

BAVARIAN BYLINES

September 2006

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Cruising Nurburgring on Vacation

After 30 years of living and breathing all that is BMW in the United States, I was finally able to travel to BMW's homeland. A chance to view BMW at its roots and to operate a BMW in the environment they are built for.

I landed in Munich, Germany on a clear morning and met my good friend Howard Wahl of Napa, California. He was just getting the keys to the brand new E90 300Xd, we would drive during our stay. Yes, a diesel, but not like the diesel powered cars of old. This modern diesel machine, with a 6-speed manual and 17" run-flats, can keep pace with an M3. With over 300 foot-pounds of torque this car accelerates with serious attitude.

This trip to Germany is an annual BMWCCA driving event and is expertly organized by member Dan Tackett of San Diego. On the following day, our first destination was the BMW Museum in Munich. We saw the construction of BMW's new delivery and community building scheduled to open next year.

We went to the top of the Olympic observation tower and could see perfect views of the famous BMW "four cylinder" head-quarter building, the factories there, and the new construction going on.

Our second point of interest was the Alpina Factory. We sped down the Autobahn and met Kris Odwarka, head of sales at Alpina, for lunch beside the beautiful Bavarian lake Ammersee. Then, shadowing Kris in an Alpina B3, we roared over to the factory in Buchloe where we met Andy Bovensiepen, son of Alpina's founder Burkard Boversiepen. Andy and Kris treated us to an in depth tour of this incredible facility with all its various shops and displays. They finished by taking us down an elevator to their massive wine cellar, another major business venture of the Alpina Company.

After another night in Munich we headed northeast on the Autobahn towards Dresden in the former East Side. That week we covered long distances on the famed German Autobahn system.

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This is one of the challenging corners of the Nurburgring, that Voit Ritch experienced while vacationing in Germany this past August.

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Monthly Meetings

The Pine Tree Chapter of the BMW CCA meets at Crickets (next door to Gritty McDuff's in Freeport). The meeting is held on the second Monday of each month at 7:00PM.

These are informal gatherings of fellow BMW enthusiasts who swap tales, ask advise, give advise, eat great food and lie about other non-mentionable Bimmer activities. We also occasionally discuss club business issues and upcoming events. This is a great opportunity for members to meet, and find out what's happening in our local chapter. It's also a chance to check out some great Bimmers driven by fellow club members. Mark your calendar and join us for the next meeting!

Advertisements

Non-commercial Classifieds are FREE to BMW CCA members. Ads are limited to 40 words each, and two ads per member per issue. Please include your name, address and phone number. Non-member classified of general BMW interest may be accepted, space permitting.

Commercial Advertising is provided free of charge, but we do request donations for door prizes to be used at events and meetings. Contact Peter Sottery at 773-1044.

Change of Address?

All address and telephone number changes must be made through the National Office in writing. Please do not send change of address information to the local chapter. Send your change via:

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Email: bmwclub@aol.com

Classified

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President's Message

Welcome to Fall in Maine. We have enjoyed and endured the rain, heat, humidity, and bugs for these gorgeous days that make it all worthwhile. The warm days and cool, crisp nights of the season are near perfect.

There have been a number of activities this summer that our members have enjoyed such as the annual steam cleaning in June and the Show & Shine benefit for the deaf at Mackworth Island in July. We still have time left for a few more events before the weather slows us down.

On September 10, we are planning our first Chapter picnic at Sebago Lake. This event will take the place of the regular club meeting but we will return to the usual schedule in October.

Bavarian Auto is sponsoring their annual Show event, this year as a fundraiser for fighting breast cancer, on October 1.

On October 8, Owl's Head Transportation Museum will again host the Foreign Auto Festival and Antique Aeroplane Show. If there is any club member that is interested in participating in a rally, scavenger hunt, or fun drive, please contact either Baer Connard or Sheila Hodgkins who plan our events. Also, if you have a favorite driving route that you can share, please send us the details.

There is still plenty of drive time left – enjoy the season!

Safe Driving ~

Dennis

Sebago Lake Cookout

On Sunday, September 10th the Pine Tree Chapter will be hosting caravans to Sebago Lake State Park in Casco with a cookout to follow. Bring your family and friends.....We have reserved a covered group picnic site just steps away from a beautiful beach and warm lake water perfect for swimming. The reserved site has picnic tables and grills, with changing rooms and bathrooms nearby. The Club will supply the food, drinks, and desserts. You just need to bring your sunglasses, swim suit, towel, and lotion! This is sure to be a great time! The park is open until 8 p.m. for those who wish to make a day of it.

