

# BMW 507

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## BMW 507



BMW 507 at the 2009 [Frankfurt Motor Show](#)

## Overview

<b>Manufacturer</b>	<a href="#">BMW</a>
<b>Production</b>	1956–1960 252 units built
<b>Assembly</b>	Germany: Bavaria, <a href="#">Milbertshofen</a>
<b><u>Designer</u></b>	<a href="#">Albrecht von Goertz</a>

## Body and chassis

<b><u>Class</u></b>	<a href="#">Grand tourer</a>
<b><u>Body style</u></b>	2-door <a href="#">convertible</a> / <a href="#">Detachable hardtop</a>
<b><u>Layout</u></b>	<a href="#">FR layout</a>
<b>Related</b>	<a href="#">BMW 503</a>

## Powertrain

<b><u>Engine</u></b>	3168 cc <i>M507/I</i> V8
<b><u>Transmission</u></b>	4-speed <i>ZF manual</i> <sup>[1][2]</sup>
Dimensions	
<b><u>Wheelbase</u></b>	2,480 mm (98 in) <sup>[3]</sup>
<b>Length</b>	4,380 mm (172.4 in) <sup>[3][4]</sup>
<b>Width</b>	1,650 mm (65.0 in) <sup>[3][4]</sup>
<b>Height</b>	1,257 mm (49.5 in) <sup>[3]</sup>
<b><u>Kerb weight</u></b>	1,330 kg (2,930 lb) <sup>[5][6]</sup>
Chronology	
<b>Predecessor</b>	<a href="#">BMW 328</a>
<b>Successor</b>	<a href="#">BMW Z1</a> <a href="#">BMW Z8</a>

The **BMW 507** is a [roadster](#) that was produced by [BMW](#) from 1956 to 1959. Initially intended to be exported to the [United States](#) at a rate of thousands per year, it ended up being too expensive, resulting in a total production figure of 252 cars and heavy losses for BMW.



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**Development**<sup>[[edit](#)]</sup>

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Front 3/4-view

The BMW 507 was conceived by [U.S.](#) automobile importer [Max Hoffman](#) who, in 1954, persuaded the BMW management to produce a [roadster](#) version of the [BMW 501](#) and [BMW 502](#) saloons to fill the gap between the expensive [Mercedes-Benz 300SL](#) and the cheap and underpowered [Triumph](#) and [MG](#) sports cars. BMW engineer [Fritz Fiedler](#) was assigned to design the [rolling chassis](#), using existing components wherever possible.<sup>[a]</sup> Early body designs by [Ernst Loof](#) were rejected by Hoffman, who found them to be unappealing. In November 1954, at Hoffman's insistence, BMW contracted designer [Albrecht von Goertz](#) to design the [BMW 503](#) and the 507.<sup>[a]</sup>

Thirty-four Series I 507s were built in 1956 and early 1957.<sup>[a]</sup> These cars had welded aluminium fuel tanks of 110 litres (29.1 US gal) capacity behind the rear seats.<sup>[a]</sup> These large tanks limited both boot space<sup>[a]</sup> and passenger space, and gave off the smell of fuel inside the car when the hood was erected or the hardtop was in place.<sup>[a]</sup> Series II and later 507s had fuel tanks of 66 litres (17.4 US gal) capacity under the boot, shaped around a space for the spare tyre to fit.<sup>[a]</sup>

## Specifications<sup>[edit]</sup>

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Side view



BMW 507 with optional detachable hardtop

The 507 frame was a shortened 503 frame, the wheelbase having been reduced from 2,835 millimetres (111.6 in) to 2,480 millimetres (98 in).<sup>[2][3]</sup> Overall length was 4,385 millimetres (172.6 in), and overall height was 1,257 millimetres (49.5 in).<sup>[3]</sup> Curb weight was about 1,330 kilograms (2,930 lb).<sup>[9]</sup> The body was almost entirely hand-formed of [aluminium](#),<sup>[10]</sup> and no two models were exactly the same. 11 cars were sold with an optional hand-fabricated removable hardtop. Because of the car-to-car differences, each hardtop fits only the car for which it was made.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

The front suspension had parallel [double wishbones](#) with [torsion bar](#) springs and an [anti-roll bar](#). The rear suspension had a [live axle](#), also sprung by torsion bars, and located by a [Panhard rod](#) and a central, transverse [A-arm](#) to control acceleration and braking forces. The brakes were Alfin [drum brakes](#) of 284.5 mm (11.2 in) diameter, and power brakes were optional. Late-model 507s had front Girling [disc brakes](#).<sup>[citation needed]</sup> & Pirelli 185VR16 Cinturato radial tyres.

The engine was BMW's aluminium [alloy OHV V8](#), of 3,168 cubic centimetres (193.3 cu in) displacement, with [pushrod](#)-operated overhead [valves](#). It had two [Zenith](#) 32NDIX two-barrel [carburetors](#), a chain-driven oil pump, high-lift cams, a different spark advance curve, polished [combustion chamber](#) surfaces, and a [compression ratio](#) of 7.8:1,<sup>[7]</sup> yielding 150 metric horsepower (110 kW) DIN at 5,000 rpm.<sup>[4][7]</sup> It was mated to a close ratio four-speed [manual transmission](#).<sup>[7]</sup> The standard rear-end ratio was 3.70:1, but ratios of 3.42:1 and 3.90:1 were optional.<sup>[2][7]</sup> A contemporary road test of a 507 with the standard 3.70:1 final drive was reported in *Motor Revue*, stating a 0–100 km/h (0–62 mph) acceleration time of 11.1 seconds and a top speed of 122 mph.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Introduction and impact<sup>[edit]</sup>



