



the columns that support thesmartclub web site

... be part of the world's largest club for all things smart

It's taken a while but I'm pleased to launch the latest copy of our newsletter, **4site** - **this Summer 2005 issue is our largest yet.**

Whilst our September 2004 issue of **4site** had over **14,600** copies downloaded in addition to the online viewing, our January 2005 issue was even more popular online (over 20,000 unique accesses) - we thank everyone for their support.

It's been a tremendously busy few months since our last issue of **4site**, made obvious by the fact that this issue is so late. Time and resources within thesmartclub's organisational team have been stretched to the limit and coupled with the launch of our new MessageBoard, time has been at a premium.

Our previous MessageBoard service had been run on our behalf by EzBoard Inc, USA and whilst it had been fairly stable over the last 4-5 years, costs had risen significantly - the costs associated with that old MessageBoard related to the number of visitors and the amount we were having to pay to prevent 'pop up' third party advertising,. It soon became clear that we were effectively in a 'no win' situation ... the more Members and visitors we had, the more expensive the EzBoard service would be with no additional services being offered and no direct control over the existing services available. Then, in June 2005, EzBoard suffered an unfortunate attack where a large volume of data, including their backups, was compromised - it affected hundreds of MessageBoard services around the world. thesmartclub was then faced with an immediate opportunity to work quickly to develop and launch a replacement service and even transfer the messages from EzBoard (who run under their own unique Board protocol). Our new MessageBoard service was launched only a few weeks prior to us having to commit to at least another three months EzBoard costs. The great news is that our new MessageBoard services is far simpler to use, much more stable and can be tweaked and changed as needs of our Members and Visitors change. My thanks go to the large number of individuals who assisted us in testing and the transfer of data.

2005 may well be more than half completed, but there are still a number of Events and features to come up this year and, of course, even more Events and new Member facilities being planned for 2006.

As ever, I hope that this additional information on forthcoming Events and activities provides you with a **4site** into 'all things smart'.

Al Young
Chairman & Managing Director
thesmartclub Ltd

In this issue you have a **4site** into:

- Review of visit to smartville, **Hambach**, France
- Review of 5th Birthday Party at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon
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REVIEW

Hambach 2005

It seems so long ago now but since the last issue of **4site**, we successfully completed another annual pilgrimage to the smart production facility at Hambach, France with accommodation again being provided at our super hotel in Saarbrücken, Germany.

Our thanks go to everyone who not only made this trip possible but to everyone who participated in such a friendly, fun and professional manner making this another really enjoyable visit to the heart of smart.

You will see from the 2006 Events below that next year's visit is already being planned.

5th Birthday Event

Although it took around six months of planning and endless sleepless nights, the weather is something that can never be planned and as such, we are grateful to whoever it was that ensured a very hot sunny day to be scheduled for our 5th Anniversary celebrations at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, UK. It was a superb turn out of smart car owners and enthusiasts, with a range of amazing cars on show, a variety of third party companies and trade stands, the attractions of the museum itself, the karting track, the 4x4 area and, of course, Russ Swift's amazing driving skills demonstrations .. sure it was only a 1.1 forfour but it was still amazing control!



To everyone who participated in the Aston Martin/Land Rover Proving Ground 'on track' opportunity, I hope you found it enjoyable and it's certainly something that was close to a very unique opportunity.

Although logically we can never have another '5th Anniversary' we are confident that we will again use this facility at the Heritage Motor centre for some future major Event for thesmartclub.

(Picture courtesy of Paul Maskens, pmaskens@mvps.org)

Forthcoming 2005 Events

TrackDay 2005

It is with regret that we announce the cancellation of our 2005 TrackDay at Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground. This would be the 5th year the Event was running and support, interest and enthusiasm for the Event continues to grow year on year. The simple fact is that thesmartclub prides itself on ensuring total professionalism in all Event logistics to make each Major Event run as smoothly and safely as possible. Our time and resources have been stretched to the limit following Hambach 2005 and our 5th anniversary Event at the Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon. There is no respite with the forthcoming London to Brighton Event on September 25th. In the circumstances, rather than us run a Trackday Event where anything less than 100% of all logistics had been considered, we took the decision to cancel the 2005 Event but we have confirmed with Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground that we will be holding our TrackDay at that venue in September 2006.

London to Brighton 2005

It's that time of year again when months of planning, liaison with countless local authorities and officials culminate in a drive from London to Brighton, an Event jointly organised by thesmartclub ltd and DaimlerChryslerUK/smart and supported by DaimlerChryslerUK/smart.



This year's Event, scheduled to run on September 25th 2005, starts from Thorpe Park, London and will again finish at Brighton racecourse, Brighton. For the details and rationale behind using both venues, please see our 'FAQ' pages available from the main L2B links on our homepage.

