

## **80 years ago: victory of BMW at the Mille Miglia.** **A spontaneous driver change and an eternal record on April 28, 1940.**

**Múnich.** The first competition also happened to be the first victory for the BMW 328. At the Eifel Race in 1936 held on the Nürburgring, it was the fastest vehicle in the two-litre class. Four years later, the car competed in a race that transformed the BMW 328 into a motor-sport legend. Two men raced to a spectacular triumph. The duo of Fritz Huschke von Hanstein and Walter Bäumer drove in the Mille Miglia held in 1940, a race which entered the annals of motor sport and the company BMW – and this only had a really perfect ending as a result of a surprising stopover shortly before the finishing line.

In 1938, the BMW 328 had already made its mark with a class victory in the Mille Miglia. Two years later, BMW set its sights on overall victory. Three roadsters and two closed versions of the BMW 328 were entered in the race. The BMW 328 coupé had been styled with an aerodynamically streamlined body by Italian specialist coachbuilder Touring. The young drivers von Hanstein and Bäumer were nominated as drivers. Both of them had started their racing careers on motorcycles and at the beginning of the 1930s they had both achieved initial successes with BMW models in automobile racing. Bäumer had already been successful driving the BMW 3/15 PS DA 3 “Type Wartburg”, and in 1938 von Hanstein became the German Sports Car Hillclimb Champion in the BMW 328. They were the dream team for the Mille Miglia in 1940.

When the race started on 28 April 1940, the two closed BMW 328 cars lived up to expectations and took the lead right from the start. But after just seven laps, the BMW 328 Kamm coupé had to retire from the race with technical problems. Now it was up to von Hanstein and Bäumer to secure success for BMW. Their Touring coupé unerringly ate up the miles and continued to expand its lead over the Italian competitors who had achieved many racing victories. Only the constellation in the cockpit gave the team management a real headache. Fritz Huschke von Hanstein was so fixated on victory that he continuously pushed forward the change in drivers that had actually been agreed. And Bäumer soon found it extremely difficult to suppress his impatience. The team management ordered him to remain in the passenger seat. Shortly before the finishing line, the drivers undertook a manoeuvre that took spectators' breath away. Von Hanstein brought the BMW 328 to a stop on the open road and Bäumer took over the steering wheel. There was undoubtedly ample time for the late change in driver. When Bäumer crossed the finishing line, the BMW 328 Touring coupé had a lead of a quarter of an hour over the second-placed Alfa Romeo. Von Hanstein and Bäumer also set up a speed record with an average speed of 166.7 km/h that went down as an eternal record never to be equalled in the history of the Mille Miglia. The three BMW 328 roadsters that had lined up at the start took third, fifth and sixth places to earn the team award for the team from Munich alongside overall victory.

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