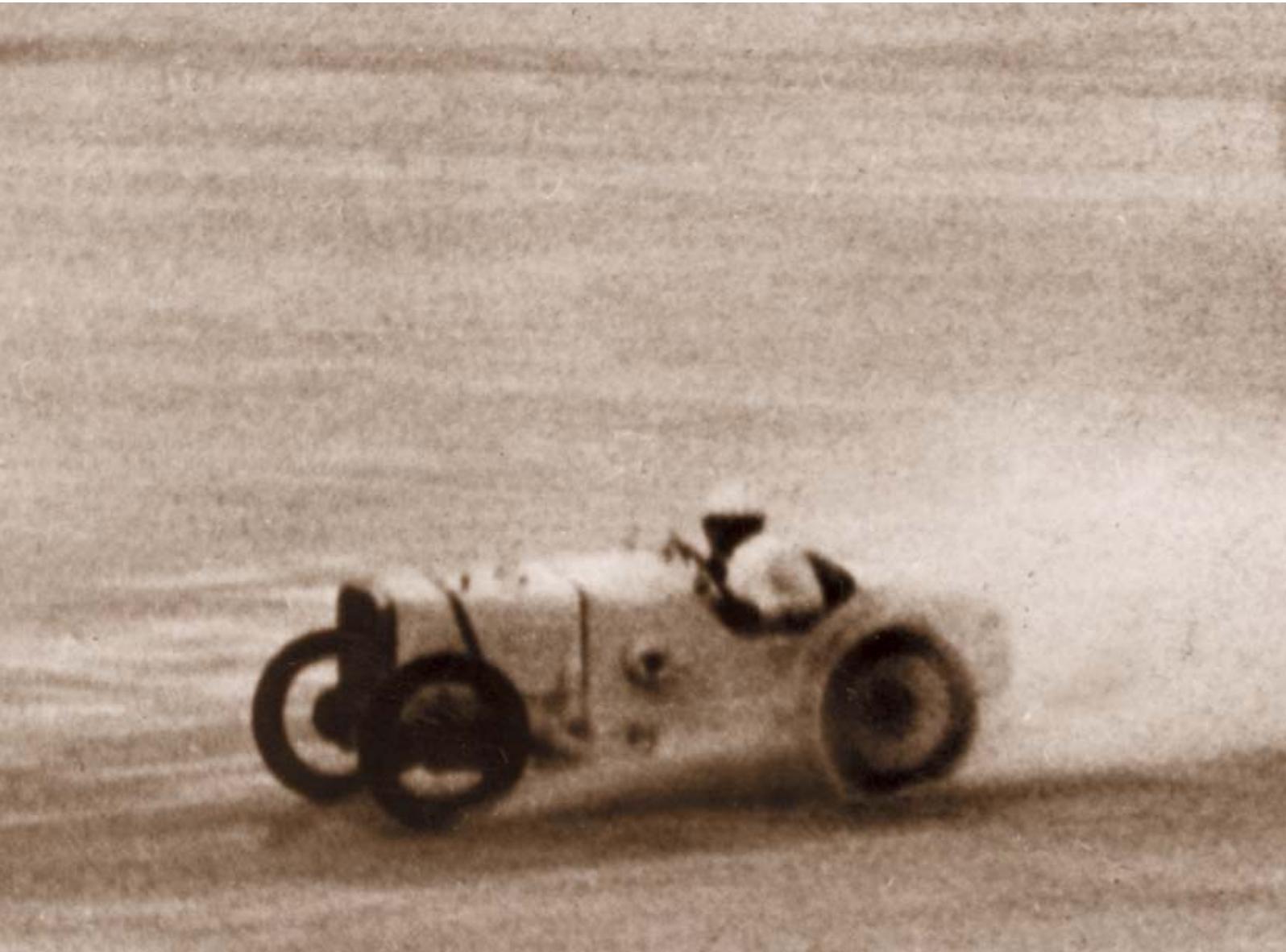
Another positive and longstanding tradition is that BMW Group Mobile

Tradition supports the Winter Marathon as a sponsor through BMW Italia as well as sending its own classic four-wheelers from the Historic Collection to Madonna di Campiglio to take part in the rally.

