

dieZündkerze

BMW Car Club of America Sonora Chapter



The legacy of King Ludwig II, Neuschwanstein Castle is one of the stops in Kai Yu's European Delivery article. Click on the link http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle for some interesting facts about its history. Click <http://hdw.eweb4.com/search/neuschwanstein> for more seasonal photos of this Bavarian landmark. If you didn't read the first part of Kai Yu's story, click on the link below before continuing with part two: <http://www.bmwccasonora.com/newsletters/2014-2nd-quarter-interactiv.pdf>

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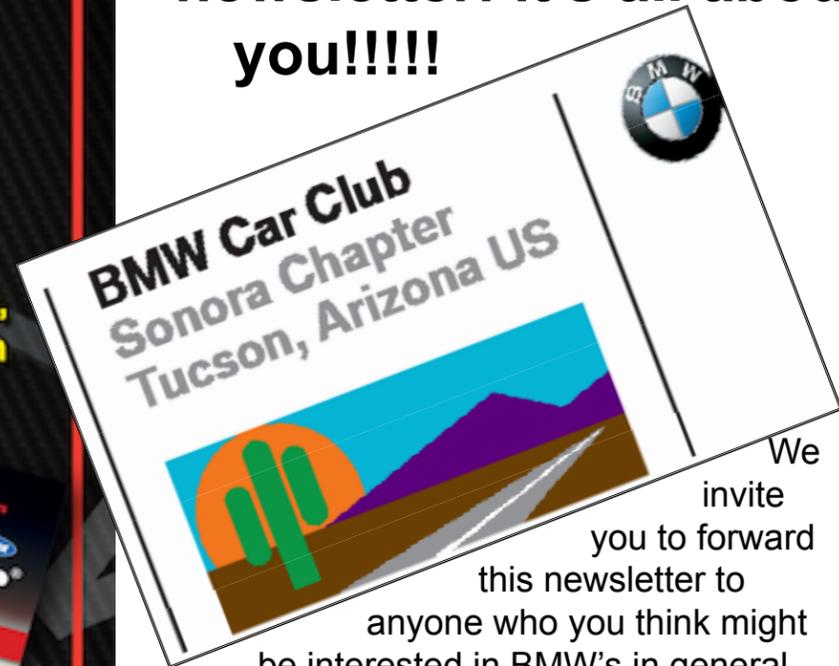


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Interactive format newsletter: it's all about you!!!!



We invite you to forward this newsletter to anyone who you think might be interested in BMW's in general, and our BMW CCA Sonora Chapter activity in particular.

Your contributions to the newsletter are invited and are welcome. Contact Quentin Peterson @ bimmermanusa@netscape.net to get published

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Editor: Quentin Peterson
Webmistress: Julia Olsen-Peterson

The FINE PRINT: Information is correct at press time (as far as the discerning eye can tell...), but please also note out disclaimer on the back page, and there, we really are compelled to put a fine point on the fine

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Well, 2014 is over half-gone and the Sonora Chapter's board has been extremely busy this season getting our 2014/2015 calendar up and running. We are hoping that there will be new events, new tracks and a lot of variety for everyone to enjoy. We know that everyone's calendars can get filled up quickly with family events and social/business responsibilities so we try to plan events as far ahead as possible. Each year though, we face increased competition from other enterprises for your attention and time; we continue to evolve to try to meet these challenges to keep you happy and interested in our club events. Our members are our customers after all, so we hope you agree that we have a great product and you return to support this year's chapter events. The Sonora Chapter is always looking for new people to join our club and new ideas, so when attending an event this year, be sure to bring a friend. While we can't please everyone, we would like to grow our membership and invite you to recruit your friends and like-minded individuals to join and participate in our events, even if they don't own a BMW (at least not yet). As president of the Chapter, it has always been important to me that we maintain and improve the quality and variety of our events. When we have a strong program and roster of events, members stay involved because they not only enjoy the events, but also the interaction with fellow BMW enthusiasts. When the board is doing their job right, members tell us they have a compelling reason to renew their membership each year because the \$48 fee is well worth the benefits. While it is no small sum these days, for less than a ticket to one Wildcat game you get a whole year of entertainment, fun, excitement, and yes, discounts too. Remember: this is YOUR club, so let's all get involved & make sure that it's an amazing club that people want to be a part of! Please remember to check our website (bmwccasonora.com) for information on current and future events! Hope to see you all at our next event! Lenny Napier, President

