



Media Information
07 April 2010

It doesn't get more authentic than this. BMW Classic Center opens its customer workshop.

Munich. From now on, BMW Classic's specialist workshop will not only be repairing and restoring its own classic vehicles, but also those belonging to customers. The BMW Classic Center thus closes the final gap in the complete range of services offered to the owners of classic models from every era of the blue-and-white badge. Just like owners of new vehicles, these customers can place their car in the hands of specialists, who can draw on the most profound expertise anywhere in the world – that of the manufacturer.

The worldwide interest in classic cars and motorcycles of the BMW brand is growing apace. The 200 or so brand clubs alone account for some 200,000 members. It figures that each of them owns a BMW from earlier decades – the number of historic cars with the blue-and-white badge is estimated at around 600,000 – and those are just the ones we know about. Added to those are some 70,000 motorbikes with classic status, which means that roughly one in ten BMWs built up until the 1980s is still on the road today. And with every year that passes, the number of classic BMWs increases significantly. Thus the early generations of the high-volume BMW 3, 5 and 7 Series already belong to the ranks of modern classics.

With interest growing, BMW Classic has responded to the wish of many enthusiasts to own a vehicle that is as faithful as possible to the original and is in the best possible condition. It is for them that BMW Classic has expanded the Historic Workshop, hitherto responsible for the company's own vehicles, into the BMW Classic Center, which now accepts outside commissions as well. "The workshop is an essential component of the reorientation of BMW Classic and of our customer focus on the classic market," says Karl Baumer, Director of BMW Group Classic. Parallel with this, the supply and remanufacturing of parts is being further expanded. To this are added further areas of business such as the purchase and sale of vehicles, authentication of vehicles, advice to buyers, and a worldwide collection and delivery service.

Company
Bayerische
Motoren Werke
Aktiengesellschaft

Postal Address
BMW AG
80788 München

Telephone
+49(0)89-382-2 77 97

Internet
www.bmwgroup.com



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All-round expertise: a full range of services under one roof.

“The great advantage for customers who bring their vehicle back to the original manufacturer is the complete range of services available under one roof. We have the theoretical knowledge of the vehicles, the technical know-how, the original BMW parts and the necessary infrastructure to connect everything up systematically,” says Ralf Vierlein, Head of Sales and Aftersales for BMW Group Classic. It is a concept that was convincing from the start, since a number of classics had already been entrusted to the team at the Classic Center before the actual launch of the new service. Nowadays, going into the Classic Center workshop feels like being transported back to the 1960s and late 1970s: next to two BMW M1s – a roadgoing sports car and a Procar race car – stand a BMW 3.0 CSi and BMW R 69 S.

The challenges vary as widely as the vehicles themselves. And they are seldom straightforward: for example, the owner of the 3.0 CSi wants to have an automatic gearbox installed in his 1970s coupé, to replace the original manual gearbox. Because this combination was never on sale, independent workshops had to admit defeat. Not so the BMW Classic Center: on a trial basis in February 1972, BMW had fitted two of the high-performance coupés with automatic gearboxes. However, this variant never got beyond the prototype stage. Thanks to rapid and unrestricted access for BMW restorers to the documentation in the company archive, they are able to build a replica of this variant – completely faithful to the original. But this will take time, as quite a number of components have to be specially fabricated for it.

Complete restoration: the M1 from the jungle.

The Series M1 is a very different story. It is to be resurrected exactly as it was built, all those years ago. The legendary super-sportscar from the 1970s belongs to a customer in Malaysia, who sent the car in a container by sea to Munich. The order: a complete restoration. The car had been sitting for many years in what was practically jungle, where it was exposed to extreme climatic conditions. On



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arrival, the classic was a wreck on wheels. The floor of the car was riddled with termite nests. Not a single rubber component was still intact. First of all, the car was cleaned from top to bottom and rid of all its 'residents'. The vehicle is now being completely dismantled and rebuilt from scratch. The experts estimate it will take about a year and a half to achieve this rebirth.

As with new vehicles, each of the various jobs is taken on by the relevant specialised division. At BMW Group Classic the work is chiefly done within the BMW Group's own network of facilities. Mechanical and electrical components are taken care of by experts in Munich. All the bodywork jobs, right through to painting, are handled by the BMW plant in Dingolfing. Motor sports models go direct to BMW Motorsport GmbH, while for M cars the specialists of M GmbH come on board.

