



# Roundel Ramblings



Newsletter of the Northern Alberta BMW Club, a chapter of the BMW Club of Canada

MARCH 2005

## This Spring, Learn To Heel-and-Toe

By Peter Spencer

If you don't know how to do heel-and-toe downshifting, now is a good time to get started. You'll have all spring long for it to become automatic – like riding a bicycle.

There's only one excuse for not learning to heel-and-toe: that's if you're riding around the track with an automatic or semi-automatic transmission (e.g., Tip-tronic); then you're excused. Otherwise, get with the program! It's easy to learn and will help you in several ways.

### BENEFITS

Heel-and-toe is an essential skill that allows you to downshift while you are braking without upsetting the car. If you want to go faster in the future, you'll need to be able to heel-and-toe.

Heel-and-toe is also important in preventing damage to your expensive equipment. A downshift without heel-and-toe often sends a big shock through your car's drive train. It's a surefire way to increase the wear and tear on your clutch and transmission. The end result is that you'll have to replace your clutch or transmission sooner rather than later.

Here's what happens if you don't have the ability to heel-and-toe: You approach a turn, going fairly fast. It's obvious that you must slow down to make the turn. You must also get into a lower gear to accelerate out of the turn. You put on the brakes – no problem. But when you shift into the lower gear and let out the clutch, a sharp impact goes through your car's drive train. Your rear wheels make a loud chirp on the pavement and the car stutters. You get through the corner, but it wasn't real smooth and you have the feeling that your car didn't appreciate the shock treatment.

And here's what happens when you **do** have the ability to do heel-and-toe downshifts: You approach the same turn. You reduce speed with your right foot on the



brake. At the same time you hold the clutch in with your left foot and move the gear lever to the lower gear. With your right foot still on the brake, you blip the gas pedal with the heel or side of that foot.

The motor spins up, matching the speed of the gears in the transmission. You let out the clutch, everything engages smoothly, you ease on the power, and zoom away – smooth, easy and fast!

### BEFORE YOU START

Heel-and-toe is an easy skill to learn, but it takes some conscious practice – 2-3 hours should do it – to get the movement and the sequence right. Then it becomes automatic. It's something like learning to tie your shoes or ride a bicycle. After a while you don't even think about it. When was the last time you thought about the sequence of steps involved in tying your shoes or riding your bike?

It's worth noting here that the name "heel-and-toe" may be something of a misnomer. It is reported that the name comes from many years ago, when the pedals ►

"What is it that's made the 3-series the object of envy and imitation among its contemporaries, as well as a perennial 10Best car? ...with its 14th consecutive award here, we've long since isolated BMW's critical ingredient: ride quality."  
Car and Driver, January 2005

"The one consistent truism in the modern car business is this: To say unkind things about the BMW 3-series is to reveal yourself as an infidel or idiot. Possibly both."  
Car and Driver, April 2003

"BMW is in the enviable position of setting the pace in the world of sports sedans..."  
Car and Driver, March 2004

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were arranged somewhat differently than today's standard clutch-brake-accelerator layout. With today's pedal setup, some people are probably able to scoot their foot around so that their toe can remain on the brake pedal while their heel stabs the gas pedal. However, most people simply put the ball of their right foot on the brake pedal and turn their ankle so the outside of that foot depresses the accelerator. Perhaps the term should be "ball & edge" rather than "heel & toe"!

Your car may need some physical adjustment to allow for easy heel-and-toe. Porsches, for example, are often delivered with the gas pedal well below the level of the brake pedal. With this setup, heel-and-toe can be difficult unless you're a contortionist. There are several ways to raise the level of the accelerator or lower the brake pedal using adjustments that are built into the car. There are some complexities to these adjustments, however, so do some checking or get some advice before you do this. You can also purchase aftermarket pedals which can help overcome problems with pedal height and foot size issues.

Shoes are another consideration, especially for women. Some shoes are simply too narrow to cover the gap between the

brake and gas pedals, so don't waste your time and patience by trying to learn this technique with inadequate shoes. Running and walking shoes work fine, as do most men's shoes.

### HOW TO LEARN

Most high performance driving books explain heel-and-toe in some detail. Two of the best, *High Performance Driving* and *Secrets of Solo Racing*, have excellent illustrations of the sequence. Go to the bookstore or library. Read the explanations. Pick the one that connects best with you.

