

BMW MOTORRAD

100 YEARS

MAKE LIFE A RIDE

The motorcycles that wrote history

A history of excellence

In 2013, BMW Motorrad celebrated its 90th anniversary. In 1923, the Bavarian company produced its first motorcycle, the legendary R32. Its engine layout – a longitudinally mounted two cylinder boxer with shaft final drive – became the established technical solution for the following nine decades and it is still used quite successfully today, when BMW Motorrad is one of the world's leading motorcycle manufacturers.

The history of BMW as a company begins as far back as 1916, when the company Bayerische Flugzeug-Werke AG was created, as a division split from the airplane producing company Flugmaschinenfabrik Gustav Otto. BMW as a company was founded in 1917, when the airplane factory Rapp Motorenwerke was restructured. Under the name of Bayerische Motoren Werke ("The Bavarian Engine Factory"), the company based in Southern Germany produced airplane engines. When World War I stopped, in 1918, the production of airplane engines was ceased, according to the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. At the start of the 20's the Bavarian

company was focusing on producing brakes for trains and small engines for other applications. In 1922, the financier Camillo Castiglioni acquired the engine production section, under the name of BMW, with the white-and-blue logo, and moved the entire operation to the BFW workshops in Munich, where the main factory and headquarters of the BMW Group still are to this day.

Since 1917, the BMW products bore the white and blue logo, the colours of Bavaria. But the interpretation that we know today, the image of a white airplane propeller spinning with the blue sky in the background, only appeared in 1929, in a drawing on the cover of a BMW aircraft magazine.



Ernst Henne

The record man

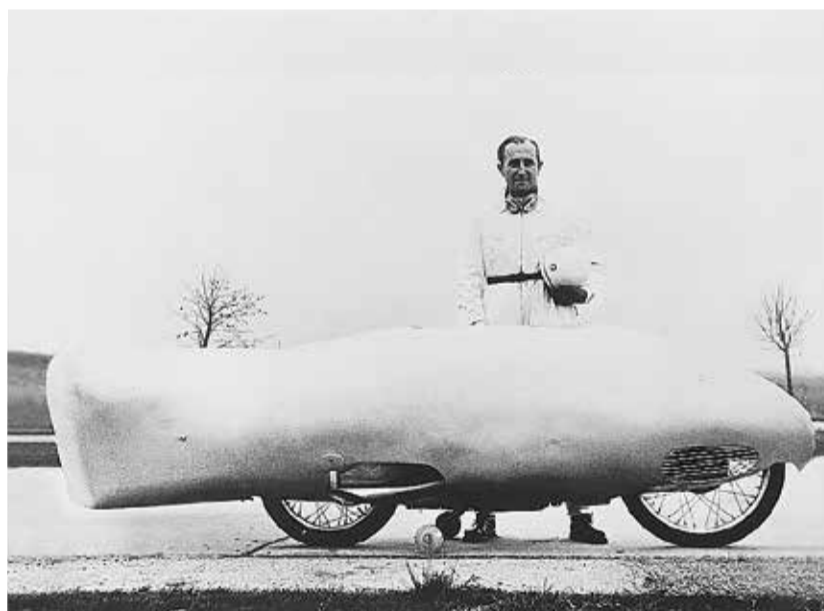
Ernst Henne was born on the 22nd of February 1904 at Weiler, in the Allgäu, as the fourth child of saddlemaker Jakob Henne. Although he had lost both of his parents by the time he was six years old, Henne learned the importance of hard work as a young child, as he worked on a farm in Bavaria. His passion for motorcycle and mechanics led him to attend courses in this field, becoming an apprentice mechanic in Ravensburg at the age of 15. He then worked as a chauffeur in Munich for a

while, before opening his own motorcycle repair shop. He entered his first competition in 1923, getting a third place. He then became a BMW factory rider, earning fame as a "complete" rider, with excellent performance on any type of surface, whether it was asphalt or rough terrain. Henne, along with the other BMW factory riders, got three consecutive wins in the legendary International Six Days off-road race, between 1933 and 1935.

Henne was the main rider in the attempts of the BMW team

to break speed records. He managed to break tens of records before getting his crowning achievement, averaging the phenomenal (at that time) speed of 279.503 km/h over one kilometre, in Frankfurt, in 1937. That record stood for 14 years. The BMW motorcycle, prepared by Rudolf Schleicher, had DOHC cylinder heads, a displacement of 500 cc, a supercharger and it was rumoured to produce over 90 hp.

Henne died in 2005, at 101 years old.



Ultimate performance



The BMW M 1000 RR was first launched in 2020 and it's the tip of the spear in terms of absolute performance in the BMW Motorrad range. The current model has a 212 hp engine, innovative aerodynamic winglets that increase downforce on the front wheel, but decrease the overall wind resistance for more top speed. The M 1000 RR already has a few podiums in the World Superbike competition and is gunning for more this season.

The classic heavyweight



The BMW R 18 family is the perfect combination between custom culture, classic BMW Motorrad character and modern technology and performance. Its engine is the biggest boxer ever produced by BMW, at 1,802 cc, 91 hp and 158 Nm. And there is a version for every taste, from the simple R 18 and R 18 Classic, to the more touring and luxury oriented bagger, R 18 B, and the supreme R 18 Transcontinental.

The GS – an icon



The R 80 G/S was launched in 1980 and the motorcycle world has never been the same again. The large displacement travel enduro had appeared for the first time. The R 1250 GS, its current successor, makes for over a quarter of BMW's impressive worldwide sales figures (202,895 units last year). The BMW range currently contains eight adventure models, as the travel enduro is more popular than ever before. And the GS is its symbol.

The boxer engine



Did Max Friz know he was making history in 1923, when he mounted the boxer engine in the first BMW motorcycle, the R 32? We don't know, but we do know that the relatively odd layout was very successful across the decades and is more popular than ever, as BMW R series boxers are in high demand all over the world. The boxer has a low centre of gravity, good cooling characteristics and tons of character. And that's what makes the bikes special.



A history of excellence

In 1921, the BMW engineers began to use the impressive expertise gained during the years of designing and producing airplane engines to a new purpose: making motorcycle engines. That year, the first BMW engine for motorcycles was produced – bearing the name M2 B15. It was a successful engine, being used by world renowned motorbike producers such as Victoria and Helios (makes that no longer exist today). Victoria KR1, a motorcycle fitted with the BMW engine, enjoyed great success. It wasn't long before the BMW engined motorbikes had their first motorsport victories.

BMW then took over Helios motorcycle production and, in 1923, the first motorcycle under the name BMW was presented – the R 32. It was an innovative vehicle, as it had a boxer engine that was mounted longitudinally, with the cylinders sticking out horizontally. Until then, BMW boxer engines had been mounted transversally in the frames of the other motorcycle producers, Victoria and Helios. The BMW R 32 was presented at the Berlin

Show on the 28th of September 1923, while the production of the Helios model ended in November of the same year, after producing 1,015 units. The R 32 achieved the first victory in a competition for the Bavarian company, as the engineer Rudolf Schleicher took part in the Mittenwalder Gsteig hill climb race and got the best time of the day on the 2nd of February 1924.

Also in 1924 the BMW R 37 was presented as a sportier and more powerful version of the R 32. The R 37 had the first engine with light alloy cylinder heads ever used on a motorcycle. Rudolf Schleicher had designed the heads. Great motorsport success followed in national level competitions in Germany, as factory and independent riders got several titles in the German championship, in the 500 cc class, until 1929.

The success that the Bavarian bikes enjoyed since the start motivated the management to extend the range of motorcycle models. And so, 1924 marked the start of development for the first single cylinder BMW motorcycle – the R 39,



Georg „Schorsch“ Meier was the first non-British rider to win a race on the Isle of Man on a non-British motorcycle, the BMW RS 255, in 1939.

with a displacement of 249 cc and maximum power of 6.5 hp. With an OHV (overhead valves) cylinder head, same as the R 37, the R 39 won the German Championship in the 250 cc class in 1925, its first year of production.

BMW's reputation began to shine in the world of speed records as well. In September 1929, Ernst Henne managed an average speed of 216.75 km/h over a mile, riding a supercharged BMW WR750, and thus began a long run of speed records.

Model development continued at an increased pace, as the R 32 evolved into the R 42 in 1925, reaching a maximum power figure of 12 hp. The R 47, presented in 1927, continued the sporting tradition of the R 37, with two extra horsepower and a top speed of 110 km/h. The frame was based on the one of the tourer – the R 42. The R 42 and the R 47 became the R 52 and the R 57 in 1928. The same year, two new touring models were launched – the R 62 and the R 63, with a 750 cc engine. The range topping R 63 had a 735 cc

Motorsport success

Even before the development process of the first BMW motorcycle, the R 32, had been completed, the engine expert Rudolf Schleicher started to create a sports bike for the 500 cc class, the R 37. BMW's managers were convinced that success in competition will make the marque more famous, but, in order to achieve this goal, they needed a bike that could easily beat the competition.

Scheicher kept the square aspect ratio of the bore and stroke (68 x 68 mm) for the R 37's engine, but the cylinder heads were completely different. While the R 32 had its valves mounted laterally in the engine block, the R 37 had overhead valves, mounted in a V shape. This solution had several advantages, such as a better shape of the intake and exhaust manifolds and a more compact combustion chamber. These advantages ultimately translated into a power and torque boost.

The R 37 was the first production motorcycle in the world to have OHV cast aluminium cylinder heads.

This material offered a considerable reduction in weight compared to the cast iron that was traditionally used. The performance of the R 37, at a weight of only 134 kg, was astounding for those times. With an output of 16 hp, it was almost twice as powerful as the R 32 for the same displacement. The R 37 could reach a maximum speed of 115 km/h. Initially, only 50 units were produced, for the price of 2,900 marks, 700 marks more than the R 32. Great success in competition led to more units being produced, so 152 bikes had been made by 1926.