...We woke up, had breakfast at the hotel again and then set off to find the site where Mussolini was executed. My wife had read online that it was a cool place to see and the lady at the hotel front desk had told us that it was about a 20 minute walk, so, why not? Turns out, it was a 40 minute walk from our hotel and not easy to find. We must have asked about half a dozen people how to get there, and to our surprise, not everyone knew. We finally found it. I think we were happier to have finally it than we were impressed with the site. It's located in Mezzegra, so if you are close, I would recommend it as a key point in history.

Again, I had fun going through the switchbacks of the Swiss alps. Of course I plotted out the longer route, ensuring extra time through the Alps. For lunch, we stopped at this little restaurant and hotel called Albergo Corona, in the very small town of Vicosoprano, in Switzerland. It was somewhat late for lunch, but the lady welcomed us, opened the restaurant, and took our orders. We were surprised at how good the food and how friendly the service was. If by chance, you are in this small town, this place is great! They also accepted our euros, despite the national currency being the Swiss franc.



After a day of driving, we made it to Hotel Hirsch. We found the hotel rooms to be clean, but very basic. The reviews on TripAdvisor made it seem much more luxurious than we found it to be. We also booked one of their higher end rooms, so I wonder what the more basic rooms were like.

Our first stop along the Romantic Road was Neuschwanstein Castle. My wife reserved our tickets for the English tour weeks before we left for Europe. The tickets for the tour were almost 20 euros/person, although we got a 1 euro/ticket discount from our hotel. The inside tour of the castle was less than an hour. There isn't much to see inside, because the castle was never actually completed by King Ludwig II. There are some amazingly hand-crafted wood pieces and beautiful paintings, and this ended up being our favorite castle, but my wife and I debated whether or not we could recommend people tour the inside. The outside of the castle, however, is beautiful. We would definitely recommend hiking to Marienburg, a bridge, where one has the best view of the castle. We got some amazing photos there. On the way to Marienburg, there is also a spot where you can take pictures of an older castle, Hohenschwangau.

On our third stop along the Romantic Road, we had lunch at an Italian restaurant called il Lago Digarda. There were no English menus, but our waitress was really nice and helped us figure out what we wanted to order. The food was great and she then gave us walking directions to the prison where Hitler wrote "Mein Kampf". The prison is hard to find by driving, but it is much easier to find on foot. Because the prison is still in use today, they do not allow photos.

Another pretty cool stop along the Romantic Road is the tower called Daniel, which is part of St. George's Church. It was a few euros/person to get in and it has over 300 (very steep) steps to get to the top. The climb was somewhat tiring, but what a view from the top! The city of Nordlingen is a perfectly round circle and the view we had from the top of Daniel tower is supposed to be similar to the final shot in the old version of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Apparently, that last shot was filmed in Nordlingen. Parking here was not easy, though. We left Nordlingen and wanted to check into our hotel before heading to Rothenberg. There was a section of the drive where we drove through beautiful countryside. Most of it had no speed limit, and it seemed to be endless miles of rolling hills, and miles of continuous 'S' turns. It was a picturesque drive, and I had tons of fun.

