



Rodger Anderson 1969 BMW 2002Ti Alpina

# BMW MOTORSPORT IN NEW ZEALAND

— A GLIMPSE OF BMW  
MOTORSPORT SUCCESS  
OVER THREE DECADES

By Jim Barclay

Brian Redman  
1976 Chevron B29  
BMW — Wigram 1976.  
Photo: Terry Marshall



## The 1970s

The BMW marque gained instant notoriety in New Zealand motorsport with the arrival in late 1969 of the BMW 2002 Ti Alpina belonging to Rodger Anderson. Rodger race the 2002 in the 1969/70 racing season. Already a crowned New Zealand Touring Car Championship (NZTCC) champion in a Mini Cooper, Rodger had some titanic on-track battles in his BMW 2002 with the Ford Escort twin-cams, including the car driven by Jim Richards. Reliability, great race pace, and plenty of cunning saw Rodger become the 1970 NZTCC champion in the 1001cc–4200cc class. Other well-known BMW drivers of the era included National Rally Champion and a very quick race-track driver Paul Adams, the ageless Dr 'Doc' Langley, a young Steve Millen who 'turboed' the ex-Anderson 2002, and successful BMW endurance driver Ken Adamson. Brian Redman from United Kingdom brought a nimble Chevron B29 BMW M-powered 2.0-litre F2 car to race in the 1976 Tasman Series amidst the big F5000 cars, and he did surprisingly well against the much more powerful cars.

## The 1980s

In 1984 Neville Crichton purchased a BMW 635CSi prepared for him by Australian ace Frank Gardner and his JPS-backed team. Together with co-driver Wayne Wilkinson, Neville won the Benson & Hedges endurance series in late 1984 and the two-round 1985 Nissan Sport series held in Wellington and at Pukekohe. In another BMW 635CSi, Kent Baigent teamed with co-driver Neal Lowe throughout the 1984/85 season; Kent won the 1985 NZTCC series and the 1985 NZTCC championship. In late 1985 Kent had a horrific high-speed accident after a collision with Denny Hulme at Manfeild, which resulted in Kent's car being written off. Other successes with the ubiquitous 635CSi cars saw Trevor Crowe with Tony Longhurst take the 1985 Production Car Championship and the 1985 New Zealand Production Saloon Championship (B&H Series). Kiwi ex-pat driver Jim Richards won the 1985 Australian Touring Car Championship in his JPS BMW 635CSi. Jim was to make frequent visits to New Zealand over following years to team up with a number of BMW drivers, including John Morton



Right Top: Brett Riley #31, Craig Baird #32 BMW 325i Coupes — Manfeild, January 1994. Photo: Jim Barclay  
 Right Bottom: Emanuele Pirro/Johnny Cecotto, Schnitzer BMW M3 Group A – 1st place Wellington 500, December 1990. Photo: Jim Barclay

and Trevor Crowe, in their quests to win the Nissan Mobil 500 and other endurance races.

Glenn McIntyre and Charlie O'Brien won the 1987 NZTCC series in Glenn's BMW 635CSi, and Glenn was the 1987 NZTCC champion. Although the 635CSi continued to be raced into the early 1990s, it was the lighter and more nimble BMWs that began to take titles from 1986. Ed Lamont and Graeme Cameron took the 1986 New Zealand Production Car Championship and the 1986 New Zealand Production Saloon Championship (B & H Series) in Ed's ex-JPS BMW 325i. In 1987 the highly successful BMW M3s arrived in New Zealand to compete in a round of the World Touring Car Championship held in Wellington. The reliable little M3s were to enjoy much success throughout the next five years, even in the face of tough competition from the more powerful V8-engined Commodores and Falcons, and the Ford Sierra Cosworth turbo cars. BMW cars won the Nissan Mobil 500 in Wellington in 1988, and continued this winning streak for the next four years until 1992, to make an unbroken run of five successive wins. Other Kiwi BMW drivers of the 1990s included Graeme Crosby, Richard Gillies, Denny Hulme, Avon Hyde, Tony Lawrence, Graham Lorimer, Warren McKellar, Lew McKinnon, Allan Milligan, Phil Myhre, Mark Petch, Paul Radisich, Brett Riley, Struan Robertson, John Sax, Kayne Scott, John Sorenson and Gregg Taylor.

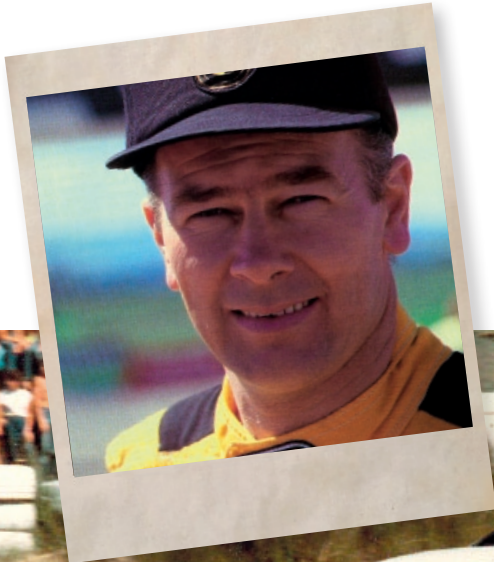


### The 1990s

Brett Riley lead out the 1990s by winning the 1991 NZTCC in the Bill Bryce-owned BMW M3. Craig Baird then won the title for four straight years from 1994 to 1997, the first two in a BMW

325i Coupe and the next two in a BMW 320i four-door. Former champ and teammate Brett Riley was never far away. Brett won the title again in 1998, driving a BMW 320i, before the late Jason Richards won in 1999 and 2000, also in BMW 320i. All the Baird, Riley and Richards successes were for the BMW Motorsport NZ/International Motorsport team so capably managed by Lyall Williamson. As NZTCC winners in eight of 10 years of the 1990s, BMW cars were certainly the ones to have. Other Kiwi BMW drivers not already mentioned included Kevin Bell, Stuart McCondach, Dennis Chapman, Robbie Francevic, Bernie Gillon, Rod Hicks, Keith Sharp and Simon Wills.

Three decades of success — a great era for BMW Motorsport in New Zealand.



Left: Jim Richards Team JPS BMW 1986

Bottom: #3 Kent Baigent/ Neal Lowe BMW 635CSi RA2-035, #4 Neville Crichton/Wayne Wilkinson BMW 635CSi — Baypark January, 1985

