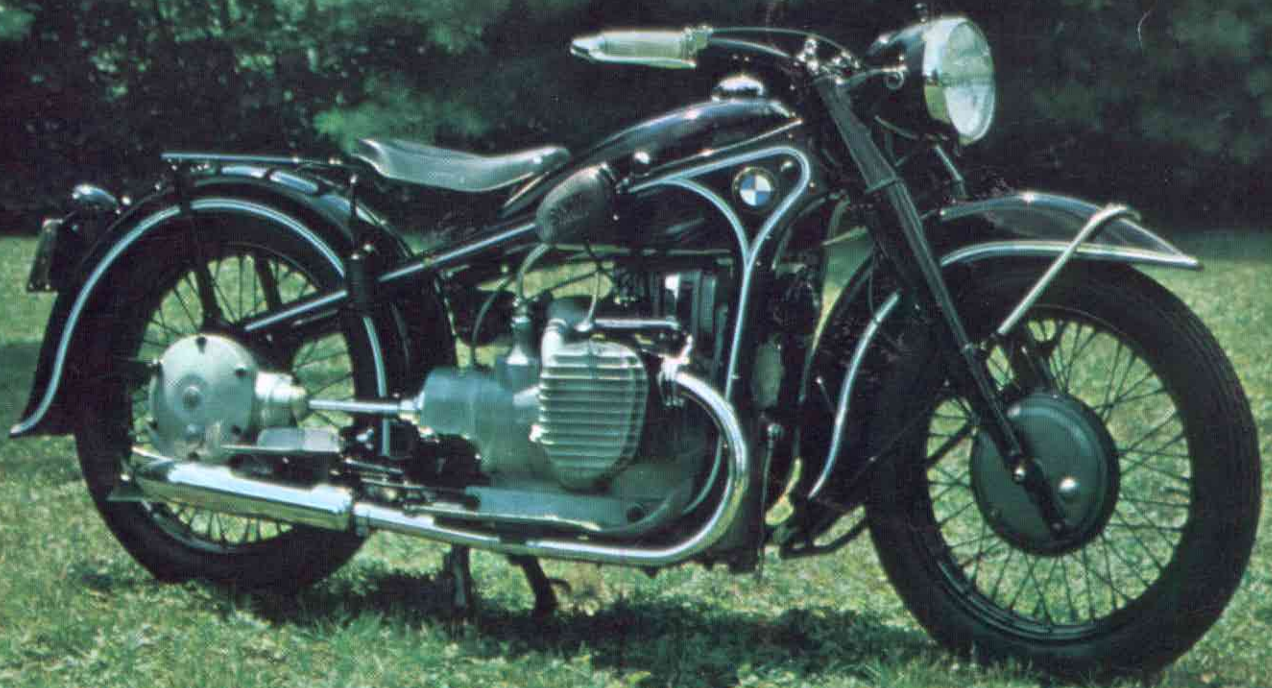


FOR THE JOY OF RIDING

mOTORCYCLE

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For The Joy of Riding

"We have found our allies, and they are us . . ."

Pogo said the same thing about enemies, but he was right only most of the time. Sometimes we actually are our own allies—and motorcyclists need all they can get. This issue deals mostly with people, the people who make, ride, or restore BMWs. Although it is sometimes inadvertant, such people usually prove to be allies in unexpected ways. If they don't help us get the bike right, they provide us good company, or a good public image, or just a reminder that the machines we've chosen have been made well for a long time.

That bike on the cover is a 1936 model R12, owned and protected by an active member of the Vintage BMW Motorcycle Owners, Ltd. Roland Slabon happens also to be the editor of their publication which details fine points of restoration, vintage BMWs and parts for sale, and other good stuff. The restorer's art is an exacting one, and very rewarding. If interested, contact Roland at P.O. Box 132, Andover, Mass. 01810 or club president John Harper, Route 3, Box 126-E5, Anniston, Ala. 36201.

But it's not only owners of esoteric BMWs who flock together. The rest of us are doing quite handily. At the big race week in Daytona this spring an informal gathering of BMW owners took place on the morning of the big race. Several hundred machines were present, many of the riders bearing that sunburned, frost-bitten look acquired on the long ride down from the Frozen North.

And the Daytona meeting was only an aperitif for the big BMW Owners of America Rally at Branson, Missouri, in late June. Some 2,096 riders on 1,335 BMWs converged on this tiny Ozark community. It has been reported as the largest gathering of single brand motorcycles anywhere in the world, ever. Now that

is one passle of allies! It also stands for a splendid job of organization by the sponsors.

