

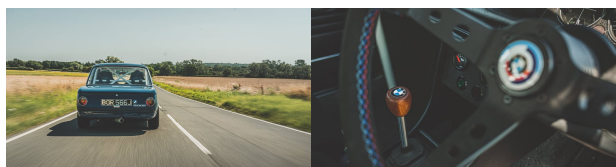
CLASSIC DRIVER

We'd bend over backwards to own this boisterous BMW 2002

Lead

It's taken the owner of this 1970s BMW 2002 five years, more deliberations than a Brexit negotiation and, bizarrely, his family's conservatory to build the classic of his dreams. A scorching summer heatwave in the UK seemed the perfect time for him to get out and enjoy the fruits of his labour...

Will Beaumont would love to say that he's fostered a lifelong affinity for the BMW brand, but that would be an untruth. The Riviera Blue BMW 2002 that the 31-year-old British freelance motoring journalist has spent the last six years building to his exacting standards does, however, strike a personal chord.



"I come from a family of dyed-in-the-wool car lovers and my dad owns an early-1970s Alfa Romeo GTV and a Lotus Sunbeam," he explains. "This kind of older, rear-wheel-drive, four-cylinder, twin-carb saloon was always around the house when I was growing up and, really, it's the blueprint for my perfect car."

It was perhaps unsurprising, then, that when the time came for Beaumont to buy his first classic car, he looked to fulfil those exact criteria. The trouble was, the cars he really wanted – an Alfa Romeo GTV or a Ford Escort, for example – were too expensive. He settled on a tidy BMW 1602, a move that would set him on a decade-long course towards owning his vision of the perfect classic.

For several years, Beaumont daily drove his humble BMW come rain or shine, forging a bond with the car that can only come from that much devotion and use. And in intimately exploring the 1602's every inch and modifying bits and pieces himself, he learned all he needed to know about mechanics.



After finding a shell of a round-taillight BMW 2002 and transferring all the bits over from his previous car, Beaumont was soon forced to accept the harsh reality that his pride and joy was really a fun weekend car rather than one suited to everyday use over long distances. Six years ago, having retired the car from its daily duties, he decided it was high time to tidy the old girl up. Rather than repaint the parts that clearly needed repainting, as he'd originally intended, Beaumont instead decided a bare metal respray was in order.

"I chose Riviera Blue, which is not the original colour of this particular car but was a period 1970s BMW shade. I had a photo of a hot-rodded Porsche 911 on my desktop for ages – it was a dark, dusty blue with two white powder-coated exhausts, a bit like mine. I thought it was just the meanest looking thing and it was just lucky that there was a similar BMW colour."





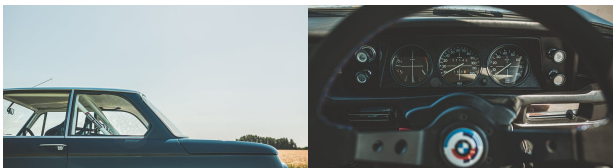
It's at this point when Beaumont's parents' conservatory enters the fray. Once the shell had been painted, a problem arose: there was nowhere to keep it. With both his garage and his preferred workshop full, the doors and doorframes of the aforementioned conservatory were swiftly removed, and the skeletal BMW was rolled into its temporary home.

"I got virtually all the non-mechanical bits done in the conservatory before space in the workshop freed up and I was able to move the car over. When you've got a family full of car lovers, this wasn't such a big deal!"



Since then, Beaumont has cherry picked a multitude of ultra-high-quality, performance-oriented modifications, leaning on the fiercely loyal BMW community for guidance and parts. The list is exhaustive. To name but a handful of the key features, there are two Dellorto 45mm carbs feeding the torquey two-litre engine, Bilstein coil-over dampers with custom Eibach springs, 2002 Turbo-spec ventilated discs and calipers up front, a bespoke aluminium fuel tank containing both the fuel pump and pressure regulators, and a bespoke set of eight-spoke wheels reminiscent of those on late-1960s/early-1970s Formula 1 cars.

"My favourite modifications are the twin carbs and the limited-slip differential. Both of those have exaggerated the character of the car and I get the most enjoyment from them – the noise of the carbs and the way the aggressive diff makes the car handle."



So, has the six-year journey been worth it? Judging by the ear-to-ear grin painted across Beaumont's face as he hares along the sun-bathed country roads, dancing around corners with aplomb, the answer is a resounding yes. "There are two reasons the car took so long to build," he concludes. "A, I wanted to achieve the highest possible standard of quality, and B, I only intend to do this once."

"I don't want to look back and wish that I'd done something better. That's why it's worth taking the time to deliberate and work through each stage properly." That approach is clear to see everywhere you look on this car, down to the finest details such as the steering wheel stitching in the BMW M colours. Okay, it's not a purist's dream. But we imagine there are hundreds of brand followers who'd bend over backwards to own this 2002. Something tells us Beaumont is not going to let go of this one any time soon...

Photos: Robert Cooper © 2020

Gallery

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