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- Reporting from Wichita
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- What's in a Name?
- Car Control Clinic

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PO BOX 4832
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MilePost



BMW M1 Homage Prototype

KC BMW Club Driving School September 10-12 Hallett Motor Racing Circuit

Mark your calendars!!! The KC BMW Club will again host our annual High-Performance Driver's Education event at Hallett Motor Racing Circuit on September 10-12. Instructors and approved advanced drivers will also have the opportunity to drive on Friday, September 10th. For those not familiar, HPDE events provide you with the opportunity to learn high-performance vehicle dynamics around a real racetrack. We have a terrific corps of instructors that will teach you the fundamentals, and our structure helps to keep the event safe and fun.



This event historically fills up quickly, so be ready for when registration opens up for this event. We will send an announcement a few weeks prior to the opening of registration.

Kansas City BMW Club—Serving Kansas and Western Missouri

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Reporting from Wichita

By: Brad Mehlinger

Reporting from Dooh-da, Wichita, aka: the Air Capitol

This is my first column for the Milepost and I'm pretty excited about it. I have written letters to a number of newspaper and magazine editors over the years, offering my opinions on a wide variety of topics in the news. The satisfaction occasionally derived from those rants, was having the opportunity to use my pen as a sword. I expect this writing exercise will be more fulfilling, and certainly less argumentative. The people reading the Milepost are here for the same reason: belonging to a club that celebrates the BMW brand. We may disagree on our favorite series or model, paint and interior color, but as BMWCCA members we share a strong common bond.

I have been fascinated with cars since paper route and lawn mowing income was used to purchase automotive periodicals and plastic model car kits. My first real car was a non-running 1959 MGA, a 20 dollar purchase in 1971. Talk about teenage rebellion - I managed to take possession of our family's single car garage at the age of 15. At last count, have owned over 65 other vehicles – a wild variety of cars and trucks, imports and domestics. Most were outright purchases, but some of the bizarre trades still provide good stories. My largest mistake and regret, (other than selling the muscle cars) was not having the discipline to photograph each and every one. As a young adult, I did a 4 year stint as a Mazda dealership mechanic. That vocational experience has proven to be a good investment, as I continue to perform all of the maintenance and repair on our vehicles and those of close friends. In recent years, I

have threatened to retire as the family mechanic, but predictably withdraw the warning when I learn what it will cost to have a competent shop do the job. Those same auto repair skills have served as the basis to rationalize with my lovely wife Carole, the need for two adults to own four BMW's: awww... c'mon honey, look at all the money I'm saving on labor!

Enough chatter about me, you want to know what we're going to do as a club chapter in Wichita this year!

I felt my first priority was to make contact with everyone. I made a deliberate effort in February to touch 100% of the Wichita-area membership. If you didn't receive an e-mail, you should have gotten a letter in the mailbox. At the end of February, one third of the total have replied, with a few expressing an interest to help, and believe me – I have a star next to the names of those people. By the time you are reading this, we will have conducted at least one and maybe two, informal meetings. As for the rest of 2010, I'm still formulating and seeking ideas. The Father's Day car show at Lake Afton is one notion. I think I'm qualified to conduct a tech session, and can probably convince my son Alex to help. I am also talking a couple ideas to Phil Johnson, the General Manager at Joe Self BMW. My intention is to use a combination of e-mail and the WichitaBMW.com website to communicate upcoming club chapter activities. If you have an idea – please share it - I'll make sure you receive full credit. More to come ! My e-mail is: BMWCCAWichita@gmail.com

Brad Mehlinger

'Heard on the Strasse' -BMW Buzz

By: Hugo Becker

The 2011 X3 is entering the final phases of testing and while this vehicle will be built in the US, this market will probably not see it first. A the second generation X3, the refreshed X5, and the all new X1, BMW will finally compete in all three of the SUV categories (S, M, and L). One possible fly in the ointment for continental X3 sales will be a potential strengthening of the dollar versus the euro as European nations come to grips with their own debt issues.

Word was circulating that the latest M model, the BMW M1, would show up at the Geneva motor show. As the start of the show approaches, the buzz is that the M1 will be a no show. We'll know soon. The BMW M1 is reported to be powered by a modified N55 turbo engine, furthering BMW's commitment to turbo charging its M offerings. There is a great debate raging on the Internet as to the merits of using high revving naturally aspirated engines rather than the direction towards turbos that the M division seems to be heading too.

BMW Motorrad's phenomenal S1000RR is about to hit the streets. This bike is the current HP champ, surpassing the Suzuki Hayabusa. The S1000RR promises to be one of the most compelling super bikes available, and wait until you see the pricing! It comes in with a base price of \$13,800. Wow!

