

Document fourni par le site www.e21.free.fr





2002 BAUR TARGA

Prod/built 1971-'74, 2713
Engine iron block, sohc alloy head
 1990cc in-line four, 98bhp @
 5500rpm, 116lb ft @ 3000rpm
Transmission four-speed manual
Suspension: front MacPherson
 struts, anti-roll bar rear semi-
 trailing arms, coil springs,
 telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar
Steering worm and roller
Brakes discs front, drums rear
Length 170in **Width** 62.5in
Height 53.5in **Weight** 2337lb
Top speed 106mph
0-60mph 10.9 secs **Price new**
 £3499 **Now** £8000 (concours)



SHOW STOPPER

Hairdresser Barbara Frak bought her '02 nine years ago, two years after its major rebuild. At first it was an everyday car, but now its miles are mostly between shows.

The brakes have caused some problems but, as Frak says, they're not up to much anyway. Spares have proved difficult, so she acquired another car for parts. The car's mint condition has caused headaches, such as when it needed a clutch and no one wanted to work on it. But the worst problem was when the unfastened hardtop flew off and was mangled badly.



Sharp-handling 2002 loses little in rigidity to saloon; it was Baur's first Targa. Alpina sports wheel is from later car; 100+ alloys were UK market fitting, a sop to help justify high price



As an aspirational icon for the upwardly mobile, the baby BMW drophead has been top of the heap for more than three decades. For many the E30 325i is still *the* BMW soft top and, even 11 years after its succession, there are still many residents of Chelsea, Kensington – and Brixton – who plainly prefer it to the later models. But there was BMW fresh air pre 3-series that's less common, as the Munich firm had been opening up its junior models since the late '60s.

The 1600-2 appeared in 1966, and the 2002 in '68. From January '68, a pretty 1600 full convertible was offered, built by Karosserie Baur of Osnabrück. It was joined three years later by the equivalent chopped 2-litre. Unhappily, this coincided with a time of increasingly paranoid safety legislation in the US, and concerns that open cars could be banned altogether led to the latter's abbreviated lifespan of only six months. Just 200 were made.

The idea of an open '02 was too nice to bury, however, and in July 1971 the full convertible was replaced by one with a top reinforced by a steel hoop. This provided roll protection for the occupants and returned much of the stiffness lost with the roof. A version of this had appeared on the Triumph Stag the year before, but that used a central bar to connect the hoop to the windscreen surround, where the Baur used slim side members, thus retaining the door window apertures.

The '02 Targa, Cabriolet, or Targa-top cabriolet, as it was variously referred to, was a desirable car, and had to be: it cost as much as an E-type. Over a four-year production life, 2317 were sold – only ever as a single-carburettor 2002: neither a twin-carb ti nor mechanically injected ti was offered.

From its functional four-square looks to details such as the fluted door handles and blue Baur badges on the wings, it is a car of real character. This was Baur's first Targa, and it is executed differently to the later ones. The roll hoop forms part of the roof's outer surface, not being covered by the removable section as on later models, and houses small windows that wind open an inch. The rear section folds into a space behind the seats, and a tonneau attached to the rear seat back pops over to leave it neat and flush with the boot. The front panel is steel, covered to match the hood section, and it has an attractive pleated lining. It unclips and stows neatly on lugs in the top of the boot, robbing only a little luggage space. Later versions slot in behind the windscreen surround, but on the '02 it clamps on top. This means that if you forget to close the catches it will launch itself at speed. Another oddity of this design is that water runs off the hood into troughs inside the car, exiting down pipes. Their blockage must have led to the death by rust of many examples.

Mechanically the '02 is straightforward, using the classic layout established by the Neue Klasse saloons of 1961 and every BMW since – struts, a variation on trailing arms and an inline overhead cam engine. On the move it feels simple and honest. With a willing engine delivering enough power to have fun, and a wonderfully tight, mechanical feel to the gearchange, it's rewarding to row along. The ride and handling are similarly taut, giving the feeling of a light car on firm suspension. The structure is commendably rigid, losing little to the saloon. The only real negative is an entirely uninspiring engine note.