Here's how to get it grooved: Find a big, empty parking lot. Sundays and late at night are good times. Drive around in circles, shifting from first gear to second, then downshift back to first using your new heel-and-toe technique. Go slowly, concentrating on the sequence of movements. Do it 10 times. Do it 20 times. Do it for an hour or two. After a while you'll feel the beginnings of an automatic sequence. Then move up a gear, shifting up from second to third and heel-toe downshifting back to second. Do it for a few minutes every day for a week and you'll never forget it. Do it driving to work for a

month and it will become completely automatic. Just like tying your shoes or riding your bike.

### WHERE TO GET HELP

Help is just a phone call away. Your favorite PCA or BMW driving instructor will be happy to give you advice or assistance. Good books include *High Performance Driving* (Bob Bondurant and John Blake-more, Motorbooks International, 1987, pp. 56-58); *Sports Car and Competition Driving* (Paul Frere, Robert Bentley Publishers, 1963, pp. 26-29); *Driving in Competition* (Alan Johnson, W.W. Norton, 1971, pp. 60-61), and *Secrets of Solo Racing*, Henry A. Watts, Loki Publishing Co., 1989, pp. 50-51).

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Need more help getting the hang of it? Come join us at the Alberta Advanced Driving School! You'll have the chance to practice heel-and-toe downshifting in a controlled environment for helping drivers get the most out of their cars without endangering themselves or other members of the public. You'll also have the benefit of direct instruction from a PCA or BMW driving instructor.

Before you know it, you'll have it mastered and just in time for the summer driving season. ■

## Northern Alberta BMW Club Executive

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www.nabmwclub.ca

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## Roundel Ramblings Advertising Rates

Full Page	\$200.00
Half Page	\$100.00
1/3 Page	\$65.00
7.5" x 2.0"	\$50.00
3.5" x 2.0"	
members	\$25.00
non-members	\$50.00

Classified ads are free for club members, and \$20.00/issue for non-members. All classified ads will be posted for one issue unless otherwise notified. Classified ads for non-members must be prepaid prior to printing.

Advertisers wishing to advertise for 1 year (4 issues) may receive a 10% discount on the single-issue advertising rates. To qualify, full payment for the year's ad run must be made upon invoice following publication of the first issue with the ad.

To place an ad, please send the exact text (and pictures) via e-mail to the club newsletter director, or by regular mail to the club mailing address. For non-club members, payment must be sent to the club mailing address. Payment can be made by cheque payable to the Northern Alberta BMW Club.

### Disclaimer

The opinions and comments expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not represent the position of the BMW Club of Canada, the Northern Alberta BMW Club, the Editor or any of the Officers.

# Tech Corner

by **Ralph Buchsdrucker**  
Service Manager  
Bavaria BMW

In this regular contribution to our newsletter, Ralph Buchsdrucker, Service Manager at Bavaria BMW, will kindly answer questions submitted by club members regarding the service and maintenance of your BMW. If you have a question that you would like him to answer, please visit the newsletter page on our website at [www.nabmwclub.ca/newsletter.asp](http://www.nabmwclub.ca/newsletter.asp). There you will find a form where you can submit your questions directly to Ralph.

**Q:** I would like to import an E36 '3' series or Z3 into Canada from the USA, what needs to be done to bring the car to Canadian standards?

**A:** All of the E36 '3' series cars and Z3's were built to North American standards in respect to emissions compliance and crash standards. This means that a United States specification car meets the Canadian emissions and crash standards and vice-versa. However a 'letter of compliance' is required from BMW Canada for importation. The 'letter of compliance' basically states to the authorities that the vehicle does meet the Canadian standards and does not have any outstanding safety recalls. When a 'letter of compliance' is requested from BMW Canada they will check the USA database to ensure all applicable recalls have been completed. If not, these must be done before the letter is issued.

There are three other requirements to meet Canadian standards, a child seat tether anchor, daytime running lights and a speedometer that reads in kilometres. The child seat tether anchor is easy, it does not even need to be installed, the kit just needs to be present in the vehicle (like in the glove box). Daytime running lights are easy on the Z3, under the dash and behind the 'knee bolster' resides the high beam relay. This relay simply needs to be replaced with a daytime running light relay and the high beams lights will function as the daytime running lights, at part power. On the E36 models, the same relay is used for the daytime running lights, but additional wiring needs to be installed, in order for it to function like the Z3 lights. I believe all USA specification BMWs are equipped with dual scale speedometers that show both KM per hour and Miles per hour, although the odometer reads only in Miles. This speedometer complies and does not need to be changed, however BMW has issued a Service Information Bulletin that outlines what is required to convert the instrument cluster if it is desired. On the Z3 and E36 models, a new instrument cluster coding plug must be installed, before the instrument cluster can be recoded. Other Models such as the E38, E39, E46 and E53 the instrument cluster can be recoded without replacing the coding plug. On all vehicles produced after Jan. 1, 1995, the actual distance traveled by the vehicle will be retained and simply be converted from Miles to KM.

