



The BMW Enthusiast

The Official Newsletter of The Bavarian Auto Club of Vancouver Island

July/August 2002 Vol.9 No.7

Inside:

- 3...Yearly Schedule
- 3...Car Comedy Corner
- 4...June Technical Meeting
Murray Bradley
- 5...Crow & Gate Drive
Frank Van der Have
- 6...Front Bumper #2
Phil Abrami,
President, BMW
Club of Canada
- 7...M3³
Martin Lane - with
Scott MacDougall,
Jim Sloan
Conrad Moller
- 11...Membership Info

Upcoming Events

- ♦ July 7th
Botanical Beach
Drive
- ♦ July 9th
General Meeting
- Oak Bay Beach
Hotel
- ♦ August 11th
Cowichan Valley
Car Picnic
- ♦ August 13th
Ennerdale
Engineering

Port Renfrew Drive & Picnic at Botanical Beach

Join us on Sunday July the 7th, for a drive along the Sooke Road/West Coast Road (Hwy 14) to Port Renfrew, where we'll picnic at the famous Botanical Beach. Located about 2 hours drive from Victoria, Port Renfrew is touted as becoming THE next West Coast Experience, similar to Long Beach.

The Botanical Beach Provincial Park is only a few kilometers from the village centre and will be our final destination. Established as a marine station for the University of Minnesota in 1900, Botanical Beach offers an abundance of marine life forms and lots of areas to explore.

Our day will start with the traditional departure for the Victoria based members from Moxies, in the Town and Country Shopping Centre, at 10:10 AM. For those of you, who will be coming from up island, the rendezvous point will be at the Frayne Centre, just south of the Mill Bay village (at the top of the hill) where you will depart at 10:00.

Along with all your picnic goodies make sure that your pack a sweater or wind breaker for the climate at the beach can be quite different from that of Victoria!

See you at the beach!

July Social Meeting Notice

Just a reminder that the July regular meeting will be held on the 9th at the beautiful Oak Bay Beach Hotel, as usual. Meet at 7:30 PM in the "Snug" pub, or the small meeting room just down the hall. You do realize that besides getting to chat with your fellow Bimmer owners, and find out the latest buzz about the BACVI (or rather BMWCC VI, the name will be changing soon, honest!) the Oak Bay Beach Hotel has some of the best beers available, as well as fantastic food? Well they do, so come on out and enjoy the atmosphere in the heart of Oak Bay.

Cowichan Valley Car Picnic



The 17th Annual Cowichan Valley Car Picnic is Sunday AUGUST 11th this year. Apart from Fabulous BMW's we have everything from Ferrari's to motorized bar stools! Bring that picnic for a true Family Automotive Extravaganza!

For more information visit the Web site: www.cvcpc.ca, or phone David Saville Peck at: (250) 246-9922

August Tech Meeting Notice

The regular monthly meeting for August will be held at the World Wide Head Office of Ennerdale Engineering, "Purveyors of the Horseless Carriage", Automobile Engineers, in Chemainus on August 13.

Our Host for the evening will be our own National Director and President of Ennerdale Engineering, none other than David O. Saville Peck!

The meeting is scheduled to start at 6:30 PM at David's and those members leaving from Victoria should rendezvous at Moxie's, as usual, and will depart no later than 5:30 PM in the normal "convoy".

Ennerdale is just outside Chemainus at 3292 Henry Road. Take the highway to Chemainus and at the turnoff for the ferry to Thetis/Kuper Islands turn left (there is an Antiques Barn and a restaurant at the intersection) and go about 3 km to David's place on the left side of the road. If you get lost you can call (250) 246-9922 for directions.

The evening will be very interesting with an astonishing collection of exotic cars for the viewing and of course David's latest offering to the world of Motorsport, the Caterham Super 7, will be on display (and, we are informed, available for purchase!). This will be an opportunity to see a number of cars close up that you will probably never see on the street! Hope to see you all there. For further info contact David or Murray.

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BMW Enthusiast

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Gold Package:1/4 page, 2 WEB links,300 word editorial
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Bronze Package:1/8 page,1 WEB placement (not linked)
 Annual fee: \$175 -Season fee: \$100 -Monthly fee: \$30

Back cover:Annual fee: \$800

Contact Doug in Ad Sales for complete details.

