

Fabulous R90s hits 30 Years!

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Spokane and the 32nd International BMW MOA Rally. On behalf of the National R90S Sport Owners Club, I invite you to share in our celebration of the 30th Anniversary of BMW's first and foremost Classic Superbike—the R90S.

I have long been a motorcycle enthusiast. On a business trip to San Diego in early spring of 2001, I found my 74' Silver Smoke cloaked with a tarp inside the owner's garage. The bike had been stored for more than 10 years and needed a new home. I purchased the bike, transported it home to Bellingham, WA and within days, had the bike back on the road. Soon thereafter, I joined the National R90S Sport Owner's Club. I quickly found that the members of the club were true R90S enthusiasts and shared my love affair for classic bikes, pride of ownership, and a good cold beer after a long day's ride. My appetite for the R90S increased. I purchased a 76 Silver Smoke while in Ohio the same summer, thereafter spending the winter months wrenching, polishing, and prepping both bikes for the 2002 riding season.

Members of the club provided me with an immeasurable amount of assistance that winter, both over the phone and through the R90SWORLDNET discussion group. As time would have it, in the spring of 2002, Rick Griffith asked me to accept a nomination to replace him as reigning club president allowing him time to organize and edit our club newsletter. I accepted the position with full intent of broadening the club's exposure and member participation from east coast to west. It has been a great ride meeting members throughout the USA and participating in club rallies and activities.

In June of 2002, we held the first ever R90S West Coast Rendezvous at Grover Hot Springs State Park in California's central Sierra's. The rally was the collaboration of rally chair Mik Herman and his intrepid golden retriever Calvin. The rest is history. The event was successful enough to prompt attendees to support and participate in an annual west coast event.

The First and Last R90S rally was held at Mac Kirkpatrick's (Dr.Beemer) house in Glenmore, PA in September 2000.



A group photo of the rally donned the front cover of BMW ON in January 2001. Since that date there have been 3 such rally's for devotees of the R90S at various sites in the Midwest/Eastern USA. At the 3rd and Last in September, 2002, I was taken ill by a sickness known no other than Daytona Orange. I left the rally knowing full and well that some day I would acquire a "loud-paint" version of the "S" to accompany my Silver Smokes.

That day arrived in the spring of 2003. With the help of John & Tena Gallagher in Danville, CA, we plied their neighbor George Mihalik with copious amounts of red zin in pursuit of his original owner, unrestored, original paint, 76' Daytona Orange. Several months later, I arrived in Danville and completed the transaction. "Jessie" was transported home to Bellingham, and prepped for a return trip to California for the 2004 West Coast Rendezvous in Quincy, CA.

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Special points of interest:

- Time to celebrate 30 Years of the R90s
- What makes the R90s a Superbike
- Ken Claus talks about the origin of the R90s Club
- Let's meet up in Spokane
- 5th and Last Rally in Michigan
- Membership Application

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30th Anniversary (cont.)

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As luck would have it, Jessie's shift detent spring broke in an inopportune moment during our group ride on Saturday morning. Fortunately for me, Ozzie's BMW was just 2 hours away. In Ozzie's absence, Mike sent a shop representative to pick me and the bike up, made the necessary repairs, and got me back on the road the same evening. Ozzie's staff provided truly exemplary service and is living example of the BMW tradition.

Jessie & I returned home, and later earned the "Best Airhead" award at the Washington State BMW rally in Republic, WA. It marked an eventful end to a riding season shared with friends.

On behalf of the R90S Sport Owners Club, I would like to extend our appreciation to BMW MOA for hosting the Northwest Passage Rally. A special thanks to Jackie Hughes, Rally Chair, for helping to coordinate a site for our members to display their bikes and share the heritage of the R90S.

I look forward to meeting you while you are in Spokane. Enjoy the many splendors and great roads the Northwest has to offer. See you on the road!

Respectfully,

Bill Stevens, President

A Superbike is Born

The R90S is arguably the most significant postwar model BMW has ever introduced, and even now, after 30 years it is still revered today as the "best" boxer by many.

It is a classic.

For most of the 20th century BMW earned a reputation building reliable but somewhat stodgy touring motorcycles.