Some interesting awards were given out at the Branson bash, including Long Distance Male Rider (Pokie Midgley) who rode 2508 miles to attend, Oldest Rider (Julius Kegel) at 84 years, Long Distance Hack (Gene Shirley) 2330 miles, and Oldest BMW (Verne Myers) on a 1929 R11. The gate prize was a new 1975 R90S, won by a delighted Ms. Patricia Frost. The "Ms." contingent produced no less than 80 solo riders. And one California club amassed more than 82,000 man miles in making the trip.

Now in case you are surprised to find that so many BMWs exist, much less motor to Missouri, we have news that there are *a lot* more. Not long ago a ceremony was held at the BMW West Berlin plant to commemorate the shipping of the 1000th

container of BMW motorcycles to the U.S.

You may have noticed another BMW media splash in the new movie *Rollerball*. That super-futuristic building with all the glass and floors hung by steel cables from a lofty tower is none other than BMW's new world headquarters building in Munich. We are assured that the building's appearance does not represent factory endorsement of the game Rollerball. You see, it is not played with motorcycles.

A "game" that *is* played with motorcycles is long-distance touring and you may have seen the big comparison test of touring bikes in the August issue of *Cycle* magazine. A BMW R90/6 comes up as one of two overall winners with firsts in five of ten categories, including quality of workmanship, suspension comfort, rider comfort, two-up stability, ease of maintenance, and convenience. No wonder that BMW club was good for 80,000 miles!

Because touring *is* such a preoccupation with BMW owners, Butler & Smith has long wanted to offer a first-quality touring fairing to BMW owners. Now, after considerable development effort, the new "Luftmeister" frame-mounted fairing is available at BMW dealers. It fits '74-'76 models and is available in most BMW colors. An example is shown in the touring photo on the back cover of this issue.

Many riders find the Fall season the most enjoyable of all for touring. We urge you to get out there and make contact with our allies. We hope you find that you have already found them . . .



John P. Covington
John P. Covington

Front Cover: After thirty-nine years, the 1936 BMW R12 is still a jewel.

Rear Cover: Equipping for touring can be beautiful.

Meeting the People Who Ride BMW



Any manufacturer with a prestigious product sooner or later gets curious about his customers. At first, if the customers are lucky, he probably began by assuming they were like himself. In BMW's case, enthusiasts just decided to build a motorcycle they would like to ride. But when customers become many, a manufacturer may realize that he can learn something from *them*.

We learn about owners through our owner-registration and warranty programs, through club activity, through letters and publications, through a wide range of media activity, and through all the subtleties of the motorcycle grapevine.

From a statistical standpoint, based on a recent survey, about two-thirds of BMW owners are married and one-third single. About two-thirds are under 35 years old and one-third over. Two-thirds use their machines mostly for touring and one-third for daily transportation including the round-trip to work.

Numbers aren't available on occupations, incomes, education, etc.,

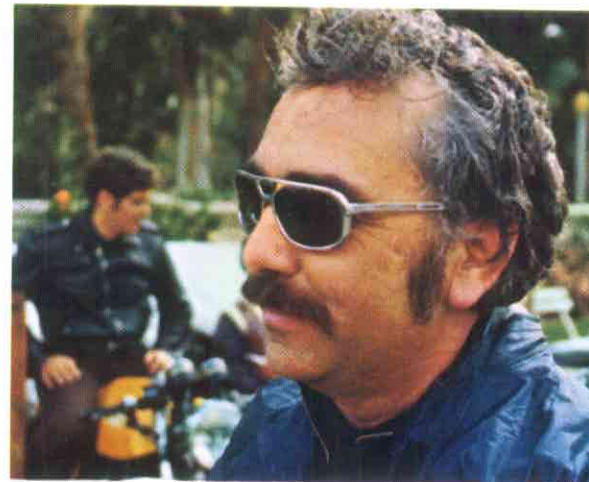
but an informal survey of the owner's cards alone shows an incredible variety. BMW owners don't appear to be overwhelmingly rich or poor, professionals or non-professionals. Many are doctors, lawyers, architects, pilots, engineers, musicians, poets, and chiefs. Many more are technicians, laborers, mechanics, plumbers, electricians, beauticians, and masons.

Of course, there are some celebrities, such as the Smothers brothers of TV fame; Bill Mitchell, a vice president and styling chief of General Motors; and Malcolm Forbes, adventurer, prominent political personality, and publisher of *Forbes* magazine. But prominence is not a universal attribute of the BMW rider.

