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Between the worlds of politics and business

In the course of the 1930s, Ing. August Rostberg – General Manager and shareholder of ‘Wintershall AG’ – rose to become one of the richest economists of the German Reich. His son Heinz, born in 1904 and a businessman with a doctorate, enjoyed his life in financial independence thanks to his father. In January 1938 he ordered a chassis fitted with a type 328 engine from the Bayerische-Motoren-Werke AG (BMW).

The 34-year-old offspring had something very special in mind. He got the chassis delivered from the BMW plant in Eisenach via the dealer ‘Motorenwagen’ based in Kassel, from where it was directly handed to the renowned body manufacturer ‘Wendler’ in Reutlingen. The Reutlingen-based company with its nearly 100 employees realized several designs of Baron Reinhard Koenig-Fachsenfeld, who built up a reputation as a proven specialist in the field of streamlined car bodies in those years. For the BMW 328 substructure Wendler drew a very pleasing, characterized by strong curves, design,

whose striking eye-catcher were the three headlights. Several air inlet openings and the missing bumpers completed the front optics. The finished BMW 328 was handed over to Dr. Heinz Rostberg, but due to the war he could not enjoy it for long. After the war, the car was found in France, where it passed through various hands and finally became publicly known at a retro fair in 1976. There, the BMW was “rediscovered” and a German BMW connoisseur had a purchase contract concluded on site and a down payment deposited. However, the great hope of owning the unique BMW 328 soon fell apart, because suddenly the French state interfered in the matter and disallowed the export to Germany!

Perhaps it was precisely this decision by the French that led to politicians in Germany, especially in Bavaria, feeling called to attend to the matter regarding the BMW. Again, the precise backgrounds remained unrevealed and also the masterminds did not become known even though now and then the name

of the then Bavarian Prime Minister – Franz-Josef Strauss – was mentioned!. But the fact was that in 1978 the unique 328 BMW was suddenly in possession of the ‘Deutsches Museum’ in Munich and is still there today!

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