

Der Sonnenfleck

Sunshine Bimmers Newsletter

Summer 2014

Volume 18 Issue 3

Annual Chapter Picnic

The Annual Chapter Picnic was held on Saturday, June 7 at Pelican Beach Park in Satellite Beach. Thanks to Mark and Amy for organizing the event. Bob Compton, our Chapter Photographer, took photos to document the experience. To see them all, go to <https://www.adoberevel.com/shares/75d8f6d87f0a434fb21f9bf3a50b9a44/albums/6aacc0f58d874d7c9136dd3fbe8be826>.



Vintage Adventure, Driving a Classic BMW CSI

by Joseph Lenart

I arrived early at the vehicle pickup point, the new home of the BMW Classic division. The 1973 white 3.0 CSI coupe, with deep red leather interior, was parked outside and glistened in the early morning sun. I slowly examined it on the inside and outside. The vehicle had just over 55,000 original miles on the odometer. It looked wonderful, a well maintained and cared for classic in the BMW collection.

I thought about why I came to this out-of-the-way spot in the northern outskirts of the Munich area, far from any of the usual tourist locations—a place so hard to find that even the taxi driver got lost. How will the CSI perform? What will it feel like to drive a 40 year old car? Was the idea of driving a classic BMW worth the time and the effort?

As eager as I was to start driving right away and find answers to these questions, I asked if I could view some of the collection of classic BMWs in the new facility. I had seen some of the collection a year before as part of the BMW Classic Car City Tour in Munich. The classic car collection was moved here to Garching; however, the city tour is no longer offered by BMW.

I viewed some of the classics again. It was like meeting old friends, just without our excellent BMW tour guide and chauffeur, Marcel Groos. Marcel's knowledge and passion for BMWs of all vintages and varieties and his ability to convey his enthusiasm was a highlight of last year's trip. Marcel also used his technical skills in support of BMW classic events, such as the annual Mille Miglia race in Italy and other classic car events.

Suddenly, on one floor in a line of 5-Series vehicles, I immediately recognized a very good old friend: a brown E12 525, identical to the one I drove while living in Germany in the early 1980s, although this 525 was in brand-new condition. My wife and I had driven many enjoyable miles (kilometers) in such a vehicle on the autobahn and the challenging secondary roads of Germany and other parts of Europe. I sat in this car and it all came back to me in that wonderful moment. This was a pure BMW—no radio, no air conditioning, no software—just all driving business. My 525 had a great-sounding engine, responsive handling, and the characteristically great BMW steering feel.

In this moment, a new adventure was waiting now. It was time for me to go back to the CSI and start my drive. As I descended in the cavernous elevator, which was built for cars, I wondered how the CSI would compare to my E12 525, accounting for time and the obvious performance differences between the two vehicles. Moreover, I also wondered how the CSI would compare with my two modern BMWs, a 2011 128i convertible with a manual transmission and a 2013 328i. I arrived downstairs and I walked through the service area, pausing only briefly to view technicians working on all forms of classic BMWs.

The E9 CSI coupe was produced from 1971 to 1975; however, only the CS (without fuel injection) was imported to the US in those years. Just over 8,000 total units of the CSI were manufactured. The CSI came with a 200 hp (at 5500 RPM) Bosch fuel injected inline 6 cylinder engine, 199 ft/lbs of torque (at 4300 RPM), with a top speed of 220 KPH (137 MPH). In Germany, they do not ask how fast one drives, they ask what is the top speed of the car; it is assumed that is how fast one will go, although the autobahn is much more congested these days.

After the trip, I estimated the overall fuel economy to be in the range of 22 to 24 miles per gallon. This was a surprising result; the fuel consumption seemed to be quite reasonable even by current standards. In 1973, the CSI sold for approximately \$8,500; in today's terms, it equates to a vehicle priced at \$75,000. The CSI was an expensive car for its time. How will it measure up 40 years after it was manufactured?



I placed some items in the trunk and I noted the good size, more than adequate, complete with a full toolkit, which I hoped I would not need. The condition of the vehicle was very good, only some minor wear on the inside. I positioned myself in the driver's seat; I adjusted anything that could be adjusted. The steering wheel did feel a little thin to me, although it was a good size. I shifted the transmission into neutral and noted the clutch had a good familiar feel to it.

