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of America  
North Star Chapter**



# North Star Bavarian December 2012



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*Remember summer? Only five more months, kids.*

*Happy Holidays from the North Star BMW CCA Board and the North Star Bavarian Staff!*



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## Meanwhile, Back at the Wrench... Jonathan Bush



### Empty Nesters

By the time this missive is in your hands, loyal reader, my long-suffering wife and I will be empty-nesters. No, our two-and-a-half-year-old son hasn't moved out to join the circus, attend college, or tackle some other worthy endeavor above and beyond his uncanny ability to knock down foam-block structures and roll toy cars around any solid surface he can reach. Rather, we are now bereft of any car built prior to 1995: Max the 1972 Bavaria and Chuck the 1981 528i have been sold.

Feelings around the Bush Compound are bittersweet, to be sure, but more of the latter than the former. It was time.

Chuck went to a local friend, Mark Pedersen, a mechanically-minded chap who is going to continue the work I've started on the car. That includes not only the manual-transmission swap and later fuel injection, but also bodywork and paint. I'm pushing for little chrome bumpers to replace the aluminum battering rams. The suspension will be rebuilt, and Chuck will finally receive the upgraded wheel-and-tire package he deserves.

Mark previously owned an M10-powered 318i, and later an E30 325i, both of which he used to autocross. Somewhere in this timeline, he also had a BMW motorcycle and, later, other interesting cars like his 2008 VW Golf R32 and 2012 Subaru WRX STi. (We won't talk about the Chevy Monza in which he started his autocrossing career.)

The conversation regarding Chuck's purchase was typical. "I bought another BMW bike, one that actually runs," said Mark. "Now I have a working Beemer, so I obviously need a working Bimmer." A deal was struck for the car and all the parts, which frees up a ton of garage space. Remember, I had parted out another E12 5 Series, and all those parts were on the shelves.

Mark and his family live close to ours, so keeping tabs on the car will be easy. Indeed, I visited Chuck last weekend in his new home, tucked away with Mark's 1955 Chevy Pickup and myriad model aircraft. I'm sure I'll again be visiting, and wrenching on, and drinking near Chuck in the future. Who knows? Maybe I'll even own Chuck again someday.

Max was shipped back to California, by way of Denver, which is probably the best thing that could happen to him. (Even garage-dwelling old cars can suffer rust and other indignities in winter here.)

The buyer is well known in the old BMW community; he's been around for years, and was co-owner of a large BMW recycler in southern California. He has had several E3 sedans, including an almost-perfect and rather correct 1973 3.0S, in addition to many 2002s. His other current passion is an E9 coupe he's owned for twenty years, which he remembers as a "painful restoration. I drove it year-round for a long time, and paid the price for it."

He is, as we like to say, afflicted.

Though he sold the 3.0S close to ten years ago, he's lately been hankering for another E3; he has told me that Max is exactly what he's been looking for. That can happen. He wants a car with some modifications, one he's not afraid to drive—and, more important, park—a car that falls in between the \$10,000 garage queen and the \$1,000 Craigslist rat. A car owned and loved and modified over the course of fifteen years by someone who cared, and knows enough about E3s to not screw one up.

This gentleman has told me several times that he's going to have to work hard to not

restore Max, a fact which will buck his track record. He's made strong promises to himself—and to his wife—that Max will remain a driver, preserved but not restored. I hope he succumbs to temptation; I think he will.

In the meantime, I'll get my garage back and have a warm place to keep both real cars for the winter. I also have plans for a mild refreshing of the walls and better lighting, in addition to scrubbing everything clean. Call it a rebirth, my own little Man Palace.

I moved to the Midwest with two medium-sized boxes of E3 parts. In the subsequent six years, I accumulated almost an entire E12 worth of parts, more E3 bits, and a small cache of E30 goodies. As mentioned, all the E12 stuff goes with Chuck. The extra E3 parts will be sold off, except, of course, for the rare stuff like the toolkits, a European gauge cluster with a new tachometer (with rare fog-light indicator), and other small fiddly interior bits.

I'll keep the E30 parts, because I will probably have another E30 at some point—and because I'm a pack rat. What can I tell you?

What's next? What happens with all this free garage space? How can the couple that had eleven cars at one point get by with only two? Stay tuned.



## 2013 BMW 328i *Words and Photos by Jim Carlson*

It is with a somber heart I welcome you here today. We are gathered to mourn the passing of a dear friend. Our friend was loved by many. He was one smooth operator. He was flexible and responsive. He was willing to perform whenever he was needed and at a moment's notice. He never had to stop and think, not for a second. Ask, and he delivered. He was athletic, powerful, and natural. He needed no artificial boost to achieve his best. He also had a great voice.