Rothenberg was our last stop for the day along the Romantic Road. We got there just in time to take the Night Watchman tour, which lasts an hour. We stayed for the first 30 minutes, as we were hungry, and the tour seemed slow. It was interesting though, and we probably could have stayed through the entire thing. But if you are not into medieval history, it's probably not for you. We then found a great restaurant called Alter Keller. It was one of the

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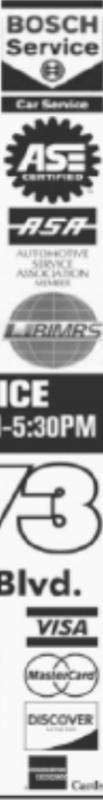
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better German foods we had during the trip. Service was great, too. The owner came by and he is a big BMW fan. He saw that we paid with our BMW card, and said he had a BMW as well. Later, he brought his phone over, and showed us his 3 series touring pictures, and photos he had taken at BMW Welt. We were also in Rothenberg during a holiday weekend, so there were a lot of people dressed up in traditional costumes. There were young children who came up to us yelling, "photo, photo, photo!" I figured they were excited to be in their costumes and wanted a tourist to take a picture of them. Immediately afterwards, they each extended their hands for money! I was surprised, but I started handing out euro coins. Almost immediately their chaperone came over and yelled at the kids, collected the coins I had given them, and gave them back to me. My wife and I found this to be extremely entertaining. I actually told the lady that the kids could keep the coins, but she insisted I take them back.

My wife really wanted to stay in a castle during our Europe trip. We did some research and found the Colmberg Hotel. It is about a 20 minute drive away from Rothenberg and it is pretty far off the beaten path. If you don't have a car, this hotel is probably pretty tough to get to. The hotel is quite pretty from the outside and our room was quite nice. We thought it was pretty cool to stay in a castle that was built around the year 1000 AD. In the late 1900s, the owners converted it to a hotel. The only downside to this place is that there is no elevator. We stayed on the 4th floor, which meant I had to carry our luggage up 4.5 flights of stairs. Also, the front desk is not open 24 hours a day, so you must check in by 8:30pm. After 10pm, the exterior lights of the castle turn off. I happened to be grabbing something from the car, and it was a little scary walking around a deserted castle in the dark. Once inside, all the lights were off as well (except for a few night lights here and there). Other than that, we would recommend this hotel.

Rothenberg is one of the few medieval cities where part of the wall surrounding the city is still up. We decided to walk the wall, which took us less than an hour. It was pretty cool to get a perspective of how they protected cities during the medieval era. My wife wanted to buy some Christmas ornaments, as the idea of the Christmas tree was invented in Germany and Rothenberg is famous for its Christmas shops. However, it was a German religious holiday, called fire tag, so all of the stores were closed. I ended up asking around and figured out that the only way for my wife to buy ornaments was to pay for admission at the Christmas museum and then go to the gift shop. That worked and we are now proud owners of a very expensive Christmas ornament from Rothenberg.

Then we visited St. Kilian's Cathedral. It was very large and very pretty and it seemed to welcome all faiths. We hadn't really explored a cathedral since we had been in Europe as we aren't really religious, but enjoyed walking through this one. We enjoyed walking around the town and ended up on a bridge where many people were drinking and socializing, probably due to the holiday.

We then decided to drive the car to the other side of Wurzburg, where the Marienburg Fortress was located. The fortress is very large and it provides great views of the city. It did require a lot of walking. The fortress pretty much looms over the city and is so large, that we thought that anyone would be crazy to try and attack the city.

From Wurzburg, we drove to Frankfurt. We chose the 25Hours Levi's hotel there for several reasons: it has parking at 20 euros/night, its location is super-convenient, with a public transportation station right across the street and it is very reasonably priced when compared with some others in Frankfurt. The rooms were very clean and unique looking. However, we did find them to be a bit small. We had dinner at the hotel's restaurant called Chez Ima, and it was very delicious. The highlight of our meal were probably the lamb chops. Chez Ima seems to be a really popular dining place for locals. It was packed every night, and one of the nights they had a live band playing. Some people online found this hotel to be too close to the red-light district, although we really didn't mind. We did see a fight break out during the day, people who were high as a kite at night, and a group of people getting ready to get high, with one person using a knife to cut up the drugs. Again, this hotel is not a luxury hotel, but we found it quite good and very convenient. We would recommend this hotel to tourists looking for the same things we were. Driving around Frankfurt also is not easy, as the streets are not well-labeled and the parking is very challenging.