Again, there will be considerable Press interest and participation in this year's Event and we can only hope that the weather is as kind (if not quite as hot) as was presented to us at Gaydon.

Remember, registration for the Event is not compulsory but it will ensure that you are kept up to date as much as possible, are supplied with your stickers and entry pack and that you have the opportunity to apply for one of our three competition categories.

Remember also that unlike the majority of other large L2B Events, entry for this Event is **100% free** of charge so register now and be part of one of this year's major smart Events.

Full details are available via our homepage at www.thesmartclub.com and additional information will be made available via www.thesmartclub.info

... and want some more L2B drives?

The phrase L2B has become synonymous with London to Brighton but, as with all things smart, there are, of course, a number of alternatives and the following Events are also running in September, details of which can be found via our MessageBoard (Meetings Forum)

L2B - Leeds to Bridlington scheduled to take place on **11th September 2005**

Scottish L2B - Linlithgow to Balmaha scheduled to take place on **18th September 2005**



Brabus Visit, Bottrop, Germany

BRABUS®

Back in 2002, thesmartclub visited the Brabus facilities in Bottrop, Germany and a few of you reading this Newsletter were fortunate enough to have been on that trip. After many months of discussion, I am pleased to advise that thesmartclub has again been invited back to Brabus for a tour of their facilities and workshops in Bottrop, Germany.



There will be a limited number of places available on this trip and online application forms will be made available soon. This is a rare opportunity to see the range of areas and facilities at Brabus, Germany

DATES

EVENT DATE : The dates are expected to be late October 2005, most likely 22nd to 25th Oct although this will be confirmed asap.

EVENT FORMAT

UK Accommodation will be provided in Ashford, Kent the night before travel through the Channel Tunnel

We anticipate we will have space for **25 cars** only comprising a maximum of **50 people** on this trip.

Germany accommodation will again being provided and current plans indicate that we will again use the superb Marriot Courtyard Hotel in Bottrop which is just a short distance from the Brabus facilities. Two night's accommodation in this hotel is on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis with secure underground car parking.



Again, the trip will be operated on a 'package' basis providing you with UK accommodation, Channel Tunnel crossing, two night dinner bed and breakfast accommodation in Bottrop, a tour of the Brabus facilities etc.

**VERY VERY IMPORTANT
INFORMATION**

This particular Event will **NOT** follow the usual 'complete' package standards of thesmartclub's previous trips such as Hambach. We will **NOT** be providing Road books, en route checkpoints or support vehicles. In the circumstances, we advocate that this trip will be suitable only for those individuals who are confident with driving in Continental Europe, have good navigation capabilities and are confident on travelling between destinations whilst abroad. We will be providing you with accommodation in the UK prior to departure, cross channel travel (via the Tunnel), a suggested route to Bottrop, half board accommodation in Germany and the facilities at Brabus Bottrop.

Costs for this trip are being finalised and you can obtain further details from **Mike Baguley** at events@thesmartclub.com

2006 Events

Hambach 2006

Planning for next year's visit to the heart of smart in Hambach France is already underway and dates are likely to be mid-end May 2006.

As with all previous years, the trip will be a total packaged solution providing you with UK accommodation (where required) prior to departure, cross channel ferry, accommodation in Saarbrücken, factory visit and tour, full comprehensive Road Books for the complete return journey and much more.

Application forms are likely to launch in January 2006 as soon as we have dates and logistics finalised with Hambach, France. As ever, it's a trip that is sure to be popular, over-booked and great fun ... we already have around half the people who went in 2005 expressing an interest to return in 2006!

We'll post details as they are known and you can be certain that you will have ample advance notice of any application forms going live.

Klagenfurt 18th to 20th August 2006



Many of you will already know of the annual European major smart Event in Klagenfurt, Austria.

The Event is commercially run by 'smart of Austria' and involves dozens of smart car clubs from across Europe travelling to Klagenfurt for a long weekend of highly professionally organised fun, driving, partying and a bunch of smart related activities.

This year's Event takes place soon (19th to 21st August) and is already looking to be one of the largest gathering of smart cars.

Like many other European clubs, thesmartclub is pulling together a 2006 package to visit the Klagenfurt Event next year.

DATES

The 2006 Event is scheduled to take place **August 18th to August 20th 2006** and we'll be one of over 20 car clubs attending.

