

BMW 5 Series Euro Delivery

Monday, 15 March 2004 (day 1)

Left Cincinnati and flew to Chicago. The flight from Chicago to Munich was oversold, so I proactively volunteered to get bumped (hoping for another free ticket or something, since I didn't need to arrive right on time). It turns out that they never needed to bump us, but they did use our coach seats and moved us up to business class (my US Airways Gold probably helped that cause as well). Very nice aircraft, a brand new Airbus A340. After a wonderful flight, we arrived, a bit exhausted from the jetlag about a day later at 8 AM on the 16th.



The hotel was very nice, and the woman at the front desk let us check in at 10 AM which was nice. We needed a good power nap before continued on our journey.



Tuesday, 16 March 2004 (day 2)



Arrived at 8 AM at the Munich airport and proceeded to the metro system (underground) from the airport to downtown. Destination, Hotel Uhland (recommended by several other BMW Euro

delivery customers). You have to take the metro to the Theresienwiese stop and it is right around the corner. There was one change of train at the hub downtown. Entire trip took about 40 minutes.

Woke up a few hours later and walked to Karlsplatz and Mariensplatz to do some sightseeing and shopping and catch some lunch. We had lunch at Hackerhaus, an authentic German beerhouse (like there aren't many?) and got some great food as well.



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After a little more shopping and sightseeing, we walked back to the hotel where the Z-monster grabbed a hold of me pretty hard at about 6 PM. Woke up at about 11 PM and got the munchies, so we walked to the train station to grab a sandwich and a drink. After some pretzels, bread, and sandwich and apple strudel, I was much better and got my focus for the big day ahead – the 5 series pickup.



underground and took it to the Friedman stop like the directions said, and walked around the corner to the Euro delivery center.



We were greeted by a funny man who smiled at me and muttered in a German sounding English, “Whvat are your intentions?” At which point I responded, “It really depends on what your intentions are! I would like to take my car now.” ☺

Wednesday, 17 March 2004 (day 3)

After I tossed and turned all night, we woke up and had breakfast at our hotel. They had a nice spread of German cold cuts (mostly glorified Bologna, but to each their own) and prochuitto, etc and some great breads and cereals, coffee, teas and juices (pretty standard throughout all of Europe).

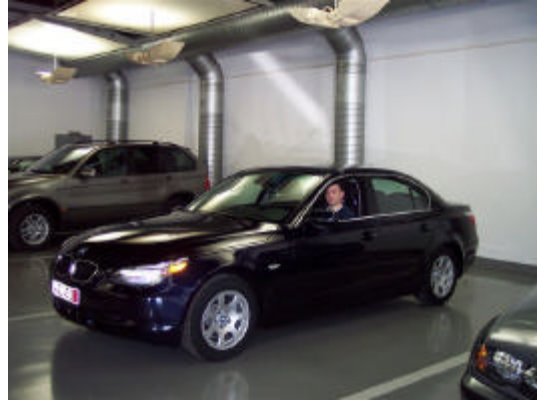


At this point, I was pretty jacked up to go get the new ride, and we went back to the



Another man named Gunther (a popular man with the Euro delivery crowd) filled some forms out with me and then went to get the car (longest 20 minutes I’ve waited in a while). I walked around the Euro delivery center for a couple of minutes, but I have to admit, it was like a tiny dealership with a very small shop, but with Bimmers for as far as you could see out the back and side doors!

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We then walked into the next room where our beauty was waiting – a 6-speed orient blue / black Dakota leather 525i! Sweet. I was really getting antsy about swapping out those 16”s on it, but that will happen when it comes back to the States (although I could have used some 18 or 19s on the Autobahn – not that it stopped me from a solid 120 even with the 16s). BTW, there were black floor mats in it, and I don’t think I ordered them. Must be standard now?

We drove around the corner to the Munich dealership which had a huge shop and selection of stuff (I was told it was the biggest BMW dealer in the world). I got a shirt and wanted to get a hat, but it had a huge HP logo on it, and I work for the #1 PC maker in the world, so I wasn’t having any of that! I did, however, take an opportunity to run to the parts department to get those pesky and elusive red reflectors for the back bumper (BMWNA, what were you thinking on that one?). I also checked out the different wheels and I think I have decided on the Star Spoke 125 19s for it when I get home.



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We ran back to the Euro delivery center to grab a quick lunch from the Bistro before catching the 1:30pm factory tour we had scheduled. The bistro food was fairly forgettable, but since we had the free lunch tickets, I loaded up on a big bottle of water and some pretzels and a candy bar before headed to the factory.



