

# THE POWER OF #D

This is a modern love story featuring BMW's mighty 1 series diesel and communities of interest. In short, it is a tale of how one BMW owner came to gain knowledge about his bi-turbo BMW e82 123d coupé with M Sport pack – with the help of many people around the world in such communities of interest as the BMW Car Club of Victoria's Facebook group, Bimmerpost's 1addicts.com forum and babybmw.net.

When the director of an international company was redeployed to Europe and had to part with his 18-month young BMW e82 123d coupé, I snapped it up (See Image 1). I said good-bye to a much loved (and slightly modified) Lexus IS300 and entered the BMW fraternity. Having spent much time modifying Google's Android smartphone OS with the aid of a community of likeminded people who are members of XDA-Developers.com – the largest such forum in the world – I turned to communities of interest to find out more about BMWs in general, and the e82 diesel in particular.



Image 1. BMW 123d e82 coupé in Alpine White

Turning to the BMW Car Club's website and forums, I found that, sadly, the forums are relatively inert. It wasn't until much later that I found the Facebook Group, but I also found that there was no interest in diesels on display. Bimmerpost's forums were much more enlightening – not about diesels – but certainly about the 135i and modifying (modding) them. I didn't heed the warning of one member who congratulated a new member, but warned him not to fall under the spell of the modder's curse now that he had bought a used BMW 1 series.

Bimmerpost's 1addicts.com forum is helpful if wanting knowledge on all petrol models and where to source items from North American suppliers such as Bimmian.com. This company is one of many such as Tire Rack, which sponsors a forum thread on – you guessed it – tyres. The 123d coupé's smoked side turn indicator shown in Image 2 is an example of one of many Bimmian.com offerings. However, once again, there was no interest in diesels, even though BMW is now making another concerted effort to market their new model diesel line-up in North America.



Image 2. BMW 123d smoked side indicators from Bimmian.com

Babybmw.net, which is UK based, was the most helpful source of information on BMW diesels in general, and the 123d in particular. While I have learned much from 1addicts.com and babybmw.net members, and carried out many mods with their guidance, I will limit the story to two examples from a treasure trove of stories that illustrate why communities of interest are much more informative and helpful than sources merely trying to sell us something.

Top Marque 4

The first story involves tyres. My 123d came with M Sport pack mods – M 18" alloy wheels, M leather steering wheel, M Door sill finishers, M Sport suspension, Anthracite headliner, M Sport Leather Handbrake Grip and later added M Sport Pedals. I found the combination of a stiff suspension and Bridgestone run-flat (RFT) tyres to be a back breaker. The forums were replete with stories of 1-series owners who were replacing what they termed 'run-craps' with other non-RFT tyres. Not only were they replacing the RFTs with Michelin Pilot Sport 2 and 3 tyres, but increasing the width of the tyres installed. I followed suit, but with Yokohama ADVAN Sport tyres – Front: 225/40ZR18 and Rear: 255/35ZR18 – having sold my RFTs on eBay. Eighteen months on, I am still happy with that decision.

Making such a decision has many ramifications. Since the BMW 123d does not come with a jack, spare tyre or other niceties for dealing with a flat tyre, I bought an OEM jack with breaker bar and torque socket from BMWDirect's eBay store and picked it up when visiting family in London. I also bought an OEM electric pump kit from a North American dealer via Amazon. Both were inexpensive when the exchange rate was more in our favour. The last item was a space saver wheel out of Germany as shown in Image 3. In each case, members of 1addicts.com and babybmw.net had blazed a safe trail for me to follow.



Image 3. OEM space saver and Continental tyre

The second story involves members from babybmw.net experiencing difficulties due to using incorrect motor oil in their diesel engines, adopting too long a service interval, and other factors. The reality is that diesels with a DPF (diesel particulate filter) need to be driven distances and do not like short trips. Every fortnight that I have been constrained to city driving, I take the 123d for a 15 to 30 minute freeway drive to burn out the rubbish in the DPF. The many discussions on babybmw.net led to a decision to specify use of Nulon Full Synthetic 5W-30 diesel formula long life engine oil, and the decision to extend my new car warranty directly with Allianz.

In closing I would like to answer the question why I chose a diesel BMW, and why I would do so again. It is not because European forum members have cranked them up to 267 kph (166 mph). Nor is it because of the fuel economy: Combined – 5.6 L/100km; X Urban – 4.6 L/100km; Urban – 7.3 L/100km. Nor is it the 304 Nm torque that pushes me back into the seat on launch. Well, it is all these things because together they take me back to my youth in the NSW Car Club when I drove a GT Falcon. Yes, seriously – on top of which I now have fuel economy and low costs, which is something that never entered my head in those days of cheap energy!

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- Stewart Adam