EVENT FORMAT

As with all our Major Event planning and packages, we'll will offer you a total solution, getting you there and back plus 'a bit more'. The Event pack will be limited to around 20 cars and will comprise:

- UK accommodation prior to departure (where required)
- Cross Channel ferry
- Accommodation in Germany en route
- A stop over in **Salzburg, Austria** where we are planning a show of our smart cars in the centre of the old town of Salzburg. We are regular visitors to Salzburg and have a number of key contacts already in place within that city - the Porsche owners club held a display of their cars in the old town earlier this year and it's a superb venue.
- smart of Austria then have a full program of activities from the Friday night to the Sunday in and around the Klagenfurt area. An example of the **2005 highlights** for this year's Klagenfurt weekend are shown below
- On our return journey, we will again stop over in Salzburg and will arrange a sightseeing tour of Salzburg and

surrounding areas (this will be by coach)

- Accommodation in Germany on the way back to the UK

Full details will be finalised over the coming months but, similar to Hambach, we'll have road directions/ guidance and support for you en route. We stress that we'll be only one of several dozen car clubs attending this Event and there are an range of other options of arriving at Klagenfurt (!) but we know the support there is for Event logistics similar to Hambach and we are confident that there will be significant interest in thesmartclub's package.

Example of **THIS year's 'smart of Austria's' Klagenfurt weekend itinerary upon arrival at Klagenfurt:**

Friday

- welcome by mayor of city plus welcome briefcase containing all information and coupons for the weekend

Saturday

- Tour of old town
- Competition
- Brabus exhibition and simulators
- Drive to Lake Corso (est 1500 smarts)
- Visit to Castle Landskron
- More competitions, driving skills and trophies
- Bathing, food, relaxing, smart shopping, free entrance to museums - where you see the smart logo it means preferential pricing
- Moonlight cruise on Woerther Lake on old steamer with drinks, music and shuttle service (limited places)
- Caribbean 'Grill and Chill' evening
- Bob Marley's "The Wailers" live and more into the early hours of Sunday morning

Sunday

- smart brunch and snacks
- Brabus test drives and exhibitions
- Prize giving and smart awards
- smart Goodie bags and attractions

Details and application forms will be launched early 2006 and we look forward to seeing you at this major European Event.

TrackDay 2006

As mentioned above in our 2005 Events section, I am pleased to advise that our 2006 Track and Drive Day experience is scheduled to take place in September 2006. Although it's some time away yet, it's a tremendous opportunity to drive your smart car on a totally closed circuit, in safe open areas where all other cars on track are smart cars. Unlike many conventional 'TrackDays', our Event is restricted solely to smart cars and is non competitive. We will have an increased range of driving opportunities for you in 2006 but importantly, it's a great opportunity for you to become familiar with your car in a safe, closed environment, free from other traffic and speed cameras (!).

Details will be posted on our web site during the first quarter of 2006.

... and

of course will will have our additional local and national Events throughout the year including the 2006 L2B (!).

NEWS

Filseck Castle / Stuttgart

On June 12th, 2005 I was fortunate enough to be invited to have lunch and a 'Round Table' meeting with **Anders Jensen, Vice President, Marketing & Sales, smart gmbh**. The venue, **Filseck Castle near Stuttgart** provided an excellent backdrop to ensure both open and honest discussions about smart past and present and equally, discussion with my key colleagues from other German smart clubs.

Anders provided an overview of the rationale behind the smart restructuring which has been heavily reported in the European Press. It was crucial that smart looks towards reducing costs to improve overall margin and this is being tackled on two key fronts namely costs of people and resources plus a review of the product range being offered under the smart brand.

On the former, the majority of redundancies within the smart group arise at Boblingen across a number of the company's operating divisions and a smaller number at Hambach. The good news is that individuals affected by these redundancies are being looked after by DaimlerChrysler with a view to potential relocation elsewhere within the DaimlerChrysler organisation.



Reviewing the product range under the smart brand meant some crucial decisions had to be made. The number of products marketed under the smart brand had expanded rapidly over the past five years combined with entry into new global markets however, as a result of the financial review, it was now time to balance product availability versus consumer demand and consumer requirements.

Many dealerships across Europe had formulated their strategies over the coming years on the assumption that the product range would remain unchanged and smart HQ in Boblingen are now working closely with such dealerships to develop revised strategies following the restructuring announcement and revision to the model range

The forfour launch was one of the most successful product launches across Europe although the success was impacted by the speculation and subsequent announcement of the restructuring at smart – that said, the forfour continues to penetrate into a highly competitive sector of the small car family market.

There has been much speculation and comment about the decision to cease production of the Roadster and Roadster Coupe. The decision to cease production is totally unconnected with any production problems that had been encountered with the car (leaks etc) and the Roadster/Roadster Coupe was the second highest selling car in its class in many European countries. However, consumer demand for this type of product has slowed considerably over the last year – this is due chiefly to the European economic and political climate. The Roadster/Roadster Coupe is generally purchased as an 'additional' car supporting a larger/family vehicle. Consumers have less confidence in the economic future and demand for such 'additional' vehicles has been dropping. This is made clear by Ford's (somewhat quiet) strategy of stopping production of the Ford Ka Roadster with similar reviews underway for other similar models from other manufacturers.