Please RSVP Sheila Hodgkins by Tuesday, Sept 5th at sheilabmw@yahoo.com or call (207) 822-2261 to confirm that you are planning to attend the cookout, how many people will be with you, and whether you wish to caravan. Rendezvous sites for the caravans will be determined once it is known what areas members are coming from.

Directions are listed on page 4, for those who wish to meet us at the State Park. We'll plan to fire up the grills around 11 a.m. The park entrance fee is \$4.50 per person for ages 12 and up, and \$1 for ages 5 -11. Please be aware that park rules do not allow alcoholic beverages, and dogs must be on a leash no longer than 4 feet at all times and are not allowed on the beach.

*****This Sebago event will take the place of the September chapter meeting*****

Nurburgring... cont.

The Autobahn looks identical to our interstate highways, so why can they sustain such a good safety record while operating at much higher speeds? First of all, drivers adhere to the rules of the road, and secondly, there are strict regulations for vehicle condition and maintenance (you won't see any duct taped beater doing 50 in the left lane!). Where allowed, we were regularly traveling at 200km plus and topped out just above 255km a couple of times (down hill). That's almost 160mph in a four door, 3-series diesel sedan. It was absolute heaven for me as a driving enthusiast!

Our final destination was the world famous Nurburgring! The afternoon we arrived there was an open track day. I initially rode with Howard driving a few laps around the track. This was his second year, so he was able to let me view the track from the passenger side and soak in the extreme intricacy involved. The "very experienced" Dan Tackett took the wheel after that, and as we sped past a couple of M3's, he wondered aloud how the drivers felt being passed by a four door diesel with four passengers and a trunk full of luggage.

Because it was an open track day, we saw everything from motorcycles to tour buses, so concentration was the first rule. We saw hundreds of different vehicles of all makes and ages. There were also historic races that day on the F1 track so the town was overrun with beautiful classic machines. Our hotel room overlooked the F1 track with a balcony to view these races up close.

The next three days were devoted to learning and driving the Nurburgring. We split into groups of approximately ten cars, with each group having an instructor and a coach. The lessons divided the track into segments where we practiced the corners and challenges that each involved. It was lead and follow with the instructor out front and the coach in the middle. During this

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***** DIRECTIONS TO ***** **** SEBAGO LAKE PICNIC AREA ****

Directions from Portland: take Route 302 North. Sebago Lake State Park will be approx. 12 miles beyond the town of Windham. There will be a sign for the park entrance indicating a left turn onto State Park Road. A variety store named Bob's Place is on the corner of Route 302 & State Park Road.

Directions from Auburn: take Route 11 South until it intersects with Route 302. Take a left onto Route 302 South. There will be a sign for the park entrance indicating a right turn onto State Park Road

**After paying at the park entrance booth, the Pine Grove Group Day Use area is the 2nd Right after the boat launch. The site we have reserved is the only one that's covered.

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Foreign Auto Festival & Antique Aeroplane Show

Mark your calendars for this club event.....On Sunday October 8th, the Owls Head Transportation Museum will hold it's annual Foreign Auto Festival & Antique Aeroplane Show.

The Transportation Museum is located on Route 73 in Owls Head, Maine, on beautiful Penobscot Bay, just two miles from U.S. Route 1 and two miles south of Rockland.

OHTM expects a spectacular array of over 200 foreign cars, ranging from the exotica to the eccentric. All BMWs, regardless of vintage can be on display on the airfield tarmac for free. The exhibitor gate opens at 8:00 am and the gates are open to the public at 9:30 am. No pre-registration is necessary. The OHTM will be expecting us. Directions, additional information on the OHTM and this event can be found at www.ohm.org. See you there.....

Nurburgring... cont.

three-day period, we also did full laps at various times to tie the pieces together. Our instructor was Reed Davis, a 20-year Nurburgring veteran and a top ten finisher. The grandeur elevation, and complication of Nurburgring must be seen to be understood. More so than any track in the world, this one needs study and practice to be driven properly. On the final day of Nurburgring, we each ran a graded lap where judges rated each of our performance at 18 segments. The day finished with an awards banquet with final scores

announced. It was evident that as a first year entrant, I was a long way from mastering the Nurburgring.

