

Eats, Shoots and Leaves!

Words and photos by John Denny



Late October I received an email from Club M Power supremo Richard Baxter saying that BMW Car magazine were looking for a E36 M3 Coupe to feature in a photo shoot that they were doing...

Turns out that BMW Car Magazine were putting together a feature for the 25th Anniversary of the M3 to coincide with their 200th edition which was due for release in February 2011. Evo magazine had already done a similar article earlier in the year, so I was more surprised another magazine was doing the article, but glad that they were including the Club.

As per usual, it was quite short notice; they were looking for an M3 GT, so I sent an email out to some of the people in the Club that I knew owned a GT. Unfortunately most were busy on the day of the shoot, so I widened the search to all E36 M3 Coupes and a few owners got back to me, all of which I offered to BMW Car, including my own.

Surprisingly they got straight back to me, saying they would love to use my car, although they initially wanted a GT, it turned out that my bright red car was more suited to the photo shoot with a Silver Grey CSL and a new shape M3 finished in Matt Silver. I immediately stopped searching for a GT and got out my Tom Tom. Fortunately, the (rearranged) photo shoot took place at Bruntingthorpe proving ground, Leicestershire, which was a couple of hours away, much better than a 5 hour drive which I was first expecting.

October 27th came around quickly, and I found myself having an early breakfast in the greasy spoon on the Bruntingthorpe site. As I tucked into my sausage and eggs Editor Bob Harper from BMW Car

magazine arrived with one of his colleagues and the photographer, closely followed by Richard Baxter and one of his friends. I polished off my breakfast, rushed my coffee and walked outside to be confronted with an awesome site for any M3 lover, Richard's E30 Sport Evo, a BMW Performance equipped E92 M3 finished in Matt Silver, and my all time favourite car – an E46 M3 CSL. I was like a big kid grinning from ear to ear like a Cheshire cat as the CSL rasped off in front of me, closely followed by the V8 growl of the E92 M3.

We finally arrived at the photo shoot location, and then set about the frantic job of cleaning the cars. Thanks to a clever little motorised jet hose the cars were quickly cleaned and wiped down; thankfully my car is well waxed, so any grime came off quite easily.

The photo shoot itself was a lengthy process, lots of "move the car here, can you get your car over there, and then straighten it up" etc, but it was all very interesting seeing how they do it. The moving shots were very interesting, driving a foot away from the camera car whilst the camera man is hanging out the back with nothing but air between him and my cars bumper!

After the photo shoot was over we were allowed to have a quick go in the BMW supplied cars and I finally realised a dream and got to drive the CSL.

What can I say? I was sold instantly. The car itself feels so special, the SMG was responsive; the carbon airbox makes the tuned 3.2 bark and snarl like a wild animal as it propels you around the track, and the seats hold you perfectly in place.

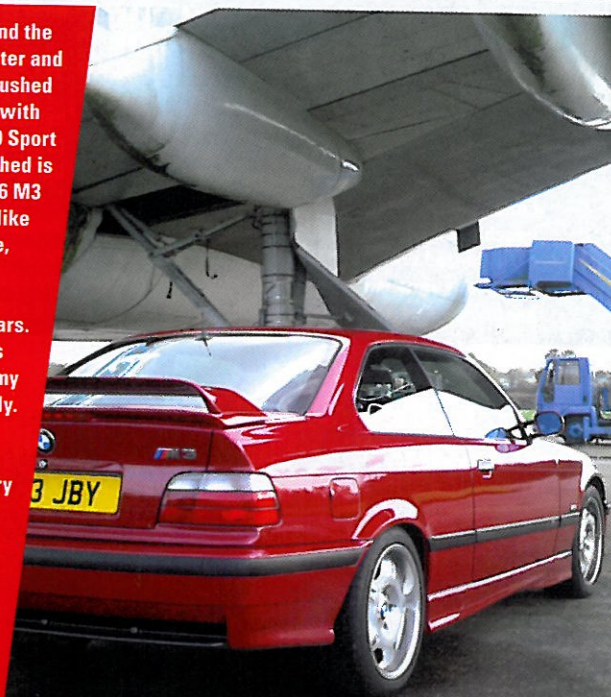
I've owned an E46 M3, but I would never have thought the CSL would be so different. It was an absolute joy to drive; all you CSL owners out there are very, very lucky to have one.

I also got to drive the new M3, and it is truly a wonderful car, it's very well built, very luxurious, pulls like an absolute train and would be the perfect daily driver, but the CSL just felt that little bit more special, and given the choice I would have gladly left my old M there and brought the CSL home.

I did get to open my car on the old runway, which was quite interesting; considering the old girl has done over 105,000 miles – let's just say it didn't hang around...

All in all it was a great day out, the people from BMW Car Magazine were really friendly, and I must take this opportunity to thank Bob Harper for letting us have a go in the M3s, even if it was mildly depressing that I had to hand the CSL's keys back...

I would also like to thank Richard Baxter for putting Bob and his crew in touch with me in the first place.



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