The attraction of the BMW Classic Center is not solely derived from its expertise and authenticity. Even when it comes to pricing, the Munich car restorers are thoroughly competitive: "As regards the price-performance relationship, we are continually getting positive feedback. The fact that we're competitive in the global marketplace can be seen in our disproportionately large order book," Ralf Vierlein confirms.

The Customer Workshop project: a network for BMW classics.

Faced with projects like these, it is easy to see that the capacity of the Classic Center is limited. In order to cope with the rising demand, BMW Group Classic launched the "Customer Workshop" project: "We've had enquiries from Romania, Spain and even from a collector in Brazil, who is interested in a restoration. We are now looking for partners abroad with whom we can work in future," says Dr Thomas Tischler, Service Team Manager at BMW Classic and responsible for the project. The first of these are already on board: in 2009 the BMW Classic Center opened its first branch in Switzerland. For quite some time the BMW branch in Zurich's Dielsdorf district had noticed a growing number of BMW classics in its catchment area and consequently an increased demand for



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professional servicing for the vehicles. That was followed by the BMW branch in Düsseldorf, which goes by the name of BMW Classic Center NRW [North Rhine-Westphalia] and looks after a large stock of BMW classics in the region.

The "Customer Workshop" project is now being gradually expanded to other regions of Germany as well as to other countries with large classic and modern-classic potential. The BMW Car Club of America alone has more than 70,000 members, and the BMW Motorcycle Owners Association of America some 50,000, each of whom, according to reliable estimates, is the proud owner of between three and four vehicles. BMW Classic intends to target the interests of these large customer groups. Ralf Vierlein: "We are planning to set up a Classic Center in the USA with its own spare parts supply for professional and private customers."

Parts supply: focus on postwar classics.

For decades BMW Classic has been steadily expanding the range of original BMW parts for classic vehicles. The catalogue currently comprises some 30,000 components. The vast majority are parts for the classics that took to the road after 1948. Today, anyone who wants to realise a youthful dream of owning a BMW 2002 or a

BMW R 75/5 has no need to worry about maintenance and repairs: "Every BMW classic with two, three or four wheels is to get its TÜV* seal of approval". That is the declared aim of Georg Blumoser, Team Manager Parts Sales.

(*Technischer Überwachungs-Verein: Technical Inspection Association)

Beginning with the R 24, the parts list becomes more complete the more recent the model. The R 24 single-cylinder motorcycle was the first BMW vehicle to go into series production again after the end of the war. The youngest offspring of BMW's series output which the experts of BMW Group Classic have taken under their wing is the second-generation 7 Series, which was produced until 1994.

The decision on which components should be given priority for remanufacture



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lies with the customers. From intensive contacts with brand clubs and drivers of BMW classics, and by observing the market, the experts know where the greatest demand lies.

As a rule, the responsibility for parts supply for motorcycles devolves to BMW Group Classic 20 years after production ceases, while in the case of cars it depends on volume after a model series has been discontinued. The simplest bit of all this is the transfer of components still in stock: they remain physically in the central BMW parts supply centre at the Dingolfing plant and are only transferred organisationally to BMW Group Classic. However, also linked with this is the responsibility for the tools and production machinery used to manufacture the parts. And the decision on their future requires careful consideration: once production resources have been scrapped, the possibility of straightforward remanufacturing of the relevant parts in their original condition is lost for ever. Incidentally, this affects not only the tools with which the parts fabricated by BMW itself have been produced; experts from BMW Classic also have a say in the fate of important production installations of suppliers and sub-contractors.

A valuable cache: highly complex tools are kept in storage.

At the very top of the priority list of production facilities that are worth keeping are body presses and highly complex moulds for model-specific components. Every part of the tooling that is relevant for subsequent fabrication is put into storage.

Admittedly, even tools have only a limited life, which can often reach its end during regular production. Then they go off to the crusher, since BMW Group Classic hangs on to the most important thing: the design drawings. As soon as the stock of parts produced with the decommissioned tool dries up, new production tools are ordered. In doing so, the experts from BMW Classic can look at the population of the relevant vehicle and demand for the part, and calculate from these how much longer the stock will last.



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Remanufacturing is teamwork.

