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Welcome to issue two of ClassicsWorld German. This, along with two sister series focusing on cars from Japan and Europe, will form a collection of publications focusing not on brands, but on individual aspects of our motoring heritage. In this series, we'll be looking at the very best classics Germany has to offer, discussing their stories and driving them to see if they're everything our hearts promised.

The BMW M-series has become one of the best-respected names in the world of motoring - and with good reason, if you look at the cars that have worn this hallowed badge with pride. It was in the 1980s that much of this reputation was forged, courtesy of supersaloons such as the legendary E30 M3, the blistering E28 M5 and the thunderous E24 M635CSi. All of these models, and more, can be found inside this publication.

We've looked at the history of the cars, and we've even pitted some of them against their more modern iterations to determine whether the 1980s really was the heyday of the M brand.



We've looked at some of the best examples of the best models while putting this publication together, and we've assessed not only which are the best examples to buy, but what you need to look for before you take that big step into M-car ownership for yourself.

Thank you for buying this bookazine. We hope you'll have as much fun reading it as we did making it.

Sam Skelton,
Editor



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8 CLASSIC BMW BUYS

We recommend 8 of the best classic BMWs from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s that you should consider buying right now!

WORDS: GUY BAKER MAIN PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON DODD

Whilst the majority of modern cars are very safe, highly efficient, technologically advanced and incredibly reliable, most lack real character. And – aside from a few big-budget exotic supercars – it's becoming harder and harder for owners to feel truly passionate about what they drive. The hard truth is that many of the latest, albeit impressive, models on offer are little more than hi-tech automotive white goods. And that's why more and more BMW enthusiasts are turning to classic BMWs instead, especially modern classics from the 1980s. Built in an era when every model had its own individual style and character, almost all offered a more engaging driving experience, came with less nannying tech and claimed an appeal which later models somehow seem to have lost. There are other advantages to a classic BMW too, with many suffering

little or no depreciation and even the tantalising possibility of future investment potential. However, before you rush out and splash your cash on a classic BMW there are a few things you should bear in mind. As a buyer you need to be pretty wary. With classics, proper provenance is key, so any rebuilds must be backed up with plenty of pictures, videos and piles of paperwork. And when it comes to inspecting any would-be purchase the most important thing to look out for is rust. It can appear almost anywhere and can be a classic killer. An expert inspection by a BMW classic specialist an essential pre-requisite, and low values for many models in the 1980s and 1990s mean lots of older restorations will have been done on the cheap, with non-original parts and patched-up corrosion instead of proper repairs. They might look good on the outside, but underneath they

could be dying. You should also be prepared to set aside a contingency fund each year to keep your classic BMW in top condition – most need continual maintenance, especially if taken on track - and the older the car the greater its likely needs. Unless you know exactly what you're doing, or know someone who does, you're better off buying a fully-refurbished car rather than a restoration project. Fortunately, classic car insurance can be good value, but your policy should include an annual agreed value, legal protection, some kind of break-down cover and track-day cover if required. There is of course a plethora of modern classic BMWs that appeal, but we have chosen our favourites across a wide range of budgets. So, whatever your particular tastes there should be a classic BMW here for you. Just make sure you keep it as original as possible!



E30 M3 - The first M3 is also the best. But, finding an E30 you can afford might prove a serious challenge...

E30 M3 values have sky-rocketed over the last few years. Just five years ago a good example was less than £20,000 – now that same car is worth at least £50,000. And some optimistic sellers are pricing low-mileage Sport Evolution models at way over £100,000. So, unless you have access to some serious funds the E30 M3 might not be the classic BMW for you.

If you do, however, then you're buying into a piece of BMW motorsport history. Road-going versions of BMW's E30 M3 DTM race car are among the most desirable sports coupés money can buy. Lightweight, wonderfully communicative and boasting a bespoke four-cylinder S14 engine, based on the M88 six-cylinder M1 supercar powerplant, the E30 M3 is built ready for the track.

All European models were fitted with a dog-leg Getrag five-speed manual gearbox, plus a rear limited-slip diff and a MacPherson coil and strut front suspension, with a rear semi-trailing arm set-up. produced in left-hand drive coupé and convertible forms, the original

2.3-litre four-pot engine produced 212hp, with a 0-62mph time of 6.6-seconds, whilst the Evolution or 'Evo 2' version made 220hp. But the most desirable E30 M3 was is the limited-edition 238hp 2.5-litre Sport Evolution – like the immaculate Black 1990 example here.

Purchased by BMW enthusiast Ian Goree in 2006 it has covered a pretty low 112,000-miles and boasts leather upholstery, Recaro front seats, AC Schitzer front and rear shocks and a Z3M differential cover. A cast-iron investment, Ian's car is a peach – if you can find one as good as this you will be doing well.

BUYING ADVICE

It's vital you buy the best example you can for the money: "Physical condition is key," explains Stuart Draper at expert Munich Legends. "Get the car checked by a specialist, looking out for rust almost anywhere – many cars will need full restoration as a result. They're also easily clocked, when the kph speedo is



replaced with a UK mph one."

Also check whether it's been tracked (most have at some point) and your E30 should come with a history file full of receipts for expenditure and old MoTs. If you can, buy from a BMW club member or other recommended source. Buying a 'known' car is usually a safer move, however interior trim and finishing parts are becoming harder to source Stuart confirms.

And according to Gary Woollatt at BMW specialists Autobahn: "The key things to look out for on E30s aside from rust, are worn timing chains and tired gearboxes."



E28 M5 - Now a rare collector's item, the first M5 is still a treat to drive. And it's fast-appreciating, too.

BMW's first M5 debuted in February 1984 and was based on the E28 535xi chassis. Featuring a body kit evolved from the previous E12 M535i it delivered excellent performance (for the day) and – compared to later M5s – possessed relatively understated looks, too. At launch it was the fastest production saloon in the world, with a 3453cc naturally-aspirated straight-six 24v DOHC engine producing 282bhp at 6500rpm. Top speed was 156mph and just 2191 examples were built by BMW – all being five-speed manuals. UK buyers bought just 187 cars so these are rare today.

Compared to later M5s the cabin feels large and airy and the driving position is quite high, but the E28 still possesses sharp throttle responses and a great-sounding straight-six engine. Quick but not to be rushed, the ride is gentle for an M car and the suspension and brakes do fall a little short of contemporary track-day fare. But as a classic drive this is a marvellous machine.

Pricing the E28 is fairly difficult though – it's just so rare. Recent sales have seen cars in poor condition fetching a bit less than £50,000, and mint condition examples changing hands for £75,000 plus. Life-long BMW fan, Ross Culver, is the lucky owner of the great-looking



177k-mile Red example in our shots, which he E28 M5 Saloon bought at auction five-years ago. Over that time this car has appreciated significantly, which is what Ross had hoped for. You may have seen it before – it's previously appeared in several motoring magazines over the years.

BUYING ADVICE

According to James Redish at M5 specialists Redish Motorsport: "Aside from a strong provenance the key issue buyers should look out for is rust and corrosion – the front wings at the bumper

joint, inner front turrets, jacking points, sills and rear axle mounting area are all prime locations." Buyers should also beware of any timing chain issues, excessive play in the steering linkages and worn rear axle beam bushes, too.

"The E28 is so rare that some collectors now buy in almost any condition, expecting to have to do a full restoration," Stuart from Munich Legends tells us. "But beware that some parts of the overdrive gearbox are almost impossible get hold of and if new timing chains are needed, cost-wise then you're looking at a full engine rebuild."

E34 M5 BMW's last hand-built M car provides a relatively affordable route into classic M5 ownership.

Built at BMW's Motorsport Division, the second-generation E34 M5 was BMW's last hand-finished M car. And you can pick up a starter car in need of restoration for less than £20,000 - with minters currently selling for around £50,000. Two different engines were fitted to the E34 BMW M5, with the initial 3535cc 311bhp six-cylinder motor upgraded from 1992 to a 3795cc unit, with 335bhp. This later car also came with a six-speed manual rather than a five-speed manual, 295lb ft of torque versus 266lb ft, a tweaked suspension and an elevated 166mph top speed.

1992 saw the release of a LHD-only five-door Touring version, introduced in left hand drive form. Just 715 right-hand drive Saloons were sold in the UK, including 50 1995 UK Limited Edition models, whilst Europe saw four special



editions - including the sought-after 20 Jahre edition.

BUYING ADVICE

As with all classics the E34 suffers from rust: "Rust and corrosion problems can affect the E34, with rear sills and jacking points, front jacking points, the

bottoms of front wings and the petrol flap frequent offenders," confirms James Redish at BMW specialists Redish Motorsport. "Buyers should also look out for timing chain issues and failing steering linkages, as well as perished bushes, warped discs and misbehaving electrics."



E12 M535i BMW's first M-tuned saloon set the template for all that followed. Great investment potential...

BMW's first M-tuned saloon set the template for all that followed. Great investment potential...

Forerunner to the first M5, BMW's E12 M535i packed an M90 3.5-litre straight-six engine with 215bhp. Based on the standard six-cylinder rear-drive 535i Saloon, but with a close-ratio Getrag gearbox added and upgraded brakes, it also claimed Recaro sports seats, a limited-slip diff and various other BMW Motorsport options.

Mahle mesh wheels hid the upgraded front brakes and stiffer suspension, whilst the bodywork received a deep front spoiler, a rubber rear spoiler sat on the boot, and iconic M striping appeared down the flanks. The steering wheel came from BMW's M1 supercar. The 0 to 60mph dash took just 6.9 seconds, with top speed recorded at 142mph. Cars needing some serious TLC start at £10,000, rising to £30,000 or more for well-restored examples.

BUYING ADVICE

Corrosion is the biggest enemy of the E12, but availability of most panels is good. Check everywhere including the sills, boot floor, suspension mounting points, base of the C-pillar and the floorpan. The M90 engine is rugged but needs regular maintenance to ensure longevity. Any untoward noises suggest a rebuild will be needed, whilst the transmission is tough - but can need refurbishing. Almost all trim items can wear out over time.



E24 M635CSi One of the best-looking BMWs ever, the E24 M635CSi is a superb classic to own.

Admit it – you had a poster of the M635CSi on your bedroom wall when you were young? Quite a few of us did – and with good reason. Exuding brash Eighties confidence and imbued with classic shark-nosed styling, BMW's super-cool M Sport Coupé packed a modified version of the M1 supercar engine under its bonnet, and was the second fastest BMW ever built, after the M1. With 286bhp and 251lb ft of torque the five-speed manual M635CSi was one of the fastest cars on the road at the time and its high-performance M88 engine used a higher compression ratio, plus modifications to the ignition and injection system to produce even more power than the M1. And yet it claimed a luxurious 2+2 cabin with stylish design touches that harked back to a golden classic era.

The official 0-62mph dash took around 6.3 seconds – although road testers got the 0-60mph dash down to just 5.4 seconds – and the 14.9 second quarter-mile time and 158mph top speed put the M635CSi into 1980s supercar territory. Yet a compliant ride and a lavish spec could see four occupants accommodated in comfort, whilst bespoke exterior touches included BBS RS wheels, a rear lip spoiler, a larger front air dam, larger front brakes and a revised lower suspension. And there were other factory options too – our 1989 Diamond Schwartz metallic feature car (which was one of the last UK cars produced) is a Shadowline



model – with optional black trim rather than standard chrome trim – plus factory fitted side-skirt extensions. This car's original dealership invoice was £43,704.35 + taxes. You can expect to pay more than this now though – M635CSi values stretch right up to £70,000, or even more for concours restoration vehicles.

BUYING ADVICE

Rust is by far the biggest E24 M635CSi issue. "They're notorious for rust so you really must inspect any potential purchase rigorously," Stuart at Munich Legends emphasises. "Especially on the front wings, on the sills and under the wheel arch fl

ares, although it can be found pretty much everywhere else, too." Parts supply isn't always painless either and some restoration jobs can be far harder than others – as owner of this car, Tahmid, testifies: "The M635CSi has been a breeze and we haven't incurred many problems, only having to keep up regular maintenance. However, we also bought a second Highline M635CSi in Alpine White and decided to get it resprayed – the quote was around £4000. But when the bumpers were removed, it soon became apparent that the car was riddled with rust – 14 months and £12,000 later it was finally sorted out!" You have been warned...





E31 850CSi Stylish but never brash, the sleek E31 850CSi is a low-profile super-GT that's fast appreciating...

Back in 1992 BMW took the 'standard' 5.6-litre V12 engine from the E31 850i cruiser and gave it some of the M treatment. The resultant 380bhp S70B56 was dropped into the engine bay of one of BMW's rarest models – the 850CSi.

Just 1510 cars were produced – all six-speed manuals - with only 160 built in right hand drive. And the Oxford Green Metallic car you see here is as close as we ever got to an E31 M8. In fact, this late 1995 850CSi is number 149, and the last car of just 21 to be finished in Oxford Green Metallic.

The ultimate autobahn-stormer it would be happy cruising all day at 150mph, but with bottom-end performance a match for supercars of the day (with a 5.4-second 0-60mph time) it could also have shown a clean pair of heels to anything that dared take it on.

A lavish spec included M-uprated suspension, larger brake with Brembo calipers, M front and rear spoilers, side skirts, aerodynamic mirrors, a rear differential oil cooler, an engine oil cooler and a fantastic looking exhaust system. And BMW's four-wheel steer system Aktive Hinterachs-Kinematik (AHK), or Active rear axle Kinematics) was also standard on the CSi. This particular example cost the original owner £83,180+ taxes.

Production ended in 1996 and as a low-volume model it's no surprise



to discover that the 850CSi is now eminently collectable, with cars changing hands for between £50,000 and £130,000.

BUYING ADVICE

It's definitely wise to spend more to buy a better 850CSi than to start off with a rough one. However, they rarely ever do come up for sale and are usually snapped-up instantly. Infamous for electrical niggles, the E31 also has high parts prices and it has that bespoke four-wheel steering system which is known to be extremely tricky to keep maintained in tip-top condition. Underbody rust

can become a major bug-bear: "Lines, hydraulics and pumps can all corrode, with potentially substantial labour costs to rectify properly," Munich Legend's Stuart Draper points out. "Big budgets can rapidly be swallowed up, with electrical issues also costly to rectify." "In addition, the seat tilt adjusters do not always work and can be costly to repair," explains owner Tahmid. "Headlining that's beginning to sag can also be pricey to repair. And if there's one issue, it often leads to others. Take an 850CSi expert with you to inspect the car – timely previous maintenance is key," Tahmid stresses.

E36/8 Z3 M Coupé

Love it or loathe it, the 'bread-van'-styled Z3 M Coupé is now a collectable classic – with a price tag to match...

The passage of time has been kind to the Z3 M, and with an old-school, chassis and two different M engines it's a hoot to drive. Original models employed the 3.2-litre in-line six-cylinder 316bhp S50 engine from the E36 M3, which took the Z3 M Coupe from 0 to 62mph in just 5.2 seconds; whilst later 2001-2002 models used the 325hp S54 motor from the new E46 M3. These later models also claimed switchable stability control, improved brakes and a tyre-pressure warning system, whilst the 0-62mph time was shaved by 0.1-seconds. BMW sold just 168 examples of this version in the



UK. Well equipped, the original 1998 UK list price was £40,595, and you'll pay anywhere between £23,000 and £50,000 for one today

BUYING ADVICE

These cars tend to be enthusiast-owned and so most are well looked after, but always buy the best you

can, keep it original and don't skimp on maintenance. Servicing is every 7500-miles for the S50 engine, and every 11,000-miles for the S54 – your Z3 M must have a blemish-free service history. Watch out for double Vanos failure, stretched throttle cables, incorrect valve clearances, worn suspension components and any signs of rust.

E30 Z1 - Quirky yet exclusive, BMW's left-hand drive Z1 is a one-off. And it's appreciating in value.

The first of BMW's Z Series Roadsters wasn't originally intended to go into production, but the public's reception was so positive that BMW took the gamble. Produced in limited numbers from 1989 to 1991, every one made was left-hand drive, with the official UK cars claiming a speedometer in miles per hour and a fuel gauge in gallons, not litres. Prices currently sit between £25,000 and £60,000 and with plastic body panels and vertically sliding doors which drop into the door sills, it has no real rivals. You can expect values to continue to rise.

One of the first BMWs to use a multi-link rear suspension, the 2.5-litre straight-six engine is good for 168bhp, the car's five-speed manual transmission comes from the E30 325i.



BUYING ADVICE

Available in six exterior and four interior colours, most buyers opted for a red model. But, whatever colour you prefer your Z1 must pack a full service history and pristine provenance. Supply of

bespoke parts is limited so repairs can prove expensive, but other common parts are cheap and readily available. Watch out for rust, cracked or scratched panels, and broken door belts. An engine swap will devalue the car.



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E24 M635CSi



These two time machines share motorsport heritage yet offer something completely different for the classic BMW enthusiast – which is the best prospect?

WORDS: GUY BAKER PHOTOGRAPHY: HEXAGON CLASSICS

More and more enthusiasts are choosing to buy a classic BMW, with more recent models from the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s most in demand. These are usually more affordable than earlier BMWs, and finding parts can be less of a problem too. If you choose a BMW Motorsport model – like this issue's two legendary contenders – then you won't be left wanting in terms of performance. Both the E24 M635CSi and the E39 M5 provide levels of acceleration which are impressive even by contemporary standards, as well as being a pleasure to drive and own. Both these BMWs can be bought for similar money, so we've put them head-to-head in an effort to determine

which one makes the best classic BMW buy. Both boast major motorsport engineering input, offer serious potential for appreciation and are guaranteed to put a smile on your face every time you drive them. So, which one would you choose?

MOTORSPORT HERITAGE

For those of a certain generation the shark-nosed E24 M635CSi was the dream car. Lying on your bed looking longingly at a poster of BMW's super-cool, super-confident, super-quick sports coupé you could dream you'd won the football pools and were now the super-savvy man about town – with all the glamorous trappings of success.

And in late 1980s Britain little said

you'd made it more than owning BMW's stylish motorsport-inspired M635CSi, complete with a driver-focused interior and that modified M1 supercar engine under the bonnet. In 1984 it was the second-fastest BMW ever built, after the M1, its six-cylinder 24-valve M88 engine produced 286bhp and 251lb ft of torque

Employing a higher compression ratio, as well as modifications to the ignition and injection systems, it produced even more power than the M1. Yet it boasted a spacious comfortable cabin with classic black boxy '80s styling. The 0-60mph dash took as little as 5.4 seconds – and with a 14.9-second quarter-mile time plus a 158mph top speed the five-speed

vs E39 M5



manual M635CSi boasted supercar-rivalling performance.

Just 524 right-hand-drive cars were built between 1985 and 1989, and aside from the bespoke engine and ancillaries the M635CSi also claimed a revised suspension (compared to the standard 635CSi) as well as larger brakes and a limited-slip differential. And its BMW M Technic body kit distinguished it – even at distance – from all other E24 6 Series coupés.

Despite the performance, the M635CSi possessed a surprisingly compliant ride and the car's comprehensive specification also included bespoke BBS RS wheels, a rear lip spoiler and a larger front air dam. A variety of factory options were available whilst BMW of Great Britain offered an unofficial 'Motorsport Edition' with Shadowline exterior trim and M-striped seats. These were available in three special colour and trim combinations, Misano Red with black leather, Nogaro Silver with black leather and Macao Blue with white leather.

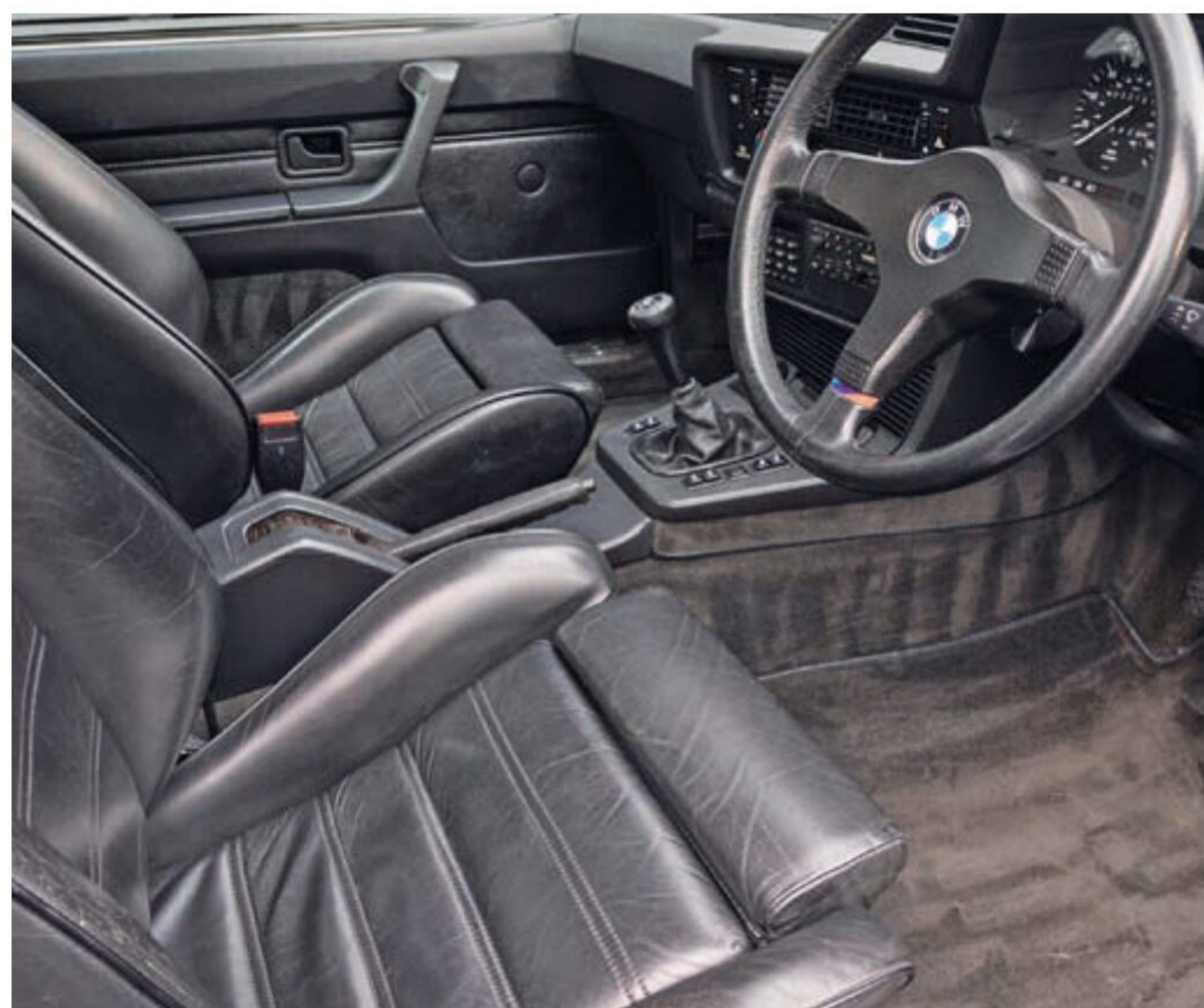
Fast forward a few years and the 'pools' had been replaced by the National Lottery whilst demand

for BMW's brash 1980's icon had dwindled – as had values. But in more recent times prices have risen significantly, right up to £70,000 or more for concours restorations. Leggy examples in need of some TLC start at £20,000, while £35k-£60k bags a better example needing little or no restoration. BMW's exclusive M635CSi delivers a blend of performance, build quality, practicality and effortless continent-crossing comfort that few other classics at any price can match. And as one of the best-looking BMWs ever, we reckon you should buy one now before prices become somewhat prohibitive. Perhaps surprisingly, our second contender, the younger and marginally quicker E39 V8 M5, is actually cheaper to buy at the moment. But with decent examples fast disappearing, prices are rising. So, now is an ideal time to snap one up. It's still a very usable M5, this, so you could buy one now, use it regularly, and likely still sell it on for a profit in a few years.

