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NEW BMW Z8

Aston crusher with an M5 under the bonnet!

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SCOOP! Secrets of next 7-series



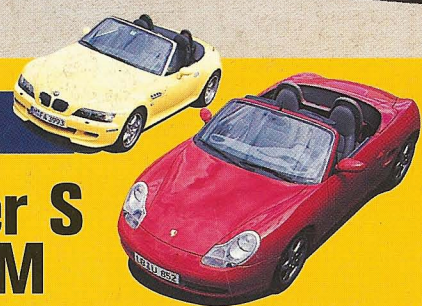
DRIVEN

All-new
Punto



TESTED

Boxster S
vs Z3 M



PLUS

200bhp Elise
Win a Honda

WIN



Damo Hill's Civic Jordan p5



REVEALED

BMW has unveiled its scorching new Z8, which goes on sale next spring after a September show debut. For the first official pictures see page 6



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NEW

New GSi breathes life into Vectra range, p22



NEW

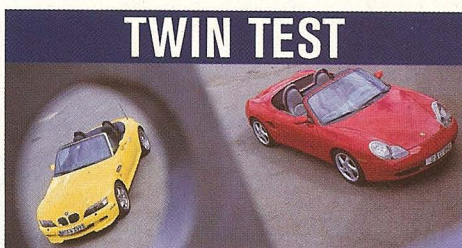
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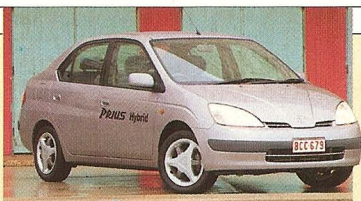
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Revealed: Bond's

● Luxury Z8 roadster ● Debut at Frankfurt show in September ● On sale next spring ● £75,000



Retro theme of Z07 concept's cabin (above) is carried over to Z8; equipment level is lavish



M5's 400bhp V8 powers Z8

BMW's charge into the new millennium will be spearheaded by the V8-powered Z8 sports car with its mixture of flamboyant '50s-inspired styling and a state-of-the-art mechanical package borrowed from the mighty M5.

These official pictures show the muscular-looking roadster in production-ready form for the first time before it is formally unveiled at the Frankfurt Motor Show in mid-September.

Remarkably similar to the Z07 concept car that made its debut at the 1997 Tokyo

Motor Show, the Z8 will sit atop the BMW line-up when it goes on sale in left-hand-drive form next spring, priced at about £75,000. Munich top brass have not yet given the go-ahead for right-hand-drive versions. However, the importance of the British and Japanese markets to BMW's bottom line means it is only a matter of time before it is confirmed for these shores. The delay stems from the intensive hand-built nature of the new car, along with the fact that BMW plans to limit annual production to an ultra-exclusive 1500 cars.

Ostensibly a replacement for the unloved 8-series coupe, the Z8 is intended to be much more of an out-and-out sports car, while at the same time fulfilling an image-led role as a showcase for new technologies, such as aluminium

spaceframe construction. Among the cars talked about by Munich officials as perceived rivals are the mighty Ferrari 360 Modena, along with the upcoming Porsche 911 Turbo and Mercedes-Benz SLR. The new roadster is designed to go one better than the likes of the Aston Martin DB7, Mercedes-Benz SL600 and Jaguar XKR. On the strength of its mechanical specification, it already looks to have a head start.

Underneath its retro-style skin, the rear-wheel-drive Z8 boasts a raft of cutting edge technology, beginning with its M5-sourced 32-valve 4.9-litre V8. With double Vanos variable valve timing, individual butterfly throttle body control and BMW's own 32-bit MSS 52 engine management

system, the all-alloy engine delivers a stonking 400bhp at 6600rpm and 369lb ft of torque at 3800rpm. Operated via a drive-by-wire throttle, it drives through a Getrag-engineered six-speed manual gearbox that will eventually be offered with an optional F1-style sequential shift

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Jeep fares poorly in US crash test



Hot V8-powered Omega spied on test

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VAUXHALL VECTRA GSi
Sports saloon gets more grunt

latest sports car

● 400bhp V8 ● Spaceframe chassis ● Stars in new Bond film ● New 7-series goes high-tech

mechanism. BMW's third generation Dynamic Stability Control, which keeps a close eye on all four wheels, ensures that rear-end behaviour is never unruly.

