

QUARTERLY

NEWSLETTER

THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC

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Classic BMWs Bring Joy to the 2023 Highlands Motoring Festival

*Text by Steve Ham • Photos by Bernie Coulson,
Rusty Russ, and Dirk de Groen*



The sixteenth annual Highlands Motoring Festival was held on June 8-11, 2023, and BMW Classic CCA members played a key role in making it a success. What started as a local Saturday car show sixteen years ago has grown to be a four-day festival including driving tours, evening events, a Main Street Parade, and two car shows. It is the premier classic car

event in the Southeast during the month of June, when the cool mountain weather makes the resort town of Highlands, NC the place to be. The area's high quality mountain roads are ideal for enthusiasts to exercise their classic cars while enjoying the beauty of four national forests that surround western NC. To take advantage of these roads and mountain scenery, the fes-

tival includes two days of "One Lap of the Mountains" curated driving tours based out of Highlands.

For many years, BMW Classic CCA members Craig Nixon and Steve Ham have served on the organizing team of volunteers that orchestrate the festival. Traditionally, each year a different car brand is chosen to be the featured marque and for



2023, the organizing team decided that it would be BMW. Further, it would be an exhibit that would tell the history of BMW automobiles. Steve and Craig put together their “BMW Dream List” that included fifteen ultimate classic BMWs from 1927 to 1990.

Starting in the fall of 2022, friends of the festival and club members, Dirk de Groen

and Scott Hughes were brought in to assist Col. Mark Chmar, HMF Chairman and head wrangler, into the search for and recruitment of classic bimmers. From the onset of planning for HMF2023, we knew that to properly tell the BMW history story a BMW 507 would be needed. Craig and Dirk had discussed the possibility with Walter Scott at the 2022 Hikon Head Concours of bring-

ing his magnificent red 507 from Vermont. Walter, who had fond memories of Highlands NC from a previous visit, immediately agreed. Not only would he bring his 507 to our “Cars in the Park” concours, but he would also be using it to participate in the driving tours and parade. Walter’s early commitment gave us credibility to recruit other significant BMWs, and the 507 be-



1930 Dixi -Richard Papy (left) and Dale Critz (right.)



1959 503 presented by BMW Classic.

BREAKING THE RULES

In early 2023, the word was spreading among BMW enthusiasts that something special was happening in Highlands in June. Our website was overrun with applications from all kinds of BMWs, including three different Z8 cars.

For many years HMF has had a hard fast rule that only cars from the pre-computer era (1990) would be eligible for the event's centerpiece event on Saturday, the "Cars in the Park" invitational. Over the years, many incredible cars have been denied invitation because of this rule. The three Z8 applicants were denied for this reason.

In the weeks preceding HMF2023, it was

clear that our "Dream List" was coming true. And with the 507 being the centerpiece of the exhibit, we had an idea. Since the BMW Z8 was designed as a homage to the 507, maybe we should display one next to Walter's car on the show field. A quick review of the denied Z8 applicants revealed a red Z8 that would be a perfect reflection of Walter Scott's red 507. John Coates, the red Z8's owner, understood our vision and agreed to bring his car. His Z8 is the only post 1990 car ever accepted into the "Cars in the Park" field. The 507 and the Z8 were displayed together on show day, much to the appreciation of everyone.



1957 507 - Walter Scott, and a 2000 Z8 - John Coates.



came the highlight car for early festival promotions.

Another must have icon, the BMW 328, initially proved difficult to secure with Lance White from Cincinnati OH finally - after clearing some scheduling conflicts - agreeing to bring his 1937 car, a frequent exhibit car at the BMW CCA Foundation Museum. Then several weeks later, another BMW 328 popped up from the Fredericks family in St.

1937 328 - Lance White at the wheel with Dave Morin in the passenger seat.

