BMW was rather slower to adopt the practice. This is represented sometimes as BMW being concerned with retaining a close link between its racecars and production models. There was some

A second major element of BMW motorsport activity has been as an engine supplier. Initially perhaps BMW was less a supplier

was developing a range of cars that were to hold popular, profitable dominance in Europe for several decades.

Body design for the big sedans was undertaken in-house, and the cars look all the better for it. Coherence and simplicity mean that the cars are attractive from every angle and have aged well. Though conventional in their overall design concept, the cars, like the majority of new models, contained some interesting technical features. BMW was adept at maximizing the extent to which each design choice, however mundane, was represented as a major technical advance. In this way, through advertising and general approach to customers, BMW sought to position itself as a company offering technical innovation and leadership while, in fact, taking surprisingly few risks in design. By the late 1960s BMW brochures and press communications were full of

long-wheelbase 3.3Li, BMW's retort to Mercedes' long-wheelbase S-Class models of 1972. Best of the bunch was the manual, fuel-injected 200-horsepower 3.0Si seen on the cover of this brochure.

The oddball 2000CS became the beautiful 2800CS when the new six-cylinder sedans emerged in 1968, retaining the old body from the pillars rearward but with a new handsome front end.

carefully presented technical detail. The company always pitched at a level just above the heads of the intended readership, in a way that tapped into the contemporary respect for scientific knowledge. This, after all, was a time when a youthful generation saw science and engineering rationality as positive and unchallenged themes in all areas of life. BMW was perhaps uniquely sensitive, either by instinct or design, to these issues.

Trispherical combustion chambers, described helpfully in U.S. advertising as *Dreikugelwirbelwannenbrennraum*, was one feature brought to public attention more for the technical image that it created than perhaps for its success as an innovation. The company also

choice rather than the means of executing it. That is, BMW engineers and marketing people knew how they wished the vehicle to respond and behave—that was the innovation and the achievement. The execution, engineering the vehicle to get that response, was a lesser and much less distinctive achievement.

Drive a BMW 2500 or 2800, or better still the later 3.0Si, and compare it with its competitors and it does feel different. With its large sedans selling at a premium price, BMW knew that the key to its success lay in giving the sedans a distinctive sporting character. Coherent marketing around this character and image were to

car was engineered to look, feel, and behave seamlessly in conformity with the brand image.

As the marque developed in later years, this learned behavior seemed to become instinctive. BMW always felt and looked right, always had a distinctiveness, and always seemed to find customers happy to pay high prices for its product. This was not an achievement of engineering but an achievement of management and organization. Long-wheelbase versions of the six-cylinder sedans were developed in response to the new SEL versions of Mercedes' 350 and 450 S class models. BMW loaded the flagship 3.3 Lia with all the options it could

ALPINA—BMW'S FAVORED TUNER

Alpina is perhaps the name most closely associated with modified BMWs. Concentrating on the marque since the mid-1960s, Alpina developed as a business offering sophisticated enhancement of even BMW's most exciting models.

The emphasis was upon the complete transformation of the vehicle, rather than the addition of odd bits and pieces. Though Alpina is independent of BMW, the two companies maintained close links during this period, and Alpina was clearly looked upon with greater favor than most other BMW tuners. More recently companies such as Schnitzer and Prodrive have been involved in competition preparation of BMWs, and these links have to some extent weakened Alpina's hold both on the market and on BMW. Nevertheless Alpina, previously a company involved in producing and selling typewriters and office equipment, has had an important role in BMW history.

Founded by Burkhard Bovensipen, the company began by offering twin-carb conversions for the *neu classe* sedans and received the tacit approval of both BMW's research and development department and, perhaps more importantly, Paul Hahnemann, the influential marketing chief at BMW. As BMW models developed, so did Alpina's range of offerings. The 02 series offered special opportunity. For the 2002, BMW developed special engines, blueprinted and balanced, with different cam profile and pistons along with the familiar enhanced induction and exhaust systems. Alpina-modified BMWs featured strongly in competition, both at the international level but also, perhaps just as importantly for the company's profile, at smaller local events throughout Europe.

By 1973 an Alpina-developed 2002Tii was offered as a complete, fully developed model in its own right. Success of this model and the changing market climate led Bovensipen to move increasingly toward the provision of complete cars. Alpina's naturally aspirated 2002 was a more pleasant car to drive than the factory's own 2002 turbo model, with more progressive power delivery. Indeed, Alpina had already had a hand in the birth of the 2002. It quickly yielded to the temptation to insert a 2,000-cc engine into the original 1600. Alpina's efforts, along with the advocacy of U.S. importer Max Hoffman, encouraged the factory to develop its own version, which became the 2002. Alpina also pioneered the use of Kugelfischer mechanical fuel injection with the engine, offering an injection kit for the carbureted 2002 toward the end of 1970 before the factory was to travel the same route and offer the 2002Ti.

Alpina produced modified versions of each of BMW's new models, each one offering enhanced performance and handling at a significant markup in price.

They included turbo versions of the 5 series cars, configured both in single- and twin-turbo form. They also found a small but enthusiastic market for a version of the large 7 series sedan, though in this case it was restricted to the United Kingdom market—where the 745i was not available—and was constructed by Alpine United Kingdom agent Frank Sytner and designated the B10. B12 versions of the V-12 750 saloon and 850 coupe were also offered, with capacity increased to 5.7 liters and the price tag of the B12 850 reaching around 250,000 deutsch marsks in 1994.

More recently, Alpina's relationship with BMW has given rise to a new concept—the ultrahigh-performance diesel. Introduced at the 1999 Geneva show, the Alpina D10 bi-turbo was dubbed the Super diesel, with a top speed in excess of 155 miles per hour. The D10 featured second-generation common rail fuel injection and twin turbos with adjustable turbine geometry.

The 2002 Turbo (foreground) and CSL coupe sum up BMW at its most aggressive and virile in the 1970s.

Nearly 250,000 of the big sedans and coupes were produced in a production run that lasted from 1968 to 1977. The biggest seller was the 2500, with 90,000 produced, while coupe sales totaled nearly 30,000.

design that was easy to produce, meant that margins were good. BMW had entered the virtuous circle where success breeds further success, and profit brings further profit.

Rubber "splitters" on the tops of the fenders were said to aid airflow but were not much help when you wanted to work on the engine. "Vents" on the sides of the wings are dummies.

All "Batmobiles" were injected and bored out slightly to give 3,153 cc for homologation purposes. The engine's 206 horsepower gave 140 miles per hour and 0–60 in 7 seconds, but with total docility and reasonable economy.

The racing Group 2 CSL coupe was the basis of the first of BMW's "art" cars. Alexander Calder, the American sculptor who invented the "Batmobile," was responsible for the CSL.