The E39 M5 may possess somewhat understated looks (aside from the famous quad exhaust pipes) but with a 400bhp chain-driven 4941cc V8



TWIN TEST E24 M635CSi vs E39 M5



A 1980s icon from its shark nose to its functional black leather trim, the M635CSi is undeniably appealing.

S62 engine lurking under the bonnet its performance is seriously impressive. With double VANOS variable valve timing, individual throttle bodies for each cylinder and a dual air induction system, the E39 M5 was capable of touching 186mph with the factory 155mph speed limiter removed, and it came with a highly-dependable Getrag Type D six-speed manual transmission.

Compared to the standard E39 540i manual transmission, the M5 gained a reinforced clutch, a rear differential utilising a shorter 3.15:1 ratio, and a limited slip differential with 25 percent maximum locking. A revised suspension

setup saw the M5 sit lower, with two levels of damper resistance controlled via the console-mounted Sport button. This also adjusted the electronic throttle butterflies for faster throttle response, enabling the E39 to hit 60mph in just 4.8 seconds, and 62mph in 5.3 seconds. Handling was impressive too, with stronger mounts, bushes and wheel bearings.

Despite being 15-years newer than the M635CSi, the BMW family heritage is still very clear in the E39 M5's cabin, but by 1998 it had evolved to include more curvaceous styling and a much chunkier steering wheel. A September

2000 facelift introduced headlights with a corona ring, revised rear lights, front parking sensors, Alcantara headlining and grey-faced main dials. You could pay as little as £15,000 for a high-mile car in need of some work, right up to £40,000 or more for a low-mileage show car. Prospective owners should be prepared to set aside a fighting fund of around £3,000 a year to keep their M5 in top condition, more if they plan to take it on track.

OWNER'S DELIGHT

You won't find many M635CSi owners taking their cars on track, however, with most just happy to savour the coupé's



Ten years on, the BMW M flagship still combines muted aggression with tasteful functionality - the ultimate discreet supercar.

superbly appointed cabin on the open road. Cruising around town, spending a weekend away or taking part in a classic car rally, the easy-to-drive E24 makes the perfect companion. With four proper seats, superb all-round vision, plenty of creature comforts like plush leather upholstery, sports seats, air-conditioning and a sunroof, the M635CSi is in its element as a grand tourer.

But if the mood takes you that motorsport-enhanced engine allows the E24 to pull smoothly and rapidly in any gear. Overtaking is always a breeze and if you do want to tackle

more twisty B-roads at speed then the M635CSi doesn't disappoint. Inevitably it feels a little old-school from behind the wheel, but the refined M635CSi can still happily keep up with modern, faster, machinery without breaking into a sweat

Admiring glances are guaranteed wherever you go, with BMW's iconic styling instantly recognised. Every journey, however short, is rewarding – making this E24 a dream classic to own. As Paul Michaels at London's Hexagon Classics confirms: "Considered avant-garde back then, today its admired M characteristics make it a much sought-after classic."

And with only 53,100 miles from new, this pristine Alpine White example for sale with Hexagon Classics at the time of writing would make an ideal buy. A 1985 car with a black leather interior, it was originally supplied by H.E Averill & Sons BMW in Norwich. The car's full service history details 21 service visits (including the important running-in service at 1,224 miles) with 18 at official BMW dealers and 14 at the same dealer.

This car's comprehensive specification also includes electric front seats, a limited-slip differential, air-conditioning, an electric sunroof,

TWIN TEST E24 M635CSI vs E39 M5



electric windows, central locking, BMW cross-spoke alloys tinted glass, and a Blaupunkt New York Square 205 stereo with an electric aerial. It also comes with the original driver's book pack and spare keys, tools, BMW torch and a history file containing old MoTs and road tax discs. The asking price at the time of test was £57,995, including a 12-month comprehensive warranty.

In contrast, despite possessing even greater performance, the E39 M5 offers a lower-profile ownership experience. Much admired by those in the know, its understated styling means you can travel from A to B without raising too many eyebrows. And for aficionados that's part of the E39's charm.

But the M5's performance is its overriding appeal: with the merest dab of the throttle confirming the reserves of power within. And although the E39 is perfectly comfortable at low speeds – with acres of passenger space, comforting leather upholstery and a pliant ride – its true character is revealed as the revs pass 4000rpm and the V8's low-end rasp opens up into a snarling growl. The real-world performance feels even quicker than the official figures suggest (0-62mph in 5.3 seconds) and the saloon's 369lb ft of torque goes to work – pulling you towards the horizon with alacrity.

Despite the plentiful power, the E39 chassis manages to deal with it pretty effectively. Yes, there is a degree of body roll, but it never gets out of control – and the rear-drive set-up means you can show off safely in dry conditions.



The durable six-speed manual transmission and mechanical limited-slip differential seem to be able to deal with anything, whilst the steering is accurate and well-weighted, if not supremely communicative. And all the while the driver remains pampered in the M5's snug, comfortable and brilliantly laid-out cabin. "And that's why this model is, for many admirers, the definitive BMW performance sports saloon," claims Hexagon's Paul Michaels.

The 2002 two-owner Carbon Black

M5 you see here, which has covered a laughably low 32,900 miles, was for sale at Hexagon Classics at the time of writing for £41,995. With a full BMW and specialist service history, it's in excellent condition and boasts an impressive specification that includes black leather upholstery, an electric glass sunroof, electric memory seats, BMW's professional communications package, a telephone, climate control, electric windows, electrically adjustable folding mirrors, individual sunshade



glazing, xenon headlamps, front and rear park distance control and a CD changer

We doubt you'll find a better example anywhere, with this M5's accompanying history file including loads of invoices and old MoTs plus all the original books, four keys and a 12-month warranty.

BUYER BEWARE

As with any classic car it's vital you follow some basic tips: always research

potential issues thoroughly first (we'll highlight the main issues for these two models) befriend a trustworthy expert specialist who could help you inspect potential cars and provide reliable ongoing maintenance, plan how you intend to store your classic BMW and set aside appropriate funds to deal with any maintenance and repair issues as they arise.

There are many things that could potentially go wrong on a classic BMW, but buying a relatively low mileage

rust-free example, with a complete service history and an accompanying history file, gives you the best chance of avoiding a lemon. Originality is always prized and getting an expert inspection is essential before agreeing any deal

For would-be E24 M635CSi buyers the biggest danger is undoubtedly rust. "These cars are notorious for rust so you really must inspect any potential purchase rigorously," confirms Stuart at Munich Legends. "Especially on the front wings, on the sills and under the wheel arch flares, although it can be found pretty much everywhere else too."

And it's not always clear how much of a rust problem a particular car has really got until the bumpers are removed – so if the owner is prepared to let you do this then the chances are the car doesn't have a major underlying issue. But if it does, at that point you could be looking at a bill of anything up to £15,000 to rectify front wings, rear quarters, wheel arches, inner front wings, exhausts and large parts of the underbody. And a proper full respray could easily set you back £3000.

The tough M635CSi clutch will eventually wear out, the gearbox is rugged but could potentially need a rebuild – check all the gears work smoothly – and watch out for leaking fuel tanks, cracked engine mounts and worn suspension bushes. Some parts are harder to source than others, but fortunately the M88 engine is very durable. However, you must check for oil leaks and note that the 100k mile timing chain change must be done

TWIN TEST E24 M635CSI VS E39 M5



properly - it's very expensive because the cylinder head and sump have to come off and the tensioners and guide rails should be replaced, as well as a new head gasket and oil seals fitted.

OE tyres are expensive, and some owners have chosen to replace the OE brakes with stronger aftermarket items. Windscreens often need replacing too, with leaky seals potentially leading to ECU damage.

The newer E39 M5 is less likely to suffer substantial rust issues but you must still scour the whole car for any signs of tin worm - especially the wheel arches, sills, jacking points, door bottoms, boot lid edges, the panel behind the rear bumper and inside the fuel filler cap.

Buyers should check all the electrics

including the climate control, electric seats, electric windows and central locking work - the digital dash can lose pixels - as well as looking out for any condensation in the headlamps and making sure the windscreen is free of cracks.

Factory BMW discs and pads can be expensive, so many owners have fitted cheaper alternatives and the original wheels do corrode - so budget for a full refurbishment if needed. Check carefully for engine smoke under heavy throttle, oil or water leaks and any erratic running - there are two mass airflow meters that can need replacing - and any VANOS rattle when warm is a major concern. The unit does rattle slightly when cold, but this should soon

quieten down. If it persists a new (or rebuilt) VANOS unit is needed.

Clutches usually between 60,000 and 100,000 miles, and the six-speed manual Getrag gearbox is usually highly dependable - it's best to walk away if there are any issues with it. A suspension refresh is wise after 100,000 miles, worn control arms and ARB bushes often need replacing while rear differential seals can leak, costing £1,000 or more to fix. An average M5 service at a specialist will set you back between £250 and £600 depending on what's required and that lusty V8 means you'll do well to better 20mpg in normal driving conditions. However, few would buy an E39 M5 with fuel economy in mind! ■





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THE APPRENTICE

Owned since the early 1990s and daily driven for almost a decade, Alex Moore's E30 M3 has since been restored by his own fair hand. That's all the more impressive given that he had absolutely no restoration experience before starting the project...

WORDS: SIMON JACKSON PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON DODD





In 1990 I went to look at a Lancia Delta Integrale with my workmate as he was looking for a new car, that's when I saw an M3 for the first time – it was Alpine White with Red leather. I knew I had to have one..." Alex Moore was the tender age of 20 when he first clapped eyes on a BMW M3, it was undoubtedly a defining moment in his automotive life. Seven months of working solid overtime shifts followed, the savings accrued putting Alex in the financial position of being able to buy his first BMW just in time for his 21st birthday.

With little knowledge of the E30 he now so adored, Alex promptly sold his trusty 1.3-litre Ford Escort and acquired the 1987 Alpine White BMW M3 you see here now, swallowing the resultant eye-watering hike in his insurance premium which was – wait for it – a staggering £1900 per annum! Regardless, Alex had worked hard to achieve his goal and all power to him for that.

"For eight years I used the car everyday to drive to work – a 60-mile round trip – I loved driving it, it was great fun and always got attention from people waving or pulling up next to me asking about the car. My shift finished at 4am some mornings and driving home through London I was stopped two or three times a week, I was always asked what I was doing. Most of the time the police just wanted to talk to me about the car!

This happened for a couple of months then I think every copper in Lewisham knew who I was and never stopped me again!" Alex laughed. By 1999 Alex and the E30 had racked-up some pretty serious mileage together and the engine, now showing 200,000 kilometres (124,000-miles) was starting to grumble a bit – rattling on start-up. Following some research, Alex booked the car into a BMW main dealer expecting a £300-£400 bill for a quick tune-up. In Alex's own words the resultant £940 bill 'knocked him sideways', and the worst part was that the rattling issue was still present when he collected the car.

An argument obviously ensued which led Alex to seek a second opinion, in the process finding specialist Bexley Motor Works / BM Sport – it diagnosed the car's chain tensioners (or guides) as the issue, providing Alex with all the ammunition he needed in his disagreement with the BMW dealer in question. With the eventual involvement of the dealership's Area Manager, and

OWNING E30 M3



Alex's legal representative, things were resolved, BMW dispatching one of its talented Classic specialists specially to work on Alex's car.

"This guy knew what he was doing," Alex recalled, "After talking to him it turned out that he had owned three E30 M3s and had been a mechanic for a race team using the cars. He talked me through what needed replacing and why. To say that I was now a lot more confident was an understatement!"

All was well again in Alex's world, the work completed perfectly, but at £5,000 the resulting bill was £2,000 greater than Alex had been expecting. A payment plan for the difference was agreed, but Alex vowed in future to use Jags and Nigel at BM Sport – 20-years later that still remains the case. In 2003 another horror story befell Alex and his E30: "I came out of work one night and the rear quarter panel had a big dent in it... it must have been from one of

the delivery drivers but I couldn't prove it as there was no CCTV around," Alex said. "My insurance company agreed to fix the car using the correct BMW parts, which meant the car had to go back to BMW. After the engine saga I wasn't too happy about going to them but this time it was for bodywork – how bad could it be?" Alex dropped the car off, seeing at the time a list of new parts required as part of the rebuild, and he was loaned a new MINI Cooper S for

the two month period the repairs would take.

"They invited me down to view the finished thing – the car was in an absolute state. It looked like a 16-year-old had gone crazy with a mop – there were marks everywhere." Alex recalled. "I went absolutely berserk in the middle of the showroom – while it was full of customers!

"The same Area Manager that dealt with Alex's engine issue called him and was extremely apologetic, ultimately the dealership required more time with the car. Another two months passed by with Alex racking up mileage in the MINI loaner. "I kept calling asking for updates, I was told it would be ready in a couple of days, but that went on for another two months," Alex told us. "I called for a meeting to explain the time issue and to ask what was going

on, at this point I was being blanked by the service and bodyshop teams. When I arrived I saw my favourite manager who led me into the workshop to see my car, there, fixed and clean, exactly how it should have been all those months before – I still don't know why it took so long as never got an explanation!" Alex soon changed jobs gaining the use of a work van, the M3 happily became a weekend toy, however, now not being used everyday and being parked in a slightly damp garage all the time, rust began to rear its ugly head. In 2009 the annual MoT revealed that the car's sills required replacement. With the sill work completed the car remained in use for another year or, but Alex noticed more rust – this time at the rear and this would be the catalyst for serious restoration work to begin. The rust issue halted the M3's use for a few years as Alex didn't

have the spare funds to undertake the work required. That it would eventually take place though was never in any doubt.

"In 2014 I did the PPI claims thing and the restoration was go!" Alex said. "I started calling around recommended bodyshops and there were some big differences in prices – from £5,000 to £12,000. That higher figure was just for paint with no metal work, and the car had to be delivered to them ready to prime and paint. The average quote was £6,000 to £8,000 which was in my budget with some money for new parts." At this point Alex began searching the BMW forums where he was exposed to people tackling their own restoration work, it sparked an idea for this hands-on kind of guy who already knew that the M3 could, for the most part, be taken apart with



**OWNING
E30 M3**





standard tools. Alex began looking for local bodyshops on the recommendation of others who suggested a workshop nearby that he could visit for regular check-ups was a sensible idea. This appealed, especially given his previous experiences.

"My brother-in-law owned a local MoT station so he gave me details of a few bodyshops he had used in the past, a particular one had just finished a Nissan Pulsar GTI-R that looked amazing so I asked around about the place."

A sure sign that this place was a good option was that it was consistently busy and that its turnaround times on vehicles were pretty long. Alex requested a quote for the restoration work on the M3 and a member of the team came to view the car. The numbers came back in the region of £6,500-£7,000 with the work set to take

approximately one month. However, there was also a second rather appealing proposition put forward...

"If I fancied it, the chap said I could work weekends on the car myself, doing all of the grunt work – stripping and cleaning it. He would be there to help out and show me what to do, and said I could use all the tools in the bodyshop, this way instead of paying him a daily rate he would take 50 percent of the cost – saving me £3,250. It was too good an offer to pass over, but I'd never worked in a bodyshop before!" Alex explained. For the following 18 months Alex's Saturdays saw him up and out the house at 8am for a quick breakfast before heading to the bodyshop. First the strip down saw him taking items off the car for refurbishment wherever possible, if bits were not salvageable those parts were added to an ever-

expanding shopping list of new items.

"It was a great learning experience," Alex said. "He showed me every aspect of the process, from using a Dual Action (DA) sander correctly, to welding and brazing. I even got to paint some of my car, only the inside of the sunroof in case things went wrong, but he said not to let it dry as we could then sand it back and start again if we needed to. It's the only way to learn, and I really did learn a lot."

In November 2017 with the car painted and just a few little outstanding jobs in need of addressing, for once things were looking good for Alex and his M3. However, as is the recurring theme of this car's story, events would soon change that. "I got a call from one of the guys at the bodyshop to say there had been a big bust-up between the business partners, my contact had left.

**OWNING
E30 M3**



The M3's restoration took 18-months, with Alex learning on the job as he went. Being hands-on with a project like this is a great way to gain a better understanding of what's involved in reviving a classic car...



I was told I needed to get my car back quickly before it was pushed outside – I shot down there as soon as possible. Luckily over the 18 months I had been working weekends there I'd got to know everyone on the industrial estate, and one of the other bodyshops on the site said it would transport the car to my friend's warehouse."

With the car relocated, its bonnet, doors and boot lid on and properly aligned, it was time to put everything else back together. Handily, Alex's boss at his day job, Chris Ruel, was an electrical expert who lent a hand with the BMW's central locking system – it had never worked correctly during Alex's ownership of the car – and a few other niggling electrical issues. New brake callipers were paired with fresh discs

and pads, a new carpet set was offered inside, so too a full set of (second hand) leathers to replace the car's original cloth inners. Three months of tinkering saw the car finally ready for the road in Spring 2018. It had been a long journey for Alex and his E30, but had it been worthwhile?

"Would I do it again? Yes!" he smiled. "If you are going to restore an M3, or any E30 really, rust is your enemy, but most of it can be fixed – its just time and money! If you can do as much of the work yourself it keeps the costs down a lot, but new parts from BMW are hard to get hold of and second hand ones are expensive."

Today Alex's refreshed M3 has covered a total of 143,000 miles and he gets out and about in it most weekends,

taking the car for early morning blasts around his home county of Kent when the roads are quiet, attending some local monthly car meets, and he's also visited the Goodwood Festival of Speed in it with his father – there the car attracted an exceptional amount of interest from enthusiasts keen to chat about it. Rightly so. Alex is keen to mildly improve upon the car when funds allow, but one thing that looks absolutely certain for the future is that Alex's 29-year relationship with this car is unlikely to end anytime soon ■

THANKS

"Thanks to my other half, Nicky, for letting me disappear at weekends for 18-months, and anyone who has helped me out with the car."



RACE, RALLY & ROAD



Nick Whale's jaw-dropping E30 M3 collection was assembled during 30-years of working with, and competing in, one of BMW's most iconic models.

WORDS: SIMON JACKSON / SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAN KENNY





RACE

1989 FIAGROUP A RACE CAR

If Nick's name is familiar to keen BMW motorsport fans it's likely due to the fact that he spent two years campaigning the Group A E30 M3 you see here in the 2.0-litre category of the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) during 1990 and 1991. One of 55 factory Group A race cars built by BMW, chassis number 1165 was sold new to BMW dealer, Godfrey Hall, who campaigned it in the BTCC's Class B category during 1989. Hall, sold the car to his fellow BMW dealer, Nick, who campaigned it in the – then new – 2.0-litre BTCC format with Pyramid Motorsport in 1990 and Techspeed Motorsport in 1991. Nick competed against fellow privateers recording his best result at Donington Park in May 1990 – third place, the highest finish for a privateer in the BTCC's 2.0-litre era.

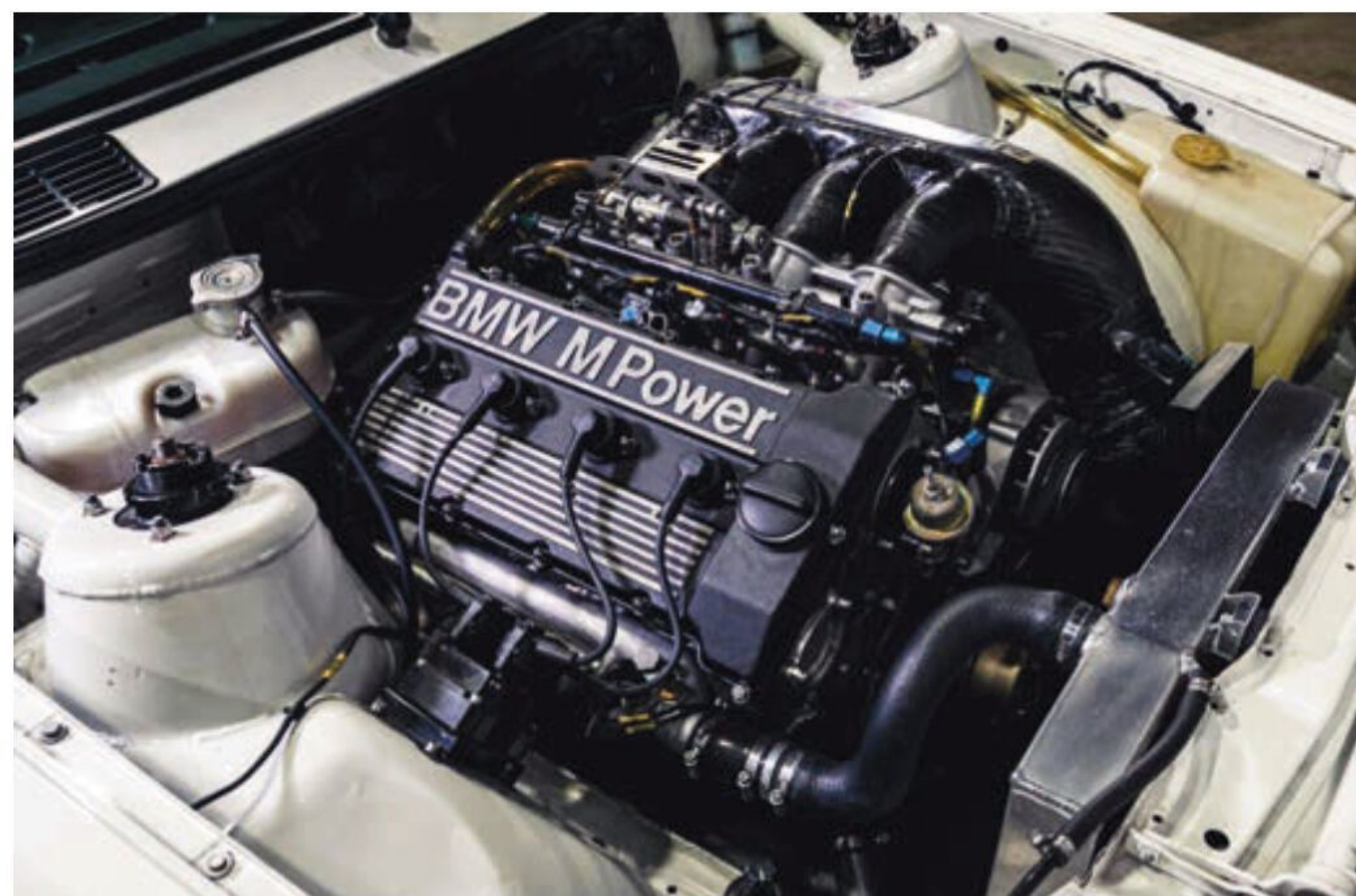
Geoff Finlay acquired the car from Nick and took it racing for a couple



of seasons in the lower ranks, it was then sold to Nigel Moseley late in 1994 when all of its running gear was transferred to a new Works Group A 'Matter' shell. The original was used as a replacement for the Prodrive Group A Loctite rally car. Denis Compton was

the next owner, he painted the car in Hillside Garage colours, modified it with a more powerful former DTM 2.5 Group A engine, using it to compete in the Northern Saloon Car series, before selling it to Mark Astall. Mark returned the car to its original Group





A specification and campaigned it on track days and in races at Cadwell Park. Mark ran the car in the famous Watson's livery and it was at this point when a track test appeared in BMW Car's September 2013 issue. Shortly after this Nick bought the car back.

