Media Information

10 November 2016

BMW South Africa refurbishes its classic cars: the legendary BMW M1 and BMW 333i.

**Midrand.** As part of the BMW Group’s centenary celebrations this year – under the motto “THE NEXT 100 YEARS” – BMW South Africa has refurbished two of its classic cars, the legendary BMW M1 and South African exclusive BMW 333i (also known as the Gusheshe).

As a world-leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles, as well as a provider of premium finance and mobility services, the company has always valued the preservation of its heritage. It is for this reason that BMW South Africa purchased the BMW M1 from a customer in the mid 1980s and used the vehicle as part of its classic collection as well as various activities. The car was later joined by the E23 BMW 745i, E28 BMW M5, E30 BMW 333i and 325iS. However, in the late 1990s, the BMW 745i (E23) and E28 BMW M5 vehicles were sold to customers due to a lack of resources to manage these classic cars. Only the BMW M1, BMW 333i and 325iS remained.

After acquiring the BMW M1, BMW South Africa restored the vehicle from its original blue colour to the red brand positioning colour. The seats, steering wheel, dashboard and carpets were completely redone at the then seat and upholstery supplier in Rosslyn, using original BMW materials. After some years, some mechanical complications occurred and the car was no longer driveable as parts became scarce. The car was then only used for static purposes until July this year when a decision was taken to refurbish the car and get it mobile again. The refurbishment was completed by the company’s press vehicle technicians as well as two apprentices from the BMW Training Centre at Plant Rosslyn.

**The birth of a legend in 1978: the BMW M1.**

When the 64th Paris Motor Show opened its gates in 1978, sports car fans and lovers had only one destination – the stand of BMW Motorsport GmbH. There they were able to admire a super-low, extremely dynamic new model making it quite clear at very first sight that this was Germany's fastest road-going sports car; the BMW M1 was 1,140 millimetres (44.9”) high, with a power of 204 kW (277 bhp) at 6,500rpm and top speed of 262 km/h. "Everybody was crowding around BMW's new mid-engined sports car", wrote the press at the time.

In addition to a successful racing history, the BMW M1 is significant as the first of the sports cars developed independently by BMW Motorsport GmbH. In July 2016, BMW Group Classic staged a revival with BMW M1 racing cars in the Procar Series just before the race for the “Austrian Grand Prix” at the Red Bull Ring in Spielberg. Races with these cars were enthusiastically received in the supporting programme on Formula 1 weekends in Europe. When the first Procar Race was held at Zolder, Belgium, in May 1979, contemporary Formula 1 racing drivers competed in identical racing versions of the BMW M1 against national sports-car professionals, private drivers and talented upcoming drivers. Some of these drivers are now taking the opportunity to get back into the cockpit of the BMW M1 at events such as the Legends Parade in Spielberg – including the three-time Formula 1 World Champion Niki Lauda, who won three Procar Races in 1979 and also succeeded in claiming the overall placing.

**A South African exclusive: the BMW 333i.**

Another special car that was refurbished is the locally exclusive BMW (E30) 333i, which was manufactured in 1985 at BMW Plant Rosslyn and characterised by a special motor as well as numerous other technological and design features. The BMW 333i, based on the second generation BMW 3 Series (E30), was specially developed for the South African market and created in collaboration with BMW, BMW Motorsport GmbH and Alpina. The highlights of the BMW 333i include a 3.2-litre straight six-cylinder engine with 197 hp (146 kW), a 5-speed sports transmission, sports suspension and specific cockpit design. By 1987, approximately 200 units were produced.

In 2017, BMW South Africa will embark on a second phase of restoring another popular model – the BMW (E30) 325iS. The 325iS was also introduced in 1985 and was a sporty upgrade of the 325i. Two versions were introduced in limited numbers: 145kW and 155kW (both 2.7 litre naturally aspirated engines). They had a uniquely identifiable ‘iS’ body kit, 15” wheels, full electric package, 25% limited slip differential and M Sport suspension with Bilstein struts. The car has a rich racing history winning local races such as the Stannic Group N Class and Castrol Nine Hour races amongst others.

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**The BMW Group**

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world’s leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 31 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2015, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.247 million cars and nearly 137,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2015 was approximately € 9.22 billion on revenues amounting to € 92.18 billion. As of 31 December 2015, the BMW Group had a workforce of 122,244 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

**BMW Group South Africa Websites:**

[www.bmwgroup.com](http://www.bmwgroup.com)

[www.bmw.co.za](http://www.bmw.co.za)

[www.mini.co.za](http://www.mini.co.za)

[www.bmwmotorrad.co.za](http://www.bmwmotorrad.co.za)

[www.bmwdrivertraining.co.za](http://www.bmwdrivertraining.co.za)

**Social Media Pages:**

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com> / BMWGroup (BMW South Africa, BMW Motorrad SA, MINISouthAfrica).

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/BMWGroup> (@BMW\_SA, @BMWMotorradSA and @MINISouthAfrica).

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com> / BMWGroupview (BMW South Africa and BMW Motorrad SA).