In addition, the formore (SUV) production also ceased. This car was developed in Germany, was to be manufactured in Brazil and then shipped to the USA. The whole process was complex, expensive, the environmental issues were in contrast to the values under the smart brand - overall, the operation was not financially viable in its current state.

The smart brand however has an incredibly strong value and it's vitally important for DaimlerChrysler to build upon that smart brand and the smart values. With 750,000 smart customers globally, 80% had never been a customer of the DaimlerChrysler organisation before and as such, it's a hugely important new customer base.

By 2010, 50% of the world car market will be in the small car. The forfour and importantly, the fortwo with its successor in 2007 will help ensure that DaimlerChrysler are a part of that lucrative market.

My thanks must go to Anders and all the team at Stuttgart/Boblingen including Rainer, Heinz and, of course, Katja.

Al Young
Chairman
thesmartclub

DaimlerChryslerUK/smart

Following the successful meetings near Stuttgart, DaimlerChryslerUK/smart held a series of press launches around the Brabus ForFour and RCRcoupe - these sessions also included a key presentation by Jeremy Simpson, head of smart (UK) to outline the UK strategic direction for smart moving forward, recent customer satisfaction surveys, a revised insurance group ratings for fortwo and forfours and the closer integration of smart and Mercedes brand identities. The venue, **Langley Castle** on 7th July 2005, again provided an ideal venue to hear about smart, specifically from a UK perspective.

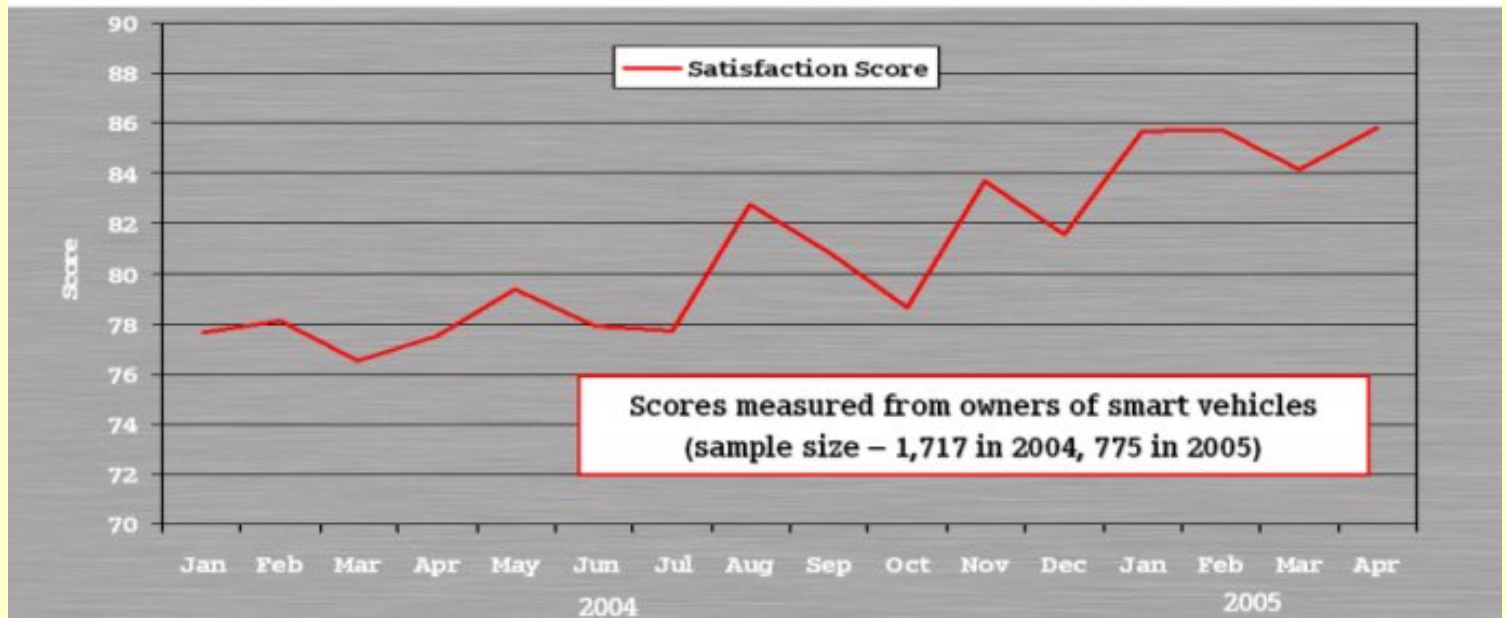


Customer Satisfaction

A recent survey of 2,500 smart owners shows that satisfaction levels with their Mercedes-Benz and smart retailers has improved continuously over the last 18 months.