At this point, I had driven over 1100 miles and it was time for the break-in service. I had done my research and

September 20th Porsche Club of America Southern Arizona Region Autocross at Central Arizona College with the Porsche Club of America Southern Arizona Region. Long pants, long shirt, no open-toed shoes, helmet w/SNELL 2005 or newer are required. Helmet rentals are available. Pre-tech inspection forms are available at www.pcasar.com and pre-register at www.motorsportreg.org Convertibles w/ factory roll-bars are allowed on track. Our contact for this event is Mickey Dowling mdowling4@cox.net

October 4th- Art in the Park: Sierra Vista, Arizona Ross Lampert rblampert@cox.net (520)378-3607

October 9th-2nd Thursday Dinner - Thunder Canyon Brewery Foothills Mall Stan Thibaut

October 18th- Porsche Club Car Control Clinic Musselman Honda circuit www.mhcircuit.com w/ same contact as the September 20th autocross.

October 18th- Tucson Classics Car Show 10-4 on the soccer field at St. Gregory's Preparatory School www.tucsonclassicscarshow.com This car show charges spectators a \$5 admission fee, & has 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place trophies for "Foreign"

November 1st - Cops & Rodders Car Show in the North and East parking lots of Hi Corbett Baseball Stadium www.copsandrodderstucson.org This car show has free spectator admission and has 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place trophies for "BMW" Please contact Quentin Peterson (520)331-3778 or bimmermanusa@netscape.net for staging info

November 23 - La Madera Picnic Beth Ritterbusch is coordinating:(520)795-5667 ritterbb@email.arizona.edu (updated info to be email-blasted to the membership)

December Ft. Huachuca Holiday homes tour – Ross Lampert is coordinating, (updated info to be email-blasted to the membership)

December 13- Ladies Holiday Tea, (updated info to be email-blasted to the membership)

January 17- After-Holiday get together: Chet Kingsbury is coordinating (updated info will be email blasted to the membership and in the 4th Quarter 2014 newsletter, in December...)

For the most recent updates to events, see the **online calendar** <http://www.bmwccasonora.com/calendar.html>

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We send a newsletter every 3 months, and send about 1-3 email announcement of chapter activities per month.

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EUROPEAN DELIVERY part two

knew that BMW North America would reimburse me. I had tried to make an appointment at the dealership while I was still in Munich, but they told me they were completely booked and suggested I try showing up early with my car and they would try getting me in. I arrived just when service opened and they said that there was no way that they could get me in. However, once I explained it was an M3 that needed break-in service and that I intended to drive it on the Nurburgring the following day, they contacted their service advisor and suddenly were able to fit me in. I later found out that this was not the original Frankfurt dealership that I had planned to go to and was actually a dealership located at the outskirts of town. That's probably why the lady looked at me funny initially and asked who I had spoken to over the phone; she told me they didn't have any guy that answers the phone at this dealership. I also got very lucky with the break-in service because I met a guy at the Nurburgring the next day, who had been to the same dealership for break-in service for his M3, and they had turned him away, even though he had made an appointment.

While I took my car to the dealership, my wife went McDonalds to buy breakfast and we met up at the Dialog museum. The public transportation system in Frankfurt is slightly more complicated than the system in Munich and it took us a bit longer to figure it out. However, it is based on the same premise that you buy a unlimited day pass and it is good for up to 5 people-very affordable.

The Dialog Museum was pretty interesting although it is quite expensive for an hour. We went in and had a guided tour. Basically, for an hour, you are in complete darkness and led by a blind guide. It really makes you appreciate your ability to see as it is not easy to get around. I do not want to go into details of the tour as I think it will ruin the experience for others. All I can say is that this is a good museum for all ages and I would recommend it.

After the Dialog Museum, we took the subway towards downtown Frankfurt and walked around. There were tons of museums in Frankfurt, but other than that, there really isn't much to see. It's basically like a New York City with less to do. If I were to do it all over again, I wouldn't have spent an entire day in Frankfurt. We would have stayed in Frankfurt and driven out to explore areas outside of the city. Rather than spending an entire day exploring the city, we should have just gone to the Dialog Museum, and then driven out to see Baden Baden. Majority of what we saw on our own was part of the Walking Tour.

