

## Showroom

The new showroom is equipped with powerful low-glare downlights of the Glamox D70 LED family, mounted at a height of 6,5 metres.



New BMW showroom concept:

# A temple to beautiful driving machines

With its new branding concept, German car maker BMW is providing architects with detailed guidelines for the construction and design of dealer showrooms. All based on the Bauhaus school of design!

## Exterior

Straight lines and angles, glass and white concrete slabs, no ornamentation. Austere, stylish and impressive. Interestingly, BMW has chosen an art movement of the past as the foundation for their dealerships of the future.



design and management of the planning and building process, working closely with the construction company and electrical installer, both selected by de Fonkert.

There were several challenges to the project, however conformity with the Bauhaus code was not one of them:

“You could say that the Bauhaus style is in our genes”, says Gert Vollaard, director of Bogaerds Architecten. “There are so many links and influences between the Bauhaus school and our Dutch De Stijl movement from the beginning of the previous century, with prominent artist like Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg setting the tone. Bauhaus is a very recognizable style, which lets a lot of daylight into the showroom. I think BMW has made an excellent choice. This is a style that makes their cars look their very best.”

His younger colleague Rafael Krijgsman agrees: “With Bauhaus, the construction is part of the design. When treated soberly, there is beauty in simplicity. In essence, this showroom consists of vertical and horizontal slabs, plus glass. That’s all, really.”

### Sunshine a particular challenge

The de Fonkert showroom and reception area has a southward orientation, which represents a particular challenge when considering the amount of sunshine flowing into the building, and the comfort and working conditions of the people inside.

The BMW concept does not allow for sun screens that

would break up the beautiful clean glass surfaces and hide the cars from view. Nor is solar glazing allowed, since this will result in too much reflection. Reflectance is the key factor in solar glazing, so that passing people would not be able to see the cars inside the showroom. A different approach was needed.

For this reason Jan de Fonkert and his architects’ team suggested a refinement of the original BMW concept, which was accepted by the Bavarian car manufacturer: Towards the south a portion of the planned glass wall was substituted by a concrete wall with a series of very tall and deep vertical glass openings. Because of the angle of the sun, this works as sun screening, and actually adds to the elegance of the design. “We found a functional and aesthetically pleasing solution that met with the approval of BMW, and which I believe will be useful in other BMW showroom projects in the future,” says Gert Vollaard.

### The importance of good lighting

A showroom for beautiful cars should be flooded with light. The cars on display should look the same from all angles. There should be no shadows. In this spacious, open and hospitable setting the cars are displayed as if they were on the road, with lots of daylight supported by artificial lighting from above.

The new Numansdorp showroom is equipped with ▶

**A**UTOMOBIELBEDRIJF JER. DE FONKERT is a complete automotive service centre, located in Numansdorp near Rotterdam in South Holland. It consists of two beautifully appointed showrooms for new and second hand cars, a modern garage and workshop, a street side petrol station plus an efficient car wash centre tucked away at the back of the premises.

Jer. de Fonkert has been a leading BMW dealership since the early 1960ies. The family-owned business enjoys an excellent reputation, and has long been a trusted partner of the Bavarian car maker. The current owners are Jan and Miranda de Fonkert. Their decision to invest in a brand new showroom according to the newest BMW dealership guidelines has resulted in an architecturally stunning construction – and created a lot of positive energy for the company and the people who work there.

### BMW Future Retail

BMW’s new retail concept is called “Future Retail”, and outlines the car manufacturer’s requirements for BMW dealers. The concept includes guidelines on every conceivable aspect of a BMW car dealership, including insights into customer behavioral patterns, new staff roles and the use of electronic aids (see sidebar).

At the core of the new concept is the revised BMW style guideline – a branding manual with detailed instructions for the look and feel of a BMW dealership, including guidelines for the use of glass, wood, textiles and other mate-

rials. However, BMW has taken this a step ahead. They now provide guidelines also for the exteriors of the dealerships, including a complete architect’s manual for the construction of new showrooms.

### Inspiration from the Bauhaus movement

BMW has chosen to build its new dealer concept on the ideals of the Bauhaus school of design, linking efficiency with aesthetics (see sidebar). With Bauhaus, the very functional can also be very beautiful.