Then in 1973, as a 1974 model, BMW introduced the R90S, with higher compression pistons (9.5:1) in a 900 cc motor (up from 750 cc), 38mm Dell'Orto accelerator-pump carbs, a five-speed gearbox, twin disc brakes along with the striking Silver Smoke paint scheme, curvaceous bikini fairing, seat cowl and a clock and voltmeter in the fairing.

BMW stunned the motorcycle world with the R90S.

All for \$3430, Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (44 cents an ounce!), when at the time you could buy a Kawasaki Z-1 for about \$1800.

BMW, with Reg Pridmore riding, won the first Superbike Championship in 1976 with the R90S. No one expected BMW to

do that!!

For most, the looks of the R90S is what really sets it apart.

In 1974 came the tu-tone Silver Smoke, later called TT Silver Smoke (for the famous Tourist Trophy races at the Isle of Man), and then in addition, in 1975 BMW introduced the Daytona Orange color, named for the races in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Depending on condition and mileage, a very nice original R90S today will sell for anywhere from \$5000 to \$10,000 and more.

General Specifications:

Model years produced
1974-1976

Engine
900 cc opposed twin

Horsepower
67 @7000 rpm

Transmission
5-speed

Carburetion
Twin Dell'Orto 38mm

Brakes, front:

Dual disk – 260 mm

rear: Drum – 200 mm

Fuel tank capacity, gals.
6.3

Dry weight, lbs.
452

Top speed, mph
Over 125

Number produced (approx.)
17,455

Color
TT Silver Smoke and Daytona Orange

Submitted by **Mac Kirkpatrick**,
Historian



Mr. BMW: Reg Pridmore aboard #163

The Legend Lives On

During the summer of 1976, I, Ken Claus, proud owner of a 1975 R90S that was only a year old at the time, was approached by John Carver at the 4th BMW National rally in Oshkosh, WI.

My conversation with John led him to inform me that he started a national BMW motorcycle club. It was called "*The National Sport Bike Club*" exclusive to the R90S. Intrigued, I thought this was a good idea and promptly joined.

As I joined, I learned I was member #14 and was happy to be part of a club that was new and fresh, and yes, revolved around the R90S. The club grew in membership and was recognized by the BMWMOA on 9/1/76.

In the mid '70's, the R90S was all the hype and frequented motorcycle magazines, setting the performance standard of the day. The peak year was 1976 when Reg Pridmore took the AMA Superbike championship riding the R90S. But as time marched on and the years passed, John & I were meeting less and less at BMW rallies.

In 1993, I did not see the club listed in the owners anonymous book and John had left the motorcycle arena. Although the club was still registered with the BMWMOA and official on paper, the club was stuck in it's tracks with nobody

stepping in to keep the vision alive. What's ironic, is that even though the club died, attending many BMW rallies during the '80's & '90's showed that the R90S always generated conversation and had a high degree of interest all those years later.

Well, every end has a new beginning and my son, Ron Claus, bought his first R90S, a '74 bike. Ken & Ron were aware of the demise of the club and refused to let it die. Knowing there was still a high interest in the R90S, we decided, together, after many discussions, we were going to get the ball rolling once again.

We gathered our thoughts and focused our energies to revive the club. Keeping with the spirit of the old club, the R90S was the sole motorcycle this club would revolve around. So, in 1994, I got in touch with John Carver and asked if we could officially take over. John had no reservations and promptly agreed to hand over ownership of the club. I proceeded to contact the BMWMOA to see if it was acceptable and proper to revive the club under new management. About one month later, I received official approval from BMWMOA along with the rules to follow for maintaining charter club status. Success! BMWMOA Charter Club #67 was on its way to being brought back to life at full speed.

From then on, we looked for R90S own-

ers and found immediate interest, gaining memberships almost immediately everywhere we turned.

The club momentum kept rolling and in the '90's we got a call from Frank Cachia from Australia who is the president of the R90S Registry. Ron & I were lucky enough to have met with Frank during his tour of the United States. Ken Claus had the pleasure of offering Frank his hospitality for 2 nights and 3 days. The R90S was obviously the main topic of our discussions, as well as helping each other's club. So, Ron & I joined his club and he in-turn, joined ours. We took pictures of this historic meeting and sent them to the BMWON magazine along with a small article. To my surprise, it was published shortly after my submission and like a light bulb, the club was instantly known on the national level.

