



# Invention's Mother



"I got tired of opening my girlfriend's door," explained Drew Hoffman, owner of this ultra-clean 320i. "I rigged up a simple solenoid and a remote actuator so I could do it from my side of the car. . . it worked pretty well."

Eight years later, Hoffman transformed that simple idea into a multi-million-dollar enterprise with Autoloc, an automotive electronics firm which has become a standard in the booming custom-car industry.

This 1982 320i began the same way—sort of. A member of the Hoffmann family for many years, it was a used-up, big-brother hand-me-down piece-o-crap by the time it got to Drew. However, it was Drew's hand-me-down piece-o-crap and served as transport to and from college, a 4,000-mile round trip between Oregon and Illinois. "Toward the end, it was powered mostly by tow truck," recalled Drew. "It seemed like every trip it made was a trip to the parts store." Eventually the BMW got a new motor, not a wheezy stock replacement but a more powerful mill from an E30 325. While its newfound power was much appreciated, it still lacked the grunt to power up Oregon's mountain passes. "I got tired of shifting so much," recalled Hoffmann. "So, I fixed it," he added.

The "fix" involved taking the engine to 2.9 liters of displacement via a larger bore and stroke. Lightweight pistons, balanced rods and APR fasteners worked their way into the equation, and a polished and ported head and high-flow injectors sit up top. Additional cooling comes by way of Zirgo high-performance cooling fans tied into a thermostatic relay. BMP provided the Split Second HFM fuel management system, which allows the driver to dial in more aggressive parameters from the cockpit. BMP's high-flow air filter augments the intake, and its headers dump into a European-style 323 dual exhaust.

by Les Bidrawn PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

## A 320i that refused to die

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The factory's conservative transmission was swapped for a more aggressively geared five-speed box from a 325i. A shortened driveshaft links to a lightened flywheel and sport clutch; a close-ratio limited-slip differential puts power to the road.

Drew advised me to start out in second gear, because the car was a "torquey mother." I promptly forgot his warning and did a 50-ft smokey in front of the Intel headquarters. They were not amused.

Underpinnings include custom front coilovers with special springs and Bilstein dampers; Suspension Techniques swaybars help control roll fore and aft. Heavy-duty urethane bushings have replaced the factory's rubber units, and BMP's front and rear stress bars help keep the chassis nice and tight. Brakes have been upgraded to larger, later-model calipers which grip vented and slotted rotors. Running gear is comprised of 7x16 Traxx wheels and 205/45ZR-16 Dunlop Qualifier rubber.

At this point, Drew was in possession of a near perfect sports sedan, an ideal blend of street car, club racer, hill climber and stump puller. Problem was, its controls were fairly primitive by today's standards—manual windows,

manual doors, no alarm...it just wouldn't do. Hoffmann threw his whole Autoloc catalog at the car: power doors, power windows, cruise control, Autoloc's ignition sensor switch and cruise control. Autoloc designed the shaved-door kit in-house, a system that remotely opens the doors through Autoloc's 16-function remote control unit. The security system includes Stellar radar motion and glass sensors and its dual-stage shock sensor. Protection from "The Man" comes by way of a Unidan Bear Cat scanner and a Whistler radar/laser detector. I doubt the Taiwanese Navy has more electronic gear in its arsenal.

Razy's Custom Auto Body and Paint applied the gorgeous finish coat on the BMW's flanks, a mixture of Midnight Black with a Violet Pearl. It's very subtle and very, very nice.

The cabin has been completely recovered and includes Recaro seats and a 325is steering wheel. The center console is of Drew's own design and includes additional VDO instrumentation. Even the trunk has been reworked with new fabric and con-



tains a tray for the relocated battery.

In hindsight Hoffmann admitted the project "got out of hand," but he has no regrets. "I took a total piece of junk and made something out of it," he said.

Currently Hoffmann's working on a Bavaria—talk about sick. That would be the mother of all projects 🚗

## Autoloc

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