Keen to race it with his son, Harry, who had been a toddler when the car originally competed, Nick drafted-in Amspeed of Brackley to completely strip, restore and rebuild the car to current FIA Group A regulations for Historic Touring Cars. At this point it was also returned

to its original colour scheme – as raced in the BTCC and it was time for another visit from us, the October 2015 issue of BMW Car features the E30 once more, this time as part of an Amspeed collection. The father and son racers gained glory immediately with wins in historic touring car racing.

Since 2017 the BMW has been in the care of Jordan Sport where it has seen the fitment of new Ohlins dampers all round, alongside a rebuild of both its gearbox and limited-slip differential. It is now race-ready again.

"The car is often invited by BMW GB to appear on its stand at major events, and was invited to Goodwood when the Group A era was celebrated with demonstration laps at the Revival Meeting," Nick said. "It is a well-known car, run by a highly respected team on a no-expense-spared basis, with known provenance and period history and it was guided at a very realistic price – especially when factory race-winning cars are changing hands at £350-400k."

RACE, RALLY & ROAD E30 M3 COLLECTION



RALLY 1987 FIA TARMAc RALLY CAR

In the late 1980s and early 1990s Nick had several E30 M3s built and prepared for racing by Prodrive – the team responsible for the BMW Works cars in the World Rally Championship. This gave Nick an insight into the world of rallying and so a lifelong desire to give it a go was born. For this Nick wanted to build and compete in a Works-specification E30 M3 (what else?) on Tarmac events to experience the same thrills as legendary ex-Works BMW rally drivers – like Mark Duez and Patrick Snijders. In January 2016 an original road-going M3 (without a sunroof or air-conditioning) was located and sent away to renowned rally preparation experts, Mellors Elliot Motorsport – the UK Proton factory rally team. There it was to be stripped and professionally prepared from a bare shell and turned into the ultimate-spec E30 M3 'Group A' Works replica to FIA 1990 specification. Detailed advice was sought from Prodrive's rally team manager in period – Paul Howarth, a man who knows his stuff.

The no-expense-spared build utilises the very best FIA-legal Group A parts throughout. At its heart sits a professionally-built 2300cc engine and Samsonas six-speed manual gearbox running homologated ratios. The drivetrain (including the development of stronger prop shaft joints and a bespoke limited-slip differential) have all been developed, strengthened and improved to date, including the successful fitment of power-assisted steering.

The suspension setup features Group A-homologated Reiger dampers all round on Eibach coils with helper springs, a competition specification radiator, pedal box, steering rack and upgraded Group A components have been added where appropriate. The car features high specification instrumentation, seats and belts as well as a bespoke fuel tank and fuel system located in the boot – designed to allow for a full-size spare wheel/quick jack and tools to be carried at the same time. This is a "turn-key" ready to race, front-running, car – it's all set for any FIA International historic, or similar, tarmac rally events.

"It has been developed over six seasons internationally to be one of

the fastest and most competitive M3 rally cars in Europe," Nick said. "It has competed in Ireland, The Isle of Man, Spain and Mallorca with two International outright wins, and it was actually lying second overall on Rally Mallorca in March 2020 when the event was unfortunately halted due to the COVID-19 outbreak."

ROAD 1992 E30 M3

There would be no competition E30 M3 were it not for the homologation road cars that allowed BMW to enter domestic Touring Car series across the world. The E30 M3 was a winning formula on road and in competition. Nick's race and rally cars are, quite rightly, supported by his stunning Alpine White road car presented in extraordinary condition – both inside and out.

A UK-supplied car, it was delivered on 10th March 1992 via Menzies BMW of Stirling in Scotland. To date it has covered just 55,000 miles and comes with both a comprehensive service history (fully detailed in its original



All three cars sold (the road and rally cars at auction, the race car shortly afterwards) achieving close to £350k.

service book) and a MoT history which confirms its mileage as being genuine.

Nick discovered the car at a customer's place and fell in love instantly. He had remedial works carried out on the car in 2012, Dick Lovett was commissioned to cosmetically return the car to perfect condition. This took the form of being stripped to bare metal with its doors, bonnet, engine, gearbox and boot removed and repainted by the approved BMW body shop with a detailed photographic record of all the works undertaken. The interior also presents in extraordinary condition with no visible marks or wear, while equally the dashboard, instrumentation, gearstick and pedals are original but completely unmarked – the car is a real time warp example to employ an overused term.

Nick tell us that it drives superbly, just as it did originally, and that is what attracted him to buy the car to keep in his 'Best of Breed' personal collection.

"The M3 was successful on the track, but more limited in the showroom as all cars were left-hand drive and at £26,000 it was not a cheap shout. A Ferrari 328 was not much more expensive at the time so it took a salesman of exceptional ability to sell cars in the UK," Nick smiled.

The top salesman for BMW UK in 'M-cars' for three years running, Nick collected his award from the BMW Motorsport factory in Munich where all BMW M saloons and sports cars were still hand-built. He used one as an everyday road car in period.

"This is the first time the car has been offered to the open market since the work was carried out," Nick said at the time of the auction. "The car is ready to use and enjoy today with all modern conveniences like ABS brakes, electric windows and a sunshine roof, but still with that classic 1980s driving experience from the perfectly weighted power steering, perfect dog-leg five-speed gearbox and willing four-cylinder BMW Motorsport 2.3 engine that can only be found in an original E30 BMW M3. And the noise, that induction noise unique to the M3, still sounds as good today as ever it did!"

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THE ITALIAN JOB

BMW Car reader Richard Head decided to take his M635CSi on a 2600 mile round trip from the UK to the stunning Italian lakes. Is this the ultimate European road trip? WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD HEAD



We'll only go in the M6 if you guarantee it won't breakdown"... We'd booked a holiday in the Italian lakes, my wife had selected the hotels – transport and logistics were my responsibility. I wanted to go in the M635CSi but it had returned from a similar trip some years ago on the back of a trailer. Mrs Head gave the ultimatum. I recognised this was a defining moment for my classic cars; are they just for show and occasional Sunday drives but largely irrelevant, or are they serious transport and integral to how we enjoy ourselves as a family? So, I looked her in the eye, crossed my fingers, took a deep breath and guaranteed it would not break down. "Good" she smiled. Great... we're going to Italy in the M635CSi, now I need to ensure I deliver on my promise.

The M635CSi (let's do as they have

always in America and refer to it as the M6 from here on) was designed for continent crossing, so it is perfect for a blast to Italy, but I needed to address the increasing frequency of just a disappointing click when starting her up. In it went for a replacement starter motor, perhaps the most frustrating thing to change on an E24. The large expanse of glass had always stressed the air-conditioning and recently it had struggled to keep its occupants cool on sunny days, so a recharge was booked. Fortunately a previous owner had carried out the expensive conversion from ozone destroying R12 refrigerant to benign R134 gas.

A few days before departure I noticed the MoT would expire while we were away, so it was booked in for a fresh ticket, which it failed! Replacing the corroded ABS sensor bracket was

relatively straightforward but it meant the car couldn't be picked up until the evening before our departure. The explanation to Mrs Head as to why a failed MoT had absolutely no bearing whatsoever on the no breakdown guarantee was a case study in 'mansplaining'.

With the fresh MoT, V5C, insurance documents and passports in the glove box and an old ammo box full of tools in the boot (carried out of habit as the boot lid mounted BMW tool kit is comprehensive enough) prep was complete. We then added enough clothes to start a charity shop as we pack to fill the space available – 354-litres of boot space – even with the intrusion of the bootmounted battery compartment the M6 has space sufficient for an outfit for every essential, occasion and weather scenario.



From the Calais exit of the tunnel we motorway direct to Reims and a chateau hotel selected for its champagne bar after, of course, a quick detour to the Reims-Gueux circuit. Last used for a Formula 1 venue in 1966, the circuit was renowned for its long straights making it one of the fastest and most famous for slipstreaming battles back in the day. It was good to see Les Amis du Circuit de Gueux restoring the BP livered timekeepers' building. With a lot more paint this could be France's Goodwood.

Next morning we take secondary roads through the rolling chalk hills and mile upon mile of vines slowly growing the grapes which one day will be quaffed as vintage champagne. Later we do motorway miles between Chaumont and Dijon before peeling off and taking the scenic route through the Jura Mountains and dropping down into Geneva on the biker's favourite, full of hairpins and blind corners, it's the M6's first taste of its staple for the next week. From Geneva we pick-up the E62 to Italy, this east-west motorway links Nantes on the Atlantic coast to Genoa, Italy's largest port, on the Mediterranean.

At the motorway speed limit of 130kmh (81mph) the 24-valve M88 purrs comfortably at 3400 revs. Ensclosed in supportive Recaro sports seats, hands resting on the three spoke M-Tech steering wheel with the road ahead disappearing under the long bonnet – it really is a commanding place



to be, the white leather giving an airy ambiance I prefer over moody black. Music is provided by the 1980s top of the range Blaupunkt Berlin with two swanenhals (controls on goose necks); on the left a graphic equaliser, on the right a remote control module. Slip in a cassette and AVC (Automatic Volume Control) takes over and modulates the volume as ambient noise rises and falls

so you don't have to. But it doesn't do it gradually; it changes it in rather large steps so the volume seems to have a mind of its own. In 1989 this was revolutionary and Blaupunkt claimed it was 'making a major contribution to road safety'. Now it is an idiosyncrasy that makes me smile as my fingers reach for the right hand swanenhals to manually adjust the volume to

ROAD TRIP BMW M635CSI



compensate.

Narrow A posts make for great visibility and from the E62 heading east above Montreux we enjoy one of the best views from a European motorway. East and west lanes split and hug the mountainside at different elevations above vine yards cascading down to Lake Lemman and the Alps beyond, you can almost hear the jazz from the concert halls and street performers enjoying the July festival.

Before we get too Condé Nast let me tell you about the M6. It evolved out of the 635CSi in 1983 when BMW dropped into it the 3.5-litre M88 straight-six developing an impressive-in-period 286 Bosch Jetronic induced horsepower. The similarly priced Ferrari 328 was only making 270bhp so the M6 is sometimes referred to as the Bavarian Ferrari. The same engine is in the E28 M5 and it's more than sufficient for stressfree motorway cruising. Hidden from view are Bilstein gas dampers, thick anti-roll bars, ABS operated M1 spec ATE four-pot callipers and cross-vented discs mounted on suspension 10mm lower than the vanilla E24 635CSi – so it can hold its own on the mountain passes.

While it lacks nothing in the M department, the car is now thirty years



old. Number 480 of only 524 right hand drive M6s, it growled its way off the Dingolfing production line on 25th January 1989 and has covered 140,000 miles since. It does pretty well for 'one of' bragging rights: one of 101 Highline models, one of twenty M6 Motorsport Editions and one of five in Macao Blue with Lotus White leather.

The Motorsport Editions were UK-only special editions with most of the optional extras in three special Motorsport colours, the others being Nogaro Silver and Misano Red.

The only thing that let the M6 down when new were its metric TRX tyres which were never really any good, especially in the wet, and are now



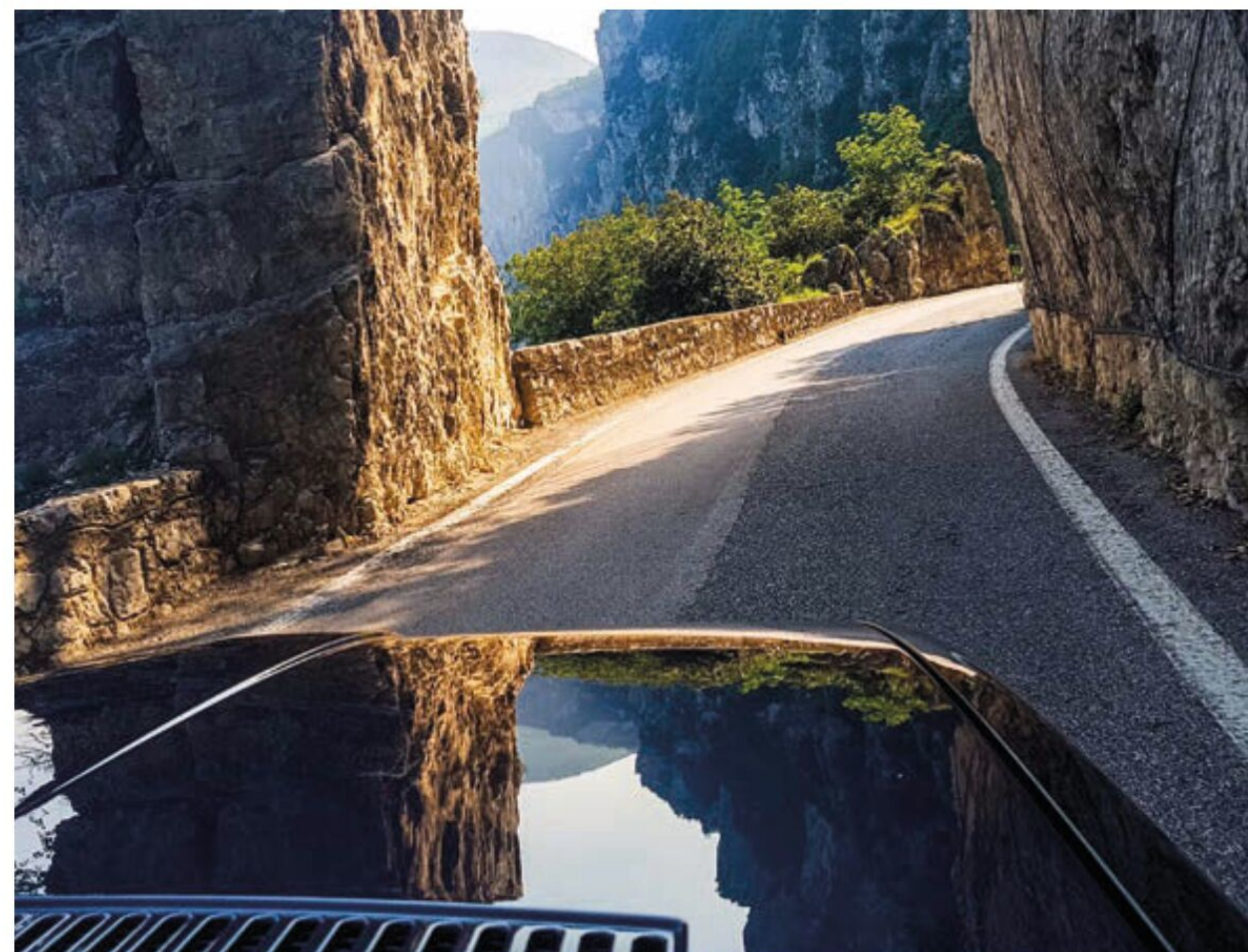
expensive. Instead my M6 sports Style 5 RC009s split rims from an E31 8-Series which look great and wear better and more affordable modern rubber.

Staying on the E62 we take the 2005 meter high Simplon Pass over the Alps, there is snow at the top. Maximum torque of 246lb ft at an accessible 4500rpm in third easily propels the M6 up the steep western edge, rarely needing to engage second even as I power out of the tight hairpins. Descending the eastern side into Italy,

engine braking in third is sufficient to control speed without putting excessive heat into the 300mm front discs, with an occasional dip into second for particularly steep sections. The straight-six twin-cam is renowned for its smoothness but I notice it doesn't like a trailing throttle. If the revs drop below 1500rpm it judders, wanting more speed or a lower gear. Perhaps this is an echo of the M88's racing heritage, it was, after all, originally developed for the M1 Pro-car. We drop down into Italy

and at Domodossola stop for a simple pasta lunch – the way only the Italians can carry off.

Choosing to take mountain roads rather than get back on the E62, we wind our way down the Valle Cannodina on single tracks towards our first Italian lake. This densely wooded, steeply sloped area is remote even now, the road only opened in 1970, and there is a noticeable change in flora; the pines and hardy alpines give way to palms, oleanders, orange blossom and vines as



ROAD TRIP BMW M635CSI



we descend and touch the shore of Lake Maggiore. We rest for two days on the Cannero Riviera in a charming lakeside hotel.

Rather than driving around the north or south of Lake Maggiore we take the ferry across the middle. The ferry from Verbania to Laveno takes twenty minutes, costs 16 Euros and saves us more than an hour and 75 kilometres. Passing by the Borromeo islands we have a great view of the seventeenth century palace and baroque gardens.

We cross back into southern Switzerland near Lake Lugano and the look and feel changes again. While Lake Maggiore is unequivocally Italian in a crumbling, chaotic yet endearing way, Lake Lugano is tidy, neat, affluent, contemporary and indubitably Swiss. The absence of recognition and love for the E24 in Swiss quarters is noticeable; while Italians appreciate its style and freely give the thumbs up, the M6 receives little acknowledgement amongst the new sports cars common on the Swiss side. Style? Just look at it – from any angle. Car designers today should be ashamed... After lunch in Lugano town we continue along the northern shore and before re-entering Italy fill up on the cheaper Swiss petrol at a service station with sumptuous views down Lake Lugano. Anywhere else you'd expect it to have been bought up and



converted into high end apartments, but here gorgeous lake views are ten a penny so, until we all drive electric cars, it remains a petrol station. Over an espresso I calculate fuel consumption; we're averaging 24.5mpg and closer to 30mpg on motorway cruises which isn't too shabby.

It's a short drive to Lake Como which has been prime real estate for a thousand years, and it shows. Lined by gracious villas and verdant gardens the climate is at its most generous. Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Liszt and George Clooney have

all sought inspiration here. We find a quiet Trattoria in Lenno and enjoy simple lake fish spaghetti dishes with Lugana wine we find space in the boot for a few bottles. One night only on Lake Como so next morning we breakfast in Menaggio before gingerly manoeuvring the low front spoiler over the ramp onto the ferry to Bellagio. In a competitive field Bellagio is often cited as the most beautiful town in Italy, but we manage to find a safe parking space while we explore and treat ourselves to Lake Como silk goods.



It's more than a hundred kilometres to Lake Iseo so to optimise lake time we take the motorway. After Bellagio and magnificent lake views the Milan-Brescia traffic, smoking industrial estates and broken road surfaces are a shock and we pass lots of cars with punctures, which gets me asking myself when was the last time I checked the pressure in the spare tyre. Never in 10 years I conclude. I keep that to myself and we arrive safely within two hours. Lake Iseo is understated compared to

Lake Como, more Audrey Hepburn in 'Roman Holiday' than Sofia Loren in 'The Millionairess'. It's where Italians go for their lake side holidays and is laid back, less touristy and perfect to relax in the sun surrounded by olive groves. Lake Garda is the biggest and most visited of the lakes and the last one on our tour. The hotel owner loves old cars and has a few himself, he tells me about the fantastic roads around here and especially the SP38 or Strada della Forra (Road of Gorges). Opened in 1913 it became known as "the most beautiful road in the world." It is narrow, often single track, and varies between deep ravines, dark tunnels, hairpin bends and steep drop-offs with glimpses of amazing views across the lake below. When Churchill drove it he called it "the eighth wonder of the world." More recently it featured in the opening car chase scene of the



Bond movie Quantum of Solace. There are faster and more famous roads, but this is the coolest one you've probably never heard of. Riva del Garda at the northern tip of the lake was Austrian until the end of World War 1 and it retains its Germanic character. Fraktur, the traditional German font, is preferred for shop signs, and more German beers are available than Italian. Perhaps that's why a gentleman approaches me when I return to the parked M6. "I have been admiring your car," he says in heavily accented although grammatically perfect

English. We spend a very pleasant few minutes talking about 'proper' BMWs and the finer details of the M6.

Next morning we're up early. It's a big miles day and we point the shark nose towards Milan, Geneva and on to Britain. The M6 has behaved flawlessly. We've covered more than 2600 miles on varied roads in comfort and with purpose. After all, if we don't use these cars what's the point? Most importantly, though, the 'no breakdown' guarantee has been honoured... like I ever doubted it would.

BMW M3 V MERCEDES 190 2.5-16



Which Teutonic tarmac-tearing super saloon makes the most compelling classic buy?

WORDS: SAM SKELTON AND PAUL WAGER

The '80s was the perfect decade for automotive excess. We might have the Veyron and the McLaren P1 today. Still, the decade of Thatcher and Duran Duran gave us everything from the Cizeta V16T and Bugatti EB110 to Jaguar XJ220, Metro 6R4, Lancia Thema 8.32, Delta Integrale... and the list goes on. Many of the more outrageous '80s products were of course driven by the need to homologate certain models for motorsport, and it was this which resulted in both the BMW E30 M3 and its arch-rival, the Mercedes 190E 2.3-16 (later 2.5-16). We sample the pair over three decades on, to try to determine which one was best.

MERCEDES 190E 2.5-16

Plough your way through the Mercedes press material relating to the 'W201' series, and there's a surprising omission: the Cosworth name simply isn't mentioned. Presumably, the mighty Mercedes-Benz didn't want to admit that in order to extract sufficient power

from its M102 powerplant in had to turn to the relatively tiny Northamptonshire engineering firm for a twin-cam four-valve head. More likely is the suggestion that the go-faster 190E was such a tiny project that it wasn't worthwhile diverting the attention of the mainstream powerplant engineering departments, and remember, this was the era before AMG became a part of the Daimler-Benz empire.

Long absent from motorsport, Mercedes saw its compact 190E model as an ideal return to the rallying stage where it had once been successful with its larger coupes. They then approached Cosworth to develop a suitable engine. With engines like the Ford BDA behind it, the Northamptonshire firm did have an impressive pedigree in the forests and devised a twin-cam head with four valves per cylinder. Bolted on to the 2.3-litre version of the M102 block used in the W123 series, this was good for up to 300 bhp at 8000 rpm in dry-sumped race trim with individual slide throttles. With a conventional intake and

wet sump configuration and running Bosch K-Jetronic injection, the roadgoing car was good for 185 bhp at 6000 rpm, which translated to a 0-62 mph time of 7.5 seconds and a 143 mph top speed.

Unfortunately for Mercedes, Audi debuted the Quattro in 1980, which with its four-wheel-drive rather scuppered Mercedes' rallying plans. So, not wanting even to play if they couldn't win, the board turned its attention to DTM racing. To prove the new car's high-speed credentials, they sent a trio of 190E 2.3-16s to the high-speed Nardo bowl in southern Italy, where the cars covered 50,000 km in 201 hours, smashing several high-speed endurance records.

The road car was unveiled a few weeks later at the 1983 Frankfurt show and was a masterpiece of understatement for the era. A distinctive yet subtle bodykit incorporated spoilers front and rear with side skirts and helped reduce the Cd to 0.32, while inside, the 2.3-16 featured heavily



bolstered Recaro seats and additional dials.

The suspension was modified for the performance flagship too, with lowered and uprated springs, revised damping, chunkier anti-roll bars and hydraulic self-levelling at the rear. A limited-slip diff was standard, and to reinforce the car's racy character a Getrag five-speed box was fitted with a race-style 'dog leg' pattern identical to that of the M3.