Next to the involvement of other corporate sponsors, such dedication clearly contributes to the success of this unique curtain-raiser of the classic car season and exemplifies the seriousness and sporting approach behind BMW Group Mobile Tradition's understanding and backing of our motoring heritage.



The course of the 2004 Winter Marathon: 500 kilometres and 15 passes across the snow-covered Dolomites.



# The indefatigable Bobby Kohlrausch

100 years ago a man was born in Eisenach who one day, in a matter of months, would drive into the leading ranks of German motor racing in his BMW sports car. With his triumphs he not only gave a major boost to motor sport in Germany, but also established the racing tradition of the Bayerische Motoren Werke with his BMW Wartburg.

by Hagen Nyncke

Robert Kohlrausch, popularly known as Bobby, was born on 9th March 1904 and demonstrated an irrepressible fondness of speed even as a schoolboy. His self-assembled motorcycle proved a painful thorn in the side of the local police.

As Bobby didn't set much store by schoolwork, his father sent him off to do an apprenticeship as a mechanic. It was at the Dixi factory in Eisenach that he learnt the fundamentals of vehicle and engine construction. He delved more deeply into the subject when he went



A blackboard commemorates the first win: Bobby after his debut Kesselberg race in 1930.

on to study mechanical engineering and electrics in Ilmenau. His father, filled with pride at the ambition that had suddenly blossomed in his son, innocently rewarded him with a beautiful Wanderer motorcycle. He discovered much too late that, rather than using it for weekend outings with friends, his son was competing in motorcycle races. Only



Just what the spectators wanted: wild chases on ice with his friend Walter Bäumer in an Austin Seven Ulster.

when the fledgling engineer nearly rode to his death in the Schleizer Dreiecksrennen did the “family council” put a stop to this dangerous pursuit. In exchange for Bobby’s solemn promise never again to take part in a motorcycle race, Kohlrusch senior went to the local BMW dealer and bought him one of the new BMW 3/15 DA3 Wartburg sports cars.

Bobby never did ride another motorcycle, but his future plans deviated somewhat from what his father had in mind. He left Eisenach to study economics in Munich, and with increasing frequency he would use his weekends in faraway Bavaria to enter his new BMW sports car into the regional racing events. In his first car race on 15th June 1930 – the Kesselbergrennen hillclimb along the twisty course between the Kochelsee and

Walchensee lakes – he not only managed to come first in the 750 cc small sports car class, but also set a new class record.

**From rookie to hillclimb expert**

Fired up by this experience, Bobby signed up for the Würgauer Bergrennen near Bamberg a month later. Here too he won with a new record time.

His great dream was to become reality on the following weekend: competing in the Eifelrennen at the Nürburgring. In his class



A frequent visitor to Berlin: Bobby Kohlrusch at the start of the Avus race.



Beating wings: Bobby in a BMW outperforms Felmy in an airborne Klemm-Mercedes.

were five competitors, all at the wheel of a BMW Wartburg. Bobby Kohlrausch, a complete unknown, managed to secure an outstanding second place behind Schmidt of Berlin.

It was now time to venture across the border into neighbouring countries. In the Kilometerrennen in St Moritz and the Bernina-Rennen, he similarly finished as runner-up. There followed the hillclimb events on the Gaisberg, the Oberjoch in Bavaria, and the Zirlerberg, at each of which Bobby not only claimed a commanding victory but finished in a new record time for all three events. In a matter of months, he had emerged as a noted specialist in hillclimb racing.

These feats naturally did not go unnoticed by the Eisenach factory. It was forbidden to use these racing triumphs for advertising purposes, but the mere appearance of the car at the events and in the media coverage helped turn this small BMW into an extremely popular model among sports-minded drivers.