We were really in the mood for something not German, so we decided to try this Korean place in downtown Frankfurt. Again, ordering was a challenge as the menu wasn't in English but the waiter was helpful. However, the food was definitely not traditional Korean, despite the restaurant being run by Koreans. We were quite disappointed and wouldn't recommend this place to anyone.

We thought that a guided tour would be a great way to see the city. However, because the tour is conducted in two languages, the pace of the tour is very slow. There is some good information, but we found the tour to be somewhat boring during the German speaking portion. It would have been better if they just conducted the tour in English. The cool part of the tour is that you end at the top of the Main Tower and the entrance to the top is included in the price. There is a great view of the city from the top and it is a place worth visiting if you are in Frankfurt, but I would recommend going there on your own without the tour. After the walking tour, we went back to the BMW dealership to pick up my car and then headed to have dinner at the wine festival. We got pretty lucky as the wine festival went from May 1st to the 12th, and so we were there just in time to catch the tail end. This was actually quite fun. It was an outdoor event with tons of wine, beer and food booths with music playing. We were able to drink some great fruit wine and try some amazing German dishes. There was also a great crepe stand where we had some dessert.

Finally, the day I had been waiting for. We grabbed a quick breakfast at McDonald's (it was actually really fancy, quite large and a separate McCafe section) and then drove for almost two hours to get to the Nurburgring. It was like going to adult Disneyland for me. The anticipation was killing me. I've known about the Ring for many years and have watched videos and read articles about it. I knew I wanted to drive it one day, but by no means am I like some of the die hard Nurburgring fans, who make pilgrimages to the Ring or who fly to Europe yearly just to go to the Ring. For me, going to drive the Ring was a great byproduct of European Delivery. I thought it would be cool to drive the

EUROPEAN DELIVERY part two

car where it was tested and I'd get to check off an item on my bucket list in the bargain.

After my delivery was confirmed, I started doing research on available public days, what I should know about the Ring, and how to prepare to drive it. The Ring is also discussed on many forums with tips. To prepare, I watched lots of videos, read up on other people's experiences, and played Gran Turismo to try and memorize the track. Unfortunately, I didn't log in as much time as I wanted on Gran Turismo - I only got in about 8 hours of seat time.

I also prepped myself mentally by not setting a time goal and not caring if I was the slowest on the track and everyone was passing me. I try not have an ego and think of myself as being a great driver. I chose to just to drive the Ring at a pace I was comfortable, as it was my first time. With only 2 track days under my belt, no Autocross experience and no professional driver training, I knew I shouldn't be trying to drive like a veteran race car driver, especially on the Ring.

As I drove and I got closer to the Ring, I saw numerous spots where people were spectating. I couldn't contain myself anymore and needed to get a first hand look at the Ring. I got out of the car while it was raining, climbed up some scaffolding, and watched the cars go by for a few minutes.

I then continued driving and looked for the entrance to the course and ended up at the visitor center. This was pretty cool to see, but I had wanted to get to Nordschleife ASAP. After a little drive, I arrived at the paddock. The feeling when you pull up in there is unbelievable. There are so many cars and enthusiasts--you truly understand why it's considered a mecca for gearheads. After parking, I found out the track was closed due to an accident. I



took this time to walk around the paddock and explore the area. Then I figured out the different packages being sold to drive on the Ring. I opted for the four lap package. I knew one lap wouldn't be enough, but nine laps may have been a bit much for one day. Shortly after buying my four lap pass, the track reopened. I pulled up to do my first lap. I drove it at about 4/10ths. I wanted to get familiar with the track get a feel for how other drivers responded/did their passing. The course keeps you on your toes. There are lots of turns, and you need to be alert for the blind turns and crests. I only passed cars that were going really slow and signaled right acknowledging me to pass them. After one lap, I exited and my adrenaline was pumping. I had

a blast and was ready for more. The track ended up being closed again right around lunch (for over an hour due to an accident), so I decided to take a break and grab some lunch. Basically, there is only one restaurant along the track so everyone eats here and the menu is pretty basic. It's basically a burger and fries place, and like most other places in Europe, they charge for condiments. Their portions were quite large though and the food was good. It was tough to get a seat here though, as they were really busy. They do not take cash or credit card. Instead, you have to prepay on a Devil's Diner card before you enter the restaurant, and the Devil's Diner card is the only form of tender the restaurant accepts. After you pay, any money leftover is refunded at the counter where you bought the prepaid card.