In 1924, Franz Bieber won the Eifel and Ruseberg races and, together with Rudolf Schleicher and Rudi Reich, pulled a triple in the famous race called Stuttgart Solitude. Bieber got his first title in the National German Championship and Schleicher won the Hindeland-Oberjoch hillclimb riding an R 37. The first international victory of the Bavarian marque was also brought by the R 37 – a gold medal in the International Six Days Trial in 1926.



engine that produced 24 hp and could take the motorcycle to a top speed of 120 km/h. In 1929, the R 62 and the R 63 evolved into the R 11 and the R 16, which now had a more robust frame.

The production rate increased in direct proportion to the fame and the titles won by BMW in motorsport. In 1924, 1,640 units

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Since the very beginning, BMW motorbikes were produced with the motto “Tested in racing, proven on the street.” The BMW R 32 was entered in its first race before its official launch and the first competition-designed model was launched in 1924, one year after the start of motorcycle production.

were produced and, by the end of the decade, the annual production figure increased to 5,680, an evolution of almost 250%. The BMW success story couldn't have gotten a better start.

The Bavarian company started the '30s in full force, as it was not greatly affected by the global financial crisis. In 1929, BMW had started car production (the model called “303”) and a new series of innovative motorcycles.

1934 was the debut year for two new models with 750 cc engines, the R 12 and the R 17. These were the first production motorbikes with hydraulic front



Sidecar motorcycle racing was very important to BMW after the Second World War. Between 1954 and 1974, BMW took 20 consecutive world titles in the sidecar motorcycle competition.

suspension. This technical solution had not only the benefit of giving more comfort for the rider, but also to improve the dynamic performance of the bike, as the front wheel could keep better contact with the road surface over bumps. The telescopic BMW forks had already passed their baptism of fire in asphalt and off-road competitions, plus a few speed record attempts. The R 12 was the tourer, with a side valve engine, while the R 17 was the sport version, with a 33 hp engine that could push the motorcycle up to a top speed of 140 km/h, a downright astronomical figure at that time.

BMW developed several single cylinder models, like the R 2, R 3, R 4 and the R 35. The R 2 was produced to meet the criteria of a law from that time in Germany. This law provisioned that owners of motorcycles with an engine up to 200 cc did not have to pay taxes for the bike or need a driver's license. Obviously, these models



Rudolf Schleicher was one of the most prominent BMW engineers from the Twenties until the Forties. Not only a very good high-performance engine designer, he was also a very competent rider.

turned out to be very popular with the public.

In 1938, BMW presented another benchmark for motorcycling history – the R 51, the successor of the R 5. The sports bike had a steel tube frame and its engine produced 24 hp, for a top speed of 140 km/h.

The speed records achieved by Ernst Henne riding Bavarian motorcycles continued to fascinate the whole world. By 1937, Henne had established no less than 76 speed records. The last one was on the 28th of November 1937 when, riding a supercharged 500 cc BMW, Henne reached a top speed of 279.5 km/h. This record stood for 14 years. On the race-tracks, another BMW rider, Georg “Schorsch” Meier, was making sensation. He became German and European champion in the 500 cc class in 1938. BMW was also enjoying great off-road success. Between 1933 and 1935, BMW riders won the nations category in the famous International Six Days off-road competition.



Something for everyone: this advertising poster in the Fifties promotes the three post-war motorcycle ranges, from the practical single-cylinder bike to the luxury tourer.

A brilliant mind

Max Friz was born in 1883 in the Swabian town of Urach. Even though his family had hoped that he would become a businessman, Max's passion was engineering and so he went to an engineering school in Stuttgart. In 1906 he took a job in the design office of Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft and he designed his first projects for the aeronautical industry in 1912-1913.

In 1916 he took a job at Rapp Motorenwerke, the company that was going to become BMW. It was here that he designed one of the best airplane engines of those times, the motor that was going to become famous across the world as the “BMW IIIa”.

When BMW became a joint-stock company, in 1922, Friz was promoted to Chief Engineer and Design Director at BMW AG, a post which he occupied until 1937. Friz caused quite a stir with the BMW R 32 in 1923 – the model had aluminium alloy cylinders, its engine shared the block with the gearbox and the lubrication system was of the wet sump type, a very advanced concept in those days.

From 1937 to 1945, Friz was the General Director of the engine production department called the Flugmotorenfabrik Eisenach GmbH. In 1945, Friz retired. The famous engineer died in 1966, in Tegernsee.



Pure riding pleasure in 1923



The engineer Max Friz designed the first BMW motorcycle using the boxer engine he'd already designed for Victoria and Helios motorcycles. The characteristics of this motorcycle were going to be carried through the decades largely unchanged: four-stroke boxer engine mounted longitudinally, with the cylinders sticking out in the air flow and transmission via shaft drive. The engine with a displacement of 498 cc had 8.5 hp peak power and the motorbike could reach a top speed of 100 km/h – a figure that was very respectable at the time. The R 32 was by no means a cheap motorcycle, at a price of 2,200 marks, but was good value for money due to its excellent riding characteristics and its shaft drive, which was almost maintenance free.

Rudolf Schleicher, the engineer, concerned himself mainly with the engine power and the handling of the motorcycle. As soon as he finished preparations for the start of production, on the 2nd of February 1924, he entered the Mittenwalder Gsteig hill climb and he won. That was the first victory for BMW in competition.

BMW emphasizes the innovative technology used in designing the R 32 in the motorcycle's user manual: “The logical evolution was that the motorcycle evolved from the bicycle; but this development could not keep up with the public's increasing need for reliability and proper handling in any type of weather and on any type of road. The B.M.W. motorcycle completely renounces all compromises. Its design is not based around a bicycle, but around an automobile.”

As it is the case with the models of today, an extensive range of accessories was available for the R 32, including a horn (which could be electrical or with an air pump), a 2 W electrical system with a 15 or 30 W dynamo, a touring handlebar or a passenger seat, including footrests for the passenger.

Also in 1923, at the same time as the first BMW motorcycle was presented, the motto that BMW still uses to this day was born – “Freude am Fahren” (Sheer Driving Pleasure).

The power of innovation in 1936



BMW wrote another page of history in 1936, when it presented the R 5 sports bike. The engine's displacement was still 494 cc, same as its predecessors, but it now produced 24 hp and pushed the motorcycle up to a top speed of 140 km/h. The R 5 was in actual fact a street version of the RS 500 race bike, but without the complex cylinder heads with double camshafts and the supercharger. The frame was now made of inert gas welded steel tube, an absolute first for a production bike. However, the most interesting innovations were to be found in the chassis. The R 5 had the first telescopic fork ever mounted on a production bike and could reach a level of stability that had never been seen before in motorcycling. The damping of the fork could be adjusted, from soft to hard, by a lever on the top yoke. The engine block, gearbox casing and the propshaft casing were made out of aluminium. The gearshift of the four speed gearbox could be operated by foot, a world first as far as production motorcycles went. This way of changing gears had only been used by racebikes until then. The R 5 also kept the manual gearshift, which could be operated both sequentially and directly (meaning one could go from second gear into neutral, for instance).

In 1938, BMW continued the evolution of the R 5, presenting its successor, the R 51. This model had spring and damper suspension on the rear wheel, as the shaft drive was fitted with a double cardan joint for the first time, in order to be able to swing and follow the movement of the wheel.

New beginning after war chaos

The '40s were dominated by the chaos that was brought about by The Second World War and BMW policy was largely dictated by the people that were leading Germany at the time, both during the war and immediately after it was over. During the war, only the military use R 75 model was produced and the return to "normal" motorcycle production happened only in 1948, with a small team of dedicated employees. The first motorbike they produced after the war was the R 24, with a single cylinder engine.

Starting from the '30s, BMW had sold many motorcycles to the police and to the armed forces. Once the Second World War erupted, the production of such specialized motorbikes became more and more important. Special models were designed to comply with the specifications needed by the army. They were asking for sidecar motorcycles with a payload of 500 kg, 16 inch wheels and a range of at least 350 km on one tank of fuel (demands that were almost impossible to meet), plus a driving sidecar wheel and a reverse gear for driving backwards.

The R 12 model was produced in large numbers and was replaced by the R 75 in April 1941. Producing 26 hp, with a respectable torque curve, the 745 cc engine had more than enough power to pull a sidecar and met all the other demands except the payload, which, at 398 kg, was still very impressive. It also had a low range box for riding over rough terrain and a limited slip differential for low grip surfaces. By 1944, about 18,000 units were produced, first in the factory in Munich, then in the Eisenach plant.

In the spring of 1942, the production line was moved to Eisenach, where BMW cars had been produced (now put to the side in favour of generators and airplane parts). From that moment on, BMW AG had completely lost its independence and was under the full control of the German state. The BMW management

was ordered to ensure that at least 70% of the parts of the R 75 were interchangeable with the ones of the Zündapp KS 750 (the main competitor of the R 75), in order to have a maximum efficiency of the spare part supply in wartime.

At the end of the war, BMW was part of the compensations paid to the allied forces. The Eisenach plant was taken over by the Soviets and the Munich factory was dismantled. The American Army forbid the production of motorized vehicles so now the BMW factories were producing frying pans made out of aluminium, which they obtained by melting cylinder heads, pipes, sprinklers and farm tools.

Eventually, production was resumed in Munich with the single cylinder R 24. In 1948, when this model went into production, BMW had 1,572 employees involved in making motorcycles. The R 24 was largely based on the pre-war R 23, with a hardtail frame and telescopic fork, a maximum output of 12 hp and a four speed gearbox. The R 24 was held in high regard by the motoring public, as it was relatively cheap, very reliable and practical, an ideal vehicle for those difficult times. By the time its production run ended, in 1950, over 12,000 units of the R 24 had been sold. Even though, after the war, Germany was no longer permitted to take part in international sporting events (including motorsport), BMW entered the national championships once again and



Each BMW model was tested in competition, including the single-cylinder models. Here are three BMW factory riders at the start of a road race, each riding an R 25, in the Fifties.