The 2.3-16 was a contender in the DTM, although Mercedes chose not to

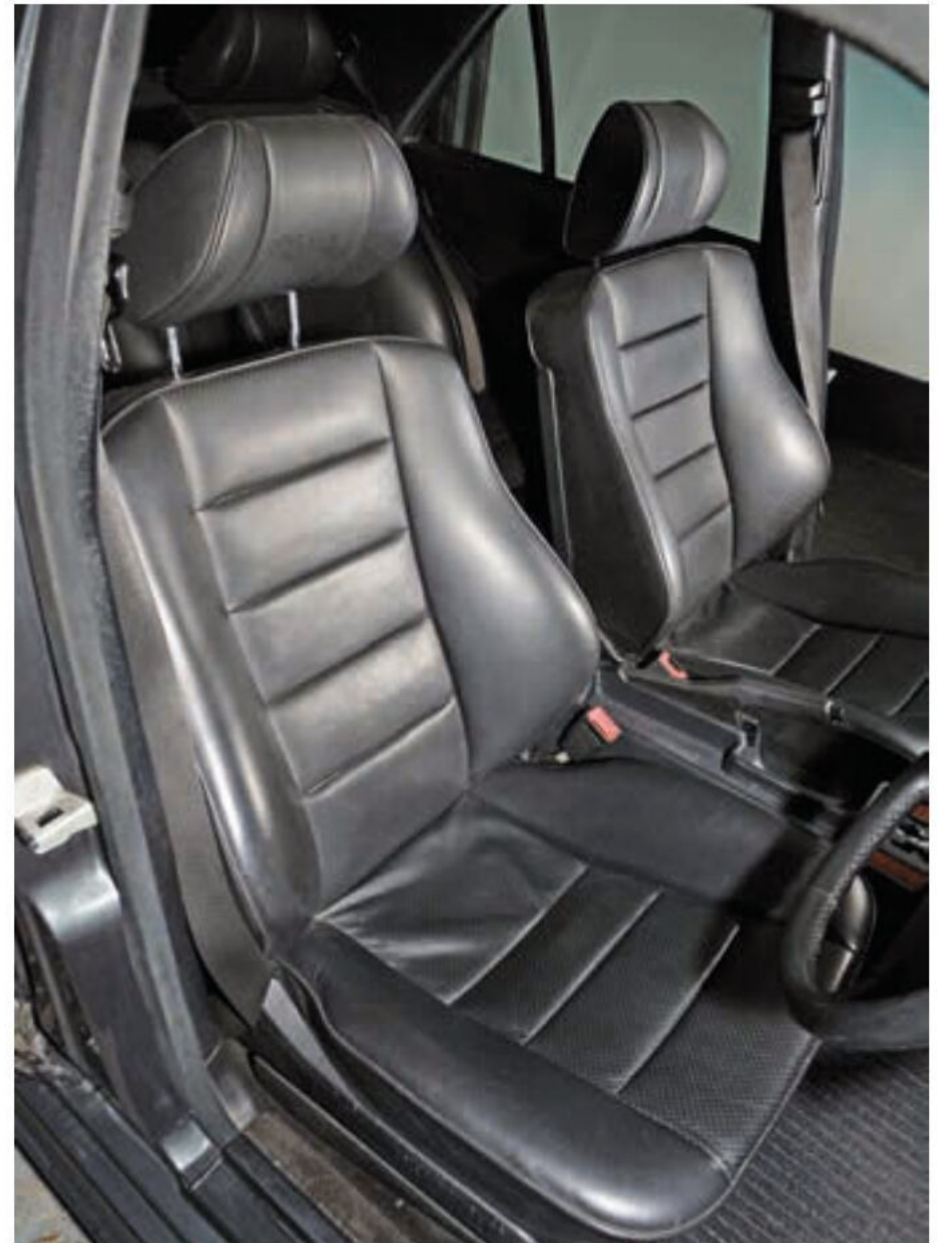
enter works racers directly. In 1987 though, the decision was taken to re-enter motorsport in a works capacity. Accordingly, the twin-cam M102 motor was further developed, gaining a boost in capacity to 2498cc courtesy of a longer stroke. In addition, a duplex timing chain replaced the original single chain, and running KE-Jetronic injection, it was good for 204 bhp in non-catalysed form.

A nice 190E is always a pleasure to drive, and the 2.5-16 is even more

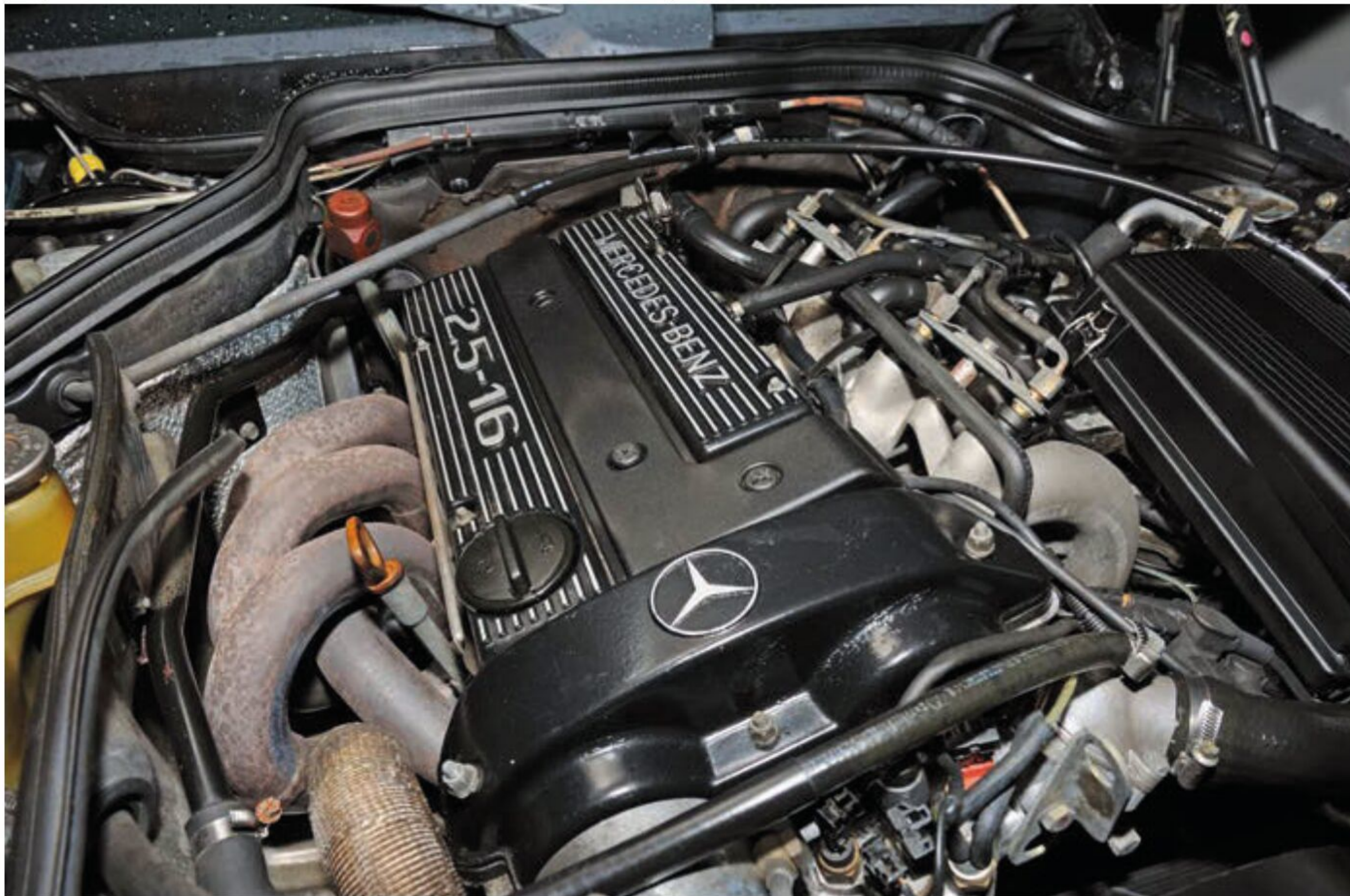
admirable, feeling generally firmer and more positive from behind the wheel. The overall feeling is of a kind of grown-up, more serious GTI – especially given the 2.5's torque advantage over the earlier 2.3. At low speeds, the 2.5-16 doesn't feel much different from the regular 190E and is happy to trundle about around town, but when traffic clears, the difference is like night and day. The twin-cam revs much harder than the regular M102 engine, and it's almost easier to drive hard than the



TWIN TEST BMW M3 V MERCEDES 190 2.5-16



Right hand drive and even an automatic option make the Mercedes an easier car to live with.



Engine based on the standard 190E unit, albeit in the 2.3 litre form seen in the W123 230E. Cosworth did the 16v head.

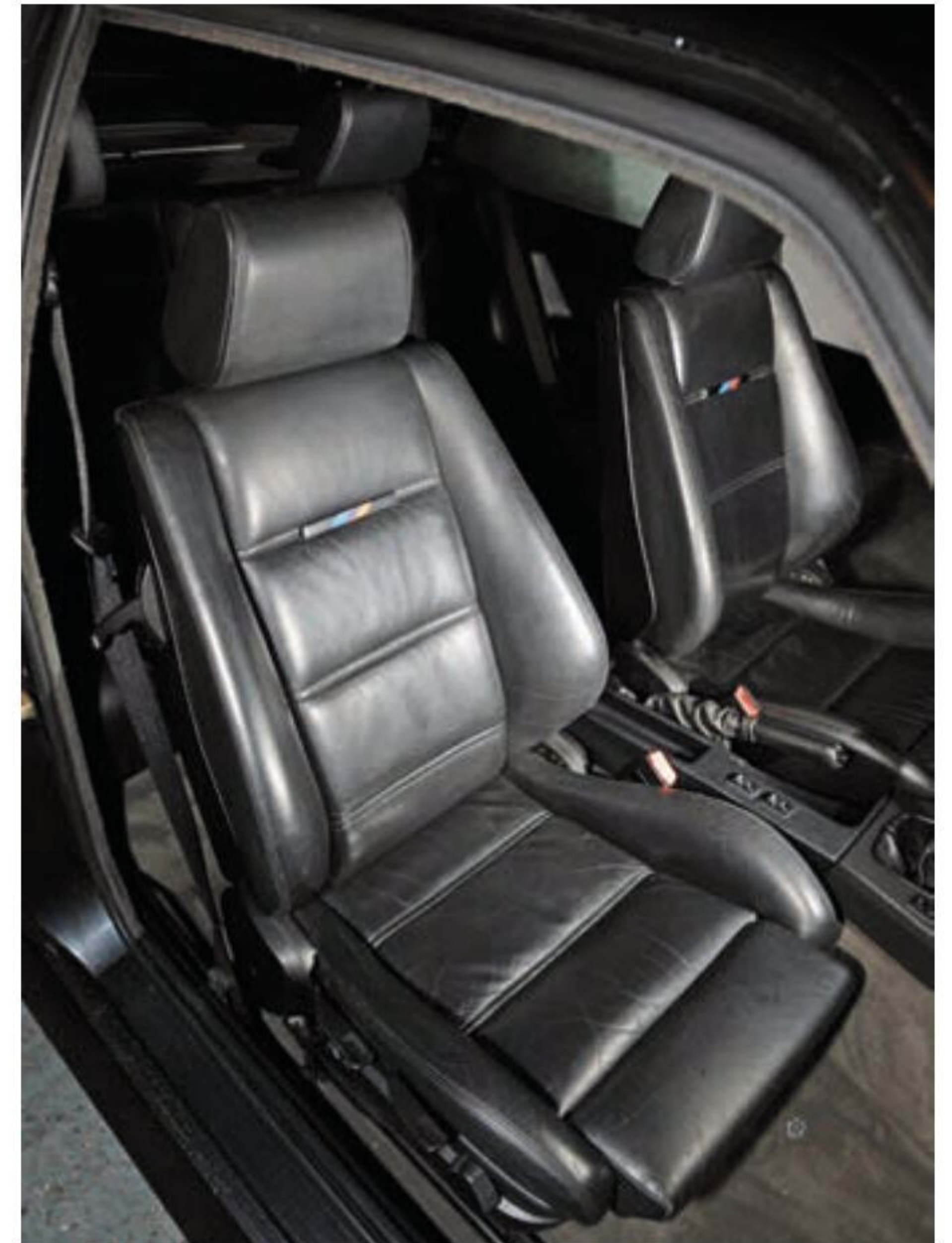
BMW. The BMW might feel more exotic, but in truth, the in-gear acceleration of the two cars is pretty evenly matched. The BMW inches ahead in terms of communication, but the Mercedes feels the easier car to drive long distance.

BMW E30 M3

The comparison between M3 and 190E Cosworth has been made before, of course, and in truth, they appealed to very different buyers when new, but today could both be on the same list for an '80s fan looking to acquire a dream car from his teenage years.

The E30 M3 wouldn't even exist were it not for the 190E 2.3-16. BMW was unhappy at Mercedes' dominance





Optional leather may be plush, but all M3s were left hand drive from the factory and all had Getrag manual gearboxes.



The M3's S14 engine was developed in house by BMW's M division. It uses head technology derived from the larger M-cars.

of the DTM championship and the European Touring Car Championship and developed a homologation special based upon its compact saloon to wrest the crown from its rivals in Stuttgart. Like Mercedes, a four-cylinder engine was used with a new four-valve per cylinder head, developed in house by BMW's M division rather than outsourced as Mercedes chose. And like Mercedes, 2.3 litres was deemed the optimum size for homologation success. Based on the engine from the 318i, it was more potent for its size than any other production engine of its era. By the time BMW had finished with it – 197bhp was more than enough to beat the 2.3 litre Mercedes' 185bhp. Mercedes

may have fought back with the 204bhp 2.5-16, but BMW's updated M3 for 1989 could produce 215bhp. The Mercedes in standard form had better aerodynamic properties than the BMW, but by modifying the boot lid and the rear screen area, BMW was able to reduce the drag coefficient of its new sporting contender to just 0.33Cd – barely worse than the Mercedes by the time the bodykit was fitted. Like Mercedes, BMW used a Getrag gearbox, revised suspension, and drastically uprated brakes.

The result was a car which would dominate the world of European Touring Car racing. While the Mercedes did manage to beat the BMW in a handful

of races, the BMW's general victory count was so overwhelming it would take the extreme, bewinged, 190E 2.5-16 Evo II to finally beat the BMW at the end of its racing life in 1992.

We've test-driven the BMW M3 in greater depth elsewhere in this title, so we'll keep our road assessment brief here. By comparison with the Mercedes, every little facet of the BMW feels just a little bit sharper. In no individual way is the BMW a significantly better car. Still, the cumulative effect is that it feels tighter, tauter, and far more entertaining to drive quickly than the 190E – the Mercedes is softer, which makes it a better long distance companion. That

TWIN TEST BMW M3 V MERCEDES 190 2.5-16



said, the hardcore nature of the M3 makes it a more amusing companion on a good B road. There's a fluidity to it which belies its saloon origins; the M3 feels like a sports car raring to go at every opportunity, whether carrying its speed through a corner or performing a second gear overtake. It might be less relaxing than the Mercedes, but is that really the point of a car like this?

VERDICT

The easy answer is that both these cars are the best in their own ways. The BMW is undoubtedly the more involving of the two, the more amusing to hurl down your favourite B road. But for everyday usability, the Mercedes is superior. Four doors, right-hand drive and its relatively outstanding value mark the Merc

out as a special car and one which is criminally undervalued when considered in the light of M3 prices.

We'd still choose the BMW, as its unique place in automotive history and its sparkling chassis make it a far more emotive car than the Merc. But we wouldn't blame you if you disagreed. ■



THE LIGHT FANTASTIC!



Buying the BMW E30 M3; a car which captures the hearts of motoring enthusiasts everywhere, and just never lets them go

WORDS: CHRIS GRAHAM

Every now and then a car maker hits the sweet spot with a particular model, producing a vehicle that's both desirable and successful and, if it's very lucky, one that becomes the stuff of dreams, too. As far as BMW is concerned, the E30 M3 was just such a model; a car which excelled on the track, flew out of the showrooms and thrilled drivers across the globe with its sweet handling dynamics. It's a car that became a legend in its own lifetime, and has gone on to reach iconic status among driving enthusiasts and car collectors alike.

ULTRA-DESIRABLE

Today the E30 M3 is one of the most desirable BMW models there is and, as such, values have rocketed. In the past 10 years, the car has gone from an enthusiast's delight to an automotive investor's must-have which, sadly, has taken all but the most down-at-heel examples – or imported models – beyond the financial reach of most enthusiasts.

But for those lucky enough to be

able to consider buying one of these cars, the prospect opens the door to what many consider to be little short of motoring nirvana. Despite being a 30-year old design that's powered by straightforward, four-cylinder, DOHC engine, the E30 M3 combines enough power with a beautifully-styled, lightweight, two-door bodyshell and tweaked suspension, to produce a car that still provides handling and driving satisfaction benchmarks against which sporting saloons continue to be judged.

Much has been written about the E30 M3's back story, and BMW's competition with Mercedes-Benz – and its 190E model – that followed the success of the E21 3 Series. The E30 M3 was developed as a homologation special to qualify a racing version for Group A motorsport. The car blossomed into a brilliant track success, winning both German and European Touring Car titles twice during the 1980s, as well as countless other racing series around the world. For this reason, many argue that the E30 M3 was the most successful racing saloon ever produced.

LIMITED BUILD

The homologation regulations required the building of 5,000, showroom-ready cars – within a 12-month period – before a race-prepared version could turn a wheel in anger. It was a big and expensive task, and something of a gamble for BMW, but the result did the trick and paid back its creators in spades. Work started back in 1981, on the engine, and BMW's plan was to design the car as a competitive track machine, which could then be developed into a road-going version afterwards. All E30 M3s were built in left-hand drive form, because BMW thought that the majority of road cars would be sold into left-hand drive markets. There was also a suggestion that converting to RHD would require a redesign of the exhaust manifold, causing a 10bhp drop in power output. Of course, the LHD-only decision wasn't a terribly popular one among potential buyers here in the UK, and early sales were relatively slow. BMW Motorsport displayed the first E30 M3 at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1985,

BUYING GUIDE BMW E30 M3

but the first cars weren't assembled until March 1986. The initial 5,000 – so important for homologation reasons – were completed just in time, on March 1st, 1987. Officially launched in 1986, the first model featured a 2.3-litre, four-cylinder S14 engine that was based on the M10 unit. However, the block was fitted with a 16-valve head derived from a 24-valve six-cylinder unit, and the combination produced a healthy 200bhp at 6,750rpm and 176lb ft of torque. Externally, the car benefitted from aggressive-looking, box-flared wings (that would allow for the fitment of 10in-wide racing wheels), extended sill panels, a deep front air dam and a rear apron panel.

UNIQUE STYLING

Aerodynamics were further enhanced by increasing the rake of the rear screen, shortening but raising the height of the boot lid and fitting a rear spoiler. In fact, just about every panel – apart from the bonnet – was unique to the M3. Underneath the surface, the car ran on revised suspension designed to maximise directional stability. The wheel castor was increased dramatically, large anti-roll bars were fitted and the steering was 'quicken' for enhanced feel. Power was transmitted from the engine to the ZF limited-slip differential at the rear by a five-speed Getrag transmission, with dog-leg first gear. This represented another nod towards the car's racing ambition; it was felt that first gear would only ever be needed on the grid, so an H-pattern for 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th would be most appropriate. The brakes were uprated too, with parts plundered from the E28 5 Series production line, including larger, thicker discs front and rear, plus reinforced calipers to match stopping power to the performance available. Of course, because the E30 M3 had been designed as a racing car, that meant that development work had to continue during its production life, as successive modifications were made to keep the car competitive. Progressively more powerful and faster versions appeared as the years of production rolled by.

EVOLUTION ARRIVES

The first 'Evolution' was already on the stocks by early 1987, and 505 were built to comply with the regulatory minimum requirement of 500 for each major design change. This first batch



The four-cylinder, S14 engine powered the E30 M3 throughout its production life, albeit with a number of notable modifications along the way.

of evolution cars, to become known as Evos, used a new 'E' marked cylinder head which, although it didn't result in more than the original car's 200bhp, did make useful power gains possible for the race-tuned engines. In 1988, exports of catalyst-equipped cars to America and Japan began, the Evo 2 arrived, and a convertible version was introduced.

The Evo 2 got a power increase to 220bhp, thanks to new pistons and camshafts, a higher compression ratio, a lightened flywheel and revised engine management. Externally, new air ducts for the brakes replaced the fog lamps in the front spoiler, a small, secondary lip was added to the wing on the boot lid and the lid itself was redesigned to save extra weight. BMW also added a visual twist by finishing the cam cover and air collector box in white, with M Sport stripes. Misano red, Nogaro silver or Macao blue exterior paint colours could be specified for the Evo 2, and the model also got a unique, grey check upholstery pattern inside. Also, the standard wheels on this model were 7.5in wide, 16in diameter alloys. Weight-saving measures, including thinner glass in the rear and side windows, shaved 10kg of the standard car's weight, and 501 Evo 2s were produced. In April, 1989 – for the European market – the standard 200bhp, non-cat and 195bhp cat-equipped saloons and convertibles were replaced with a 215bhp model, using a similar specification engine to the Evo 2, but with a cat as standard.

This 215bhp model also used the Evo 2's 16in wheels as standard. The final step forward came with the introduction of the Sport Evolution, in December, 1989. For this car, the S14 engine's capacity was increased to 2.5 litres which, combined with new camshafts, boosted power output to 238hp. Only available in either red or black (with contrasting bumper inserts), the model had taller wheel arches, adjustable front and rear spoilers plus a 10mm lower ride height. A little more weight was saved (primarily by fitting a smaller fuel tank), 600 were made and E30 M3 production came to an end in 1990, with a total of 17,434 cars having been produced. There were also 786 convertibles made, which continued on in production until 1991.

BUYING ADVICE

For the low-down on buying an E30 M3, I spent a happy afternoon with Barry Sheward who, with Ross Ingram, runs independent BMW and MINI specialist BMR Performance (tel: 01293 773774, bmrperformance.co.uk). Barry has owned a number of E30 M3s, and is currently part-way through the restoration of a 1986 example, so knows the model inside-out.

The first point he made was that potential buyers should be aware of this model's tendency to rust. "As with any model from the E30 range," he told me, "your first consideration should always be body condition. This is of paramount importance because it's the



most expensive aspect to put right and, unfortunately, the E30 is a model that's prone to corrosion.

"Thirty British winters can't fail to have taken their destructive toll on all but the most cosseted of cars, while badly repaired accident damage can be another source of expensive rusting.

"Like all E30s, the M3 can rust more or less everywhere, and I'm not just talking about the unsightly, cosmetic stuff here; it's typically seriously structural, so will require proper repair.

WHAT TO PAY?

Nowadays there's no such thing as an undesirable E30 M3 and each one that still exists will have a strong value today. At the bottom of the market, the roughest examples of a standard car start at £25,000-£30,000. But, generally speaking, these are the sort of cars that are likely to need the same amount again spending on them to bring them up to a good standard. Nowadays, it's even possible to pay £10,000-£15,000 for a basic shell, and £20,000+ for an exceptionally good one. A tidy, usable car with some history can be yours today for about £40,000 while, for a good, low-mileage standard car you'll need to pay £50,000-£60,000. However, the real collectors-type cars, with less than 30,000 on the clock, are now fetching £80,000. A good Evo 2 will cost £80,000+ but, as usual, everything depends on mileage, history and condition. The special edition cars take prices to an even higher level, with

the best, mint Sport Evos commanding anything up to £150,000. Barry has even heard rumours of the very best examples changing hands between collectors for £250,000!

"These cars rust from the inside out so, unfortunately, they often turn out to be worse than expected. I've seen plenty of pretty smart-looking E30 M3s which turn out to be hiding a horror show beneath the surface," Barry warned. "The inside-out nature of the corrosion on this model can make it tempting for less scrupulous sellers to apply a bit of paint here, and a skim of filler there, and make a ropey car look outwardly presentable; certainly good enough to fool an unwitting or inexperienced buyer. This is why I always advise that a proper, pre-purchase inspection – carried out by an experienced specialist – is absolutely essential. Rush into buying a car like this without getting it properly checked, and you could be paying for that mistake for years to come.

"BEWARE THE BUBBLES!

