

BMW Car Club
of America
E31 Chapter



Newsletter

July 2014 Issue No. 2 Editor: Fern Mora

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*Convoy of
Eights On
their way
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From the Drivers Seat

By Roger Wray



Welcome to the second newsletter for our E31 Chapter. Many things have been happening behind the scenes and we are progressing. Your board has been busy finishing up all the items for our chapter, and as of this writing, we have almost 60 members. This is a great start for our chapter. Please spread the word to fellow e31 owners.

We are in the process of establishing area facilitators – area representatives for the chapter to help coordinate local and regional events. These facilitators, in working with the Chapter Board, will organize local events and work with the National Events Coordinator. These facilitators should be in place soon – watch our BMWCCA E31 website for the announcement.

The April edition of the BMW CCA ROUNDEL magazine announced the formation of our chapter. If you have not had a chance to read the article, please do so.

Chapter apparel (Women's and Men's Polo shirts, button down shirts, caps and visors) are now available with the approved chapter logo. Check out the website for ordering information and details!

2014 is the 25th anniversary of the introduction of the e31. Events are happening worldwide to celebrate the date. 8er.org is organizing an event at the factory in Munich, and several BMWCCA E31 members are planning on attending. Here in the United States, the chapter is planning an event at the 2014 EURO Auto Festival held at the BMW Zentrum and Factory – the 8@25. The event will be held on October 17-18, 2014. Fellow e31 owner Georgie Melanis is the Chairman Pro tem of the EURO AUTO FESTIVAL 2014, and has assured us that e31 owners will be recognized. This year's show field will be organized and spots will be assigned prior to the show day and he has guaranteed all 8ers will have their own parking with the BMW marquee on the field. He has said he would like to give the BMW CCA E31 8ers our own table at the banquet, and if enough cars register, our own class for judging. He has also talked to fellow E31 Chapter member and E31 owner Bruce Brutschy about arranging a couple more events like a caravan drive, driving tour, and special reception. Bruce is in the process of planning this special event with the assistance of several other e31 owners. At the 8@20 event we had 51 e31 cars at the EURO AUTO FESTIVAL in 2009. Let's work to make the 8@25 an even bigger event! Registration will be opening soon, so watch the BMWCCA E31 website for updates and more details.

I would like to encourage chapter members to please submit a picture of your car and details so you may be added to the "Members" section under "Chapter Information".

Please email the following to: webmaster@bmwccae31.com

1. Your Name
2. Year, Model and spec (US, Euro, J-spec etc)
3. Location

Again thanks to the founding Board members our website administrator and our Newsletter Editor Fern Mora for all their hard work and efforts.,

**BMW Car Club
of America
E31 Chapter**



E31 Chapter Attends its First National Chapter Congress

by Roger Wray



On March 14 – 16, 2014, representatives of the BMW CCA E31 Chapter attended the 2014 National Chapter Congress hosted by BMW CCA in Dallas, Texas. Roger Wray (President) and Tom “Wuffer” Carter (Secretary) represented the new Non-Geographic Chapter.

Friday included the Annual BMW CCA Meeting followed by a welcome reception and dinner. Tom and I wore our new E31 shirts and were immediately welcomed by everyone in attendance. Saturday morning, several speakers discussed BMW CCA’s philosophy on the past, present and future. Larry Koch spoke on relationships with dealerships. He stated that we, as BMW CCA members, should view BMW CCA as a brand. We represent BMW CCA as part of the club and chapter. He went on to state that we need to create an image and interact with dealerships, as most dealerships know very little about the club and even less about the chapters. His recommendations were to (1) position the dealerships in a positive light within the chapters; (2) recognize local BMW Centers as positive partners;; (3) inform chapter members through the newsletter about local dealerships; (4) encourag chapters to strive to build business relationships with dealers through sponsored events; and (5) develop mutual trust and empathy.

Many dealerships have very little knowledge regarding BMW CCA and its chapters. Statistics show that 5,000 BMW CCA members a year purchase new cars and take advantage of the BMW CCA Reward Program in the form of rebates . Larry also emphasized that chapter members realize the importance of BMW Centers to BMW CCA and how each member is responsible for enhancing the image of the Chapter.



2014 National Chapter Conference *Two of Our Board Members Attended*



From left to right:

Tom “Wuffer” Carter, BMWCCA E31
Secretary; Frank Patek, BMW CCA
Executive Director; and Roger Wray,
BMWCCA E31 President.

Also discussed was BMW CCA membership trends. Presently, BMW CCA has almost 70,000 members. Membership reached a low in 2011 of just under 59,000 members. One of the large areas we as BMW CCA members need to concentrate on is retaining members after they join. Statistics show that 22-25% of members do not renew their membership. Those statistics also show that 67% of memberships are a direct result of personal contact.

