

River City Bimmers  
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www.rivercitybimmers.org

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BMW Car Club  
of America  
River City Bimmers



# Der Fahrersitz

The Newsletter for the River City Bimmers

April - June 2012

# The 550i

## Weiß hot



Also in this issue:

Street Survival needs you! • Our man at the Vintage • Events in July!

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Photo by James Parker  
He does such nice work!

**River City Bimmers**  
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[www.rivercitybimmers.org](http://www.rivercitybimmers.org)

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## Welcome New Members!

David Aplin, Memphis, TN

Jesse Arellano, Bartlett, TN

Alan Barfield, Germantown, TN

Michael Burnette, Germantown, TN

Oscar Cabello, Cordova, TN

Melinda Calabrese, Germantown, TN

Robert Crouch, Collierville, TN

Albert Everett, Little Rock, AR

Harry Hamlin, N. Little Rock, AR

Derrick Hampton, Memphis, TN

Brian Hariman, Germantown, TN

David Lambert, Memphis, TN

Thomas Olmsted, Germantown, TN

Taliessin Penfound, Memphis, TN

Tom Penfound, Memphis, TN

Bradley Paul, N. Little Rock, AR

Jill Stern, Lakeland, TN

James Sullivan, Collierville, TN

**We rely on National Office for this information, so if there's a misspelling of your name or location, please drop a line to [otto99@roadfly.com](mailto:otto99@roadfly.com) so we can make sure we have the correct information.**

### 43rd Annual BMW CCA Oktoberfest

Columbus, OH  
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course (Lexington, OH)  
Monday, September 17 - Sunday, September 23, 2012

We have been asked to host the Houston Chapter's Road Monkeys as they pass through on their way to Oktoberfest, and anyone planning on going can join the caravan. However, they like to eat in local places and stay in local lodging. Food is no problem, but input on local lodging (not a chain) is needed. Call Greg at 901.212.9098 with suggestions for dinner, a place to stay and any other ways we can be good hosts.

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# Calendar of Events

PLEASE NOTE: No dinner meeting in July

**July 14, 2012 - 11:00 a.m.**  
Tech Session - Cookout  
Quality Dent Repair  
5055 Covington Way, Suite 3  
Memphis, TN 34134  
(901) 409-2122

**July 21, 2012 - 10:30 a.m.**  
Photo Scavenger Hunt  
Details will be posted on  
the Facebook page

**August 16, 2012 - 6:30 p.m.**  
Dinner Meeting  
Soul Fish  
3160 Village Shops Drive  
Germantown, TN  
(901) 755-6988

**September 22, 2012 - 9:00 a.m.**  
Autocross (tentative)  
Millington Jetport

**September 29, 2012 - 8 a.m.**  
Street Survival  
Memphis Police Academy  
4371 O.K. Robertson Rd  
Memphis, TN

## Autocross Schedule - All clubs

July 7-8 SCCA  
July 28-29 NASA

Aug 4-5 SCCA  
Aug 18-19 NASA  
Aug 25 PCA - MIR\*

Sep 8-9 SCCA  
Sep 15-16 NASA  
Sep 22 BMW  
Sep 29 PCA

Oct 6-7 SCCA  
Oct. 13-14 NASA  
Oct 20 BMW  
Oct 27 PCA

Nov. 3-4 NASA  
Nov 17 PCA - MIR\*

Dec 08 PCA - MIR\*

\*Memphis International Raceway



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# Letter from the PresEditor

One of the advantages of working from home is that I don't have to contend with the morning commute in what is arguably one of the most idiot-filled towns in America; quite frankly I do not miss it at all, but had forgotten how risky it can be. However, one morning last week I had to venture out during the rush hour to visit Beelzebub at the county clerk's tag office, and on the drive in I saw many moves that would have gotten a drive-through penalty in just about every major motorsport. And the kicker was none of the cars executing these daring maneuvers were cars that one thinks of when thinking of daring maneuvers. Had I been flinging my car about in such a manner, I would have been instantly branded as one of "those people in a BMW." I suppose being one of "those people in a Malibu" doesn't quite have the same ring. And a lot of these Hans Stuck wannabes are in SUV's on the phone, applying make-up, shaving, making an in-car latte, all of the above, etc. I once came up behind a woman on I40 shellacking her 'do with a can of AquaNet. Wouldn't you have

## Disclaimer

This newsletter is a publication of the River City Bimmers (the Chapter) and its contents remain the property of the Chapter. The Chapter is not connected in any way with BMW A.G.. or BMW N.A. All information furnished herein is provided by the membership of the Chapter for members only. The Chapter assumes no liability for any of the information contained herein. The ideas, opinions and suggestions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and no authentication is implied. Unless otherwise noted, none of the information in this newsletter is "factory approved". Permission is hereby granted to reproduce any material published herein provide full credit is given to the author and River City Bimmers, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED OR SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED.

Modifications within the warranty period of your BMW may void the warranty.

loved to sit in her car? And since she had the mirror aimed at her coif instead of the rear-view, she couldn't see me shaking my head in total disgust and bewilderment. It's amazing there aren't more accidents in Memphis, based on all the tuned out drivers - and that's a generous term - we all see on a regular basis. Just makes me glad my car is quick enough to escape trouble, has good enough brakes and steering to help me avoid trouble, and is built like a tank in the unfortunate occurrence of trouble. And it's purty, too.

Street Survival is coming together nicely. There's a report from the planning committee elsewhere in this issue. Keep watching the Facebook page for specifics, and we will be soliciting volunteers soon to act as instructors, help with the set-up and registration, and just be there to pitch in when needed. Watch the skies.