After lunch, the track re-opened and everyone rushed back on the track all at once. The rain was coming down pretty hard and the track was packed, so I decided to wait about 15 minutes so the traffic on the course could dissipate a little. Since it was raining, I played it safe and didn't really push the car. I had seen enough crashes on YouTube. Being a little more familiar with the track I drove a little faster than my first lap, but held back because of the rain, driving at between 4.5-5/10ths. However to my surprise, after a couple of minutes, I started to pass people. I doubted myself for a bit. I wondered why most of the cars were going so slow. Did they know something I didn't? They must have more experience with the course than I do... Regardless I just went my own pace and if I felt comfortable passing, I did. But just as before, I generally waited for acknowledgement before passing or at least passed at an area where I had enough room to avoid a collision. It's a good thing I did, because by doing so I avoided a few accidents. Some people were not aware of their surroundings, and as I started my pass, being right

EUROPEAN DELIVERY part two

next to their fender, they would suddenly cut into my driving line.

After a full lap in the rain and not pushing the car that hard, I decided to do another lap without exiting for a cool down. The rain had let up a bit, and this being my 3rd lap, I was a little bit more comfortable with the track. I drove it at about a 6/10ths. My 3rd lap was definitely faster than the previous two. I was still playing it safe though, and focusing mainly on finding the right gears and learning the lines. Afterwards, I exited for a cool down.

About 20 minutes later I went back for my 4th and final lap. This was by far the fastest of the day according to my butt dyno (and later confirmed via video). Once again the goal was to go my own pace and learn the course. I drove this lap at about a 7/10ths. Even though the rain had basically stopped, the majority of the course was still wet. I did slightly kick out the rear, once or twice. After getting home, I saw some YouTube videos of spin outs and crashes the same day I was there. They occurred in the rain and also in the condition I just mentioned. The Green Hell will bite back. Towards the end of this lap I had to slow down for a safety car, then a flatbed tow truck--yet another reminder how many accidents happen here. I do wish I would have gotten a chance to drive a dry lap after getting more familiar with the track. I had a blast, and I wish I had more time to spend at the Ring. I will definitely be going back again one day. To drive it at full speed, you should have the course memorized. I did not spend enough time memorizing it, so I was not able to drive it faster (safely). I guess I still had a need for speed after leaving. On the Autobahn headed back to Frankfurt, I decided to see if the top speed of my car was limited to 155mph. I waited for a long straight stretch with minimal cars. I managed to hit right around 170mph before having to slow down for a speed enforced zone. The car was still pulling too before I had to slow down!

When we were in downtown Frankfurt a couple of days before, we bought these combo tickets for a tour of the Rhine. We got a great deal as the guy sold us train tickets to get to the Rhine from Frankfurt and tickets to a boat on the Rhine, where we could hop on and hop off.

It took us about an hour to get to the Rhine River area by train. We left at around 6 am so once we got to the Rhine, we were hungry for breakfast. Not a lot of restaurants were even open so we ended up eating a typical European breakfast buffet at a hotel. It was decent and similar to all of the other breakfast buffets we were used to eating.

The Rhine River boat tour is a pretty cool way to see the main part of the Rhine River in one day. There isn't enough time to stop at every stop to get off and look around but most of the scenery can be seen from the boat. It was pretty relaxing and the boats were nice and you were able to order food and drinks. You really don't even have to get off of the boat if you don't want to. There is also a recording on the boat to describe each of the stops you pass by in all different languages and does a nice job of giving you some history.

We were fascinated by one of the stops called Assmannshausen. We didn't have time to stop there but were amused by the name. I know, we were somewhat immature, but we found it funny.

