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M4
Convertible
Unveiled!

See page 6



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THE BIMMER BOY story by
RUSSELL LABARCA

The Hydr Connection



Chief Joseph Dam in WA

Being employed in the hydroelectric industry, it's rare that I get to cross paths with the automotive industry, or much of anything car-related, while working. Occasionally there will be a great road to tackle out to a hydroelectric power plant; there are several hydro plants in the area of US 129 in North Carolina, better known as the Tail of the Dragon. But more often, hydro power plants are remote, accessible only by under-maintained roads that stress even the most competent four-wheel drive vehicles to their limits. Once in north-western Pennsylvania, I rode along a wash-boarded dirt road, scraping tree branches on either side of the truck, to reach a hydro facility. Several years earlier I had made the same trip as a tourist, in my uncle's E36 M3, and could not believe the car survived that voyage unscathed. Low sports cars that you like to keep clean need not apply; upgrading to the four-wheel drive rental car is normally a must.

Hydraulic turbine design is similar in principle to other turbomachinery designs, be it for jet engines, gas-fired power plants, or steam power plants. An automotive crossover occurred some sixty years ago when hydraulic turbine researchers focused their attention on gas turbine research for the Packard Motor Car Company, but that development didn't get too far for a variety of reasons. Turbines in automotive applications quickly flamed out (I don't get to use good puns like that in the hydro industry!).

More recently, a hydro-automotive crossover occurred when BMW developed a joint venture with the company

SGL to form SGL Automotive Carbon Fibers, where carbon fiber is produced for BMW's automotive applications. BMW got the carbon fiber bug with the E92 M3 and E63 M6 roofs, and took knowledge gained in those applications to develop the full carbon fiber tub structures used on the i3 and i8 electric / hybrid vehicles.

Part of their goal in building these green cars was to combat the argument that hybrid vehicles aren't born green, and still have a large negative environmental impact. The majority of other electric vehicles are manufactured alongside their fuel-powered cousins, meaning that the assembly process still consumes energy which emits carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. They may be greener to run, but they aren't any greener to build.

The SGL ACF facility was built purposely in Moses Lake, Washington, USA, to take advantage of the reliable greenhouse gas-free energy supply. Enter the hydro connection: Washington state is home to some of the largest hydroelectric power production facilities in the world thanks to the Columbia River and its tributaries: Grand Coulee (6,800 megawatts), Chief Joseph (2,600 MW), Bonneville (1,200 MW), Wanapum (1,100 MW), and Priest Rapids (850 MW) are just a few. To put those numbers into perspective, think about the old 100-Watt light bulbs; one megawatt is one million watts, so it's ten thousand of those light bulbs, and Grand Coulee alone can power 68 million of those light bulbs.

Bimmer Boy *cont'd on page 19*



The New BMW M4 Convertible

A new dimension in aesthetic appeal and performance.

The arrival of the new BMW M4 Convertible (fuel consumption combined: 9.1–8.7 l/100 km [31–32.5 mpg imp]; CO2 emissions combined: 213–203 g/km) sees BMW M GmbH making another alluring addition to its legendary high-performance sports car line-up. The new M4 Convertible replicates the performance figures of the new BMW M3 Sedan (fuel consumption combined: 8.8–8.3 l/100 km [32.1–34.0 mpg imp]; CO2 emissions

combined: 204–194 g/km) and the new BMW M4 Coupe (fuel consumption combined: 8.8–8.3 l/100 km [32.1–34.0 mpg imp]; CO2 emissions combined: 204–194 g/km), but emphasises its stylish and distinctive appearance through its individual character and places the fascination of sporty and dynamic open-top driving at centre stage. The new model finds BMW M GmbH drawing inspiration from a long tradition: BMW's high-performance sports car for track and road is entering its fifth generation in open-top form with this new chapter in its history headed "M4

Convertible".

The BMW M4 Convertible shares the elegant lines of its open-top 4 Series siblings. Its design language allows it to skilfully blend a distinctive and graceful silhouette boasting finely balanced proportions when the roof is open with an exceptionally dynamic coupe line, shorn off B-pillars, with the hardtop closed. At the same time, the M4 Convertible's styling cues – including a signature power dome for the bonnet, eye-catching exterior mirrors in twinstalk style and flared front and rear wheel arches bulging over



forged lightalloy wheels with mixed tyres in 18-inch (optional 19-inch) format – all identify it clearly as a member of the BMW M3/M4 model family.

