

Fragile

BMW's CS coupés have a reputation for beautiful bodies, fine road manners, strong performance and rust. Are they still a good buy?

Words: Bob Harper **Pictures:** David Shepherd



The 1960s were renaissance years for BMW. At the beginning of the decade the company was struggling in the marketplace with oddballs and oddities such as the 700 and the Isetta bubble car, while its larger products such as the 502 were no longer in vogue with buyers. BMW virtually started again with models like the 1500, the 2000, and the critically acclaimed 1602.

By the end of the decade, it had released new, modern, larger saloons in the form of the 2500 and 2800. But BMW still needed a flagship model to cement the notion that it was the maker of fine sporting vehicles. Enter

the 2800CS Coupé. The new coupé was not, in fact, all new, but a skillful amalgamation of tried and tested parts. The six-cylinder engine was poached from the saloon, while the pretty body was effectively that of the 1966 2000CS with improved front end styling.

While it may not have been all-new, the Hofmeister-designed bodywork was achingly beautiful. Even today, the CS stands out from the crowd with its delicate lines and perfect proportions. It has a timeless appeal, and it could easily be argued that it is the prettiest coupé BMW has ever produced.

There's more to this car than good looks, though, it is also a great drive. The smooth and responsive big six provides plenty of

power to entertain, while its handling is a delight – balancing the rear end on the throttle is surprisingly safe and drama free. It also rides better than many modern cars, and today's car designers should note that its delicate pillars give it a light and airy interior. There is room for four adults, and a decent boot makes it a practical everyday proposition.

History

The 2800CS was announced in September 1968, and the first left-hand-drive models rolled off the production line in December 1968. While the saloons were assembled at BMW's plant in Munich, the Coupés were made by Karmann at Osnabruck in north west