Even if the M1 won't be at the Geneva show, the Mini Countryman will be. Slated for a 2011 US launch, the Countryman takes the Mini brand into the small SUV (Cute-Ute) territory. Equipped with a powerful direct injected, turbocharged, 1.6L four cylinder, 6 speed transmission (manual or automatic) and Mini's ALL4 all wheel drive, the next Mini should be a hit.



Hybrids continue to come out of the BMW plants. The next up will be the BMW 5 Series ActiveHybrid. With the N55 in-line six cylinder engine and an eight speed automatic transmission, power is augmented under specific driving conditions by a 55 HP electric motor. This car will make its debut at the Geneva Auto Show.

There's a neat little BMW commercial floating out on the Web touting Efficient Dynamics. They even manage to poke a little fun at their Audi compatriots in the process. It's titled, "BMW. Physics Lesson."

www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8eQT3nzs2s

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And in the world of high performance yacht racing, BMW and Oracle teamed up to bring the America's Cup back to the US. An incredibly sophisticated boat, the BMW Oracle entry claimed the cup from rival Alinghi in two races. Alinghi failed to score a victory in the contest.



KC BMW Club Announcement List

Want to stay up to date on the latest happenings in the BMW "welt?"
Contact our webmaster to be added to the KC BMW Club announcement email list.
We'll use this list to notify you of upcoming exciting events and other club news.



Send an email to:
webmaster@kcbmwclub.com



What's In a Name? The BMW 550i GT

By: Hugo Becker

A rose by any other name is a rose. But when is a chrysanthemum a rose? What's that, a chrysanthemum cannot be a rose? Well the same issue exists with automakers' use of the term, GT.

There are too many definitions of the term, Gran Turismo. How else could such disparate vehicles like a Mustang GT, Bentley Continental GT, Nissan GT-R, Ferrari 599 GTB, Pontiac GTO and the new BMW 550i GT all be considered Grand Touring cars.

Realistically, they can't. A GT has to be a car capable of quick intercity transit on the European continent. For instance, no pre-WW II car could be considered a GT because the quality of roads needed for swift transit from, say, Paris to Milan didn't really exist. And to call any two door coupe a GT would be ludicrous. After all, who would consider a '55 Chevy Bel Air, stove-bolt six, a GT.

The term Grand Touring was applied to cars long after the term Grand Tour came into use. The Grand Tour was the term used to describe an adolescent Englishman's finishing school trip about the continent. The term first surfacing in literature in the 17th century, the Grand Tour was a must for affluent males and, later, females of English society. (A lot has been written about the Grand Tour, but one recent publication, Tim Moore's, "The Grand Tour", merits reading. It's one of the funniest books I've ever read. To give you a flavor, it involves a well-used (used up?) Rolls Royce and a driver dressed in a purple velveteen suit.)

The classic definition of a Grand Touring car revolves around the following characteristics, room for two (or 2+2) and their luggage, capable of comfortable high speed cruising, oriented to the driver (not chauffeur driven), and capable of handling any road thrown at it. They had to be able to handle the roads up and over the spine of Europe, the Alps, with aplomb. The classic GT car would be something like the BMW 3.0 CS, lithe, agile, perfectly proportioned, and eminently capable on mountain passes or autobahn.



Few previously would have included the 550i GT in the Gran Turismo category, however. It's tall, full-figured, four door body makes this an odd duck BMW. Taller than the equivalent Touring, yet shorter than the X5, the saving grace of the 550i GT is its ease of entrance and exit. The slightly taller stance than the sedan or station wagon models raise the 'H-point', hip point, which makes sliding into the seats easier. As the population ages, tricks like this can sell cars.

But what that rather large shape does do is coddle three plus passengers in the lap of luxury. Its versatile two mode rear opening allows it to swallow the contents of an antiquing run using the hatch, or a smaller items without exposing the cabin to the weather using the smaller bootlid. And yet it still provides the driver the tools to enjoy the joy of long distance, high speed, motoring.



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Unlike its smaller (closer to the ideal) GT brethren, the 550i GT delivers high levels of comfort to back seat passengers. Depending on the options specified, four zone climate control, heated and cooled seating surfaces and rear seat entertainment spoils rather than squeezes those relegated to the back seat. And unlike its luxury saloon competitors, it sacrifices little in the way of driving pleasure.



Exterior styling from the B-pillar forward looks like a tall 7 (the 550i GT is on a modified 7 platform with a wheelbase equal to that of the standard wheelbase 7). Where BMW had to get clever was from the B-pillar back. Here the coupe like roofline, tall rear deck lid and hatchback functionality required a visual trick to keep it from looking bloated. Cleverly, the BMW designers added a horizontal crease above the shoulder line and had the two overlap each other a bit. It works.



