

Celebrating 50 years of M power. Pure exhilaration, pure adrenaline

 By Naresh Maharaj

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And it was done in a lavish M style. If there ever was a motoring festival in Mzansi, then it has to be the M Festival, held this past weekend at Kyalami racetrack. It was really immersing, whether you are a petrolhead or otherwise. After all, the 'M' is the most powerful alphabet in the worldwide motoring scenario. South Africa's biggest car fest was back and bigger than ever as we all celebrated 50 Years of M Power. Between track experiences for enthusiasts, a pop-up showroom, activities the whole family could enjoy, and then some.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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BMW enthusiasts have had limited opportunities in recent years to get together and share their common passion for their beloved automotive brand. Also, the BMW Car Club of Gauteng hosted two events on the track.

A true SA champion

The event was graced by Sheldon Van Der Linde, South Africa's BMW DTM driver. Van der Linde was back in the country, days after his Schubert Motorsport team had secured the team title.

He may be just 22 years of age, but boy oh boy, can this guy drive an 'M' powered car. He took the media on hot laps, reached speeds of up to 300kmph on the straights, and made tyres squeal around the 21 turns at Kyalami so loudly, that the screeching tyres could be heard miles away. And he could have done all of this with a cup of coffee in his hands, whilst talking to the media. Now that is saying something.

Host of activities

The world's biggest M Fest was back at Kyalami to mesmerise and delight the legions of BMW fans in South Africa. Showgoers got close to the sensational Red Bull Drift Brothers, who made a special trip to Johannesburg with their custom BMW M4 Coupé Competitions, Van Der Linde, who was on hand, alongside the BMW Driving Experience's professional drivers, to provide hot laps to showgoers, although those who preferred to be behind the wheel of their dream BMWs could do so on the custom-built test drive course.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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Further on-track action included Round 8 of the BMW Car Club Gauteng's M Performance Parts Race Series and demonstrations by some of South Africa's top spinning athletes following the recent crowning of the 2022 Red Bull champion. For entertainment of a different kind, the BMW M Fest main stage was graced by headline acts Zakes Bantwini and Mafikizolo, and supported by the likes of DBN Gogo, Black Motion, DJ Zinhle, Desmond and the Tutus, Mango Groove, Lady Zamar, and many more. All of these acts had thousands of fans dancing away the day and into the evening and each artist was special in their own way.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

While the signature BMW M Fest pop-up dealership showcased the latest BMW models at exclusive show offers, vehicles demonstrating BMW's proud heritage was also on display at the BMW Car Gauteng Concours d'Elegance, while an array of classic BMW M vehicles was also exhibited in Kyalami's pit garages.

A BMW first

In a first for the BMW M Fest globally, this year's instalment included an M Talks lounge where guests ranging from Franciscus van Meel, CEO of BMW M GmbH to Peter van Binsbergen, CEO of BMW Group South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, and Van Der Linde, to answer questions.

Another first was the world premiere of the new BMW M2, alongside the first showing on African soil of the BMW XM – only the second standalone M car developed – and the South African premiere of the BMW M4 CSL. Both the new BMW M2 and the BMW XM will go on sale in South Africa in the first half of 2023. All these models will be reviewed on this portal soon. But how about this: only one thousand of the M4 CSL were manufactured and all have already been sold with 16 right here in SA. Truly remarkable.

To those who attended the biggest celebration of the world's most powerful letter, the 2022 BMW M Fest, I could tell that

they all enjoyed the same. It was just another demonstration of the power of BMW M.

Really cannot wait for the next one.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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