Press Release

April 2012

BMW Automobiles.

BMW has been manufacturing automobiles for more than 80 years. During this time, BMW has developed into a technology leader who defines its own trends, transforms new ideas into useful features for customers, and analyses existing inventions in order to develop them further.

**The first BMW automobiles – the start of a long success story.**

The history of BMW cars started in 1928 when the company had an opportunity to purchase automotive facility Fahrzeugfabrik Eisenach. Initially, licenced production of the Austin Seven continued under the brand name Dixi. The advanced development BMW 3/15 PS was launched on the market in 1929 and was the first automobile to bear the BMW emblem. 1932 saw the first BMW automobile developed by the company roll off the assembly line with the designation BMW 3/20 PS. Two years later the Munich automaker presented the BMW 303 as the first model powered by a 6-cylinder inline engine and established a successful BMW tradition. The BMW 303 already sported the characteristic kidney-shaped radiator grille. Up to that point, BMW had always been at the lower end of the mid-range, but the BMW 326 was the first representative of the classic mid-range. Almost 16,000 units of this car were sold, making it the most successful BMW to be produced before the Second World War. In 1936, the time had come for an even more sporty and powerful model and the BMW 328 was launched with a production run of just 464 units. The legendary roadster became the most successful sports car in the late 1930s and was instrumental in establishing the sporty image of the BMW brand. The highly tuned motor-sport versions achieved some notable successes – for example, the BMW Touring Coupé took a class victory at Le Mans in 1939 and won the Mille Miglia outright in 1940. The most luxurious BMW to roll off the assembly line before the war was the BMW 335 from 1939. The 3.5 litre 6-cylinder inline engine was a completely new development. It had a maximum output of 90 hp and luxurious interior equipment – this car in the luxury class is regarded as the forebear of the BMW 7 Series.

**New start after the war: the return to the automobile luxury class.**

The BMW 501 was launched on the market with a 6-cylinder engine in 1952 as the first post-war model (also known as the “Baroque Angel”) followed by the even more luxurious BMW 502 version. The world’s first all-alloy V8 engine for volume production was installed in this car with an output of 100 hp. The BMW 507 and BMW 503 from the pen of Albrecht Graf Götz were produced in parallel from 1956. Many aficionados today regard the BMW 507 sports car in particular as the most beautiful BMW ever built. Although these luxury models are an integral part of BMW history and the image of the brand, they were in fact a failure from a commercial perspective. By contrast, the company produced a real winner with the construction of the BMW Isetta. In the period from 1955 to 1962, BMW produced a total of more than 160,000 units and launched an extended four-seater version with the BMW 600. However, this success was unable to solve the deep-seated financial crisis besetting the Group. The support from Herbert Quandt and a new product concept enabled BMW to chart a roadmap to profitability with the advanced small car BMW 700. The new design and technical developments had a distinct profile compared with all its predecessors. The final breakthrough came from 1961 with the “New Class”. The long-awaited mid-range BMW 1500 was an impressive car with straightforward design, sporty handling and numerous engine versions. The cars in the “New Class” were among the first BMW models to feature BMW’s signature “Hofmeister kink” in the C-pillar. While these automobiles are regarded as the forebears of the BMW 5 Series, the BMW 02 Series models laid the ground for the subsequent BMW 3 Series. A total of more than 800,000 of the sleek BMW 02 Series cars were sold. They were both eminently suitable for families and defined the sporty image of BMW over the long term. BMW returned to the luxury automobile class in 1968 with the large saloons and coupés and again renewed its successful tradition of 6-cylinder inline engines.

**Birth of the model series and breakthrough into new segments.**

1972 marked a milestone in the company’s history. Alongside pioneering design, the BMW Turbo study presented innovations like ABS or radar-based distance warning devices which gradually went into series production. BMW laid the foundation stone for today’s model series – also in 1972 – with the first BMW 5 Series. In six generations, more than 5.5 million cars in this series have been sold. Over this trajectory, the BMW 5 Series has continued to strengthen its status as the most attractive and innovative vehicle in the segment of the upper mid-range. The BMW 3 Series came along in 1975 and this has remained the best-selling BMW model to this day and the epitome of a sports saloon. The BMW 6 Series rolled off the assembly line for the first time in 1976 and this created a unique combination of dynamic performance and stylish elegance. When the classic BMW 7 Series was launched in April 1977, all the BMW model series had undergone a process of renewal. In 1987, BMW tackled the apogee of engine construction. For the first time since the 1930s, a German manufacturer once again presented the market with a 12-cylinder engine, in the second generation of the BMW 7 Series with the BMW 750i. The automaker was able to underpin its aspiration to technology and innovation leadership at the top of the range with further generations of the model series. The BMW 8 Series was launched as particularly exclusive and luxurious in 1987. The elegantly designed coupé combines the highest possible aspirations with unique design and is positioned at the pinnacle of automobile construction. BMW conquered a completely new segment with the BMW 1 Series in 2004. The company augmented its model range with this series and successfully established BMW in the premium segment for compact cars.