Once upon a time I heard about how certain discussions were taking away from all of the driving events. So now to make that all truthy, we need to schedule some driving events. We have autocrosses set for the rest of the year, but would like to know what else members find interesting. A gymkhana has been discussed for the early fall, a photo-savenger hunt list has already been prepared, and there's a few wineries and attractions around waiting to be invaded. So put on your thinking helmets. Nothing is too far out there (well, almost nothing), so give it a thought and run it up the flagpole.

Greg

Visit River City Bimmers online at [www.rivercitybimmers.org](http://www.rivercitybimmers.org) or on Facebook. Post photos online on the website or on the Facebook page, keep up with meeting notifications, and get to know other members of our club.

Comments are always welcome. Send an e-mail to [otto99@roadfly.com](mailto:otto99@roadfly.com) with comments, suggestions for articles, or whatever's on your mind!



# 550i

There was a commercial recently on TV that showed athletes in their appropriate sporting garb, and they were transformed into evening gowns or tuxes. The point was to show how something so powerful could still look nice, refined, and generally no one would suspect what lies beneath. Meet the automotive equivalent.

The new 550i is luxurious, a technological wonder, and an absolute beast. Underneath that sculpted shape is a fire-breathing 4.4 liter twin-turbo V8 mated to an eight-speed transmission with paddle shifters on the wheel if the Sport box was checked. 400 horsepower and 450 ft/lbs. of torque await your right foot commands, and the acceleration is nothing short of stupendous, with 0-60 ticking by in 4.8 seconds flat. Not too bad for a 4,417 pound car, and somewhat faster than the lighter and less stylish Dame Edna this model replaces. And although you will most likely never see one on the showroom floor, a 6-speed manual is available in the 550i as a no-cost option. However, if you want the fastest 550i,

then you want the automatic, as the manual was slower across the board in most tests.

The car has all kinds of technological gimcrackery, like lane departure warning system, active cruise control, front, rear, side and top view cameras (and how they get the top view is a mystery), and tons of other stuff that add absolutely nothing to how quickly the car can get through a corner, stop, accelerate, etc. Cool stuff, expected at this level, but how cool would it be to be able to get this car with manual seats, no NASA-level computer brain; just the essentials that make up the Ultimate Driving Machine?

Not that this car isn't a UDM - it is in every way. It handles amazingly well for a big car, inspiring confidence and giving great feedback from the butt dynamometer. You know where this car is going, and it's quite easy to forget this car is very nearly as big as an E38 7 and outweighs the E38 by some 200 pounds.



## How to Contact the BMWCCA

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E-mail: [questions@bmwcca.org](mailto:questions@bmwcca.org)  
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## well at least a small part of it.

The Library, Archives, and Museum Program (LAM) has created a repository for BMW-related historical documents, literature, and paraphernalia, providing the public with access to rare and interesting BMW artifacts while ensuring their continued existence. This archive is housed in Greenville, South Carolina near the BMW CCA National Office and BMW Manufacturing.

Our growing Archives, Library, and Museum needs your tax-deductible donations. See our website for more info.

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# AUTOCROSS

# ACTION!



Brakes feel the size of pizza pans, and haul this heavyweight down to a stop in nothing flat, with a firm, communicative feel.

As is now the course with the upper level cars, there is the switch on the console allowing you to program the car for maximum efficiency, a comfortable ride, a slightly more sporting feel, and the top of the heap Sport+ setting, which turns down, but never completely off, the traction control, changes the transmission shift points to a higher rev point and speedier gear changes (hence the auto outrunning the manual), and tightening up the suspension and steering. Oh, yes, the steering. The one criticism of the car is that the steering feels artificially heavy and not as alive in the hand, certainly not to the level of which we have grown accustomed. There's nothing wrong with it, quite the contrary, but the diehards out there know the difference, and will notice the lack of feedback through the thick steering wheel. It's certainly not a deal breaker, but hopefully can be remedied in upcoming models or in the aftermarket.

The interior is a sumptuous place to spend time, and the sport seats offer the right blend of support, seat stick, and softness. There are buttons and switches everywhere, some of which we didn't have time to figure out. iDrive is continually being improved so less time is required staring at the screen instead of the road, but some time spent to set everything up before turning the key is most certainly the wiser choice.

Unlike the previous version, which really only looked best in dark colors and the optional 18 or 19 inch wheels, the new 5 looks nice in any color and with the base wheels. While it does take some styling cues from the 7, it seems to be a more balanced design, with no bad or un-gainly angle to be found.

So the new 550i is a very nice car, as one would expect when plunking down 75 large (\$75,320.00 to be precise as tested). Our car was fitted with the M Sport, Driver Assistance, and convenience packages, the latter being a power closing trunk and soft-close doors and the smart fob that unlocks the doors as you approach. Gas mileage is abysmal (EPA 15 town-23 road), but it IS a big old twin-turbo V8, so that should come as no surprise.

Drive one if you can. You won't be sorry. Own one if you can. You may not ever forget it.





# Street Survival Needs You!

We need volunteers for Street Survival On September 29th at the Police Academy. We will be setting up the track and registration on Friday, September 28. On Saturday we need help with registration, track safety, course workers for each event, and if you have the gift of instruction and can explain car handling we need you to ride in the cars with the students and teach.

Please email [jared@nosoupforyou.net](mailto:jared@nosoupforyou.net) for questions or call my cell at 901-337-8070.



## The Vintage

Greg and Alison Flint represented RCB at this year's Vintage in Winston Salem, NC. Greg's personal favorite is above, a Euro 525 with an S54/6-speed transplant. The Flint's joined Rodney Middendorf in the Rallye, and Greg and Rodney competed in the Shade Tree Mechanic competition. Thanks to Rodney for the photos.



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