The survey, carried out by Maven Management*, shows that in January 2004 owners said they were 77% satisfied with their retailer. By May 2005 satisfaction levels had risen to 86%.

smart retailer CSI performance



Jeremy Simpson, Head of smart in the UK and Ireland, said: “We have been totally focussed on improving the customer experience within our network, particularly after feedback from smart owners suggested they were less than happy visiting some Mercedes-Benz and smart retailers.”

“This topic remains a priority for us and we are publishing these results to show that the dramatic steps put in place have yielded results.”

Insurance Group Ratings

DaimlerChrysler UK has also been working behind the scenes with The Association of British Insurers (ABI) on various subjects including vehicle security, parts availability and pricing, and availability of specialist vehicle repair facilities within the Mercedes-Benz and smart network. As a result, all smart fortwo models have been re-classified with lower ABI insurance group ratings**.



Insurance group ratings

> fortwo

fortwo	Old group type	New group type
fortwo coupé pure 50bhp	3A	1E
fortwo coupé pure 61bhp	3A	2E
fortwo coupé pulse 61bhp	3A	2E
fortwo coupé passion 61bhp	4A	3E
fortwo coupé BRABUS	8D	7A
fortwo cabrio pure 61bhp	4A	3E
fortwo cabrio pulse 61bhp	4A	3E
fortwo cabrio passion 61bhp	5A	4E
fortwo cabrio BRABUS	9D	8D

- All insurance ratings of the smart fortwo range have received a lower insurance group rating
- The fortwo coupé pure 50bhp now has an insurance rating of only 1E!



Insurance group ratings

> forfour

forfour	Old group type	New group type
1.0 purestyle 64bhp	-	3E
1.0 coolstyle 64bhp	-	3E
1.5 BRABUS 177bhp	-	16D

- The new forfour 1.0 purestyle and 1.0 coolstyle have received a low insurance group of 3E whilst the forfour BRABUS has been given a rating of 16D which is in-line with its competitors.
- All other forfour insurance ratings have remained unchanged.

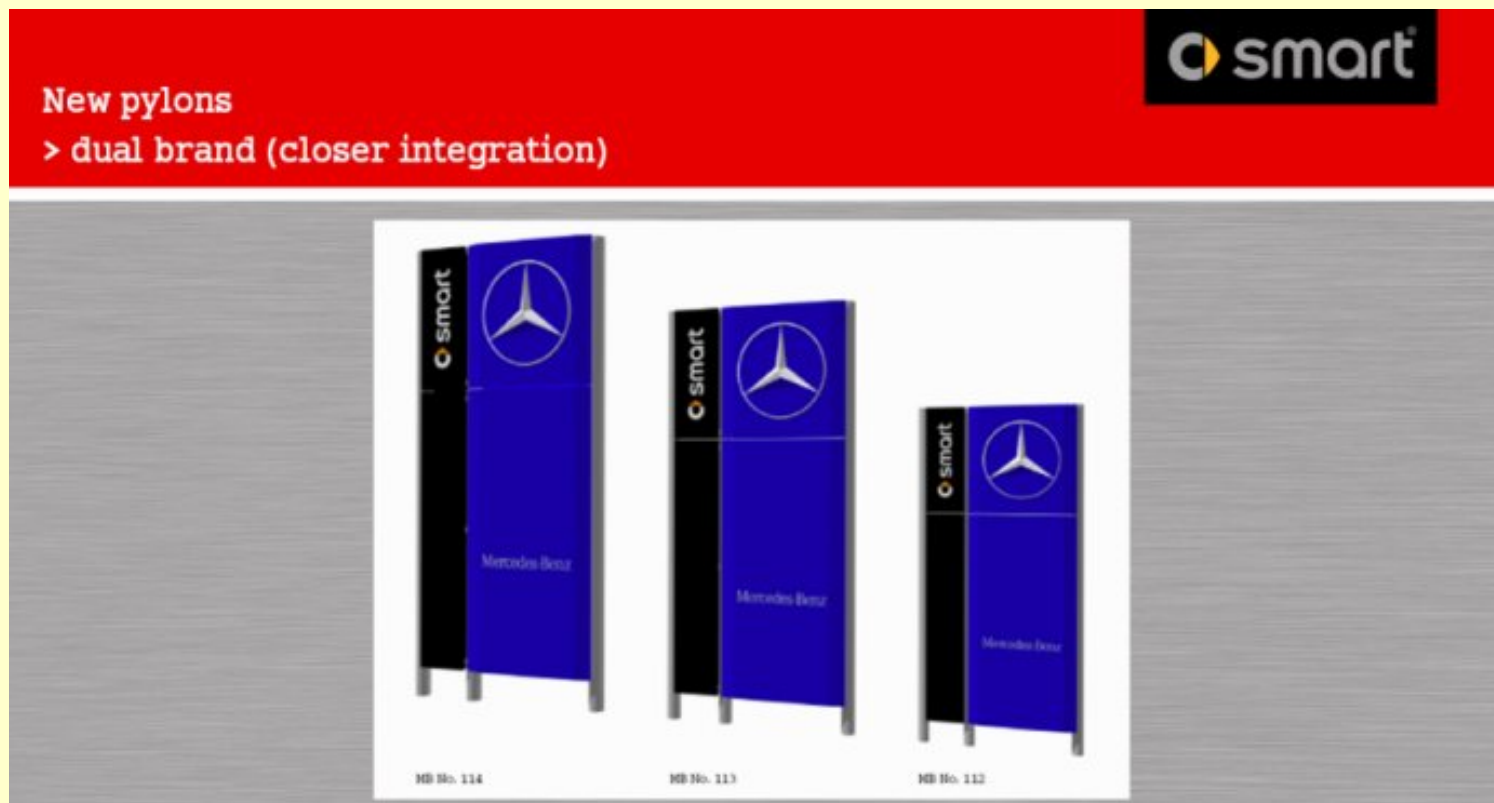
Simpson continued, “Assuming all insurance companies follow the ABI’s guidance, customers will potentially see their insurance renewal several groups lower than at present. This is further proof of DaimlerChrysler’s commitment to create a smart ownership experience that meets the tremendously high standards set by the products.”