CURATING THE PERFECT MOUNTAIN DRIVING TOURS

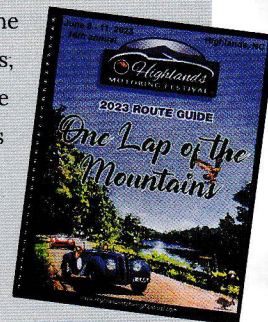
Some of the festival's most popular events are the driving tours that explore the less traveled back roads around the Blue Ridge and Smokey Mountains. Every year organizers curate new routes with a focus on driver and navigator experience. For HMF2023, the organizing team tasked Steve and Craig to manage the "One Lap of the Mountains" driving tours. Starting in 2022, we began to map out potential routes. We decided to utilize a long portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway for one of the 2023 routes. A hot lunch buffet at Harrah's Casino was arranged. We took many test drives to determine the best routes and confirm mileage readings, utilizing our personal BMWs including a

2002tii, 635CSi, Z3, M3, and 340GT. BMW automobiles were born in the mountains. Classic BMWs can find their roots in the roads around Highlands NC.

One of the first planning decisions that must be made is the lunch venue. Around that the tour routes are mapped avoiding left turns and busy intersections. Rest stops must be figured into the plan. We search for back roads that have good pavement and well banked curves. Scenery abounds on these mountains and routes are selected to emphasize the area's natural beauty. Run groups are limited to twenty-five vehicles so each day has two run groups. Volunteers are recruited to be group leaders and sweep

position followers. These volunteers then go out and test drive the routes for further feedback. Road construction becomes one of the final elements that must be monitored. The route guides are printed just days before the event, allowing for issues that can come up in the final test drives. Each year more than a dozen volunteers work on the event.

Already at work on the 2024 driving tour routes, Craig and Steve can be found driving their BMWs on the less traveled mountain roads around western NC in search of the perfect route.



1960 700 Sport - Keith Ennis.

accomplished by Scott Hughes, who also transported the rare bimmer to Highlands.

The big surprise came in the form of a 1948 Veritas RS, an immediate post-WWII competition car produced by former BMW engineers from a pre-WWII BMW 328, during the days when BMW was not allowed to produce automobiles. Longtime classic car collector, Jack Frasher owns this Veritas RS, a car which is rarely shown in public and that has declined invitation to many nationally prestigious concours events. Jack and Cathy Frasher decided to bring the car into public view for the Highlands Motoring Festival.



1973 3.0CSL and 1975 2002 Turbo - Scott Hughes.

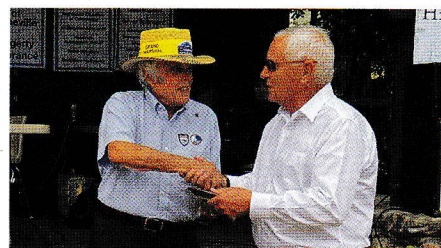
As wrangling momentum built, all kinds of BMWs started applying for invitations. In the end, twenty-two carefully selected classic BMWs joined sixty-three other classics for the "Cars in the Park" exhibit. For six hours, on June 10, 2023, Highlands was treated to an extraordinary collection of BMWs, curated to tell the story of the BMW automobile brand. Our dream list of BMWs had come true.

All participants and guests, and the BMW enthusiasts in particular, were very appreciative that Brian Redman was this year's Grand Marshal and guest speaker at the



1985 M635CSi - George Whiteley.

Gala. We had a wonderful evening with Brian showing video clips of his many racing experiences along with answering questions and signing copies of his book "Daring Driver, Deadly Tracks".



Scott Hughes receiving the Brian Redman Award.



1990 Z1 and 1980 M1 - Scott and Fran Hughes.



1989 320iS - Mike Gray (right).

