



## **45 Years Ago: the launch of the first generation of the BMW 3 Series.**

**The BMW 3 Series (E21) was introduced to the world in July 1975, giving rise to the birth of one of the brand's top icons.**

**Munich.** The presentation of the BMW 3 Series in 1975 turned the page to a whole new chapter in automotive history. Although the two-door Sedan displayed distinctive characteristics emphasising its relationship with the BMW 5 Series unveiled three years earlier, the compact and sporting model that eventually made its debut on the market was a totally new car. From the very beginning, the 3 Series concept was tailored to drivers who placed exacting demands on their car, demanded powerful engines and flawless handling, and appreciated the far-reaching safety features previously only offered by luxury-class cars.

Expectations of the new model were high – after all, it was following in the tyre tracks of the internationally successful BMW 02. The BMW 3 Series was charged with the task of combining the sporty, agile character of its predecessor with new qualities in the areas of design, comfort, space and safety.

### **Clear forms, dynamic proportions and a premiere for the driver-focused cockpit design.**

The design of the body followed the new approach already applied to the BMW 5 Series by head designer Paul Bracq and was distinguished by a clear use of forms. The front end was dominated by the striking BMW kidney grille and circular lights, the latter featured in twin-headlight form in the top-of-the-line models with 2.0-litre engine. Other distinctive elements included the coupe-like side window graphic including the Hofmeister kink at its trailing edge and the “power dome” contouring of the bonnet.

Its new proportions made the BMW 3 Series look significantly larger at first glance than its predecessor, although the 4,355-millimetre-long, 1,610-millimetre-wide and 1,380-millimetre-tall two-door was actually only a few centimetres larger in each respect than the BMW 02. Track widths of 1,364 millimetres at the front and 1,377 millimetres at the rear gave the new kid on the block a powerful stance.

The interior of the BMW 3 Series witnessed the debut of the now familiar driver-focused cockpit design. The vertically stacked controls in the centre of the dashboard were angled clearly towards the driver, making them easier to reach and read. This new development helped to optimise ergonomics and remains a signature feature of BMW models to this day.



**Powerful engines – also available with six cylinders for the first time in this class.**

The official presentation of the BMW 3 Series – on the day before the opening of the 1975 International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt – saw the Chairman of the BMW AG Board of Management draw particular attention to the BMW 320i. “In our eyes this car is the worthy modern successor to the fabled BMW 2002 tii,” noted Eberhard von Kuenheim. With a helping hand from fuel injection technology, the four-cylinder engine under the bonnet of the BMW 320i produced 92 kW/125 hp. And that was enough to propel it not only to the top of the 3 Series range but also into the highest reaches of car fans’ affections. In the year following its debut, readers of Europe’s biggest-selling motoring magazine voted the flagship 3 Series model “the world’s best sedan” in the class up to two litres displacement.

The model range also included the BMW 316, BMW 318 and BMW 320 variants from launch. Their model designations were derived from the size of their engine displacement: 1,573cc, 1,766cc and 1,990cc respectively. The sophisticated four-cylinder carburettor engines combined sporting performance characteristics with very reasonable fuel economy. Even the 66 kW/90 hp entry-level engine in the BMW 316, which weighed just 1,010 kilograms, allowed customers to experience smile-inducing agility and a top speed of 160 km/h (99 mph).

The engine line-up blossomed in spectacular style in 1977, as the lower mid-range welcomed the arrival of six-cylinder engines for the first time. The 2.0-litre engine for the BMW 320 and 2.3-litre unit bestowed on the BMW 323i were designed specially for the BMW 3 Series. The straight-six powering the BMW 323i included features such as electronically controlled engine management and transistor ignition, generated 105 kW/143 hp and accelerated the two-door car from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) in just 9.0 seconds.