Detail on front fender/wing

The 507 made its debut at the [Waldorf-Astoria](#) Hotel in New York in the summer of 1955.<sup>[12]</sup> Production began in November 1956. Max Hoffman intended the 507 to sell for about US\$5,000, which he believed would allow a production run of 5,000 units a year. Instead, high production costs pushed the price in Germany to [DM](#) 26,500 (later 29,950),<sup>[13][note 1]</sup> driving the U.S. price initially to \$9,000 and ultimately \$10,500 (\$93,000 today).<sup>[14]</sup> Despite attracting celebrity buyers including John Derek and most notably [Elvis Presley](#) (who owned two),<sup>[15]</sup> [Hans Stuck](#) and [Georg "Schorsch" Meier](#), and being powered by a [V8 engine](#), the car never once reached more than 10% of the sales volumes achieved by its [Stuttgart rival](#), the [six cylinder Mercedes-Benz 300SL](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

Intended to revive BMW's sporting image, the 507 instead took BMW to the edge of [bankruptcy](#)—the company's losses for 1959 were DM 15 million. The company lost money on each 507 built, and production was terminated in late 1959.<sup>[4][16]</sup> Only 252 were built,<sup>[11][17]</sup> plus two [prototypes](#). Fortunately for the company, an infusion of [capital](#) from [Herbert Quandt](#) and the launch of new, cheaper models (the [BMW 700](#) and later the '[New Class](#)' 1500) helped the company recover.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Legacy<sup>[edit]</sup>



Rear 3/4-view



Side top view of a BMW 507 softtop with roof down



[BMW Z8](#), with 507-inspired front grilles and side vents

The styling of the 507 later influenced the [Z3](#),<sup>[18]</sup> the [Z4](#),<sup>[citation needed]</sup> and, most noticeably, the [Z8](#),<sup>[19][20]</sup> with its chromed side vents and horizontal front grilles.<sup>[19]</sup> The 507 remains a milestone model for its attractive styling. 202 507s are known to survive, a tribute to the car's appeal.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

### Notable owners<sup>[edit]</sup>

[Elvis Presley](#), as noted above and while stationed in Germany on duty with the US Army bought two models. His first 507, a 1957 model (chassis # 70079 and colored white), had been raced by [Hans Stuck](#), used as a press demonstrator by BMW, as well as appeared in a German musical comedy entitled "Hula-Hopp, Conny" (released in March 1959). Because many of Presley's fans left

lipstick marks on the car, mainly while parked outside his home at 14 Goethestrasse, in Bad Nauheim, he had it painted red. It was imported into the United States in 1960 and was bought by Alabama disc jockey Tommy Charles, who had it extensively modified, including having the engine replaced with a Chevrolet V8.<sup>[21]</sup> In July 2014, [BMW Group](#) announced that Presley's car, would be on display for a short period at the [BMW Museum](#) in [Munich](#), before being entirely restored by its Classic department. This fully restored car, now back to its original white color, after being displayed in the newly renovated BMW Zentrum museum located at their US manufacturing center in Greer, SC., has returned to the BMW Museum in Munich, Germany<sup>[22]</sup>

Presley reportedly gave his second 507, (chassis # no. 70192) to [Ursula Address](#), who starred in *Fun in Acapulco* with him in 1963.<sup>[note 2]</sup> Address's husband, [John Derek](#), who had yet another 507 but had just sold it to entertainer [Fred Astaire](#), then had the 507 Elvis gave his wife especially customized, which included changing its color from white to light blue, as well as having the engine replaced with a Ford 289 V8. Address sold the car in 1997 to [George Barris](#) for US\$300,000. The car was then again restored with a correct drivetrain by a later owner.<sup>[23][24]</sup> When the car arrived at McDougall's Carrera Automotive it had also been repainted black. Being that the original engine was lost to time 2 503 V8's were located along with the dual carburetor intake from a 507. Both engines were made into a running engine with BMW AG making a new engine gasket kit including head gaskets at a cost of US\$25,000. It was also returned to its original white color and subsequently sold at auction for US\$350,000<sup>[25]</sup> and at another auction in 2011 for US\$1,072,500.<sup>[24]</sup>

[Bernie Ecclestone](#)'s 507 fetched GB£430,238 (US\$904,000) at an [auction](#) in [London](#) in October 2007.<sup>[26]</sup> At the Amelia Island Concours in March, 2014 a 507 sold at auction for \$2.4 million.<sup>[27]</sup>

[John Surtees](#) was given a 507 by [Count Agusta](#) for winning the 1956 500cc World Motorcycle Championship on a [MV Agusta](#). Surtees worked with Dunlop to develop disc brakes for the front wheels of the 507, and his 507 eventually had disc brakes on all four wheels.<sup>[20]</sup> Surtees owned his 507 until his death.<sup>[28]</sup> Soon after, in July 2018, the Surtees car sold for £3,809,500 plus commission, the equivalent of US\$5 million and thus the highest ever paid for a 507.<sup>[29]</sup> On December 1 of 2018, a 507 owned by BMW 507 and 503 designer [Albrecht von Goertz](#) was sold for £2,367,000 plus commission also at Bonhams.<sup>[30]</sup>

## Notes<sup>[edit]</sup>

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- <sup>^</sup> A contemporary [Mercedes-Benz 300SL](#) was DM 32,500.
- <sup>^</sup> Address told *Bimmer* magazine that Elvis gave her the car, while RM Auctions says there is no known documentation of Elvis giving Address the car.