Great Dane

Danish firm and specialist BMW parts supplier, Schmiedmann, has been making its presence felt across Europe since 1996. We take a closer look.

Words: Ben Koflach

Schmiedmann – it's a name you can't fail to have noticed. Whether you've dealt with the company directly or not, you'll no doubt have seen its adverts and news stories in this very title at some point. Take a look at a map of Europe you'll find Schmiedmann has got it covered and with ambitions for further expansion, the future looks very promising indeed.

The roots of the present day company began in Nordborg, Denmark, in 1996, when founders, Christian Jacobsen and Martin Thorup Andresen (then aged 25 and 23 years old respectively at the time), decided to start a part-time business. Christian was already employed as a mechanic, while Martin was studying at business school. The first incarnation of their company was called CM Import, and its aim was to be the cheapest place to buy BMW parts in Denmark. This ethos remains the focus of Schmiedmann today, although its remit is obviously now on a much wider basis.

In under two years the business was booming and Christian had to leave his day job to keep up with orders. Soon after Martin finished his studies and joined Christian full time. The company then expanded its offering by setting up a workshop service to fit parts purchased on-site, which required the employment of a full-time mechanic. A year on the guys employed another mechanic as things were getting busier than ever.

By 2000 CM Import had grown, having eight employees. It had 500 square metres of work space and a huge 1600 square metres of outdoor space, where up to 100 BMWs were kept at a time for dismantling. The selection of products on offer was also extended to include new and used accessories and spares, and finally used BMWs. Still, there was plenty more to come…

The following year, the guys took another step forward when they bought out one of their main competitors, a company called Cartech. This meant that Christian and Martin now had two sites to play with: Nordborg and the new site in Odense. The company's price promise remained, and, as you might expect, things were constantly evolving and growing. The two departments were reorganised so that the Nordborg-based department sold new and used BMW spares and specialised in breaking used BMWs, with between 150 and 200 cars in stock at any time. Most parts were sent out via mail order, though the workshop facility remained as busy as ever. The Odense-based operation specialised in new parts and accessories only, as well as doing repairs thanks to the fully-equipped workshop.

2001 was also the year that saw the business expand to include a Norwegian department – the demand from customers here was so much that it made perfect sense. Marketing was also prioritised, and the task of building the website was started. With so many products on offer it wasn't easy, but once finished www.bmwspecialisten.dk soon became the most visited BMW website in Scandinavia.

2002 was the year that the name Schmiedmann first came about. At first it was used as the name for the German mail order department of the company. However, the following year BMW contacted Christian and Martin to say that it wasn't keen on the BMW Specialisten name. As a result the company rebranded as Schmiedmann. Whilst this was happening the Nordborg department enjoyed rapid growth. By 2004 a Copenhagen department had been added to the line-up, and a dynamic new website launched.

Oslo's outlet, although unfinished here, is impressive nonetheless: the M3 on gold rims boasts an S54-engine and SMG 'box complete with paddles

SCHMIEDMANN

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Fast forward to 2009 and things were still looking strong, despite a financial crisis in Denmark which meant that the Copenhagen outlet had to be shut. However, come 2010, it was clear that nothing could stop Schmiedmann. A new Finnish department was set up and today things are looking stronger than ever. The firm now has over 50 employees in seven departments in six countries. For us Brits, the website is perhaps the easiest way to access the mind-boggling range offered by Schmiedmann; from track rod ends to coilovers and camshafts for anything from 1959 700s right up to F10 5 Series', it really is a very comprehensive BMW parts website. Try and find a website offering more BMW parts; go on, I dare you.

In addition to new and used products Schmiedmann also now offers its own branded products, which include some rather tasty stainless steel exhaust systems, good looking manifolds, and short shift kits, to name just a few. In short, Schmiedmann is run for enthusiasts by enthusiasts. So if you're yet to discover it, you're in for a real treat ●