

Press-Release

September 2012

BMW Driving Academy – the BMW Group’s new driver training centre.

On 14 September 2012 the BMW Driving Academy will open for business. This new BMW Group driver training centre just outside Munich lies close to the heart of the company, with barely 30 kilometres separating it from BMW headquarters. The site of what used to be the Fürstenfeldbruck airfield in Maisach covers some 130 hectares (1.3 million square metres) – an ample area on which to simulate and practise every conceivable type of driving manoeuvre and situation. “The new facility in Maisach allows us to offer our customers an array of new training options, something that hasn’t been possible up to now due to space restrictions,” says Robert Eichlinger, Head of BMW and MINI Driving Experience. “Here, our customers can now experience and learn to deal with driving situations at various speeds. And that means the driving safety training courses will be more realistic and participants will be able to experience up close how brake distances increase, for example, and at what speed they hit their personal limits when it comes to car control.” With the exception of the racing track courses, adventure trips in South Africa and snow and ice training, this is where all BMW Driving Experience driving safety training courses will take place in the future.

As well as driving safety training courses, in which participants learn skills such as how to drive defensively, save fuel and prepare in advance for situations on the road ahead, the BMW Driving Academy will also help customers to work on responding more safely in more dynamic situations. Handily, they won’t need to worry about brake or tyre wear in the process, as cars are laid on as part of every BMW Driving Experience training course. An extensive line-up of BMW 1 Series, BMW 3 Series, BMW M and BMW X models allows the participants to simply climb in behind the wheel and enjoy the experience. MINI cars can also be provided for the training courses on request.

The BMW Driving Academy demonstrates the BMW Group’s commitment to improving driving safety on the roads. Its aim is to offer all sorts of customers – from novices to advanced drivers seeking to hone their skills – a wide selection of training courses aimed at demonstrating the art of car control in all situations and thus enabling them to be good

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road users. A report by the TÜV Nord technical inspection authorities underlines the positive effect of driver training on accident occurrence.

As well as driver training, the BMW Driving Academy offers the ideal environment for exclusive events containing a driving element. It also provides the perfect venue for special events such as product presentations, international media events and tailor-made customer events. Whatever the occasion, driving pleasure will be a paramount factor.

2012 – the first development phase.

The BMW Group has put together a multi-stage long-term development plan for the site. At present the company has a rental arrangement with an option to buy. What you currently see at the facility is therefore merely “phase 1” of a bigger plan. Should the company decide to purchase the site, the plan would envisage commencing a wide-reaching programme of construction and adding further sections to the facility. “We have a lot of ideas and concepts in mind for driver training that we would like to put into practice here,” says Robert Eichlinger, with an eye to the future.

The BMW Driving Academy offers wide open areas for practical driving exercises.

The 130-hectare (1.3 million-square-metre) facility offers impressive room – in the most literal sense – for new ideas. The first development phase already provides an excellent environment in which to improve car control and sharpen up reactions, thanks to a 100,000-square-metre apron with watered surfaces, a just under 1.8-kilometre circuit and a 3-kilometre-long take-off and landing strip. The aim is always to present course participants with situations that are as realistic as possible, making it easy for them to apply their newly- refined skills when they get back to normal roads.

Flexible and spacious – the airfield apron.

Spanning 100,000 square metres, the apron area of the BMW Driving Academy alone is twice as large as the entire usable space available to the previous driver training centre at Munich Airport. With its asphalt and concrete surfaces, four watered zones and three circular areas, the apron offers ideal practice areas for steering, braking and evading manoeuvres in all weather conditions.

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There is no change in level at the transitions between asphalt and concrete areas of the apron. The freshly-asphalted areas of the apron meet the highest current road-building standards. The three circular tracks can be watered individually, allowing participants to follow a range of exercises, such as a large oval test or a figure of eight. The circular tracks therefore allow for a much more adaptable training concept than the two equivalents of the previous facility. The circular tracks help participants to learn about the phenomena of oversteer and understeer, correct cornering technique and how to deal with aquaplaning. "Here, the participants get the best possible demonstration of what the laws of physics are all about," explains Robert Eichlinger.

