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Two successful BMW cars bid farewell to the sports car world: Production of Z8 and M5 soon to be discontinued

Munich, April 16, 2003... The immensely successful career of two sophisticated and sporty BMW models is gradually drawing to an end. The production of both the classic Z8 Roadster and the high-performance M5 Sedan is shortly to be discontinued. At the end of June 2003 the very last batch of these fascinating cars will leave the manufacturing plants at Munich and Dingolfing.

During the three years in which it was produced, the exclusive, unlimited short-run series of the BMW Z8 captivated around 5,700 customers worldwide, including the film hero James Bond, his action movie "The World Is Not Enough" bringing worldwide acclaim to this beautiful car. The Z8 also became enormously popular as a collector's car; it now adorns the garages of numerous classic car aficionados.

At least three and a half times as many BMW M5s were produced at the Dingolfing factory: By the time production ceases, around 20,500 of these vehicles will have been manufactured and sold worldwide, making the M5, which was launched in the autumn of 1998, not only the first of its kind in the high-performance Sedan segment, but also the most successful. It's no surprise that the M5 has won numerous awards. Most recently, Automobile Magazine presented the M5 with Best Sport Sedan/Wagon in the editor's poll, for the fourth consecutive year: "BMW's soul-stirring M5 is…a 155 mph cruise missile dripping in luxury. Turn off the radio, shut down the cell phone, and pay attention. You're about to go for the ride of a century."

While 2,100 of the first generation M5s were hand-built between 1984 and 1987, the second generation was able to continue the success story with

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12,000 vehicles manufactured from 1988 to 1995. Thanks mainly to the integration of the current M5 model into series production of the 5 Series at the Dingolfing plant, it was possible for the very first time to produce more than 20,000 units of this fascinating car.

Same power unit, varying concepts

As well as having the same sporting characteristics, the M5 and the Z8 have one other special thing in common – they both have the same power unit. Their identical 5-liter, high-revving V8 engine developed by BMW delivers an impressive 394 horsepower and 368 lb-ft of torque. If you shift th rough the six-speed manual gearbox quickly, the M5 accelerates from 0-60 mph in 4.8 seconds. Being built almost entirely of aluminum, the slightly lighter Z8 does this classic sprint in a mere 4.7 seconds.

Although both cars are equipped with the same power unit, they do differ greatly in terms of body design and concept. The Z8 presents itself as a fascinating, open two-seater, which was recently awarded the title "Classic Car Of The Future" due to its intelligently reproduced classic ambience. To drive it is to experience that authentic roadster feeling constantly accompanied by the sonorous sound of the V8 engine. It goes without saying that the Z8, currently priced at $132,195, including destination, is equipped as standard with everything needed to experience immensepower and comfort.

The M5 – "The Businessman's Express" is what a British car magazine said of this car. This is a fitting description of this high-performance Sedan. The fast four-door car behaves just as well on the motorway as it does when tackling the Nürburgring's northern circuit. For $71,095, including destination, customers can purchase a superior sports car that, in addition, offers convincing comfort.

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