Powering the BMW M4 Convertible is the newly developed six-cylinder in-line engine with M TwinPower Turbo technology and high-revving character already familiar from the M3 Sedan and M4 Coupe. The power unit generates maximum output of 317 kW/431 hp from its 3.0-litre displacement and serves up peak torque of 550 Newton metres (406 lb-ft) across a wide rev band. The BMW M4 Convertible therefore offers the driver not only exceptionally sporty performance attributes – the sprint from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) takes just 4.4 seconds (with the optional seven-speed M Double Clutch Transmission) – but also sufficient reserves of power to cruise along in relaxed but rapid style with the

roof down.

Like the BMW M3 Sedan and BMW M4 Coupe, the BMW M4 Convertible also displays a strict adherence to the intelligent lightweight construction principle. For example, the bonnet and front side panels are made from aluminium, as are many components of the high-performance chassis. Added to which, ultralightweight and – thanks to its hugely impressive rigidity – also extremely durable carbon-fibre-reinforced plastic (CFRP) is employed in many areas of the new M4 Convertible. The drive shaft is one example, the use of CFRP allowing it to be constructed as a single-piece unit. This makes for a significant weight saving and a reduction in rotating masses. The CFRP precision strut in the engine compartment, meanwhile, weighs only 1.5 kilograms yet offers rigidity superior to that of a comparable aluminium com-

ponent. It therefore plays a key part in the car's excellent steering response and precision.

The three-section folding metal roof of the BMW M4 Convertible has full interior lining and represents a compelling proposition with its excellent sound-proofing and winter-proof construction. The roof opens at the touch of a button in under 20 seconds – while travelling at up to 18 km/h (11 mph), if required.

Complementing its already extensive standard specification, the new BMW M4 Convertible can also be ordered with a wealth of attractive options to further enhance its aesthetic appeal, dynamic prowess and comfort levels. And for that distinctive personal touch, the exclusive BMW Individual range of equipment offers the prospect of a unique driving experience. Special colours and materials can be fine-tuned to the driver's wishes.





Technology: Innovative measures across the board deliver maximum performance, precision and agility.

In keeping with the philosophy of BMW M GmbH, the development of the new BMW M4 Convertible has reflected an unwavering commitment to outstanding driving dynamics combined with uninhibited everyday usability. Indeed, the M4 Convertible is powered by the same 317 kW/431 hp six-cylinder in-line engine with M TwinPower Turbo technology found in the new M3 Sedan and new M4 Coupe. The aerodynamics of the open-top sports car have been optimised to deliver ultra-dynamic handling properties and maximum efficiency, with extensive intelligent lightweight design measures also forming part of its make-up.

High-revving straight-six engine with M TwinPower Turbo technology.

With maximum output of 317 kW/431 hp available between 5,500 rpm and 7,300 rpm and peak torque of 550 Newton metres (406 lb-ft) on tap over an extremely broad rev band (1,850 rpm – 5,500 rpm), the BMW M4 Convertible's six-cylinder engine has the firepower to provide elite sports car levels of performance. Fitted with the standard six-speed manual gearbox, it needs just 4.6 seconds for the sprint from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph), dropping to 4.4 seconds if the optional seven-speed M Double Clutch Transmission is specified. Top speed is an electronically governed 250 km/h (155 mph). The M TwinPower Turbo engine hits maximum revs of 7,600 rpm and combines superior sporting ability with outstanding efficiency. Indeed, the BMW M4 Convertible posts fuel consumption of just 9.1 litres per 100 km / 31 mpg imp (M DCT: 8.7 l/100 km / 32.5 mpg imp) in the EU cycle – equating to CO₂ emissions of 213 g/km (203 g/km) – and already meets the EU6 exhaust gas standard.

Technology straight off the race track delivers unbeatable performance.

With its engine generating such impressive performance, it's little surprise to find that the other links in the BMW M4 Convertible powertrain are also fully track-ready. In order to ensure optimum operating temperatures in everyday use, on short journeys around town and out on the race track, the six-cylinder unit has an immensely effective cooling system. This includes an indirect

intercooler to maximise charge pressure and engine output. As well as a main radiator, the track-ready cooling concept also comprises water coolers repositioned to the sides for the high and low-temperature water circuits as well as for the engine and transmission oil (if the M Double Clutch Transmission is specified). An additional electric coolant pump cools the turbocharger bearing mounts when the car is stationary.

The vast experience of BMW M GmbH in motor sport is also evident in the engine's oil supply system. At its core is a low-weight magnesium oil sump with a special cover to minimise movement of the oil under the impact of strong dynamic lateral acceleration. An additional oil extraction pump and a sophisticated oil return system situated close to the turbocharger likewise help to maintain stable oil circulation under extreme acceleration and deceleration.