I was first introduced to our friend at the age of fourteen. I still remember that day well. Already well acquainted himself, my dad introduced me to him in a parking lot outside of school. Our meeting was brief, but memorable, as the best first impressions often are. I remember his low baritone voice and his friendly demeanor. We were quick friends. Over the years I've gotten to know him better and appreciate his many talents.

However, the last few years have been quite tough on our friend. Giving in to the mounting pressure of doing more with less, our dear friend started experimenting. He slowly started using a hugely powerful upper, Turbo Boosted Power (TBP), yielding impressive results. Our friend was starting to run faster, pull harder, and consume less. But the effects of TBP have many negatives. Our friend would never be the same. Much like Darth Vader, his soul was being corrupted. His once sonorous voice was muffled under the wheeze and whistle of TBP. His once charming, responsive personality was replaced with cold performance. He started taking a moment to get going, hesitating at each new request. He eventually grew addicted to TBP, until virtually unrecognizable. Again like Darth Vader, at his core he remains who he always was, but now hidden under all sorts of extra mechanicals and artificiality. Our friend is no more.

Goodbye, Naturally Aspirated Six. We will miss you.

Do not be discouraged, good friends. With each dusk comes a new dawn. What once was may never be again, but we can still look to the future with hope. The new order is here and likely to stay. Turbocharged engines are the way of the future and with each new generation the shortcomings of the turbo becomes resolved. Although it still has some rough edges to smooth out, the new BMW 328i is a great example of the vanguard of smaller displacement turbocharged engines we will, like it or not, be acclimating to in the near future. Who knows? We may even grow to appreciate their strengths the same as we loved our dearly-departed friend.

The F30 328i enters the market as BMW's base 3 Series offering. Gone is the three liter naturally aspirated six. Replaced with a two liter turbocharged four cylinder, the new engine demonstrates why the naturally aspirated engine, in general, will be a rare thing in the future. The reason? Less weight, more power, more torque, and better fuel economy. Driven by the increasing market and regulatory pressures to achieve better fuel economy, the car industry as a whole is moving to smaller, turbocharged engines to meet these realities while not sacrificing power. In fact, much of the new 328i is designed with fuel economy in mind. If that concerns you, I recommend scouring craigslist for the cleanest E46 model you can find to suit your six cylinder desires.

As mentioned, the engine is the starting point for the efficiency focus and makes a pretty good case for itself. The old base six cylinder made 230 horsepower and 200 pound foot of torque and was rated at 18 mpg city and 28 mpg on the highway. The new turbo four? 240 horsepower and 255 pound foot of torque while achieving 23 mpg city and 33 mpg on the highway. To add insult to injury, the new four cylinder will also out-accelerate the old six cylinder by nearly a second; 5.8 seconds vs. 6.5 seconds. Where the four

*more:*





cylinder loses a few categories in smoothness and noise. At start-up, the new four sounds, well, let's say uninspiring. Idling, as is the case with most directly injected engines, is a collection of whirring and clatter not dissimilar to a diesel. At full throttle, the whistle of the turbo is audible, and the exhaust displays some ferocity. Gone is that soulful purr of the six. But mostly the engine noise goes unnoticed. Further, the new four, while not a rough engine by any means, simply lacks the finesse and responsiveness of the straight six. But as mentioned, the power is there. And noticeable. Floor the throttle and the 328i accelerates with authority.

Speaking of transmission, the now familiar 8 speed automatic does its part to ensure the 328 cruises efficiently. The BMW gear selector seems to receive some criticism for unnecessary complexity, but as it is now used on nearly all BMW models, it's quickly becomes second nature. Once in gear, the transmission responds quickly. Shifts are smooth and quick. With the car in Comfort mode, the transmission seeks out the highest gear possible to help eke out every last mpg. Select the Sport setting and the transmission automatically drops to 6th gear and seems to stay there unless instructed otherwise using the steering wheel paddles. The paddles are more conventional and better than some of BMW's previous iterations. The right paddle is dedicated to upshifts. The left, downshifts. The paddles add a level of engagement to the otherwise straightforward driving experience.