Stepping from the '02 to the E21 323i, it is plain how far the game moved on with the first 3-series. When introduced in 1975 there was criticism that the 'three' lacked the character and handling of its much-loved sibling, but the 323i feels an altogether more grown-up motor car. For a start there's that silky six-cylinder sound, with just enough volume from the twin tail pipes and, as soon as you get rolling, there is a pleasing sensation that honesty has been replaced with sophistication. Where the '02 feels small, the 323i feels like a big car that just happens to be small. Quiet and refined, it's smooth – and a perfect candidate for trans-continental touring.

On introduction, the top of the range was the four-cylinder 320, the six-cylinder 320 and 323i arriving in '77 and Baur versions only becoming available in 1980. The 323i quickly gained a reputation for being a tail-happy, undrivable hooligan of a car lacking the older model's finesse. It was damned fast for the time. Stuffing a powerful six-cylinder engine into such a small body, still fitted with '02-type semi-trailing arm rear suspension, made for an entertaining drive... and provided the perfect opportunity for fools to make fools of themselves, even in the dry.

The car launches to 60mph in what feels like a short 8.3 secs and, where speed limits allow, it will cruise comfortably all day at more than 100mph. The suspension is soft, giving an endearing habit of squatting and sticking its nose in the air when you plant your right foot. Throw it at a corner and it just hunkers down and gets on with it, in the satisfying way that only a good rear-driver can, this car's limited slip differential no doubt helping out. Only lifting off in corners is a no-no, worse on early American cars that suffered from soggy spring rates and less cornering power than the '02. The limousine ride is slightly spoiled by the odd shimmy of scuttle shake, but it takes a lot to really upset it.

The top differs from the '02, in having the rear windows behind the roll hoop and the front section made of glassfibre. The hood part folds on top of the rear shelf, and even with the tonneau popped over to tidy it up it still looks like Quasimodo's uncle. Small drivers will see little but a hump in the mirror.

Hump aside, Baur did a good job. Top up, the car is tidy and only above 60mph is there a slight rustle from the rear hood section, but there is none of that sensation of movement that you get in a conventional soft top. In fact it simply feels like a saloon.

Other advantages to the Baur arrangement show why some people opted for it over the later factory E30 convertible. There are four configurations: top up; top down; front open, rear up, Targa style; and top on, rear down – which can be a godsend in really hot sun. You can even use a roof rack.

From 1982 the E30 took over to become the definitive 3-series. In 1985 the 325i replaced the 323i at the top of the range and, in '86, convertibles arrived in Britain, the model continuing until 1991. Baur versions had been available, selling only in limited numbers – but this one was built by BMW. The hood takes only seconds to drop, disappearing under a steel tonneau, and with the windows down it becomes naked to the waist.

BMW went to great lengths to ensure that the hood was a rigid structure, with 28 Teflon



323i BAUR TARGA

Prod/built 1978-'82, 137,137 (all types) **Engine** iron-block, alloy head sohc 2316cc in-line 'six', 139bhp @ 5300rpm, 148lb ft @ 4000rpm **Transmission** five-speed manual **Suspension: front** MacPherson struts, anti-roll bar **rear** semi-trailing arms, coil springs, concentric telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar **Steering** rack and pinion **Brakes** discs all round **Length** 171.5in **Width** 63.4in **Height** 54.3in **Weight** 2530lb **Top speed** 126mph **0-60mph** 8.3 secs **Price new** £10,547 ('80) **Now** £3500



GRAPHIC DETAIL

Illustrator and writer Tim Slade's 323i has been an everyday car for more than three years. It has been to Spain, round eastern Europe, even all the way to Transylvania.

Two years ago it was treated to new wings, sills and a repaint, and inside has Recaros from an M535. Mechanically, problems have been minor but sometimes niggly. Rough running took months to track down to an incorrect coil.

Tim loves its pace and refinement, and enjoys its rarity. "And the image is less 'in your face' than some BMWs."