"Nine times out of 10, the few bubbles that might be found on the scuttle panel at the base of the windscreen, or on the side of the rear quarter panel, will be just the tip of the rusty iceberg. Some areas are straightforward to repair, but others are far from it. Rust that's found doing its worst on the underside of the roof panel, or in the bulkhead, can typically be enough to write-off an 'ordinary' E30. But, given the incredible

rise in value that this M3 has seen in recent years, such repairs are now viable, but eye-wateringly costly, nonetheless. "There are no bulkhead panels available now from BMW, so dealing with rust will have to involve the use of hand-fabricated repair sections which, when combined with the awkwardness of the location, will send the cost sky-rocketing. Unfortunately, the same applies to the roof on cars fitted with a sunroof. The tray supporting this rusts first, after which the corrosion spreads to the inside of the roof panel." Barry continued: "The E30 is a product of its time, and manufacturing techniques back in the mid-1980s weren't as exacting as they are now. While plastic wheel arch liners were fitted at the front, nothing was added at the rear, so mud traps there typically lead to problems. The underside of the car was generally well coated with polyurethane-based underseal which lasts well, unless its protective layer is breached.

CARELESS LIFTER!

"The most common cause of this is careless jacking. There are square pads at the front end of the sills, which are fixtures used at the factory during the manufacturing process. Unfortunately, people often mistake these for lifting points, and pop the trolley jack under them with destructive results. The weight of the car causes the structures to collapse,



splitting the underseal coating and allowing air, water and salt to get directly at the metal. The same can be true when using the recommended jacking points with anything other than the car's own jack."The E30 M3 has long been a favourite among track day enthusiasts, so plenty have been fitted with lowered and stiffened suspension. This can trigger stress-fracturing in the inner wings that, in turn, will cause rust to develop. Inevitably, a lot suffered accident damage, too, and the tell-tale signs of this can often be seen in the engine bay, as Barry explained."Look for rippling along the tops of the inner wings, and for creases across the front panel. Check under the fuse box for both rusting and puckered metal, and make sure the suspension strut towers look straight. Different colour paints, or over-thick underseal applications in these areas, should be regarded with suspicion. Also, take the time to walk

slowly around the car to look critically at the panel gaps; are they all even, as they should be? Watch for paint colour variation, too, as this is a common indicator of poorly-repaired accident repair or previous restoration work. It's all too easy to forget the basics.

SUNROOF WOES

If you're looking at a car that's fitted with a sunroof, then you must take extra care; roof corrosion is a fearfully expensive problem to deal with on these models. Check the whole roof skin for any signs of bubbling, indicating that rust will be eating its way out from within. You can get a useful view of the underside of the roof panel by raising the sunroof into its tilt position then, from inside the car, use a torch to look in through the slot at the rear of the aperture. Problems are caused because the sunroof sits in a metal tray that's bonded to the

underside of the roof panel. Rusting is promoted by condensation and/or leaks from around the sunroof panel, which is why BMW switched to plastic sunroof trays on later models. "If you're lucky and catch the problem in time, it's possible to replace the metal sunroof tray without removing the roof panel. However, if corrosion has spread to the roof itself, then you're in trouble. New roof panels are no longer available, so a good, used one from another E30 is the only option. However, these are now hard to find and will require modification to it, due to the M3's roof extension that facilitates the more aerodynamic angle of the rear screen. Localised repairs are tricky because, when welding large, flat panels like this, it's incredibly difficult to avoid inducing unsightly distortion."

WATER INGRESS

The whole corrosion situation isn't helped by the relative ease with which water can find its way inside the car. The felt seals around the metal sunroof panel are designed to let water past but, if the drain channels and pipes beneath become blocked, then it'll overflow into the body of the car. Elderly door and windscreen seals can provide another easy route inside for the wet stuff which, eventually, will start pooling in the footwells. As well as being bad news for the metal floor, the generally damp cabin atmosphere caused by damp carpets, will also promote corrosion elsewhere. The boot must be checked for water leaks, as well. Barry advises that, if possible, all the interior trim should be removed for a proper inspection. "Ageing boot lid and rear light cluster seals will let water into the boot and this

Some 786 E30 M3 convertibles were built and only about 30 were officially imported to the UK; a very rare beast, indeed.





tends to settle in the pockets on either side, where the toolkit and battery are located," he says. "So, check these areas carefully, as well as the condition of the inner wheel arches. There's a spare wheel which sits in a well in the centre of the boot floor and, although this isn't usually badly affected by rust, it should be checked nonetheless." Moving to the main interior, be on your guard for signs of condensation and damp. Also, if the carpets feel damp or you spot surface rusting on the seat runners, for example, then further investigation will be necessary. The interior is pretty simple, although lots of cars will have been 'got at' over the years, so finding original, unmolested examples is a rare treat.

"BATTLE SCARS

"Typically, trim panels will have been cut about to allow for the installation of uprated radio speakers, and finding a car that's still fitted with the factory radio is unusual. Some trim and cloth is available from BMW, and there are specialists producing the more unusual cloth patterns." Barry went on to explain that "the rear seat is unique to this car so, if that's been changed, replacing it will be very expensive. The front seats are just the standard, BMW sport-type units, so replacements can be found from other E30s, but re-trimming will probably be necessary. Sport Evo and Evo 2 models had unique door cards which are now all but impossible to find. A complete cloth interior for a standard car is likely to cost about £1,500, while a leather one will add another £1,000

on top. I've seen Sport Evo interiors selling for £4,000-£5,000!" Steering wheels and dashboards (which crack) can be replaced with new parts, but the instrument cluster was unique to this car, so replacement is expensive. The rest of the switchgear is standard E30, so shouldn't pose much of a problem. Carpets are still available from BMW but are, according to Barry, now made from a different material, and feature a different heel pad for the driver so, unfortunately, look like non-period replacements.

MECHANICAL MATTERS

Mechanically, the E30 M3 is a very robust car, in all its forms. The engine and gearbox are both strong and durable, as is the differential. Having said that, they are old cars now, so many will require a mechanical rebuilt or refresh. "Much will depend on the life the car has led," Barry told me, "but, in a lot of cases, this is likely to have been a relatively hard one. Differentials aren't expensive to have rebuilt today (£600-£700), and secondhand ones are available for about £600." The Getrag 265 gearbox is trickier to find if a replacement is required. The European cars got the dog-leg, five-speed version while American cars were equipped with an overdrive unit. Don't get caught-out by somebody selling a used dog-leg 'box from a 535i or 635i, because this will have different gear ratios. "The gearbox can get a bit notchy and noisy with age, but it's generally a tough unit. A rebuild is perfectly possible, but parts from

BMW are expensive. However, we have experience of an independent specialist called All Gears, in Worksop, Notts., (tel: 01909 478581, all-gears.co.uk), which provides an excellent service. There was only ever a manual gearbox on this M3. "The S14, four-cylinder engine that powered the E30 M3 in various guises during its production run is, essentially, a straightforward motor. Compared to more modern engines, there's no Vanos, no valvetronic, very few sensors and pretty basic electrics. Now, while this is a good thing in many respects, it's also something of a double-edged sword because the relative mechanical simplicity can tempt all and sundry into having a fiddle!

DIY OPTION?

For this engine to run properly, correct set-up is essential," Barry advises. "Although it's simple by modern, M engine standards, it's important to appreciate that there's still plenty to get wrong. It is relatively DIY-friendly if you know what you're doing and, as with any engine, it'll only be as good as the last person who worked on it." Engines that have endured a hard, high-revving life, will be showing their age now, perhaps with worn piston rings (smoky exhaust), bottom-end bearings and oil pump. Valve clearances need to be checked and adjusted properly – ignoring this can lead to problems. The inlet manifold gaskets are rubber blocks that sit between the head and the individual throttle bodies. With age, these harden and crack, resulting in air leaks that will cause engine running issues. The

engine also features an air flow meter to assist the fuel injection system, and these can wear or be badly adjusted by people trying to rectify some other issue. "There was a concern that grew up around the E30 M3 during the 1990s, which suggested that it was essential to change the timing chain at 100,000 miles, or face mechanical disaster. But this is a myth that stemmed from the failings of the M88; the engine the S14 was derived from. That unit was fitted with a single-row timing chain which was under-engineered for the job. As a result, they stretched, jumped teeth and even broke, so changing them at 100,000 miles was sensible and necessary.

BETTER TIMING

However, the S14 engine was fitted with a much stronger, dual-row timing chain, and I've never seen one break. But wear in the chain's plastic guides and tensioner mechanism can result in slackness, and there have been cases of tooth-jumping as a result. One workaround to mask a noisy chain that I've seen quite often, is the fitting of a chain tensioner from the S50. "The engine's top end is very strong, and camshaft wear just doesn't occur. Nevertheless, some will probably be in need of an engine refresh by now. A cylinder head rebuild, with new valve guides on the exhaust side, plus new piston rings and an oil pump, will cost about £7,500-£10,000 at an independent specialist. "Unfortunately,

E30 M3 SPECIAL EDITIONS

• Tour de Corse:

Created in France in 1987 to celebrate a French win in that year's Tour de Corse rally, in Corsica. Only 50 were made, and all were Diamond black, with Tour de Corse badging and yellow headlamps.

• Europameister 88 Celebration:

Built to mark the M3's dominance in Group A racing, in 1988. All were painted in Macau blue and 150 were made. It was based on the standard car with the 195hp, cat-equipped engine, but featured Evolution-style spoilers, black-spoked, 16in alloys and extended, grey leather interior.

• Johnny Cecotto Edition:

Launched in 1989 to preview the forthcoming, 215hp engine upgrade, 480 were built to celebrate Cecotto's driving success with the Schnitzer team. Available in Macau blue, Misano red and Nogaro silver, the

car looked like an Evo 2 but, under the bonnet, had a red-painted engine. Inside there were half-leather seats, lots of extra equipment and a Johnny Cecotto-signed and numbered plaque.

• Roberto Ravaglia Edition:

A UK-version of the Cecotto Edition introduced in 1989 – neither that driver nor Schnitzer were well known in the UK then. Only 25 were imported, 16 of which were finished in Misano red, with Anthracite half-leather trim, while the other nine got Nogaro silver paint and silver, half-leather trim.

• Swiss M3 Cecotto Edition:

Emissions legislation in Switzerland during the 1990s necessitated the creation of this 211hp version of the Cecotto Edition for that market. Eighty cars were built late in 1989 and during the spring of 1990, all of which featured an M-Technic II steering wheel and a Cecotto-signed but unnumbered plaque.

S14 engine parts tend to be expensive from BMW. The timing chain guide parts, for example, cost £380 per tensioning rail, and all the parts needed to replace the whole mechanism add up to over £1,000! A replacement oil pump will cost you £444 from BMW so, clearly, things can quickly add up and, in reality, it's perfectly possible to spend £8,000 on an engine rebuild.

COOL ENOUGH?

The cooling side of things is fairly robust, although problems with the electric fan (on European models) can cause overheating issues, which need to be avoided. Elderly electric fans can seize, or fail to activate at the low-speed setting. When the latter happens, the engine will be allowed to get close to overheating before the fan finally kicks





in, which is never good. There are no warning lights to signify fan problems, so the temperature gauge is the only guide. The radiator can leak from the top and bottom joints to the core, as a result of corrosion, and can be damaged by flying stones. The water pump is generally reliable but, when they're old and worn, coolant fluid leaks from around the main shaft can develop. Also, it makes sense to check and replace all the hoses, as ageing rubber will be prone to hardening, cracking and splitting. Barry says that the E30 M3's braking and suspension systems are durable and relatively straightforward. "This car has an early ABS system as standard which is reliable and the odd sensor failure is about as bad it gets. The system uses single-piston calipers front and back, although they're bigger (as are the discs) than those on a normal E30. To have all four calipers rebuilt, with new pistons, will cost about £250. Brake discs are still available from BMW, at about £120 each for the fronts, and £72 for the rears. However, it's not uncommon to find brake

upgrade kits fitted to these cars. "With regard to the suspension, the front struts are unique to this model, and are £1,128 each from BMW for the bare strut. These can rust, necessitating replacement, or they may have been cut down to facilitate the fitting of coilovers. Original shock absorbers were not available from BMW for some time, so Bilsteins are a popular replacement."

A DRIVER'S DELIGHT

The E30 M3 rides surprisingly well on the standard suspension. It's compliant and perfectly comfortable for normal use, especially when compared to the M Sport set-ups used on more modern BMW models. There's also a quite widely held belief that the car handles and rides better on the standard 15in wheels, rather than the 16s that were introduced with the Evolution. It's not a fast car by today's standards, but the immersive driving experience offered by this first M3 is – virtually – second to none. The car's performance can be exploited safely and legally on the public road in a way that's

simply impossible with a modern M3 or M4, if you want to keep your driving licence. It was a quick car in its day, and remains a rapid and exciting one today. However, owning an E30 M3 isn't about its ultimate pace, it's much more about how the car feels to drive. People fall in love with this model simply because it's so engaging. Drivers feel completely in touch with what's happening; there's no electronic nanny interfering with the steering or throttle. The car goes where you point it and is a thrill to drive on a twisty road. Yet it remains docile and friendly around town, offering great manoeuvrability and superb, all-round visibility thanks to its compact size and narrow pillars. The E30 M3 offers a level of simple, driving purity that's hard to beat, and is perhaps only equalled by the E46 M3 CSL. The fact that, 30 years on, its abilities are still held in such high regard, and that it remains a driving benchmark against which all else is compared, says everything you need to know about the wonderful qualities of this desirable and beguiling machine. ■



BIG GUNS

The extravagant V12-powered Jaguar XJS and the outrageously pricey BMW 6-Series were the ultimate way to show you'd made it in the '80s. We revisit the duo as classics courtesy of the range-topping M6 and XJRS. WORDS: PAUL WAGER

Despite coming from very different backgrounds, the Jaguar XJS and the BMW 6-Series have more than you might think in common. Both are derived from their maker's mainstream saloon car of the time – in Jaguar's case its only saloon car – and both replaced a very different and far more classically styled predecessor to varying reception from the brand faithful. They were both also outrageously expensive: Launched just a year apart, the Jaguar in 1975 and the BMW in 1976, by 1980 the XJS retailed at £19,187 while the 635CSi just undercut it at £18,740. To put that into perspective, a 3-litre Capri was yours for £6833 and a Porsche 924 just £9103.

Both offered something the more mainstream coupes couldn't, though: chiefly a combination of imposing style and lazy power, both cars being grand tourers as opposed to the more sporting E-Type or 3.0 CS which had come before.

Both were also developed into a very different animal indeed in the shape of the TWR-developed JaguarSport XJR-S and the flagship M635CSi, the Jaguar gaining a stretch to a full six litres and the BMW's M badge signifying the adoption of the M1 supercar's engine. At this point prices were in another league entirely: in 1988 BMW would relieve you of £45,780 for an M635, while an optimistic Jaguar was asking £48,029 for the XJR-S. That put both of these heavy bombers an easy 10 grand above a top-end Mercedes E-Class coupe or the revolutionary Audi Quattro.

The price tag was perhaps justified though: still nothing provided quite the same combination of style, power and continent-crushing ability and in the case of the Jaguar, nothing could equal its cylinder count at the money. In fact, the nearest V12-powered alternative was the £116,000 Lamborghini Countach, although the flat-12 Ferrari Testarossa

did undercut it slightly at £112,000. Impressively though, both would be given a good run by the XJR-S or M6.

Today, values of both the Jaguar and the BMW remain solid but now as it was back then, both are still supremely useable classics in the way the Italian supercars never were. How to they compare today? We revisited the XJR-S and M635CSi to find out.

M635CSi

Like the XJ-S, BMW's 6-Series coupe was very different from what had gone before which was the 3.0 CS coupe. The slender pillars and elegant detailing of the Wilhelm Hofmeister design marked it out as a product of the late '60s and in contrast Paul Bracq's 6-Series was a brutalist car park to the CS's Victorian arcade.

And as such it was bang on trend and thoroughly modern for the mid '70s, its thrusting prow and chunky stance giving it an aggression the older



car lacked – at least, in roadgoing form without the wild spoilers of the ‘Batmobile’ CSL racers.

As launched in 1976, the 6-Series – or E24 in BMW-speak – was based on the platform of the contemporary first-generation 5-Series. Like the CS before it, production of the low-volume coupe bodyshell was outsourced by BMW to coachbuilder Karmann and the car was launched in the UK in September 1976 as a single model: the 200bhp 633CSi, offered in either four-speed manual or three-speed automatic flavour.

A response to sluggish sales was the livelier 635CSi offered from late 1978, sporting a bored and stroked engine, five-speed close-ratio manual, LSD and stiffened suspension, the car identified by front airdam, rear boot spoiler and cross-spoke wheels. In 1980 the 633CSi was replaced by the 2.8-litre 628CSi, while in 1982 the car was extensively revised to use the platform of the second-generation E28 5-Series.

These later cars retained the E24 model code but are in reality very different with virtually no interchangeable parts. Although it looked very similar, the bodywork was subtly different and included modern design features such as wraparound bumpers. A year later the wraps came

off the M635CSi, sporting a modernised derivative of the 24-valve 3.5-litre straight six debuted in the M1.

Running Bosch Motronic injection and driving through a five-speed Getrag manual and LSD, the M635 boasted 286bhp and sat on uprated springs and dampers with 240/45 TRX rubber while four-piston calipers uprated the brakes.

Visually, the car was distinguished by body-coloured wheelarch extensions, deeper front spoiler, a pair of discreet M badges... and very little else. In similar vein to the subtle M5 sharing the same engine, the M635 was a masterpiece of subtlety but packed a sledgehammer punch: spinning the 24-valve motor to its 6500rpm peak power would see it scorch to 60 in just 6.4 seconds and top out at just shy of 160mph – figures which mean it’s still a fast car by today’s standards.

To drive though, the M635 feels almost mundane in comparison to the expectations generated by those kind of performance figures. The cabin ambience is pure upmarket 5-Series and the car feels very much like a mass-made product – a mass-made product of the highest quality but a factory-produced commodity nonetheless. The interior style is stark but efficient in the best ‘80s Germanic style as employed

to good effect everywhere from Golf to S-Class and in purely technical terms is probably superior to the Jaguar. The plastics are higher quality and the slightly angled gauges are a masterpiece of ergonomic efficiency and clarity.

Certainly it feels more modern than the Jaguar cabin but as a result has perhaps dated more, despite its undoubted quality of construction.

Fire up the M6 and it feels very modern, the Motronic engine management giving it an instant start and a sewing machine-smooth idle with just a slight edge to the note from the twin pipes which hints at its potential.

The M-badged 6-Series were all three-pedal cars which makes them a very different beast from the cooking 635CSi which is more often to be found in self-shifting form where the combination of the torquey BMW ‘big six’ and four-speed ZF combine to create an easy-living grand tourer.

In practice, the manual car is no harder to pilot than a 520i, with an easy clutch and a light shift action and after just a few minutes it becomes obvious just how well the manual box suits the M Power engine – and just how much the extra cam changes the character of the car.

TWIN TEST XJS Vs 6-SERIES



1989 BMW M635CSi

Engine:	3453cc I6
Transmission:	five-speed manual
Max power:	286bhp
Max speed:	158mph
0-60 mph:	6.3secs
Length:	4.8m
Weight:	1505kg

Whereas the 12-valve six is a willing yet lazy companion, the 24-valve motor wants to go from the outset and is eager to spin towards its 6500rpm ceiling. At moderate engine speeds, the car feels merely brisk rather than quick, but let it rev and it takes on a new purpose, the car feeling like an overgrown GTI and begging you to grab it by the scruff of the neck and drive it hard.

Not too hard, though: the M6 was tied down rather better than the standard car but that chunky rubber will only save you for so long. BMW's semi-trailing arm rear suspension is waiting to trap the unwary and especially in the wet a car of this age with this much power on tap needs caution and no small degree of skill to drive hard.

That, of course, it all part of the fun though and you can't help but drive a car like this with some verve. You also can't help grinning as you work that M Power engine.

All of which makes it a very different beast to a V12-automatic Jaguar... doesn't it?

JAGUAR XJRS

Technically what you see here isn't a



286bhp made the M635CSi a true autobahnstomer - surprisingly happy to rev, too.

Jaguar but a JaguarSport – at least that what it says on the V5 of Alan Richell's stunning example in our photos. Established as a joint venture between Jaguar and Tom Walkinshaw, the purpose of the JaguarSport operation was to capitalise on Walkinshaw's motorsport success with the XJ-S and create road cars with an added sporting

appeal to attract a more youthful buyer into the Jaguar fold.

The JaguarSport treatment was first seen in 1984, offered on both the 3.6-litre AJ6 and the regular 5.3-litre V12, both of which received a 10 per cent power boost with a sports exhaust but the top cat (sorry...) of the range was the 6-litre V12. With a longer stroke



1989 JAGUAR XJR-S

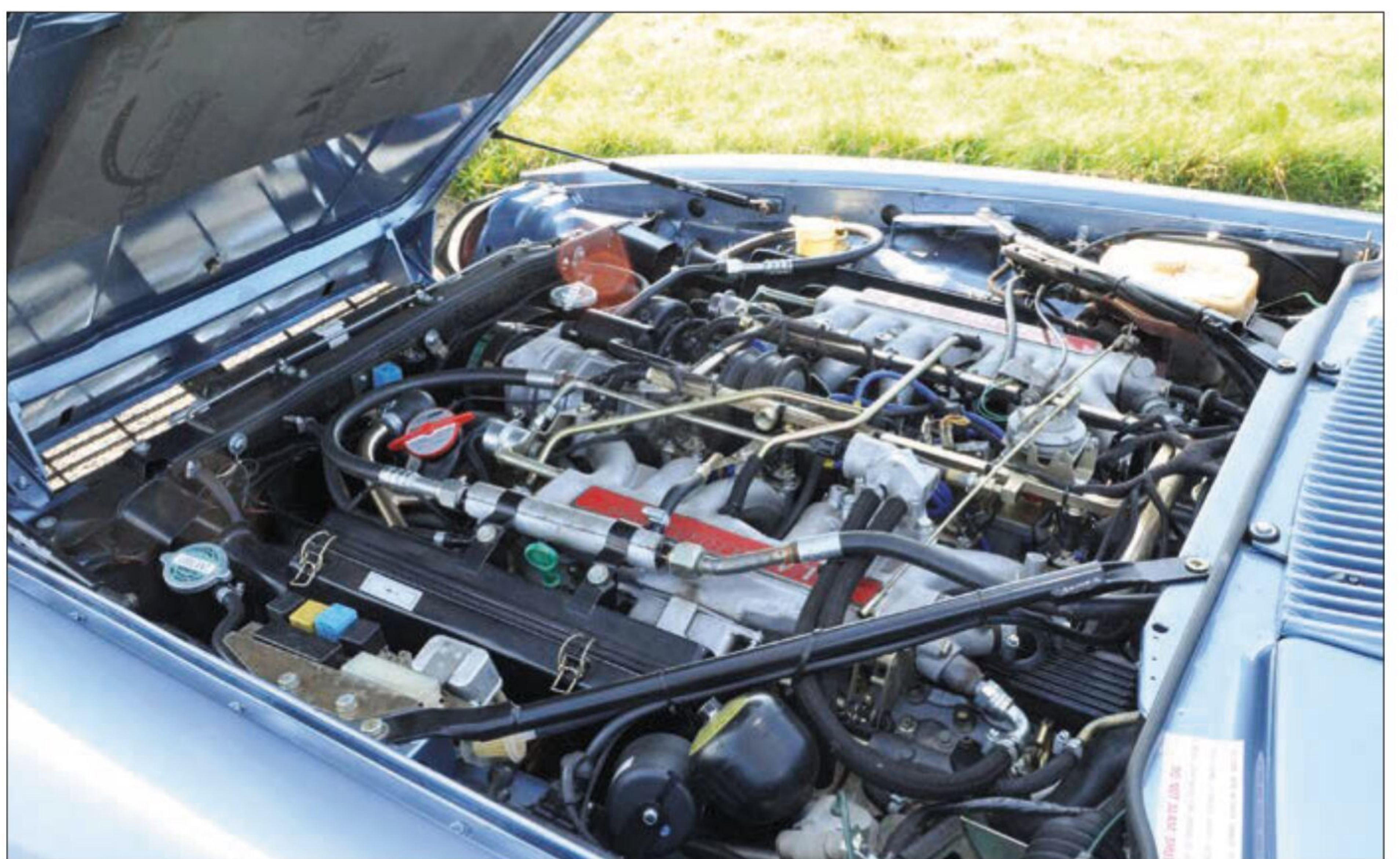
Engine:	5993cc V12
Transmission:	three-speed auto
Max power:	318bhp (std)
Max speed:	160mph
0-60 mph:	6.5secs
Length:	4.8m
Weight:	1800kg

of 78.5mm, new pistons and remapped engine management, the car left TWR's Kidlington premises with 380bhp and a top speed of 170mph. The brakes were uprated to suit, discs enlarged to 10.6 inches front and 11.6 rear, with lightweight four-piston calipers, while stiffer springs and dampers firmed up the car and the steering was recalibrated for more feel.