Total revenue in 2013 was \$4,745,911, and total expenses for 2013 were \$4,538,604. Actual budget targets each year is \$0, and excess gains or losses impact where BMW CCA utilizes any excess funds. 2014 Budget projections are \$4,549,721 in revenues, and \$4,548,449 in expenses, leaving a balance of \$1,272. As you can see, this is pretty tight for such a large organization!

Many may ask: “Where does my \$48.00 membership dues go?” This was broken down at the meeting in detail. For each \$48.00 membership, each chapter receives \$15.30. Roundel publishing and mailing costs equal \$15.00, and the National Office receives \$9.70. If one renews their memberships for multiple years with a discount, the Chapter still receives its \$15.30 per member, Roundel costs remain the same, and the portion of the dues going back to National decreases.

Tom checking out the BMW
CCA items at the 2014 National
Chapter Conference



**BMW Car Club
of America
E31 Chapter**



Roger Wray and Matt Russell, BMW
NA Product and Technology
Communications Manager

The Saturday evening session and dinner featured Matt Russell, who is in charge of BMW NA Product and Technology Communications. Matt gave a very informative and entertaining talk about the future direction of BMW development and products. He also covered the development of the BMW Turbo show car and showed a video interview with Bob Lutz, who was heavily involved in the development of the BMW Turbo while working at BMW AG. Many refer back to the BMW Turbo show car in the lineage development of the E31. At the end of the evening I had the opportunity to speak with Matt and found out that he is a big E31 enthusiast, and was aware of our new chapter.

Sunday was filled with more sessions. Tom and I also attended an Autocross discussion presented by Roger H. Johnson. Roger is in charge of certifying SCCA Autocross course designs, and presented an in-depth overview of course design, student evaluations and course, safety. Unfortunately, there were no pictures of e31s on a course!

As we wrapped up the conference, Steve Johnson, the Executive Vice President of BMW CCA and who we fall under as a non-geographic chapter, Tom, and I discussed the challenges of our new E31 chapter and how we will integrate into BMW CCA. We will depend on our members in geographic areas to organize and have events together. Additionally, we encourage members – if they are not already – to become involved in local events, both with other E31 owners, and with local chapters.



Tom “Wuffer” Carter, Satch Carlson
(ROUNDDEL Editor) and Roger Wray at
the 2014 National Chapter Conference





By: Roger Wray

Heading West to 8-Fest

My wife Marcia and I were fortunate enough to attend the 10th Anniversary of the West Coast 8-Fest held at the Benbow Inn. I was already scheduled to be in San Diego in September, so after finishing up with the meeting we headed up the Pacific Coast Highway. Having been stationed in San Diego in the early 1980's in the Navy, I had always wanted to drive up the length of California along the PCH.

The trip up PCH was as beautiful – and twisty – as advertised. Marcia on more than one occasion told me to keep my eyes on the road and not the scenery as we switched back and forth in our Kia rental SUV. MapQuest told me that the trip from Florida to the Benbow Inn in Garberville was “only” 3061.50 miles. The car was not finished yet, and we had to plan a trip to fly into San Diego, so a rental car it was!

After a beautiful drive up the Pacific Coast Highway and spending a night at the Navy Post Graduate School in Monterey, we proceeded to meet up with other 8 owners south of San Francisco and traveled to the meeting place north of the Golden Gate Bridge to caravan up to Garberville. When we pulled in to meet up with the President of SoCal Eights Fern Mora and the 23 other 8s ready for the 206 mile caravan to Garberville, somehow the Kia just seemed out of place. No worries....the back window of the Kia was dirty, and so the words “8-Fest Pit Vehicle” were written into the dirt and off we went doing our best to keep up.

Our arrival at 8-Fest presented an opportunity to meet people face-to-face whom we had only known through email and phone calls. Steve Cohen greeted us as we pulled up, and it seemed as if we had known each other for years....actually we had through the E9 group since the early 1990's. We met others and it was great getting acquainted with the West Coast crowd. Drinks were exchanged, new friends were met, and the Benbow Inn provided a beautiful backdrop for a great event.

Saturday came and somehow the Kia just didn't fit in for the drive. Not to fear, as Tom “Wuffer” Carter came through and offered Marcia and I a ride for the event. We enjoyed watching the train of 8s as Wuffer negotiated the curves and pot holes and I acted as a co-pilot looking ahead for those pot holes. Marcia was all tucked into the back seat (no small feat as she is 5 feet 9 inches tall), but Tom took care of his precious cargo (Marcia that is!). We enjoyed the beautiful scenery and loved seeing the whales out in the Pacific Ocean – we don't see too many of those in Florida!