The 328i, in further pursuit of maximum efficiency is equipped with an engine Start/Stop system. When in Com-

fort or Eco mode, the engine will shut down when the car comes to a complete stop. For the most part the system is transparent. The biggest give away is the climate control performance, especially on warm days. As soon as the brake pedal is released, the engine fires back to life before your foot hits the throttle. Only once did the system really catch my attention. I managed to lift off the brake just as the engine was stopping. The resulting start up seemed rough due to the engine being caught mid-cycle. The rest of the time the system goes mostly unnoticed. Selecting Sport disables the Start/Stop function.

Efficiency also guided the exterior styling. Cues, such as the furrowed brow over the headlamps, are an example of form following function as BMW pursued a low drag coefficient. Under-body air management, while unseen, helped BMW accomplish the class-leading 0.26 drag coefficient.

Yet another efficiency-minded change to this new 328i is the utilization of electronic, instead of hydraulic, power steering, greatly reducing the parasitic drag of a hydraulic. As you may have heard by now, most electric systems are generally devoid of feel. Unfortunately, that is the case here. The steering, while very accurate and direct, simply does not provide the type of feedback you expect when driving a BMW 3 Series.

Obviously, efficiency was a main priority for the engineers. On that front they have succeeded. The question that may be on your mind at this point is, Does it still drive like a proper 3 Series? The answer is mostly.