It was obvious to those at the production plant that providing factory support for this talented driver could significantly benefit sales. Bobby's friendship with Sales Director Albert Kandt Junior must have opened some important doors for him.

The second BMW Wartburg to come out of the factory had a special test engine which no ordinary customer could buy.

It already featured a cylinder head with overhead valves, and further improvements meant the car now had more horsepower on tap than the meagre 18 bhp of the side-valve production model.

### **A familiar sight at every track**

With this model, Bobby launched into a phenomenal 1931 racing season that saw him driving his BMW on frozen mountain lakes, on the sand track of the Daglfing trotting course in Munich and on the grass track at Riem.

But his true element remained the numerous hillclimb events staged in

Germany at the time, though he did make appearances in Austria and Czechoslovakia as well. In all, he entered 15 races that year, twelve of which he won – the majority of them in record-breaking times.

The small BMW regularly demonstrated its absolute reliability and never let him down. Only three times did Bobby have to cede first place to the competition. On the Kesselberg, his “home course”, he was keen to put on a good show, but took a corner a bit too briskly. With a breathtaking pirouette between two bridge railings, he certainly delivered the best showpiece of the day but failed to make up for the lost seconds during the rest of the race. In

Young talent must be encouraged: congratulations from Rudolf Schleicher, in charge of BMW test cars and motorcycles.

scene when he won the ice races on the Eibsee and Titisee lakes.

### Watch out for fast Brits

After winning the car race in the Wiesbadener Automobil Turnier, the next event was a comparative race in which he had to compete



behind their supercharged Austin “duck racers”.

### Solo career

The engine’s response to Bobby’s desperate catching-up attempt was to give up the ghost. It was time for something urgent to be done, but to Bobby’s deep disappointment the BMW factory was no longer willing to support him technically or financially. After the 3/15 production model was phased out, no powers of persuasion could change their minds. From now on Bobby Kohlrausch was on his own.

With the help of a supercharger, he managed to boost output to around 50 bhp, but the chassis was now approaching its limits. In the Eifelrennen, Bobby narrowly escaped disaster when his BMW turned over at the very spot where Bugatti driver Hans Joachim von Morgen had had a fatal crash during training. Bobby only had a realistic chance of winning laurels in the national hillclimb events.

In the Grand Prix at the Nürburgring



Horsepower: Bobby (2nd right) on the grass trotting course in Munich Riem.

the event on Berlin’s Avus track, a mere 1.5 seconds separated him from the winning DKW of Gerhard Macher after a race distance of almost 100 kilometres.

With his consistently outstanding performance, Bobby Kohlrausch had now advanced into the top

echelon of German racing drivers. Even though there was no official championship as yet, he ranked as the most successful German driver of the year. In preparation for the 1932 season the car was thoroughly overhauled while the engine underwent a rejuvenation cure. Bobby was back on top form in the racing

against a sports plane. Even in this contest he was to prove unbeatable.

British racing drivers were signing

**Bobby Kohlrausch was indefatigable. Wherever a race was on, he’d be there – usually winning.**

up for Germany’s major races that were open to international competitors, and with their exceptionally fast cars proved a serious threat to the victory-spoilt BMWs. Bobby was given a foretaste at the Avus race in Berlin when drivers Barnes and Goodacre left the German trailing

a young British driver, Hugh Hamilton, was on the grid with a 750 cc supercharged M.G. and led the entire racing elite a merry dance. Bobby was the only competitor able to stand up to him, but with a gap of a full twelve minutes there was little he could do to salvage Germany’s honour.



Pride and joy of the young racing driver (left): the BMW Wartburg with trademark laurel wreath. Centre: Unplanned showpiece in the 1931 Kesselbergrennen: a spin put Bobby out of contention. In the Nerobergrennen at Wiesbaden (right) Bobby left the competition trailing again.

### Runner-up after a rollover

In the Schauinsland Hillclimb Grand Prix, Bobby in his BMW won the final race in the sports car class. For the racing car category he took a different-calibre car onto the grid: the same supercharged Austin that had shown him its tailpipe in the Avus race.