## Northern Alberta BMW Club Member Discounts

### Parts and Service

#### Apple Auto Glass

9205 - 63 Avenue

Edmonton, AB

Phone: (780) 437-6520

**10% off parts and labour**

#### Apple Auto Glass

10640 - 169 Street

Edmonton, AB

Phone: (780) 455-3232

**10% off parts and labour**

#### Bavaria BMW

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Edmonton, AB

Phone: (780) 484-0000

**15% off parts (except Dinan parts)**

**10% off service (except service pkgs.)**

### Bert's Alignment & Auto Service

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Edmonton, AB

Phone: (780) 484-1034

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(please see Ron to obtain discount)**

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Edmonton, AB

Phone: (780) 435-4449

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#### Fastech Tire

17226 - 107 Avenue NW

Edmonton, AB

Phone: (780) 483-8344

**10% off wheels, tires and service**

### Aftermarket

### Parts and Accessories

#### TEKNIQ AutoSport

Phone: (780) 434-1222

Website: [www.tekniqauto.com](http://www.tekniqauto.com)

E-mail: [Qassim Moolla at](mailto:Qassim.Moolla@tekniqauto.com)

[info@tekniqauto.com](mailto:info@tekniqauto.com)

**10% discount on custom steering wheels,  
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#### Trend Motoring Accessories

8385 St. George Street, Unit 14

Vancouver, BC

Phone: (604) 323-8369

Website: [www.trendmotoring.com](http://www.trendmotoring.com)

E-mail: [Robert Papernick \(a.k.a. Bob Jr.\) at](mailto:Robert.Papernick@trendmotoring.com)  
[robert@trendmotoring.com](mailto:robert@trendmotoring.com)

**BMW Club members are able to purchase  
direct at wholesale prices**

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIP CARDS  
MUST BE PRESENTED**

# Swapping Factory Strut Bearings for More Negative Camber

By Gustave Stroes



The stock strut-top bearings on the E46 M3 can be rotated into several positions to effect a change in front camber (and caster as a side-effect). The strut bearings can also be swapped from left-to-right. Since the strut bearings have three studs (and can be rotated into three positions) there are six (6) possible front end strut bearing arrangements which are theoretically possible.

Of these six possibilities, three are realistic. These are discussed in this article. It should be noted that all these results were obtained on a lowered M3. I played with the strut top bearings during the same time that I installed a Bilstein PSS 9 system on the car. With an E46 M3 at factory ride-height, the camber results discussed here would be different due to the "camber-curve" built into the front suspension (i.e. camber changes with ride height)...

The first strut-top bearing arrangement to mention is obviously the stock factory setup. As shown in the first photo there is some scope to adjust camber in the factory orientation simply by sliding the strut bearings inwards or outwards in the slotted holes in the strut tower. I have heard it said that sliding the strut bearings from their factory position in the middle of the

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slots to the inside limit will yield about  $0.5^\circ$  additional negative camber. This would imply that the full range of camber adjustment achieved from sliding the strut bearings from one end of the slots to the other end is about  $1.0^\circ$ . My gut feeling is that it is less than this but I have not measured it, unfortunately.

When oriented according to the factory setup the strut bearings will have their arrows pointing towards the front of the car, and the strut bearing marked "R" (next to the arrow) will be on the right (passenger's) side, while the strut bearing marked "L" will be on the left (driver's) side of the car. The "arrows" in question are cast into the top of the strut bearings and are visible in the summary photo at the bottom right.

The second position of interest is what I call the "5 degree solution". This configuration yielded 5 degrees of negative camber as shown in the photo at the bottom of the previous page. The details of this configuration are that the strut top bearings are left on their respective sides (left on left, right on right), but the bearings are rotated through one position. The arrows on the strut bearings end up pointing outwards and slightly back (instead of forward). Also the bearings are slid to the "outside" of the slots in the strut tower (otherwise you would have even more negative camber).