In fact if any generalization is to be made, it appears that BMW owners are intelligent and involved people. They care about what they do. They often have keen interests in addition to their enthusiasm for motorcycling. But since even these generalizations fall short, we think the best way to describe the BMW rider

is to introduce a few. The following people, chosen not quite at random, just happen to have BMW ownership in common.

JOHN HERMANN of Coronado, California is a BMW rider of many colors. During the day he is a land appraiser for the California Highway Department. Evenings often find him at the San Diego Opera



John Hermann



Capt. Beverly C. Dickerson

where he sings tenor in the chorus. He and several other musicians have informally organized as the "Phantoms of the Opera." John is also a charter member of the San Diego BMW club and has been active in promoting motorcycle interests, including getting the toll lowered for bikes on the spectacular San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge.

John Hermann is a native of Tennessee who got to know the San Diego area when serving as a lieutenant in the Navy. He discovered, he says, "It isn't necessary to sweat in the summer, nor to shiver in the winter." He is a confirmed traveler and has been to Europe many times. In 1970 he decided to try touring Europe by bike and published his observations in an article.

John bought his first BMW, an R50, in 1959, and still commutes by

bike everyday to work. His last European tour was on an R90S, which he enjoyed so much that he left the bike at a German dealer for use when he returns again this fall.

John's enthusiasms cover his social consciousness, too. He is an active leader in his church, and past-president of an organization that provides help for senior citizens. BMW owners are lucky that two of John's colors are white and blue.

BEVERLY C. DICKERSON is a pilot for Delta Airlines with a career that spans some of the brightest years in aviation history. Bev Dickerson learned to fly at age 19 while studying aeronautical engineering at Louisiana State University. But his first job with Delta was as ticket agent while he studied for his commercial license. He was soon appointed a relief pilot and actually

recalls working both the reservations phone and ticket counter by himself and then piloting a flight—all in the same day.

In 1942, Dickerson was promoted to captain, and during World War II he flew military charter flights for the Air Transport Command. In 1950, he again aided the military by flying DC-4's in the Tokyo Air Lift. For Delta he flew the first airmail flight into Alexandria, La; the inaugural Miami-San Francisco flight across the Gulf; and the inaugural Boeing 747 flight. He now flies 747's regularly.

Captain Dickerson owns a BMW R90 S and an R90/6. He is not only a touring enthusiast with long tours in the U.S. and Europe, but also a trail rider. He trails and tours in the mountains of North Georgia and in the Rockies. Besides bikes, he likes tennis, water skiing and snow skiing. He lives with his wife in Miami and has two sons and two daughters.

GRACE BUTCHER created national attention for motorcycling recently when her article on solo touring and camping appeared in both *Sports Illustrated* ("Red Tent, White Bike," Feb. 3, 1975) and the *Reader's Digest* (June 1975). It is not at all a "how-to" story but rather a brilliantly evocative portrayal of the touring experience. What startled many readers was that Ms. Butcher often travels alone.

Before motorcycling entered her life, Grace Butcher had a considerable career as a long-distance runner. She's a former U.S. record holder in both the indoor and out-



Grace Butcher



Bill and Mary Hunter

door women's half-mile. She's won several major cross-country championships as well as half-mile and two-mile championships.

She is also a prizewinner off the field, with awards for four books of poetry as well as poems in many magazines and anthologies. Besides the motorcycle articles, she has written on training techniques for track and field.

Grace Butcher is now an assistant professor of English at Kent State University. The academic schedule offers time for her writing—and her riding. In 1974 she decided to try her hand at motocross and has been racing in the 125cc-class ever since.

But touring remains her favorite, formerly on an R60, now on an R90/6. "The best," she says, "is simply sitting on my beautiful bike and riding."

BILL and **MARY HUNTER**, a Seattle couple in their early fifties, have done a most amazing thing: with virtually no prior riding experience they decided on short notice to buy two new BMWs and tour Europe. Mary, who proposed the idea, had never even traveled from the West Coast. But once the decision was made, they settled resolutely to the task of acquiring in a few short weeks the skills that take others many years.

Their chief benefactor was Bob Malley, a young motorcycle dealer from Tacoma, Washington, who doesn't even sell BMWs. He must have been inspired by the novelty of the situation for he volunteered to teach the couple to ride.

