

Yes – I do need help

Words and Photographs by John Denny



After 10 years of running E36 Coupés I've finally dipped my toe in the E46 Pool. In my previous article I admitted that I had contemplated moving away from the E36 Model, and started looking at the very well equipped Alpina B3 as it's the next evolution of the mark.

The B3 had all a boy could wish for - nice interior, smooth ride, responsive performance, all be it controlled by an auto box.

I was very impressed with its seemingly limited production numbers, coupled with having a different look to the Ci Sports that seem to have been very popular as there wasn't an M3 available until 2001.

When it came down to it, I just couldn't do it. I found myself sat in traffic jam in my old M3, and a Steel Grey E46 M3 passed by at the same time a standard E46 coupé passed by too, and I realised I couldn't live with the standard looks of the coupé, when the M3 was such better looking proposition.

As my GT2 burred off down the road on the way to Belfast with its very contented owner, I began what turned out to be an easy task in replacing my GT2, a car that so far has been my favourite of all the 32 I've owned.

I had been looking in the usual places, Piston Heads, eBay and good old trusty Auto Trader for the last 3 months, ever since the new owner of my GT2 had expressed an interest in buying her.

I just couldn't decide on colour, spec, mileage, did I go for a cheap high mileage? Or risk the depreciation of a low mileage one after i'd racked up the miles.

The Yellow represented good value for money, but the wife was not at all convinced, in fact she said "I

don't care what you get as long as it's not that awful yellow!"

Then late on Saturday night I found it!! 2001 M46 M3 finished in Steel Grey, reasonable miles, Black Leather, HK Sound system, and a TV (my minimum spec was the leather and HK, so result).

How had I not seen this before, after all my hours of looking the perfect car, reasonably priced, and only 66 miles away?

I went to see the car the following day, unfortunately committed the cardinal sin, viewed in the dark, and moreover in the rain!!, but as we turned the corner I saw her under a street light, and instantly I thought "Yes that will do nicely" and before the current owner unfolded the electric mirrors, and the monitor burst into life I was hooked.

A short test drive later, and a good look around the car on a garage forecourt, and we shook hands. A week later, and a bank account emptied, I collected my first ever E46 M3.

It took me a few weeks to get the feel for this new car, that felt heavier and larger to thread down my local country lanes, but I must say that now I'm getting the feel for it I can wholly say I wish I'd made the change years ago (to be fair funds didn't allow ;0).

It has an modern interior that's a really nice place to be when your not putting your toe down, and have the time to soak up you surroundings.

It handles so much more positively than the previous mark, and the looks speak for themselves, much more butch and menacing, it's stealth like with the subtle grey paintwork, and light window tints, I really like the symmetry of the twin pipes, it just finishes the car off.

I must say after being such a dedicated E36 fan, I never thought the E46 M3 would do it for me, but I can say with conviction that this is the best car I have ever owned, and will not be rushing back to the E36 M3 any time soon.....

(Though knowing my track record who knows!)