Continued:

Saturday evening was the banquet, and Steve had arranged for me to be one of the speakers. A group of us had been working on becoming a BMW CCA Chapter, but had done a pretty good job of keeping it quiet. My topic was supposed to be the importation of the Alpina cars, but it was really only a half-truth as Steve and I planned to take the opportunity to announce the formation of a new BMW CCA E31 chapter. We had only received official notice that we had been accepted as a new chapter just four days before the 8-Fest event, so the timing was excellent. We announced the new chapter to the audience, and were like proud parents with a birth announcement.



Marcia Wray

Sunday it was off for another drive riding shotgun with Wuffer and Marcia tucked away in the back seat again. The Redwoods were just as beautiful as imagined with the sun filtering in among the trees. The evening presented another opportunity to spend time with the “left coast westerners”, and the hospitality was outstanding.

Monday morning came, and it was time for everyone to head home. We all seemed to linger for awhile as it seemed nobody was really interested in leaving. Marcia and I enjoyed meeting new friends, and placing faces to names of those we have come to know throughout the community. One of the challenges of our new E31 Chapter is holding National Events. But through efforts such as those put together by Steve and his 8-Fest committee, the groundwork has been laid for future events. We cannot wait to see everyone again, and the outlook is bright for events in the future!

Outstanding Event – Lots of Fun – Great Meeting Fellow Eighthers

On Our Way to 8-FEST



Twenty-one SoCal 8 Members met just across the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge at Vista Point. This was a central point for many of us who came from different cities. Our caravan drove north on Hwy 101 and picked up three additional 8s along the way. It was a sight to behold -- 24 Eights and 2 others in a line that stretched a half-mile. After 130 miles, we made a pit stop in Willits to top off some of our thirsty 8s.

Wow! What an entrance into the town we made, taking over two of the three gas stations. We continued up north for the last 65 mile run to our final destination.

The excitement built once we approached the Benbow Inn to commence the 10th Anniversary of 8-Fest. As we rolled in, we met old friends and were introduced to new owners. All thoroughly enjoying the moment.



Meet and Greet at Vista Point



21-8s on our way North

ROLLING INTO 8-FEST



A long line of 8s approached the Historic Benbow Inn where we were greeted by Steve Cohen, "Mr. 8-FEST", and others welcoming us to a weekend of tech sessions, and what all of us looked forward to -- two days of driving fun on the back roads in Humboldt County. Saturday to the "Lost Coast", where our suspensions were severely tested, and coming back through the town of Ferndale, and on Sunday, driving through the "Avenue of the Giants" redwood forest.



Leading the caravan



"Mr. 8-FEST"

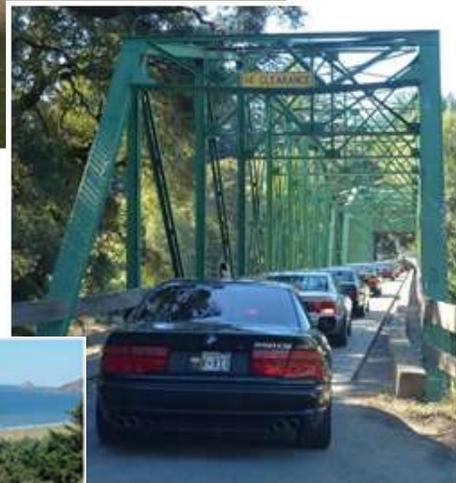


Saturday Morning

Staging for the Drive to the Lost Coast



An early wake up call on a misty morning as we prepare for our first drive to the Lost Coast. We stopped for box lunches and a photo opportunity in Petrolia before continuing to the old lumber town of Ferndale.



Start Your Engines!