This is tough to visualize without a picture so it might be useful to skip to the summary photo at the bottom right.

One thing is clear - with  $5^\circ$  of negative camber one could probably stuff a 10" wide wheel under the front fender!

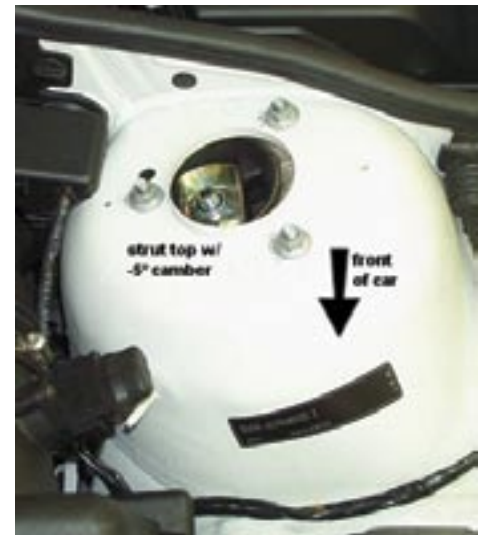
That's only halfway in jest for it's important to realize that there is a correlation between the width of wheel that will fit under a fender and the amount of negative camber you plan on running. The Super Touring guys had this down to a science and often had less than 1mm of clearance between the tire and the fender. This left absolutely no scope to remove negative camber - they were "locked-in" so to speak.

The photo at the top right shows how the top of the strut tower looked with the strut  $-5^\circ$  camber position. This setup was obviously not going to work. This is way too much negative camber. This configuration also reduced the caster by quite a bit - an undesired side-effect (though no negative bump-steer effects were noticed as some

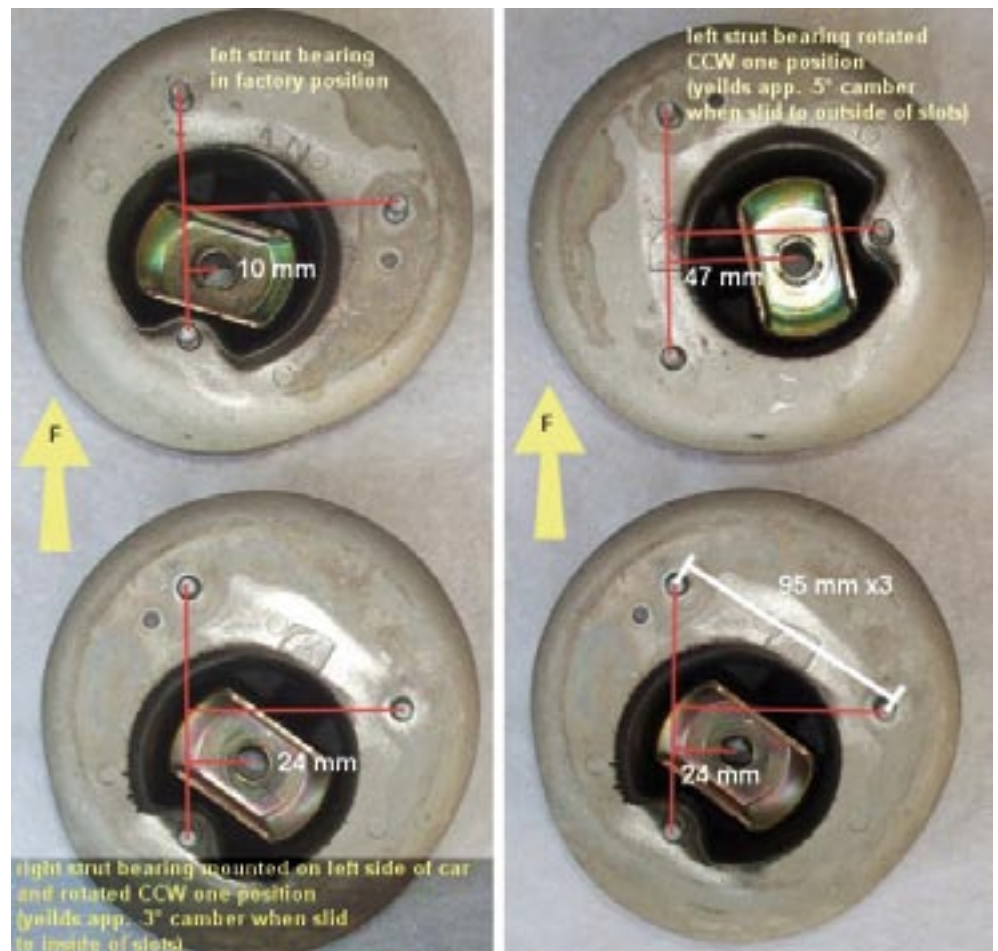
have suggested). A long hard look at the strut bearings eventually showed that swapping the bearings from left to right as well as rotating them might yield desired solution (I had been told by a reputable source that I should swap them, but I had erroneously convinced myself that it would make no difference, and that only the same three solutions would be available).

