

# INTRO of the 8 Roadster and the X7

My son-in-law Todd has leased BMWs for the past ten or twelve years. The last two were well equipped X5s from Laurel BMW in Westmont. He and a guest were invited by NA to an unveiling last night of the 8 roadster, this one a convertible, and an X7. He knows of my interest in BMWs and invited me as his guest. It went from 6 to 9 pm at the Hilton Chicago Oak Brook on Midwest Ave. in Westmont. Actually, it seems like mislabeling. When I look at Google maps it seems to me that the hotel and golf course are in Westmont but the hotel has been named Hilton/Oak Brook resort. And the road you turn off to enter the property is called Cass Ave. Either way it's at the far southern end of Oak Brook on Midwest or the northern edge of Westmont on Cass.

We entered the ballroom when they opened the doors and we spoke to NA's Philip Wilcox for a few minutes. He did the talking during the unveiling. His presentation was introduced by a woman from NA but we didn't talk to her and I couldn't see her name tag. I didn't catch her name when she introduced herself. There was a three piece group with a singer playing an assortment of songs.

I was very impressed. I don't think NA would ever do anything like this for the 3 series customers. There was food galore and a full bar in the center of the room operating on three sides. But it wasn't perfect. They didn't have any lemonade so I had orange juice. There were several waiters walking around with hors d'oeuvres and three or four tables, each about twelve feet wide and each with a type of food. The first had something labeled flatbreads that looked like pizza ingredients atop something. The second had something like entrees and vegetables but smaller and fancier. The third had desserts. One side of the dessert table had chocolate cake, carrot cake, and cheesecake above and cookies, chocolate spirals on pretzel sticks, and some other things below.

I unfortunately took a piece of carrot cake before I saw the other side had cannoli. The dessert table had an ice sculpture of the 8 series grill. Or perhaps it was the X7. They look the same to me. The ice sculpture fins slanted rearward at the top as do the grills on the two cars. It reminded me that I noticed the grill on a 3 series from 2012 or so was rather straight up and down. I wondered about that and asked an NA person at the next auto show I attended and the guy said it's a safety feature required by German law. If you hit a pedestrian the impact will be spread out, minimizing injury.

The presentation started about 7 pm so we had quite a bit of informal time. We talked to an NA lady stationed at the X5 with no name-tag and I asked her how NA decided whom to invite. She said they asked the Chicagoland dealers who were likely X7 and 8 series customers and NA marketing invited some too. I asked if there was going to be a showing for the local dealers and she said they'll be there later in the evening. They were inviting the 'dealership principals'.

Todd noticed a fine point about the X7. If you open both side doors and look at the top of the B pillar you see two 'embossed' characters about two inches high: X7. The color is the same as the body color so you have to rely on shadows to see them. We looked at the X5 and saw the same thing. While at the X5 we asked the NA lady and she said the X3 has similar indentations. The X7 hood has two raised areas from front to back. I suppose a hood that large could easily flex without them.

The X7 will sell for \$70,000 or \$90,000 depending on whether you choose the six or eight cylinder engine. It's a long, tall vehicle with very large wheels. Todd thought we were told 22 inch wheels.

I read in Wikipedia that the G20 3 series has a double wishbone front suspension. That means no more MacPherson strut. I looked under the front fender of these two cars and each has a wishbone at the top so they, too, have no MacPherson strut. The lady at the X5 said the G20 will be available in March. I'm hoping it's on display at the Chicago auto show.

At one time I walked back to the front of the X7 and noticed the the left and right headlights were different. The two 'rings' around, well around three sides, of each headlight on the car's right side were on and those on the left side were off. It was this way for at least a couple of minutes and I couldn't figure out why.

I sat in the 8 series and, of course, it has a very low seating position with the legs straight forward. There was almost no space for a rear seat passenger's knees. The upper outside corner of the passenger seat, and perhaps the driver's seat, has a fabric strap with a loop. If you pull the strap upward a motor slides the seat forward and the seat-back pivots forward making it easier for the rear seat passenger to enter. The trunk is narrow but goes surprisingly far forward. I think Todd understood when he asked if I thought you could put a golf bag inside. "Yes; probably two if there were no cart". If I heard correctly this car will sell for \$126,000.

Both cars have or are available with laser headlights. Why laser? I don't know all the reasons but the laser headlights, despite the complication, take up less space and generate brighter light while consuming less power. Don't lasers damage retinas when you look directly at them? Yes, but you don't. You don't look at the laser because the laser light is not permitted to exit the car. The laser shines onto a reflector and thence to yellow phosphorus which fluoresces, generating bright, white light. That light is sent to another reflector which is then directed onto the road. If the laser separates from its housing the laser is turned off.

As a bonus for attending we received, the next day, e-mail messages with a number good for a \$1,000 reduction in price. There are some limitations such as not applicable to the 8 series or X7 and there's a time limit though the cutoff date wasn't stated.

Sorry for the quality of the photos. I didn't think to bring my camera so I used my iPhone. The lighting was very poor and flash didn't help much.

JIM JELKE