Photo Opportunity

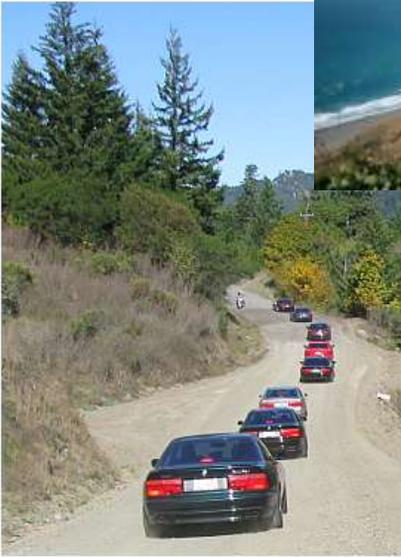
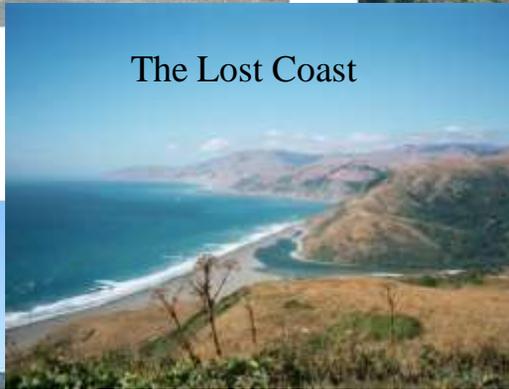
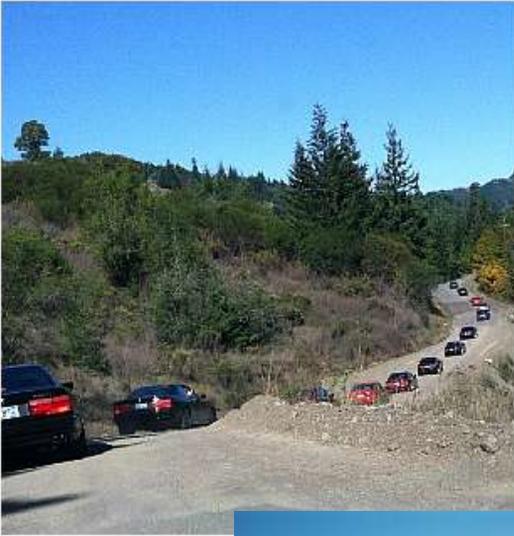


2013 8-FEST - Stopping at a park in Petrolia and setting a new record with 95 registered 8 owners in attendance. We enjoyed our box lunches and took lots of photos before moving on.



Lunch in Petrolia, CA

Back on the Road Again - to Ferndale



Arriving in Ferndale, CA





Ferndale, CA

After a rough and rugged drive through the Lost Coast we arrived in Ferndale, a Victorian town founded in the late 1800's.



Brian & Taylor



Fern & Grace



One of our 8s had a problem on the way back from Ferndale but a few fellow 8ers stopped to lend a hand and get him back on the road.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Four Tech Sessions



People Choice Car Contest

Some of our ladies went on a Wine Tour while the tech sessions took place. They had a lot more fun than we did and it showed when they returned ...☺ “No Bingo or card games for these ladies”.



Event Testimonials



Tom Jacobsmeyer, SoCal Eights Event Organizer

I had a lot of anticipation for this event, it being my first large 8 Series event. It sounded like a lot of fun. I was not disappointed.

The caravan trip up with our SoCal Eights group was a great start to the weekend. When we pulled over for gas and ran into more "players", I knew this was going to be the best place on earth to be that weekend.

While I had looked at the hotel pictures on a number of occasions, I was not quite prepared for the magnificence of the entire place. The exterior was only a taste of what the interior held. Our room was more than adequate and had a tremendous view out to the backyard and the bridge. Picturesque does not capture it. The camaraderie and driving trips were super and the drive through the redwoods was very relaxing...the bumpy roads even had their own charm. Dinners on the patio and lunches on the road did not disappoint. We really enjoyed meeting other 8 owners and the discussions of 4 short were a hoot.

This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime event for us. Even if there is another Left Coast 8-Fest, I don't think it could be as special as this first one for us!



Ronn Harris, SoCal Eights Secretary

For me, the most impressive activity was at first, the caravan from San Francisco, but even more impressive were the weekend drives portion of the event activities. The sight of 90+ 8 Series was very exciting. The locals that saw our cars roll in as we made some pit stops were amazed, and of course some of us heard the standard line ... *"when did BMW come out with these? "I've never seen this model before!"*

Personally, I don't think there will ever again be an event for the 8's like this as our cars age (and we aren't getting any younger either), but I can truly say that I was a part of the greatest 8 series event...EVER!



Gary Corcoran, SoCal Eights Vice President

I looked forward with great anticipation since learning about 8-Fest from Steve and Karen in the BMW Corral during the Laguna Seca Festorics Races in 2012, the day after the M8 was showcased at the Legends of the Autobahn. Beginning with the SoCal caravan from San Francisco on Friday through saying goodbyes on Monday, the entire weekend was so much fun. And sharing the experience with my son made it even more special for me. Many thanks go out to Steve Cohen and to everyone who planned, executed, or just simply attended this fantastic event. My final souvenir was the speeding ticket received on the way home—priceless!



Fern Mora, SoCal Eights President

I participated in 8-Fest in 2003 and it was amazing. The 10th Anniversary event was truly enjoyable for us. Grace and I had a wonderful time visiting with old friends and meeting new ones. The drives were spectacular and the tech sessions were extremely informative. This is an event I will not forget for many years to come. My only wish is that they would be more frequent. The camaraderie we have built with other 8 owners is unsurpassed and is the reason why I continue to be part of this great group.