Learning was not entirely painless for the couple, who were more used to golf and to the comfort of deck chairs at their summer home on Camano Island. Bill works as a pressman and foreman at the *Seattle Times* and Mary is an optician. In separate minor incidents, Mary suffered a sprained finger and some cracked ribs. They took turns following each other in the car to practice in traffic.

But the day came when they breathlessly passed their licensing tests and soon were off to Europe to join Bob Beach's Motorcycle Adventure group. A few days of ear-holing in the Alps honed any rough edges from their riding skills. Says Mary, "We planned on selling our BMWs after the trip, but now we are hooked. *Love that BMW!*"

Restoring the Fabulous BMW R12

For many riders that which is best is that which is last: the end product of the evolutionary process, technology's most recent issue. But there are a few who appreciate a motorcycle simply because it is beautiful—regardless of age. Or because it represents an important step in the evolution of a design. Or merely for the very fact that it is old. One such man is Roland Slabon, the owner of the superbly restored BMW R12 shown on the cover of this issue and on these pages.

Thirty-two-year-old Roland, who earns his daily bread working on computer systems, has a thing about BMWs, for he now has five or six of them. The R12 is the pride of his collection, however, and he maintains it in absolutely jewel-like condition. He keeps it not as a museum oddity but as a working machine. It still delivers its original 18 horsepower, motoring Roland briskly along the roads near his home in Massachusetts.

Of course, the R12's appearance has not always been so exceptional. Like many collectors, Roland has gone to considerable effort to reconstruct the life history of his bike, which began when its serial number P6478 was stamped on at the factory in 1936.

According to Roland, the machine was first imported to the U.S. in 1936 or 1937 by then New York BMW dealer Emil Recke. In 1938 or 1939 it was purchased by a Mr. Clarence Lyle of Meredith, NH. Lyle is known to have corresponded with the factory regarding more performance for his mount.

Around 1950 Lyle handed the R12 over to his stepson Mr. Guy Stoye, who apparently used it very little. For the next 20 years it resided variously inside and outside the Stoye barn in New Hampshire. On June 8, 1970, it was stolen. Posters circulated among BMW dealers eventually alerted a mechanic at a dealership in Lewiston, Maine, who spotted the R12 when it was brought in for service. The unique and easily recognized front

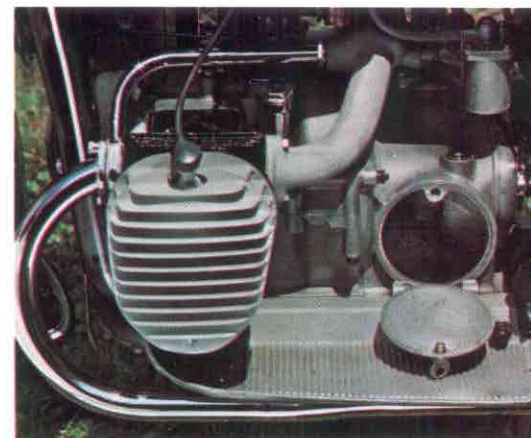


BMW collector Roland M. Slabon

fender had been removed to disguise the R12's appearance. The machine was recovered on December 18, 1970.

Almost a year later the R12 was sold in unrestored condition to antique bike enthusiast Fred Sullivan of Marblehead, Massachusetts. Fred hoped to work on the R12 but was already engaged in another challenging restoration. He sold the R12 to Louis Rizoli of Salem, Mass., who worked on it in the spring and summer of 1972. Roland Slabon purchased the bike from the Rizoli estate in 1973.

Restoring the R12 was made somewhat easier by the fact that most of its parts were still present. Use, abuse, weather and time had taken their toll, however. The machine was completely dismantled, stripped of what lacquer remained, and repainted. Plated parts were replated. A new exhaust system pat-



Hinged cover reveals toolbox.

turned on the original was fabricated of stainless steel. The missing fender was replaced by a similar fender from a machine built somewhat later in the '30s. The alloy cylinder-heads were sand-blasted and a few broken fins welded up and reshaped. A new wiring loom, patterned on the original, was fabricated and installed. The entire electric system was carefully gone over and refurbished. Rizoli regarded the restoration as a labor of love and proceeded with diligence and inspiration.

Interesting technical features abound on the now fully-restored R12. The machine is a 750cc side-valver with a single, centrally mounted carburetor. A twin-carb "touring" model producing two more horsepower (20 bhp) was also built during the same model year—as was a twin-carb overhead valve model, the R17 (33 bhp). A close look at the photos will reveal a surprising feature: preheating the intake mixture. Those chrome tubes that travel up from the exhaust collar to the intake manifold are *not* an early version of exhaust gas recirculation. They are blind tubes which merely transfer some of the heat of the exhaust gases to the intake mixture for better, more complete combustion.

