

Press Release
13 January 2020

On ice with winners: BMW Group Classic at the GP Ice Race 2020 in Zell am See.

Philipp Eng, German Touring Car Masters (DTM) driver, pilots the BMW M3 Rally and Christian Menzel in the 2012 Dakar MINI ALL4 Racing drifts across the ice. Another legend is also part of the action: the Morris Mini Cooper S Works Rally.

Munich. Chilly weather is not to everybody's taste but there are two huge advantages to a racing event for historic vehicles on ice: low tyre wear and "natural" cooling for engines running hot. At the weekend of 1 and 2 February 2020, the GP Ice Race will be held for the second time in the Austrian town of Zell am See. Motor-sport classics from different marques and derring-do drivers will battle together in enthralling duels on the frosty surface there. BMW Group Classic is taking part in the icy spectacle for the first time. Vehicles with a winner's genetic makeup are being dispatched to the GP Ice Race 2020, including a first-generation BMW M3 which won the European Touring Car Hillclimb Championship twice before being converted to a successful rally vehicle, and a MINI ALL4 Racing, triumphant in the Dakar Rally in 2012. And the replica of the classic Mini Cooper S that created a sensation just a few weeks ago at the Coppa delle Alpi 2019 will also line up at the starting grid on the automotive ice rink in Zell am See.

The GP Ice Race is a tribute to the legendary racing events that were held on the town's frozen lake in each of the winter seasons between 1937 and 1974 and attracted large numbers of spectators. The new edition will take place on a natural ice track at the old airfield where modern racing cars piloted by numerous celebrity drivers compete alongside youngtimers and classic cars to test their mettle in a setting with a wintry mountain backdrop. The event programme also includes skijoring, which is one of the precursors for ice racing in Zell am See. Daredevil skiers used to be pulled along over the icy track by galloping horses and later by motorcycles and cars.

BMW Group Classic is launching two historic racing cars on the ice. These winners achieved their biggest successes on very different terrain. A first-generation BMW M3 has been registered for the GP Ice Race 2020, which Francis Dosières drove to victory at the European Touring Car Hillclimb Championship in 1988 and 1989. In the subsequent year, the BMW M3 was converted to a rally car. And it also demonstrated its strengths in the new discipline. Dosières' compatriot Patrick Artru was successful with it in the French Rally Championship for several years. The BMW M3 is being piloted by a local matador. The GP Ice Race counts as a home race for Salzburg-born DTM driver Philipp Eng.

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By contrast, sand and stones were once the territory of the MINI ALL4 Racing. In 2012, the two French drivers Stéphane Peterhansel and Jean-Paul Cottret drove the car to victory at the Dakar Rally. This was the first Dakar success for MINI. Eight years later, Christian Menzel is testing whether the MINI ALL4 Racing can shine with unstoppable tempo on ice as well as in the desert. And Menzel has a proven track record of experience as an endurance racing driver. In 1998, he was a member of the quartet of drivers that won the 24 Hour Race driving a BMW 320d on the Nürburgring.

The replica of the Mini Cooper S in the rally version is having its second outing in the Alps within the space of just a few weeks. While the rubber was still hitting the snowy or cleared roads in December, this time the track is a sheet of pure ice. However, versatility has always been the forte of the most athletic version of the classic Mini. After all, the Mini Cooper S won the Monte Carlo Rally in the years 1964, 1965 and 1967.

BMW Group Classic is also presenting two classic racing cars in Zell am See which once created a sensation at the 24 Hour Race of Le Mans. The BMW M1 entered the French endurance classic in 1981 and was an immediate eyecatcher with its unusual paintwork finish. Design artist Walter Maurer had styled the mid-engined sports car with hand-painted images of traditional Munich inns and city sights. The "Tavern Automobile" became a symbol of the close connection between BMW and local sponsors from Munich. It will be presented in Zell am See together with the Le Mans winner from 1999: the BMW V12 LMR. With this open-top sports car, BMW succeeded in achieving overall victory for the first time with a works car at the world's most legendary endurance race.

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2018, the BMW Group sold over 2,490,000 passenger vehicles and more than 165,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2017 was € 10.655 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.678 billion. As of 31 December 2017, the BMW Group had a workforce of 129,932 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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