

Media Information

May 20, 2022

100th anniversary of BMW Group Plant Munich: Timeline & milestones.

In the century-long history of the BMW Group plant in Munich, there have repeatedly been events that have presented the company with extraordinary challenges. Many highlights and some setbacks have marked the plant's path from a small aircraft engine factory to the leading plant for the mid-size segment in the BMW Group's global production network.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of its parent plant, the company looks back on pivotal moments and milestones.

1922

On May 20, an Extraordinary General Meeting of Bayerische Motoren Werke AG approves the sale of engine construction, aluminum casting operations and the company name to Bayerische Flugzeugwerke AG (BFW). Ever since this transaction, BMW has been headquartered on Lerchenauer Strasse east of the Oberwiesenfeld district (today: Olympic Park) in Munich.

1923–1929

The first BMW motorcycle, the R 32 model, is produced. With it, the factory for aircraft and power units for installation in various vehicles takes the leap to becoming a supplier of road vehicles.

By the end of the 1920s, the BMW plant in Milbertshofen expands significantly. From the mid-1920s, the plant premises grow from 140,000 square meters to around 216,000 square meters. During the same period, the built-up area increases more than two and a half times. A motorcycle test track now dominates the factory site in the north.

1930

Apart from in-line aircraft engines, BMW also produces radial power units, initially rather small in size, for sports aircraft. This is followed by engines built under license for commercial airliners. The first large radial engine developed by BMW, the BMW 132, comes off the production line starting in 1934. Remaining in production in Munich until 1945, this power unit is fitted in a growing number of different aircraft, including the legendary JU 52.

1935

Annual production of motorcycles reaches the 10,000-unit mark for the first time.

1938

In December 1938, the 100,000th BMW motorcycle is produced in Munich-Milbertshofen.

As a first, the company hires an in-house physician. A year later, a healthcare center and a daycare center for children is opened in the former mansion of the plant director.

1939–1945

Large numbers of workers are drafted into the German Wehrmacht. Since the motorcycles and aircraft engines produced by BMW are essential to the war effort, foreign workers are sent to the Munich plant from 1941 for forced labor.

1940

The BMW 801 double-radial power unit is developed at the Munich plant and built here as well as at two other production sites up to the end of the war, with a total production volume of about 30,000 units.

1942

Starting in December 1941 and primarily over the course of 1942, motorcycle production is relocated from Munich to BMW's plant in Eisenach. The intention is to free up capacities at the Munich plant for the production of aircraft engines.

1945

As World War II ends, many of the buildings and production facilities at BMW's original plant are either completely destroyed or so badly damaged that they can no longer be used. American troops occupied the BMW plant in Milbertshofen and the headquarters of BMW AG on April 30, 1945. On July 28, BMW receives a limited manufacturing permit for the repair of machines and U.S. Army vehicles. One month later, the American military government extends the production permit to include motorcycles, agricultural articles and household items.

1948

Launching the R 24 single-cylinder motorcycle, BMW starts its post-war series production of vehicles. In accordance with the rules imposed by the Allies, its engine capacity is limited to 250 cc. The very first motorcycle completed is raffled off among the workforce.

1952

BMW production cars were built at the Eisenach plant until 1941. Now, for the first time, BMW cars are built in Munich. The first model, the BMW 501, is basically an evolution of the pre-war BMW 326.

1954

Reaching 30,000 units a year, motorcycle production at Plant Munich hits its first milestone. Then, as a result of the 'motorcycle crisis', sales slump in just three years to 5,400 units, with workers at the Munich plant fearing for their jobs.

1955

Production of the BMW Isetta starts in April. The success of the 'motorcoupé' built under license from ISO in Milan secures jobs at the Munich plant. Workers previously employed in motorcycle production now switch over to the Isetta.

1962

The first model of the 'Neue Klasse', the BMW 1500, goes into production in mid-1962. The athletic four-door mid-sized sedan lays the foundation for BMW's economic success.

1965

The 100,000th Neue Klasse vehicle is built in late August.

Up to this point, the Munich plant has built a good three-quarters of a million cars and motorcycles since resuming operations in 1948.

1968/69

Production activities are moved for the first time from Munich to Dingolfing and Berlin, with the former GLAS plant in Dingolfing serving initially to build components for BMW cars and motorcycles. Production of BMW motorcycles ends after 46 years, with all BMW motorcycles since coming from Berlin, where series production begins in September 1969.

1975

Production facilities at the Munich plant are reconfigured for the first BMW 3 Series. Benefitting from this change, BMW is now able to build cars to customers' specific wishes right from the body shop.

1977

Production of the large six-cylinder models (2500, 2800, 2.8 L, 3.0 S, 3.0 Si, 3.0 L and 3.3 Li) ends. Between 1968 and 1977, the Munich plant built a total of more than 220,000 units. This step also helps to streamline BMW's plant structure: from now on, the Munich plant builds engines for all BMW cars and the BMW 3 Series.

1978

In November, the 500,000th BMW 3 Series vehicle leaves the plant premises.

1978/79

BMW's plants are adjusted to the new production concept. The look of the Munich plant changes quite a bit with the conversions and new building projects, which also include tearing down and redesigning the South Gate on Dostlerstrasse originally built in 1934.

1980

The BMW plant network continues to grow, with production being decentralized gradually. Plant management is adjusted to reflect this development, with the Munich plant now being run not only by a technical director but also a commercial manager.

1981

On July 20, the original building at the Munich plant, Building 11, has to make way for structural changes on the premises. The building was originally erected in 1913 by Gustav Otto for the Otto Werke, one of the companies to come before BMW AG.

