

BMW history

BMW R 75



Model history

Civilian production of motorcycles ceased in 1941 as Germany concentrated on the war effort and the needs of the army. BMW motorcycles had always been popular with the country's officialdom – and by extension with the military. Single-cylinder models were used as lightweight courier and training motorcycle, and sidecar models of the R 12 were delivered to the German army, the Wehrmacht.

Germany's war strategies necessitated a vehicle that could travel equally well on a variety of surfaces – mud, ice, gravel and sand – and which needed only the very simplest maintenance even in extreme temperatures and under demanding conditions. This motorcycle also had to be able to travel at marching speed over long distances without trouble.

No German manufacturer had such a vehicle on offer in the Thirties, so BMW and Zündapp received a special commission to develop such a motorcycle. In the winter of 1938, BMW began work on this project, basing their research on the engine of the R 71 and on the overhead-valve 500 and 600 cc engines.

The engine of the motorcycle could be removed and replaced quickly and easily, as the lower section of the frame could simply be folded out of the way. Greater stability came at the cost of the rear wheel suspension. While the frame passed all tests with flying colours, the side-valve engine displayed heat-related problems when travelling cross-country or at low speed over longer distances. The BMW vehicles did not compare well with the Zündapp KS 750, so it was suggested that BMW produce the Zündapp motorcycle under licence. BMW, however, wanted to make a motorcycle of its own and developed a new engine.

The result was a 750 cc engine which delivered 26 hp at 4,000 rpm. This engine's torque was highly impressive and, due to its very low compression of 5.8 : 1, it had no trouble using poorer-quality or synthetic fuel. By contrast to the R 71, this new engine did not overheat at any point during testing. Named the R 75, it went into production in 1941.

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Drivers could choose between four gears for road conditions and three cross-country gears. At 420 kg, the sidecar version was unusually heavy, but complete manoeuvrability was guaranteed thanks to the two reverse gears, again one for road and one for cross-country conditions. The sidecar drive was permanently engaged; the differential was provided with a lock to ensure maximum torque for both the rear and sidecar wheels. Matching the motorcycle's use, the 16-inch wheels received 4.5 cross-country tyres.

The front wheel possessed a normal handle-operated brake with a 250 mm diameter, while hydraulics took care of the rear and sidecar brakes.

Production of the R 75 was relocated to Eisenach in October 1942, as the Munich plant was turned over exclusively to the production of aircraft engines. BMW ceased making the R 75 in 1944. About 18,000 had been made in total.

Current information

The R 75 is somewhat different to other BMW motorcycles as it is of interest not only to motorbike and BMW collectors, but also to people with an interest in military memorabilia. The same applies to the Zündapp KS 750 and, to a lesser extent, the R 12. As a result, the R 75 is the centre of a lively scene and replacement parts are easily available from specialist dealers, which is unusual for pre-war motorcycles.

Please contact this address if you would like to find out more:

BMW Veteranen-Club Deutschland e.V.
c/o Rüdiger Joop
Bahnhofstrasse 17
35745 Herborn
Germany
Tel: +49 - 2772 - 41222
Fax: +49 - 2772 - 41402

Replacement parts:

BMW Veteranen-Club Deutschland e.V.
Josef Kast
Witzighauser Strasse 21
89269 Vöhringen-Illerberg
Germany
Tel: +49 - 7306 - 5539
Fax: +49 - 7306 - 8910

Copies of technical literature are available from:

BMW Veteranen-Club Deutschland e.V.
Andreas Pytel
Dilbornstrasse 43
47804 Krefeld
Germany
Tel.: +49 - 2151 - 711933
Fax: +49 - 2151 - 720357

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Literature:

BMW Profile 1:

Motorräder aus München

Published in 1997 by BMW Mobile Tradition, Munich

The book can be sent to every BMW dealer. Simply call

BMW's order line 01 09 0 035 252 (German) or

BMW's order line 01 09 0 035 256 (English).

Stefan Knittel:

BMW Motorräder - 75 Jahre Tradition und Innovation

Motorbuch Verlag, Stuttgart, reprinted in 1997

ISBN 3-613-01829-2

Can be ordered via bookshops.

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BMW R 75 (plus sidecar)



Data sheet

Manufactured from 1941 - 1944
Total no. built approx. 18,000
Cost at production start 2,630 reichsmarks

Engine

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Internal designation | 275/2 |
| Type | Four-stroke, two-cylinder boxer |
| Bore x stroke in mm | 78 x 78 |
| Displacement in ccm | 745 |
| Power in hp/rpm | 26/4000 |
| Compression | 5.8 : 1 |
| Valves | Overhead |
| Fuel inductions | 2 Graetzin carburettors, Sa 24/1 and Sa 24/2 |
| Engine lubrication | Force-feed lubrication |
| Oil pump | Gear pump |

Transmission

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------|
| Clutch | Single-plate dry clutch | |
| Transmission | 7-gear: 4 for road conditions, 3 for rough terrain | |
| Gear change | Foot- and hand-operated with a selection lever for both road and cross-country | |
| Gear ratios | Road: 1st gear 1 : 3.22 | Off-road: 1: 4.46 |
| | 2nd gear 1 : 1.83 | 1: 2.54 |
| | 3rd gear 1 : 1.21 | 1: 1.67 |
| | 4th gear 1 : 0.9 | |
| | reverse 1 : 2.41 | 1: 3.3 |
| Rear wheel gear ratio | 1 : 6.05 / 1 : 5.69 (from vehicle no. 754056 onwards) | |

Electrical system

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Generator | Noris DS 6/50 |
| Ignition | Magnetic |
| Spark plugs | Bosch W 175 T 1 |

Chassis

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Designation | 275/1 |
| Frame | Multisection, screwed steel frame |
| Front wheel suspension | Telescopic fork |
| Rear wheel suspension | Stiff |
| Sidecar suspension | Leaf spring on body, tubular on wheel |
| Wheel rims | 3 D x 19 |
| Front tyre | 4.5 x 16 (off-road bloc profile) |
| Rear tyre | 4.5 x 16 (off-road bloc profile) |
| Front brake | Mechanical drum brake, 250 mm diameter |
| Rear brake | Hydraulic drum brake, 250 mm diameter |
| Sidecar brake | Hydraulic drum brake, 250 mm diameter |

Dimensions and weight

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Length x width x height in mm | 2400 x 1730 x 1000 (with sidecar) |
| Wheelbase in mm | 1444 |
| Tank volume | 24 l |
| Unloaded weight | 400 kg (with sidecar) |
| Load rating in kg | 270 |
| Fuel consumption per 100 km | approx. 6.3 (road) to 8.5 l (off-road) |
| Oil consumption per 1000 km | 0.5 - 1 l |
| Top speed in km/h | 95 |