Then I turned the key and the engine instantly came to life with a great sound. All this was exciting except for the windshield wipers moving unnecessarily on a sunny day. It was not immediately obvious to me, or anyone else standing nearby, how to turn them off; a technician quickly came over and showed me the switch at the end of the turn signal stalk, which in this vehicle is located on the right side of the steering column. I did have to get used to this throughout the day of driving and using the turn signals. The E12 (1977) was the first BMW to move the turn signal to the left side.

I shifted into reverse gear without thinking about it; reverse gear was right where I expected it to be. It shifted smoothly with a clutch feel very similar to my modern 128i. Driving off gave an immediate sense that this car was solid, composed, and ready for the drive ahead. I noted the large windows with the concomitant great visibility. I also noticed at this point it did not have a right side mirror—good thing for the excellent visibility. I was getting comfortable with the car on the long driveway toward the main road.

Out onto the main road in front of the BMW Classic facility, I headed eastward, enjoying the sonorous sound of the six-cylinder, fuel-injected engine. I planned a route of nearly 200 km (124 miles) with a lunch break at the midpoint at what appeared to be a nice local restaurant.

While not far from Munich to the northeast, this area was not well frequented by tourists and I actually had to use more of my conversational German language skills than I thought I would have to, but more about that later.

The BMW Classic facility is located in an industrial area and I was getting used to the car as I headed out on the main road toward the residential areas. I turned left (north) on Bundes Strasse 11 (B11) toward the town of Landshut, with several smaller towns along the way. At Landshut, I planned to turn southeast and head toward the town of Vilsbiburg for lunch and then complete a large triangle with the return to Garching via Taufkirchen and Erding.

The Bundes Strasse are secondary roads that are also maintained by the German Federal government. My plan was to stay on these larger secondary roads and drive through many of the picturesque German towns along the way, with some open areas for higher speed driving. As I noted earlier, I had driven extensively on the autobahn in prior years, including last year's trip, and I was more interested in the local road driving this time with the CSi.

Not long after driving a short distance on the B11, I encountered a major road closing and detour. I had to make a quick decision to go on the autobahn to avoid the unknown routing; this section of the autobahn closely paralleled the B11 to Landshut. I was not certain how well the CSi would fare on the autobahn with modern vehicles, especially since there were no speed restrictions on this section of the autobahn in the relatively open area northeast of Munich.

Onto the autobahn. The CSi accelerated briskly without any sense of strain. I entered the flow of traffic easily, the CSi responding well with no drawbacks or any limitations. I was quickly increasing my speed to 120 KPH (75 MPH). This was no trouble at all for the CSi, although I did close the windows partially due to the wind noise at that speed, the electric windows were convenient for this; no other discernable noises were present such as squeaks or rattles. The tires also helped with a quieter, smoother ride with the smaller rims and thicker tires of the era.

I thought I would stay in the right lane and leave the autobahn closer to Landshut; once I avoided the detour on the B11, I would be back on my planned route again. I started off just taking my time in the right lane when I quickly encountered much slower truck traffic. I decided that I would have to get into the high-speed lanes after all and pass the trucks and other slower traffic. Then I had this realization, for the first time, that I was in a 40—yes 40-year-old car—that was smoothly passing traffic on the autobahn at speeds over 140 KPH (88 MPH) and without any discernible drawbacks. On the contrary, the CSi inspired confidence and a readiness to respond to any maneuver. It felt solid and responsive; this was a step back in time without a step down.

Exiting the autobahn near Landshut, I was back on my planned route just on the outskirts of the city. Landshut is a larger city in which one encounters the usual obstacles of urban driving: lanes ending, streets changing names suddenly, and not a straight street within the city limits. This required a lot of shifting, changing lanes, and quickly turning left or right. As a side note, the outskirts of Landshut is also where BMW has a plant that produces carbon fiber panels for the new i3 and other parts for all BMWs.

The steering response was fantastic. The transmission felt completely modern; moreover, it actually felt quite nice to shift. The engine power was more than adequate to get into and out of the wrong lanes in the city. The brakes were very good also, here in the city and earlier on the autobahn, the four-wheel disc brakes providing sure and safe stopping power. My initial reverence for the car was not at all fading, but actually increasing with every opportunity to test its character.