On a lighter side:

It was also Grace's birthday on Sunday. I surprised Grace with the help of others with this sign I showed to everyone without her knowing. Everyone sang "Happy Birthday" and she didn't know how they all knew. *Very Sneaky*



SO CAL EIGHTS PACK THE LOT AT EF1 MOTORSPORTS IN SIGNAL HILL, CA



February 13, 2014

Twenty-three of SoCal Eights members attended our first Wrenchfest of 2014. Fabrizio (Fab) is a great supporter of our group and has been a host for several of our Wrenchfest events. We've had 8-Series owners come from as far away as Las Vegas, Northern California, and Arizona. It is always a premier event. Bruce Papp from Adams Polishes always attends and held a very informative detailing clinic. He is a great supporter of our group.



This year we made arrangements for Long Beach BMW to bring a new BMW 4 Series and a Special Edition 6 Series. Some of our members had a chance to test drive the new 4 Series car



Bruce Papp holding a detailing clinic

Coffee and pastries in the morning, then hotdogs and cold drinks for lunch were served thanks to the "Hot Dog Guy" and donations from those attending.



SOCAL EIGHTHS VISIT



April 12, 2014
Special Bugatti Exhibit



We got up early in order to meet & greet at Pepperdine College in Malibu. It was the start of a fantastic day. The 60 mile caravan up the coast on Highway 1 was great as we made our way to our final destination -- The Mullen Museum in Oxnard, CA.

On exhibit were a collection of some of the most expensive Bugatti automobiles and artwork in the world.

It's a special day for our SoCal members and we had a wonderful time touring the exhibits.

Many people today only know about Bugatti because of its amazing supercar, the Veyron. But in fact, Bugatti has one of the most interesting and storied backgrounds of any automaker still currently operating.

Bugatti was originally founded in 1909 in Molsheim, France by an Italian immigrant, Ettore Bugatti. Born in Milan, Italy, Mr. Bugatti was the son of a noted furniture and jewelry designer and also somewhat of an eccentric genius. This is what made his automotive designs so interesting.





1932 Bugatti Type 54 with Type 50 Engine



1932 Type 51



Peter Mullin, the museum's founder and chairman, owns the largest private collection of Bugattis in the world. This exhibit celebrates the achievements of the Bugatti family. "Everyone in the family just exuded huge artistic talent," said Peter Mullin.

"The Art of Bugatti"

There were just too many cars to show them all in this issue. The new show is an intimate look at more than a century's worth of Bugatti family creativity – automotive enthusiasts associate the name only with cars. As our tour guide explained, the Italian-born, French-based Bugatti family were accomplished sculptors, painters, and furniture makers as well as car collectors. Their work on exhibit includes more than 40 automobiles (and one aircraft) from Ettore Bugatti, nearly two dozen pieces of sculpture from Rembrandt Bugatti and more than 40 pieces of furniture from Carlo Bugatti. All was on view to those lucky enough to have a precious ticket in their hand.

BUGATTI TYPE 57SC

Atlantic
1936



One of the highlights of the exhibit was this Bugatti Type 57SC Atlantic that recently sold to a private collector for between \$30-\$40 million, making it one of the most expensive automobiles ever sold. We were extremely fortunate to have a chance to see this magnificently designed car. Once it returns to the collector, there may not be another public viewing available for a long time.





Early Bugatti automobiles were both engineering and artistic masterpieces, with details such as gasket-less engine blocks (so precisely finished were the mating surfaces) and elegant finishes in the cockpit and engine compartment.

In its early days, Bugatti primarily produced sports/racing cars and grand touring coupes. The former did very well in competition, with models such as the Type 10 and Type 35 earning many wins in the 1910s, '20s and '30s. Perhaps the most memorable victory, however, came at Le Mans in 1939 when, with but one car and limited financial backing, Jean-Pierre Wimille and Pierre Veyron co-drove a Type 57C to victory. Bugatti engines were primarily straight eights featuring overhead camshafts and three valves per cylinder. Supercharging was also used in some applications. Output ranged from 90 horsepower up to 200 in later versions fitted with the supercharger.



A Le Mans Trailblazer

Also on display was this Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport



The latest edition of the Bugatti Veyron is the Super Sport -- a record-smashing, 1200-hp monster (that's 199 hp more than the base Veyron, if you need reminding). You might think that this makes the Super Sport special, but obviously the mere fact of holding the world speed record for production cars is not special enough.