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After the Second World War, BMW restarted motorcycle production with a simple and reliable bike – the single-cylinder R 24. The people needed a practical and reliable means of transport, so sales figures surpassed all expectations.

started winning titles again, with Schorsch Meier as a rider.

The boxer came back into production in 1950, mounted on the R 51, which was basically the same bike as before the war, with slight modifications, and was now called R 51/2.

In the '50s, Germany went through an economic boom and motorcycle sales took off in a way that nobody had expected. The world needed cheap and practical means of transportation and BMW was there to fulfil that need. The turnover of the BMW Group in 1948 was about 4 million marks and it reached to 20 million marks in 1949.

The R 24 became the R 25, which now had suspension for the rear wheel and it, in turn, became the R 25/2.

The R 51/2 evolved into the R 51/3 in 1951. That same year, the R 67 was launched, a model identical to the R 51 with the exception of the bigger 600 cc engine. In 1952, BMW introduced a

new sports model, the R 68. With a 600 cc engine and a power output of 35 hp, the motorcycle surpassed the magic threshold of 100 miles per hour (160 km/h). BMW intensified their efforts in motorsport and got their first title in sidecar competitions in 1954. The Bavarian marque was going to dominate this branch of motorsport, with 20 consecutive world titles to its name.

Starting in 1955, BMW used the Earles fork front suspension and the swinging arm rear suspension on all street or racing boxer models. In 1956, the Earles fork was also used in single cylinder bikes, beginning with the R 26. It was robust and well-suited for sidecars.



With a simple design and a reliable engine, the R 24 became an instant success after it was launched, in 1948. In two years, more than 12,000 units were produced.



The BMW R 25 evolved from the R 24 in 1950, with a steel tube frame and dampened rear suspension. In two years, over 25,000 units have been produced.



The BMW R 75 was the warhorse of the German army. Strong and reliable, it had amazing off-road abilities, thanks to its transfer box.

The sporty edge in the Fifties

Initially presented at the Motorcycle and Bicycle Show in Frankfurt in 1951, the R 68 went into production in 1952. The 600 cc engine produced 35 hp at 7,000 rpm and could propel the bike to a top speed of 160 km/h. The R 68 went down in the history books as the sports bike that could reach the magic threshold of 100 miles an hour.

The Frame was made of steel tube and the fork was telescopic, but it had a hardtail rear.

In order to get extra performance, the engine was derived

from the one of the R 67/2 and underwent significant changes. The diameter of the valves increased by 4 mm (intake) and 2 mm (exhaust), the Bing carburettor was 26 mm in diameter instead of 24 and the camshaft was completely new. The compression ratio had increased from 5.6:1 to 7.5:1, thus getting the power up to 35 hp. However, the increase of the compression ratio could have negative side effects, such as detonation, so BMW fitted a system to manually adjust the ignition timing. The small lever on the left handlebar

allowed the rider to adjust ignition timing according to necessities, in order to protect the engine from burnt valves or damaged pistons.

The R 68 wasn't just a very fast motorbike on asphalt, but one that was quite competent off-road as well. In order to use it off-road, customers could opt for a special exhaust system, with a raised silencer, for better ground clearance.

Only 1,452 units of the R 68 were made between 1952 and 1954, making the R 68 one of the rarest BMW production motorcycles.



Back to normal

Just like the other car and motorcycle manufacturers in Germany at the time, BMW used pre-war technology in order to restart vehicle production in 1948. The R 23, which had been launched in 1938, was chosen for the comeback because it could be produced at a reasonable cost.

For the R 24, BMW kept bore and stroke at 68 mm, for a displacement of 247 cc. The maximum output of the R 24 was 12 hp at 5,600 rpm, 2 hp more than the R 23. The R 24 used a Noris dynamo electrical system and a battery instead of the Bosch ignition system.

The most important change referred to the gearbox, which now had four gears instead of three. So the motorcycle could accelerate better, even though the top speed was a relatively modest 95 km/h.

The R 24 sold very well, thus giving the Bavarian maker a welcomed headstart in the difficult post-war period. In total, 12,020 units of the single cylinder model were produced between 1948 and 1950.

The R 24 became a pattern for all single cylinder models in the '50s and '60s. In 1950 the R 24 evolved into the R 25, with engine modifications, a steel tube frame and rear suspension. Although the bike was 10 kilos heavier than the R 24, its top speed had increased, reaching 97 km/h. 25,300 units of the R 25 were produced in just two years.



To Tehran with 12 hp

In 1956, an agriculture student named Hans Winter and his Iranian friend, Koorosh Eghbal, wanted to leave Germany to visit Eghbal's family, near Tehran. But the costs of a return flight (2,103 marks) were too much for the two students, so they just left on Winter's BMW R 25/2. When they left Homburg, in the Saarland region, in torrential rain, they still had 6,200 km to travel. They crossed Germany, Austria, went through Belgrade, Macedonia and reached Istanbul. Then they rode through Ankara, Aleppo and Baghdad, reaching Tehran 18 days later, at 10 o'clock in the evening, on the 30th of April 1956.

The next morning, the motorcycle was thoroughly inspected by the mechanics in BMW Tehran's workshop and the two men travelled by bus to their final destination, Mashad, near the Afghanistan border. The two friends spent a few months there, before setting off to Germany. Eghbal returned by plane, but Winter left on his bike. With no passenger and with a strong appetite for adventure, Winter went the long way round, travelling 9,264 km and visiting the South of Europe. Three weeks later, Winter returned to Germany with a perfectly working bike, after more than 15,000 km.





Hard times and a fresh start

As more and more people started choosing the car as the daily means of transport, the popularity of motorcycles waned, along with the sales figures. By the second half of the 50's, there were considerable drops in sales. Famous brands, such as DKW or NSU, chose to focus solely on car production. Many other factories turned to producing 50 cc bikes, like mopeds or scooters, but BMW, after making a few prototypes of small bikes, chose not to follow that route, concentrating instead on developing the existing model range and on achieving success in competitions.

In the single cylinder range, the R 26 transformed into the R 27, a more powerful and more comfortable model than its predecessor. Production of BMW single cylinder motorcycles ceased in 1966.

In the boxer range, the R 50/2 and the R 60/2 were launched in 1960, both being very similar to the R 50 and R 60 of the 50's. The engine of R 60/2 developed two extra horsepower, reaching 30 hp and a top speed of 150 km/h. Increased reliability was provided by a completely new crankshaft and camshaft, plus a reinforced frame.

In the autumn of 1960, BMW presented two new sports models, the R 50 S and the R 69 S. The 500 cc engine produced 35 hp, giving a top speed of 160 km/h, and the R 69 S, with 42 hp, could go up to the remarkable top speed of 175 km/h. Along with significantly improved road-holding, the two S models were the first stock bikes with a steering damper, a technical solution meant to stabilize the front wheel, especially when riding fast over rough surfaces.

BMW underwent massive restructuring in 1965. It involved plans to concentrate car production in Munich, and later in Dingolfing, while motorcycle production was to be moved to Berlin-Spandau. Thus, at the beginning of the 60's, the company named BMW Motorradfahrwerke was founded in Berlin. Final assembly took place here starting in 1966 and the relocation of the

production facilities was completed by 1969, even though the testing and development department remained in Munich and is still based there today.

An increase in the American motorcycle market was announcing the first good signs, the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. The motorbike was transformed in the course of a few short years from a utilitarian vehicle into an object of passion. More and more people from the middle class bought a

motorcycle as a hobby. Producers in Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy launched new models, with ever increasing power figures. BMW launched a new series in 1969, just in time to catch the huge wave of popularity. The new model series had completely new frames and engines – and so, the legendary /5 series was born. The new model range started with the R 50/5, at 32 hp, continued with the R 60/5 (40 hp), while the range topping R 75/5 developed

50 hp and reached a top speed of 175 km/h.

There were massive differences between the new generation and the older boxer models. The crankshaft was no longer

made out of separate segments, but forged from a single piece of metal. The camshaft was now positioned under the crankshaft. The R 75/5 now had a modern constant depression carburettor

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In the Sixties, the motorcycle became an object of passion. BMW's range changed according to the market needs, with beautiful and sporty models, such as the R 90 S and the /5 series.



Introduced in 1976, the R 100 RS was the first fully faired production bike in the world. With a maximum output of 70 hp and a line that was studied and developed in the wind tunnel, the R 100 RS could reach a top speed of 200 km/h. The touring-oriented RT version had a taller windscreen and luggage compartments in its fairing.

which improved the throttle response. The frame was now a double cradle type made of steel tube and the rear suspension had a swingarm with two oil shock absorbers. The long suspension travel, bigger ground clearance and excellent handling attracted a lot of praise for the new BMW models.

In 1973, BMW celebrated 50 years since the production of the first motorcycle and, the same year, the 500,000th BMW motorcycle rolled off the production line. At the same time, the company went for an even sportier image when it launched the new R 90 S, the first sports model after the acclaimed R 69 S. With a displacement of 898 cc and 38 mm Dell'Orto carburetors, the R 90 S produced 67 hp and could reach a top speed of 200 km/h.

That same year, BMW launched the /6 series, with many modifications compared to the /5. The models now had a new instrument console, with separate speedometer and rev counter, a longer swingarm, a completely new five speed gearbox and a hydraulic braking system, with drilled discs.

In 1976, BMW launched the /6 range, which had a gearshift pedal with a shorter travel. One year later, the R 80/7 replaced the R 75/7. Displacement increased to 797 cc (from 745 cc) and the engine had more torque. Two power versions existed, one with 50 hp, which was cheaper to insure, and one with 55 hp.