Events & Deadlines for the next two months

July

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 <i>Botanical Beach Drive British Grand Prix</i> | 8 | 9 <i>General Meeting Oak Bay Beach Hotel</i> | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 <i>French Grand Prix</i> | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 <i>German Grand Prix</i> | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

August

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 <i>Cowichan Valley Car Picnic</i> | 12 | 13 <i>Tech Meeting Ennerdale Engineering</i> | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 <i>Hungarian Grand Prix</i> | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

Yearly Schedule

- Jul 07 **Botanical Beach Drive:**
- Jul 09 **General Meeting & Social Gathering:**
Oak Bay Beach Hotel. 7.30pm
- Aug 11 Cowichan Valley Car Picnic
- Aug 13 **Tech Meeting** - Ennerdale Engineering
- Sep 10 **General Meeting & Social Gathering:**
Oak Bay Beach Hotel or the Rathskeller Restaurant. TBA
- Sep 15 Cowichan Valley Wine Tour. - TBA
- Oct 08 **Tech Session:** - TBA
- Nov 12 **Annual General Meeting** - BMW Dealership.
This venue has not yet been confirmed.
- December We will canvas the memberships interest for a Christmas Party. If the numbers are there we will schedule a party.
- Anytime There may be events added and time/venue changes in due course, please keep an eye on the calendar in future newsletters. For more info contact Tania Muiser bmwprincess@shaw.ca

Car Comedy Corner

Top 10 Indications the Rumors of The Ford/Honda Merger May be True

- 10 All "H" emblems to be replaced with Calvin peeing on a Chevy symbol.
- 9 All body gaps changed to +/- one inch.
- 8 Ford to do away with stringent "no parts falling off" policy.
- 7 New Civic hatchback to be offered in LX, EX, Si and Boss 302 models.
- 6 Next-generation Accord to incorporate mutant fish-like styling.
- 5 Quality is now Job One. (Jobs Two and Three are drinking coffee and following the Detroit Red Wings.)
- 4 New Ford idea: "Less welds, more glue".
- 3 New note to be added to all drawings: "Suckiness of this part to be left to supplier's discretion".
- 2 Jeff Gordon's face printed on company bathroom tissue.
- 1 Two words: "Festiva 2004".

Courtesy: Autoweek Magazine



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www.bigotires.bc.ca

Tech Session at European Specialty Car Services: June 11

By: Murray Bradley

The regular monthly meeting for June was held in conjunction with a Tech Session at European Specialty Car Services, 1702 Northfield Road in Nanaimo.

The normal procedure for out of town meetings took place with the group from Victoria meeting up at Moxie's to form a convoy to our destination. Shortly after leaving however, Chris Chong's 528e had "belt" problems which his colleagues pitched in to rectify, even though it meant blistered fingers for some! The trip continued and because of the scarcity of evident law enforcement on that Tuesday evening the members arrived at European Specialty Car in rather short order. Martin Lane and Erik Anderson in their M5's were the first to arrive and admitted to having exceeded the posted speed limit somewhat at times!



The turnout for the session was good with approximately 15 members on hand including a few from Nanaimo, one of whom was Jim Ballard in his "Collector" 2002 tii. Wayne and Hazel Ayres of European Specialty Car Services put



Wayne & Hazel; the perfect hosts!

out a good BBQ spread of "brats" and burgers, which were much appreciated, and then the Tech Session began.

Two cars were selected to be put up on the hoist for Wayne to go over from stem to stern. The first was the 320i of Frank Csordas which he purchased new in

1980 and it turned out to have its original exhaust system with all the original heat shields intact - that could be one for the Guinness book! Wayne replaced a couple of bolts that had vibrated loose however. The second car was the 1988 M5 of Rick Fisher, formerly owned by Conrad Moller. It too was given a thorough analysis by Wayne and, of course, there were plenty of comments from the assembled members during both inspections.

After a short business meeting a convoy was formed to



return to Victoria. Again the absence of "the Law" lead to a bit of "unlawfulness" on the highway but the traffic was light and the weather was good. We all stopped in Duncan to gas up because the gas is about 5 cents per liter cheaper! Go figure this one out!

All in all it was a very successful session and our sincere thanks are extended to our excellent hosts in Wayne and Hazel Ayres for their hospitality.