The Luncheon



We ended our afternoon with a special lunch in the Oxnard Marina overlooking the boats at Moqueca Brazilian Cuisine restaurant. Great location, great food, and great friends.

Following the luncheon, we departed and some of us took the drive south on Pacific Coast Highway 1 again. We just can't get enough of the twists and turns when driving our Eights.

MOQUECA BRAZILIAN CUISINE





The BC 8's Wrenchfest !

By: Henry Christoff

April 26, 2014

Langley, British Columbia Canada

Our first WrenchFest of 2014 was held Saturday, April 26th at the world famous Wuffer's Garage & Spa. In spite of questionable weather, eight cars (all 850's with the exception of Glen's '97 US spec Black 840), and nine owners turned out with the long distance award going to IMNDEEP and wife from Marysville, WA.

There was a great deal of discussion about the new E31 Chapter and how it will impact 8 Series owners in Canada. Wuffer talked about his attendance at the recent BMWCCA National Conference in Dallas and how the new E31 Chapter is coming together with lots on the horizon.

Fivecars at the WrenchFest actually see Wrenches:

Andrew ('91 J-spec Mauritius Blue) needed minor reattachment to the passenger side body molding and the LF wheel well liner needed to be refastened as well. There was some speculation that these issues were caused by excessive speed - but this could not be confirmed by any You Tube footage.

Henry ('91 C-Spec Calypso Red) needed the hydraulic steering filter replaced and Pentosin fluid flushed. No problem with Wuffer providing guidance.

John ('91 J-spec Silver) replaced his questionable brake light switch (the potential cause of his Brake Light Circuit MID error message). A puddle of Pentosin on the driveway lead us to discover an overfilled reservoir and potentially a failing brake bomb.

Chris (Imndeep '93 US-spec Black) had his instrument cluster pulled to sort out his recurring airbag light and replace a broken fog light switch.

Walt ('93 US-spec Black 6-speed) arrived early afternoon. His car had recently undergone some very necessary repairs for a broken cooling system accumulator after sitting for nearly two years untouched. After a shakedown cruise it now appears that his radiator is leaking. Repair scheduled for another day.

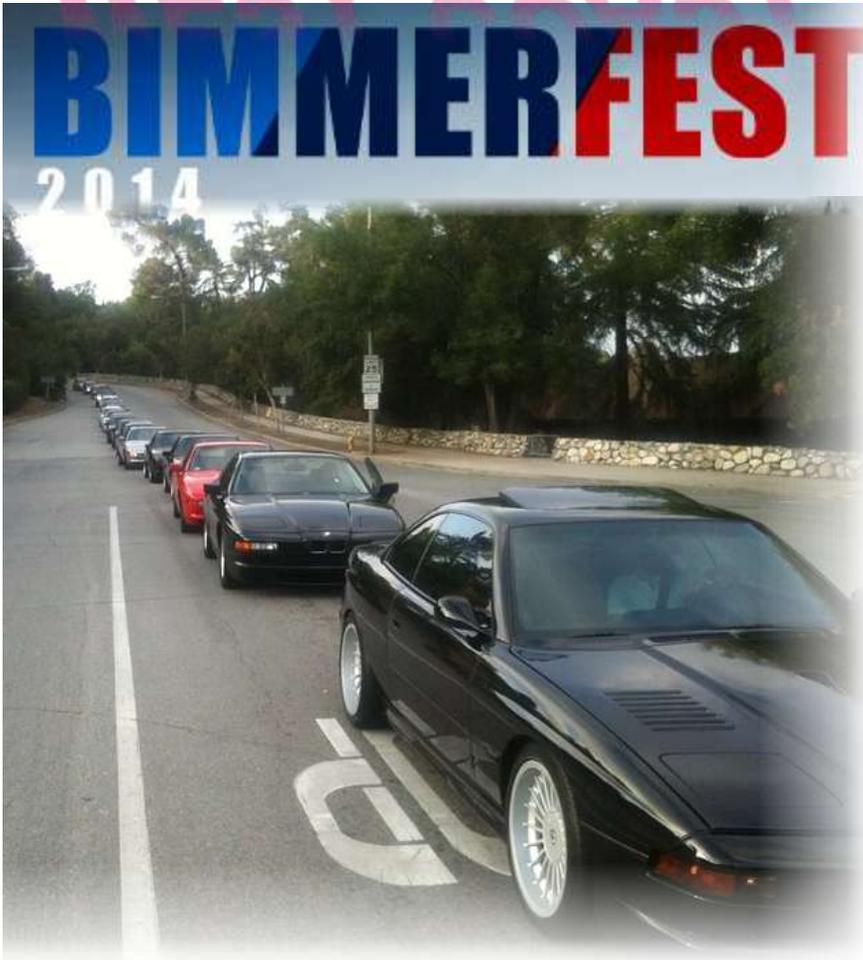
Jamie ('94 US-spec CSI Hellrot), Vic ('91 J-spec Laguna) and Dietmar (91 J-spec White) kicked tires and socialized.