* source Maven Management/DCUK

** source Association of British Insurers (ABI)

Closer visual links between Mercedes and smart brands

There has been continued comments and feedback regarding the diversity between the Mercedes and smart brands at many dealerships and DCUK/smart have now announced that new promotional 'pylons' are being established across the network to further strengthen the bonds between Mercedes and smart brands. An example of the new pylons is shown below:



Roadster Production Update

Jeremy Simpson advised that he has secured the ongoing production of 400 Brabus Roadster and Roadster Coupe models to be produced later this year for the UK which will see model availability through 2006. He said, "These models will have some technical and trim changes for the next year with the Roadster selling at £16,995 and the Roadster-Coupe variant at £17,295. We currently have 1,000 Roadsters and Roadster-Coupes in stock to meet customer demand for this year when 2,500 units will be sold with the Brabus versions accounting for 15 per cent of the model mix".

Simpson said, "It is ironic that as soon as DaimlerChrysler announced production of the Smart Roadster was to stop, so UK customer demand increased by 30 per cent hence our request to the manufacturer for them to extend the car's life for us until next year. The Roadster looks as though it will become a future classic ". He added, "This year the UK market for Smart should return to being the third largest in the world behind Germany and Italy".

With regards to model complexity in terms of options, he continued "We are simplifying our model line-up and simplifying the range of options we now have which customers tell us is to confusing. For instance the entry level purestyle ForFour now has six options compared to the 57 previously available". "We are also making it easier and less costly for dealers to operate and take on the Smart franchise. Our original plan was to have 106 dealers and after sales points in the UK but we have now reduced this to 73 points to be in place by 2007. Currently we have 56 dealers but we need to increase our representation and fill open points nationwide and we want to establish Smart outlets in smaller towns as well". "Dealers will now need three-car showrooms or showroom space rather than the six-car requirement we had before and we are considering applications from non Mercedes-Benz franchised dealers for the first time. We are able to offer our dealers better profit margins and a more financially attractive stocking plan".

My thanks must go to Jeremy, Debbie, Sheena and Jim Smith..

Al Young
Chairman
thesmartclub

thesmartclub's WEE TOY in 2005 Monte Carlo Rally

Our smart Roadster (first registered in July 2003) is currently mid preparation for the **2005 Monte Carlo Rally** – a 2000km Event scheduled to take place September this year

Background

Following DaimlerChrysler's decision to cease production of the smart Roadster and smart Roadster Coupe at the end of 2005, Al & Fiona Young (thesmartclub Ltd) decided that entering the Rally would not only generate good publicity for the car but would also be an ideal way to mark thesmartclub's 5th Anniversary year and the 5th year of the smart brand in the UK



Modifications



W66 TOY has already had extensive modifications carried out and our thanks go to **Smarts-R-Us Ltd** for their assistance with a number of key modifications, **Stanley Young BSc FIMechE FIEE** for additional engineering and consultancy work and to **smart of Milton Keynes** for their extensive and technical work carried out on the car to date.

Immediately after thesmartclub's 5th Anniversary Event at the Heritage Motor Centre, W66 TOY returned to DaimlerChrysler/smart where technicians at Milton Keynes continue to finalise safety and system modifications.

Sponsor decals will finally be applied during August 2005.