The watering system integrated into the apron uses a water recirculation system which ensures the water is used as effectively as possible and consumption is kept to a minimum. The water, which is sprayed through jets onto the surface of the apron, drains away into several collection and filtering systems, where it is purified and then stored in an underground tank. Rain water can also be stored here and used for the training courses. Consumption of drinking water is therefore kept to a minimum.

The concreted practice areas of the apron will be used for drills such as low-speed evading and braking manoeuvres up to 40 km/h. The aim here is to maintain total control over the car from the outset and, at the same time, speed up reaction times. These exercises offer the best preparation for situations where the driver suddenly has to evade an obstacle in heavy urban traffic without putting himself or other people in danger. Participants are made aware of how high a speed 40 km/h really is when a quick and precise evading manoeuvre is required. The new exercise areas of the apron are suitable for manoeuvres at up to 120 km/h, which is fast enough to demand special driving skills – expertise the BMW Driving Academy participants will, of course, be able to develop.

Enjoyable driving challenges on the circuit.

The new circuit area branches off the apron to the north. With a completely newly-asphalted surface, at 1,792 metres in length and measuring 10 to 15 metres in width, the circuit is perfect for higher-speed drills. It offers numerous sections where various manoeuvres, such as slalom manoeuvres, evading and braking, can be practised

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in isolation. But participants can also use this area to explore the ideal line or, at the end of the course, to put together everything they have learned one more time and get their heart pumping a little faster into the bargain. The layout of the course and the presence of a chicane purposefully presents the driver with certain challenges.

Take-off and landing strip, extra tracks in the pipeline.

Part of the circuit section runs over the airfield’s former take-off and landing strip, which fits the three-kilometre-long, 45-metre-wide NATO template. By way of comparison, a four-lane motorway measures just 34 metres in width. The circuit sees course participants carry out drills at speeds of over 120 km/h, such as motorway slip road simulations. This is also an excellent place to recreate and practise queuing traffic scenarios and special manoeuvres for personal security staff. Ample run-off areas around the take-off and landing strip ensure potential risks are minimised, making it ideal for safely practising and repeating driving situations which would not be feasible on a normal road.

A handling course is in the pipeline for the next stage of development at the site. The idea is for the driver and car to simulate dangerous situations on an approximately 2.5-kilometre-long course replicating the character of a country road. At up to eight metres in width and featuring hollows and crests, it is intended to push participants to their limits as realistically as possible. Finding the ideal line, executing overtaking manoeuvres and developing a feel for the car at higher speeds will all be on the agenda here.

The BMW Driving Academy buildings.

Beyond its driving practice areas, the BMW Driving Academy also comprises a series of buildings. Catching the eye immediately is the new reception building with its very modern-looking Welcome Area. Behind it are two hangars dating back to the formative days of the airfield in 1935. Both are protected as historic buildings and have been carefully restored and modernised accordingly. A total of 12 former aircraft hangars (known as “NATO shelters”) are dotted around the site. These hangars can be used in a variety of ways and will take on new functions – as event venues, for example – as future development phases are launched at the site.

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Reception building and Welcome Area.

The Welcome Area of the BMW Driving Academy greets visitors from a considerable distance with its modernistic and open architecture standing adjacent to the historic hangar. This will be visitors' first real point of contact with the BMW Driving Academy. After entering the buildings, they are met by a Guest Manager, who welcomes them and explains how their programme will unfold. Visitors arriving for a driver training course check in using an iPad and are then looked after in the best possible way. In this area of the building visitors can also bring themselves up to speed on the BMW Group brand and its model line-up, or find out more about the extensive range of BMW Driving Experience courses available. The area as a whole has a bright, friendly air to it and is designed to give visitors an instant feeling of relaxation.

On the first floor of the Welcome Area is the BMW M Power area, a separate room for groups of 40 to 60 people that offers the ideal environment for exclusive events. This area leads out onto a generously-sized roof terrace. From here visitors can enjoy an exceptional view over the whole of the BMW Driving Academy site. In all, the upper floor offers 100 square metres of space for visitors excluding the terrace, or 220 square metres terrace included.

The hangar – seminar building, paddock and workshop in one.

