

# Building Icons

## BMW Welt

Many iconic brands from the world of fashion, technology, media or the automotive industry try to present their character also out of their primary field of activity. One way of doing that is to project the specifics of the brand into architecture. This option was also the one selected by German automotive giant BMW, which has gradually built a complex of four architecturally unique buildings in its headquarters in Munich. The first one is a four-cylinder tower where the headquarters of the company are based. The second building is the BMW Museum, reminiscent of the legendary brand logo, followed by the BMW Classic building and the latest BMW Welt.

**B**MW Welt was based on an architectural competition of 2001. The COOP HIMMELB(L)AU Wolf D. Prix & Partner studio in Vienna with its deconstructivist design project beat out more than 270 designs. According to the chief architect, the building should not be only an exhibition hall, but also a temple, a marketplace, and a place to meet and exchange knowledge. The source of inspiration for the design was the citadel of Acropolis in Athens. The main purpose of the building is to serve as a delivery centre for new BMW owners, a showroom of the current BMW models (BMW, Mini, Rolls-Royce, BMW Motorrad) and a space for the official events of the company.



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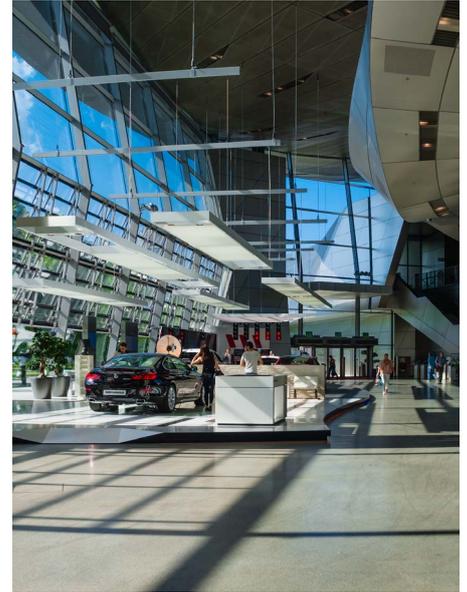


The entire BMW campus is located next to the Olympic Park in Munich. The most dominant features of the Park are the Olympic Stadium, built according to the project of Günter Behnisch and Frei Otto, and the Olympic Tower. With its futuristic look, BMW Welt has greatly enhanced the character of the existing built-up area. The construction of BMW Welt started in 2003 and the original plan was to open it before the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Due to the delay and simultaneous construction of the BMW Museum, the opening ceremony was moved to October 2007. The construction costs of the entire building exceeded € 100 million.

The most distinctive feature of the building is the double cone, which resembles an asymmetrical hourglass. It is located at the main entrance on the south-eastern side of the building, it reaches a height of 28 meters and has a diameter of 45 meters at its widest point. Experts consider it one of the most venturous architectural achievements at present. It acts as the main supporting structure for the roof, which houses more than 16,000 m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels, thanks to which the building is able to cover a large part of its own power consumption. The outer shell of the building is made of a combination of semi-transparent glass and stainless steel panels. The largest part of the interior is the main hall, whose design is complemented by a monumental staircase, curved bridges and balconies that appear to float in space.

One of the primary purposes of BMW Welt is to be the centre for handing over cars to their new owners. Annually, approximately 50,000 clients use this possibility. Due to the unique feeling that clients experience when they see their new car for the first time in a special hall equipped with a stage where the vehicle is transported by a lift from an underground garage, they are willing to travel from other continents as well. Another function of the building is to act as a park for fans of the brands in the BMW Group. All current models, from motorcycles, BMW, Mini and Rolls-Royce cars, to the current F1 racing car are exhibited here. In addition to the presentation of vehicles, BMW Welt also has a special interactive exposition for children, design studio and technologies of the state-of-the-art cars or several restaurants, among which EssZimmer, the holder of two Michelin stars, stands out. Along with visiting other representative BMW buildings, such as the BMW Museum and BMW Classic, visitors can get a comprehensive overview of the brand's history and present. In addition to the car-related activities, BMW Welt also offers the opportunity to rent part of the building for private events, e.g. premieres of films, parties or conferences are held here. Annually, BMW Welt hosts over 450 events.

Thanks to the construction of this architecturally venturous centre, BMW has become even more interesting for



its potential customers and managed to differentiate significantly from its competitors. In the first year of its opening, the centre welcomed approximately 2.2 million visitors. Nowadays, more than 3 million people a year visit this complex. With this number, BMW Welt is among the most visited tourist attractions in Bavaria. For comparison, the Neuschwanstein Castle is visited by 1.5 million tourists a year. In the first decade since its opening, BMW Welt has received more than 20 million visitors. Most of them have come from abroad, mainly the USA, Asia and the Middle East. Besides BMW, the whole city also profits from the car fans' arrivals and becomes more attractive for visitors.

## BMW Welt in numbers:

**2007**

Opened in

**73 000 m<sup>2</sup>**

Total area

**3 000 000**

Number of visitors in 2016

more than  
**100 000 000 €**

Construction costs

**800 kW**

Capacity of the solar power plant