An engine sound in keeping with the car's motor sport genes is provided by an innovative flap arrangement in the twin-pipe exhaust system. The electrically controlled flaps just before the rear silencer minimise exhaust back-pressure and help create an unmistakable BMW M sound.

Intelligent lightweight design across all areas of the car.

As well as outstanding dynamic qualities, intelligent lightweight design also allows the BMW M4 Convertible to claim exemplary efficiency. Its extensive weight-saving measures produce a DIN kerb weight of just 1,750 kilograms – around 60 kilos less than its predecessor.

Among the key contributors here are the aluminium front side panels and bonnet, with lightweight aluminium construction also a feature of the chassis. Extensive use is also made of a material that is both lightweight and extremely stiff, and therefore durable: carbon-fibre-reinforced plastic (CFRP). The propeller shaft is one of the elements of the BMW M4 Convertible made from CFRP, which permits a single-piece construction. This leads to weight savings of 40 per cent over the previous model and therefore a reduction in rotating masses, which in turn results in more dynamic powertrain response.

Also made from CFRP is the precision strut in the engine compartment, which weighs only 1.5 kilograms yet offers rigidity beyond that of a comparable aluminium component. It therefore plays a key part in the car's excellent steering response and precision.

Active M Differential, Electric Power Steering and M compound brakes ensure precise, extremely dynamic handling.

The Active M Differential fitted to the driven rear axle of the BMW M4 Convertible enhances traction and directional stability with the help of an electronically controlled multi-plate limited-slip differential. Its control unit links up with the DSC (Dynamic Stability Control) system and also takes into account the position of the accelerator pedal, the rotational speed of the wheels and the car's yaw rate. The degree of lock on the rear axle – which may be anywhere between 0 and 100 per cent – is adjusted as required within a fraction of a second. Optimising traction in this way also provides unbeatable driving stability in challenging conditions and allows impressively dynamic acceleration out of corners.

The electromechanical steering system offers the twin gifts of

a direct steering feeling and precise feedback. With the integrated Servotronic function the level of steering assistance is automatically adjusted according to the car's speed. The steering also offers the driver three settings as standard, which can be selected at the touch of a button. COMFORT, SPORT and SPORT+ modes allow the driver to adapt the level of steering assistance to suit the situation at hand and the driver's personal tastes.

The M4 Convertible is fitted as standard with BMW M compound brakes, which boast impressive feel, outstanding stopping power and high resistance to fade – in addition to their low weight.

Flawlessly interlinked aerodynamics measures.

The sophisticated aerodynamics of the BMW M4 Convertible play a standout role in imbuing the car with its unbeatable performance and efficiency. For example, lift-reducing measures such as the powerfully formed front apron, airflow channelling through the front end and a smooth underbody help give the car outstanding handling properties. Furthermore, elements like the Air Curtains and M gills with integrated Air Breathers rearwards of the front wheels minimise turbulence in the front wheel arches. Together with the aerodynamically optimised exterior mirrors in twin-stalk style, these are also highly distinctive design features of the BMW M3/M4 line-up.

The BMW M4 Convertible's three-part folding metal hardtop offers significantly improved sound insulation over its predecessor thanks to its "noise-absorbing" headliner, which reduces wind noise by up to 2 dB compared with the outgoing model. In addition to this appreciable increase in comfort, the fully lined roof also offers full winter usability. One press of a button and the dynamic, closed-roof high-performance sports car transforms into a sporty and elegant open-top machine in a shade over 20 seconds. And the roof can even be lowered while on the move, at speeds of up to 18 km/h (11 mph).

The revised and wider-sided optional wind deflector and new, likewise optional neck warmer – which is adjustable through three stages – ensure the driver and passengers can also enjoy a relaxing open-top drive at low temperatures and at higher speeds. The standard loading assistance system, meanwhile, raises the folded roof when stowed away in the rear to allow easy access to items in the boot. Load capacity is 220 litres with the roof open or 370 litres when the hardtop is closed.

Design: An aesthetically persuasive combination of dynamics and elegance.

The new BMW M4 Convertible shares the sporty, dynamic looks of the BMW 4 Series Convertible on which it is based, but employs M-specific M design elements to underline its outstanding performance and lend it an unmistakable appearance.

Exterior design shines the spotlight on superior performance.

The new BMW M4 Convertible is larger than its predecessor in terms of width, wheelbase and track width, and boasts perfectly balanced proportions. Its long bonnet, short front and rear over-



hangs, and set-back passenger compartment are all key contributors to the car's hallmark BMW lines. When closed, the three-part folding metal hardtop seals a harmonious yet dynamic coupe form, unruffled by B-pillars. When the roof is open, the side view of the BMW M4 Convertible displays a zesty elegance and is encumbered by neither the rollover protection system – now hidden away fully from view behind the rear head restraints – nor aerials (e.g. for the radio).