Editor note: please ignore the date on the photos, they were taken in 2002, trust me! <G>

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Country Roads - Crow and Gate Trip Tour and Dinner: May 19th

by Frank Van der Have

As I've missed a number of the recent club events and meetings due to work travel I was really looking forward to the annual trek up to the Crow and Gate Pub in Cedar. The weekend weather looked promising on the Saturday,



b u t

Sunday was

cloudy and cooler affair...still the drive promised to be very entertaining. As my wife Lynne and I approached the Malahat Mountain Inn where we were to rendezvous, we saw the local fire department with their equipment deployed right near a line of parked BMW's. Fortunately, they weren't there to put out an engine fire, but were practicing on an abandoned building, which had been taken down. Our group of 10 cars then proceeded to take the Shawnigan Lake exit and our trip through the country started. The west side of Shawnigan Lake is very picturesque and the roads are twisty, which suited our cars to a "T". As this is a residential area the speeds were kept well within the limits. We rounded the lake and then proceeded to Cobble Hill. If you're coming from Victoria and have time to meander I would suggest taking these back roads and enjoy the local scenery. We continued to Cherry Point, Cowichan Bay through to Maple Bay, where we met up with Al and Melba Carlson. Our route



c o n t i n u e d
through Crofton
onto Chemainus
where we made a
"p**" stop at
David Saville-
Peck's Ennerdale
Engineering.

David has a great selection of automobiles and his latest venture is manufacturing and distributing the Caterham Super 7 in North America. Based on the Lotus Super 7, designed by Colin Chapman, these cars are like a roller skate on wheels, except that you've got a bit of a wind screen. Both

Martin Lane and I can attest that you don't just get in this car....you wear it. We will definitely make arrangements to meet at Ennerdale later this year so that David can fill us in more on the car's progress.

As we headed out of the last leg of the trip we were developing quite a train of vehicles and it was decided to take the highway route to the Cedar turn-off which allowed most of us to stay together (not to mention get a bit of speed up). The final section took us along Yellow Point Road, another twisty route with many elevation changes.



With the road getting slippery with the slight drizzle, one had to exercise caution on corners. Needless to say the group arrived intact and ready for their dinner. As we entered the parking lot another four BMW's from north island based club members were already in attendance, and once we were inside it was quickly apparent that our group took over a good portion of the pub. It wasn't long before drinks were in hand, food was served, and the socialising began.



The afternoon quickly passed into early evening and soon it was time for everyone to make their own way home....with a quick stop in Duncan to get cheap gas. Needless to say I look forward to next year's trip and I'll try to come up with another route for us to explore. So make sure that you mark your calendar for this annual Victoria Day weekend event.

Front Bumper #2

by Phil Abrami, President, BMW Club of Canada
abrami@education.concordia.ca, 514-487-4646

Rome wasn't built in a day. And neither will the new BMW Club of Canada. My initial Front Bumper column was written immediately after the National Directors' meeting in Vancouver way back in February. I do have some highlights and accomplishments to report on our progress since then but there is still some work to be done.

In recognition of the formation of the new BMW Club of Canada consisting of eight chapters and approximately 1300 members from coast-to-coast, BMW Canada accepted our proposal to increase funding to the club by doubling our grant from \$10,000 annually to \$20,000 annually. We are sincerely grateful to BMW Canada and look forward to enjoying a productive relationship with the marque as loyal enthusiasts of the "Ultimate Driving Machine".

We have solved the thorny problem of club insurance, we hope for the foreseeable future. We have several types of coverage-Directors' and Officers'; Comprehensive and General Liability; and Special Event (Motorsport)-now with two brokers. The good news is not only that we have the coverage (and after 9/11 this was an issue) but that the \$5M limits of our coverage remain in effect. The bad news is that the costs of this coverage have increased, as they have generally done in many facets of the insurance industry.



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Under the old structure of the Club and the old bylaws, most of the member dues--\$40.00-- was directed towards the national club with only a small portion--\$15.00-- sent to regional chapters. Under the new bylaws, the maximum amount that national can retain is 25% of chapter dues; 75% stays with the local club. I'm proud to say that we've been able to keep our promise and reduce dramatically the transfer payments per member from chapters to national. It is now only \$9.00 per member-more than a seventy-five percent reduction.

We've worked hard to take advantage of technology to encourage communication on a national level. Before e-mail and the Internet this would have been a difficult, time-consuming, and costly problem when you realize the distance between the Bluenose Chapter in Halifax and the Vancouver Island Chapter in Victoria. We now have distribution lists and e-mail serving the eight national directors, the executive members of all eight regional chapters, and chapter newsletter editors. And I am confident you will see dramatic changes and improvements to our national website soon.

