

AUTOMOTIVE

## BMW and Kith unveil limited-edition race car, capsule collection for brand synergy

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*The new car's design is loosely based on a BMW E30 M3. Image: BMW*

By ELLEN KELLEHER

German automaker BMW has unveiled a collaboration with streetwear label Kith and a new limited-edition sports car to seal the deal.

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Only 150 editions of the BMW M4 Competition x Kith have been released and their temporary arrival on the scene stems exclusively from the partnership between BMW and Ronnie Fieg, Kith's founder. A line of BMW-inspired clothing and accessories is being sold as well and the effort showcases BMW's attempts to remain a hip "lifestyle" brand at a challenging time.

"Those who were looking for the extra performance edge of the Competition have been on the sidelines waiting for it and now can get in on the latest version of the M4," said Tyson Jominy, vice president for data and analytics with **J.D. Power**, Nashville. "Those who buy the highest performance version of any car tend to be the most loyal customers so competition should work to keep existing BMW owners in the fold."

Ties to Ronnie Fieg

The car is very much the brainchild of Mr. Fieg, as this limited-edition vehicle draws inspiration from his E30 generation M3 and a matching M4 Design study.

"Some of my favorite memories from growing up came from going to visit my grandfather and riding around in his BMWs in the 1980s," Mr. Fieg said in a statement. "These moments in my life really shaped my passion for BMW, so working on this project with them has brought everything full circle."

The car's debut is also timed to come alongside the unveiling of the largest apparel collection Kith has released, The Kith for BMW Collection.



*Much of the Kith for BMW collection, including this quilted racing jacket, are already sold out. Image credit: Kith*

On offer are a line of bomber jackets, robes, sweaters and more, with the shared Kith and BMW logo. The apparel is priced starting at \$65 for branded tees, while a suede bomber jacket runs \$695.

This partnership marks the first time BMW has altered its iconic logo to create an alternative with an extra ring around the BMW roundel, to reflect the collaboration. On top of this, the rear of the car also features a black Kith logo with the tri-color BMW M stripes.

The models on offer come in black, dark silver and white and prices start at \$109,250 plus fees.

To generate enthusiasm, BMW and Kith have also unveiled a video which features the father and son race car drivers Johnny Cecotto, Sr. and Johnny Jr. battling against each other.

*The video features a race between Johnny Cecotto Junior and his father.*

The elder Mr. Cecotto is behind the wheel of a stylish E30 M3, while his son is at the helm of the M4 Competition X Kith.

"In 1985, the E30 M3 redefined the sports car," says the male narrator as the camera pans to the older car at the start of the race. "Thirty-five years later, a new definition is born."

As one expects, the speed of the M4 soon eclipses the E30 and at the end of the footage, the younger victor gets out of the newer car to face his father.

"Introducing the new BMW M4 Competition X Kith," says the narrator. "The only competition is in the name."

With its BMW M TwinPower Turbo 3.0 Liter inline-six cylinder engine, the M4 Competition X Kith boasts over 500 horsepower as well as all wheel-drive.

The design team at Kith has put its touches on the interiors, while the merino leather seats have the Kith logo. Other advances include a sophisticated driver assistance system as well as the BMW Intelligent personal assistant and either Apple CarPlay or Android Auto.

By all accounts, the car has already sold out, but BMW sees the tie-up as a chance to encourage drivers to recognize the connection between the original BMW M3 and its new BMW M4 Competition Coup, which marks the sixth generation in the iconic range.

"It also allows us to spread the word to an exciting new target group, as the lifestyle fashion scene transforms from a cultural phenomenon to a global way of life, bringing a new and very distinct brand of exclusivity to many different areas," said Markus Flasch, chief executive of BMW M GmbH, in a statement.

#### Lifestyle branding

The opening of a fashion line for BMW curated by Kith presents an interesting cross-channel marketing opportunity.

It follows a 2018 move by the British automaker McLaren, which joined forces with British fashion label Belstaff to translate its focus on mobility to clothing.

Marking the first collaboration between the two brands, their capsule collection featured outerwear and suiting designed for drivers' comfort both in and out of the car ([see story](#))

Kith has a history of forging strategic partnerships across a range of industries. Last year, for example, Italian fashion label Versace worked with the streetwear label on a collaborative collection that leveraged both of their perspectives on style.

The 100 co-branded pieces created drew from silhouettes designed by Kith and fabrics sources by Versace, combining both of their aesthetics.

Increasingly, high-fashion and streetwear are converging as consumers crave more casual, sporty attire. Partnerships are one way in which luxury is keeping up with changing styles ([see story](#)).

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