Standout M design features include the hallmark power dome on the bonnet, BMW M double-spoke wheels, eye-catching exterior mirrors in twin-stalk style, M gills with integrated Air Breathers rearwards of the front wheel housing, flared front and rear wheel arches, and the high-gloss polished, slanting pair of twin exhaust tailpipes.

Dynamic character continues seamlessly through the interior.

The new BMW M4 Convertible's interior likewise leaves little doubt as to its family links with the high-performance M3 Sedan and M4 Coupe. For example, a host of now customary BMW M equipment details heighten the car's elevated sporting pretensions. These include M-specific circular instruments with white graphics, the M leather steering wheel with chrome trim and colour contrast stitching, an M gearshift lever, M door sill finishers and an M driver's footrest.

As standard, the driver and front passenger enjoy the services of electrically adjustable, heavily contoured leather sports seats with recessed head restraints and integral belt guides. A special stylistic highlight of the M4 Convertible's front seats is the illuminated BMW M logo integrated into the head restraints. The two individual rear seats likewise offer impressive comfort and lateral

support, thanks to clearly defined seat surfaces and backrests.

BMW Individual: Unlimited scope for meeting customer desires in terms of exclusivity and individuality.

The BMW M4 Convertible sets its sights primarily on those customers for whom – in addition to performance – a car's looks, the allure of exclusivity and, not least, the luxury of open-top driving play an important role. These customers are particularly keen to ensure their car has a stylish and distinctive appearance. Extending beyond the standard and optional equipment details available for the BMW M4 Convertible, the rich variety of BMW Individual allows virtually limitless scope when it comes to adapting the car in detail to owners' personal visions of comfort, luxury and style.

Over 20 years of experience in the individualisation of BMW models.

What began in the early 1990s with the creation of sensational one-offs for the likes of Karl Lagerfeld and José Carreras has, under the BMW Individual umbrella, developed into a one-of-a-kind department for the personalisation of BMW models. The BMW Individual range comprises two areas: the BMW Individual Collection and the BMW Individual Manufactory.

The BMW Individual Collection offers a unique driving experience of the highest order. Special colours and materials can be matched precisely to customers' desires, resulting in a car very much in their own image. The BMW Individual features for M Automobiles include exclusive interior trim elements and extremely high-class Merino leather upholstery variants. Similarly oozing exclusivity is the range of available exterior paint finishes. Customers are presented with a collection of ultra-radiant metallic colours and four sporty, matt Frozen metallic shades.

The BMW Individual Manufactory is not so much a place as an idea, which is turned into tangible form on a daily basis. That idea is total customer orientation. Here, special requests from BMW customers that go beyond the BMW Individual Collection take shape. Whether it is elaborate paintwork, unconventional materials or outré requests, the BMW Individual Manufactory draws on its experience and craftsmanship to make every vision of exclusivity a reality – provided it does not conflict with safety standards, the brand character or legal requirements. The Manufactory also develops and completes special editions, show cars and special market-specific model series.

Metallic or matt: the BMW Individual paint finishes.

A BMW M4 Convertible with BMW Individual refinements can be identified at a glance by its standout exterior paintwork alone. Customers can choose from brilliant metallic tones and the softly shimmering matt finish of Frozen metallic shades. All the exterior paintwork options available from BMW Individual showcase the dynamic and eye-catching design language of the BMW M4 Convertible with a particular allure and extra impact.

A BMW Individual metallic paint finish possesses an unusual brilliance. Its special pigmentation means that the paint colour



shifts depending on the incidence of light, lending the surfaces a striking depth. Tanzanite Blue metallic is a fine example. Similarly to the precious mineral from which it takes its name, this unique BMW Individual paint finish switches between a radiant turquoise and a serene dark blue according to the incidence of light and the angle from which it is viewed.

Numerous options when it comes to interior decoration.

BMW Individual has for many years now used only the most exclusive leather available for a BMW: naturally very soft and fine, BMW Individual fine-grain Merino leather boasts a unique and exclusive look and feel. The colours of the leather appointments and leather-covered instrument panel likewise set a new benchmark. The nine specially developed colour shades range from expressive to classically elegant and, like BMW Individual leather trim with contrast stitching, are available exclusively through BMW Individual.