Judging by some archive BMW video of commercials shown in Germany for the 3.0 CSi in its time, I did not come close to pushing the CSi to its full capabilities, although the demanding driving style in Germany does give one an appreciation of the car's potential for enthusiastic driving. No car manufacturer shows commercials like that these days, even with a disclaimer.

BMW management should drive the 3.0 CSi once in a while just to remember the greatness of the brand and these pivotal vehicles. I was told by a senior BMW official that, indeed, BMW management does take advantage of driving classic cars. This may be true, I do sense the echoes of the 3.0 CSi when I now drive my 128i.

Soon I was out of Landshut and on my way to the lunch stop at the Café Gabriel. After driving through a few more towns, I arrived in Vilsbiburg, a lovely small Bavarian town with a nice town center area. This is where I parked. I was fortunate to find a larger parking spot with no opportunity for anyone to park on one side of the CSi, keeping it safe. I did receive some stares and comments about the CSi at this point from some passersby; there is an appreciation for these classics in this part of the world.

After a nice lunch sitting outside by a small river, and with another chance to use my conversational German, I was driving once again to the next main road that would turn back toward the starting point in Garching. Looking at my watch, it seemed that I was ahead of schedule and I was thinking about adjusting my route so as not to arrive back too soon. No worry, the route was adjusted for me: I came upon another major detour. This time, there was no convenient autobahn to use to avoid the detour.

I was not far from Garching and I still had time before BMW Classic closed for the day. The drive after lunch was even better than the drive earlier in the day; this route had nice wooded areas and interesting roads. There are few straight sections of roads here in Germany and I am sure this is why BMWs handle so well. They have to meet the challenges of negotiating these challenging roads with the demands of the driving enthusiast.

While I was enjoying the drive, I began to realize that I may not have followed the detours properly and I seemed to be driving away from Garching and not toward Bundes Strasse 388 (B388), the road that would lead directly back to BMW Classic. At this point, I stopped by a small field; I opened the trunk and reached for the GPS, fighting back a sense of disappointment.

I had extensively studied the route and I planned to use classic navigational methods in a classic car. It worked well up to this point, even with the earlier deviations from the planned route, and I managed well without the aid of a GPS. Now, I was not quite sure if this road would take me back to Garching in time.

There was a cigarette lighter located in the center console, and, yes, it had the part that pushes down and heats up. I removed this and I plugged in the GPS; it did not turn on and there was not enough power for only battery operation. I pushed in the cigarette lighter to see if there was power, but it did not heat up; it was not working at all. It appeared that I was going to have to complete the classic drive without any modern aids after all.

Now I started thinking about the time. If I arrived after BMW Classic closed, what was I going to do with the CSi? I was scheduled to leave Munich early the next morning. I started to retrace the most recent part of the drive to find a way back to the B388. I was not having much success so I had to resort to another classic method: stopping at a gas station to ask for directions. Asking for directions in German was relatively easy; understanding the response is another matter.

I stopped in a town while I was retracing my route back to the beginning of the detour. A friendly mechanic was able to provide directions, although he had to tell me twice, all in German, since this was not a usual stop for English-speaking tourists. After thanking him for the directions, he did take a look at the car and admired its condition. He asked how well it drove. This was fun to explain in German.

It seems I was not far off course after all. Even though the directions from the mechanic were complicated, the directions did put me back on course. After several extended left turns and right turns with a few fun roundabouts along the way, Garching came into view. I completed the journey, thrilled with my day behind the wheel of an uncompromising classic, a 1973 BMW 3.0 CSi.

Sunshine Bimmers Dinner August 16 in Ocoee

Our next Sunshine Bimmers Chapter event is a dinner at the new 269 West Wine Lounge in Ocoee on August 16 (SAT) from 5 to 8 pm. The place is located at the north end of Ocoee between SR 429 and Ocoee-Apopka Rd. You can call them at (407) 516-1928; they don't have their own website yet. This will be an adventure for all of us. They are a beer and wine bar with tapas menu that features some German foods plus other styles.

