

# May 12, 1999 — CC36110

## Manufactured for the BMW museum / Mobile Tradition



### Vehicle Data

VIN	WBAEF71090CC36110
Type	EF71
Line	840Ci (ECE)
Dev. Series	E31 ( )
Code No.	8
Body	COUPE
Steering	LHD
Doors	2
Capacity	4,4
Power	210
Transmission	REAR
Gearbox	MANUAL 6 SPD
Exterior Color	BARBADOSGRUEN METALLIC (247)
Upholstery code	LEDER NAPPA/SCHWARZ (0525/MSSW)
Production Date	Wednesday, 12. May 1999

### Order Options

Code No.	Description
245	STEERING COLUMN ADJUSTMENT ELEC
353	ANTI-GLARE STRIP FRONT + RR WINDOW
416	SUNBLINDS
423	FLOOR MATS, VELOUR
428	WARNING TRIANGLE
431	INTERIOR RR VW MIRROR W AUT ANTI-DAZZLE
459	SEAT ADJUSTM., ELECTR. W MEMORY F DRIVER
481	SPORT SEATS F DRIVER/FRONT PASSENGER
494	SEAT HEATING F DRIVER/FRONT PASSENGER
528	AUTOMATIC AIR RECIRCULATION CONTROL(AUC)
536	AUXILIARY HEATING
540	CRUISE CONTROL
669	RADIO BMW BUSINESS RDS
672	CD CHANGER BMW FOR 6 CDS
676	HIFI LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM
704	M SPORT SUSPENSION
710	M LEATHER STEERING WHEEL
773	WOOD TRIM
775	INDIVIDUAL ROOF-LINING ANTHRACITE
782	M LT/ALY WHEELS SYSTEM II
801	GERMANY VERSION
863	EUROPE/DEALER DIRECTORY
879	GERMAN/OWNERS HANDBOOK/SERVICE BOOKLET
915	BODY SKIN CONSERVATION, DELETION

Pictures above: BMW Mobile Tradition, 1.9.2007—Martin & Christoph Brügger

Pictures below: Spiegel Online, 3.8.2009



### SPIEGEL ONLINE

August 3, 2009, 9:24 AM  
BMW 8er

### Quiet anniversary of an anti-icon

By Stefan Robert Weissenborn, translated by RW

**Modest birthday celebration: 20 years ago BMW presented the 8 Series with a flamboyant twelve-cylinder engine. The car had everything a luxury coupe needed and still failed - because of its sports car looks.**

With the giant and sleek twelve cylinder the Bavarians hoped to open up a new segment: the luxury sport coupe class. But nothing came of it. "The buyer's taste was misjudged," says Kai Jacobsen, automotive historian at BMW in Munich. With just over 30,000 units in ten years, sales of the 8 remained far behind the expectations.

20 years ago, the to date one and only BMW 8-series was showcased at the IAA in Frankfurt. "The 12 cylinder engine, in use in the E32 7 series since 1986 was well established and hence was thought to befit a luxury coupe," says Jacobsen. For this the preceding 6-series was discontinued.

Thus, the 300 hp 850i was released into a race in the luxury class which it could not win. The 8 competed against rivals like the Jaguar XJS Coupe. "It was also compared to the Porsche 928, although that does not make for a good fit," says Jacobsen. Others, like the car magazines "positioned it in the direction of a Ferrari Testarossa." As spectacular as the claims from Munich was the price of the car. 135.000 Deutsche Mark did not make the purchase decision any easier. "It was not exactly a bargain," Jacobsen says about the, at the time most expensive BMW.

### Big boy with small sales

The already low production figures broke away quickly. Whereas 1991 saw more than 9500 8ers roll off the assembly line - most of them with a five-speed automatic transmission - one year later yielded only a quarter of that figure.

Even the US market with a fixation for large displacement and high power engines did not bring success to the 250 kph quick luxury coupé with the brilliant aerodynamics. "I just don't get it," Dieter Wende of the historic workshop of the BMW Classic depot in Garching-Hochbrück is puzzled about the failure. "It is an excellent drive, it is highly enjoyable and I think that its looks are just amazing."

To avert the disaster BMW came up in 1993 with the 840Ci propelled by a smaller eight cylinder engine and with 286 hp. Only this did not resolve the problem of weak sales on either side of the pond. Even the 850CSI, a watered down version of the M8, planned as a super car, was unable to induce a change. "One certainly cannot blame the technology" historian Jacobsen says.

### Innovative rear axle kinematics

In fact, the 8 offered quite a few amenities - remote-controlled central locking, auto-dimming rear view mirror, electric sunshade or an auxiliary heating option. For a premium of around 3500 Deutsche Mark the electronic damper control, designed to make the ride smoother, was available. The engine had proven reliable anyway.

The rear end in fact showcased a completely new development tagged AHK. This rear axle kinematics (Aktive Hinterachs Kinematik) introduced better driving stability for the 850CSI and was, according to Jacobsen, a unique sales point. Again, the technology was not to blame. "Maybe," the historian muses, "the body shape was disliked by some". Despite all this, the 8-series clearly is a milestone in the history of BMW cars.

### Maiden voyage for a "Playboy" shooting

It is hence hardly surprising that the sleeping beauty 840Ci, driven by SPIEGEL ONLINE 840Ci had to be woken up first. The car stood dormant next to two of three produced convertible 8-series prototypes that never made it into production. This car, produced in 1999 had had a cameo appearance in 2002 for the occasion of a photo shooting for the "Playboy" - but without scantily clad girls. "It was all about extravagant cars," says workshop employee Wende. The car came back with only 127 km on the clock. "During this photo shooting it lost its virginity," jokes Wende.

The 8 still had the smell of a new car, and we added another 145 kilometres to the tally. Driving around the city centre of Munich it treated itself to 17.7 litres of fuel per 100 kilometres according to the onboard computer, only no one took notice of us. On the highway the engine seemed a little restless after all those years in hibernation, pushed forward nicely, but was unable to hide its notorious weakness of a late peaking torque. The ride on hardened tires was a little bumpy. It never went smooth for the 8 and the 8-series enthusiast Wende is hesitant to say "It will never become an icon". It wanted to be everything nevertheless.