The Austin factory in Birmingham had taken up the European challenge and provided him with this works car. Such disloyalty seemed to have invited its own revenge when, shortly before the finish, his new race car turned over. But such trivialities made no impression at all on the seasoned driver, who got the car back on its wheels and swept across the finish line to claim the second best time.

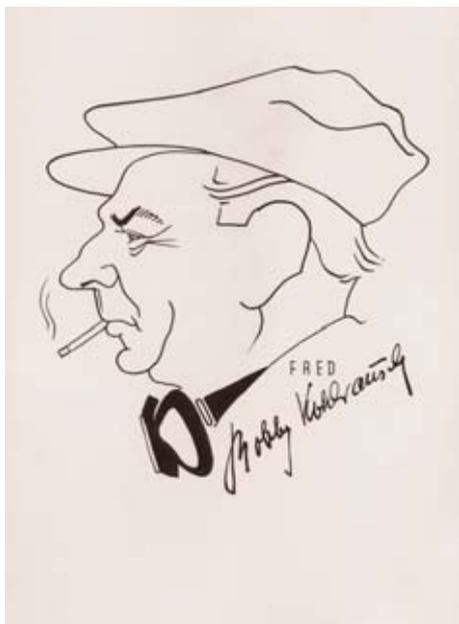
### Back to BMW?

He was to have more luck with Austin after this when he effortlessly picked up the threads of his previous string of victories. In 1934 he switched to the racing and sports cars of the keenest rival marque, M.G., with which he not only continued his impressive racing career until 1937 but also demonstrated his prowess by claiming seven international speed records.

Meanwhile, a revival of his collaboration with BMW seemed on the cards. Bobby was earmarked as Ernst Henne's co-driver for the first involvement of the BMW 328 abroad, in Montlhéry, France. Unfortunately, however, the car dropped out before the event and he never got the chance.

Incidentally, Bobby Kohlrausch

never entered his private BMW 328 into a race because he felt there was no level playing field on account of the preferential treatment reserved for the NSKK



(National Socialist Motoring Corps) team and some friends of BMW.

After the war, Bobby Kohlrausch was one of the first motor racing personalities to commit themselves to the revival of motor sport in the newly founded German Democratic Republic. As a Russian general had confiscated his BMW 328 and promptly had a fatal crash with it, Bobby was obliged to look around for another racing car with which he could compete with a genuine

chance. He eventually found what he was looking for in West Germany.

### Bobby's secret

One of the most successful micro-cars of the 1949 season, the LTE Juwel with a 750 cc BMW engine, was up for sale. Racing driver Ferdi Lehder of Neulsenburg swiftly concluded a deal with Bobby.

The unconditional prerequisite for the sale, however, was the strictest secrecy. Through a cleverly staged deception, the LTE Juwel was whisked across the border to Eisenach in East Germany, where it was completely overhauled by a crew of former employees of the Auto Union racing division and, with the help of an M.G.-Zoller supercharger, tuned to deliver absolute top performance.

At the 1950 Sternberg race, spectators had a first chance to admire the transformed car. What was behind the

Farewell at Schauinsland: Bobby's final race with the supercharged BMW. He beat race models of the same size to set up a new record.