This system has been functioning very successfully since 1994. It was in that year that the BMW Group founded BMW Mobile Tradition, the forerunner of BMW Classic, with a clear objective: only a roadworthy and visually impeccable classic vehicle can be a credible representative of its era. Admittedly, with those dating from the earlier years of manufacture, it is not always so easy to guarantee this. The older the model series, the greater the challenge to the specialists to produce a new set of parts. This is where teamwork is required: in cooperation with Sales, Parts Technology, Scheduling and Purchasing, a precise production plan is drawn up – similar to that of a new series.

100 per cent original: material, surface and quality.

The first thing to be done is to assemble all information about the part. Here, the most important basic data includes the material from which the element was originally made, how it was processed and whether the structure or surface were treated in a special way. Particularly where engine or transmission parts are concerned, the quality of material is of critical importance if the replicated component is to operate smoothly with the old, existing parts.

The first batch of remanufactured parts is sent to specialists in parts technology at BMW Classic, where they undergo precision measurements and checks. A door hinge must fit exactly, the door must open and close perfectly, and seams and gaps may not deviate from the original. In order to ensure this, the initial sample is fitted into the intended location. Depending on the complexity of the component, several rounds of tests and adjustments to the tools are necessary until BMW's quality standards are achieved. Only then is the part signed off and actual production can begin. At this stage, too, quality is continually controlled until the finished parts go into BMW's central warehouse – after all, every customer must receive flawless goods.



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New life for old engines: BMW supplies replacement units for classics too.

Defective or worn vehicle components do not always need replacing by new parts. Engines and transmissions, dynamos and electronic controls lend themselves extremely well to reconditioning. In this case, a classic engine in need of an overhaul receives no less attention and expenditure than one of today's units: both are dismantled and overhauled at the Landshut plant. And every engine reconditioned by BMW always carries a two-year guarantee, irrespective of production year and car model. What applies here is the exchange principle: in return for the defective engine, the customer is given a replacement unit which, in terms of quality and functioning, is as good as a new engine. Independent tests certify not only the engine's flawless quality but also the best value: to repair serious engine damage often works out more expensive than a replacement unit from BMW. The supply of dynamos and electronic components operates in the same way. In this case, however, it is not BMW that does the reconditioning, but the original supplier.

State-of-the-art logistics for supplying classic parts.

Customers of BMW Classic receive the parts they need in the same easy way as any owner of a new BMW car: they are simply ordered by part number, since the logistics are fully integrated into BMW's worldwide service network. The customer just goes to his nearest BMW dealer – anywhere around the globe.

Catalogue of historic parts on the Classic website.

The complete catalogue of components held in stock is listed on the internet and is continuously updated. Anyone looking for a particular part can find out about it there. Access to the on-line parts catalogue is available at www.bmw-classic.com. Specific repair equipment for vehicles dating from the 1960s is available in the same way as the parts.



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BMW Classic is there not only to help the classic customer in practical ways, but also to give advice. The experts suggest repair solutions, give instructions for installation and tips on alternative parts. They help out with detailed data on engine tuning as well as with information on which oil and which grade of fuel the BMW classics require.

Vehicle authentication: a certificate of authenticity “from the horse’s mouth”.

In addition to all this, BMW is one of the few manufacturers offering extensive and detailed authentication for classic BMW cars and motorcycles. The certificate gives information on the historical integrity and condition of the classic model. Modifications carried out over the years in the course of repairs or restoration are often difficult to recognise. BMW Classic has the skills to examine historic BMWs and verify how original they are. When drawing up a BMW vehicle authentication, the experts at the BMW Classic Center work closely with their colleagues from the BMW company archive. It is there that important data on a vehicle’s history can be reconstructed. The BMW vehicle authentication is an important tool with which to assess the correct market value of a classic BMW. It gives the client certainty as to the value of his property and serves as a reliable basis for negotiation when buying or selling.

And even those interested in a possible purchase, but who are still undecided about buying a particular vehicle, can be helped by BMW Classic to make up their mind: in Munich a small number of historic vehicles are available for hire, from the Isetta to the 3.0 CSi and 1802, all the way to the Z1. At the wheel of one of these, you can literally feel the fascination of classic BMW automobiles.

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For questions please contact:
Manfred Grunert
Technology Communications
Spokesperson Heritage
Telefon: +49(0)89-382-2 77 97
Fax: +49(0)89-382-2 85 67

Media Website: www.press.bmwgroup.com
E-mail: presse@bmw.de