In 1995, Ron & I decided to change the name of the club to "*The National R90S Sport Owners Club*". To accompany the new name, a new web site needed to follow since the home computer revolution was on. So, Ron jumped in and created the club web site, which was a huge hit. Online membership was available and stirred inquiries from all reaches of the globe, including New Zealand, Japan, South Africa, Australia, Canada, Europe and of course, the States.

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The Legend Lives On (cont.)

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So much interest was being generated in the club, that we expanded and opened a European R90S Club and an Australian R90S Club. The expansion to Europe was quite a feat, and to meet this challenge, Kirk Ratzel from France agreed to meet this challenge. Equally challenging, was the expansion to Australia, and at the helm is Philip McArdle.

All the work here in the U.S. to keep "The National R90S Sport Owners Club" up and running is Bill Stevens, our current President. Presently, our club has 178 members globally. We publish a quarterly newsletter and officially meet three times a year at BMW motorcycle rallies. The rally scene has evolved to the point that the R90S club now has their own rally which has been extremely well received. It has its own chat room which was set up by Mac Kirpatrick and has over 400 members. We even have our own club beer! Most of all, the club is about friends and meeting new people, all with a common interest. The club is a great resource for assistance with technical problems, parts, and a wealth of information about the R90S. You never know who you might meet or be in contact with. For example, Ron had talked to Reg Pridmore – '76 AMA Superbike Champion riding an R90S - and was able

to get different hints about go-fast items and literature for the R90S to help keep the legend alive. We do believe that the people who own R90S's have the ultimate riding machine that was ever manufactured by BMW.

Check out the newly designed R90S Club web page: <http://bmwr90sownersclub.org>

as well as the popular R90S chat room:

<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/R90SWORLDNET>

This is a special year to celebrate the R90S. It is 30 years old! Happy Birthday!

Ken Claus

Vice President

The National R90S Sport Owners Club
BMWMOA #67

e-mail: FastR90S@aol.com

And away we go..... even Wiley's getting into the big picture .



R90s's on display at Spokane

Jackie Hughes has arranged for the R90S club members to display their bikes adjacent to the vintage displays organized by Jim Falk. We will be in Bay # 3 of the fairgrounds complex. Members can register their bikes for the vintage competition at time of entry. Bikes can be checked in and out during the day by owners. Jim has specific guidelines for removal and viewing of the bikes to assure safety and to prevent another "Ken Claus:" disaster by onlookers.

As for specifics, the Rally will be held as follows:

Spokane County Fair & Expo Center
404 North Havana Street
Spokane, WA

Club Specifics:

R90S Sport Owners Club Display

Adjacent to Vintage Display: Bay #3

Group Meeting & Photo: Friday, July 16th @ 10:00 AM

Group Ride: Leaving @ 11:00 AM

Group ride around Lake Couer d'Alene. BYO Lunch. Returning to Fairgrounds around 3:00 PM.

Australian R90s Chapter celebrates 30th Anniversary!

After years of happily riding “Tony”, my 1975 R90S Daytona that was my first ever motorcycle restoration, I decided to replace the Bing carbies with Dellortos and upgrade the ignition system with an electronic Boyer Brandsden. I ordered the lot, including new coils from MotoBins in the UK and spent several days on my labour of love. Not having timing light and balancing manometer I was really in the dark as to how it would perform. Much to my delight, it not only started, it ran reasonably, although not brilliantly. Good enough to get me to the rally, however Sunday, October 5th, the Victorian BMW Motorcycle Club hosted an anniversary rally for the BMW Super bike the mighty R90S.

The day was started with two ride venues, one from Port Melbourne and the other from Lillydale. In view of the fact I rode from Lillydale, this article will focus on this aspect of the day’s celebration.

The ride started at 9:30 am from the Shell Garage in Lillydale with Frank Cachia as the lead rider on his veteran Daytona. We rode up the highway to Healesville where we turned off on the St Leonard – Myers Creek road over the Great Dividing Range through the Toolangi State Forest with its marvelous twisty road to the Melba Highway. Down the Melba to Glenburn where we turned off toward Flowerdale. This is a very nice stretch of road that enables one to “test” the recent updates of Dellorto carbies and electronic ignition systems as related to performance. This turned out to be slightly premature as the system still required further “fine tuning”. Non-the-less enjoyable, however.