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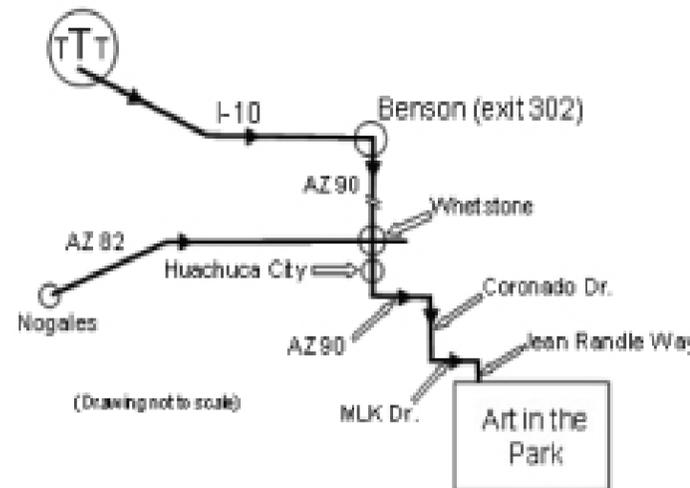
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EUROPEAN DELIVERY part two

We ended up getting off at St. Goarshausen and walked around a bit. One of the main attractions there is the Loreley statue. It sits below the Loreley rock which marks the narrowest part of the river between Switzerland and the North Sea. We were having a very nice walk until it started to pour out of nowhere. We basically got caught in the middle of a storm and rushed back to wait for our boat. Spring in Europe is tricky as it can be sunny and beautiful one minute and then be raining the next. We decided to stop again at Oberwesel, as it has one of the largest vineyard areas and we thought it would be a great place to stop for lunch and wine. We knew we couldn't come to the Rhine and not try some of the wine. We loved this lunch spot. It looks like the owners converted their house into a restaurant--it was such a cute place. We also really enjoyed our German food and the wine was served chilled in a clay vase. This was great place to stop as the service was also very friendly. We would definitely recommend this place. After lunch, we headed back onto the boat and didn't get off on any more spots. We just relaxed, enjoyed the scenery, and shared an ice cream for dessert. After getting off the boat we did a little souvenir shopping in Rudesheim while waiting for our train back to Frankfurt. After having German food for lunch, we were definitely craving something different and ended up at a Chinese restaurant within walking distance of our hotel. This place was seriously authentic as it was packed with all Asians, and ran by a very nice Chinese lady. We thought the food was great and it ended up being a nice ending to our trip. It rained pretty much the whole time during the drive back, from Frankfurt to Munich. The average speed of cars driving in the rain was about 100 mph. Some higher performance vehicles were traveling 130+mph. At one point, I was traveling about 120-130 mph, and my car was very stable with no hydroplaning, but a police vehicle pulled up behind me. Naturally, coming from the USA, and not used to being able to drive this fast, let alone in the rain, I thought I was done for! I slowed down and switched one lane to the right. Immediately the police car sped past me, going 130+ mph! I really wanted to try and break my previous top speed record of 170mph, but I also felt it was unsafe to try that in the rain.

My drop-off point was at the Munich airport. You park the car outside a designated building, and after some paperwork, you walk less than 3 minutes to the terminal. The car needs to be dropped off with nothing inside the car and washed of road debris in order to clear US Customs. If the car has been driven in dirt they ask that you wash the wheel wells. I washed my car just down the street from the airport at a gas station.

The wait for redelivery was torture. I waited a couple days short of 11 weeks after returning stateside to get my car back. For some reason it sat in Customs for weeks. Although the wait was longer than average, I would do European Delivery again. It was a great experience!