To anyone that loves the challenge of driving at your limit this is the ultimate place to do it; complicated and unforgiving! At least we didn't hurt that rental BMW we were driving, but we sure tested it to its limits over 3,000 km of Autobahn and Nurburgring! Until next year anyway....

Voit Ritch



Voit Ritch taking a Nurburgring corner in the 2006 BMW 330 Turbo Deisel.



Voit Ritch and friends visiting the famous Alpina Factory in Buchloe, Germany.

Teach them to drive... standard.

I was surprised to learn that only 11% of new cars sold in America this past year were manual transmissions; although I doubt this statistic is the same across brand lines (i.e. Buick vs. BMW). While I understand that automatics can be convenient when in stop and go traffic - it seems like the driver is getting short changed on driving enjoyment.

I was fifteen years old when my father taught me to drive. It was an early 60's vintage Chevy pickup with a four on the floor and no power steering. I remember focusing so hard on letting the clutch out while simultaneously pressing the gas peddle that I forgot to un-crank the steering wheel as we made the sharp left turn out of the driveway, and promptly ran into the stone wall that ran along the side of our yard. My ego was damaged, but the truck was not. I always considered learning to drive a manual shift vehicle at a young age as one of the gifts that my parents gave me.

Fast forward 25 years later, and it was time to teach my own children to drive. Both had taken driver's ed and learned on automatics, but I knew it was important that they learn how to operate a standard shift car as well. It was frustrating for all of us at first, thumping, bumping and stalling around behind the Hannaford in Windham... but they caught on quickly, and both became fans of the manual shift.

I think all teens learning to drive should learn on standard shift cars in driver's ed (unless a physical challenge prevents them from doing so). Sure, it's a more challenging process at first, but the rewards are big. And driver's ed teachers don't come with the baggage that parents do, when it comes to teaching something to a teenager.

That brings me to another topic: how do driver's ed teachers do what they do?? Honestly, anyone who can teach teens to drive without losing their cool deserves a Nobel Peace Prize in my book.

Both my offspring now own five speed manual shift cars: Michelle has a 1987 325is and John has an '85 735i (both cars are close to 300K miles and running great!). They are both good, attentive drivers with a good "feel" for their cars. They listen to the engine, not just the radio. I think it gives them more self confidence too... and it's always good to know that if they're in an emergency situation and need to drive a standard shift vehicle - they know how to do it.

Standards get better gas mileage and they are typically cheaper to buy new as well. But most importantly, they're more enjoyable to drive.

Catch me if you can! *Amy*

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Start Your Engines!

Back by popular demand, the Pine Tree Chapter will once again host a racing event for members at Maine Indoor Karting, 23 Washington Avenue, Scarborough.

Maine Indoor Karting karts are NOT the typical fun karts that are seen at most locations. They are real European racing karts with Honda 200 CC, 6.5HP engines and wet clutch drive systems. Members who attended the event last year will tell you that this is an event that you do not want to miss! If you have not previously been able to attend the monthly meetings, this would be a great time to start. Don't be shy; we love seeing new faces.

This event is scheduled for Monday, November 13, 2006 at 8:15 p.m. **It will take the place of our regular November monthly meeting at Crickets.** Maine Indoor Karting will be opening its doors just for us so we'll have the track all to ourselves. The Club will pay for one race per member. Additional races will be at your own expense. We have negotiated a reduced rate of \$15 per race.

For those who wish to eat before racing, we will be gathering for dinner at Ricetta's, 29 Western Avenue, South Portland at 6:30 p.m. Directions and the menu for Ricetta's can be found at www.ricettas.com. (Members will pay for their own meals). We will then caravan from Ricetta's to Maine Indoor Karting.

You must present a valid driver's license in order to race. Comfortable clothing is recommended. Maine Indoor Karting will provide us with a 15 minute safety briefing, racing suits, helmets, and neck braces. (We did look pretty spiffy last year!) Open toe shoes are not permitted while racing. Information and directions for Maine Indoor Karting can be found at www.maineindoorkarting.com. Maine Indoor Karting can be reached at 1-888-246-5278.

The member with the fastest race time will get bragging rights for the next year.!

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