

# SCHMIEDMANN

Denmark-based BMW specialist Schmiedmann has grown tenfold since its humble beginnings in 1996. It now has 63 employees and multiple branches...

WORDS AND PICTURES Adam Tait

**W**ith the bulk of *TBMW* advertisers residing in the UK, Denmark-based BMW parts supplier Schmiedmann adds to the global mix. It was started by two young entrepreneurs, Christian Jacobsen and Martin Thorup Andresen, who were just 25 and 23 respectively. Both were ardent BMW enthusiasts; Christian was employed as a mechanic and Martin was studying business when they decided to start up with an afterhours operation. Long-term however, they hoped to commit to the company full-time and progress from the 100 square metre premises located in Nordborg.

Back then the dynamic duo traded under the name CM Import and its philosophy was to supply Denmark with the lowest-priced BMW parts. The quality of the parts they supplied and the extra mile they went to for the customer base soon built the company a solid reputation.

This success led to Christian putting his tools down and turning to CM Import on a full-time basis. Martin continued to study but soon joined Christian to manage the business. Six months later a mechanic was hired so the parts they were supplying could also be fitted in the adjoining workshop.

Another growth spurt occurred shortly afterwards, with the addition of another mechanic and a 300 square metre expansion that consisted of a workshop,



**Below right: Wheel and tyre packages also feature within the extensive Schmiedmann catalogue.**

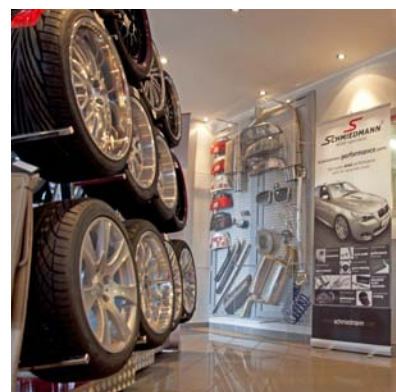
**Below: The parts showroom offers another element to the BMWs that Schmiedmann break for parts.**

warehouse and an office. The millennium led to CM Import employing a further six staff members and an additional 200 square metres of premises to accommodate the salvaging of around 100 accident-damaged BMWs that lived outside in a huge car park.

CM Import's competition was a company known as Cartech in Odense. Martin and Christian had been successful enough to buy out this rival in 2001. At this point the company underwent a name change to 'BMW Specialist'. Now operating out of two branches, the Odense arm had five employees and sold

BMW parts and accessories, along with a workshop to carry out the necessary hands-on work. Nordborg on the other hand continued to salvage damaged BMWs, increasing the number of vehicles in stock to 150-200. Parts were dispatched via mail order but a lot of customers also visited the workshop to have new or used items fitted.

Not shying away from the original business concept, Martin and Christian reinstated their service of supplying Denmark's lowest-priced BMW parts by launching a price guarantee on all parts, accessories and repairs. As if this





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**Left:** These carbon inserted Schmiedmann steering wheels can be bought on an exchange basis.

**Right:** This is how Schmiedmann envisage the new premises will look when they move in.



**Above right:** Producing Schmiedmann branded parts like gear knobs formed part of the recession beating strategy.

wasn't keeping Martin and Christian busy enough, increasing pressure from Norway resulted in a branch opening as a franchisee.

BMW Specialist's website became Scandinavia's largest and most



**Above:** For not much more than £200, Schmiedmann manifolds are an affordable option.

**Right:** Full exhaust systems are available for the Z4, from the manifold to high-flow cats and stainless steel cat-back systems.



visited BMW website, no doubt thanks to the online shop – a feature that many specialists haven't taken advantage of today. In 2003 a legal dispute with BMW (due the BMW name being used) influenced another name change, this time to Schmiedmann, which has been in use for the past decade. This rate of growth continued and since then Schmiedmann has opened branches in Sweden, Finland and Hungary. However, it hasn't been a fairytale because a branch in Copenhagen had to be closed due to issues with the franchisee and when the economic crises hit across Europe, Schmiedmann felt the repercussions in its annual turnover.

A plan was put together to combat the downturn. One solution was to translate the website into English and German without losing its attractive prices. More products were added to the range and an advertising campaign was launched to focus more attention on what

Schmiedmann had to offer. Perhaps the recession was a blessing in disguise for Martin and Christian, because without it would our readership might have never seen what the translated website had to offer so quickly?

From its humble beginnings, Martin and Christian have taken the company to an international operation with 63 employees and for 2012 they have just purchased an even larger premises. Yes the recession did bite, but Schmiedmann has bitten back harder.