With a 5.7:1 compression ratio, the R12 is remarkably easy to kick over. Ignition is by magneto. Mag and generator are combined into one unit with gear-coupled shafts, chain-driven from the camshaft. Spark-advance is manual through a lefthand twistgrip. Turning the grip forward advances the ignition. Thus the rider faces the curious situation of rolling the left grip forward for

spark advance as he rolls the right grip rearward for throttle opening.

Gearchanging on the R12 is also a bit of an adventure. The 4-speed box is handshifted by a lever on the right side of the fuel tank. One must, of course, remove one's hand from the throttle twistgrip to change gears. One's left foot rests idly on the footboard with no work to do. The transmission is a two-shaft affair, considerably more compact than the three-shaft versions of later years. This leaves more room in the "gearbox," the casting of which also includes a truly substantial toolbox.

Power continues to the rear wheel (rigidly held by BMW's pressed-metal "Star" frame) by means of the traditional drive shaft. As with most of the early models, the shaft is exposed.

Other interesting features of the R12 include its telescopic front forks (said to have been the world's first production telescopics), the "reverse" hinging of control levers, a numbered tab system inside the gas tank opening that indicates how many liters of fuel remain, and two center stands.

Riding the R12 is an altogether unique experience for anyone trained on machines with more contemporary controls and suspension. Says Roland Slabon, "One quickly learns, and forever remembers, to *never* let out the clutch after a gearchange until the right hand is firmly back on the throttle grip." But he adds that the sleek, low slung machine corners nicely and tours quietly and tirelessly. It must have been an impressive motorcycle when it was built 40 years ago. It certainly is an impressive motorcycle now.

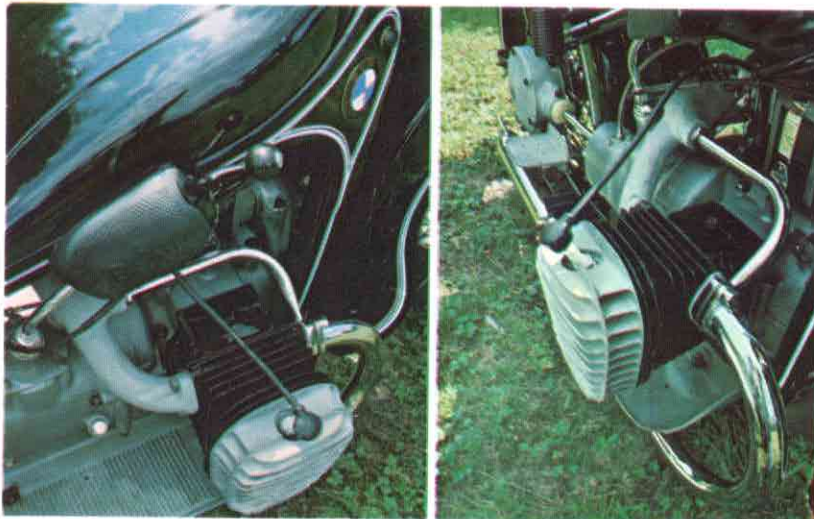
Stressing Quality Control at BMW:

More than just good engineering is required to produce motorcycles that quite customarily collect 100,000-mile awards and that can endure the rigors of New Hampshire winters unprotected for years and still be restored to mint condition. Good engineering and first-class materials are part of the job, but an equal and unseen part is rigorous quality control during the manufacture of the motorcycle. At BMW, the Quality Control Division has as much influence over the final product as any other division.

Quality control involves not so much the original designation of materials, processes and dimensions, but rather the strict determination to hold to original specifications. At BMW this concerns not only manufacturing of motorcycle parts, but also assembly, testing and after-sales reports.

Typically, new machines and their components are subjected to exhaustive dimensional, metallurgical, chemical, durability, and other tests. They are tested for conformance to literally hundreds of governmental regulations and industrial standards: from the DOT to the DIN, from the SAE to the ISO, and so forth. Whole motorcycles as well as components are exposed to the equivalent of thousands of miles of riding. And only if they pass do they go on to customers throughout the world.