From Flowerdale it was up the highway to Kinglake West, across to Kinglake and down the famous Kinglake Road to St Andrews where we were greeted by the “A” group for a “regroup” and a short ride to Kangaroo Ground for the Anniversary Rally Celebration.

Approximately twenty Daytona’s and Silver Smokes, along with a couple of veteran modifieds were on display for the crowd to admire.

I have no idea what the total attendance figure was but The Classic Club section included Ken Wright, Neil Primer, Malcolm and Chris Wilson, John Stock, John Chilianis, Kay and Phillip McArdle and the President of the BMWMOA Ian Snadden, now a member.

Ken Wright, Frank Cachia and Phillip McArdle, your servant scribe represented the National Sport Owners Club of the U.S.

Frank was one of the recipients of an award and Phillip won the draw for a framed cover of the 1973 issue of “Two Wheels” magazine with a picture of a Daytona.

The Pictures are compliments of the Classic Club Photographer and Phillip’s Partner Kay DiClemente. Kay rides a Honda 450 Rebel, by the way, her legs not being long enough for an R90S.

The Staff at Wellers Hotel in Kangaroo Ground were slightly overwhelmed by the crowd and were not helped by their computerized cash register going crook. The meals were brilliant as far as I could tell. Since I was riding I was unable to partake of the local plonk, mores the pity.

All in all, a very memorable day in celebration of a superb motorcycle. Well Done!

Phillip McArdle

Australian Chapter President



All lined up for the adoring crowds..



Frank Cachia and his beloved “Katie”



Frank wins yet ANOTHER trophy!

Tech Tips: "Stickier" Grips

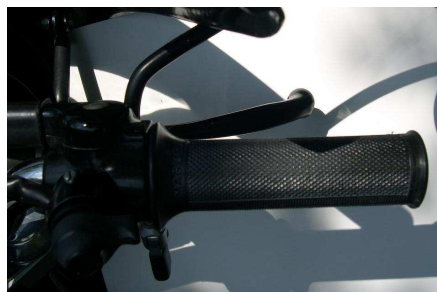
Most of us appreciate how well our old bikes weather Father Time, many with oem or factory original parts.

One thing has always bugged me about the original Magura grips on my '74. They're just too damned slippery!

At steady freeway speeds, I often find myself re-wrapping my throttle hand to get a better grip due to it constantly sliding off.

The culprit for this is the little raised points on the grip have softened and worn with age.

Here's one way to get that new grip feeling back.



Get yourself some 220 grit sandpaper and use it to roughen up the grips a little.



Just a few strokes are all you need.



Works like a charm, maybe not as good as new grips, but last time I checked, most BMW dealers don't stock these babies on the shelf.

Rick G., ed.

R90s Rally Taking Shape

Mark your calendars now for the 5th and Last AND best R90s rally to date.

August 20, 21,22 are the dates and Mike and Rhyley Meagher are our hosts once again. (if you recall the R90s rally was held there two years ago).

Mike and Rhyley treated R90s members to their beautiful Bed and Breakfast located on 5 rolling acres of wooded land.

Located in the sleepy little town of Webberville, just northwest of Detroit, this installment of the latest R90s get together promises to be one of the best.

We'll have a Saturday Day Ride, Bike Show as well as a catered dinner.

John Yee, our esteemed Newsletter Editor has more information.

You can reach him at:

john-ye@sbglobal.net



Carlton Crown Lager, the official Beer of the R90s Sport Owners Club



Crown Lager was named in honor of Queen Elizabeth II and was originally sold as an acceptable alternative to drinking wine in restaurants. It remains the leading premium beer in the country accounting for 33% of the premium beer market. Although premium beers still only account for 6% of Australia's total beer consumption, this figure still represents a significant income for the Australian brewers who produce the 1.8 billion liters of beer consumed in the country each year. And as the margins on premium beers are significantly higher than the mass market brands Carlton Crown Lager is an important beer to Carton United Breweries (CUB).

One Incredible Story

The following is a reprint of an article from the club newsletter from the Fall 2001 Issue.

The Incredible and True Story of One R90S

By John Yee

Note: The story you are about to read is true. The real names have been used whenever possible and all the following events have actually happened.