The 900 cc models were replaced in 1976 by the R 100/7, with a 60 hp engine, and the R 100 S, with 65 hp. These were distinguishable not only by their 980 cc displacement, but also by their "square" cylinder head covers, with a different look from the rounded ones that had been used until then. The sensation of 1976, however, was the R 100 RS, the first production motorcycle with a full fairing that ever existed. With a maximum power of 70 hp, it could sustain a top speed of 200 km/h over long distances, with the rider sitting in a normal position, instead of an uncomfortable racing crouch. The fairing had been studied in the wind tunnel and the buyers could opt for a single seat. Shortly after it was launched, the R 100 RS got hydraulic disc brakes on the back wheel and light alloy cast rims. The BMW R 100 RS won the "Motorcycle of the Year" award from the renowned German magazine "Motorrad". In 1978, at the Köln Motorcycle and Bicycle Show, BMW presented a range of small displacement boxer engined bikes, the R 45 and the R 65. With a weight of just 185 kg, the two models had 473 cc and 649 cc engines, and impressed with their agile handling characteristics, 18 inch wheels and sprightly engines. The R 45 produced 35 hp and the R 65 – 45 hp. The smaller version, the R 45, was also available with the power limited to 27 hp, making it cheaper to insure and very popular among novice riders.

Also in 1978, BMW presented the touring model, R 100 RT. Its fairing had also been developed in the wind tunnel, but it was adapted to the needs of long distance riders.

The first Superbike

The sporty R 90 S from 1973 was the answer that BMW had for the motorbike manufacturers from the Far East and from Italy. The designer Hans A. Muth made a motorcycle that still thrills fans today. The overall image became even more striking since 1974, when the Daytona Orange colour was introduced on the R 90 S.

The little top fairing was an innovation in mass production and, with the hump in the rear of the seat, the R 90 S was opening a new chapter in the visual history of the Bavarian manufacturer. The fairing significantly reduced the wind pressure on the torso of the rider. And the dashboard carried quite a few innovations: next to the mandatory speedometer and rev counter, the R 90 S had a clock and, for the first time in mass production, a voltmeter that showed the tension at the battery's terminals.

There was also a steering damper on the top yoke which was adjustable in three positions (0-1-2) according to the rider's wishes. The chassis of the R 90 S offered plenty of comfort and touring abilities and road-holding was impressive when riding it in a sportive manner, as long as the bearings in the steering head and in the swingarm were correctly tightened.

The boxer engine in the R 90 S and in the R 90/6 got a new crankshaft and, while the R 75/5 and the /6 series had constant pressure carburetors from Bing, the R 90 S had two Dell'Orto performance carbs. Thus, the engine produced 67 hp (exactly the same output as a Honda CB750) and the top



In 1973, the R 90 S was the sportiest model that BMW had ever mass produced, the first Superbike in the proper sense of the word. In addition to a very powerful engine, the R 90 S had a great chassis, with class-leading handling. Plenty of victories in competition followed.

speed of 200 km/h was confirmed by press tests.

Competition success quickly followed, as Helmut Dähne and Hans-Otto Butenuth got victory in their class at the Production TT in 1976. That same year, Steve McLaughlin won the Daytona 200 riding a R 90 S and his teammate, Reg Pridmore, became American Superbike champion, in the new competition class for motorbikes derived from mass production, with engines of over 750 cc.



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The instrument panel of the R 90 S includes, alongside the normal speedometer and rev counter, a clock and a voltmeter that shows battery voltage.



The future is now

In 1969, BMW launched a completely new series, with the R 50/5, R 60/5 and R 75/5, starting a new era in motorcycling. From a technical point of view, each part was new.

The old frame had two loops in the rear for mounting the shock absorbers, while now there was a separate four-point mounted sub-frame on which the shock absorbers were fitted. The springs of the rear suspension now had adjustable preload and the fork was telescopic. Even though, in the past, BMW had preferred the Earles fork, with a swingarm behind the wheel, the evolution of technology brought the advantages of the telescopic fork to light. Moreover, this type of fork induced less of a tendency to straighten the bike up while leaning with the brakes on, which further increased riding pleasure.

The camshaft was positioned under the crankshaft and the pushrods of the timing mechanism went under the cylinders. The new alternator was of the three-phase type and for the R 75/5 the electric starter was offered in the standard equipment level, while it was optional for the R 50/5 and the R 60/5. The principle of the separate gearbox, with its own oil sump and of the transmission via propshaft were unchanged. The three displacement versions, with 496 cc, 599 cc and 745 cc all had the same stroke, therefore the same crankshaft and engine block. The only thing that changed was the bore, at 67 mm (R 50/5), 73.5 mm (R 60/5) and 82 mm (R 75/5). The latter used a constant pressure carburettor for the first time – an important evolution, allowing smooth running.



Speed and reliability

After the sports models of the Fifties, the next stage in the development of the 600 cc engine was reached by the new R 69 S from 1960. High power outputs at high engine speeds were very much sought after, especially in the markets outside of Germany. The R 69 S impressed with a power of 42 hp, a 20% increase compared to the R 69. With a top speed of 175 km/h, it was one of the fastest motorcycles in the world at the time and it gained a reputation of a fast and reliable bike, both in competitions on asphalt and off-road.

The compression ratio of the engine had increased from 8 to 9.5, the cams had a different profile, the valves had a longer stroke and the air filter allowed for a better airflow in the intake. The R 69 S also had a number of features

destined to make it more attractive for North-American customers. The seat was wider and had thicker upholstery and the handlebar was a little higher. Limited editions painted green, red or blue extended the range on the market across the Atlantic. The necessity of a better range (quite important on the American market) was solved by the optional 24 litre tank (considerably larger than the standard 17 litre one). Starting in 1967, the R 69 S, available until then in America only with an Earles fork, was also offered with a telescopic fork, according to the standards of those times.

The R 69 S also brought important contributions to the development of the /5 series. The /5 series' frame was first tested with the engine from the R 69 S in the wind tunnel.

In full swing

The '80s marked a revolutionary time in BMW history, as innovation was the keyword for this decade.

In 1980, BMW practically invented a new market segment, when the R 80 G/S model was launched. In the years that followed, BMW brought a host of innovations in motorcycle technology, starting with the Monolever – the single-sided swingarm, and continuing with the Paralever rear suspension and the anti-lock braking system, ABS.

At the end of the 70's, the strategy of BMW was very clear: increased performance, combined with a reduction in noise and pollution. All of these could only be taken up to a certain point using the old boxer engine. Many other options were considered and the engineers eventually opted for the in-line four cylinder engine, used as a stressed member of the frame and installed horizontally. Thus, in 1983, the first production bike that followed this concept was launched – the K 100. The inline four cylinder engine was fed by fuel injection (Bosch LE-Jetronic), was installed horizontally in the open steel tube frame and it had a load bearing function. The maximum power of 90 hp was reached at 8,000 rpm. In 1987, the K 75 debuted. This was a model based on the same concept, but it had an in-line three cylinder engine. Although the K series was going to have strategic importance for BMW's evolution, the boxer engine was far from being outdated. The R 100 CS with a small handlebar mounted fairing continued the sporting tradition of the R 90 S, and the R 100 RS and R 100 RT, being very successful, were produced until 1984.

The "pièce de résistance" and the model that truly established the boxer engine in the modern era was launched in 1980 – the R 80 G/S. The G/S moniker meant Gelände/Straße, which means „off-road/street“. The 1980 introduction of this model was going to be a turning point in the history of motorcycling as we know it, as the R 80 G/S, to all intents and

purposes, invented a new market segment – the one of the big displacement travel enduro.

With a dry weight of just 183 kg, the 797 cc engine produced more than enough power, at 50 hp. The motorcycle could easily handle itself on light or medium off-road tracks and was very good in any situation on asphalt surfaces, be it long trips or sporty riding. In 1982, the street bike qualities of the R 80 G/S were enhanced once the R 80 ST was launched. The ST was designed solely for riding on asphalt roads.

In the mid-Eighties, all the boxer models from the R 80/R 100 series got engines that were derived from the one of the R 80 G/S. Other technical innovations included the light alloy cast rims and the Monolever single sided swingarm rear suspension, with a single spring/shock absorber unit mounted laterally. This system was mounted on the R 80 G/S and on the K series models.

In 1987, the G/S moniker became simply GS. In 1988, the R 65 GS was presented, this being a 27 hp version of the travel enduro, significantly cheaper to insure in Germany. The same year, the R 100 GS replaced the R 80 GS, with a larger displacement engine and more torque across the rev range. In 1988, BMW presented the range-topping models at the Köln Motorcycle Show: the R 100 GS Paris-Dakar, to celebrate the victories of Hubert Auriol (1983) and Gaston Rahier (1984/1985) in the famous rally, and the K 1, the first production motorcycle with four valves per cylinder that BMW ever made, with a completely new aerodynamic design.

In its eighth decade of existence, BMW increased its role of technology pioneer and innovator, extending the range by returning to the single cylinder segment, with the F 650, and also producing the first scooter, the C1.

The German motorcycle market had a strong increase after



The R 1100 RS started a new generation of boxer models, being designed from scratch. The Telelever front suspension provided excellent stability without compromising handling and the 1,085 cc engine was fuelled by electronic injection, a premiere for BMW boxers.



the reunification of federal and democratic Germany. With constantly increasing sales, the '90s were a period characterized by expansion and innovation for BMW. In 1991 a closed loop catalytic converter was optionally available for the K series models – a world first for production motorbikes.

The R 1100 RS sports model began its career in 1993, equipped with the first completely new boxer engine since the launch of the /5 series, in 1969. The R 1100 RS was as modern as bikes could be: the boxer engine was cooled by air and oil, it had overhead camshafts and four valves per cylinder.

At a displacement of 1,085 cc, the engine produced 90 hp. The chassis was equally innovative: if

the Paralever suspension system, with torque reaction compensation, was already known by the public, the Telelever front suspension caused a stir. The telescopic fork controlled the trajectory of the front wheel, but the spring and damper were a single unit, mounted on a triangular swingarm. This way, steering forces were separated from suspension forces. The surprises kept on rolling in for the chassis chapter: the R 1100 RS did not have an actual frame, as the engine had a load bearing function. The front suspension was attached to a steel subframe, mounted on the front of the bike, and the swingarm was mounted on the gearbox casing. The rear subframe, that supported the seat, was mounted directly onto the engine. In the

years that followed, this concept was used on all the boxer models. In 1998, BMW launched the sporty R 1100 S, with an engine that produced 98 hp.