We haven't forgotten the members either. There is a distribution list for BMW CC club members and Canadian enthusiasts of the marque. Why not join? It's easy enough by going to the web site:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Canadian-BMW/>

There are still a few things in progress. Discussions between the two BC clubs have taken place but there is not final closure on names and territories. We have not fully updated our status with Industry Canada and dealt with some technical issues regarding registering the new bylaws. We have transferred much of the old account to our new club bank account but there remains some incomplete business. For example, we have yet to undertake several annual audits the club is mandated to perform. We don't have formal guidelines on conflict of interest although we're much better informed now than a few months ago. We also hope to develop more driving school material such as instructor guidelines and perhaps some instructional videotapes which will then be offered to regional chapters for their input and use. BMW CC patches, decals, and membership brochures are also things we've thought about and would like to see happen soon.

The most important task facing the club, and one I hope to resolve during my term as President, is to insure all our regional chapters are enthusiastic partners in our new umbrella organization. Several members of the Trillium Executive have been displeased with developments this year and have withheld dues payments and a large portion of the old national account. I sincerely hope they will reconsider and I am happy to discuss their concerns at any time so we can all get back "on track".

M3³ (or, Why I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love Motorsport)

by Martin Lane, with Scott MacDougall, Jim Sloan, and Conrad Moller

On a cool but dry Saturday morning at the end of March, (in between the days of sleet and snow) four intrepid Club members met at Victoria BMW in order to bring you the following story:



There has been a Motorsport-massaged 3-Series present in the BMW model lineup almost without fail, since the mid 1980's. First

showing up in Europe in 1986 and in North America in 1988, the E30 M3 road car was built to satisfy the homologation requirements for the Touring Car Race Series in Germany and other parts of Europe. The 330 HP M3 race-car quickly became the reigning champion in DTM and other European racing series. The 193 HP, 2.3 liter 4-cylinder road-going version became a hit with the enthusiast crowd due to its phenomenal handling prowess coupled with day to day civility. The worst aspect of its existence was the relatively high price of entry. Over the years, various racing versions continued their form, and the E30 M3 became the "winningest" car in racing history, not only in the premier series noted above, but also in SCCA and BMWCCA races in North America, and similar levels of racing in Europe and around the world. This model continues to win, even now some 15 years after its original introduction. The last model year of production for Europe and North America was in 1991.

The second generation E36 M3 appeared in 1993 in Europe, 1994 in Canada, and 1995 in the USA. Engine size was now a 286 HP, 3 liter 6- cylinder (for Europe and Canada) and 240 HP for the US market. This model has been by far the most successful for BMW Motorsport (now BMW M) from a sales perspective, and is justifiably loved by many. However, some enthusiasts lamented the loss of the elemental nature of the original E30 car, even though the new road car was far superior in acceleration, grip, and overall luxury and civility. Such is the price of progress, with increases in weight, luxury appointments, and refinement.

In 2001 BMW M presented the E46 M3 as the ultimate of the 3- Series lineup with a 333 HP, 3.2 liter 6 cylinder engine. The newest member to wear the hallowed M3

badge doesn't just improve in all areas of performance, it literally blows the previous cars into the weeds. With more acceleration, braking, cornering grip, and overall capabilities, the new car becomes an ultra-fast GT that goes head to head with such cars as the Porsche Carrera.

Your Club scribes assembled at Victoria BMW to find out if the E46 M3 truly carries on the now-legendary mystique of its forbears.



Our M3 comparison test looked at a 1988 Salmon Silver E30, 1998 Dakar Yellow E36, and a 2002 Carbon Black E46. Along for the fun (I mean test) were Martin Lane (providing the E30), Scott MacDougall (giving up his E36), Jim Sloan (I don't know how we were able to convince him to jump in the new E46 that was graciously provided by Victoria BMW), and Conrad Moller (brave passenger, photographer and note-taker). Our plan was to allow all three drivers a turn in each vehicle, and then discuss the nature of each of the beasts. But first to a Mohawk gas station to check tire pressures and have a walk around.

All three cars are based on their respective generation's two-door coupe model. All three are available in cabriolet form (as well, the E36 version could be had in a 4 door sedan, even with an automatic gearbox if so desired!). Of the three cars the 1988 E30 had the most alterations compared to the standard model, with its deeper front air dam, wide boxy fender flares, altered rake to the rear pillar and backlight, raised trunk deck height, and large wing. All these changes were done to improve the otherwise poor aerodynamics of the base car, in the quest for race-track performance. The fender flares give room for larger and wider wheels and tires on the road car, with slight alterations in the suspension and track, again to give the engineers room for better modifications in the race-cars. The interior would be familiar to any E30 driver, with sport seats and steering wheel straight from the 325is, and standard full instrumentation except for an oil temperature

gauge replacing the usual fuel economy gauge. A couple of special touches were the map lights built into the rear view mirror, and the rear seat made into a strictly two-person affair with contoured seats and no centre position safety belt. The electric antenna for the radio was deleted from the rear quarter panel in favour of a fixed unit on the roof.