First, a little history. I had raced motocross for seven years and decided to try street riding. My first street bike was a new 1974 Yamaha RD350 and I turned it into a café racer. After two years I wanted to go big bore for my second street bike. When BMW came out with the R90S in 1974, I had no interest in it. But now, being a little older and I thought, wiser, I looked more closely at the R90S. Still being a punk kid at the time and with not a lot of disposable income I knew I couldn't afford a new R90S at \$3995.00 plus tax. I started calling out of state to see if I could find a deal on one. I happened to call Competition Accessories in Zenia, Ohio. The owner, Warren Bales was very friendly and helpful. He said, "John, if you want to drive down here, I will give you a great price on a new R90S." My brother and I went down there with a van and when I saw the bike, I had to have it! So on March 16, 1976, a brand new 1976 Silver Smoke R90S was mine for the low price of \$3490.00 out the door!

At around 11,000 miles I decided to buy another R90S because my 'old' one had been caught in the rain on a few long trips. So, on November 26, 1976, Warren Bales again sold me another 1976 Silver Smoke R90S but this time, the price was only \$3305.00 out the door! This one was serial number 4990496, the bike I still own.

In the spring of 1977 I sold the 'old' R90S to the first guy that saw it. It was like losing an old friend. It had taken me on trips to Colorado, Traverse City, Tahquamenon Falls, Whitefish Point, Toronto and all the way through the Georgian Bay area. I thought to myself, "Well, I'll probably never see her again and I will regret the day I sold it and if I ever did want it back, there will be no way to find it."

Jump forward 23 years, it is now July 2000 and the National is at Midland, Michigan. Tom Stafford rides his 1978 Motosport and I ride my R90S to Midland and we have the bikes in the Vintage Display. Tom introduces me to a chap by the name of Norm Delezenne who has a very nice Daytona Orange R90S. We were both surprised to learn that we only live about 20 miles apart and had never met each other before so we started chatting about the bikes, how long have we had them, where did we buy them, what have we done to them, etc.

During the R90S Owners Meeting at the rally, I suggested to Norm that I could trailer both bikes to the First & Last R90S Rally held in Pennsylvania if he wanted to go. As those of you who attended know, a great time was had by all and we wondered when and where the next R90S Rally was going to be.

Today I am starting to get my things together for the Second & Last R90S Rally. Again, I will trailer my bike and Norm's to Newton Falls, Ohio for the rally. I go in the basement to get my gear. I thought, "Since there is going to be a judging at this rally, should I bring my original paperwork?" I came across my original warranty registration card and bill of sale. I dig further and what do I see? Another warranty registration card and bill of sale from my first R90S. I look at the serial number; it's 4990376. Hmmmmmm. I start to wonder, would this serial number be listed in the National R90S Sport Owners Club listing? My heart is pounding and I rush upstairs and start comparing the serial numbers.

Damn!!!

When I first see 4990376 I didn't believe it so I checked it again. It checks out so then I look across the listing to see who the owner is. Holey Moley!!!! Norm Delezenne! I start to get the chills and reach for the phone with nervous fingers to call Norm.

Telephone: *Ring, ring.*

Norm: *Hello.*

John: *4990376.*

Norm: *That's my bike!*

John: *What would you say if I told you that was my first R90S?*

Norm: *Get out of here!*

John: *It's true! I have the original bill of sale and warranty card.*

It's incredible, after 23 years I found the first R90S I ever owned at the Midland National and didn't even know it until now! In fact, this bike is still within a 20 mile radius since the first day I brought it home! Norm claims he bought it from his dentist in 1980 and it was already orange. Now, the mystery is how did it get from Silver Smoke to Daytona Orange in less than three years? This story is not over yet. Norm and I will get a DMV trace and keep you informed. Needless to say, we both have an agreement that I have first right of refusal if Norm ever wants to sell 'his' (my old) bike and Norm has first right of refusal if I ever want to sell my bike.

The following is a reprint of an article from the club newsletter from the Winter 2003 Issue.

A Lame Attempt to Complete the Story of BMW R90S #4990376

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By Norm Delezenne

Well, to be painfully honest what John Yee has written is basically true. I say "painfully" because I've taken my share of crap about the ownership of "my" R90S, mostly dished out by John!