After checking in at the Welcome Area, visitors can proceed to the adjacent hangar. One of the original buildings from 1935, it is now protected as a historic monument. The basic architectural structure of the original building was therefore preserved and kept visible to visitors when renovation work was carried out. However, attention was also paid to providing the kind of modern, sophisticated appointments that reflect the premium image of the BMW Group. The end result sees old and new combining to create a special atmosphere. The building certainly does not shy away from the site's history, with holes in the hangar's steel girders remaining as scars from the aerial bombardment of the airfield during the Second World War.

The side section of the hangar houses seminar rooms, offices and a cafeteria. Catering for participants is included as part of all the full-day BMW Driving Experience training

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courses. The seminar rooms for the theory section of the courses will be the first port of call for visitors after they have checked in, and up to 50 people can be accommodated amid the modern furnishings and light, friendly ambience. Once the theory element of the course has been completed, the participants move on to the vehicle handover area in the hangar's large, two-section hall. In one section they get behind the wheel of the spotless and fully-fuelled cars they will be using for the course, before driving out through a roller gate. This has the advantage of allowing them to get in and out of the cars under shelter from any inclement weather. This area can also be used to host events; it offers space for 400 people while mobile presentation facilities allow it to be adapted to suit almost any occasion. The other section of the hall behind the partition houses the entire workshop area and BMW Driving Academy offices. Two lifting platforms are on hand in the workshop to carry out smaller jobs, such as tyre and fluid changes. This set-up allows the cars to be kept in optimum condition at all times during the BMW Driving Experience training courses.

Up to 10 courses can be run concurrently at any one time – that represents an increase of 30 per cent in this initial development phase alone. Plus, the infrastructure of the building is designed to allow the programme to be expanded at any time. Larger events can also be catered for upon request; indeed, using the shelter and outside area significantly increases the available capacity once again.

Driving safety in harmony with nature.

The whole former Fürstenfeldbruck airfield site has been classified as a nature conservation area. There have been no military flying activities here since September 2003, leaving a rich and unique array of flora and fauna to put down roots. The area represents the largest unbroken area of lime dry grassland and lowland hay meadow habitats anywhere in Europe. And it goes without saying that the BMW Group is committed to keeping it intact. Before we set up the new centre at the site we obtained a number of reports, including one on noise levels, to ensure that the BMW Driving Academy would not adversely affect the development of the plants and animals on the site. The BMW Group sticks closely to the stipulations of the Bavarian environment ministry when it comes to looking after the site and protecting the species living on it. Indeed, in the

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area around the apron, 6,000 square metres of unused space has already been returned to its natural state. Reports are compiled to examine every construction proposal before building begins and projects continue to be monitored once work is under way to ensure the environment is looked after as effectively as possible. If green areas are built on, “ecological compensation areas” two-and-a-half to three times the size are created and protected in the towns of Garching and Eching near Munich.

Added to which, the BMW test centres in Aschheim (Bavaria) and Miramas in southern France have found that nature thrives at their facilities and there are no drawbacks for flora and fauna. Indeed, with the sites closed to public use, nature is left to establish itself and flourish all but undisturbed.

A site steeped in history.

The location of the BMW Driving Academy can look back on a turbulent history. In October 1935 building work began on the open airfield for the “Luftkriegsschule 4” training school, one of the German military’s key prestige projects at the time. From 1936 pilots were trained here for the Luftwaffe, and in 1937 the German air force took over the site. In 1943 a concrete take-off strip was laid down and initial testing began with the Luftwaffe’s first jet aircraft, the ME-262, which was due to go into service the following year. To prevent this from happening, American bombers began a bombardment of the airfield on 9 April 1945 and destroyed the buildings and take-off strip almost without trace. Today, the scars of the Allied attack remain etched into the structure of surviving hangars. On 29 April 1945 the site was occupied by the Americans, but was still used as an airfield by the new German air force from 1957 to 1996. This period covered the terrorist attacks of the 1972 Munich Olympics, a situation that came to a tragic conclusion at the Fürstenfeldbruck airfield. The airfield site served as a reserve airfield from 1996 to 2003, when it was finally decommissioned for military use.



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