On the BC8's Calendar:

2nd 2014 WrenchFest, Saturday June 28th at Wuffer's Garage and Spa; and Sunday, June 29th is the annual Vancouver, British Columbia German Car Festival, staged at Waterfront Park in North Vancouver. The BC8's will have their usual spot on the rise above the group of BMW's attending. Also on the lawn will be Benz, Porsche, and Audi owners with their classics, vintage and current production steeds.



SO CAL EIGHTS ATTEND WEST COAST



May 17, 2014

Fern Mora

One of the most anticipated shows of the year is Bimmerfest and SoCal Eights always attends this event in force. This year was no exception. We had 24 members in attendance and while there, we recruited two additional members to the ranks. Roll-in was at 7:10am for our group. This year we had special reserved parking in the Heritage Coral.

There were hundreds of attendees that came by to view our cars in the coral. Normally the Heritage Coral is sparsely populated. The organizers did not expect as many 8s so they were very surprised to see us arrive in such force.





SoCal Eights

Heritage Coral



i8 Attends Bimmerfest 2014



One of the main featured BMWs of the show was the addition of the new i8. The BMW i8 is ready to revolutionize its vehicle class. As the first sports car with the consumption and emission values of a compact car, the strength of the plug-in hybrid lies in the perfect synchronization of electric motor and combustion engine which makes itself apparent in maximum efficiency and dynamics on the road. The first sports car that even accelerates the Zeitgeist.



Mister 8-Fest

Converting this 850i to 860i

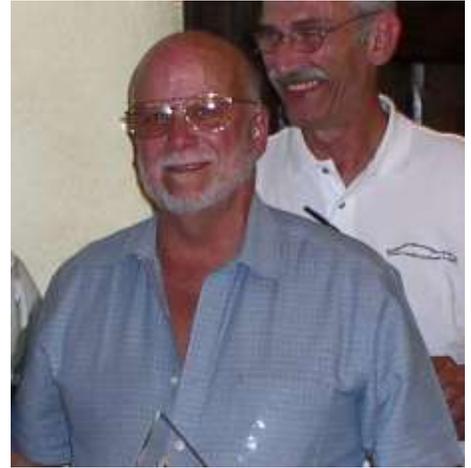
If you haven't heard of Steve Cohen from Santa Rosa, California, the originator of the Left Coast 8-Fest and the American Russian River Wine Barrel Tasting Tour, then you haven't been an 8 owner for very long. Steve has been one of the most influential persons in the 8 community since first purchasing his one owner 1991 850i 6 speed. He has added more to bring this community together than any other person. Although he has transferred the duties of the wine tour, he is still a very active and strong supporter.



In order to have his project be successful and increase the HP and Torque of this 850i, just changing one part such as the cam would not achieve the goals Steve was looking for. It was virtually impossible to do simply. He knew more engine work needed to be performed in order to gain the HP he was looking for.

He had to consider the entire engine and modify it based on a set plan. After many discussions, the engine was shipped to "The Power Plant" on the East Coast. There were five goals that had to be achieved:

1. Significantly increase HP and Torque.
2. Still run smoothly even in very slow or stopped city traffic.
3. Pass California smog tests.
4. Use the existing in-car wiring harnesses.
5. The only modifications in the electronics were to be the chips.



BMWCCA E31 Chapter Vice President

Some people have a need to take care of a nagging engine problem because the repairs are required just for the car to run. Steve looked at the problem and asked himself "What If?"

This is what makes some of our lives so interesting.



May 24, 2013

They call it the Lost Coast, and it's one of the most remote stretches of California coastline you'll find anywhere. For those who love driving, it's a perfect paradise of turns, elevation changes and spectacular scenery.

It's like Highway 1 through Big Sur, but with absolutely no traffic, even on a Saturday afternoon at the tail end of tourist season.



No wonder Steve Cohen chose it for the driving segment of his forthcoming 8-Fest, the West Coast celebration of all things E31. There's no better place to wring out a BMW like an 8 Series...or the F12 M6 Convertible we're using to chase down Cohen in his 850i-turned-860i. Cohen's car started life as an otherwise ordinary 1991 E31 850i coupe, but it's become much, much more over the last 20-plus years and almost 300,000 miles. In addition to supersizing its V12 engine, Steve has also done everything possible to improve its chassis, upgrading its suspension from stem to stern in the quest for more sportive handling.