1983

The first large community event is held at the plant in June, with more than 70,000 guests joining this Festival of Nations.

1986

Although the development units have been moved from the plant gradually to the new Research and Innovation Center (FIZ), the only way to reach production targets at the plant, given its restricted location in an urban neighborhood, is to optimize and automate the production processes.

1990s

With Plant Munich being situated in an urban neighborhood, it is particularly important to maintain good and close relationships with the local population. This is why BMW establishes a Neighborhood Forum in 1994, communicating the special position of the plant right in the center of town as well as the environmentally friendly production processes.

Since 1999, the Z8 has been assembled at the Munich plant in a production shop established especially for this outstanding sports car. Presenting this dream machine at the Frankfurt Motor Show, BMW proudly introduces a truly outstanding model in the exclusive segment of high-performance sports cars.

2000

In March 2000, the integrated engine storage, or IMOLA, is put into operation at Plant Munich. This new storage facility is based on sophisticated engine logistics. IMOLA enables perfect customer orientation and adherence to engine delivery dates.

**2001**

As a first, the Munich plant receives the Plant Award in Gold as 'Best Car Plant in Europe' in 2001. The findings of the study conducted by the U.S. J.D. Power and Associates market research institute certifies the premium quality of BMW production.

2003

Plant Munich is honored with the Eco Award of the City of Munich.

2004

In May 2004, the Munich plant builds the 7-millionth car.

2005

The BMW 3 Series celebrates its 30th anniversary and the fifth generation of the most successful BMW model series rolls off the lines at the Munich plant.

2008

As part of Project i, Plant Munich manufactures approx. 900 MINI E.

2009

In summer, the 8-millionth car is produced at Plant Munich.

2010

The world premiere of the sixth generation BMW 3 Series Sedan takes place at the Munich plant. A high-speed servo press is put into operation.

2012

The production of the fifth generation of the BMW 3 Series Touring starts in June.

2013

Production of the new BMW 4 Series Coupé starts in July.

2014

In February the production of the BMW M4 Coupé starts.

The BMW Group Plant Munich wins the Lean Award in the OEM category.

An all-electric truck takes up operation supplying the parts.

2015

In April, the foundation stone is laid for the next paint shop. The guest of honor: Lord Mayor Reiter.

While the BMW Group production network celebrates the 10-millionth BMW 3 Series Sedan made – the anniversary vehicle itself is made in Munich – the Munich plant also starts production of the BMW 330e plug-in hybrid.

2016

The ten-millionth vehicle made at the location runs off the assembly line at BMW Group Plant Munich.

The plant is awarded with the Ludwig Erhard Award.

The BMW Group celebrates its centenary in the adjacent Olympic Park.

2017

In May, the new paint shop, one of the most state-of-the-art facilities in the automotive industry, is put into operation. The plant makes various modifications to prepare for the future.

The plant launches the production of the new BMW 4 Series Coupé, the M4 Coupé and the limited edition M4 CS.

2018

The seventh generation of the BMW 3 Series is unveiled at the Paris Motor Show.

The whole team at the plant watches the world premiere as part of a larger event with live coverage of the show.

2019

The new generations of the BMW 3 Series Touring and the 3 Series Sedan plug-in hybrid go into production at Plant Munich in summer.

At some 230,000 cars, 2019 ends as one of the highest-output years in the plant's history.

From 2019, buildings, production facilities and logistics systems are prepared for series production of the BMW i4 starting in 2021, with total investment standing at 200 million euros.

2020

The BMW Group announces that it will relocate its long-established engine manufacturing operations in Munich to the BMW Group sites in Steyr (Austria) and Hams Hall (UK) by the middle of the decade. A new assembly plant completely geared to electrified vehicles is being built on the site of the engine production facility. The ambitious schedule envisages just over two years from the first day of demolition to commissioning of the new facility and construction of the first vehicles.

At the same time, a new body shop is being built on the site of the old paint shop, decommissioned in 2018. The two new buildings enable series production of the 'Neue Klasse' (New Class) at the Munich plant from 2026 – a completely new total vehicle architecture optimized exclusively for electric drives.

2021

Production of the BMW i4 at Plant Munich starts in the fall. It is the BMW Group's first all-electric Gran Coupé. This means that BMW Group Plant Munich now builds five different models with all available drive variants (internal combustion, plug-in hybrid and all-electric) on the same line.

2022

On May 20, the BMW Group Board of Management invites representatives from politics, industry and local society to a ceremony at the plant.

Workers in production are granted an extended lunch break with a special open-air buffet and vehicle exhibitions on the plant premises – including the model revision of the BMW 3 Series, whose launch communication starts the same day.

At the beginning of October, the workforce of the Munich plant celebrates a two-day anniversary party with their family members.

Another fall highlight: the first M3 Touring goes into production in Munich.

Corporate Communications**Media Information**

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If you have any questions, please contact:

Corporate Communications

Julian Friedrich, Head of Communications Production Network BMW Group

Phone: +49 89 382 25885

Email: Julian.Friedrich@bmw.de

Susanne Tsitsinias, Communications BMW Group Plant Munich

Cell: +49-151-601-62613

E-mail: Susanne.Tsitsinias@bmw.de

Internet: www.press.bmwgroup.com/deutschland

E-mail: presse@bmw.de

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 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2021, the BMW Group sold over 2.5 million passenger vehicles and more than 194,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2021 was € 16.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 111.2 billion. As of 31 December 2021, the BMW Group had a workforce of 118,909 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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