However, the real trick to making a big vehicle like a GT is to deliver similar driving performance that its smaller siblings enjoy. The 550i GT does that through a variety of techniques. First is the high torque, high horsepower, 4.4L turbocharged V8. That great power plant is coupled to a sophisticated eight speed automatic transmission. This transmission is lighter and shifts quicker than the six speed it replaces. It really works well with the flat torque delivery of the engine and shifts perfectly in any of its modes.



A quick jaunt onto the interstate confirmed that this would be a comfortable all day cruiser. The turbo-charged V8 providing prodigious passing power with the ultra-smooth 8 speed ZF automatic transmission ticking off gear changes soto voce.

But interstate highway miles represent only a portion of a GT's repertoire. A quick blast through a set of twisty bits was enlightening. While not as agile as a 335i coupe, for example, it didn't fall flat on its face either. Firming up the suspension to Sport, the 550i GT felt good at 6 to 7 tenths. But don't expect to see this car at track days.

The optional Adaptive drive permits multiple suspension tuning, from Comfort to Sport + and the integral active steering allows speed dependent steering inputs from the rear wheels. This features eases slow speed parking maneuvers and mimics a shorter wheelbases car's agility at higher speeds.

BMW has given us something, a very competent and comfortable car, somewhere between a Touring and an SUV, that is as comfortable in town and as it is on the road. Is it a GT? Not really, but would you rather they call it a Sports Activity Vehicle?

So, if you're in the market for a four door car that offers a more user friendly ingress and egress than either its sedan or SUV counterparts, yet acquits itself decently on two lanes and can gobble interstates all day without breaking a sweat, the 550i GT merits a look.

Car Control—What's That?

By: Ryan Staub

The Kansas City BMW Club has hosted High-Performance Driver's Education events for over 15 years. HPDE events are a great way to learn the capabilities of your car, car control skills, and the "line" around a racetrack. These events are held at road-course race tracks across the country, and drivers typically reach speeds in excess of 100mph.

Many of our members have always been interested in improving their driving skills, but for one reason or another, a HPDE event wasn't the first step for them to take. For some, the \$250-\$350 entry fee for an HPDE event is too much; for others, the thought of driving around a real race track is just too intimidating; and for many (especially those with kids), taking 2 days off to go play at a race track just isn't a possibility. Whatever the reason is,

car control skills in our brief classroom sessions, and then the real fun will begin. All participants will receive in-car instruction from our experienced performance driving instructors while they navigate through many challenging and fun exercises: slaloms, emergency lane change, dry and wet skid pads, emergency braking, and a mini road-course racetrack.

These exercises are a lot of fun and certainly get your heart beating, but the main benefit is to experience, feel, and know how to respond in situations where you need to use car control skills to avoid an accident. In this course you will learn the capabilities of your vehicle and how to control it in an unthreatening environment. We highly encourage our male and female members of any age to come out, have some fun, and improve their car control skills.



we've recognized that our members need an entry level car control/performance driving course.

In June, the KC BMW Club plans to hold our first Car Control Clinic. For those familiar with the "Street Survival" events that we have organized to teach teenagers accident avoidance and performance driving techniques, our Car Control Clinic will share many components but with a focus toward adult drivers. Participants will learn the basic concepts of

In the next 4-6 weeks we will finalize the details for this event. Details about this event will be posted on the www.kcbmwclub.com website and we will also send out an e-mail to all members on our announcement list (if you're not on the list, contact our webmaster to get added).

BMW CCA Chapter Officers National Congress





GET FUELED UP AT OKTOBERFEST

Join us at Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wi.

To register, or
for more details, visit
www.bmwccaofest.org
or call
800-878-9292

Monday 8/23	Tuesday 8/24	Wednesday 8/25	Thursday 8/26	Friday 8/27	Saturday 8/28	Sunday 8/29
First Timers Meeting	Concourse	TSD Rally Symphony Car Control Clinic Driving School Club Race School	Autocross Car Control Clinic Driving School Club Race School	Autocross Driving School Club Race	BimmerMeet II Driving School Club Race	Driving School Club Race
Fun Rally Beach Party	Fun Rally Buffet	Fun Rally Lunch at Road America	Fun Rally Buffet at Road America Karting Drive-In Movie	Fun Rally Final Banquet		

2010 Membership Drive



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Schedule of Events

March 2010

Check www.kcbmwclub.com
For the latest info.

• **1st Saturday GTG**

Panera, Shawnee Mission Pkwy

• **Monthly Meeting**

Join your BMW Club friends for a great evening of food, drink and camaraderie.

6:00p Zarda's at 87th & I-35

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2010

• **1st Saturday GTG**

Panera, Shawnee Mission Pkwy

• **Tech Session**

Casa de la Vossler
6500 Granada, Prairie Village, KS
9:30a til Chuck says vamoose
Food & Beverage provided

• **Detailing Clinic**

Casa de la Gelatka
Noon til 3p
Food & Beverage provided

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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