BMW Individual interior trim strips lend a highly effective touch to this cabin ambience, rare precious woods creating exclusive highlights within the BMW M4 Convertible's interior.

Equipment: Generous standard equipment supplemented by numerous options for enhanced dynamics and comfort.

The new BMW M4 Convertible is delivered from the factory with a specification in keeping with its dynamic and luxurious nature. Customers can additionally choose from an extensive range of equipment options, which allow the character of the open-top sports machine to be honed for even sharper dynamics or further enhanced comfort.

Exterior and interior equipment underlines the car's impressive performance potential.

The BMW M4 Convertible is immediately recognisable as a high-performance model from BMW M GmbH thanks to its signature design elements, such as a lightweight bonnet with eye-catching power dome, sculpted front apron with three large air intakes, black double-bar kidney grille, exterior mirror casings in twin-stalk style, rear apron with integrated diffuser, and an exhaust system with four tailpipes. Customers can further strengthen the confident appearance of their car with a broad range of exterior paint shades, including ultra-exclusive BMW Individual finishes.

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forged 18-inch BMW M light-alloy wheels (front axle: 9 J x 18, rear axle: 10 J x 18) with mixed tyres (front axle: 255 mm, rear axle: 275 mm). Available as an option are forged 19-inch M light-alloy wheels in either Ferric Grey or Black (front axle: 9 J x 19, rear axle: 10 J x 19) with mixed tyres (front axle: 255 mm, rear axle: 275 mm).

Inside the car, customers can select from among four exclusive colours for the standard fine-grain Merino leather upholstery. Beyond this, the BMW Individual range offers nine further colour options for a personal touch. The sporty and dynamic character of the interior is the product of striking standard equipment details like the M double-spoke leather steering wheel, which sports an M logo, chrome trim and colour contrast stitching.

Innovative technologies delivering top-level performance.

Power transfer in the BMW M4 Convertible is via a six-speed manual gearbox as standard. Available as an option is the seven-speed Double Clutch Transmission M DCT, which allows the driver to change gear not only using the selector lever in the centre console but also via the shift paddles on the steering wheel. This transmission effectively combines two gearboxes, each with its own clutch. This means gear changes are executed with no interruption in the flow of power – and the shift processes are therefore shorter. Drivelogic allows the driver to select from different shift modes, which see the M4 Convertible adopting a particularly comfort-oriented, economy-focused or ultra-sporty approach to gear changes when in automatic mode. The Launch Control function also integrated into M DCT enables optimum acceleration off the line.

The standard Active M Differential optimises traction at the rear axle. The electromechanical steering system, meanwhile, represents a new development from BMW M GmbH and is the critical component in the link between driver and car. It offers the gifts of direct steering feel and precise feedback. The integrated Servotronic function electronically adjusts the level of steering assistance according to the car's speed, providing optimum steering characteristics at all speeds. Three steering settings (COMFORT, SPORT and SPORT+) can be selected at the touch of a button to adjust the level of steering assistance to the situation at hand and to the driver's personal tastes.

The optional Adaptive M suspension likewise comes with COMFORT, SPORT and SPORT+ modes. The BMW M4 Convertible

is equipped as standard with M compound brakes, but customers can also order their car with even lighter and more effective M carbon ceramic brakes, which boast the additional visual highlight of gold-painted callipers.

Optional equipment items provide comprehensive driver information.

Needless to say, the BMW M4 Convertible is also available with the wide range of driver assistance systems and mobility services introduced under the BMW ConnectedDrive banner, some of which are already familiar from the BMW M3 Sedan and BMW M4 Coupe. Among the highlights are the new generation of the Navigation system Professional offering extra capability, sharper graphics and 3D elements for the map display, Driving Assistant Plus, which warns the driver of a looming collision with a pedestrian or vehicle, the intelligent anti-dazzle LED High Beam Assistant, and Active Protection with Attention Assistant.

The optional Head-Up Display comes with additional, M-specific functions such as a gear display, rev counter and Optimum Shift Indicator.

Hall of fame: A byword for open-top driving pleasure for over a quarter of a century.

The new BMW M4 Convertible builds on 26 years of tradition. Indeed, a Convertible has lined up alongside its two-door Coupe sibling as a firm fixture of the BMW M3 in all four generations.

First generation: the racing car with the soft-top.

