

BMW International Open 2007

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BMW Golfsport

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Classic Convertible convoy marks official opening of BMW International Open

Munich. A unique parade of classic BMW convertibles conveyed a select group of leading golf pros through the city of Munich last night to mark the opening ceremony of the BMW International Open 2007 tournament.

On their way to the traditional draw party, the golfers drove some of the most beautiful BMW convertibles of all time. The route took them from the official players' hotel to the exclusive BMW showrooms in Lenbachplatz, Munich. As the convoy progressed through the evening rush-hour, pedestrians on the sidewalks stopped and waved and motorists honked their horns at the sight of the stylish line-up.

"It was a wonderful experience driving one of these sensational classic motorcars," said defending champion and world No. 7, Henrik Stenson of Sweden. "Even after all this time, you can appreciate the engineering, design and craftsmanship behind the construction of these cars."

For English player, Paul Casey (world No. 16) the classic car experience came just a day after he drove the BMW Clean Energy 7 series, one of BMW's new hydrogen-powered cars. "I have now driven the future and the past," he said. "It was a clear demonstration that BMW has always strived to be at the forefront of innovation and technology. It was fantastic – really good fun."

With a history stretching back to the mid-15th Century, golf has a rich tradition and heritage. From the outset, it also aroused great passions – to the extent that shortly after it was invented it was banned by the Scottish parliament because soldiers were neglecting their military duties in favour of a round on the links.

"Passion and heritage are qualities embraced by BMW as well, which this year celebrates its 90th birthday," said Ludwig Willisch, BMW Group Head of Region Germany and Tournament President of the BMW International Open 2007. "Our brand has been a symbol of innovation right through the company's history. We were delighted to offer some of the players an opportunity to experience at first hand some of the most celebrated BMW convertibles of all generations."



BMW models represented in the golfing parade were 319/1 (1936), 326 (1939), 328 (1937), 335 (1939), 502 (1955), 503 (1956), 507 (1958) as well as the 1600 Baur Cabrio (1970) and a 2002 Baur Cabrio (1976). Apart from Stenson and Casey, the lucky golfers who enjoyed the classic experience at first hand were Miguel Angel Jiménez (Spain) puffing on his trademark cigar, José Manuel Lara (Spain), Nick Dougherty (England), Thomas Bjoern (Denmark), Bernhard Langer (Germany) and Jarmo Sandelin (Sweden).

Just as modern golfers trace the traditions of their sport back to its origins five centuries ago, players in the BMW International Open 2007 tournament will also be able to appreciate the steady evolution of BMW technology and design from its early days to the present. Every day, the pros will be shuttled between their hotel and the championship venue at the Golfclub München Eichenried in some of the latest BMW models. And, between testing their skills against some of the world's leading players, they will also be able to test drive any BMW of their choice during the tournament.

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Notes on the cars:

The cars were from the BMW collection, which contains 400 motorcars and 200 motorcycles, representing examples of each model the company has produced since its inception.

BMW 319/1: the oldest in the convoy. Only 178 were built, making it an extremely rare collector's piece today. With its lightweight body and powerful engine it represented a departure from the larger vehicles of its day and was an immediate success on the race track.

BMW 326: This proved to be the most successful pre-war BMW model with more than a 1000 sold. It was powered by the first BMW six-cylinder engine, in this case with a displacement of two litres and developing 50 horsepower.

BMW 328: The 328 Roadster, developed in 1935/36, is one of the legends of automobile history. This stylish sports car soon dominated the two-litre class. Modified competition versions won their classes at Le Mans and in the Mille Miglia.

BMW 335: With a powerful 3.5-litre engine, the BMW 335 made the leap into the automotive luxury class. In addition to the saloon, the BMW 335 was also available as a two- or four-door convertible. Of the 157 models built, about 20 were supplied for customized bodywork to be fitted.

BMW 502: With 100 bhp, this model was one of the fastest touring cars on the market. Stuttgart coachbuilder Baur cooperated with BMW to present two-door and three-door convertibles and a coupe version. Only 57 convertibles and 24 coupés were built to customers' orders and marketed via the BMW dealer network. Today, they are some of the rarest BMW classics from the post-war period.

BMW 503: Designer Albrecht Graf Goertz was responsible for the aluminium bodies of these luxury models, which had electric windows and roofs and a 140 bhp alloy V8 engine. Built by hand and with a price of nearly DM 30,000, the BMW 503 was one of the most exclusive automobiles of its time.

BMW 507: This sports car, available with three different rear-axle transmission ratios and a range of top speeds between 190 and 220 km/h, worked wonders for the image of Bayerische Motoren Werke. Almost all BMW 507s, in many cases bought originally by international celebrities, are still on the road today.



BMW 1602: This attractive convertible gained enormous popularity and was the forerunner of the current 3-series.

BMW 2002 Targa: After US legislators ruled against convertibles, targa-type designs became popular with motorists who still wanted to enjoy the thrill of open-top driving.