The engine’s task of fast-tracking the 3 Series to sporting eminence in the mid-size segment was shared by independent suspension featuring control arms and spring struts at the front axle and semi-trailing arms/spring struts at the rear. The front axle control arms had a MacPherson construction using anti-roll bars, creating the perfect platform for excellent steering precision. The 3 Series also gave an all-new design feature its BMW premiere: elastically mounted rack-and-pinion steering. The first-generation car had earned itself a reputation for outstanding driving dynamics and agility that remains resoundingly intact in the latest model to wear the 3 Series badge.

**Successful changing of the guard: the BMW 3 Series becomes the new bestselling model in the company’s history.**

The BMW 315, powered by a 1.6-litre engine developing 55 kW/75 hp, joined the fray in 1981 as the new entry-level model in the line-up. The same year, BMW 3 Series sales reached the one-million mark. That meant the new model range had outstripped the figure recorded by its predecessor after just six years in production to become the most successful model in the company’s history. Customer satisfaction levels were also exceptionally high. In a survey conducted in 1980, 80 per cent of BMW 3 Series drivers said there was “nothing they could improve” about their car.



A total of 1,364,039 units of the BMW 3 Series were sold up to 1983, of which 4,595 were in “Top cabriolet” trim. This take on the 3 Series recipe was the work of Stuttgart-based coachbuilder Baur, whom customers could commission to conjure any engine variant of the 3 Series into an open-top four-seater with a suitably burly rollover bar.

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#### **Acerca de BMW Group**

Con sus cuatro marcas BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce y BMW Motorrad, BMW Group es el fabricante Premium líder en vehículos y motocicletas; el cual, a su vez, proporciona servicios financieros y productos de movilidad de alta calidad. Al ser una empresa global, BMW Group opera 31 instalaciones de producción y ensamble en 15 países y cuenta con una red global de ventas en más de 140 países.

En 2019, BMW Group vendió más de 2.5 millones vehículos y más de 175 mil motocicletas en todo el mundo. La ganancia antes de los impuestos para el ejercicio 2019 fue de aproximadamente 7 mil 118 millones de euros sobre ingresos que ascienden a 104 mil 210 millones de euros. Al 31 de diciembre de 2019, BMW Group tenía una mano de obra de 126,016 empleados.

El éxito de BMW Group siempre se ha basado en el pensamiento a largo plazo y la acción responsable. Por ello, la compañía ha establecido la sustentabilidad ecológica y social en toda la cadena de valor, responsabilidad en los productos y un claro compromiso con la conservación de los recursos como parte integral de su estrategia.

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#### **Acerca de BMW Group Latinoamérica**

BMW Group en la región de Latinoamérica comercializa las tres marcas BMW, MINI y BMW Motorrad; así como en algunos países también se incluye la submarca BMW i. BMW Group México inició sus actividades a finales de 1994 y por tanto celebró en 2019 el 25 aniversario de presencia en este país. En la región de Latinoamérica el primer importador se ubicó en Ecuador en 1958, con lo que se tiene presencia desde hace más de 50 años.

El Grupo cuenta con dos plantas en Brasil, una ubicada en Araquari, Santa Catarina, con enfoque en la producción de autos. La otra planta se ubica en Manaus, Amazonas, la cual es la primera instalación que fabrica vehículos de dos ruedas de la marca fuera de Alemania. En julio de 2014, se anunció la inversión de mil millones de dólares para la construcción y operación de una planta de producción en San Luis Potosí, México; la cual inició operaciones en 2019 con la nueva generación del BMW Serie 3.

La región de BMW Group Latinoamérica se compone de 28 países: Antigua, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brasil, Curacao, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haití, Honduras, Islas Caimán, Jamaica, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, República Dominicana, Santa Lucía, Surinam, Trinidad y Tobago y Uruguay. De estos países, 28 ofrecen la marca BMW, 15 ofrecen la marca MINI, 15 ofrecen la marca BMW Motorrad y 7 la submarca BMW i.

Además, cuenta con una organización de servicio y postventa, que ofrece atención a clientes.

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