

2009 Sturgis MS Vintage BMW Rally: Another Benchmark Success!

Contributed by Paul Clark
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You couldn't ask for a nicer setting for a vintage BMW rally than on a collector's beautiful wooded riverside grounds in Sturgis Mississippi. And if that collector happened to be one of the country's leading restorers and repairmen of vintage BMW's, with shop and museum onsite, then you have the makings of a world-class event indeed. And so it was, this April 2009.

April 17-19th this year vintage BMW enthusiasts from around the country gathered together toÂ meet, tell stories, laugh,Â learn, andÂ look at bikes.Â Gracious hostsÂ CraigÂ 'Vech' and Elaine Vechorich hosted the event at their home and shop in Sturgis MD.

BMW motorcycles built before 1970 need special service that only a few people do anymore. Vech is one of those guys- he's the mechanic's mechanic, and world renowned (literally) for being as helpful as he is honest. Vech and Elaine run Benchmark Works <http://benchmarkworks.com/> , a place where vintage BMW's can feel at home and get the care they deserve. Vech is one of the few people you'll find who does wartime and prewar BMW motorcycle service, which is another level ofÂ challenge altogether.

Â A vintage BMW rally is also a rare chance to find and swap parts, and there was plenty of activity, and plenty of thingsÂ to look at!Â Â This was regarded by many as one of the best BMW swap meets in recent memory.

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It's good to be the boss! And after years of doing good unto others, sometimes good karma pays off. This fantastic WW2 R12 Krad came to the rally and Vech couldn't let it slip away. No kidding, this is a really exceptionally original bike, an important find, and we'll be taking a closer look in upcoming weeks.

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Rallies are always important places to learn. Vech and Craig BetjemanÂ held forth inÂ a rousing Tech Seminar, another in the continuing series of BMWVMCA educational events! No kidding folks, when these guys get talking, you can literally see the gears turning.

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If anyone remembers what page of what book they were looking at, do tell us!Â Â

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Â Do you wanna know what's in that box? I want to know. Have you got any of those things, you know, I don't know what the name of 'em are, y'know, one of those things? That tank looks nice, ask him how much he wants for it. You know, if you'd been at this swap meet I bet you'd have found the parts you need for that project of yours. Maybe next year.

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^ You can't beat camping next to a Civil War cemetery for peaceful rest.

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And in the end the living roared forth on their vintage BMW's, vowing to return in 2010! Don't miss next year's rally!

(photo credits: Richard Sheckler)^