



Rods & Classics

Vintage Bimmer

**The resurrection of a pre-war
BMW 327/28**

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Every now and then, you come across something special in the automotive world. Yeah, we see our fair share of classic Shelys and Plymouth Barracudas, or ultra-exotic Lamborghinis, or even a Koenigsegg or two. However, there is nothing that can match the class and character of a pre-war sports roadster.

While modern cars are a marvel of performance and technology, their souls always seem to be a hollow shell when put next to a classic like the BMW 327 roadster. Yes, modern vehicles utilize the most ingenious materials and robotic manufacturing and painting technologies to make them as perfect as possible, but when you look at a body that was hand-formed out of a single sheet of steel, tenderly worked through the English Wheel, Shrinkers and Pullers to create the classic lines, it brings back the romance of building cars once again. Real metal dials and knobs that are hewed on a lathe rather than cheap molded plastic. An engine finely tuned with a screwdriver adjusting the jets on a carburetor rather than a laptop plugged into the dash. An exhaust system that bellows out the music of unspoiled

internal combustion rather than an acoustically tuned muffler to emulate once great sounds. There's just something about a great old car that blows anything built in the modern era out of the water.

One such vehicle is this 1938 BMW 327/28 Roadster that has been tediously brought back to life by the good folks over at Jellybean Autocrafters, in Surrey, B.C. The 327 represented BMW's most prestigious sports cars, built before World War II would bring a temporary end to BMW's vehicle production. One of 596 ever produced, this vehicle was originally built to make use of BMW's original 327 body, while equipping it with the high-horsepower mill of the 328, upping horsepower from 55 to 80.

The owner of this beauty, a collector from Seattle, Washington, received it from a friend back in 1991, who had imported the car from Europe. While it wasn't in the greatest condition, the car's new owner proceeded to compete in several Time Speed Distance rallies on the U.S. west coast, traveling as far as Los Angeles. However, as time and wear took affect, the car was taken off the road around 2003 to have

some nagging issues restored. The doors were starting to hang and metal corrosion was starting to catch up with the integrity of the car.

Getting the odd issue fixed would lead to a myriad of other issues that needed attention. So, requiring a complete rebuild, the car was stripped down to parts and after several connections, Ewald Penner at Jellybean Autocrafters was enlisted to take on the challenge of rebuilding the worn out Bimmer.





When the car arrived in Canada, it was merely a frame with rear fenders and several boxes full of parts, not the ideal way to start a project, as any backyard restorer will tell you. However, Jellybean is no mere backyard restoration company, as it has much experience with just such machinery. Bob Maynard was put in charge of the project, having a good bit of experience working on European vehicles back in Great Britain, and went to work on what would become a two-year marathon build.

The greatest challenge the team found with the car was procuring accurate parts. Body panels were deteriorated and required handmade replications, so the body was acid-dipped in preparation for the metal recreation. There are no body panels available for this classic, so every part needed special hand-crafting in shop. Likewise, many small details such as door handles, dash controls and trim were missing, and new parts would have to be researched and fabricated from metal billets.

Then, parts such as the window frame required another restoration technique. Sending the original off to be polished only found that pitting went too deep, to the point where the polishers shrank the piece by a quarter of an inch to try and remove the defects. Jellybean had to build the piece up by spraying on molten aluminum and polishing it back to its original shape, saving an impossible to find original piece.

However, not everything was restored back to completely original condition. This 327/28 has received some slight massaging to make the car more comfortable to drive over long distances, as the owner still plans to compete with this car. As such, the engine has had a slight increase in





power, somewhere in the neighborhood of 120 horsepower with the addition of three carburetors and an aggressive camshaft. Likewise, the generator has been replaced with a 60-amp alternator fitted inside the generator's original housing to keep the classic look. A modern starter has been installed, while halogen bulbs have been placed into the original headlight buckets, so that motoring in the dark won't be as risky as using candle power.



The finished product was painted with a classic black and ivory white two-tone paint job, which really brings out the car's character. Upon closer inspection, the attention to detail, not only from Bob and the rest of the Jellybean staff, but from BMW itself back in the thirties, reveals all the intricate shapes, lines and designs that made these cars so special in the first place, craftsmanship that is simply impossible to include in cars built by machines today.

As before, this lovely Bimmer will go on to compete in classic TSD rallies and tours. While the quality of the piece could easily be confined to a museum of confined collection, it certainly is refreshing to know that this owner not only drives his prized possession, he actually goes out and competes with it. 