That kind of attention may seem excessive, but it's hardly unusual. Coupes have always been special cars to BMW enthusiasts, and so have convertibles. Where sedans tend to be workaday daily drivers, used and discarded, the coupes and convertibles are cherished for the long haul, driven hard but lovingly cared for too. They're also celebrated, and events like 8-Fest, Z-Fest and the various Sharkfests draw hundreds of cars and their owners to enjoy some of the world's greatest roads in the company of like-minded enthusiasts.

Ten years ago this October, Cohen's first 8-Fest brought 87 E31 coupes to this isolated region, more than had ever gathered in one place anywhere in the world. Six months before the second 8-Fest in 2013, 75 were already signed up. Some were repeat visitors, but plenty more would be attending for the first time, enticed by the prospect of a weekend's full immersion into the world of the 8 Series.

May 24, 2013

In addition, the ported and polished cylinder head was given a four-angle valve job and mated with S70 cams and Extrude Honed intake manifolds followed by Rinehart custom headers. The throttle bodies were bored out by 3mm and paired with 18.4 lb/hr Bosch injectors. The engine also got custom DME chips from The Powerhouse, a BMW engine oil cooler and a clutch and pressure plate sourced from an 850CSi. At the rear, Cohen installed a 7 Series' 3.15:1 differential with 50% limited slip. The end result, of course, is that impressive 435 hp and 480.5 lb-ft, up from 295 hp and 332 lb-ft as delivered.

That's about the limit, Cohen says. "I think there's only so far you can go with the V12 because of the exhaust side of the heads. In the head itself, the port comes up and does a 90-degree turn," he explains. "There was talk of somebody back East building a four-cam set of heads, but it was crazy the amount of money he wanted."

More power alone isn't enough to transform an 850i into a sports car, so Cohen made substantial suspension improvements too: H&R Sport springs, Bilstein shocks, Generation K-Bars anti-roll bars that measure 28.5mm front/19.0mm rear in place of the 24mm/13mm stock bars, M-Wrench camber plates/spring perches and a Strong Strut brace. When we followed Cohen earlier, it was easy to see that he'd dialed-in the 8 Series about as well as one could. Even at a brisk pace, the car showed very little body roll, looking totally planted through the faster corners as well as the tight stuff. I can't testify to its balance or agility from behind the wheel, but it was certainly capable of running at speeds that forced the new M6 to earn its keep.

Long-term ownership of a well-loved car

It's still no sports car, Cohen says, and its size and weight—4,123 lbs., as delivered, or about 600 lbs. lighter than our M6 Convertible—keep its agility firmly in GT territory. "But the way it is now, with the 6.0-liter engine, it's one hell of a GT car. And it's fun to drive, just really neat. I enjoy it." He's enjoyed it for 21 years and 289,000 miles. We've said many times that BMW's coupes and convertibles tend to be special cars that are treasured by their owners, and Steve's car is a perfect example of that phenomenon. It's not a perfect car, mind you, though it shows far less wear than it would if I'd owned it since 1991.

What's the key to Cohen's initial attraction and long marriage to the 8 Series? "It's just a gorgeous car, absolutely gorgeous, and unlike anything BMW has ever done," he says. Cohen agrees that coupe owners tend to be exceptionally passionate about their cars, keeping them for a long time and selling only when necessary. For those who buy 8 Series cars used, that day often comes sooner rather than later when they realize the price of maintaining a high-tech coupe with a V12 engine. "We've been predicting for years that as the price came down on the 8s, people would buy them, usually kids under 30, who didn't realize what it takes to keep one up," Cohen says. "I get questions like, 'Where can I get a used coin holder?' They could go down to the dealership and buy a brand-new one for a minimum amount of money, but they just won't do it or can't afford to do it."

E31 Upcoming Events

July 27, 2014:

SC 8's "Meet and Greet" at Dana Point then make a run up Ortega Highway through Cleveland National Forest to Lake Elsinore for lunch. For details contact:

Fern.Mora@socaleights.com

August 9, 2014:

SC8's Second Wrenchfest for the year to be held at EF1 Motorsports 2675 Dawson Ave. Signal Hill, CA 90755
Time: 9:00 AM-4:00 PM or until all the wheels go back on.

October 17-19, 2014:

8@25 / BMWCCAE31 / EURO Auto Festival at the BMW Zentrum and Factory in Greer, South Carolina.

Info and registration:

www.bmwccae31.com

September 28, 2014:

SoCal Eights is holding the "BMW 8 Series 25th Anniversary Celebration" and BBQ at Mile Square Park in Fountain Valley, CA from 11:00 – 3:00 PM invitations and details to be announced soon. www.socaleights.com