The 1998 E36 version by contrast, has the least altered appearance compared to the standard coupe. There is a revised front air dam, larger wheels in a unique design, more aerodynamic side sills, and stylish (albeit small) mirrors, but otherwise it is very difficult to tell one from its 318/325/328is brethren. Inside however, reside the neatest sport seats, and they are not found anywhere else in BMW's line-up. They have a unique shoulder bolster that moves up and down with the headrest. All four of us found these to be the most comfortable seats of our three test cars. The steering wheel and instrumentation were standard sport issue, except for the natty M-Sport tri-colour stitching on the steering wheel.

Looking at the 2002 E46 car, we noted the return of significant fender flares (though not as extroverted as the E30's) and larger-yet wheels and tires. It was interesting to note that the road going E46 came with 18 inch wheels, which were the largest diameter ever worn on a factory E30 race-car! There was the requisite larger front air dam, and we spied an interesting stylistic touch in the chromed gills on the front fenders, behind the wheel wells. This is a familiar feature also found on the Z3 and Z8, and of course

on the 507 of the late 50's. The rear view of the car was distinguished by quad exhaust tips, a trademark feature of all M series cars over the past few years. There was a tiny lip spoiler on the trunk lid that appears exceptionally irrelevant compared to the huge wing on the E30, but I gather it provides a significant reduction in rear axle lift at high speeds. The interior of the E46 is improved from the standard series models by the sport seats and steering wheel, and by instrumentation including an unusual tachometer. It has lighted orange and red zones; the orange lights started around 4,500 rpm when the engine is cold, but they go out in sequence as the coolant (oil?) temperature rises, leaving a single orange light and a red light to mark the redline when one is at full operating temperature. Mixed views about this feature abounded, with the intent of the feature understood and appreciated by all, but its actual appearance was felt to be tacky (not Tachy!). Of note, the redline was at 8,000 rpm, the highest of our trio. Comments were not favourable on the comfort of the seats, some of us finding our butts numb after a while and others feeling like they were sitting on the seat rather than coddled in the seat as in the other cars. We were unanimous in the dissatisfaction of our heads rubbing on the roof liner: surely this is a mistake on the designer's part, to not allow more vertical seat travel.

Now the real test began! We fired up the cars and headed out on the road. Immediately, the age of the E30 is apparent, with interior noise by far the loudest, emanating from the engine, exhaust, tires, road surface and wind. The E36 interior was far quieter, with a nice engine note, but a little wind noise crept in from the upper corners of the windshield, and some tire noise was heard. The E46 was not the quietest, surprisingly, and a dissatisfying tinny whining engine note found its way into the cabin and the exhaust sound was not audible under most circumstances. The outside mirrors of the E36 were the smallest and least-liked for functional reasons, while the E30's gave the best visibility but their appearance is frumpy in comparison. The rear three-quarter visibility out of the E46 was notably worse than the older cars. The outward visibility in the E30 reminded us a lot of one of the virtues of older BMW's, with the sense of sitting up high in a tall greenhouse with a commanding view of all four corners; in the other two you are definitely lower, with less well defined sight lines. The noise/vibration/harshness (NVH) quotient in the E46 was significantly better than in the earlier cars (excepting the comment about the engine noise); in fact it is a feature of each progressive generation that the designers and engineers are able to reduce these problems by such a remarkable amount. However, the down side of this progress is the filtering out of "feel", about which there will be more comments along the way. The clutch action on each car is good, lighter with each generation, but the bite



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on the E30's Sachs Sport Clutch is the most satisfying of the bunch (and it makes for great looking calf muscles, too!). The E30's 5-speed shifter suffered from age and worn bushings making the lever sloppy but the actual shift action was fine, once warmed up. The other two shifted well, but the slightly rubbery feel of the E46's 6-speed compared to the E36's 5-speed made us wonder if a little less work in the N/V/H Department would have paid some dividends. The overdrive 6th gear in the E46 (as opposed to the 1:1 5th in the E30 and E36) makes for reduced highway RPM while cruising, but the relatively wide gap in the ratios between 2nd and 3rd wasn't as appreciated.

