



Press release
January 2012

Design that moves. The BMW design DNA.

BMW is a byword for authentic, forward-looking automotive design. Authentic in that the design points to the experience that awaits you. It holds out a promise that is fulfilled the moment you set eyes on the car. Every BMW is instantly recognisable as such and conveys what the brand stands for: Sheer Driving Pleasure. BMW design is forward-looking in that it displays pioneering innovations which time and again raise the bar in the premium segment of the automotive industry. Over many decades, a variety of design elements have formed the unique DNA of BMW as defined by its distinctive proportions, surfaces and details. Each BMW interprets these hallmark features anew to express its own individual character. BMW recognised the character-shaping value of these design cues early on and has systematically nurtured them over the years. They can be found in every BMW, past and present.



Company
Bayerische
Motoren Werke
Aktiengesellschaft

Postal Address
BMW AG
80788 München

Telephone
+49-89-382-20961

Internet
www.bmwgroup.com



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The distinctive hallmarks: proportions, surfaces, details.

BMW design embodies the perfect harmony of technology and aesthetics. Here function takes on a form and beauty of its own. Among the salient features of a BMW are its proportions, surfaces and detailing. Their interplay moulds the character of a BMW and spawns the unmistakable BMW look. The characteristic proportions – long wheelbase, short overhangs, stretched bonnet and set-back passenger cell – evoke the sporty elegance and dynamics of every BMW even before a wheel has turned. The individual character of each vehicle is conveyed through meticulously sculpted surfaces, tautly drawn and contoured by precise lines to shape the body of the car. Each model evinces its own interpretation of the surface design, creating richly faceted accents through precision detailing.





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Incisive aesthetics: the BMW face.

The front end of a BMW alone sports signature features that unmistakably identify the car as a BMW. The two-part kidney-shaped radiator grille, the brand emblem set centrally above it, and the twin round headlights jointly form a striking design composition in which the front headlamps, “sawn off” at the top, define the customary intent look that is firmly focused on the road ahead. The radiator grille – familiarly known as the “kidney grille” – was first introduced in 1933 and has over time evolved into BMW’s most conspicuous feature. This iconic BMW design element appears in many different renditions and continues to define the face of a BMW to this day: flanked by the hallmark twin round headlights with light rings, it forms the centrepiece of an ensemble that imprints a unique look on each BMW.





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Characteristic flow of body lines.

The side view similarly displays numerous hallmark BMW design elements that are variously interpreted according to model. The long bonnet smoothly segues into the set-back passenger cell to create a stretched outline that is both elegant and functional, generating a dynamic silhouette that imbues the car with a forward-surging stance even when stationary. The long wheelbase provides a dynamic and elegant base for the car, while short overhangs at the front and rear bracket the familiar BMW proportions that are divided by just a few eloquent lines. Also characteristic is the side window surface which, with its chrome-coloured frame, takes its lead from the formal language of a coupé. It tapers into the Hofmeister kink, a dynamic counter-sweep at the base of the rear pillar that supports the roof and separates the rear side windows from the rear windscreen. This styling element, named after former BMW Design Director Wilhelm Hofmeister, gives the window outline a forward thrust while accentuating a further BMW hallmark: rear-wheel drive. Beneath the window frame, a precise swage line with integrated door handles runs along the side to divide the car body. Emanating from the front, this line extends to the rear in a single, sweeping motion that rises at varying angles depending on the model, lending the car a pronounced wedge shape.





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Driver orientation and ergonomics in the interior.

BMW design is known for its driver-oriented approach. The ergonomic configuration of the interior firmly defers to the driver: important operating and control elements in the instrument panel and centre console are angled towards the driving seat for optimum visibility and are thus within the driver's direct reach. Likewise, all the display elements are arranged in the driver's direct field of vision so that information relevant to various driving situations is easily accessible. Select materials and a finely harmonised colour scheme underline the design statement of the interior and highlight the vehicle's character on the inside as well. This methodical focus on the driver not only emphasises the ergonomics but also the strong emotional aspect of the interior design.





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On the inside, the individual character of a BMW is expressed in the special interplay of surfaces and lines that follows the layering principle. This refers to levels made up of different materials that are arranged on top of each other and serve different purposes, bringing alive the interior surfaces and dynamics. For the interior design of BMW cars, this layering approach ushers in a new, modern aesthetic and creates a visual lightness.

“We design moving products, both in the functional and in the emotional sense. Our design is authentic; it indicates what you can experience with our products and evokes the heritage of the brand. But our design is also geared towards the future and lends a face and soul to the cutting-edge technology that defines our products. Beyond that, our design evinces a keen attention to detail, with customers still discovering intriguing design elements years down the line.” Adrian van Hooydonk, Senior Vice President BMW Group Design.



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In the event of enquiries please contact:

BMW Corporate Communications

Susanne Giuliani (née Spatz), BMW Group Design and Lifestyle Communication
Tel.: +49-89-382-20961, Fax: +49-89-382-20626

Michael Rebstock, Head of Product Communication BMW Automobiles
Tel.: +49-89-382-20470, Fax: +49-89-382-20626

Media Website: www.press.bmwgroup.de
E-mail: presse@bmw.de

The BMW Group

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI, Husqvarna Motorcycles and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 29 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2011, the BMW Group sold about 1.67 million cars and more than 113,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2011 was euro 7.38 billion on revenues amounting to euro 68.82 billion. At 31 December 2011, the BMW Group had a workforce of approximately 100,000 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last seven years.

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