*more:*

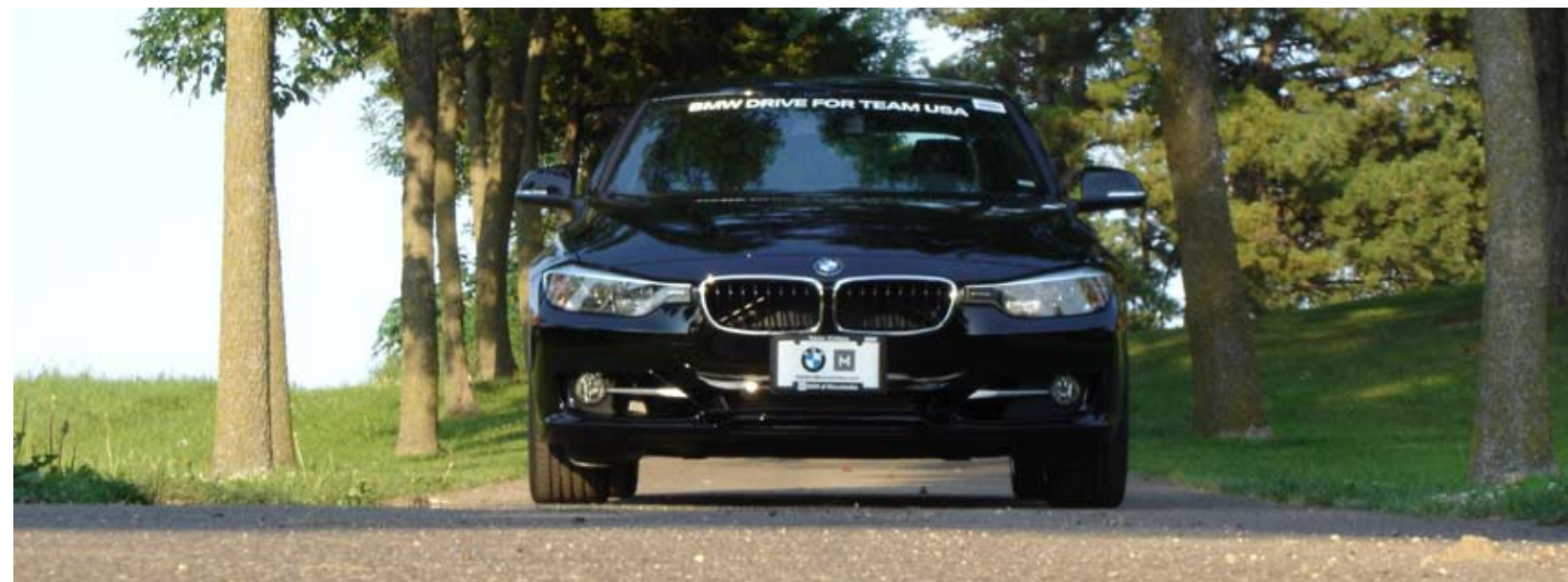
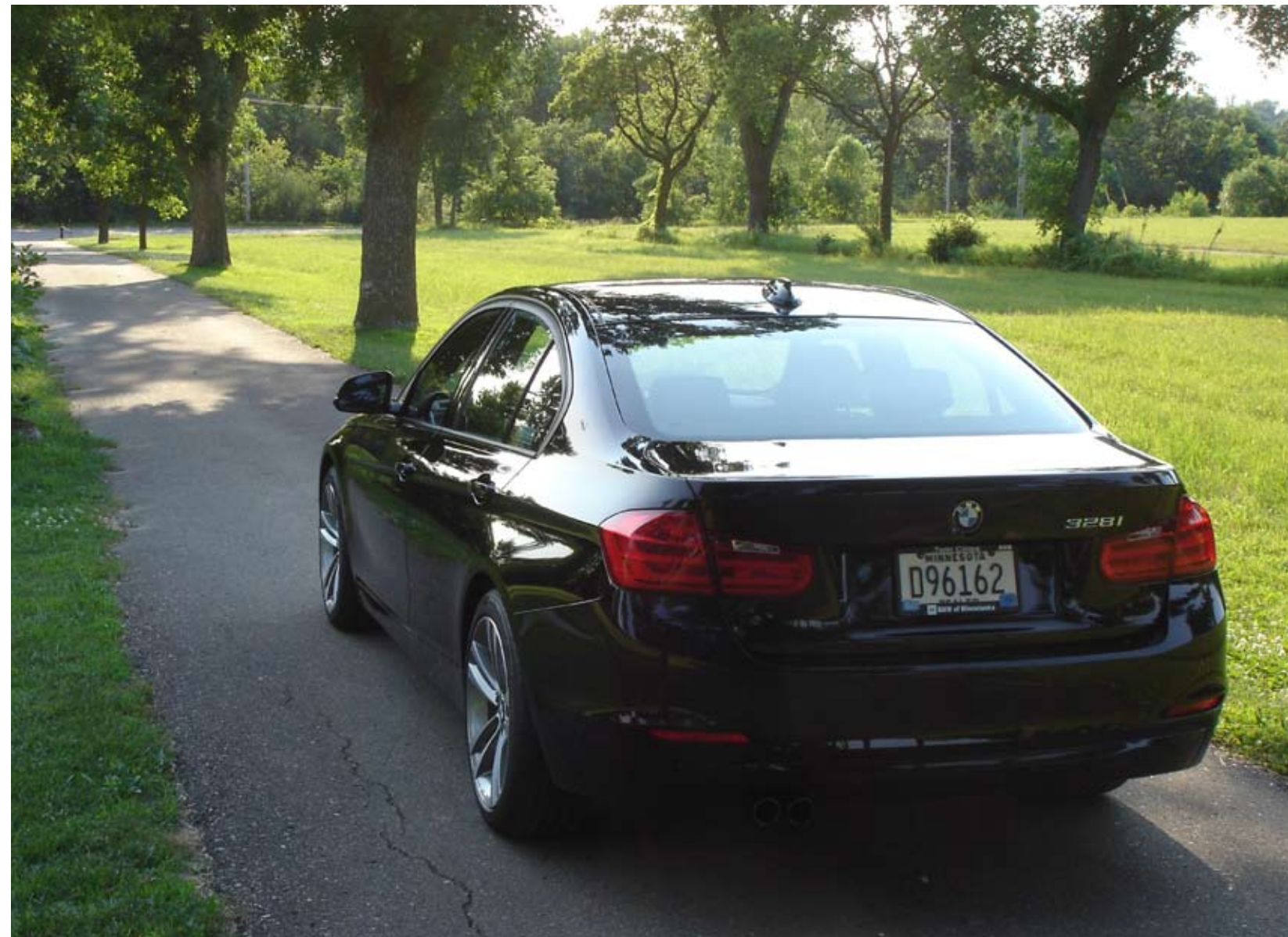
For the new model, BMW has rolled out a new packaging convention. Each individual 'Line' - Sport, Luxury, Modern, and M Sport - has its own unique interior, exterior, wheels, and even key fob specifications. The Luxury and Modern lines focus a bit more on pampering the occupants in luxury. The Sport, and especially the M Sport, focus on delivering the classic 3 Series driving experience.

Fortunately, for my test drive, I was in the Sport Line. With the sport suspension, the 328i continues to carry the BMW name proudly with excellent handling and stability. Through curves, the new 328i does have some body roll, but it is very well-mannered and stable. Peruse other reviews of the 328i in the major car magazines and you will learn the handling capabilities of the Sport are still leading the class. The 328i, with less weight over the front wheels, seems to be preferred to the 335i for its noticeably greater agility. Power junkies, however, will still go for the turbocharged inline six in the 335i. The only things keeping me from declaring this 3er as superb are the steering feel, the overall car complexity (even on the base model), and the engine noise.