The factory is only about 10 minutes away, and we arrived just in time for the tour. What a great tour. We live in KY about 3 miles from the Toyota plant where the popular Camry, Avalon, Sienna and Solara are built. It was interesting to compare and contrast the differences between those factories (and later, the Porsche factory as well). We were impressed with the robotics that handled many of the tasks down to the fraction of a millimeter. We saw the paint shop and learned a little about how they bake in infrared before the oven, and also how the metallic paint is applied. The other parts of the line were down for retooling, so I was little let down there, but overall, a great tour. Our tour guide Gert was very nice and I enjoyed it.

When it was over, he brought us into a room where there was a huge “heads up display” of the Formula 1 boss talking about the program, and then we were brought into another room to see the actual Formula 1 car. Very cool. Couldn’t take pics, sorry!



From there we walked toward the museum where they had some journalists at the HQ doing a photo shoot on the new 6 cabriolet and the new RR sedan (whoa mamma!). I also snuck a peek at the new M5 concept car, but wasn’t allowed close enough to get any real good pics. I did get one through the blinds outside as proof though!



The museum was OK, and I pretty much flew through there, taking pics, as I needed to get moving towards Leipzig if I wanted to get there before dark. Also, it was my first time to drive on the Autobahn, so I was getting pretty pumped up for that. After

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taking a few more pics of the HQ, we left for Leipzig.



Driving on the Autobahn is something that every one must do once in their life. It is so liberating! I am now one of the many to come back and lobby harder for higher speed limits on rural US highways!



On the way to Leipzig, we got off before the city to take the backroads towards Colditz (where we were staying). **BIG MISTAKE!** It may look shorter on the map, but in hindsight it would have been WAY faster to go around the whole city of Leipzig on the Autobahn and then take the most direct route from there. It wouldn't have been that big a deal, but it was getting dark, so I couldn't enjoy it quite as much as I thought I might. Lesson learned.

After almost getting there, there was this 50m portion of the road that was out (as

there often is there – roads are ALWAYS under construction). Unfortunately for us, that detour took another 30 minutes – no joke, because of a 50m road block.

We arrived at our destination, the Rusterhof at about 10PM. It was a farm house outside of Colditz. My wife rang the bell and a window on the second story window opened, “Hello!” The owner, Gunter, was absolutely fabulous. Probably the best host we had the entire trip. When we arrived, we hadn't eaten and were STARVING (we didn't think it would take nearly as long to get there as it did). He was very gracious and had his wife make us up some dinner real quick. He said she wasn't the cook for the restaurant, but he brought us a plate of eggs, potatoes, cabbage and sausage and it SO hit the spot! He guided us to our room upstairs and we crashed hard. Long day!

Thursday, 18 March 2004 (day 4)

We got up and had breakfast in the restaurant downstairs at the Rusterhof. Gunter greeted us with some bread, cheese and meat, juice and tea (we aren't coffee people). It was again, wonderful. Gunter talked to us in his best English (I think he enjoyed the practice) and told us how his great grandparents lived there over a hundred years ago (as evidenced by some of the photos on the wall).



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When we went outside, we could not believe how much nicer it was in daylight! It was a truly beautiful place. We drove to downtown Leipzig, about 40 minutes away. This time, the drive was very nice. We were rested and not in a rush, so it was nice to enjoy the ride.

We found a great parking spot downtown next to the garden (reminded me a little of a tiny Hyde Park) ironically, right next to another 5 series sibling. BTW, there were a bunch of the new 5s around in Germany, but I was still amazed at how many people stared in approval at it.



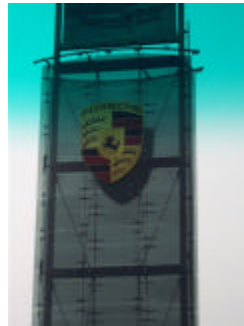
We walked around the Zentrum, doing the usual tourist window shopping and taking in the sights. We tried to get some travelers cheques converted into Euro, and you would be amazed how little people took travelers cheques in Germany in Austria. IMO, don't bother, just bring Euro and your credit card.

We had lunch at India Gate, a neat little restaurant on the second floor with a cool view so you could people watch. I was grateful that I knew what dishes I wanted by their Indian names, because tikka, tandoori, naan and papadam are universal menu items (note every place has English menus or a server that can translate). IMO – if you are going to try to learn any German at all, start with food items! My wife knows how to say “butterfly” in German, but that really didn't help us much when trying to order something other than pork (schwein). ☺



Zentrum.

We walked around some more and then set out for the main attraction in Leipzig (at least as far as I was concerned), the birthplace of our Cayenne Turbo! It was about a half hour outside of the



We arrived about an hour early for the 5:30PM tour, so we rested in the car, and I got more acquainted with the i-Drive system. IMO, it is awesome and I after a week in the car, I am truly an advocate of it.