*For 2023, the Highlands Motoring Festival raised over \$100,000 to be equally distributed between three local need charities: REACH, Literacy Center, and Community Care Clinic. Over our 16 years, HMF has contributed over half a million dollars to local charities. **Thank you!***

BMW's at the 2023 HMF

- 1929 BMW 3/15 Dixi
(Dale Critz Jr.)
- 1934 BMW 315/1
(Dirk and Alexandra de Groen)
- 1937 BMW 328
(Lance White)
- 1939 BMW 328
(Fredericks Family)
- 1935/1949 Frazer Nash BMW 315
(Dale Critz Jr.)
- 1948 Veritas RS
(Jack & Cathy Frasher)
- 1956 BMW 502
(Paul & Jayne Queck)
- 1957 BMW Isetta 300
(Fran Hughes)
- 1959 BMW 503
(BMW Classic)
- 1960 BMW 507
(Walter Scott)
- 1960 BMW 700
(Keith Ennis)
- 1971 BMW 2002 Rally Car
(Dirk and Alexandra de Groen)
- 1972 BMW CSL Batmobile
(Scott & Fran Hughes)
- 1972 BMW 2002 Cabriolet
(Don Bower)
- 1973 BMW 3.0CS
(Drew Gregg)
- 1975 BMW 2002Turbo
(Scott Hughes)
- 1980 BMW M1
(Scott & Fran Hughes)
- 1985 BMW M635CSi
(George & Sue Whiteley)
- 1987 BMW 535iS
(Greg Trigaux)
- 1988 BMW M3
(Conrad Collection)
- 1989 BMW 320iS
(Mike Gray)
- 1990 BMW Z1
(Fran Hughes)
- 2000 BMW Z8
(John Coates)



BMW Classic Car Club
of America



Behind the Wheel



Dear Club Members,

The spring and summer seasons offer many opportunities to bring out our classic BMWs, be it for showing or for driving. In this respect, the Highlands Motoring Festival, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, is my

favorite event on the calendar, as it offers both and is easily accessible from South Florida. This year, the "Festival with an Altitude" at 4,118 ft. was particularly nice. BMW was the featured marque and the organizers, under the leadership of Mark Chmar and club members Steve Ham and Craig Nixon, were able to bring the best of the best vintage BMWs to this lovely town. As always, the drives this year were spectacular.

There were other South Floridians who headed for the Carolina mountains. Valentina drove her 528e and Martin Meissner his *Kommando Wagen*, to find not only relief from the heat, but also to join hundreds of other classic BMW enthusiasts at The Vintage in Ashville and Hot Springs. Here they met Robert Tran who made the trek in his '72 2000 Touring all the way from Southern California.

David Lowen and Tom Pesikay had a wonderful weekend at the Greenbrier Resort, in West Virginia. Sounds like they could use a few more classic BMWs on the show field, and I have added it to the calendar.

Neal Heffron, from Boston, looked a bit further away for car entertainment. He received an invitation to bring his M1 to the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este in Italy. Neal's M1 was featured in the summer 2021 issue of our

newsletter. Did he have an enjoyable time driving his own M1 on the Monza racetrack and showing it at the Villa d'Este? He will tell you all about it in this issue.

There is no stopping Steve O'Neill. At 80-years-young, he just got his 11th classic BMW. Steve is the leader of the *Rocket Dogs*, an informal group of classic BMW owners. Whenever the weather permits, Steve rallies his troops for a drive in and around beautiful Bucks County, Pennsylvania. When Steve meets a new owner, he encourages him or her to sign up as a member. Thank you, Steve! You are a great ambassador for the club.

You all can be ambassadors. There are a few easy ways. First of all, do not throw away your issue of The Ultimate Classic. Pass it on to a friend, perhaps your mechanic, or someone who owns a classic BMW. Also, when you sell a BMW, register the new owner, and pay for his or her first year of membership. They will be forever grateful as it will enhance their ownership experience.

Next year, our club will celebrate its 20th anniversary of being an Official BMW Club. The club itself, or rather its predecessor, started 50 years ago, when the then-vintage (read: prewar) BMW owners separated from the BMW CCA, as they had no interest in hanging out with owners of 2002s and E9 coupes. They were interested in the older BMWs, how to keep them running and where to find parts... come to think of it, that is what we are still about.

See you down the road!

Dirk