It was in 1988 that the JaguarSport joint venture was established, with the TWR-developed cars sold through select Jaguar dealers, although the 6-litre option was dropped at this point.

Following criticism that the JaguarSport cars were little faster than the standard cars, the 6-litre option returned for 1989, revisiting the TWR engine with its longer stroke, adding Zytec engine management and improved air intake for a result of 318bhp. The XJR-S retained the bodykit and the Speedline alloys grew to 16-inchers while the car sat on similarly uprated suspension.

By 1993, Jaguar had created its own version of the 6-litre engine and the XJR-S was gradually wound down, while internal politics eventually saw



JaguarSport V12 good for 318bhp, though an auto box was standard equipment.

the JaguarSport operation liquidated in 1994 following the decision for TWR to produce the DB7 using a discarded Jaguar design for an XJS successor.

Regardless of the corporate politics, the end result was simply tremendous and those who dismiss the XJS as coming up short to the E-Type would do well to spend just a few minutes in an

XJR-S. The style is pure '80s excess of course, Alan's car easy to spot in the Cotswold village where we met up for our photos: for one thing, several feet of it generally stick out of parking bays full of family hatches and identikit SUVs, while its chunky spoilers and flat-faced wheels mark it out as being from a different era.

TWIN TEST XJS Vs 6-SERIES



More modern at first glance than the Jaguar, but the passage of time has dated it firmly as a 1980s machine.

Entering an XJ-S feels like more of an occasion than the BMW, the low roofline and snug cabin with its high central tunnel reinforcing the point that this isn't simply a two-door version of a volume saloon.

It's from the inside that the difference between these two cars is really reinforced, with the Jaguar most definitely feeling the more special of the two. The light-coloured leather and wood veneer are a world away from the sombre black plastics of the BMW, while the majestic bonnet is forever in view, reminding you of the physical size of the car's outrageous powerplant and also serving as a handy means of placing the

car on narrow roads.

With twice as many pistons to coax into motion, it's no surprise that waking up the V12 requires a couple of seconds' cranking, the effect being not unlike a race car. Once running though, the JaguarSport car sounds very different from the unobtrusive exhaust note of the regular Jaguar V12. As produced originally, the 6-litre cars were fitted with a performance exhaust, but Alan's car has since been further fettled by noted Jaguar specialist KWE, where it received the firm's own system alongside a revised ignition system and some other mods which provide it with a useful power hike over the regular

JaguarSport offering.

As Alan reflects, he'd acquired the car very much as a 'keeper' and the engine mods were part of what amounted to a complete going-over by KWE during which process the car was also treated to the KWE suspension upgrade.

Compared to the M6, the XJR-S feels less overtly sporting on initial acquaintance, thanks in large part to its automatic box, a three-speed GM unit. Slip the delicate chromed shifter into D – the XJR-S predates the 'J-gate shifter' introduced with the XJ40 – and the car wafts away on a light throttle like any other V12 Jaguar.



Jaguar walnut and leather clash with the bright carpets and cream TWR wheel.

Ambling through village streets, it's comfortable and refined, pattering over potholes without crashing, although this is perhaps a legacy of the care which has been lavished on the car by Alan and KWE. Few XJ-Ss are as nicely set-up as this and the absence of any untoward squeaks, rattles or clonks provide a rare chance to sample the XJ-S as it was originally designed. In fact, the only other XJ-Ss I've sampled which have felt so fresh are the last-of-the-line cars in the Jaguar Heritage collection.

Once we're out of the village, Alan encourages me to give the car

its head and as I oblige, the GM box eases down a gear and the car simply gathers speed with a firm yet unrelenting shove. It's a very different experience to the terrier-like M6, but the 6-litre engine does feel similarly eager, revving more freely than the regular 5.3 V12 and giving the car mighty mid-range punch.

A Jaguar speciality has always been a remarkable ride/handling balance and the XJR-S doesn't disappoint on this front. It may be firmer than the regular XJ-S and feels beautifully planted but also manages to avoid the firm ride

of the BMW, the end result being a car which feels much happier on our excessively pockmarked roads and which Alan reports can easily be used every day. On a twisty A-road Alan encouraged me to push the car hard through a series of S-bends and despite not wishing to put someone else's Jaguar through the hedge, it's obvious at even relatively modest speeds that the car is at least as capable as the BMW. Indeed, it was judged by road testers of the day to be ultimately more capable, although the limits of both cars are very high.



TWIN TEST XJS Vs 6-SERIES



VERDICT

Having once edited a *BMW* magazine and more recently being immersed in Jaguars and having had an XJS on the drive for several months, this is a tricky one to decide. The M635 will always be a favourite BMW, ranking right up there with the E39 M5, but I love the car in the way one loves a Snap-On spanner or a favourite kitchen knife: a quality tool designed efficiently to do a specific job.

The Jaguar on the other hand appeals in an entirely different way, largely because of the outrageousness of a V12 engine but also since Jaguar – a smaller player compared to the might of BMW – managed to create a car which could not only be compared to the best the Bavarians could offer yet which was sufficiently credible to need no excuses making for it. And also because nobody ever needed 12 cylinders in their car engine but it's nice to know you can.

LIVING WITH THEM

Neither of these is the sort of car you end up owning by accident yet neither of them has to be a headache to live with. BMW was one of the first makers to support its older cars with a factory classic operation and as a result much of what you might need is still available from your local main dealer... albeit at a price.

The aftermarket can cater for much of the running gear and with many parts shared with contemporary 5 and





7-Series cars a down-at-heel car can be brought up to scratch for affordable money given enough patience.

As with anything made by Karmann though, your main enemy will be body rot and the 6-Series does like to dissolve. Panels can be particularly costly with front wings only made in batches for BMW Classic and retailing at £1000 a side.

In some ways the XJ-S is the easier prospect, certainly for UK-based owners with legions of Jaguar specialists

out there and Jaguar's own Classic operation now covering the cars. Like the BMW, the Jaguar will like to rot and the best advice is to buy on condition rather than get hung up on a particular specification. On the subject of which, don't overlook the cost of reviving the interior, since the leather and wood can be expensive to have refurbished properly.

Buy a good one though and the service consumables aren't going to break the bank, certainly with the limited

miles you'll cover in the car. One thing will be expensive though: neither of these deserves cheap tyres, so go for the correct rubber, with Alan reporting that the correct size of Falken rubber works well on the Jaguar.

Values? Both BMW and Jaguar values are rising healthily in line with increasing interest in 1980s cars, though of the two the BMW is the more valuable. The XJR-S is the rarer car, but more affordable; just make sure you've enough in the coffers to afford the V12's rapacious fuel costs. ■



THE LIGHTFANTASTIC!

As a high-performance all-rounder, there are few better cars than the BMW M5 and, as Chris Graham reports, the E34 variant remains one of the very best



The E34 5 Series was a notable model for many reasons, but two of the more fundamental were its sales success and its overall quality. This was the first large saloon from BMW to sell over one million units, and it was also the model that really delivered the first, serious body blow to arch rivals, Mercedes-Benz.

From a driving enthusiast's point of view, the jewel in the crown of the E34 range – as is the case with all 5 Series models – was the M5. This was the model that most 5 Series owners aspired to and, in the case of the E34, with very good reason. The BMW M5 has always been a model that hasn't needed to shout about its abilities. Sure, the newer F10 and F90 variants have an arguably 'louder' look than the earlier models, but even

they remain subtly muscular, rather than overtly aggressive.

In many respects, the M5 has always been the thinking man's sports car; a vehicle whose performance prowess is only matched by its incredibly useful ability to perform the most mundane of motoring duties, with comfort and aplomb.

M5, TAKE TWO!

The E34 variant we're focusing on in this feature, was the second iteration of the M5. It followed the E28 version and was launched in Europe late in 1988, but UK buyers had to wait another couple of years before they got the chance to buy the car in right-hand-drive form. Outwardly, the M5 didn't look much different from the rest of the E34 range,

but very good things were happening beneath the surface. Under the bonnet, the car was powered initially by an S38, 3,535cc engine which, at that stage, was the largest straight-six that BMW had ever made. It produced 315bhp and generated 266lb ft of torque which, running through a five-speed manual gearbox, was sufficient to push the 1,700kg super-saloon to 60mph in 6.4 seconds.

While this might not sound terribly exciting by today's standards, back in the early 1990s it was quite something, especially for a four-door saloon. To put it in perspective, an early 1990s Mercedes-Benz 300SE took 9.1 to complete the same sprint, an Audi 90 Quattro needed 8.1 and a Porsche 944, 7.8. Suffice to say, the new M5 caused quite a stir.



The interior in this Rosso red LE model was trimmed with champagne extended leather and natural poplar wood. Orinoco cars got bicolour petrol and mint leather combined with graphite, bird's-eye maple. The identification plaque says it all.



BUYING GUIDE

E34 M5



Much of the handling development work was carried out by BMW engineers at the Nürburgring, to hone the steering, brakes and suspension under the most rigorous of conditions. As a result of their efforts, the M5 had springs that were 25% stiffer than the then current 535i model, thicker anti-roll bars and a ride height that was lowered by 20mm. Stopping power was delivered by enormous, 316mm, vented, front discs and the steering set-up was both fast and well-weighted.

HAND-BUILT

The E34 M5 was the last M car to be built by hand, and each one took nearly six weeks to complete; a fact that was inevitably reflected in the £51,450 launch price (equivalent to nearly £138,000 nowadays). Of course, being an M car, BMW ensured that owners got a good deal for their money, and the new M5 was equipped with automatically-adjusting Boge dampers. These stiffened during cornering and braking, but relaxed

E34 M5 TECH SPEC	M5 3.6	M5 3.8
Capacity (cc/cyl)	3,535/6	3,795/6
Power (bhp)	315 @ 6,900rpm	340 @ 6,900rpm
Torque (lb.ft)	266 @ 4,750rpm	295 @ 4,750rpm
0-60mph	6.4	5.6
Top speed	155	155
Economy (mpg)	23.6	23.4

to a softer, more comfortable setting the rest of the time.

The car ran on 17in alloys and was fitted with a revised clutch for a lighter action. Customers could also specify the Nürburgring Pack when buying, which added a manual control for the adaptive suspension, a thicker rear anti-roll bar and wider, 9in wheels. The 3.5-litre remained on sale for the first couple of years, then the capacity was increased to 3,795cc, producing the 340bhp, 3.8 model. The 0-60mph time dropped to 5.6 seconds, thanks to the extra power and torque, and the car became even more impressive.

The greater capacity, which added

another £1,000 to the car's price, was achieved by increasing the S38's bore and stroke, and this also boosted the maximum torque to 295lb ft. Although the top speed was electronically limited to 155mph, it's been suggested that a de-restricted 3.8-powered E34 M5 could have topped-out at 170mph. A Touring version was also created, but was never officially marketed in the UK, and only 900 are reported to have been made.

MORE GEARS

In the spring of 1994, the final raft of model changes included the introduction of a six-speed manual gearbox, to



There were originally two, factory two-piece wheel options – M System I and M System II. Later cars featured M parallel alloys. Uneven tyre wear will point towards suspension wear, or poor wheel alignment.



Both versions of the S38 straight-six are reliable and durable if properly maintained and used regularly.

enhance the car's mid-range pulling power, and a brake upgrade to include lighter, more durable, 'floating' discs (a first for a road car). The standard wheel size was also increased, to 18in, as was the asking price, to £55,580. Production ceased in July 1995, with just over 11,000 E34 M5s having been built.

Anyone looking to buy an E34 M5 today must be realistic about their chances of finding a decent car. With the newest examples now getting on for 25 years old, natural wastage, owner abuse, idiotic driving and corrosion have all taken their toll. The upshot is that there are slim pickings out there, even for those buyers with a pocket full of cash. Check any of the popular, online websites and you'll be lucky to find more than a handful of these cars for sale at any one time. What's more, those that are there are likely to be expensive, if they're anything approaching half-decent examples. As with most M cars, values are on the up nowadays, and so the days of finding a down-at-heel example for a couple of grand, are long gone.

The next essential point to appreciate is that buying one of these M5s today is going to require deep pockets, if you're settling for anything less than the very best out there. This is a complex car which will deteriorate rapidly if it's not given appropriate levels of care and attention. Unfortunately, it's an all too familiar story but, as residual values tumbled, so these cars found their way into the hands of ever less sympathetic and increasingly cash-strapped owners.

ENOUGH TLC?

Very few people who bought a 20-year-old E34 M5 for a few grand back in 2010, would have been prepared to go the whole hog on specialist servicing, quality lubricant changes and regular anti-corrosion inspections. It was a cheap car that got blasted around the place until it either got stolen, was piled into a tree or was written-off due to the prospect of large repair bills. Such was the sad fate of many a once-valiant M car, I'm afraid, and now the mantle of responsibility falls on us enthusiasts to pick up the pieces, and make the best of what's left.

Just about the worst thing that can happen to a specialist, hand-built M car – apart from it being run into the ground by an uncaring owner – is that it ends up sitting unused for years at a time. There are few things that cause more trouble for cars of this sort, than inactivity. Unless the storage environment is very carefully controlled, fluctuating temperatures, condensation and even the presence of rats and mice, can wreak havoc. Rates of corrosion are likely to be greatly accelerated and, given the propensity for the underside of this car to rot anyway, that's the last thing you want.

CORROSION ALERT!

So, any car that you get the chance to look at needs to be carefully checked for rust. Start with the underside, and get the vehicle up in the air so that you can have a proper look.

Inspect the areas around the jacking points, the sills and the floorpan for structural corrosion. Such issues will be expensive to put right. If you're not sure about what to look for, then make sure you involve somebody who is. A couple of hundred quid spent on a proper, pre-purchase inspection by an independent, BMW M car specialist, is a small price to pay, in terms of what it might save you in the long run.

The ingenuity and resourcefulness of the shadier automotive refinishers out there, really can create a sow out of a pig's ear when it comes to sale car prep. So, always remember that just because a car looks clean and shiny on the top side, that's no guarantee that all's well beneath the surface.

Cast a critical eye along the bottoms of the doors, the wheel arches and around the fuel filler. Corrosion in these areas is likely to have worked its way out from the inside, so nine times out of 10, will actually be worse than it looks when the paint and surface rust is cleared away. As far as the engine is concerned, both the S38 3.5- and 3.8-litre versions are inherently pretty reliable, assuming proper maintenance. However, therein lies the rub, as we've already discussed. To remain in good nick, it's essential that these engines are serviced regularly, and that oil and filter changes are carried out as the service schedule dictates. It shouldn't be overly expensive to keep things up and running, as long as owners keep on top of the routine stuff.

BUYING GUIDE E34 M5



MECHANICAL ISSUES

Another requirement that's often ignored concerns the valve clearances. On this engine, these really do need to be checked and, if necessary, adjusted on an annual basis (or every 15,000 miles). Regrettably, this is another aspect that's typically neglected, especially by owners skimping on the cost of maintenance.

The later, 3.8-litre version of the engine switched to an ignition-coil-per-spark-plug arrangement, and these coils can be a source of drivability issues. Any hesitation under acceleration can be a tell-tale sign that one of these is on the way out. Elsewhere on the engine, the coolant system can be a bit of a weakness, which is a worry as overheating really is something that needs to be avoided. Keep an eye on the engine temperature during the test drive, especially if you get caught in traffic. If it starts to creep ominously towards 'hot', then the chances are that the viscous fan coupling is at fault – either broken or seized solid.

Also, try to make sure that you are there when the engine is started from cold. Rattling heard from the front of the motor once it's running, can indicate a worn timing chain tensioner, which will need to be replaced sooner rather than later. However, don't be too alarmed if the cold-start idle sounds especially loud.

This can be misdiagnosed as a problem with an expensive exhaust manifold, but it's more likely to be the emissions-reducing secondary air injection pump, which can be deleted if required. The transmission side of things generally throws up very few problems, with the manual gearbox being typically reliable, as is the clutch and the differential.

LEAKY DAMPERS?

Of course, being the age and type of car they are, the E34 M5's suspension and

WHAT TO PAY?

With E34 M5s so thin on the ground these days, it's not so much a question of what to pay, but more about whether or not you'll get the chance to pay! The entry level for this model nowadays is about £12,000, for a high-mileage, 3.6-litre car. As you might imagine, the 3.8-litre versions have a greater attraction for many buyers, so are typically a good deal more expensive. An E34 M5 in anything approaching genuinely good condition and with a history, is likely to be priced in excess of £25,000

running gear is likely to have taken a bit of a pounding, so will require careful investigation, too. The dampers in the rear, self-levelling suspension system may be found to be leaking, as might the hydraulic pipes that supply them. Cars that are seen to be noticeably low at the rear, could be suffering with accumulator problems, or tired regulator valves, which tend to be expensive to sort out. Significant cost can also be encountered if there are found to be problems with the electronic damper control set-up used on the 3.8-engined models. So, when test-driving a car with this system fitted, make sure that operating the switch actually makes a difference to the way the car handles. Elsewhere in the suspension system, wear is likely to be encountered in the various bushes and ball joints, leading to sloppier-than-expected handling and the presence of knocks and creaks during manoeuvres. Replacement of these items is all pretty routine, though, so not terribly expensive. Lastly, from a mechanical point of view, check the steering for the presence of excessive play, indicating steering box wear. It's also worth paying attention to the condition of the vehicle's electrics.

now, and you can at least double that again for one of the very rare, Touring models. The shortage of cars means that the market has gone 'international' and, at the time of writing, I found three or four cars that were being advertised for sale outside the UK. In general terms, buy on condition and service history, rather than mileage and price. The car is perfectly capable of high mileages if properly looked after, so a record of professional care and attention – especially in the past decade – is a tremendous plus point for any car you may come across.

I've read a number of comments on forums about how this aspect often gets ignored, despite its potential to cause significant and potentially expensive problems. Trouble most often arises from badly-installed, aftermarket alarms, in-car entertainment systems and other electrical devices. So, if you're looking at a car where you can see that such things have been added, bear in mind that this could be a niggling and annoying trouble-trigger in the future. However, problems aside, the thing that shines out about the E34 M5 is just how good it was, and remains to this day. It's not a perfect car, of course, and I'm sure that many enthusiasts these days would opt for the millimetre-perfect build quality delivered by robots. But this car has a strong heart and real soul. This is a model that owners develop a tremendous passion for, and a loyalty to. Yes, it's not the cheapest car to keep running and, yes, it's not that fast by modern standards. But it retains an enormous appeal, and its abilities as a beautifully-styled, understated, four-door saloon will surely ensure that its desirability levels are set to rise and rise. So, if you can possibly manage it, my advice is to buy one now! ■

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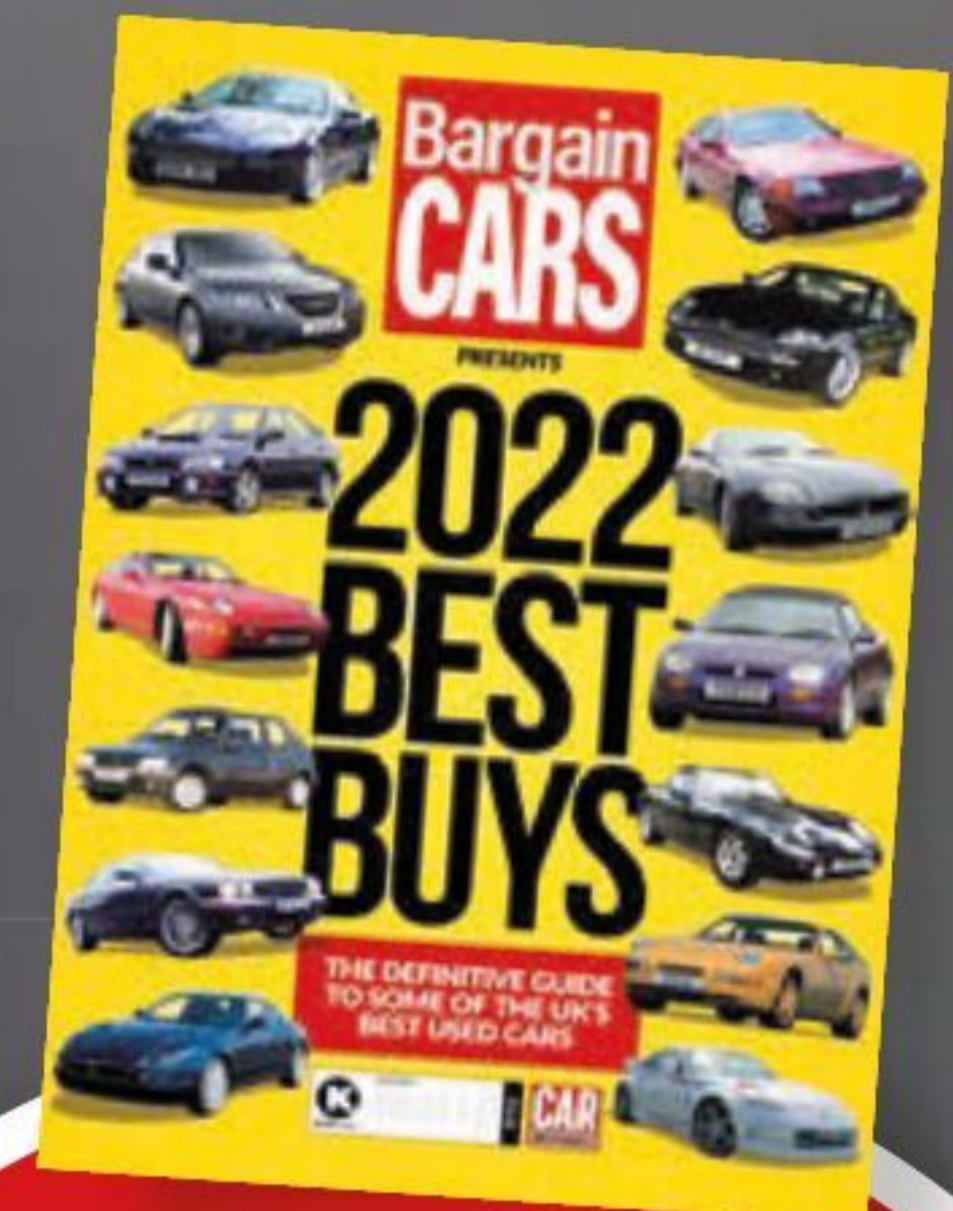
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TUNER PASTOR

With this magnificent period survivor from tuning supremos AC Schnitzer, James Fleming has become something of an evangelist for the brand's road-racer prowess...