**BMW M automobiles: the most powerful letter in the world.**

BMW Motorsport GmbH was established in 1972 and it succeeded in creating a big success in 1978. The BMW M1. the grandfather of all BMW M models itself ranked among the fastest sports cars of its time even in the series version. The BMW M535i was presented in 1980. It was the first sports saloon to be developed by Motorsport GmbH and the precursor of the BMW M5. The BMW M3 is still regarded as the most successful touring car in the world. The first series model in this series rolled off the assembly line in 1986. The presentation of the first BMW M5 in 1984 represented the genesis for the segment of the high-performance saloons in the upper medium range. Meanwhile, the successful high-power saloon in the fifth generation was becoming an enduring fascination. Apart from the BMW M6, two representatives of the BMW X family were also being marketed along the same lines as the BMW M: the BMW X5 M and the BMW X6 M were the first four-wheel drive BMW M models.

**BMW X models – the establishment of a new segment.**

In 1999, BMW established a new market segment with the off-road BMW X5. The “Sports Activity Vehicle” combines BMW’s quintessential sheer driving pleasure with the all-terrain character of an off-road vehicle. There are now four BMW X models – BMW X1, BMW X3, BMW X5 and BMW X6 – and they have proved key to the success of the company.

**BMW Z models – pure emotion.**

BMW reconnected with the successful roadster tradition when it launched the BMW Z1 in 1988. The BMW Z1 was the first complete development by the “ideas factory” BMW Technik GmbH. It was built between 1988 and 1991 and the innovative chassis and aerodynamic body gave this car superior handling characteristics. The second representative of the BMW Z Series, the Z3, was presented in 1995 as a roadster and as a coupé. Ultimately, the BMW tradition of sporty two-seaters found its most modern interpretation in the BMW Z4. Dynamic proportions and a powerful engine epitomise the roadster and the coupé in this successful series.

**MINI. A zest for life.**

Since 2001, the MINI brand has complemented the product portfolio of the BMW Group – the first premium vehicle in the small-car segment. The advanced design combined with the athletic, cheeky character expressed the lifestyle of an entire generation. The MINI Hatch made a start in 2001 – and by 2011 the MINI family had grown to six model versions: MINI Convertible, MINI Clubman, MINI Countryman, MINI Coupé and MINI Roadster.

**Rolls-Royce Motor Cars: the aspiration to motoring perfection.**

After the BMW Group acquired the rights to the brand and the name for Rolls-Royce cars in July 1998, the newly developed Rolls-Royce Phantom rolled off the assembly line at Goodwood, England, from 2003. The model represented a successful relaunch for the brand while continuing the heritage of traditional Rolls-Royce values. In September 2009, the new Rolls-Royce Ghost heralds the arrival of a second model family. The Ghost offers an authentic, though more informal interpretation of traditional Rolls-Royce values.

For more information please contact:

**BMW Group Corporate and Governmental Affairs**

**Technology Communications**

Manfred Grunert

Spokesman Heritage and Driving Experience

Phone: +49-89-382-27797

mailto: Manfred.Grunert@bmw.de

Internet: [www.press.bmw.de](http://www.press.bmw.de)

**BMW Group Classic**BMW Group Classic is responsible for all activities within the BMW Group associated with the history of the company and its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce. This ranges from the Group Archives, which are available to anyone as a centre of expertise for all the facts and figures surrounding the history of the company, the brands and the products, through the BMW Museum, which receives more than 400,000 visitors each year, to the BMW Classic Centre where all the facilities are provided that drivers require to satisfy their passion for classic BMW vehicles from spare parts to full restoration. Another aspect is planning and implementation of participation in all the classic events attended, and administration and expansion of the vehicle collection with more than 1,000 exhibits.

**The BMW Group**

With its three brands – BMW, MINI, Husqvarna Motorcycles and Rolls-Royce – the BMW Group is one of the world’s most successful premium manufacturers of cars and motorcycles. It operates internationally with 25 production and assembly plants in 14 countries and a global sales network with representation in more than 140 countries.

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

Long-term thinking and responsible action have long been the foundation of the BMW Group’s success. Striving for ecological and social sustainability along the entire value-added chain, taking full responsibility for our products and giving an unequivocal commitment to preserving resources are prime objectives firmly embedded in our corporate strategies. For these reasons, the BMW Group has been sector leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices for the last seven years.

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