The K series got the four valves per cylinder distribution system from the K 1 at the start of the Nineties and the displacement was raised up to 1,092 cc. In 1997, the K series evolved further and the K 1200 RS debuted, with a maximum power of 130 hp and a top speed of 245 km/h. The super-tourer K 1200 LT evolved from this model.

In 1993, BMW used the single cylinder engine once again, when it launched the F 650, with a Rotax produced and BMW designed water-cooled engine, that produced 48 hp. The F 650 had chain drive, a first for BMW.



The BMW K 100 was introduced in 1983 and it was completely different from anything BMW had ever done until then. It had a horizontally placed in-line four cylinder engine that was liquid cooled and produced 90 hp. Strong, fast and reliable, it proved to be quite successful.



The R 1100 GS, launched in 1994, was the first BMW GS from the '90s and it had a fuel injected engine, Telelever front and Paralever rear suspension. It instantly became the vehicle of choice for globetrotters across the world.

Fun + Enduro = Funduro

After having stopped production of single-cylinder motorcycles in the mid-Sixties, BMW chose to return to this market segment in 1993. The result was the F 650, a motorcycle intended for paved roads, but one that could easily cope with light off-road riding.



The F 650 was a first for BMW from many perspectives. Unlike the old single-cylinder models, the engine was now liquid cooled, instead of air cooled, and was mounted transversally instead of longitudinally. The final drive was also unusual for a BMW: it was a chain drive, instead of the classic shaft drive. The 652 cc

engine had double overhead camshafts and was fed by two small, 33 mm, Mikuni carburetors, for a better torque curve. Ignition was a double-spark plug type and the gearbox had five gears.

The F 650 had a 19 inch front wheel, unlike previous GS's, which had 21 inch wheels, more suitable for off-road riding. The

single cylinder bike had excellent handling on asphalt, with great agility in corners, but could also make a very good impression on dirt roads, thanks to its long travel suspension and relatively low weight. Its successor, which was presented in 2000, was called the F 650 GS and had electronic fuel injection and a catalytic converter.



Unusual

The K1 was a revolutionary motorcycle when it was presented, in 1988. The aerodynamic shape of the fairing, the 100 hp engine with four valves per cylinder and the ABS system represented the absolute pinnacle of motorcycle technology in the Eighties.

Five years after introducing the K series, BMW came up with another innovative concept, called the K 1. No other bike had divided opinions in such a way until then, as the K 1's looks instantly created two factions: part of the public was fascinated by the interesting and aerodynamic design of the K 1, while others viewed the new bike as utterly unattractive. Due to its relaxed riding position and full fairing, the bike was very well suited for long freeway rides and

the two luggage compartments in the rear provided enough space for a few things. The motorcycle was very stable at high speeds, as it was among the first models in the world to have a 120/70 VR 17 front tyre – a size now considered normal. In 1988, along with the K 100, the K 1 became the first production motorcycle to be fitted with ABS. This system was available as an option for the price of 1,980 marks.

Elspeth Beard. Adventurer.



In 1982, Elspeth Beard, a British Architecture student, 23 years of age at the time, left on a journey around the world on a motorcycle, spending the next three years on the road and riding for 80,000 kilometres. She used a BMW R 60/6 from 1974, bought second-hand in 1980 for just 900 pounds (approximately 1,000 euros), with 50,000 km on the clock. After a few trips to Scotland, Ireland and Corsica, Elspeth set off around the world. She sent her bike to New York by boat and she took a plane to get there. From New York she went to Canada, later reaching Mexico, then to Los Angeles. From there she sent her bike by boat to Sydney, Australia. In the time it took for the bike to get "Down Under", she travelled across New Zealand. As she was in her third year at University, while she was in Sydney she worked as an intern in an architecture firm. She then made her own sturdy luggage boxes and went off to explore Australia. She then reached Singapore, crossed Malaysia and Thailand, then got to India and Nepal. From there, Elspeth wanted to go home, riding along with Robert Albrechts, another BMW rider she met in Kathmandu.

Elspeth got home after 80,000 kilometres on the bike. She had been through two quite heavy accidents, had her money and papers stolen in Singapore and got hepatitis in Turkey, on her way home. She completely rebuilt the bike and still has it to this day, but now uses an R 80 GS Basic as her daily means of transport. Elspeth Beard is now a multiple award winning architect and her work is well known across the world.

Destination: Dakar

The launch of the BMW R 80 G/S at the Cologne Motorcycle Show amazed both the public and the competition. A two cylinder enduro bike with a 800 cc engine had never existed until then. The only concepts that had even come close to this idea had been street bikes converted to scramblers by enthusiastic owners. The 800 cc engine produced 50 hp at 6,500 rpm and a maximum torque of 59 Nm at 3,500 rpm. And the suspension of the new G/S, with a single-sided swingarm, was also new. It had a single, large section, steel tube and the shaft of the final drive was going through it. A single shock absorber unit

handled damping on the rear. The suspension had 170 mm of travel on the front and 200 mm on the rear. The tall suspension also gave better ground clearance in corners compared to street boxer models. Therefore, the bike could also be ridden in a sporting manner on the street, with very respectable leaning angles.

Using the R 80 G/S, BMW developed the motorcycle they entered in the legendary Paris-Dakar Rally, one of the toughest motorsport competitions in the world. The Frenchman Hubert Auriol won the famous rally in 1981 and in 1983 and, in 1984, it was his teammate Gaston Rahier's turn to win. The Belgian, a former

world motocross champion, was only 1.64 meters tall and could not mount the GS 1000 rally bike from a standstill and used to climb on after setting off. He proved to be a master in controlling the 75 hp bike across hard terrain and a very good navigator, winning the rally for BMW in 1984 and in 1985.

BMW's tally of wins in the Dakar Rally would amount to a total of six after Richard Saint rode to victory in the 1999 and 2000 editions of the rally on the BMW F 650 RR, a full racing version of the single-cylinder F 650. It had a 700 cc, 75 hp engine, long travel suspensions and no less than five fuel tanks holding a total of 45 litres of fuel.





The F 750 GS and F 850 GS were presented as new models for 2018 and marked a big difference from the outgoing F 700/800 GS. The fuel tank was now in the conventional place and the parallel-twin now got up to 853 cc, with 77 hp for the 750 and 95 HP for the 850. The F 850 Adventure, with a bigger tank, followed the next year.

Power, innovation, control

During the first decade of the third millennium BMW established new benchmarks on the medium and large displacement motorcycle market, developing and completely rethinking the F and K series and continuously improving the technology standards. Bikes are more powerful, more economic, easier to ride than ever.

Although the German market had started to drop after the year 2000, BMW continued to grow every year. Since 2006, BMW sold more than 100,000 motorcycles a year.

In 2004, BMW completely renewed the K range. The four cylinder engine, with a 1,200 cc displacement, was now mounted across the frame, with the engine block tilted forward at a 55 degree angle. In the fully faired sports model, the K 1200 S, the engine produced 167 hp and the bike could reach a top speed of 280 km/h. The engine had a dry sump, four valves per cylinder and was designed to achieve maximum performance. In 2005, the same engine was mounted on the most powerful naked bike in the world at that time, the K 1200 R, with 163 hp. This model was also used in the one make series, the BMW Power Cup. The K 1200 GT, with an adjustable windshield

and integrated luggage system, was the tourer of the K series. With the R 1200 RT and the K 1200 GT, BMW now had over 50% of the large displacement tourer market segment.

The K series used the Duolever front suspension, which worked according to the same principle of separating steering and suspension forces as the Telelever, but gave better stability and better sensitivity in sports riding.

The GS, together with the whole boxer series, was reinvented again in 2004, when the R 1200 GS was launched. Lighter, more powerful and with more advanced technology than ever before, the travel



enduro turned into the mainstay of the BMW range, accounting for more than 40% of the marque's sales figures around the world.

In 2006, BMW presented the first two models with parallel twin cylinder engines in the history of the company, the F 800 S (sport) and the F 800 ST (sport-touring). With an 800 cc engine and 85 hp on tap, these bikes represented another premiere: the first toothed belt final drive ever used by BMW. The F series extended in 2008, when the F 800 GS was launched, a very agile travel enduro, with excellent off-road performance. There was also an asphalt oriented version, the F 650 GS.



The intercontinental missile, the K 1200 S, was launched in 2004, fascinating the public with its power and torque that had never been seen on a BMW motorcycle until then. The bike is in its element on long (and quick) rides or in sports riding mode.



The F series started its career in 2006 with the F 800 S, with a parallel twin cylinder engine and toothed belt final drive. The same solutions are used in the F 800 GT tourer, launched in 2012. The 800 cc engine is the most economical in its class.

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The S 1000 RR, the most powerful production bike ever made by BMW, was an instant hit, becoming the best-selling model in its class since the first year of production. Tested in competitions as soon as it was presented, the Bavarian rocket rose up to the challenge.



Launched in 2010, the six-cylinder tourers K 1600 GT and K 1600 GTL stand out due to their ultimate comfort and surprisingly sporty handling. The six-cylinder engine has plenty of power and torque and pulls very smoothly at any rpm.

In 2004, along with the K 1200 S, the electronic suspension adjustment (ESA) system made its debut. This system allowed the rider to adjust the damping characteristics of the suspension in real time, by simply pushing a button on the handlebar. In 2006, on the K 1200 GT, the ESA II system was launched. With the new generation of the system, the preload could now be adjusted electronically as well.

In 2005, BMW launched the hp range. The HP2 Enduro was an off-road bike that used the 110 hp engine from the R 1200 GS, but was lighter, more compact, with conventional suspension front and rear, designed for maximum performance on rough terrain. One year later, the HP2 Megamoto was launched as a supermoto version of the HP2 Enduro, and in 2007 BMW

presented the HP2 Sport, a bike designed to slice through high speed turns on the racetrack, its boxer engine having been maxed out to 133 hp.