Join the Sonora Chapter's unorganized un-tour to Sierra Vista's Art in the Park festival on Saturday, October 4th. Art in the Park is the largest arts and crafts fair in southern Arizona, bigger even than Tucson's Fourth Avenue Street Fair. Over 250 vendors offer everything from jewelry and clothing to paintings and photographs to furniture and yard art to natural soaps and skin-care products. And there's more. Much more! The Huachuca Art Association sponsors and juries the show, which means that only top-quality products and creative work will be for sale, yet there are prices to fit every budget. This year we're not going to have any kind of organized convoy from Tucson. Instead, we'll just meet on the north side of the band shell in Veterans Memorial Park at around 10:30 Saturday morning. The map shows you how to get to the parking area on the north side

of the park but there's parking on the east and south sides too. Plan on having to search for a spot: this is a very popular event! RSVPs are appreciated so Ross will know who to expect. Drop Ross Lampert an e-mail at rblampert@cox.net or give him a call at 520-378-3607. Hope to see you there!

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Sonora Chapter Toolbox

Availability is subject to reserve: for more information, or if you have additional tool requests or donations, please call Mike Hornisher at 327-4981. For our club members, we have available an assortment of loaner tools, equipment and some factory repair manuals.

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Torque wrench (10-75 ft-lbs) | M-engine valve tool |
| Torx drive set | micrometer |
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| Service interval reset tool | Haynes & Chilton manuals |

Computers, Batteries and your BMW

It was my privilege to talk with John Ranney, owner of European Auto Tech, about the computers in our cars. I thought I knew a lot about computers, but from the mechanic's side, there is so much more.

My first big "oh wow" was that in newer cars, since 2006 or 2007, the battery can actually be registered to the car, so that the charge level is set for the battery to provide the longest battery life! One type of battery is specifically referred to as an AGM battery (and to clarify, not all batteries in vehicles that require registration are AGM, and in fact 3's and 5s are mostly lead acid. And, most modern batteries are sealed even if they are lead acid. The benefits of AGM batteries are that they have a higher capacity, can be deep cycled, have longer service life, and can be used in vehicles with high current demands but do not like to be overcharged.

Registration to the car is done through factory scan tools - and if not registered, the battery WILL be overcharged. So, don't go to the local generic auto parts place and plop a battery into your newer car - AGM batteries need to be replaced by AGM, and all batteries, where required, HAVE to be registered. As you may know, batteries are not all the same. There is a varying degree of quality of batteries, cheap batteries do not stand up to the high demands the BMW electrical system puts on them. Cheap batteries fail way before they should. European replaces 1 and 2 year old cheap batteries all the time.

Of course, I never had considered that fault codes could even tell you about a battery problem. There are fault codes that set in body modules, instrument clusters, SRS, ABS/DSC low voltage and/or battery exhausted. Also, the shop cannot accurately diagnosis a newer BMW with a cheap of battery that is failing. Even MINI Cooper's with the CVT trans have had issues with the transmission shifting and it turns out to be just a bad battery.

That the charging system be "right" is hugely important because there can be over 120 (computer) control units in a car to operate all the different systems. Those will be addressed in future articles. And the bigger cars tend to have more bells and whistles. If the charging system is compromised there can be a host of problems! And what kind of problems might those be? Control units like a "sweet spot" of voltage so don't even think of jump-starting your car - voltage spiking causes damage. Overcharging/voltage can "fry" or damage control units, undercharging/voltage can cause processing errors, communication errors between control units, control units shutting down etc.

So how do you care for all these electronic systems? Rule number 1 is "Don't get them wet"! More seriously, bringing in your car for regular service will stay ahead of a lot of problems. When serviced, the shop will check to see if any problems are pending. Electronics are checked during services like transmission and brake fluid changes (although European Auto Tech scans during Vehicle Check services and Inspections 1 and 2, they don't scan during any other service unless requested) - and remember that no matter what the fine print says, there are no "lifetime fluids". The shop never knows what they might find during a service because something can be compromised, yet hidden to the car owner. BMW lawyers define "lifetime " as up to the limitations of the warranty. If you expect to keep your nice BMW past that point, it is suggested to change out these fluids on a regular maintenance schedule to get the maximum life out of your car.

The biggest things to remember are to schedule regular maintenance, not just oil changes. Don't discount this. Stay ahead of potential problems which, if not caught early, can well cost you more. Remember you want that pricey beauty to live as long and healthy a life as possible.

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