Underpinning the Z8 is a newly developed MacPherson strut layout up front and an optimised version of the M5's multi-link suspension at the rear. Engineers have gone over every component in a bid

to minimise unsprung forces, working closely with suppliers to ensure a high content of aluminium. BMW is quietly confident that a new rack and pinion steering system – a first for a V8-powered BMW – will ensure its handling outclasses that of its open-top rivals. The change could see BMW ditch its traditional recirculating ball steering for future models.

Hung out at each corner are unique 18in five-spoke wheels shod with 180mph-rated rubber. Stopping power comes courtesy of dustbin-lid 345mm front and 328mm rear ventilated discs lifted from the M5. BMW claims a 62-0mph stopping time of 2.5sec.

Munich insiders say the decision to base the Z8 around an aluminium spaceframe has kept the kerb weight close to



M5's blistering performance to be exceeded by that of Z8

exceed its electronically limited 155mph top speed.

The Z8's throwback styling also looks set to win many admirers. Look closely and you'll see a series of BMW styling cues, both past and present. The Z8 is a



Elegant Z8 promises to have the performance and dynamics of a true sports car

the original 1400kg target. As a result, acceleration should be sensational. BMW claims the Z8 hits 60mph from rest in under five seconds and could easily

curvaceous yet muscular-looking car from any angle – perhaps not as distinctive as the '50s 507 (which the Z8 unashamedly recalls) but sure to turn heads.

The Z8 adheres to the



Next 7-series, due in 2002, will look bolder than current car and feature even more cutting edge technology than S-class

Before the Z8 goes on sale in Europe, you can see it in action as James Bond's wheels in the movie *The World Is Not Enough* late this year. The roadster's first appearance will be at the Frankfurt show in September, when production will start at BMW's Dingolfing plant. Final assembly will take place at a dedicated workshop in the shadow of BMW's Munich headquarters.

Despite the impending introduction of the Z8, BMW can't afford to rest on its laurels. Along with replacements for the M3 and Compact, Munich engineers are also working flat out on a follow-up to the 7-series.

Due out towards the end of 2002, BMW's new flagship saloon was co-designed by Chris Bangle and Wolfgang Reitzle, before his move to Ford. Prior to his transfer, Reitzle called the new 7-series "a car from another star", hinting at its bold new looks and technological heights,

sleek high-intensity tail lamps. The only obvious changes from the Z07 concept car are a new front assembly with a deeper air dam and integrated indicators and the omission of the hump on the bootlid behind the driver.

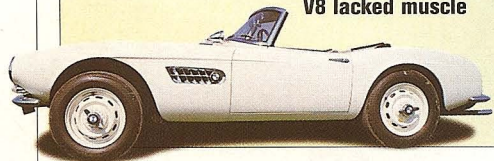
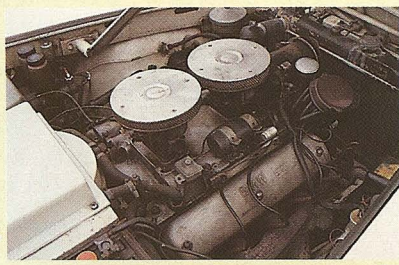
Earlier plans to produce a coupe have been dropped on cost grounds. Instead, the Z8 will come as standard with an aluminium hard-top featuring evocative helmet blisters within the roof. In open-top guise its cloth hood with glass rear window folds electrically into a recess behind the fixed rollover bars, with a cloth cover.

