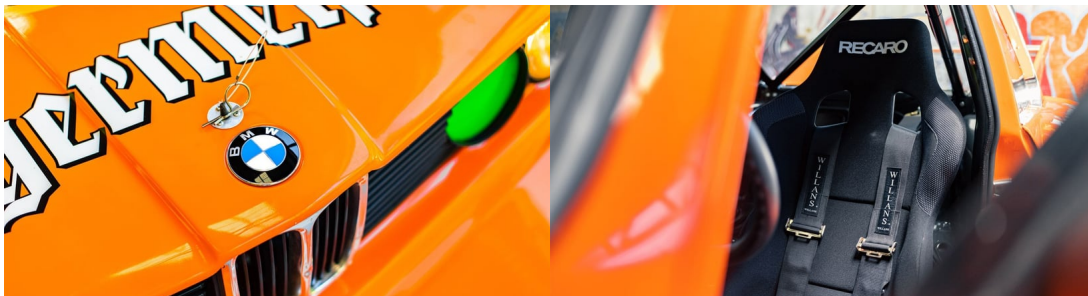


CLASSIC DRIVER

Extremely quick and wickedly orange - This BMW 320 Group 5 is a racer's dream

Lead

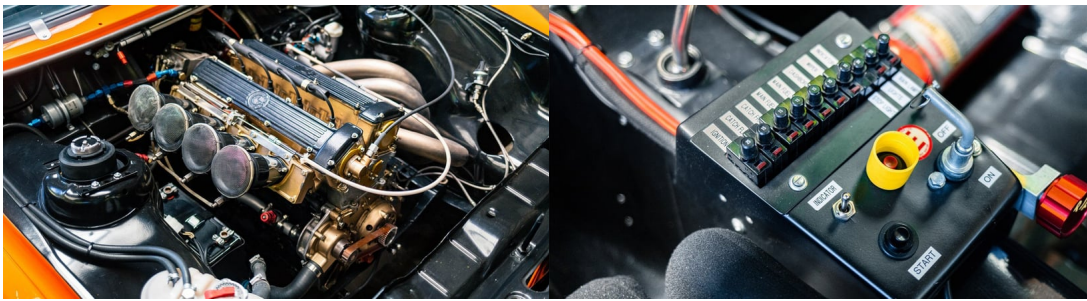
With the Halloween season approaching, anything resembling the vibrant hues of a pumpkin has our attention. This sharp-nosed Jägermeister racer certainly caught our eye and is now available via RM Sotheby's Private Treaty Sales.



If you fancied racing during the 1970s, and you were brave enough to wrangle some of the wildest machinery with four wheels and an engine, Group 5 was likely where you'd go to get your thrills. The cars, particularly during this decade were simply outrageous, with the "Special Production Car" category allowing extensive modifications to regular road cars, making them virtually unrecognisable. The FIA rules restricted the width of the car, therefore cars were built with standard body widths but wide mudguard extensions, hiding ultra-wide race wheels and upgraded brakes. Brands from all over wanted a slice of the action, with some of the world's largest sponsors behind them, but there are few as iconic as the Jägermeister liveried BMW 320 from 1977.

It's important to reiterate the enormity of what was changed on these race cars during this era of racing. Only the doors, bonnet and roofline needed to remain unmodified, giving manufacturers and privateers almost free rein when it came to styling and aerodynamics, while mechanically, loose restrictions led to the widespread use of top-flight race technology, and BMW took full advantage of this. This decorated example is powered by the period correct M12/7 four-cylinder engine, capable of producing 330 horsepower and could comfortably rev to an eardrum-splitting 10,000 rpm.





This example has had somewhat of a roller coaster life, being supplied new by BMW and raced at the highest level by Harald Grohs throughout the 1977 DRM season, where the German's all-or-nothing driving style certainly brought him moderate success in the car. After it had served its race duty, the car would then be used as a display piece for several years and was later auctioned in 2002 and was very much in need of restoration.



Thankfully, this fire-breathing racer wasn't ready to quit, and after a six-year restoration, the monstrous 320 breathed new life after an extensive refurbishment. Incredibly considering the nature of racing, the chassis, suspension, differential, and gearbox are said to be original to the car, as are major body panels including the bonnet, boot lid, and doors. Only the front wings and spoiler are said to be remanufactured.

It's easy to think of other iconic liveries and vehicles from this heyday of motorsport, but the impossibly wide arches and flamboyant styling, mixed with arguably one of the greatest racing liveries ever designed, makes this BMW 320 an absolute must for a race-inspired collection.

Photos by Kevin Van Campenhout

Gallery

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