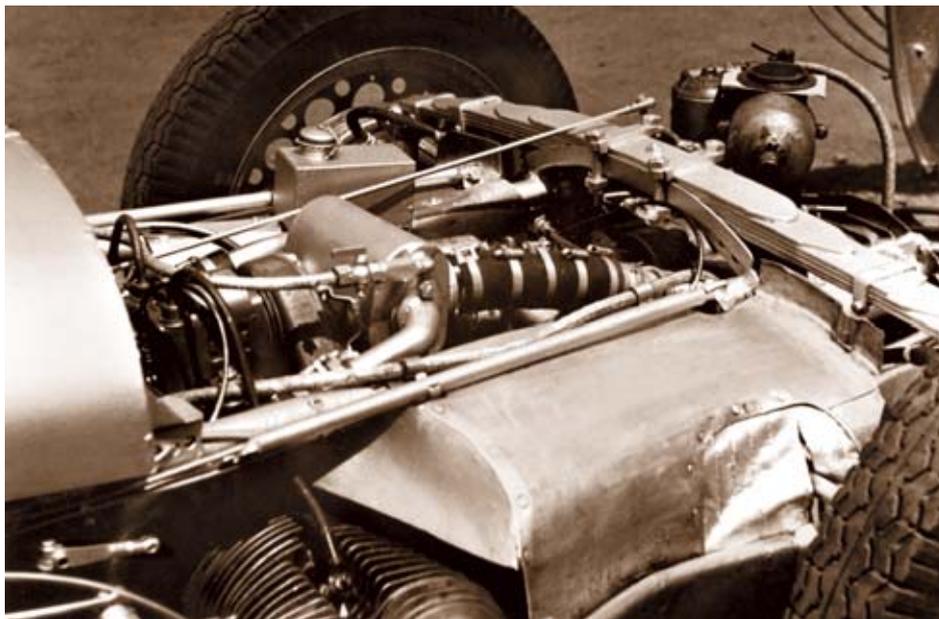


cryptic designation “G.v.B.”, however, remained a mystery.

**No stopping despite a heart attack**

In the race on the Halle-Saale-Schleife, this “Geheimnis von Bobby” (Bobby’s secret) claimed its first success. In races in West Germany, too, the car initially proved very successful. Second place in the Schauinsland hillclimb event and victory with a new record time on the Grenzlandring revived memories of the good old days. But in order to meet the regulations for the new Formula 3 class, the engine then had to be rebored back to 500 cc and was no longer permitted to use a supercharger.

This emasculation left the engine with inadequate performance, and Bobby, so accustomed to winning, now had to clear a path for the competition. It was only the Olympic ideal that drove him on, though he never really had a



Art of compression: thanks to the Zoller supercharger, undreamt-of reserves could be coaxed out of the R 75 engine.

First appearance after the war: the “Geheimnis von Bobby” (Bobby’s secret) during the Sternberg hillclimb.



chance of achieving any decent placings. While racing on Berlin’s Avus track he suffered a heart attack, but refused to give up. During preparations for the Hillclimb Grand Prix at his favourite Schauinsland circuit, he died on 12th August 1953.

**Immortal legacy**

In his short life of just 49 years, Bobby Kohlrausch had carved his name into the annals of motor sport as one of the most tireless and successful German

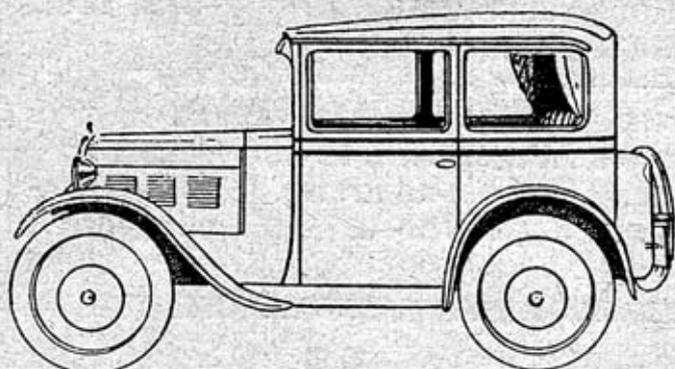
racing drivers of all time. His matchless triumphs, particularly with the small BMW Wartburg, paved the way for the advancement of motor racing in Germany and played a crucial role in the early impact of the BMW brand in the motor sport arena.

Outstanding feats by Bobby Kohlrausch:	
Overall (1930–1953)	70 first places
	20 second places
	2 third places
	7 international records
With BMW (1930–1933)	27 first places
	8 second places
	0 third places



Zwei Seelen  
doch  
ein Gedanke

**BMW**



**„INNEN GRÖßER ALS AUSSEN“**

BMW AUTOMOBIL-VERKAUFSGESELLSCHAFT mb.H.

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