The main assembly facility for BMW motorcycles, located in Berlin, has special environmentally controlled laboratories for quality-control tests. These include temperature and humidity-controlled rooms which are dust and vibration free, where highly sensitive measuring instruments will perform their best. Similar laboratories check incoming parts from suppliers, such as electrical components, brake linings, shock absorbers, filters, gaskets, etc. Tough environmental stresses to which a motorcycle might be subjected are heavily intensified. Among these are temperature variations, salt spray, aging, and mechanical and electromagnetic shock.



"H-pattern" gate for 4-speed gearbox and footboards for a firmer perch.

A Key to Manufacturing Excellence

A typical batch test, for example, concerns a shipment of forged-steel connecting rods, just in from the steel mill. Samples of the batch will be checked for strength, hardness, structural integrity, and other properties. The samples will be cut for microscopic examination and stressed-to-failure during other tests. If the batch passes, the remaining pieces receive finish machining and are assembled into motorcycles.

Owners of BMW motorcycles who service their own machines may have noticed a number of odd marks and paint dabs. These are not faulty finishing, they are, on the contrary, quality-control marks, applied to assure that a particular part or assembly passes muster. The disc-brake photo on the Winter 74-75 issue of this *Journal* shows a red dot on the end of the front axle. This indicates that the assembly has a rigorous torque specification and that the inspector has passed it.

Sometimes an inspector's mark will be two color dots such as red and green or green and yellow. Sometimes it is a stamped number or the inspector's initials. Steering-head alignment, for example, is carefully checked on an optical sighting rig. If a frame passes, the inspector stamps his initials on it in an inconspicuous place.

Some 86 inspectors at the final assembly plant check over the machines and their components before they are released for sale. The high ratio of BMW quality-control personnel to assembly workers is un-

matched in the industry. In fact there is a lively spirit of competition between production managers to realize the fewest "rejects". This is only part of what keeps BMW's production standards at their recognized high quality.

Quality control on the highly-mechanized assembly lines is also mechanized, although individual inspectors are always present to oversee the operation. Most inspection parameters are displayed on giant panels. Any out-of-tolerance measurement instantly triggers an alarm. For example, some 182 drills function in the drilling and tapping of the engine casing, and the performance of each is measured and recorded. If a single drill breaks or wears out-of-tolerance, an alarm is triggered, and operation is interrupted for replacement or repair.

A typical example of subassembly inspection is BMW's "dyno hall." Here every engine with clutch and gearbox attached is cycled for at least 15 minutes on a dynamometer. Timing and carburetion are adjusted, idle and full-throttle mixtures checked, and oil pressure monitored. The assembly is run up and down through all the gears and measured for noise level, vibration, power output and torque. If it passes, it goes on to final assembly. That is, unless an inspector chooses it for occasional random teardowns for minute internal examinations.

The complete motorcycle again goes to a test bed for a final check of all functions including electrical, power, controls, wheel alignment and many other items. And then the machine is ready for the most demanding test of all: a spin on the test track by a rider who has been specially trained to detect even the most subtle problems.

Only a machine that survives this grueling qualification procedure is

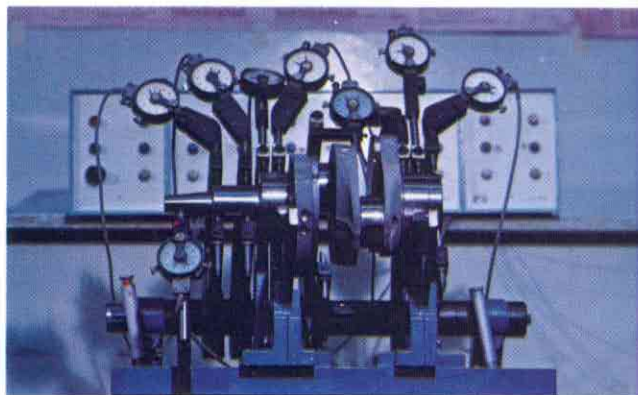


Optical sighting rig checks alignment of steering head and frame tubes.

then shipped out to customers around the world. Crating is done in such a way that no major items have to be disassembled and reassembled before the customer takes charge. Essentially adjustments remain as they were set at the factory and checked by the corps of inspectors.

An entirely separate inspection team picks machines at random as they come off the assembly line and subjects them to thousands of miles of road tests and additional strenuous laboratory procedures. In this way, potential technical problems are caught in advance, and the part design or assembly procedure can be improved.

Quality control is an expensive and serious business at BMW. The reliability and durability of BMW motorcycles are not easily come by—but are easily appreciated by the man who buys his motorcycle with one goal in mind: the joy of riding.



Crankshaft runout readings are displayed and recorded. Vast control board at rear signals any tolerance error.