The drive took us along Blanshard Street and out onto the Pat Bay Highway, where a brief time was spent at highway speed in traffic. There was a mild vibration in the E46's steering wheel, perhaps the result of tire imbalance, otherwise the ride was quiet and composed. The E36 was



much the same, only not quite as vault-like. The E30 was noisy and the firm RD springs and Bilstein shocks replacing the original suspension bits made for a much harsher ride. The character of each engine was easily tested here, with the relatively gutless low-rpm torque of the E30 notable. The E36 was very satisfying, with no downshifting required to move away from traffic smartly. The E46 was positively electrifying, with everyone agreeing the smoothness of the motor somewhat reduced the sense of just how hellishly strong it really is.

Off onto secondary roads, we wound our way along West Saanich Road towards the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory. The heavy traffic prevented anything but the most minor transgression of posted speed limits, but here in the twists the E30 came into it's element. Nothing compares to the E30's turn-in; it is immediate, precise, and effortless, probably one of the closest cars to a go-kart for the road. The other two are remarkably good (fantastic, if compared to 99.5% of cars out there on the road!), and one is constantly reminded how well BMW makes their cars feel lighter than they actually are.

The Observatory hill road made for a brief test of each car's nimbleness, with its narrow winding tarmac and an interesting hairpin. Here, the E46 really impressed me with its ability to literally "explode out of the corners" (I have always found that expression a bit overused, but not in this car!). Unfortunately, the DSC-3 intervened too much on the dry roads, so a sport-setting for it, or defeating it, would be in order. The E36 was almost as strong up the steep grade, but its ASC was notably abrupt in action when it ceased interfering with your right foot efforts, a bit unsettling if you are not used to the sudden increase in power it causes. Thankfully BMW does supply a switch to turn off the electronic "aids" in the newer M's, so those interested in extracting the last ounce (gram?) of performance can do so. Speaking of electronics; the E46 has a "Sport" mode switch that remaps the drive-by-wire throttle, which makes the car noticeably more responsive to the right hand pedal. For more relaxed city driving, or highway cruising its position would normally be "off". The E30 was slower accelerating, but much easier to place in the corners, with an uncanny ability to feel what was going on at each tire all the time. The small motor was valiant for its displacement, but it simply couldn't compare to the extra 900 cc's and the variable valve technology the others had on it. At the top, we didn't marvel at the view over Victoria, as we were far more interested in the view under each hood and trunk lid, and in each door and cubby inside the cars.

The E46 had an inside trunk release that glowed in the dark (we tested it) and I can report it worked as advertised. A couple of your humble servants were tempted to keep me in there for a trip back down the hill, but fortunately less violent heads prevailed!



Your diligent test drivers discuss the merits of the "M" cars' trunks, before stuffing Martin into one!

We pressed on after changing drivers, to Willis Point Road for a chance to push the cars over some exciting roads to explore their balance and control. All were extremely capable machines, and all of the basic points differentiating them were confirmed once again. At the Fire Station we changed over once more and drove back to town. We reluctantly handed the keys of the E46 back to the dealership, and settled down to lunch at Pluto's to debrief.

We came away from our test with an appreciation for the character of the cars, which is really the same in each case. Any M3 is the pinnacle of sport sedan driving, and represents the "state of the art" at its point in time. The evolutionary progress is remarkable, when one looks at the



BACVI Testers have their own method for measuring trunk capacity

changes that have occurred during the span of 14 model years separating our three test cars. The differences are of course reflected in the evolution of all cars in general over the same time period. The improvements do have a down side, as we have noted the purity of the driving experience is diluted in the quest for increases in performance and refinement. Whereas the newest car has a 140 HP advantage over the oldest, the E30's finer balance and feel are superior to the E46. Overall, I think all four of us would choose the 1998 E36 M3 as our own personal transportation, as it provides a significant improvement over the E30 in structural solidity, comfort, performance and refinement, but with a lesser degree of numbing of feel and control when compared to the E46. In reality, all three cars are winners, and someone contemplating the purchase of any generation M3 is going to be rewarded with one of the finest driving experiences available to the general public.

We gratefully acknowledge Victoria BMW and Augie Vaza for loaning the E46 car, and thank David Sterling personally for his willingness to support our little adventure.

We look forward to the next opportunity to run a comparison test! Perhaps when there's a new "7" series available...



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