Keep up to date

Live updates from the Rally, advising progress and news, will be sent directly to thesmartclub's web site (www.thesmartclub.com) from the car after each series of stages during the Event.

In addition, the car will be brought directly back from the Rally to be displayed at the finish venue of this year's **London to Brighton Run** on September 25th 2005

For further information about this car's participation in this rally email montecarlo@thesmartclub.com

(W66TOY picture courtesy of Paul Maskens, pmaskens@mvps.org, Casino picture courtesy of visitmonaco.com)

Brabus ForFour - we give it a fine old 'testing' in Germany and UK

The meetings referred to above at Filseck castle and Langley castle also offered us the opportunity seriously test the Brabus forfour from a truly independent approach.

The publicity material provides one with sufficient details about the car itself and, indeed, one has been able to arrange test drives in this car for some time now. But this car is promoted as a 'sports' model and as such, just exactly what is it like when pushed hard .. how does it behave when compared to potential competitors?

Let's look at the manufacturer's key specifications first:



The 1.5 litre turbocharged engine has been developed by BRABUS exclusively for the forfour and delivers 177 bhp, thrusting it from 0-62.5 mph in only 6.9 seconds. With a top speed of 137 mph, the BRABUS forfour is the most powerful and fastest series production smart ever built. With a power output of 177 bhp (130kW) and a kerb weight of 1,090kg, the power/weight ratio of 162 bhp/tonne is an enviable figure for most 'sports' cars.

Maximum power output is reached at 6,000 rpm, while the maximum torque (230 Nm) is attained at 3,500 rpm. It is testament to the versatility of the engine that 90 per cent of the maximum torque is delivered across nearly the entire rev range from 2,300 to 6,100 rpm.

The springs have been made 30mm shorter at the front and 28mm shorter at the rear, while the shock absorbers are now more rigid to reduce body roll when cornering. The brakes (internally ventilated at both front and rear) have also been boosted. The lowered suspension ensures braking stability at speeds up to 137 mph, and precise dynamic driving on winding roads. The direct steering (as before with electric power steering) makes for yet more driving pleasure on winding roads, without sacrificing driver and passenger comfort: the car's agile and very sporty handling doesn't mean a rough ride. The ABS and ESP have also been adapted to take into account the increased power and the various changes to the vehicle, particularly to the front axle.

Fuel consumption (mpg)	
urban cycle	31.7
extra-urban cycle	50.4
combined cycle	41.5
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	159
Emission class	EU4

OK, that's the manufacturer's input. **But what's it really like?**

We published our Road Test of the conventional forfour early last year ("***We test the new forfour around the hills in Rome, Italy***" and copies available from us via admin@thesmartclub.com) but how does it compare with it's Brabus big brother?

There is no doubt that this is a quick car and, in terms of performance against any of the other forfour models- it's a different beast all together. The first thing one notices is its eagerness to keep revving - it reminded my of the Honda or Toyota engines that just want to rev upwards for ever with the engine never dreaming of ever hitting a rev limiter.

It revs well but equally, the smooth torque delivery is amazingly consistent across the rev range - it comes into its own at reasonably low revs and will pull you past most traffic exceedingly quickly without the fear of running out of road in the face

of any oncoming traffic.

Start to push the car harder and one begins to appreciate the development work on the suspension although that appreciation is tricky to acquire. In a manner similar to that used during our Rome tests, one felt that when pushed hard into a corner, a spot of understeer may kick in, push harder and hey, it didn't understeer .. but wait, harder still and it would oversteer .. all ready to correct it ... but no, it didn't oversteer either. This is all very good when one gets around the corner and realises that this car really will hang on in there and one still has tarmac under the tyres.

I guess it's not so much an issue of self confidence in the corners but more one of feedback (i.e. car to driver). It should have the car giving the driver such positive feedback on approach, mid corner and exit that it inspires confidence in the driver ... I did not get this feeling with the Brabus forfour and it was a 'voyage of discovery' (rather than absolute positive driver feedback) that made me realise I could continue to push the car harder and harder and it really would stick to the road like glue. A tad un-nerving during the early stages and I was all ready to collect the car from the scenery if the minimal feedback I was getting proved to be wrong. However, when one realised that the car actually did have some tremendous cornering and stability characteristics, it could be pushed as a sports car should be able to be pushed. Push even harder on some of the country roads (in a safe and controlled environment of course) and one finds that even if airborne, the car lands perfectly and immediately regains its self control. Very impressive.



So there is no doubt about it, this is really a quick car for its class. So any negative points? Well, I couldn't help feeling that I was never quite sitting low enough in the car to appreciate it fully and although one has to work hard at keeping the car on peak performance all the time, the engine never actually sounds as though it's happy when doing this - it's all an audio illusion however and it delivers the power consistently and happily ... then again, there are other cars that sound happier when they deliver their power. In addition, I'm not quite certain I could cope with the rather 'flat board' feel of the suspension at all the other times the car is not being pushed hard.

