

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## M-division patriarch Jochen Neerpasch picks his favourite BMWs

### Lead

Overseeing the creation of BMW's M-division is just one of numerous landmark achievements in Jochen Neerpasch's glittering career. With the marque celebrating its centenary this week, we asked him to choose his favourite BMWs of all time...

### BMW 700



Often credited with saving the company, the 700 also found favour with competition-minded individuals, Neerpasch included. "Before joining BMW I did some racing for Willi Martini, a Nürburgring-based tuner who specialised in 700s. The were small, simple and surprisingly fast." Indeed, a 700 S came fifth overall at the 1961 Monte Carlo Rally.

### BMW 3.0 CSL



Another credit to Neerpasch's name is the transformation of the genteel CS coupés into the legendary, fire-breathing 3.0 CSL 'Batmobiles'. "Our first task after my arrival in Munich was to lighten the coupés, which was difficult as things weren't quite as progressive as they are today. Once that was done, we focused on aerodynamics and increased the engine displacement, and from then on they were unbeatable."

### BMW M1





“Funnily enough, we initially chose to build the M1 for cost reasons. To homologate the 3.0 CSL, you had to build 1,000 cars. We decided it was more economical to build a racing car for the road. For example, at the time we raced the 3 Series in Group 5, a road car cost 35,000DM to build but a race car cost 750,000DM. With the M1, a road car cost 100,000DM and the Group 4 ProCar cost 150,000DM.” Neerpasch does have one regret concerning the M1, however: “Before I left BMW, I bought an M1 road car – one of only two that were painted in grey. It’s a shame I didn’t keep it, considering their current values...”

### The Art Cars



A masterpiece dreamt up by Neerpasch and Hervé Poulain, the legend of BMW’s Art Cars extends well beyond the usual remit of either the art or automotive fields. “We had a new goal for Le Mans. Victory would not be top priority; instead, it would be an art happening on the racetrack. It was fantastic to see how the artists got along with the engineers. Back then, no one could foresee that the Art Car would become so important, but it is now a field in which BMW has exclusive ownership. No other manufacturer can take over.”

### BMW M4



Somewhat surprisingly, Neerpasch’s favourite car from the M3 bloodline is not the E30. “I must say I’m impressed by the current M4. It’s the type of car you can use for normal purposes during the week, then at the weekend you can do ten laps at the Nürburgring at the absolute limit without making a single change to the car.”

Photos: BMW

### Gallery

















**Source URL:** <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/cars/m-division-patriarch-jochen-neerpasch-picks-his-favourite-bmws>  
© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.