In the end the chosen solution was to swap the strut bearings - left to right and right to left - as well as rotating them through one position. The strut bearings are such that their arrows point forwards and inwards as shown in the summary photo at the bottom right. I also slid the strut bearings to the full inside position in the tower slots. This configuration yields about  $3^\circ$  negative camber, with room to back off to perhaps  $2.2^\circ - 2.3^\circ$  if you were to slide the strut bearings to the outside of the slots in this configuration. Another plus is that the change in caster is negligible (only a slight decrease, probably a few tenths of a degree).

The method just described allows one to adjust the negative camber on an E46 M3 while still retaining the factory strut top bearings. Thus the factory ride quality is retained due to the shock absorption



afforded by the thick rubber pad in the strut bearing. The downside is that this pad eats up a lot of suspension travel. This is where a true camber plate with spherical bearings helps. A camber plate allows a greater range of camber (and caster) adjustment, and opens up additional travel to prevent bottoming out on lowered cars. The one negative point is that some additional "noise" comes into the cabin due to the lack of any rubber in the system. Still, many people consider camber plates to be perfectly streetable. It's really a matter of personal preference. ■



# The Goodwood Festival of Speed

One of the most interesting automotive sporting events anywhere, is the Goodwood Festival of Speed, which takes place annually in Southern England. This auto-erotic pilgrimage is being held in late June [24-26 June] this year, to coincide with the revised date for the F1 of Great Britain [03/July] making this a speed freak's travel planning double-header.

Any of you who are interested in attending, should be aware that over 100,000 attended last year's three day Festival and, that there are several local club members who are thinking of adding to those numbers this summer.

Background: The Festival of Speed is far more than just a hill climb it can justifiably claim to be the world's biggest and most diverse celebration of the history of motor sport. It is the only occasion where you will see in action the greatest competition cars and star drivers from all eras: everything from 19th

century steam carriages to current Formula One; fabulous racing motorcycles 2500bhp Land Speed Record cars alongside engineless soapbox racers plus motor sport legends like Moss, Surtees, Brabham and Andretti rubbing shoulders with today's hottest properties such as Jenson Button and Colin McRae.

Motor racing first came to Goodwood in 1936 when the 9th Duke of Richmond held a private hill climb through the park. Five years earlier he had won the Brooklands Double 12, and then in 1948 he opened the Goodwood Motor Circuit. These early events inspired his grandson, the present Earl of March, to bring motor sport back to Goodwood. This resulted in the first Festival of Speed, held in 1993 in the picturesque parkland surrounding Goodwood House.

Since the inaugural meeting, the Festival has become established as a key event in the motor sport social calendar. But it is not all about

action on the hill. Unrestricted access to the paddocks means that spectators and autograph hunters can get closer to the cars and drivers than at almost any other meeting. Away from the bustle of competition, you can relax with a picnic on the lawns of the House among some of the most beautiful and innovative automotive creations, which are judged in the Cartier 'Style et Luxe' design competition. You can explore the exciting displays of our many exhibitors, or seek an adrenaline rush from the Festival's interactive entertainment, including driving simulators and tank rides. Children will delight in the special amusements to be found at the Junior Festival of Speed.

The Festival is motor racing's equivalent of Ascot or Wimbledon: an extravaganza of sound and colour that has been described as 'the garden party of the Gods'. Related info for this year's Festival can be found @ <http://www.goodwood.co.uk/fos/>

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for Southern Alberta:  
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for Northern Alberta:  
Ron Van Vliet  
(780) 458-5151

For more information and registration forms, visit us at [www.nabmwclub.ca/aads](http://www.nabmwclub.ca/aads)

# Event Calendar

## March 2005

**March 15**

### **Toyo Tire Tech Session**

On hand will be Tom Jose, John Carpenter and Dave Johnston from Toyo to profile their performance tire line up (including the T1R, RA1 and Proxes 4).