The launch of the first BMW M3 in 1986 served primarily to satisfy the homologation requirements for what was then the German Touring Car Championship (DTM). In order to take its place on the grid for this prestigious race series, BMW had to come up with a series-produced version of the competition car and build 5,000 examples of it for sale within a year. The road-spec BMW M3 was created with the demands of motor sport very much at centre stage and there were no plans initially for an open-top version. However, after around two years of resistance, BMW eventually gave in to significant customer demand, and the BMW M3 Con-





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vertible was unveiled in 1988. It was based on the four-seater BMW 3 Series Convertible and powered by a four-cylinder petrol engine initially producing 143 kW/195 hp. In 1990, output was increased to 158 kW/215 hp, enabling the open-top M3 to accelerate to a top speed of 239 km/h (148 mph) – making it the world’s fastest four-seater series-produced convertible at the time.

Second generation: new advances in safety technology.

The powers that be in BMW’s motor sport department – now rechristened M GmbH – had planned an additional Convertible version of the second-generation BMW M3 (launched in 1992) from the outset. Based on the four-seater 3 Series Convertible, the BMW M3 Convertible was launched in 1994 with a raft of innovative safety technology on board. For example, the rollover bars of the standard rollover protection system – positioned behind the rear seat head restraints – would spring up in an instant if the car was in danger of turning over, teaming up with the ultra-rigid windscreen frame to protect the passenger compartment. The BMW M3 Convertible was just 80 kilograms heavier than the Coupe variant, but delivered a comparably high level of performance. The 210 kW/286 hp model needed 6.2 seconds for the sprint from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph), just 0.2 seconds more than the Coupe. And once its output had been boosted to 236 kW/321 hp in 1995, the Convertible reduced its figures to an even more impressive 5.6 seconds (Coupe: 5.5 s). Top speed remained unchanged at an electronically governed 250 km/h (155 mph).

Third generation: shining an even brighter spotlight on the car’s sporting character.

In spring 2001, almost exactly a year after the starting gun had been fired on the third generation of the BMW M3, M GmbH unveiled the Convertible variant to join its Coupe stablemate in the line-up. It was identical to the M3 Coupe up to the A-pillar, but a striking beltline gave the open-top model an even broader, more powerful appearance. The BMW M3 Convertible therefore cut a more muscular, broader, more hunkered-down figure than any BMW M3 before it. And it had the bite to back up the bark; hallmark M attributes such as a 252 kW/343 hp high-revving naturally-aspirated engine, beautifully tuned M suspension, a variable M differential lock and M highperformance brakes enshrined the BMW M3 Convertible as an elite athlete of its kind. The sprint from rest to 100 km/h (62 mph) took just 5.5 seconds.

Fourth generation: giving the sporting character an even sharper edge.

Less than a year on from the debut of the fourth-generation BMW M3 Coupe and the four-door Sedan that followed a little later, BMW stirred the fires of anticipation among open-air driving enthusiasts with the launch of the BMW M3 Convertible in spring 2008. A 4.0-litre eight-cylinder engine generating 309 kW/420 hp – and sustaining around 85 per cent of its 400 Newton metre (295 lb-ft) peak torque across a rev range of 6,500 rpm – gave drivers of the drop-top four-seater an impressive armoury with which to sate their appetite for sporty, dynamic corner-chasing and relaxed cruising alike.



BMW: Top of a Hapless Heap of New Sports Sedans

The ultimate car magazine – is Car. This British publication reviews every automobile manufactured in the entire world. Combined with typical English humor, breathtaking photography, and the most professional journalists in the business – Car has no equal. Their last issue featured a shootout amongst the five best selling Sport Sedans, including Audi Sportback 2.0 SE Technic, Infiniti Q50 2.2D, Mercedes C220 Bluetec, Lexus IS300h F Sport, and BMW 320d M Sport.

First off – all of the above cars cost within a few thousand dollars of each other and all were diesels except the Lexus – which was a hybrid. The cost of Petrol is much higher than diesel fuel in Europe to the extent that 70% of all passenger vehicles are diesel driven. Here in the good old U.S.A our oil companies manipulate the price at the pump so that diesel fuel costs about the same or more (even though diesel fuel costs far less to refine) – go figure. Here’s how Car magazine evaluated the big five players:

AUDI SPORTBACK 2.0 SE TECHNIC

Their 1968 cc engine is smoother than most (except BMW) yet still transmits a fair degree of high-frequency vibration through the controls when underway. Steering is fairly accurate but



BMW

lacks involvement (virtually all of the scribes complain about numb electric steering on all of the cars tested except BMW). “The ride, however, is a disaster steadfastly refusing to settle down at any velocity”

INFINITI Q50 2.2D

“The Infiniti’s ride, acceptable on a decent surface, rapidly falls apart to become fretful and indecisive if challenged in any way. Meanwhile, of three steering weights advertised on (the) screen ‘Light’ is strangely unavailable, and ‘Standard’ is already sufficiently heavy , inert and insensitive to make ‘Heavy’ a choice fit only for



Cro- Magnon-man. In all, so corrupted does the steering system feel that you've more chance of threading a needle wearing oven gloves than you have of placing this car accurately in a corner (love that British humor).