In 2009, BMW produced their first modern superbike, the S 1000 RR. With a four cylinder across the frame engine, with a 1,000 cc displacement and 193 hp on tap, for a weight of approximately 200 kg fully fuelled, the RR immediately became one of the most powerful and fastest bikes in its class.

Also in 2009, the K series engine grew to 1,300 cc, its power now reaching 175 hp and its torque curve growing thicker. In 2010, with the K 1600 GT and GTL, BMW made the first in-line six cylinder motorcycle engine in the history of the company. With a maximum output of 160 hp, a 175 Nm torque and silky smooth running, the six cylinder

tourers instantly became the benchmarks of their class.

At the Milan Motorcycle Show in 2011, BMW presented its first maxiscooters: the C 600 Sport and the C 650 GT, teaming with technological solutions never before seen in this category. Both bikes were using the same 650 cc and 60 hp engine. The C 600 Sport had a slimmer and narrower outline, with a sportier image, and the C 650 GT was a proper tourer, with a comfortable seat, relaxed riding position and perfect protection from the elements.

One year later, the first four cylinder HP model was launched in the form of the HP4. This bike was actually a lighter version of the S 1000 RR. Its engine had more midrange torque (and the same power of 193 hp) and more advanced technology, such as the traction control system that could be adjusted in 14 steps and the DDC (Dynamic Damping Control) system, an absolute premiere. The DDC



Introduced in 2012, the C 600 Sport and C 650 GT maxi-scooters represent the ultimate expression of urban mobility. Thanks to the powerful engines and the refined chassis, they are also as fun to ride as any motorcycle.



Launched in 2008, the F 800 GS quickly gained a loyal following among off-road travel enthusiasts. The Adventure version was introduced in 2013 and has a 24 litre tank, giving it a range of over 500 kilometres.

suspension can basically adjust itself in real time according to the riding style and situation on the road.

Also in 2012, BMW presented the new F 800 GT, a successor for the F 800 ST. With a more comfortable riding position, full fairing and 5 hp more at the top end, the F 800 GT is an agile and light tourer that's very easy to ride and very economical.

In 2013, BMW amazed the public again with the completely

redesigned R 1200 GS. The only link to its predecessor (which was already the best selling travel enduro in history) was the concept of the boxer engine and the shaft drive. The engine is now partially liquid cooled. The suspensions are electronically adjustable and semi-adaptive, there is a slipper clutch (which is now of the wet variety) and the front brake calipers are mounted radially. The clear leader of the segment is stronger than ever.

Serving the law



The first use of a BMW motorcycle by public service institutions happened in the Twenties. But, excepting motorcycle production for the German army in the '30s and '40s, one might say that the relationship between BMW and government institutions took off after the Second World War.

In the Fifties and Sixties, police forces, official escorts and even the Red Cross chose BMW motorcycles and since 1970 more than 100,000 motorcycles have been delivered to governmental or non-governmental organizations in over 150 countries across the world.

These figures highlight the versatility and reliability of BMW motorcycles. The range of optional equipment and accessories designed for the use of government institutions was studied and refined over decades of development in this field. BMW motorcycles are used by the police, roadside assistance services, fire services, armies and official escort services. That is why the BMW factory can have a certain degree of flexibility when it comes to mounting special equipment on motorcycles. The company can also provide special courses for riders and mechanics, long term service agreements and the guarantee of providing spare parts for 15 years after a model's production stops. Full personalized riding gear can also be provided. The current range of motorcycles modified for police use includes the F 750 GS, F 850 GS, CE 04 and R 1250 RT.



BMW continued to reach technological peaks in the 21st Century: ASC traction control, ESA electronically adjustable suspension system, DDC adaptive suspensions, E-Gas ride-by-wire throttle and, of course, a perfected ABS system.

A true success story

The models of the R family are the ones that uphold the 100 year-old boxer tradition of BMW Motorrad to the greatest extent. They have always been present in the line-up, throughout this last century. For the past 43 years, the GS became the most representative and popular model in this line-up, starting a worldwide trend for adventure bikes that became very powerful, especially in the last two decades. The R 80 G/S (standing for Gelände/Strasse) was launched in 1980, with air cooling and 50 HP. It later became the R 100 GS, in 1988, then a big step has been taken with the R 1100 GS, which introduced the Telelever suspension and fuel injection. There were also the naked R 1100 R, the tourer R 1100 RT and the sport-tourer R 1100 RS, all of them equipped, as was the tradition, with the same powertrain and

technology. Starting from the R 1150 GS, in 2002, there was also the Adventure version, with taller suspension and a 30 litre fuel tank. A big revolution came in 2004, when all the R family, but especially the GS, became a lot lighter (by some 30 kg), with the engine reaching 100 HP and 115 Nm of torque. In July 2007, the 100,000th R 1200 GS left the production line of the Berlin factory, as this model became the most successful one in the history of the company. Between 1980 and 2009, 500,000 units of the GS had been sold.

In 2007, the power of the boxer increased to 105 hp and the electronically adjustable suspension (ESA) was introduced as an option. The smaller twin-cylinder GS models were introduced in 2007, at EICMA (the F 650 and F 800 GS). These were updated to become the F 700 and F



800 in 2012, being completely replaced in 2018 by the new F 750 and F 850 GS.

A completely new water-cooled boxer engine was introduced in 2013, first to the GS, then to the rest of the

R range, with 125 hp and 125 Nm. The next evolution came in 2018, with the ShiftCam variable timing system, that brought the boxer to 1,254 cc, 136 hp and 143 Nm of torque. The newer generations of the R 1250 R

and RS abandoned the Telelever, using a conventional upside-down fork. The RT and the GS are still using the Telelever. The GS is still the best-selling BMW motorcycle, with more than 60,000 units sold in 2022.



BMW R 18: Time Machine

First, there was the BMW Concept R18, presented in 2019 at the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, on the shores of Lake Como in Italy. It integrated all the elements characteristic of post-war BMW motorcycles and a completely new boxer engine with a Gargantuan look. "Every part of the motorcycle has a functional purpose. Not many have the courage to be so honest and direct in their design," said Bart Janssen Groesbeek, who designed the motorcycle. Everything is visible, everything is functional, and the spirit of the legendary BMW R5 is everywhere.

A year later, not even the pandemic could prevent the launch of the R 18, the model with the biggest boxer engine ever produced by BMW. After 15 years of absence from the cruiser segment, the Bavarians returned with this motorcycle that weighs 345 kg empty. Its chassis is based on a double-swing steel tube frame, and, like the BMW R 5, the swingarm incorporates a nickel-plated, exposed cardan transmission. The drop-shaped tank and the optional pinstripe paint are other elements that evoke the illustrious predecessor, but the R 18 also writes its own story.

As for the suspensions, the BMW R 18 has omitted any electronic adjustment option on purpose. A 49 mm telescopic fork and a center-mounted shock with progressive action, adjustable for preload, keep the wheels in contact with the ground. As with the BMW R 5, the telescopic fork legs are clad in metal sleeves, and the double wishbone swingarm and shock with a lever system carry the R 5's seemingly rigid rear suspension concept into the modern era. Speaking of current times, the R 18 offers three standard riding modes with unusual names: "Rain", "Roll" and "Rock". Standard equipment also includes ASC (Automatic Stability Control, which can be switched off) and Electronic Engine Brake Control (MSR).

The design of BMW R 18 facilitates customization: the rear subframe is easy to disassemble and the painted parts can be

easily detached. Brake and clutch line attachment points allow easy installation of high or low handlebars combined with compatible lines and wiring. As expected, the R 18 family grew rapidly. In addition to a plethora of custom creations from the most reputable manufacturers, BMW Motorrad launched three more variants, the R 18 Classic in 2020, followed by the R 18 Transcontinental and R 18 B in 2021. The BMW R 18 Classic is a nostalgic tourer that evokes the era of grand cruisers built for seemingly endless journeys. The 16-inch front wheel, generously sized windshield, additional LED headlights, passenger seat, a pair of saddle bags and the standard Electronic Cruise Control system provide supreme comfort. As with the R 18, for accessorizing and personalization, BMW Motorrad collaborates with big names such as Roland Sands Design, Mustang Seat, Vance & Hines...

The R 18 Transcontinental and R 18 B answer the "luxury vs cool" dilemma, and they do it in the purest American style. The first is a Grand Tourer with handlebar-mounted fairing and windscreen, three luggage cases, comfortable passenger space and large digital display dashboard, and the second a Bagger with a different saddle, shorter windscreen and matte black painted engine. Both have a dashboard with four analogue clocks, a 10.25-inch TFT color display, additional headlights, Marshall audio system, Dynamic

Cruise Control, 24-litre tanks, the increase in tank capacity being possible thanks to the typical American "streamline" style. The newest member of the R 18 family is the 100 Years Special Edition. The Classic Chrome color scheme combines black surfaces with chrome gloss, alongside white pinstriping, while the engine and transmission use Avus Black, named after the famous Berlin racetrack. A contrasting element is the quilted saddle that combines black with a "bull's blood" red. Other delights for fans are the final section of the Akrapovič exhaust, recreating the BMW logo and the 100 Years BMW Motorrad emblem, which also features the motorcycle's production number.

The heart of the new BMW R 18 is the new air and oil-cooled two-cylinder boxer engine, nicknamed the "Big Boxer". Its impressive looks and technology are a continuation of the traditional air-cooled boxer engines that provided

so many inspiring moments. It has a capacity of 1,802 cc, with a maximum power of 91 hp at 4,750 rpm. From 2,000 to 4,000 rpm, the torque never drops below 150 Nm, and its maximum value is 158 Nm at 3,000 rpm. It



weighs 110.8 kg including the gearbox, housed in a separate housing, like the old BMW boxers. The timing with block camshafts, pushrods and rockers is inspired by the R 51/2, a classic approach, complemented by the modern solution of fork rocker arms that actuate the four valves of each cylinder. The pushrods are short and their chrome housings are visible above the cylinders, valve clearance being adjusted as before by a screw. The six-speed gearbox has a dry single-disc clutch, which however benefits from an anti-hopping function and, optionally, reverse function, found as standard on the 100 Years Special Edition.