I purchased #4990376 in March 1981 (I thought it was 1980 as John said but I have since found my bill of sale dated '81) from a fellow who lived down the street from me at the time. I used to stop and chat with the guy off and on. I had owned several cycles by then, including a couple of 750 Hondas, a Z-1 Kawasaki and I was riding at the time (I believe) my '78 Yamaha XS-11. I had admired the R90S from afar, having thought BMW's were classy. This bike's paint scheme was (I thought at the time) attractive but rather gaudy. It bothered me a great deal that the owner was prone to leave the 'S' sit outside (not always covered) for days at a time. To have the ability to own a (newer) BMW and then not to seem to care about it was, to a neat freak like me, close to blasphemy!

The owner approached me that March and asked if I was interested in buying the R90S. I hesitated for awhile, only because I was used to riding behind a full fairing (Windjammer style, you folks who were riding back then will understand) and the bikini fairing of the 'S' didn't seem to offer much in the way of protection. But I found a way to come up with the money and buy the 'S', my first BMW. The price I paid was \$3000. The bike came with a set of Krauser hard bags and a BMW tank bag. These extras were brand new and had never been used! Also included were the owners' manual, a BMW shop manual and complete tool kit with the BMW shop rag. The owner told me that he was the original purchaser of the bike, a story I believed to be true for over 20 years!

In retrospect I guess I should have asked

for the original bill of sale (or some form of proof) of my neighbor being the original owner but what the hell did I know? At the time, I was all of 24 years old! I never dreamed I would keep the 'S', my first BMW, for over 20 years and that it would become a genuine classic. Or, that 20 years later, I would meet and become friends with the "real" original owner.

Based on my memory, some documents I've found in my records and discussions with John we have a feel for the ownership history of my 'S'. John bought her new in March 1976 and she came from the factory Silver Smoke, that's without question. John sold the 'S' to a college age kid in March 1977, that is also for sure. The kid (I believe) kept the bike for a season or so but no longer. At that time my neighbor purchased #4990376 from him. That's what I believe happened, as I remember clearly seeing the bike (now Daytona Orange) parked down the street for more than one season (at least two) before I bought it in the Spring of 1981. So the reality is that for 20 years I believed I was the *second* owner of the 'S' (and told people as much) when the facts now say I'm likely the *fourth* owner!

Needless to say, I was more than a little disappointed when all this came to light after John discovered his original documents and the bike's serial number. To try to confirm my theory I checked with the Michigan DMV but I was told they do not keep records for motorcycles over ten years old. I should mention that John (a real gentleman) has given me his original bill of sale and BMW ownership card for #4990376. I had never seen (or even heard of) a BMW ownership card. It's sort of a plastic (credit card style) plate that was intended to be presented for warranty work.

How my 'S' changed color we are really not sure. But it happened before 1979 when I first became aware of this bike. I had no reason to believe the bike's paint work wasn't original when I bought it. In recent years I wrestled with having it re-

painted as wisdom tells us paint "is only original once" and so forth. But being tired of looking at 15 plus years of minor nicks and scratches I did finally have all my bodywork repainted by Holt BMW in 1995. Holt even said at the time it was one of the better factory paint jobs that he'd seen, as it had almost no orange peel. Did the kid John sold the bike to back in 1977 (or my neighbor) swap bodywork with someone? Or did my neighbor buy new Daytona Orange pieces that would have been readily available at the time? If so, what happened to the original bodywork? Is what's with the 'S' now the original pieces? I honestly don't know.

Fast forward 23 years. I still have R90S #4990376 in my garage. I've owned several other BMW's over the years, but (outstanding machines all) they've come and gone. But the 'S' is still with me. I've spent a great deal of time over the last five years or so trying to get the 'S' back (as close as I can) to original condition. I've enjoyed every minute spent fussing over it.

The R90S has never let me down. It's seen me through all the curve balls that life tosses at you. Two wives, a few girlfriends, a career change or two and around a half dozen addresses. It's sat covered in many a garage, including spending over four years (without moving) in my late grandmother's garage while I was living and working in Munich, Germany and traveled a great deal as part of my job. That period was the only time in 20+ years I feel I neglected the bike. For the most part it has not been my only bike, and it hasn't been a daily rider since the late '80's. With only 28K on the clock, by BMW standards it's really not even broken in! But most important, it's now (more than ever) an immense source of satisfaction and personal pride.

I can say with complete honesty that no object I've "owned" in my life, be it a

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