I confess that my own tests were somewhat at the edge of the 'test drive' envelope but I guess that's the whole point of a sports car - if it was not meant to be pushed, I would be testing some other model in the range. For information (and purely by way of comparison) my own 'extra-urban' cycle of very hard driving (but extremely enjoyable driving) returned just over 14mpg enough said.

All-in-all a very quick car that will certainly surprise other road users when given the opportunity - if you have not yet done so, arrange a test drive and test it as it's meant to be driven (within the confines of local law) - only then will you be able to draw your own conclusions.

Al Young
Chairman
thesmartclub

New smart Centres to our *Privilege Card* and Dealer Car Schemes

We are delighted to advise that we have finalised discussions with a group of five smart centres to bring you a range of discounts under our **Privilege Card** Scheme and in addition, they will shortly be launching on our 'Dealer Car' service to bring you a range of new and used smart cars across all five centres. Furthermore, the new agreement will mean that special offers, open days and local Events can be brought to you via dedicated areas within thesmartclub's web site. Our thanks go to Philip Deacon and Daksh Gupta for their help and cooperation to date.

The new centres coming online during August 2005 are:

- smart of Coventry
- smart of Derby
- smart of Liverpool
- smart of Nottingham
- smart of Oxford

We'll be running launch information as each centre comes online and we look forward to a mutually beneficial partnership with these smart centres.

In addition, I am delighted to advise that **Smarts4U** will be joining us in some superb promotional publicity and a great range of cars on offer later this month.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND SERVICES

thesmartclub Car Insurance Scheme

Our *Privilege Card*

thesmartclub is pleased to provide a dedicated important and valuable new service for its *Privilege Card* holders as follows:

Adrian Flux Insurance Services are pleased to be able to offer *Privilege Card* members up to 15% discount on their motor policies.

In addition Adrian Flux welcome young drivers, modified cars and drivers with convictions.



As the country's leading intermediary for specialist Motor Insurance, Adrian Flux has become synonymous with competitive quotations and providing an excellent service.

Their personable, highly trained staff is on hand to help with any queries you have.

As a company, Adrian Flux have been providing policies

New companies and service providers continue to join thesmartclub *Privilege Card* Scheme. We already have over 20 UK smart centres offering **discounts** on parts, accessories and servicing and 8 centres offering discounts on new and used smarts. In addition you should check our Dealer Cars menu option for additional deals and savings on a range of forfours.

Participating Centres include:

- Aberdeen
- Beaconsfield, Birmingham, Bournemouth
- Coventry
- Derby
- Edinburgh
- Gatwick
- Harrogate, Hertford, Hull
- Liverpool
- Manchester, Macclesfield, Maidstone, Milton Keynes
- Northampton
- Nottingham
- Oxford
- Perth
- Sheffield
- Tonbridge
- Wolverhampton

Additional companies and service providers bring you discounts on a range of performance parts and accessories, trailers, Vehicle Rescue & Recovery from

to the UK's drivers for over 30 years.

We have established a dedicated phone number uniquely for thesmartclub *Privilege Card* Members to use for all their smart insurance requirements:

The service **is live NOW** and available on **thesmartclub hotline** by dialling

+44 (0) 1553 845 939

and quoting your *Privilege Card* number

the AA (which also has a range of additional benefits such as trailer recovery, pit/paddock recovery, no lower age limit and a dedicated phone number, insurance and travel).

In addition, savings on **ALL** application costs for our 2005 Major Events are also available to ***Privilege Card*** holders.

All these services and benefits are available for only 10.00 GBP per annum. If you have not already done so, apply for your *Privilege Card* via the *Privilege Card* menu option on our homepage. You can see the full list of participating companies by selecting the *Privilege Card* Benefits option



Our Online Shop



Our Online Shop continues to provide you with a range of club branded merchandise ranging from pens, mugs, key rings to clothing and luggage - in addition, we are a reseller for 'smartimes' magazine.

We'll have a range of clothing prepared for our Major National and International Events and if you have any specific suggestions for merchandise that you may require which we currently do not stock, please email us at products@thesmartclub.com

Remember, all our ***Privilege Card*** holders also benefit from discounts to all our branded merchandise in our Online Shop.

Club information and contacts

Full contact details for thesmartclub team are shown under the 'Contact Us' Menu Option on our main home page together with background details for thesmartclub.

thesmartclub is now the UK's second largest Car Club¹ and remains proud to be the world's largest independent club for smart car owners and enthusiasts with Members in 51 countries around the world.

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¹ Based on independent research and AutoExpress research November 2004