WORDS: DAN BEVIS PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON DODD





This car is my first love." The wiles of this vividly red E30 M3 have entangled themselves deep inside James Fleming's affections, and not just for the obvious reasons. Naturally we can assume that the way it looks and drives, and the fabulous specification are all vital factors in increasing the levels of affection to ever-higher planes, but the connection is far more granular and nuanced than mere lust. This car represents the realisation of dreams; a link to the past that creates a clear thread into the future

James, you see, has idealistic motoring intertwined within his very DNA. He started out working in the family business from a very young age, his father having run a successful Citroën and Chrysler Jeep franchise for twenty-five years, and James worked his way up from brandishing the polishing cloths as a youngster to rising through the ranks into the big chair; today he's the head honcho at Fleming Brothers Suzuki in Hunstanton, Norfolk, along with sibling Jonathan. So with this diverse patchwork of brands forming his automotive past and present, why BMWs?

Readers of our sister title *BMW Car* may recall that James has been in print before with his modified 1M, and we know that there's more than one E30 325i in his past...

"It's all down to an early ride in an E30 M3," James explains. "Many years back, a family friend – Chris Rossiter – gave me a spin in his passenger seat around Cadwell Park, and from that moment on it's always been a hero car for me. It's what inspired me to buy my first 325i as a daily-driver and track toy, and then another – and ultimately this M3."

Now, this – as you will have no doubt have spotted – is no ordinary M3. Indeed, it's positively bristling with period-perfect AC Schnitzer upgrades; most noticeable are the wheels, which are genuine ACS 3-piece split-rims in staggered widths, but dig a little deeper and there's far more to explore.

It's all eminently appropriate for a race-derived homologation special such as the M3, as AC Schnitzer cars have always been race-bred machines; a connoisseur's choice for the sort of customer who appreciates the M-Power ethos and hankers after something even more special, more focused, more offbeat. With roots in the iconic Schnitzer Motorsport team, which was founded way back in 1967, AC Schnitzer was established as a brand in

BUYING GUIDE E30 M3 EVO

its own right in 1987, which means that the E30 M3 was well into its stride by the time they swaggered onto the scene. A match made in motorsport heaven? Well, judge for yourself – the evidence is right here before you. Because this isn't just an M3 with a set of Schnitzer wheels, it's got deep swells of heritage backing up the badge."

This is a rare non-sunroof example, which was first registered in Luxembourg in 1989," James explains. "It's a four-

owner-from-new car, a 2.3-litre non-cat example from the factory, although in 1995 it was taken to AC Schnitzer in Aachen for its 2.5-litre S3 conversion," we're told.

Engine-swapping an M3 these days may have the purists crying 'sacrilege!', but of course this is no hooligan chop-job – this was a period conversion by a revered and respected race outfit; ACS models are still sought-after as left-field BMW alternatives today, but back in the

Nineties this was incredibly aspirational stuff. Nowadays there are two schools of thought when it comes to owning a unique and celebrated car such as the E30 M3; the first is in favour of preservation and security – maintaining them to a finicky, concours standard using only OEM parts, ensuring that the screwheads all face the factory-sanctioned way and so forth. These are the cars that end up sitting unused in climate-controlled lock-ups and display



spaces, driven seldom if ever.

This is an entirely reasonable way to behave, and after all, it's the owner's prerogative – if that's what they want to do, then so be it. These are rare and valuable cars, they should be preserved for future generations, and for posterity. However, the second school of thought is what we might call 'the Goodwood approach'. If you've been to the Revival and seen priceless grids of Ferrari 250 GTs, Jaguar E-Type

Lightweights and the like having the very life thrashed from them (and, not infrequently, finding themselves making questionable friends with the Armco, in agonisingly expensive paroxysms of twisted metal and vintage dismay), you'll arrive at the crux of this way of thinking: these are simply machines crafted from metal, rubber and glass.

It is not beyond the wit of man to fabricate replacement parts for any bits you may happen to bend.



BUYING GUIDE E30 M3 EVO



The timeless touch of AC Schnitzer can

And furthermore, they're just cars. Yes, they're particularly special and unusual cars, but the fundamental purpose of such a machine is to convey a person or persons from point A to point B; OK, cars such as these are designed to perform said task with as much speed, adrenaline and visceral stimulation as can be mustered, but they are ultimately just modes of transport. They were designed and built to be driven, and therefore it makes perfect sense to use them for their intended purpose. If it seems necessary or advantageous to modify parts here and there to enhance this experience, let it be so.

James is evidently of the latter

persuasion, believing that driver's cars ought to be driven, and the fact that this car was Schnitzer-modified in period makes the changes all the more alluring today.

The beating heart of the S3 package for the M3 was the 2.5-litre engine upgrade. Technically it was really a 2.4, with the displacement of the S14 four-pot being teased out to 2,431cc – the stroke was increased with a billet steel crank and forged pistons, gas-flow was improved for the intake and exhaust systems, and engine management was tweaked, resulting in a vivid and vibrant 245hp.

And the Schnitzer approach was

about far more than simply throwing a handful of extra grunt into the stock chassis. Working hand-in-hand with Bilstein, they developed a 'Sport' suspension upgrade with tweaked camber settings, uprated dampers and a 20mm lower ride height. To mark the S3 out aesthetically as being something a bit special, the firm channelled the spirit of the DTM to swap in a single-wiper conversion and slick aerodynamic wing mirrors. The three-piece ACS wheels are a motorsport statement of intent, while the Schnitzer steering wheel and pedals keep the upgrades at front-of-mind for the driver.

In addition to these myriad period

E30 M3 Evo

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION:

AC Schnitzer S3 2.5-litre four-cylinder, full custom stainless exhaust system with X-pipe by Deutsch Tech, 5-speed manual, LSD

CHASSIS:

9x17" (front) and 10x17" (rear) AC Schnitzer 3-piece split rims, Yokohama AD08R tyres, AC Schnitzer Sport suspension inc. new front legs with negative camber built-in, Sport Evo alloy bottom arms, Powerflex bushes throughout, Hartge anti-roll bars, drilled and grooved discs, Mintex M1144 pads, Goodridge braided lines

EXTERIOR:

Zinnobar Red, Sport Evo front bumper with carbon fibre splitter, Sport Evo rear spoiler with carbon Gurney flap, AC Schnitzer one-piece racing mirrors, AC Schnitzer single wiper conversion

INTERIOR:

Black leather trim, AC Schnitzer steering wheel, AC Schnitzer pedals



BUYING GUIDE E30 M3 EVO

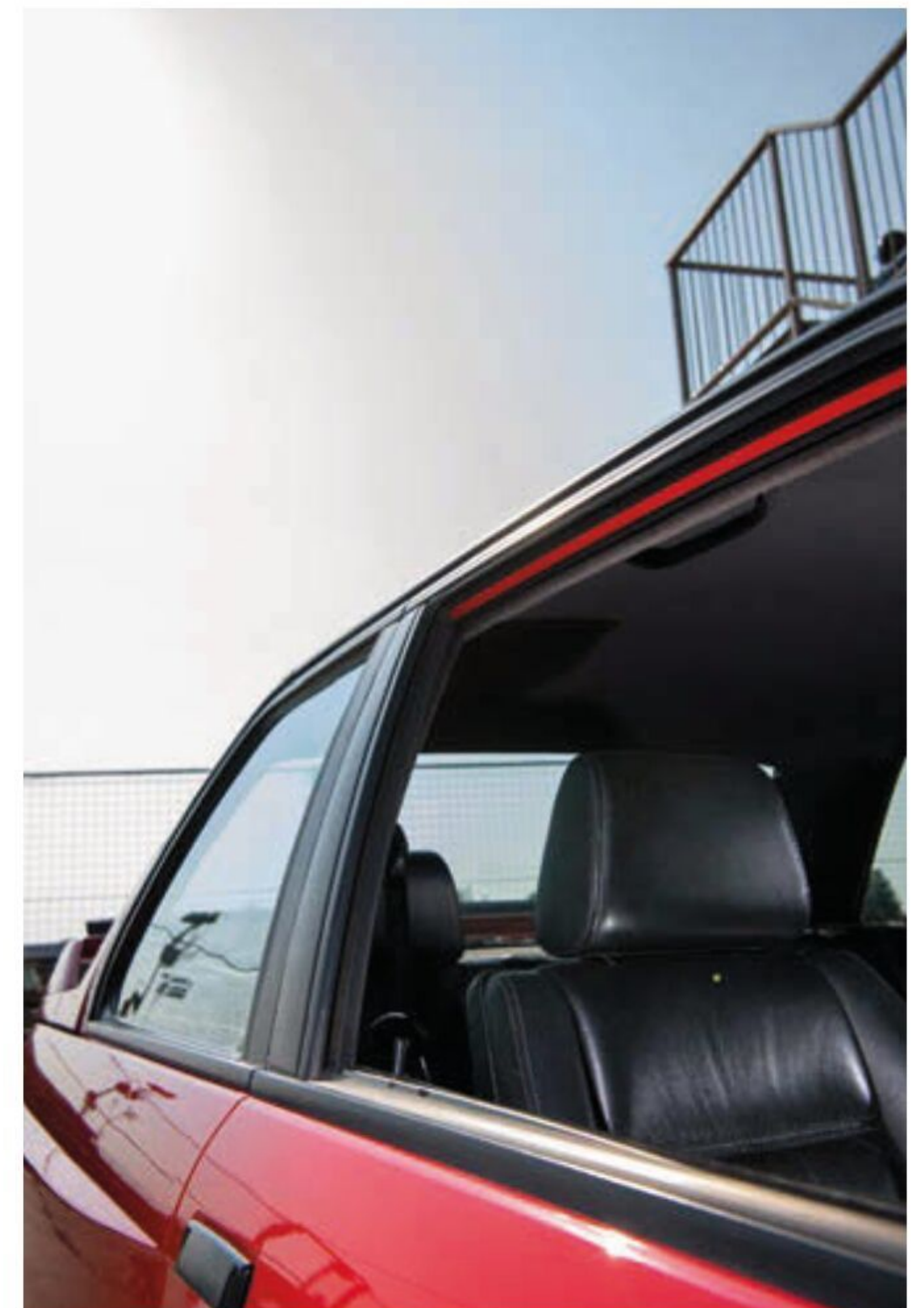


enhancements, James has taken a sympathetic approach to refine the formula yet further, creating the M3 he'd always dreamed of owning and enjoying. On the technical side, he's upgraded the brakes with drilled and grooved discs, Mintex fast-road pads and braided lines, as well as swapping in a set of Hartge anti-roll bars and the alloy bottom arms from the Sport Evo. That jewel-like engorged S14 (which,

it's worth noting, is markedly different to BMW's own 2.5-litre engine in the later Sport Evo) has really found its voice thanks to a full custom stainless exhaust system with X-pipe, hand-crafted by the artisans at Deutsch Tech in Milton Keynes, and on an aesthetic level James has fitted the Sport Evo front bumper with a carbon fibre splitter, and a Sport Evo rear spoiler with an achingly cool carbon Gurney

flap. The finished result is a sort of greatest-hits of 1990s M3 splendour, colourfully painted over an '89 canvas and representing the perfect fusion of 'show' and 'go'.

"I originally bought the M3 as a track car," says James, evidently still channelling the halcyon endorphins of those early Cadwell Park adventures, "but obviously over the years prices have gone crazy. She's retired from the





track now, but still gets the occasional trip to the 'Ring. In 2020 we were planning a trip to Classic Le Mans, although unfortunately COVID stopped that. But the times I've been to Europe are the best, as people cross lanes on the motorway for photos and you get lots of thumbs-ups and smiles!

"It's plain to see why this car has got so deeply under his skin. It's not just the stellar visuals; naturally that's a key factor, and the intoxicating fusion of poise and thrust make a strong case, but most of all this is a car with stories to tell. A bona fide survivor, keenly demonstrating what was possible for the platform at the hands of high-end tuners, and something which today will always be a talking point."

Owning the E30 has been an amazing experience," James enthuses. "The love for the car is phenomenal from pretty much anyone who likes cars – there's always someone taking a photo, or people just wanting to chat and find out about more about it." And that's very much the essence of a machine like this. It's intriguing, it's fascinating; it exists as much as a piece of art as it does as a historical document. The fact that it's also hilarious fun to drive is simply a wonderful fringe benefit. ■



GILT LILY?

Alpina's B6 3.5S is that rare thing – an E30 M3 made even better. We tell its story.

The BMW E30 M3 is an astoundingly good car, and these pages should only reinforce that view. From collectors to test drives, we've delved into the world of the M3 among other 1980s M saloons and brought you the very best content possible. But what about the best car? Can you make the E30 M3 better, or would it be gilding the lily even to attempt it?

Alpina had always ploughed a different furrow to the BMW M division,

even if its products are drawn from similar base stock. It remains a family run business, Burkard Bovensiepen and his sons Florian and Andreas are still at the helm, pushing an individual agenda without compromising what made BMWs great in the first place. Acknowledged by the German Federal Ministry of Transport as an independent manufacturer in 1983, all subsequent models have been legally registered Alpina, rather than modified BMWs.







It offered alternatives to each and every M car of the 1980s – from the M635CSi-smashing B7 Turbo Coupe, through a bewildering array of B9 and B10 models based on the E28 5-series, down to a series of 2.5-3.5 litre variants of E30 to challenge and beat the M3. The B6 3.5 was the most powerful of these, but still used 325i running gear. This model, the B6 3.5S, is a rarity. Using the M3 as its base, just 62 were ever built.

Under the bonnet dwelt the same M30 six cylinder unit as lived in the original B6, a 3.5 litre variant of the standard E30. This was no conventional M30 though, a modified head with improved combustion chambers, lighter, higher compression pistons by Mahle, a new exhaust system and new camshaft meant that power jumped by 20% - from 218bhp to 261bhp – and torque rose from 232lb.ft to 255lb.ft. Granted, it was a heavier engine than the M3, but when that car could only offer 197bhp and 177lb.ft of torque, the extra was more the ample compensation. It's enough for 0-60 in just six seconds – as quick as the M3's E36 based successor, and a second ahead of the E30 M3.

Like the M3 and the standard B6,



Unique trim and digital gauges in vents denote Alpina. Walnut dash not to all tastes.

the 3.5S uses a Getrag gearbox, retaining the M3's dog leg gate for first. Underneath, its chassis is mostly shared with the standard M3 model, including its myriad suspension upgrades over the Standard E30 which in Alpina form mark this as an S variant. What is

different, however, is that all B6 3.5S models used the front springs of the M3 with air conditioning – stiffer than those of the basic car to handle the extra weight, which Alpine needed for the six cylinder engine. 8" wide wheels were fitted with 225/45 tyres.



Inside, you'll find a little walnut trim, a new steering wheel, gearknob, and speedometer. The seats, typically, will be new – Recaros, trimmed with Alpina striping – and digital instrumentation for oil temperature, pressure, and inlet manifold pressure in place of one of the air vents. Outside, only the new wheels and Alpina stripes give the game away.

Alpina's engine management sacrifices BMW's smooth idle in favour of performance, though the Alpina engine is even smoother than the original higher up the rev range owing to shorter pistons and longer conrods. It's not only quicker 0-60 either, with almost five seconds shaved from the M3's 0-100 time of 20.5 seconds. 15.8 seconds is still longer than its standing quarter mile though – 14.4 seconds, with a terminal speed of 96.3 according to *Performance Car* back when these cars were new. 60-80 and 70-90 both take less than six seconds too, making this car a true autobahnstomer. By comparison, each time in the standard M3 is nearer to eight. The six cylinder engine doesn't weigh much more than the air conditioning-equipped version of the four, and the suspension tweaks keep that under control – but what's





surprising is how this engine liked to rev. From 4000rpm to the rev limiter at 6600rpm is its real sweet spot – then a decisive gearchange (for the Getrag won't be rushed) and the joy can start all over again.

Period road tests praised the B6 3.5S for its turn in – even sharper, apparently, than the already impressive original product. Understeer could be expected to increase given the extra weight over the nose, but it was said that the car suffered less than the original owing to its meatier tyres. It's still well balanced – yes the extra weight is in the nose but don't forget that it's approximately equal to the air conditioning equipment BMW had already factored into the chassis of the standard car. Nimble – and while *Performance Car* felt that the ride was firm it was never tiresome – and indeed on smoother surfaces felt quite well damped. The revised suspension settings only serve to make it feel like the engine was meant to be underneath



Unlike BMW, Alpina modified the M30 six to power its take on the M3 formula.

that bonnet – where things are snug, but nothing has had to be cut apart to make it fit except minor modifications to the firewall. It's grippy, though if you do want to push, we've been told that any loss of traction is so progressive as to make it a joy to slide.

The sharp injection cutoff makes slick gearchanges an art – heel-and-toe down the box, and feathering the throttle with as minimal a clutch dip as you can, and precision will leave you feeling proud of yourself. It's all too easy to get it wrong, especially if unused to the dog-leg throw, but get it right and it feels fantastic. At around £35000 when first launched in the UK in 1987, the B6 3.5S wasn't cheap, even when compared to the standard M3. But this is a car which melds the best attributes of the M3 with the best attributes of the larger M cars – it's like an M-cars Greatest Hits compilation,



and when new it was acknowledged that the list price was a price well worth paying. Today if you can find one you're looking at six figures regardless of condition, and it seems a shame that such rarity and collectability mean that few of these cars will ever really be driven hard again. The standard B6 offers a similar experience at a more attainable price, meaning that the S is destined to be desired by the many, but achieved only by the few collectors who

can afford rarely to use it. Shame.

With just 62 built between November 1987 and December 1990 you'll be hard pressed to find one today – a standard B6 is a more common car, though even then we're only talking about 219 examples sold worldwide. As a development of the M3 it's sublime – it answers the criticisms of the armchair pundits without sacrificing any of the standard car's driveability. Is it better? It depends on your perspective. The M3 is an unashamed motorsport hero, developed for the track and it feels that way. The B6 3.5S, however, with its increased torque, taller gearing and additional luxuries, feels more like a grand tourer, almost like a predecessor to BMW's own E36 M3. Its fans will settle for nothing less. But that doesn't mean the standard car is an inferior product. ■



Alpina B6 3.5 was based on the standard E30, offering similar performance but without the rarity of the B6 3.5S

SIX APPEAL

The sober looks of BMW's '80s coupe can hide a blistering pace. We spend an '80s flavoured day with the 286 bhp M6.

WORDS PAUL WAGER PHOTOGRAPHY JACKIE SKELTON



The end of the first generation BMW 6-series was much mourned by enthusiasts, to the point where the run-out 'Highline' models were pretty sought after. Part of the issue back then was that the car was never really replaced, as its successor was the 8-Series – a softer, bigger car altogether complete with V12 power.

These have a strong enthusiast following but were slated by some as being too soft to carry the mantle of the mighty Six, although that was very much redressed by the BMW Motorsport-developed 850CSi with its 380bhp V12.

To discover just what made the

original 6-Series so special, we took a pristine example of the range-topping M6 on a day trip culminating in a visit to BMW's flagship Park Lane dealership for the launch of their BMW Classic venture. Although it would be more correct to refer to the car as the M635CSi – the simpler M6 designation was only ever used in the North American market.

Our day begins at BMW's UK headquarters in Bracknell, home to the German marque for the last 30 years and coincidentally right opposite the HQ of another middle class icon, Waitrose. The car in question is a part of the small heritage fleet maintained by BMW

UK's press department and as such has had no expense spared on its upkeep: an important consideration since the 6-Series may be cheap to buy but can be frighteningly expensive to restore.

The car park in front of the BMW building is rammed full of its latest models, the autumn sunlight glinting off their sharply creased styling and round here nobody bats an eyelid at the most exotic transport. The old 6-Series though is different and as it's brought round to the front of the building for us, the characteristic deep chested exhaust note has people turning to look.

It's at this point in a drive story that



DRIVEN BMW M6

the car owner often tells you to watch for a sticking this or a broken that but our 24-year-old M635 is as pristine as a brand new road test car and we waste no time in spearing off into the remnants of the Bracknell rush hour.

Round here it really is BMW country. Not so much because the firm is headquartered in the town but because that's the car of choice if you live in this affluent part of the country, have a decent job and want a car which looks the part.

These days though, the crowds of diesel 1-Series, 3-Series and of course new MINIs buzzing around are a far cry from the scene in the late '80s when this

M6 was new. Back then BMW wasn't anything like the volume seller it is today and the range was much simpler. No SUVs, no MINIs, no 1-Series: just the 3, 5, 6 and 7-Series.

It may be 24 years old but it's more than capable of keeping up with the modern traffic. The M635 is often described as the result of dropping the M1 engine into the 6-Series, although in truth the engine was slightly revised for the M635 (and M5) application. Whatever the details, the 24-valve 3.5-litre six puts out a mighty 286 bhp and since the 6-Series weighs only 1500 kg performance is strong even by today's standards: 0-60 comes up in just

six seconds and should you find yourself a handy stretch of Autobahn it won't run out of steam until 158 mph which makes it slightly faster than the electronically limited supercars of today which are all (apart from Porsche) restricted to a mere 155...

Bosch's Motronic engine management means the car runs smoothly even from stone cold and makes these cars as easy to live with as any modern hatchback. In fact, squirting round the roundabouts as we head out towards the M4, the main thing to worry about is not overcooking things and performing an impromptu drift session.

BMW was one of the first makers to



DRIVEN BMW M6

adopt electronic traction control but this M635 comes from the generation before that, relying on a good old-fashioned limited-slip diff to keep things under control. The M635 gained 15 per cent uprated springs and specially tuned Bilstein dampers, with a nice predictable feel to the handling which lets you know when you're pushing a bit too hard. I'm not about to push this example that fiercely but I know from previous experience that the M635 can be made to go very hard indeed in the dry, although it takes a special kind of skill to keep up the pace on a wet road.

