



ROAD SIGNS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BMW OWNERS CLUB OF SAN DIEGO



King of the Alps and Friend of the Marque



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JOHN HERMANN—FRIEND OF THE MARQUE

TOM MOONEY

On Saturday, 21 July, in a surprise ceremony at the BMW MOA International Rally at Redmond, Oregon, John Hermann was designated as a Friend of the Marque by the International Council of BMW Clubs sponsored by BMW, AG. There are only 48 people world-wide who have been honored between 1996 and 2001 by this highly prestigious award.

The program was approved by International Council meeting in 1995 (based on an original concept by Robert Hellman, editor of *On The Level*); the first awards were made in 1996, at International Council meeting in Japan.

The Friend of the Marque was created by BMW as the company's highest award for service to the marque by BMW club personalities in order to recognize individuals who have made substantial contributions to the world of automobile and/or motorcycle activities within the BMW community. The program applies to both car and motorcycle club members.

Eighteen Americans (cars and motorcycles) have been designated as a Friend of the Marque which includes the following motorcyclists: Robert Hellman, Keith Demptser, Alice Haines, Court Fisher, Bill Doyle, Oak Okleshen, Roland Slabon, Jeff Dean, David Hough and John Hermann.

BMWOCSD submitted the following letter for this singular honor to BMW MOA, which presented the nomination to the International Council of BMW Clubs at its spring meeting.

"Long before the founding of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America, the BMW Riders of America (now BMW Riders Association) or the BMW Owners Club of San Diego, California, Inc., John Hermann was actively making friends for BMW motorcycles

all over the world. For more than 40 years, John Hermann has been the true Ambassador of motorcycling, and BMW motorcycling in particular.



"Today, more than 40 years later, John Hermann continues to inspire and encourage men and women of all ages to learn the skills necessary to enjoy safe motorcycling. In this endeavor, he has three specific goals: 1) to encourage more riders to enjoy riding BMW motorcycles with other BMW riders; 2) to encourage more riders to discover the joys of riding BMW motorcycles in a sporting manner; and 3) to encourage more American motorcyclists to discover the wonderful motorcycle roads of the Alps.

"John Hermann has more than 800,000 miles to his credit on 15 BMW motorcycles. This feat alone is staggering and speaks for itself, but it is also true for only a very small handful of motorcyclists in the entire world. In 1980, John Hermann was awarded the Gold Pin by the *International Verband der BMW Clubs* in recognition of his unflinching commitment to BMW motorcycling.

"Hermann is a founding member (#13) of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America (BMW MOA); a founding member (#13) of the BMW Riders of America now called the BMW Riders Association (BMW RA); and a founding member of his local southern California club, the BMW Owners Club of San Diego, Inc. (BMWOCSD). He has served on the Board of Directors of BMW MOA and was designated an Ambassador in 1986.

"At the local level, Hermann has served in almost every club position of BMWOCSD, including President, Vice President, Social Chair, Road Captain and Parliamentarian. He continually encourages the club to include both sporting rides as well as touring rides, with the result that BMW riders are widely recognized as experts on the roads in southern California by enthusiasts of all marques. For untold years, he has authored the *King of the Alps* column in BMWOCSD's monthly newsletter, *Road Signs*.

"In 1997, the BMW Owners Club of San Diego unanimously voted to elevate him to Honorary Life Member (one of three given in the club's 31 year history) in recognition of his untiring efforts on behalf of BMW motorcycling and continued support to his local BMW club.

"He encourages motorcyclists to become skilled riders through practice and training. He participated in the first "Nürburgring West" at Laguna Seca and subsequent riders' schools at Willow Springs. Additionally, in Europe he participated in two Fahrerlehrgangs at the Nürburgring track in Germany.

"Hermann's first BMW was an R50, followed by fourteen more BMWs, four of which he rides today. Since 1970 when he took delivery of an R75 in Freimann, Germany, John Hermann has made at least one and more often two

trips to the Alps every year. Since 1985 he had maintained a BMW motorcycle in Europe to more easily indulge in his passion of riding in the Alps, introducing others to the pleasures of Alpine riding and making friends in every country in which he travels. With so many years exploring Europe, the Alps, Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily, it is little wonder that Whitehorse Press invited him to write a book in 1991. *Motorcycle Journeys Through the Alps*, a 224 page, soft cover book was published in 1993, reprinted in 1995 and has received international acclaim as the best English guide for Alpine riding in Europe. An expanded (304 pages) and heavily revised second edition was published in 1998 under the title, *Motorcycle Journeys Through the Alps and Corsica*.

“John Hermann is not just a motorcyclist. He is also a leader in his community. He is a faithful communicant of the Mission Valley United Methodist Church (largest Methodist Church west of the Mississippi River) where he served on the Building, Memorial Gardens and Director of Music Search Committees. He is also a Trustee, Lay Leader and currently serves on several committees. He is a founder and serves on the Board of Directors of Meals on Wheels of Greater San Diego. He is also a founder of the first Alzheimer Support Group in San Diego County. John Hermann is an accomplished classical pianist and, prior to retirement, was a member of the San Diego Opera Chorus for more than 18 years. He is truly a renaissance man in our BMW Motorcycling World who deserves the special recognition which would be afforded by selecting him as a Friend of the Marque.”

Congratulations from all of your San Diego Club Members!