Lords of the NurburgRing Car Show August 16

The Everglades Chapter BMW CCA is hosting the Lords of the NurburgRing Car Show on Saturday, August 16 at the American German Club of the Palm Beaches featuring cars from BMW, Mercedes Benz, Audi, Porsche, and Volkswagen. The facility is located at 5111 Lantana Rd; Lake Worth Florida 33463. Registration starts at 9am; rags down 11am. The event will include vendor display booths, raffle items, Music, food, beer, and wine. Proceeds to benefit the BMW CCA Foundation's Street Survival Teen Driving Program. Trophies for each brand and many special awards including Best Restoration, Best Engine, Best of Show and Miss Oktoberfest's personal selection!

All entries for car show will receive an event T-shirt and surprises. Registration entry for the Car show \$25 (BMW CCA Members); all others \$35.00. Day of the event \$35.00 for all. For more information, go to <http://www.motorsportreg.com/events/lords-of-nurburg-ring-car-show-american-german-club-palm-be-bmw-cca-everglades-393858#.U95wbGPQroY>. You will need an account with MotorportsReg.com to register for this event - it only requires username and password.

This is a spectator event open to the public with a gate fee of \$10. The American German Club will have discounted tickets available online via Groupon and/or TravelZoo. Proceeds to benefit the Street Survival Teen Driving Program. After the car show, Saturday evening (5:30)the Dinner/dance with German Music, German entertainment of the Masskrugstemmen Beer Mug Holding Contest and the Miss Oktoberfest 2014 Final and Crowning! Dinner Dance cost is \$25.00 p/p at the door. As a car show participant, when you register you can advance purchase dinner tickets for \$20 P/P. The Everglades Chapter has a block of rooms (available at a discount) at the Hampton Inn & Suites located on Gateway Blvd, Boynton Beach. Tell them you are with the BMW Car Club.

Petit LeMans at Road Atlanta October 1-4

The Peachtree Chapter BMW CCA is hosting a BMW Corral at the Road Atlanta Petit LeMans race in October for all days of the event. The cost is \$115.00 for Corral Parking and \$85.00 for the Event Passes. The corral will be located in the premier centrally located space across from the entrance to Vendor Village and includes the following:

- Exclusive parking with the BMW CCA Club Members
- A large tent with tables and chairs
- A large flat screen TV with a live feed of the race

The Chapter is selling all of the parking passes and event passes individually. This should give the most flexibility for you to pick and choose how many parking passes and event passes you need.

1. Event Pass - \$85.00
 - a. 4-Day Hospitality/Event Ticket
 - b. Corral Access Pass
2. Corral Parking Pass - \$115.00
 - a. Infield Parking Pass to Road Atlanta

b. Corral Parking Pass

Register here: www.msreg.com/Petit2014BMWCCA or go to <http://www.peachtreebmwcca.org> for more information.

Classic 24 Hours of Daytona November 12-16

HSR (Historic Sportscar Racing) would like to invite you and your club members to attend the inaugural Classic 24 Hours at Daytona November 12-16. This is the first event of its kind in North America with cars and drivers entered from around the globe. More information can be found at www.Classic24Hour.com, but the short version is that cars will drive a few hours at different times over the 24-hour period. Several Clubs have arranged group convoys to Daytona International Speedway where there will be manufacturer specific corrals set up. Any member of a club who would like to participate will receive a club code that will waive the parking fee for the weekend. If you are interested please let me know so we can set up your "club code" and I can keep you up to date with event news. Contact James Redman, Historic Sportscar Racing: General Manager, at 772-713-7322 or JRedman@HSRace.com.

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Sunshine Bimmers Chapter Board of Directors

President Al Butler
abutler@mpzero.com

407-376-3258

Secretary Amy Rutenberg
Amanda.Rutenberg@health-first.org

Vice President George Poelker
gpoelker@gmail.com

407-230-8052

Treasurer & Club Racing Patrick Spikes
pspikes@cfl.rr.com 407-454-2057

Directors Nick Katona, Keith Proud, and Deborah Pandeline

Website:
www.sunshinebimmers.org

Chapter Photographer
Bob Compton

Webmaster & Newsletter Editor
Al Butler

Special Note: The Sunshine Bimmers Chapter was required to rent an official post office box as a condition of charter by BMW CCA. Our new official address is PO Box 3214, Windermere, FL 34786-3614; however, you should directly contact the person listed above who is most likely to be able to respond to your need, as the post office box is not checked daily.