Chunky E21 first 3-series oozes '70s looks, hood is less elegant than its predecessor. Fast in a straight line: tail-happy handling is tempered by limited-slip diff on this car. Recaros from an M535

bearings, and a complex steel frame. It can't compete with the hard top of the Baur for silence, but it is pretty good. Although of a three-layer construction, the hood is unlined and, top up, this gives a surprisingly low-rent feel to the interior, with the structure of the frame visible all around you.

The classic square-cut 3-series feels much wider and lower than the first 323i, but it is only 35mm broader. The dash is almost unchanged from the E21, but the trim looks more modern and more substantial. The optional, heavily bolstered Recaros look good and grip you firmly. Start up and the exhaust is much deeper, exiting through twin large-bore pipes on the same side. This is a fast car: 0 to 60mph coming up in 8.1 secs, and going on to 135mph. The saloons were quicker, but a lot of engineering went into stiffening the shell, and it adds considerable weight. It seems to work, as there is only the occasional tremor of scuttle shake. The suspension is firm, with a well-controlled ride, and a thoroughly secure and chuckable feel to the handling. It all feels more modern than the E21, but it comes over as a little less smooth and refined than the earlier car.

The 2002 is a surefire classic, with status and values to match. Its '60s design, feel and abilities make it a great car to cherish, but perhaps not to live with every day. The 325i thoroughly deserves its popularity, and it is everything that you hoped it would be. It's the 323i Baur that's the Aunt Sally. Unfashionably middle-aged, the first 3-series is a forgotten model, most having succumbed to abuse and rust, and the few that you see around are almost always on their last legs. The E21 323i is a capable and likeable car, and in Baur form it has both charm and practicality. It is a shame that time and fashion have dealt so harshly with it. ♦

Thanks to the BMW Car Club: call 01225 709009

ALPINA'S M3 BAITER

If you fancy something rarer than an E30 M3 ragtop, and about as powerful, Alpina's C2 2.7 is just the thing. If you wanted one in 1988, you had to stump up another £6995 plus VAT on top of your new 325i. This car's first owner must have been loaded because, before conversion, it was already a rare Motorsport version, and had set her back £28,950. Only 108 were produced, including saloons. It sports fat Alpina wheels and side skirts, plus a special grade of leather, Alpina wheel and gear knob – and a numbered plaque on the dash. The roof drops electrically.

Start up, and Alpina's engine work – stroking to 2.7 litres, revised head, oversized valves, Mahle pistons plus lumpy cam – makes itself known, with a race-car idle. It's an inch lower than the standard car, with Bilsteins all round.

Pottering along with this car's four-speed auto in 'E', it's only the exhaust that keeps you sharp. Turn the knob to 'S', and all hell breaks loose. It holds to the red line, and won't change into fourth until you turn the knob to 'E'. The

quoted 210bhp feels conservative: the manual could do 0-60mph in 6.9 secs and 145mph, the auto only fractionally slower.



325i CABRIO

Prod/built 72.586/1985-'90

Engine iron block, alloy head 2494cc sohc in-line 'six', 171bhp @ 5800rpm, 167lb ft @ 4000rpm

Transmission five-speed manual

Suspension: front MacPherson struts, anti-roll bar rear semi-trailing arms, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar

Steering rack and pinion

Brakes discs all round

Length 171.7in Width 65.9in

Height 53.7in Weight 2690lb

Top speed 132mph

0-60mph 7.4 secs Price new

£16,495 ('86) Now £5500



NET BENEFITS

Paul Stanfield is an Internet manager, and can't stop buying cars. He has owned the 325i convertible for less than a year in which time little has gone wrong. A mixture problem was sorted out by a dealer for £30 (the car qualifies for BMW's Four Plus scheme). Parts have also proved to be cheaper than he expected.

Stanfield says these cars provide incredible value for money right now, still being second-hand, rather than classic. "But the build quality is not a patch on Mercedes," he reckons.



Baur did early E30 Targas, then BMW developed full convertible in-house, shell is strengthened extensively. Optional Recaros; double locks for security; cross-spoke alloys de rigueur for '80s