The interior of the Sport Line is instantly recognizable by the matte red trim across the dash. It also features red stitching on the seats and door panels. Standard across the line is what I would refer to as iDrive lite. Even the most basic model, such as the car I drove, feature a wide screen mounted atop the dash controlled by the iDrive joystick. Navigation and myriad other functions come with higher spec models. The basic system is user friendly. Navigating around radio and phone functions proved straightforward. Pairing my phone to the car via Bluetooth took a few tries, but considering this was the first time I had ever paired a phone to a vehicle, we'll chalk that one up to the user. It's possible to spec a 328i with a price under 40K, but playing with the online configurator reveals that BMW will happily sell you a seriously, almost ridiculously loaded 328i for over \$56,000.

Ultimately, this new 3 Series is one of the best mid-sized sport sedans on the market. It handles beautifully, while at the same time returning a degree of fuel efficiency matching econoboxes from just a few years ago. The interior is handsome and spacious. The exterior is aggressive, yet classy.

While I still prefer the e46 generation of 3ers for their design, engines, and driver engagement, it will be exciting to see the evolution of this new and future 3 series models. I'm confident BMW will continue to lead the way in building the ultimate driving machine well into the future, wherever it leads.





**A Day In The Life Of Sam The Saver And His Tiny Planet-Friendly Car**

Sam had enough of five-dollar a gallon gas and hundred-buck fill-ups. Oh, his big old SUV was roomy and comfortable as all get out. Lots of power with which to thumb his nose at Minnesota winters. But it had to go!

"I'll miss you old buddy," Sam said as wheeled onto the lot at Midget Motors. He was fighting back tears. All the more so when the salesman gave Sam his "best offer" for the SUV.

"Most dealers won't even take these babies," the salesman said. "You're lucky."

Sam thought the salesman seemed a bit on the smarmy side.

Sam didn't feel lucky. More like sick. Still, he had felt lucky a couple of months ago when the spate of Midget Motors ads caught his eye.

*New Midgeteer!  
Beats the high cost of gas!  
Fun to drive while you save!  
Order yours today!*

Sam did just that. The ad must have been written just for him. He couldn't wait for his new Midgeteer to arrive. He'd show those gas profiteers! What luck!

And now here he was on the Midget Motors lot. He didn't feel lucky no matter what the salesman said. He gave his old SUV a last loving look on his way into the show room.

His new Midgeteer was front and center. Pint-size! Cute! Symbolic Green was the only color choice. Sam's six-foot-two-inch frame towered over the car.

"Somehow we'll all fit into this thing," Sam said. "We're doing the right thing." His petite wife wouldn't have too much trouble and the twins were still toddlers.

Time to settle up and be on his way. Sam was in for some shock treatment.

"We usually don't even take SUVs," said the sales manager. "We can't give the damn things away." With that he offered Sam a "no dicker" fraction of it's original

cost. Sam was glad that at least his Midgeteer was priced as agreed.

"But this damn insurance is outrageous!" Sam found himself yelling.

"It is high, alright. But that's because it's small car." In a matter-of-fact manner that only fanned Sam's rage the sales manager explained, "Tiny cars just cost much more to insure."

"Why, for God's sake?" Sam was trying not to lose it.

"Because tiny cars get beat up more in accidents. And people inside them get hurt. Or worse. I'd drive real careful if I were you."

There was that damned matter-of-factness again.

"But you will be saving money on gas. Saving even more because gas is only \$3.00 a gallon today."

Have a good day, Sam.

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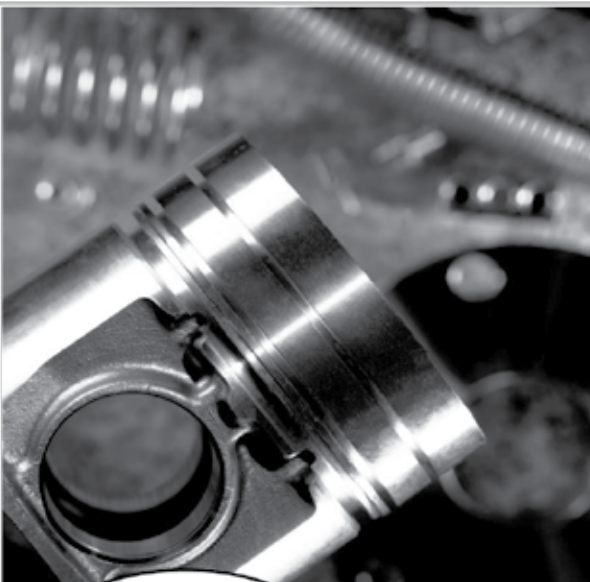
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