MERCEDES C220 BLUETEC

"Everything about the new Mercedes yells 'S class left in the boil wash a tad too long.' The C class delivers the intended opulence but leans more towards A class than C class. Merc is proud of the weight saving, but the lack of mass means the car never settles." The Mercedes new Agility Select system works in tandem with the **bayerische** brief

optional Airmatic suspension to allow tailoring of suspension, steering and powertrain through Comfort, ECO, Sport, and Sport Plus. "Sport Plus gets the powertrain about as enthused as it's ever going to be, the added weight to the steering feels somewhat artificial, akin to a pair of small sandbags hung off opposing (steering wheel) spokes."

LEXUS IS300H F SPORT

The previous IS model had a 2-Litre diesel, but the 2015 model has been dropped in favor of a Hybrid – melding a 178 bhp petrol engine with a 141 bhp electric motor and a CVT transmission.



BMW

This combination never quite lives up to the promise of a sports sedan. It was the second heaviest of the bunch and the extra weight could be felt while navigating tight turns. Additionally, its lowered sports suspension “generates an over tough ride”. Another turn-off was the constant drone of the CVT transmission plus the fact that it’s all but impossible to brake smoothly due to the regenerative braking system. The real deal breaker, however, was the actual long term road test mileage of 38 mpg – far short of the claimed 65.7 mpg.

BMW 320D M SPORT

Although BMW was the clear winner of the shootout they did not entirely escape the acid tongued evaluation of Car’s scribes. “Sorry, but the 3-Series interior simply doesn’t deliver on the promise of the exterior. The flat, slightly lifeless instrument binnacle, unappealing switchgear and muddy blue-on-blue sat-nav screen are starting to feel drab, whilst the electric indicator operation, fiddly auto gear lever and complex multimedia screen access are constant irritations. On the move (however) the BMW is simply a joy. Dynamically it’s peerless in this company. Allied to adaptive M Sport suspen-

sion, configurable drive modes are there for the asking, but why bother? All is just dandy if left well alone in the default Comfort mode. The steering’s fabulous (The previous model was severely criticized for its numb steering but the engineers have been working overtime to fix the problem) and ride quality is first class. Magically, the 320 remains wonderfully planted at all times.

The incessant tingle of road-surface information doesn’t equate to a hard ride in the least, even retaining admirable pliancy when you engage more sporting modes. It handles with such ruthless poise, precision and adjustability that – but for the size of the envelope around you – you’ll quickly forget you’re aboard a family saloon.

The automobile industry, as a whole, has given in to the bureaucrats and eco-weenies to the extent that fuel mileage is the Holy Grail. Thus, the main design criteria is MPG; driving, handling, and the sheer joy of carving curves on a back country road has to be given up in favor of a pristine planet.

A sad situation indeed.



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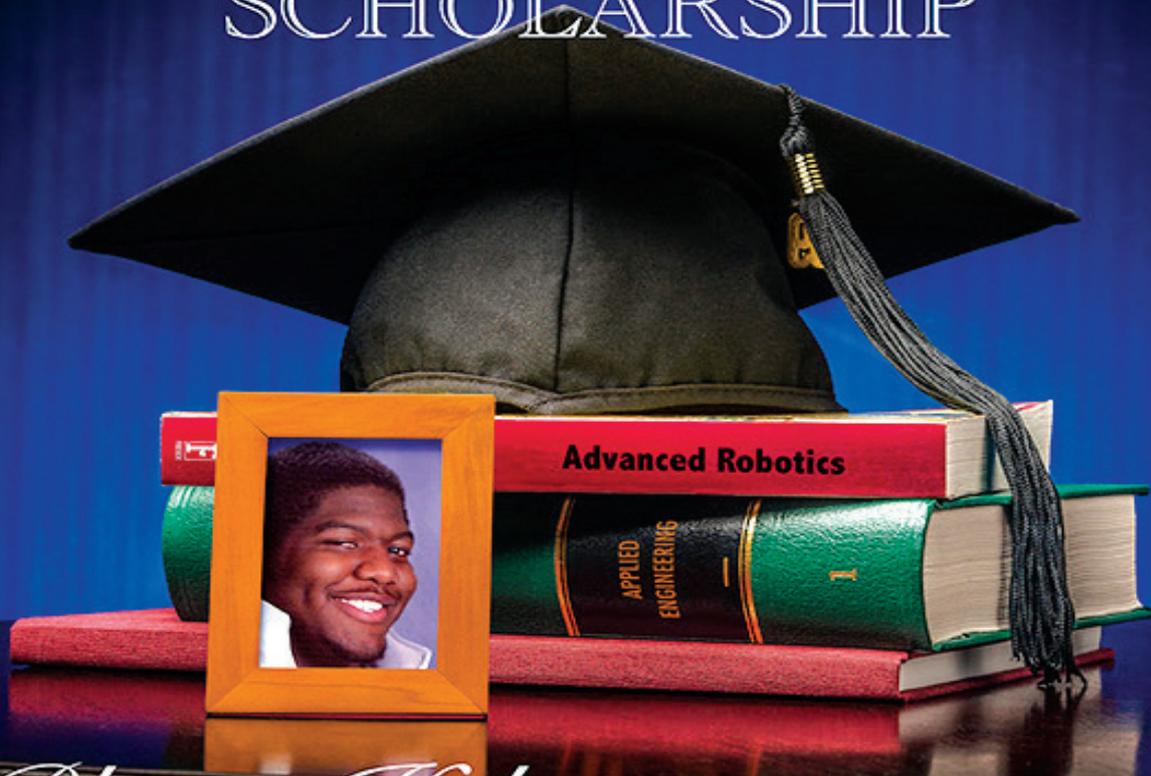
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Please Help...

