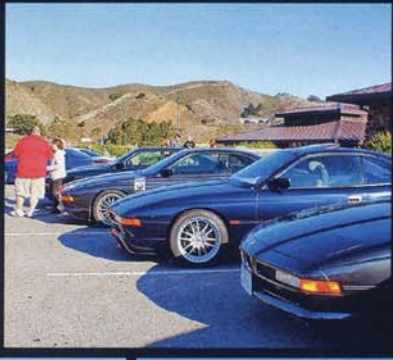




FEST

2013

We catch the action from the world's largest 8 Series meeting.



October 2013 saw the Pacific Coast of America host the world's largest gathering of the E31 8 Series at Garberville, California with the rather impressive attendance of 86 cars ranging from 840is, 850is, a supercharged and a turbocharged 850i and an 860i to the Sublime Alpina B12 5.0. Hosting the 153 attendees at the historic Benbow Inn was the newly formed BMW E31 America and our very own Gerry Speechley was there to report for *Performance BMW* magazine and also act as a technical adviser during the technical sessions that took place during the event.

Friday started the proceedings with the meet-and-greet arrival of the attendees followed by dinner and a keynote speech by Jackie Jouret, editor of *Bimmer Magazine* in the US. The following day, a convoy of E31 8 Series departed under clear blue skies from the Benbow Inn following an approximately 150 mile route along the unspoilt 'Lost Coast' of Northern California, stopping at the Rockefeller Forest along the south fork of the Eel River, through Petrolia (site of the very first oil well drilling in the US), through the A W Way Country Park mountain roads and along the black sand beaches with seals, sea lions and a school of whales visible from the shoreline.

The 2.5-mile long convoy then climbed back up the valley, back to the quaint Victorian town of Ferndale, reputedly the best preserved in California, filled with antique stores, art galleries and shops, and the location of the films *Outbreak* and *The Majestic*. The convoy then returned to the Benbow Inn for dinner and a speech by Roger Wray on the subject of importation of Alpina cars into North America – something that was previously not possible due to Construction and Use Regulation and Federal Approval issues.

Following a buffet breakfast Sunday morning, the convoy reformed for a tour along the 'Avenue of the Giants', a 31-mile living museum of the world's largest Redwood trees before returning to Richardson Grove State Park for lunch. There was a display in the hotel grounds of many of the cars, which were judged by the attendees themselves with a number of categories ranging from best engine presentation to the best overall vehicle in its group.

The afternoon's activities consisted of four technical sessions including forced induction, seat repairs, suspension system dynamics and a technical forum presented by Tom Carter, Bill Fox and Gerry Speechley. Later in the evening, Gerry also made the final keynote speech to those in attendance on the future of the E31.

The event was the tenth anniversary of the previously largest gathering of E31s in North America held at Whidbey Island in Washington State and this year's weekend surpassed even that historic event. A significant announcement was made on the Saturday evening by the organisers that the BMW Car Club of America would now officially recognise 'BMW E31 America' as the first ever non-geographical chapter of BMW CCA to organise E31 owners in the USA and Canada. Good work! ●

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