



Through October 3rd to 7th, BMW owners and media personnel from around Asia were invited by BMW Group Asia to attend BMW M Track Days 2019 at Malaysia's Sepang Formula 1 circuit. Over the course of four days, BMW owners and automotive journalists—typically used to street cars in their home countries—were treated to an experience worthy of the performance and prestige of BMW's M Division and the ballistic missiles with tyres that are M cars.

It wasn't just about cars though. For the first few days of our stay in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, we were treated to the finest of mixers, lunch and dinner events and guided tours.

On the first night, we were taken to a BMW organized mixer at the Cantaloupe at Troika Sky Dining—where owners, journalists and BMW sales representatives could get to know each other. A delectable eight course meal followed—including scrumptious Wagyu beef, tiger prawns, and more. The view of Kuala Lumpur's impressive skyline, soft lounge music and the fantastic food and hospitality set the tone for the rest of the trip. On the second day, the guests (us) were taken on a tour of the Royal Selangor facility that produces the



finest offerings of Malaysia's century long pewter products industry, with a surprise at the end—all the guests walked away with a pewter bowl that they made themselves, with their names stamped on the bottom and a certificate proclaiming their newfound expertise at hammering a pewter sheet into a bowl. A fine lunch at Manja Old Malaya—within stones' throw of



the KL Tower—was followed by yet another foray into Malaysian handicrafts, this time at Jati Batek. Guests then learned the craft of batek t-shirt painting, painted their own t-shirts with a design of their choice, and walked away with their very own batek painted t-shirt.

Free and easy time in-between, however, was spent thinking of 6th October, the group's des-

ignated track day at Sepang. The idea of being allowed to drive around an ex-Formula 1 track that used to be frequent haunts of the likes of Michael Schumacher and Kimi Raikkonen on race days filled everyone with nervous anticipation and excitement. That we would be driving extremely powerful, rear-wheel drive and all-wheel drive BMW M cars around a circuit where you could hit speeds close to 300 km/h easily was not far off in the thought process.

Come race day, out on the track, a trio of models were waiting for the drivers—2019 models of the beastly, 591 HP/553 lb-ft torque M5, the poised yet capable 425 HP/406 lb-ft M4, as well as the drift-happy 405 HP/406 lb-ft M2 Competition. We strapped in, went out to the back straight to do some acceleration and braking practice runs, and then, after a slow spotting lap around the circuit, we were off.

Driving the M5 on a track is vastly different from piloting the large, four door performance sedan around city streets. The acceleration, unfettered by concerns of driving over pesky humans, is violent and unnerving, especially if you have a heavy foot. Fortunately, it stops just as quickly and less violently, a fact that came in handy when decelerating from 260 km/h to 60

km/h for the first turn and right-left chicane at Sepang. The AWD system keeps you in the safe zones of performance—allowing you to have fun but keeping the rear in check even during aggressive cornering.

By contrast, the M2 Competition is a pure drivers' car. Normally the M2 Comp would have a traditional 6-speed manual driving the rear wheels, but for this event, BMW managed to find an automatic. Even the automatic proved to be a handful if you were over-eager with the throttle input—the M2 was quite happy to reward you with a change-of-pants-needed moment if you dared it. While noticeably slower in the straights compared to the M5, the M2 Competition and the M4 were definitely the drivers' choices over the heavier M5.

Overall, the four days spent at KL proved that BMW not only provides the performance and engineering quality that it is famed for in its cars, but also goes many extra miles to ensure the ownership experience is just as rewarding. If only Bangladesh's tax structure allowed the import of M cars...

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AUTO NEWS

Chevrolet Corvette C8R – channeling the successes of past Vette racers



Chevrolet just released the C8.R Corvette, which is the race car version of the road going car. But before we get into that, I think it is important to put into context how much weight the Corvette nameplate holds and how much the C8.R has to live up to.

The Corvette moniker has been around for 66 years now, and has stood alone as America's only sports car. Corvette's

racing history has been rich for almost as long as they have been around. After the initial Corvette "failure" where Chevrolet developed a car that looked good but was not exactly the best in the driving department, Chevrolet later paired the chassis with a V8 and successfully sold and raced them to the Corvettes we know today. The Corvette nameplate won first at LeMans

in 1960 with the C1, and in later generations developed splendid track cars, notably the C3, C5 and C6, all of which dominated tracks all around.

The C8.R Corvette swears at the face of tradition—the front engine, rear wheel drive layout is no more and long gone are pushrod V8s, replaced by a mid-engine layout and dual overhead

cam, direct injection V8 with a flat plane crank. The engine is mated to a 6 speed sequential gearbox, and has been reported to make 500 HP and 480lb-ft of torque from its 5.5 liters of displacement.

HASEEB CHOWDHURY

COLLECTIBLES

MiniGT Honda Civic Type R FK8

Malaysia, despite being car crazy and sporting a healthy tuner lifestyle, is surprisingly low on the scale of places where you can pick up a good die-cast. I did manage, though, and walked away from BMW's M-Track Days 2019 (story above) with a MiniGT Honda Civic, hastily purchased from the duty free shops at the KL airport.

For a price of RM 50 (roughly BDT 1000), the 1:64 FK8 Honda Civic Type R (mine in Aegean Blue, with Modulo aftermarket bits) carries fantastic detailing and spot-on scale—while it may be larger than every other 1:64 scale from other manufacturers, the logos, lights and intricate details all look scaled to proportion. The paint and interior details are great too. On to the quibbles—the mirrors are rubber, and one of the wheels have a casting issue where its not a complete circle, reportedly a common issue with MiniGT. Another common issue, similar to Tarmac Works, are the larger-than-scale shut-lines. Otherwise, fantastic buy. Congratulations to me.

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