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The Big Boxer is the biggest boxer engine that BMW Motorrad has ever produced, with a capacity of 1,802 cc. It produces huge amounts of torque, with at least 150 Nm on tap between 2,000 and 4,000 rpm.



All of the models in the R 18 family are highly customizable bikes from the factory. There are different wheels, exhausts, handlebars, seat finishes and color combinations that one can choose from. The R 18 B and R 18 Transcontinental come with luxury equipment, such as the 10.25" TFT display and the Marshall sound system.

BMW R nineT: A Blank Canvas dedicated to the Artist in You!

The BMW R nineT embodies the essence of 90 years of BMW history: strength and purity, in their rawest possible form. This roadster brings together the robust character of a boxer engine, design elements from various eras of motorcycling and cutting-edge technologies in a modular concept that offers maximum potential for customization.

Launched in 2013, the R nineT takes its power from a classic boxer engine, just like the legendary BMW R 32. Although some 90 years later, the capacity of the air and oil cooled boxer is 1,170 cc, the power has reached 110 HP, and the maximum torque is 119 Nm at 6,000 rpm. This motorcycle has been designed to delight lovers of custom creations. From original BMW Motorrad accessories to aftermarket components by renowned companies in the field or unique pieces from custom artists, everything will find its place on the R nineT. The secret of this synergy lies in the tubular steel frame, incorporating the boxer engine and its gearbox as load-bearing elements. The frame consists of a front section that incorporates the steering head and a rear section that supports single sided aluminium swingarm. As a rider, one may enjoy the sensations offered by this motorcycle alone or with a pillion, as the pillion frame can easily be removed. An aluminium tail seat cover is always at hand in the list of accessories!

The traditional chassis blends perfectly with modern technology, as the Telelever suspension, usually fitted on boxer models from BMW



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One can radically modify the looks and character of this bike, according to his or her individual preferences.

Motorrad, has been replaced by a fork borrowed from the S 1000 RR superbike! The two exhausts placed on the left side of the motorcycle can also be mounted in other positions, depending on the connecting pipe chosen by the

owner. The swingarm allows for a wider rear tire to be mounted, and the license plate number, together with the rear lights can also be positioned laterally. The motorcycle's electrical system has been designed to allow customization work. It should also be noted that the sides of the aluminium tank were meticulously polished by BMW Motorrad craftsmen before being painted. These are just a few of the „secrets“ of this café racer roadster and its hand-built feel!

BMW CE 04 – The silent revolution



In 2021, CE 04 opened the chapter of electrically powered urban two-wheel mobility for BMW Motorrad. With a futuristic design, this maxi scooter offers astonishing acceleration from 0 to 50 km/h: only 2.6 seconds. This is possible thanks to the liquid cool permanent magnet electric motor, mounted in the frame between the battery and the rear wheel. The BMW CE 04 has a maximum output of 42 hp and a range of 130 kilometres, offering complete peace of mind. With a quick charger the

battery can go from 0 to 100% in just one hour and 40 minutes. All the scooter's features have been designed for the fast pace of urban life: 10.25-inch color TFT dashboard with HD resolution, with integrated navigation, phone connectivity and multiple display options, waterproof phone compartment with USB-C charging port, various storage compartments... There are also optional carry bags, a reverse gear, and an engine brake strategy which regenerates energy for the battery.

BMW C 400 X



In 2017, BMW entered the premium mid-range scooter segment with the C 400 X. The asymmetrical headlight with LED technology allows you to quickly identify it as a member of the BMW Motorrad family. With a sporty and dynamic look, the C 400 X was designed to be more than just a means of transport from point A to point B, as fun

and comfort were also taken into account! The 34 hp single-cylinder engine provides enough power, and the drive train is smartly balanced, with the swingarm having a good torsional rigidity, thanks to an innovative swing arm bearing. The C 400 X can safely accelerate, even on slippery surfaces, thanks to the Automatic Stability Control system.

BMW C 400 GT



One year later, BMW Motorrad showed that it could do even better with the C 400 GT variant. This scooter is the Grand Turismo version of the C 400 X, designed for those who simply want to go further, faster, and may be carrying a pillion. The larger windshield and

wider fairing offer more weather protection for longer rides, the pilot's seat has a separate backrest, while the passenger has comfortable footboards instead of footpegs. Storage spaces are generous and the Keyless Ride system is standard.



R nineT Scrambler

To please those dreaming of a scrambler, but lacking the drive to start modifying an R nineT, BMW Motorrad launched the R nineT Scrambler version in 2015. Those who saw it just as a fashionable motorcycle quickly understood how wrong

they were. With a 19-inch front wheel, and tires as wide as those used on the GS models, the R nineT Scrambler is a capable off-roader and a fun bike to be ridden on asphalt, without breaking a single sweat.

R nineT Racer and R nineT Pure

The R nineT Scrambler platform proved its versatility the following year as well, when BMW Motorrad launched the R nineT Racer and R nineT Pure, both equipped with conventional forks. As its name suggests, R nineT Racer has the looks of a half faired sports bike of the 60s and 70s, a low, elongated silhouette, a riding position similar to the S1000RR and classic BMW Motorsport



colors. It is easy to understand that this bike has broken quite a few hearts. For those who can only see themselves riding a motorcycle that reduces everything to its essence, BMW has come up with Pure, the most affordable R nineT. This is the entry ticket to the Heritage range and the very bike to enjoy the windings of a country road, without any protection from the elements.

BMW R nineT Urban G/S

Thanks to its modular frame concept, R nineT has also metamorphosed into an urban enduro warrior with a 19-inch front wheel. Inspired by the legendary BMW R 80 G/S launched in 1980, it faithfully recreates its color scheme, but thanks to the 1,170 cc and 110 hp boxer, the model performs the duties of a classic high-calibre enduro. It also looks more like the

creation of a custom boutique shop! The high mounted front fender, the round headlight with its classic fairing are visually captivating and the current technologies offer all the safety you need. Although it can be mistaken for a motorcycle from the '80s, the R nineT Urban G/S offers high end modern brakes and an optional ASC (Automatic Stability Control) system.





In search of ultimate performance

BMW Motorrad basically rewrote the rules of the litre sport bike class when they launched the revolutionary BMW S 1000 RR in 2009. With a power of 193 hp the new RR was more powerful and more technologically advanced than any other bike in its segment, instantly becoming a resounding success. Next came success on the racetracks: in 2010, Ayrton Badovini won the FIM Superstock 1000 World Cup with nine wins in 10 races, riding a BMW S 1000 RR entered by BMW Motorrad Italia.

The model got a light facelift and some technical updates in 2012, as it became more agile and gained some torque in the lower rev range. Then, in 2015, came the first generation change. And, once again, BMW Motorrad rewrote the rules: 199 hp, 204 kg with a full tank, plus high level electronics, such as ABS Pro, DTC traction control with 14 step adjustability, DDC electronically

adjustable and active suspension, Launch Control and, as an absolute first on a sportbike, Cruise Control and heated grips. Once again, BMW S 1000 RR was affirming itself not only as an absolute weapon for the racetrack, but also as a comfortable and easy to ride street bike.

The 2019 evolution was what you might call radical. The mission of the design team

The current S 1000 RR is not only very powerful and fast, but also easier to ride fast than ever before, due to its light weight, great balance, aerodynamic winglets and very high-tech electronics package. We now have Slide Assist for on-the-throttle drifts and Brake Slide Assist for safely "backing it in" on the brakes.



The S 1000 XR is the lightest bike in its class and has eye-watering performance, with its 165 hp. But it's also comfortable and easy to ride, making it a very competent sport-tourer. The riding position has been described as "perfect".

was a difficult one: to start with what was already a milestone in its class in all aspects and get a bike that was 10 kg lighter, one second a lap faster on the racetrack and easier to ride. The result? A weight reduction of 11-14,5 kg (according to version and equipment), a power of 207 HP and a radically different, compact chassis, for blistering lap times. The 999 cc engine was 4 kg lighter than the previous one and now had the new variable timing system called ShiftCam, which ensured at least 100 Nm of torque between 5,500 and 14,500 rpm. The new Flex Frame chassis used the engine as a stressed member and provided better grip and

precision at high lean angles and the electronic systems made yet another step forward, with three individually configurable Race Pro modes, next to the familiar "Rain", "Road", "Dynamic" and "Race" modes. All of these were now configured and viewed on the new TFT 6,5" display.

The last version of the BMW S 1000 RR was launched at the end of 2022 and is, again, a milestone in the field of litre sportbikes. Nowadays, maybe not so much through sheer power, although it is very impressive there too (210 HP), but more through its chassis and electronics which have indeed gotten to the next level. The new Flex Frame chassis

has less lateral rigidity, for better feedback at high lean angles, plus precision and grip when riding on the limit, on sticky tyres. The DTC traction control now has the Slide Control function, for controlled slides on the gas, which it can implement by using a new sensor for the steering angle. The ABS Pro system now also has the Brake Slide Assist function, for controlled slides on corner entry on the racetrack, plus the Slick setting, for a late intervention of the ABS while riding fast, on very grippy tyres. There are also the winglets that first appeared on the M 1000 RR, which ensure extra stability and reduce the wheelie tendency on the straights.