Our community is joining together to create a permanent memorial to honor the life of Joel Ajavon. His wonderful spirit and giving nature brings us together to honor his memory. The rules and regulations governing scholarships are complex and we have enlisted the help of a special advisor at the Rochester Area Foundation who will assist with administration, guidance, IRS filings, etc. The concept is to award an annual scholarship to a worthy student studying Robotics or Engineering, which were Joel's educational choices. If you would like to contribute to this most worthy cause, visit www.racf.org/Donate, or your tax deductible check, with "Joel Ajavon Memorial" in the memo line, should be made out to:

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■ **Bimmer Boy** from page 5

For some local perspective: the Niagara Power Plant scheme at Niagara Falls (the combined Robert Moses and Lewiston plants) produces 2,400 MW; Rochester Gas and Electric's three Genesee River facilities total about 60 MW. At Ginna nuclear, outside Rochester, the single reactor makes around 580 MW.

The biggest units at Grand Coulee produce 825 MW each (over 1 million horsepower). The small units there each produce the same power as around 1,000 2002 Turbos (125 MW). Hydro power sites in the Pacific Northwest are often quite picturesque, although thousands of 2002's lined up and humming instead of a concrete dam and powerhouse would be quite the site to see. But I digress.

A quick hydropower primer: Most of the powerplants on the Columbia River are considered run-of-the-river, meaning they operate as the river water flows. The dams create differences in elevation between two sections of the river, and the flowing water is directed through the hydraulic turbines (that's where I do my work), which in turn spin generators to produce electricity.

Moses Lake is situated around 50 miles from the Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams, and the SGL-BMW factory therefore has great access to electricity generated without greenhouse gas production (admittedly, there were carbon emissions in building the dams and powerplants, but the power itself has been generating for close to sixty years, nearly pollution-free). This is simply not possible with fossil-fueled plants, and was a key goal for BMW and their new brand of electrics.

The i3 is assembled at a new purpose-built facility in Leipzig, Germany, and continues the green manufacturing trend. The plant is powered by 100% renewable energy, mainly from local wind turbines (of which there are many in Germany). In the last piece of the car's sustainability puzzle, the interior components are also made mainly from recycled and non-synthetic material.

My company recently finished a ten-year upgrade to the Wanapum powerplant, improving the turbine performance and increasing the power generated, and is at the beginning of a new contract for similar upgrades at the Priest Rapids facility. With more power becoming available, perhaps BMW will make use and expand their production; more carbon fiber BMW's may be in our future. It's nice to know, at least tangentially, that my industry and the newest BMW's are connected.

Of course on most business trips to Germany, I fly through Munich, and more often than not there's an extra day built in to pay a visit to the Welt and Museum (what a convenient coincidence!). That crossing of paths isn't likely to change anytime soon.

2014 Calendar of Events

September

27 Saturday,
Autocross – Cherry
Valley Motorsport Park

November

8 Saturday, Street
Survival School – WGI

December

6 Saturday, Holiday
Party – TBD

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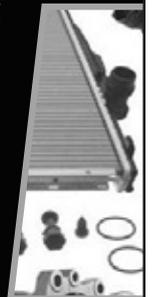
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