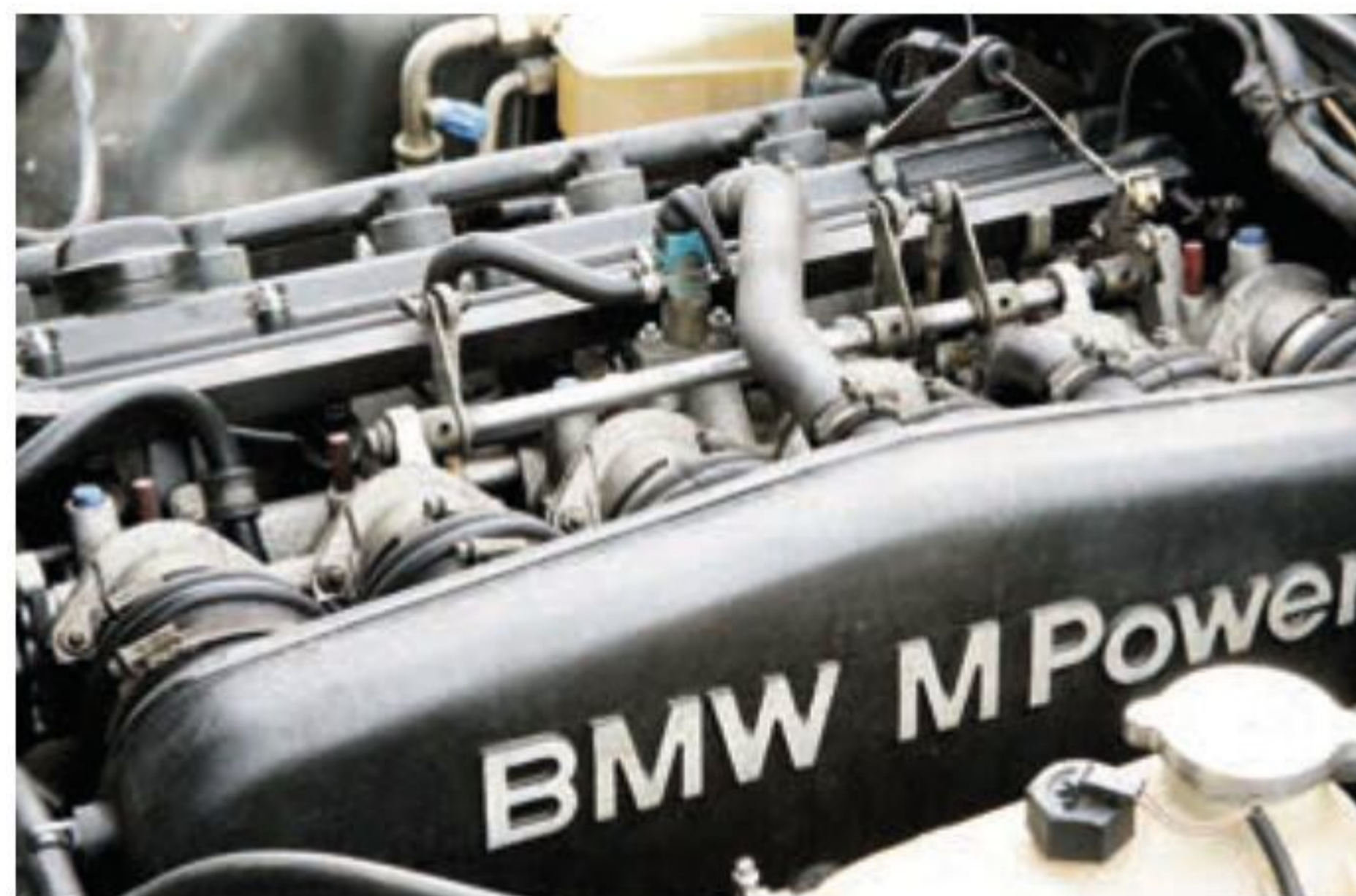
Many M635s – and indeed many BMWs of this era – were supplied originally on the metric-sized Michelin TRX wheels and tyres and although the tyres are still available, the high cost of them tends to put owners off sticking with them. The easy option is to switch from the 415 mm TRX wheels to a set of visually similar 15-inchers from another BMW and fit cheaper conventional tyres, but the TRX does have its supporters, notably the team at Longstone Classic Tyres, who once spent a long time telling me that if only I could try a car on new TRX rubber instead of the age-hardened semi-slick examples more commonly found then I would be convinced.

And here is my chance: BMW UK's pockets are deeper than the average owner and this car wears what look like a pretty new set of matching 215/45 TRX GTs. The verdict? Yes, they're really not bad at all and as a precursor to modern low-profile performance tyres they work well, these fresh examples not presenting the scary sudden breakaway for which they have perhaps unjustifiably gained a reputation.

Spearing down the A329M towards the M4, I'm getting more used to the car, although I've driven this particular example a few times before. The throw of the gearshift is lengthy by modern standards and the travel of the pedals too, but in other respects it feels very modern indeed. The leather-clad sports seats are electrically adjusted via a complex array of buttons on the transmission tunnel, meaning it's easy to get comfortable and the mirrors are electric too.

As we reach the sliproad for the M4, I'm being hassled by a rep in a hurry, anxious to get past me in his Audi diesel. Yes, I know these modern oil-burners can be pretty fast, but as I grab second and wind up the twin-cam six of my





24-year-old BMW, that four-ringed grille rapidly disappears from the mirror. It's as torquy as you might expect a 3.5-litre engine to be and at lower speeds it's really very docile, but evidence of the BMW Motorsport input is apparent as soon as you rev it hard – as it gets on cam, it takes on a different, crisper note and comes very much alive.

Our destination is another town redolent of '80s boom, Newbury where the cellphone giant of Vodafone had its HQ and for many, the mental image of the 6-Series will be accompanied by an estate agent barking into a brick-sized mobile, which makes it somehow appropriate.

At a 90 mph motorway cruise, the M635 is in its element, with only a touch of wind noise around the driver's side window to spoil the party. Blame the frameless design for that and the difficulty of sealing a piece of glass against the roof – later BMWs used

an electronic system where the glass dropped down as the door was opened, returning automatically as it was closed to sit inside a seal.

It's at this point that I investigate the onboard computer which was standard kit in the range-topping M635. All the information you need is displayed here in glorious Sinclair-style red LEDs but rather than by pressing a column stalk, it's accessed via an array of tiny buttons. I once met the BMW engineer who was responsible for developing this system, who admitted that it was very much designed by engineers, for engineers'. It really doesn't pay to longer on the average fuel consumption either: drive it hard and that M-Power six will be getting through the unleaded at a rate of well below 20 mpg. Not that it would have been a problem back in 1986 when fuel was at £1.90 a gallon and economy was so far down the priorities that BMW didn't even have a diesel offering in its



UK line-up. Oddly, although this car is a pretty high-spec example and comes with air conditioning, it doesn't feature cruise control which is so useful in those interminable 50 mph motorway limits watched over by the dreaded average speed cameras.

We've arranged for photography in the grounds of Highclere Castle just south of the town and the understated style of the 6-Series blends right in with the elegant backdrop, to the point where I could just imagine myself in

a parallel universe, crunching up the gravel driveway of my stately home in an M635, Roxy Music playing gently on the Pioneer cassette deck.

Magazine photo sessions can be hard work with older cars: panning shots mean you're constantly accelerating past the photographer, braking, turning round and accelerating again, but the M635 comes from a modern era where there's no overheating, no squealing brakes and no funny noises from the power steering. These cars are just as at home

in the city grind as they are maxed out on the Autobahn, the only concession to the demands of our photo session being a drop in the average economy to 17 mpg.

With the photography over, we head back towards Bracknell and our appointment in Park Lane. Keeping away from the motorway, the M635 feels quite different – still rapid, but a real driver's car too. Overtaking slower traffic is as easy as you'd expect with this much power on tap, but unlike a modern





turbodiesel you need to think about revs and gears in order to make the most of the free-spinning six. Misjudge things and you've got the security of four-pot calipers and 300 mm discs to wipe off the speed rapidly which is an area where later BMWs with their single-pot sliding calipers are often criticised. Our chase car today is a brand new MINI Clubman Cooper D, representing the current state-of-the-art in small diesels, but even so the driver reports having to row the boxy MINI estate hard through its six gears to keep up.

As we get closer to London the traffic builds and we soon find ourselves in the kind of stop-start jam where a good two hundred of those 286 horses are entirely superfluous. The car may be perfectly happy in heavy city traffic, but the manual box makes it tiring after a while and these days serious performance cars like this come with the option of a fancy sequential automatic and flappy paddles instead of a manual ZF and clutch pedal. Back in the day though, if you wanted a self-shifting 6-Series you had to settle for a 218bhp 635CSi without the all-important 'M' on the boot, since the M635 was never offered as an auto.

Despite this, the big glass area and angular bodyshell make the 6-Series easy to place in urban traffic and it



286bhp of M-Powered straight six heft, kept in fine fettle by BMW Park Lane.



THINKING OF BUYING ONE?

The M635 or indeed any 6-Series from the 628 upwards is a car to buy with your eyes open. The mechanical bits are as tough as any other BMW, but the bodyshells were assembled by German coachbuilders Karmann. It used to be an in joke that Karmann was the German word for rust and just like the Karmann-assembled Mk1 Scirocco, the 6-Series does like to rot. Bodywork restoration is an expensive proposition, especially since the front wings run at something like £500 each - and sooner or later all 6-Series will need a pair. They rot all along the top

edge, down the back edge adjacent to the door and at the front above the front bumper, although if it's caught in time a competent bodyshop can save the day.

As for the engine, despite - or perhaps because of - its motorsport origins it really is a tough old thing. The single-row timing chain must be replaced at 100,000 miles, at which point fitting the updated tensioner from the later M3 is a smart move, but if this is done on time then it will be good for 200,000 miles. The valve clearances should be checked every 40,000 miles and it's crucial to use the right concentration of anti-freeze but other

than that, keep it full of oil, don't cane it from cold and it will last forever. Bear in mind though, that if the worst happens, it's entirely unrelated to the M30 engine in the regular 635.

Incidentally, if you end up settling for a 635 instead of the M car, then bear in mind that the 6-Series was introduced back in 1976, when it was based on the then-current 'E12' 5-Series. As the 5-Series range was updated into the 'E28' shape so the 6-Series was revamped in mid 1982 to use the later floorpan. The post-'82 cars are markedly more modern, with far better parts availability so make sure you don't buy the wrong one by mistake.



FACT FILE 1989 BMW M635CSi

ENGINE:	3453cc 24-valve straight six
GEARBOX:	5sp man
POWER:	286 bhp at 6500 rpm
TORQUE:	251 lb-ft at 4500rpm
0-60MPH:	6.0 secs
CONSUMPTION:	18 mpg
LENGTH:	4755 mm
WIDTH:	1725 mm
WEIGHT:	1500 kg



does seem to shrink around you in the way all the best cars do. It's not tiring to drive in an urban context, as so many large GTs can be.

Eventually we arrive at our destination and after a day of experiencing the very best BMW had to offer in the '80s, it's somehow appropriate that as I stroll up to BMW Park Lane the showroom has been cleared of modern metal to

make way for an impressive display showcasing BMW's heritage. Instead of 116d and X6 under the spotlights, the arresting sight includes the Z8, a CSL 'Batmobile', an M1 road car, the original E30 M3 in ultimate Sport Evolution trim, an original 328 and a 2002 rebuilt five years ago from entirely new components by BMW's classic division.

The event is the launch of BMW

Classic in the UK, hosted at the Park Lane dealership which is spearheading the firm's push to provide unrivalled support for its classic enthusiasts - support which has continued apace ever since. It's all driven by the ethos at BMW Classic that the older cars exist to be used rather than mothballed - something which makes our blast around Berkshire seem entirely appropriate. ■

BMW M3 E30

We revisit the car which cemented the reputation of the BMW M brand for good.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: SAM SKELTON





Thirty five years after its launch in 1986, the BMW E30 M3 still enjoys a fearsome reputation as one of the best homologation specials of all time. Conceived as a direct riposte to the Mercedes 190E 2.3-16 "Cosworth" and intended as the basis of a Group A European Touring Car entrant, this first M3 was a world apart from the GT-like six pots which followed. It was a four cylinder sports machine first and foremost, and even today there are few cars better at tearing up tarmac.

BMW wasn't happy with arch-rival Mercedes dominating the European Touring Car Championship, and decided that its own small saloon, the E30 M3, was more than capable of taking the fight to Stuttgart and beating the 190E Cosworth at its own game. To satisfy the regulations for Group A, Munich had to produce 5000 road-going examples of the car it wished to use in competition, within a 12 month period. Little more than the doors and roof of the standard E30 would remain, so BMW had to ensure that the road-going version was an attractive enough proposition to meet the sales requirements. The first stage was the engine – an obvious thing to modify for success on track.

BMW's Motorsport division departed from what the traditionalist might expect in developing this engine – in that rather than their trademark straight six, the engine chosen was a four cylinder. But there was sound engineering thinking behind the decision: An improvement in low speed torque relative to engine capacity, and also better tolerance of high revs. The crank of a four cylinder engine is shorter and therefore stiffer, enabling higher revs to be achieved before any risk of engine damage. As this car was fundamentally developed for racing (and in racing guide was aiming for 300bhp), the torque improvements and higher rev potential were both welcome.

Although it was based on the M10B18 from the 318i, the M3's four-pot (dubbed S14) was a bit of a hybrid. It took the block of the M10, bored and stroked to reach 2302cc. This was mated to a four cylinder development of the cylinder head design used in the M5 and M635CSi, giving four valves per cylinder. The cylinders were fed by four separate throttle bodies, and the result was more power per litre than any contemporary naturally aspirated engine – even those of Ferrari and Lamborghini. This engine would produce 197bhp when fitted to the car, 192bhp if a



catalytic converter was fitted and – from 1989 – was upped further to 217bhp – from a four cylinder 2.3.

A Getrag gearbox was fitted – the same unit as the Mercedes 190 2.3-16, with a dog leg first gear ensuring that 2-3 and 4-5 were on the same plan for fast, racing changes. Fifth was a direct drive, in contrast to the accepted norm of using fifth as an overdrive ratio, while all other ratios were closely spaced to keep the car in its optimum power band. Suspension and damping were calibrated for racing, BMW fitted a quicker steering rack, and the brakes were ventilated discs and fitted with ABS

as standard – impressive stuff for the mid 1980s. The resultant package was then beefed up with wider arches to cover the wider track, blistered like those of the fearsome Audi Quattro and Lancia Integrale. The rear of the body was given greater aerodynamics by playing around with the screen rake and bootlid, and the whole thing was finished with aggressive bumpers and skirts.

While a slightly overcast day in the East Midlands might not have been the setting BMW first envisaged for the M3, the fact is that this car draws the eye wherever it goes. It's loud, it's a statement, and yet it's not remotely

FACT FILE	1989 BMW M3
ENGINE:	2302cc 16-valve four-cylinder
GEARBOX:	5sp man
POWER:	215 bhp at 6750 rpm
TORQUE:	169 lb-ft at 4800rpm
PERFORMANCE:	6.4 secs
0-60MPH:	150 mph top speed
CONSUMPTION:	25 mpg
LENGTH:	4345 mm
WIDTH:	1680 mm
WEIGHT:	1200 kg



S14 engine was based on the 318i's four cylinder, not the six cylinder you'd expect of BMW. For racing, it was stronger.

yobbish with it. On the contrary, this Cinnabar Red example screams "intent" from every angle. Inside is similar, while it's Spartan in trimmings, that only reinforces the sensation that this is a car for the driver rather than the playboy with some cash. Our test car, which belongs to Satty Singh, isn't

even fitted with electric windows or a sunroof. Just a few additions from the M Technology catalogue such as an uprated exhaust system and a smaller steering wheel are present, to sharpen the BMW further. Satty's car is a later variant, with the more powerful engine as seen in the Ravaglia special edition

– produced from 1989 alongside the more powerful 2.5 litre. This is still a 2.3, but with 215bhp instead of the original M3's 197. It sits well on 225/45/16 Continentals - which, Satty is keen to emphasise, are now becoming trickier to find. "Many owners these days put the cars on different rubber and keep the



DRIVEN
BMW M3 E30



Continental tires for show, they can fetch serious money even secondhand for concours cars now."

Slide into that beautiful seat trimmed in Uberkaro cloth and the interior is a driver's delight. Clear, concise instrumentation and all minor controls

calling easily to hand; shorter drivers may find the steering wheel a shade too high but if you're around the six foot mark you'll find it perfect. Adjustment is easy, too, and there's plenty of visibility all round. Even on this base model, mirrors are still electric - as well they

should be, given the car cost well over £20,000 when new. This figure would have bought you a Rover Sterling, plus a Fiat Tipo for trips to the shops. What it doesn't buy you in the BMW is right-hand-drive; all E30 M3s were LHD from the factory, although some were



converted to RHD by Hartge in the early 1990s using parts from the 325i.

Back and down into first with the dog-leg shifter, and you're away. The first surprise with the M3 is just how docile it can be. Driving through little Northamptonshire villages at 15-20mph there's no popping or banging, no sense that this race derived machine is eager to get on its way. If anything, at low revs it's a shade flat. It feels no more aggressive than a Metro or a Fiesta, and while a left hand drive car in Britain does take some getting used to, it doesn't feel much bigger than either of the aforementioned cars either. If you were a City trader in the late 1980s, it's absolutely understandable that you'd have found the purchase of an M3 a suitable way to spend your bonus.

But it's the way this thing drives on the open road that makes it feel so special. Hit a national speed limit B road and put your foot down, it takes off – coming alive after around 4000rpm, and singing right round to the 7000rpm redline. It's here that the dog-leg gearbox makes perfect sense too, second and third for overtaking and twisty bits, fourth and fifth for sweeping bends and straights, that engine just pulling and pulling until you find yourself at risk of an SP30. Brake, blip the throttle to match the revs as you downshift into a bend, feed the power on as you come out of it – the M3 flows as if it's connected to your mind by telepathic link.

Satty was concerned about slight vagueness around the centre position from the steering column, but if

there was anything there it could be attributed to an ageing rubber bush rather than anything more serious; an understandable complaint on a car which had done 170000km (approximately 105000 miles) at the point of test. While replacement of the bush might have sharpened the experience further, it would be a mistake to do as many might consider and replace the bushings on this car with harder polybushes. It retains a suppleness through the rubber – while the suspension is undoubtedly firm, it's incredibly well damped owing to a combination of compliance in the dampers, the rubber componentry, and the car's light weight – an E30 M3 like this tips the scales at around 1200kg, which is about the same as a modern Ford Fiesta.



Very few cars have ever felt this sorted, just one of the reasons the M3 has earned itself the reputation it has. Even successive iterations – the legendary E36 M3 Evolution, the E46 M3 CSL, the E92 GTS with its storming V8 – lack this sense of directness, this feeling of innate connection with the tarmac. They're GT cars trying to live up to the reputation of a sports saloon, cashing in on the cachet while forging their own, new experience.

It feels wrong to talk numbers in the presence of a car like the E30 M3, because to reduce this to mere statistics is to miss the point of the car. But those

stats, by the standard of their era, are nonetheless impressive. 215bhp. 169lb. ft of torque. 1200kg curb weight. 0-60 in 6.4 seconds. A top speed of 150mph. Enough to make the M3 faster than a Ferrari 308GTS, a Porsche 928S, and a Mercedes 560SEC, to say nothing of the 190E Cosworth. In terms of power to weight, the M3 was off the chart, and compares well to more modern supercars and GTs. It's not far shy of producing 180bhp/tonne in the later specification of our test car – the same sort of power to weight ratio as a Renault Clio V6, or a Honda NSX.

While cars like the later Sport Evolution attempted to focus the M3 further with bigger spoilers, bigger engines and more power, the standard car we have here perhaps captures more of the ethos behind the M3 project. Likewise the M3 convertible, as collectible though it is, can miss the point – the folding hood and stiffening add weight, and weight is anathema to a car developed to go quickly on road and track alike. By the end of its five year production run in 1991, BMW had produced 17970 E30 M3s, including 786 convertibles.



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REPLACING A LEGEND

BMW's replacement of the M3 was somewhat convoluted, owing in no small part to a restructuring further up the BMW range. The 6-series had been replaced on paper by the BMW 850i, a V12 engined colossus which in part alienated the customers looking for a traditional six cylinder BMW GT. The M3 would become the true replacement for the 635CSi in context; with a 3.0 six cylinder engine in the new coupe shell of the E36 3-series. However, it's arguably fairer to argue that the E36 318iS was a true replacement for the original E30 M3 – using an engine derived from Touring Car proposals (which would later see service in the Z3 1.9), mated to a relatively lightweight specification. The 318iS remains excellent value for those looking to enjoy a similar driving experience without the E30 M3's fearsome price tag.

ON YOUR MARKS

The adjustments to the shape at the rear of the M3 were done, it is widely known, for aerodynamic reasons. However, what is less widely known is that it was in direct competition with the aerodynamic qualities of the Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.3-16 "Cosworth". The standard E30's drag coefficient of 0.39 was nowhere near as good as the 190's 0.33 in standard form. The bootlid raised by 1.6 inches and shallower rake to the rear window were a conscious effort to ape the rear end shape of the Mercedes, in order to benefit from a similar aerodynamic advantage at speed. The M3's 0.33 compared well to the 190E Cosworth's 0.32. As the bottom of the screen sat further back on the M3, the parcel shelf no longer fitted. Rather than develop a whole new shelf, BMW simply fitted an angled extension panel which redirected the air for the rear demister onto the window.





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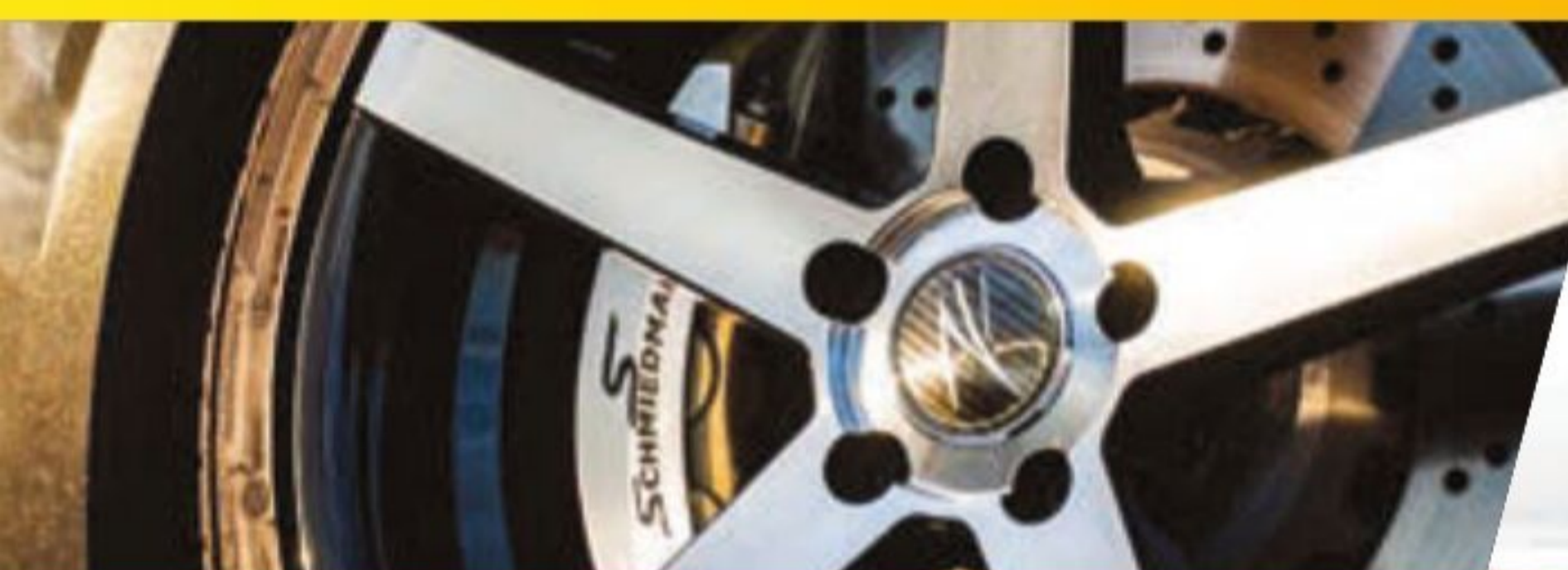
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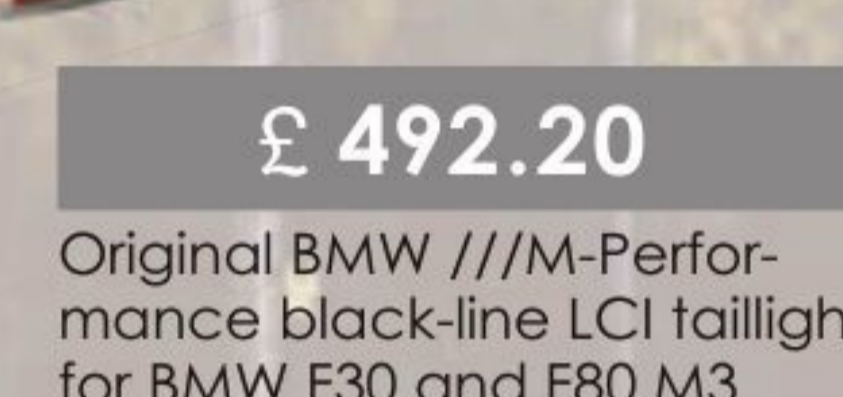
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