The M 1000 RR is now at its second generation and has the latest technology meant for breaking lap records. A top speed of 314 km/h, with full stability in corners and on the brakes, due to its aerodynamic winglets



The BMW S 1000 R was launched at the end of 2013 and amazed the world with its daring, streetfighter style, but most of all with its incredible performance for a roadster. Derived from the BMW S 1000 RR, the new naked bike had a 999 cc, 160 hp engine, for a 207 kg wet weight. At revs below 7,500 rpm, the engine of the S 1000 R delivered 10 Nm more torque than the S 1000 RR, which made it ideal for blistering standing start launches and for full-on adrenaline injections. Of course, it had all the high level electronic systems of its time, such as Race ABS, DTC, plus the DDC electronically adjustable and active suspension. The model was slightly updated for 2017, gaining 5 hp and losing 2 kg.

The S 1000 R was completely renewed for 2021, with a dynamic (and now symmetrical) style. The engine power was still 165 hp, but the weight dropped down to 199 kg and the chassis now had the Flex Frame technology from the RR. The electronic systems now include wheelie and engine brake control, plus the hill start assist HSC Pro.

The S 1000 XR sport-tourer/adventure bike was launched in 2015, combining the performance and adrenaline shot of the S 1000 RR with the usability and comfort of an adventure bike. The engine, derived from the RR, came with 160 hp and 112 Nm, for a weight of just 228 kg. It delivered awesome, superbike-like performance, but in great comfort, ensured by the electronically adjustable and adaptive suspension, the adjustable windshield, plus all the practical options, such as top case and side cases, heated grips etc.

The current version of the S 1000 XR was launched in 2019 and had 165 hp, 114 Nm and 10 kg less than its predecessor at the same equipment level. Obviously, the full suit of electronic systems is there: the electronically adjustable and adaptive suspension Dynamic ESA (as standard) or Dynamic ESA Pro (ex works option), Dynamic Brake Control, plus a TFT 6,5" display and smartphone connectivity.

The first "M" motorcycle, the BMW M 1000 RR, was revealed in 2020 and meant to be a full optimized track weapon, but keeping the elements that make the S 1000 RR a good streetbike,

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The S and M families of BMW Motorrad motorcycles are the epitome of high-performance, but, in keeping with tradition, they keep the traits that make them user-friendly street bikes. The options list includes heated grips, cruise control and comfortable seats, there are pillion seats and the bikes develop their huge power in a controllable way.

such as the ShiftCam variable timing, the heated grips and cruise control. The bike is very light, at 192 kg, and very powerful, at 212 hp. The maximum rev ceiling was increased by 500 rpm, now getting to 15,100 rpm. This was made possible by using Mahle pistons and Pankl conrods. The aerodynamic winglets, meant to reduce wheelie tendency, were first introduced on the M 1000 RR. It also had special M brakes, with blue brake calipers.

The new M 1000 RR was launched as a 2023 model, rewriting the rules in terms of performance and aerodynamics. The new fairing with the next generation of winglets, carefully optimized in the wind tunnel, allows a greater downforce on the front wheel, for more stability on the gas, on the brakes and even more grip in the corners. But it also offers less wind resistance,



Not too much, nor too little

The G 310 R roadster was revealed in 2015, as an ideal bike for beginner riders and for the ones who have the A2 license. With an efficient 313 cc engine that delivers 34 hp and 28 Nm and a wet weight of just 158.5 kg, the G 310 R is easy and fun to ride, well balanced and economical, both to buy and to maintain. The bike proved its performance and durability on the racetracks in Romania, in the single make S300 series in the MotoRC championship.

The last version of the G 310 R was launched as a 2021 model, with a light restyling and a new slipper clutch.

The same platform was used for the G 310 GS adventure version, revealed at the end of 2016. It comes with taller suspension that has longer travel, more wind protection for long trips, all for a weight of 169.5 kg and a tempting price tag. The G 310 GS was also renewed for 2021, with adjustable levers and an assist & slipper clutch.



The S 1000 R was launched in 2014 and it shocked the world with its "hooligan" side, obvious from its styling, light weight and performance. It also proved to be smooth, precise and easier to ride than one might expect.



The M 1000 R is the ultimate roadster in terms of performance. With 210 HP, winglets and carbon fibre wheels as an option, it's unbelievably competent on the racetrack, but keeps the usability and smoothness of the S 1000 R.

as is proven by the increased top speed, from 306 to 314 km/h, for the same maximum power of 212 hp. There are carbon fibre brake cooling ducts, integrated in the new front mudguard, which is also optimized for reducing drag, especially at speeds of over 250 km/h.

The first naked M bike was also launched as a new model for 2023 – the M 1000 R. It's a roadster based on the S 1000 R, but it has the full power engine of the S 1000

RR, with 210 HP and ShiftCam variable timing. It also has winglets, in order to be able to make full use of its unbelievable power with greater stability, plus an impressive electronics package. Its winglets provide 11 kg of downforce at 220 km/h, its final drive and last three gears have shorter gearing than the S 1000 R, for more acceleration, and the electronics include the configurable Race Pro 1-3 modes and the Brake Slide Assist system.

Fun to ride middleweights

The middleweight naked bike and sport-tourer were revealed at the end of 2019 and brought easy to access performance, a cool and modern style and great value for money. Both bikes use a parallel twin cylinder engine, derived from the F 850 GS, with a power of 105 hp and 92 Nm torque, of which 87 Nm are available between 4,500 and 8,500 rpm. The F 900

R is the roadster version, with a more forward leaning riding position and simple fairing and the F 900 XR is the adventure version, with slightly longer suspension travel, an upright riding position and a front fairing that includes an adjustable windshield. Both bikes have a 6,5" TFT display as standard, plus ABS Pro, DTC, DBC and MSR as optional equipment.



The Romanian connection

The BMW brand has a long history not only in the world in general, but in Romania, in particular.

In the interwar period, the BMW brand was present in Romania, both with dealerships and in motorsport. The Balkan country was well-connected to Western Europe, since the royal family of Romania was closely related to noble and royal families from Prussia, Germany, Great Britain, Portugal and Russia, among others. Michael I, from the Hohenzollern dynasty, became king of Romania for the first time in 1927, at the age of six, until 1930, when his father, Carol II, returned to the country and became king again, for 10 years. Michael then resumed his kingship in 1940 until 1947, when the new communist government forced him into exile.

Michael I was quite passionate about all mechanical things and loved to drive cars, ride motorcycles and even fly planes. He drove a car for the first time at the age of six, and drove motor vehicles for 85 years, amassing over 2 million kilometres behind the wheel or in the saddle. He was not only interested in driving, but also became a skilled mechanic. He personally restored some classic cars and was a member of classic military vehicle collectors' clubs in Italy, France, Britain, Switzerland and the USA.

King Michael regularly attended and watched motorcycle races held by the Romanian Moto Club Sports Society (precursor of the current Romanian Motorcycling Federation) on racetracks in Bucharest, Timișoara, Brașov, Oradea, Sibiu and Cernăuți. The Romanian Motorcycling Federation was set up in 1927, the same year that Michael I became king for the first time.

Before the Second World War, international high-profile motorcycle races were held in the larger cities of Romania and factory teams and riders came to win



Above, the posters produced by BMW Motorrad after race wins in Bucharest (by Ludwig Kraus and Dan Tătușescu, on motorcycles), and after breaking speed records

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Between the two World Wars, Romania had a very interesting and popular motorsport scene and BMW was part of it all. Even king Michael I was often seen riding his R 51 and attending races at the Grand Prix of Bucharest.

important prizes. One such rider was Ludwig "Wiggerl" Kraus, born in 1907, who started his career at BMW at only 14 years old as an apprentice mechanic, beginning to race for BMW Motorrad teams in 1929, as a sidecar passenger, or a "monkey". He then started riding solo on dirt tracks, running his first hill climb in 1933. He became a factory BMW rider in 1936 and scored a victory on the Nurburgring and two wins in the Bucharest Grand Prix, in 1938 and 1939. Also featuring at the forefront of racing in Romania, on

BMW motorcycles, were the brothers Dan and Radu Tătușescu, both gentlemen riders, but very quick in their respective classes, on BMW R 51 models.

In cars, legendary drivers, such as Petre Cristea were scoring important victories behind the wheel of BMW cars, like the BMW 328 Sport.

So, before WW II, Romania was an important scene for world motorsport and BMW was an important part of that scene, both on two and on four wheels.



Radu Tătușescu, a gentleman racer, at the end of the Brașov Grand Prix in 1939, astride his BMW R 51, surrounded by spectators and supporters.

Ludwig "Wiggerl" Kraus on a supercharged racing BMW motorcycle, in the Bucharest Grand Prix, in 1939. The factory rider from Germany would go on to win the race by a huge advantage over his competitors.

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy



Spectacular rides through jagged rocks, sand and mud, energy-sapping challenges in the trials - the riders have given everything. In the untouched dream scenery of Albania, the ultimate off-road adventure started on September 4, 2022: the 8th International GS Trophy. The week-long challenge is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that demands everything from the international participants: courage, skill and stamina. The 57 participants had to show skill, endurance, but most of all, team spirit.

The Int. GS Trophy was first organized by BMW Motorrad in 2008 and it proved to be a great success, both in finding riders and teams that were willing and able to take their GS motorcycles to the limit and in showing that the BMW GS is a capable, tough and high performance motorcycle in all conditions, including extreme ones. The Int. GS Trophy is a sort of "Olympics of Adventure Riding", taking place every two years, with the year in between used for trials to sort out who will qualify to ride in the competition.

Around 10 hours a day on the motorcycle and well over 1,000 kilometres covered: You must prepare for such a challenge for quite a long time. Two years to be precise. Because after the end of the last Int. GS Trophy, the preparations for this year's already started. After many training sessions and qualification rounds, all teams were finally decided. Although the teams fight with full commitment, winning is a secondary matter. It is more about new friendships, the common experience and cohesion in the team. And yet, in the end, there were two teams that prevailed with their skills: Team South Africa won both the men's and women's competitions.

The venue of the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024 has been decided: this time the off-road adventure will take place in Namibia. Having been held on all continents around the globe, the International GS Trophy now returns in 2024 to where it all began in 2008 - Africa.