THE LEGEND THAT INSPIRED THE Z8

Launched in 1955, the shark-nosed 507 did little to boost BMW's dire financial predicament at the time. But the lithe Albrecht Goertz-penned 507 made a lot of sense for the struggling German car company and did much to boost BMW's profile above its Isetta bubble car image. Despite the modest performance from its

140bhp 3.2-litre V8 – its main rival at the time was the voluptuous 210bhp Jaguar XK150 – the elegant and stylish 507 was a showcase of what was to come from BMW. Only 253 coupes and roadsters were built, making them highly covetable.

Beautiful 507 showed world what BMW was capable of in 1955, even though its V8 lacked muscle



◆ classic roadster look with a long, sweeping bonnet, modestly proportioned cabin and stubby rear. A length of 4402mm, width of 1813mm and height of 1300mm make it 98mm shorter, 3mm wider and 5mm higher than the Mercedes SL, while a long 2510mm wheelbase ensures minimal overhangs. Credit for the exterior goes to Henrik Fisker, the 36-year-old Dane who heads up BMW's Designworks studio in California. "The idea was to bring it [the 507] bang up to date, as if it had continued in production like the Porsche 911," he says.

Few will argue about the result. The Z8 plays the heritage card stronger than just about any car on the road today. The most striking elements include an elongated kidney grille, chromed cooling ducts behind the front wheel arches, a prominent swage line along the doors and a sloping rear end with chromed exhausts. The throwback theme is peppered with high-tech details such as rounded ellipsoidal headlamps and

Ultra-slim high-intensity tail lamps give rear a modern look



which he claimed would upstage the new Mercedes S-class in all areas.

Codenamed E65, the limousine will retain the traditional BMW double kidney grille and twin-headlamp set-up, but will ditch the conservative lineage of today's model in favour of a much more modern shape.

The new 7-series will boast an aluminium-intensive rear-wheel-drive platform derived from the 5-series. To ensure class-leading ride and handling, the BMW will employ electronic active body control co-developed with Bosch and air-sprung suspension, similar to that on the S-class.

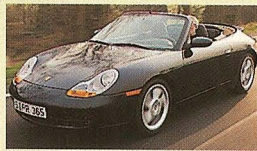
Together with the adoption of lightweight steel body panels, the big car is expected

to weigh a lithe 1400kg in base six-cylinder trim. Although roughly the same size as the outgoing model, interior space will be significantly improved.

Other developments include the adoption of a new 42-volt electrical system in place of the traditional 12-volt arrangement. The new system is said to cope better with the car's complex satellite navigation and Internet functions and cutting-edge Hella lighting system.

BMW is expected to carry over the existing six and eight-cylinder petrol and diesel engines, but sources close to the firm say the petrol motors will boast high-tech direct

WHAT THE Z8 MUST BEAT



PORSCHE 911 CABRIO

Price £74,800 (Carrera 4)

Engine 296bhp 3.4 flat six

HIGHLIGHTS

The most sporting of the luxury convertibles, with fabulous handling and a charismatic flat six engine. A relative bargain, too.



MERCEDES-BENZ SL600

Price £103,040

Engine 394bhp 6.0 V12

HIGHLIGHTS

More roofless GT than sports car, the SL remains hugely impressive despite being 10 years old. Big V12 offers devastating mid-range punch.



ASTON DB7 VANTAGE

Price £99,950 (Volante)

Engine 420bhp 6.0 V12

HIGHLIGHTS

Potent V12 breathes new life into gorgeous DB7. Ride and handling have improved, too. Now one of the world's great grand tourers.

Z07 concept was revealed at the 1997 Tokyo Motor Show in both roadster and coupe forms. Coupe body style has been ditched for Z8, while roadster loses its hump



injection systems, combining enhanced performance with reduced consumption and emissions levels.

Also under development is a new all-alloy 400bhp 5.8-litre V12 based around the same 60deg architecture and four-valve design of the current 5.4-litre unit. A new six-speed ZF automatic gearbox will also make its debut in the 7-series. It is expected to han-

dle the 443lb ft that the existing 4.0-litre diesel kicks out in unrestricted form.

Greg Kable

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