*Location:* Eurasia Automotive  
5641 - 91 Street  
Edmonton, AB

*Time:* 7:00 PM

*Cost:* Free

## April 2005

**April 16**

### **Pipestone Cottage Café Breakfast Drive**

Participants will take off on an early morning breakfast drive to the Pipestone Cottage Cafe for some great food and even better camaraderie with fellow fans of BMWs. Please see the website for additional details.

*Location:* Drive will begin at Eurasia Automotive  
5641 - 91 Street  
Edmonton, AB

*Time:* 8:00 AM Rendezvous at Eurasia  
9:30 AM anticipated arrival at Pipestone Cottage Cafe

*Contact:* RSVP to Alison Poole at apoole@nabmwclub.ca.

*Cost:* Participants will be responsible for their own breakfast.

**April 23**

### **Advanced Driving School - Instructors' Session**

This event is by invitation only and is meant to prepare instructors who will be instructing students in the art of advanced driving technique at the Alberta Advanced Driving Schools.

*Location:* Race City Speedway  
11550 - 68 Street SE, Calgary, AB

*Itinerary:* To be distributed to instructors at a later date.

*Contact:* Please visit the website at  
[www.nabmwclub.ca/aads.asp](http://www.nabmwclub.ca/aads.asp).

*Cost:* Set on a cost recovery basis of \$100.

*Note:* Instructors, please notify  
Tracy DesLaurier at [tdeslaurier@nabmwclub.ca](mailto:tdeslaurier@nabmwclub.ca) of your  
room requirements.  
Do not book through the hotel.

*Rooms will be booked at:*

Calgary Macleod Trail Travelodge  
9206 McLeod Trail, Calgary, AB T2J 0P5  
Phone (403) 253-7070

**NABMW Club executive meetings** are open to all members and are scheduled for the second Thursday of every month.

Please contact the club President at [pspencer@nabmwclub.ca](mailto:pspencer@nabmwclub.ca) for meeting location and issues that you wish added to the agenda.

## May 2005

**May 17**

### **BMW 3 Series Launch**

Come join us as we celebrate the unveiling of the new BMW 3 Series in Edmonton.

*Location:* Bavaria BMW  
17250 Stony Plain Road, Edmonton, AB

*Time:* Evening

*Contact:* Members wishing to attend must RSVP to Mike Beck, General Sales Manager, Bavaria BMW. He may be reached by e-mail at [mbeck.bavariabmw@telus.net](mailto:mbeck.bavariabmw@telus.net) or by phone at 484-0000.

*Cost:* Free

**May 27 & 28**

### **Advanced Driving School**

The purpose of these schools is to instruct students in the art of advanced driving technique, and polish skills through excellent one-to-one in-car instruction on a closed road track.

*Location:* Race City Speedway  
11550 - 68 Street SE, Calgary, AB

*Itinerary:* Registration Friday @ 7:30 AM  
Friday's sessions run 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM with BBQ to follow last session  
Saturday's sessions run  
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

*Contact:* Please visit the website at [www.nabmwclub.ca/aads.asp](http://www.nabmwclub.ca/aads.asp).

*Cost:* \$425 for first driver, \$100 discount for second driver in same vehicle. Fees include manual, lunches, and day 1 BBQ; helmet rentals are an additional \$20.

*Note:* Rooms at a discounted group rate have been blocked at:

Calgary Macleod Trail Travelodge  
9206 McLeod Trail  
Calgary, AB T2J 0P5

Students, please reserve directly with the hotel by calling 1-877-530-9206 and using group code "AAAD." If you encounter problems with group booking, ask for Tracey Dar.

Instructors, please notify Tracy DesLaurier at [tdeslaurier@nabmwclub.ca](mailto:tdeslaurier@nabmwclub.ca) of your room requirements.  
Do not book through the hotel.

## June 2005

**June 5**

### **BMW Show and Shine at Bavaria BMW**

This event will give BMW owners and fans a chance to show off their cars in a friendly laid back atmosphere while enjoying a bite or two.

*Location:* Bavaria BMW  
17250 Stony Plain Road  
Edmonton, AB

*Time:* TBD

*Cost:* Free

# ***We're back!***

# **eurasia**

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### **Customer Appreciation Pig Roast**

Old customers,  
new customers  
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**Saturday evening,  
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(Champ Car weekend in Edmonton)

**Mark your calendar!**

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