Straight lines and angles, glass and white concrete slabs, no ornamentation. Austere, stylish and impressive. Interestingly, BMW has chosen an art movement of the past as the foundation for their dealerships of the future. And it works. It really is a “museum approach”, where crisp white walls and an impressive feeling of space highlight the fine art objects on exhibit within.

### Architect-managed process

A local architectural firm, Bogaerds Architecten, was commissioned by de Fonkert to design the new showroom in accordance with the BMW guidelines. This involved knocking down an existing showroom, replacing it with a two-storey Bauhaus-style construction of almost 900 m<sup>2</sup> that would fit seamlessly into the existing building complex of the de Fonkert automotive service centre. The work was carried out in close cooperation with BMW and the owner, Jan de Fonkert. Bogaerds Architecten was responsible for the

## Bogaerds Architecten

Gert Vollaard (left) and Rafael Krijgsman of Bogaerds Architecten.



powerful low-glare downlights of the Glamox D70 LED family, mounted at a height of 6,5 metres. The lux level is 700-800lx throughout the showroom. In the offices and reception area there are matching recessed luminaires of the Luxo Modul LED type, with glare-free microprismatic optics. All luminaires have a colour temperature of 4000K, which provides for a bright, daylight-related ambience that make people and cars look their best. The light levels are adjustable with the use of sensors.

The use of LED light sources means that the showroom luminaires are virtually maintenance-free. Modern LED light sources have extremely long life expectancy. This is a huge advantage when mounting luminaires in inaccessible places like in a 6,5 meter high showroom ceiling with a lot of valuable cars underneath.

“Working in the new showroom is a huge transformation for the people working at de Fonkert”, says Gert Vollaard. “The old showroom was much darker, with a ceiling height of only 3 metres. Now the staff works in bright surroundings. It is a totally different human experience, for the staff as well as for the customers.”

Vollaard and Krijgsman are particularly pleased that the entire building complex, with new and old elements, now looks like one entity, and not as the result of developments-over many years. It is as if the clean lines of the new

showroom bind the older buildings into a whole.

### Three-way communication

A particular challenge for the architects was working with the concept owner, BMW, in addition to the owner of the building. All plans and alterations had to be submitted to BMW for approval before implementation. The architects at Bogaerds Architecten found this to be an interesting work form, which led to some particularly good solutions, some of which were not part of the original BMW concept.

“You could say that BMW provided the ingredients, but we proposed our own recipe,” says Rafael Krijgsman.

Says Vollaard: “I think that BMW has done a good thing for their dealers. It will be a big step for many, but I am convinced that it is the right way of doing things. It may not be the easiest way, but when the starting point is good everyone in the project becomes keen on getting the detailing right. Then it becomes a success. The BMW manual is not just a manual. It is a good concept that inspires people to do their best.”

“BMW dealers are now coming here to see what their future looks like. I know that they will be inspired by what they see, including those special details that were not in the original BMW concept.”

### Key facts & figures

#### Jer. de Fonkert automotive service centre

Reception and workshop entrance 50 m<sup>2</sup>  
 New showroom 870 m<sup>2</sup>  
 (new cars including BMW-i)  
 Existing Premium Selection showroom 570 m<sup>2</sup>  
 (second hand cars)  
 Garage workshop 570 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Storeroom 100 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Petrol station kiosk 90 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Total footprint 2250 m<sup>2</sup>



### BMW's "Future Retail" Experience

BMW is currently in the process of rolling out their "Future Retail" program to more than 300 dealerships worldwide. For many local dealers this means major investments in showroom alterations, staffing and equipment.

A cornerstone of the Future Retail philosophy is BMW's determination to transform the dealerships into places people will want to visit. This involves architecture, design and styling, but also the way business is conducted within the premises of the dealership. Today's customers want their time valued. They are in general better informed, expect higher price transparency, knowledgeable staff and an inviting, no-pressure environment.

BMW recognizes this. Their new showrooms will look more like chic clothing stores or art museums than car dealerships. There are other noticeable differences once one steps inside. Salesmen do not approach customers as they enter, instead they may be greeted by a so-called Product Genius. Using a tablet computer, these technically minded employees provide prospective buyers with a no-pressure explanation of the features available in BMW's vehicles. The service is similar to that offered at Apple's Genius Bars.

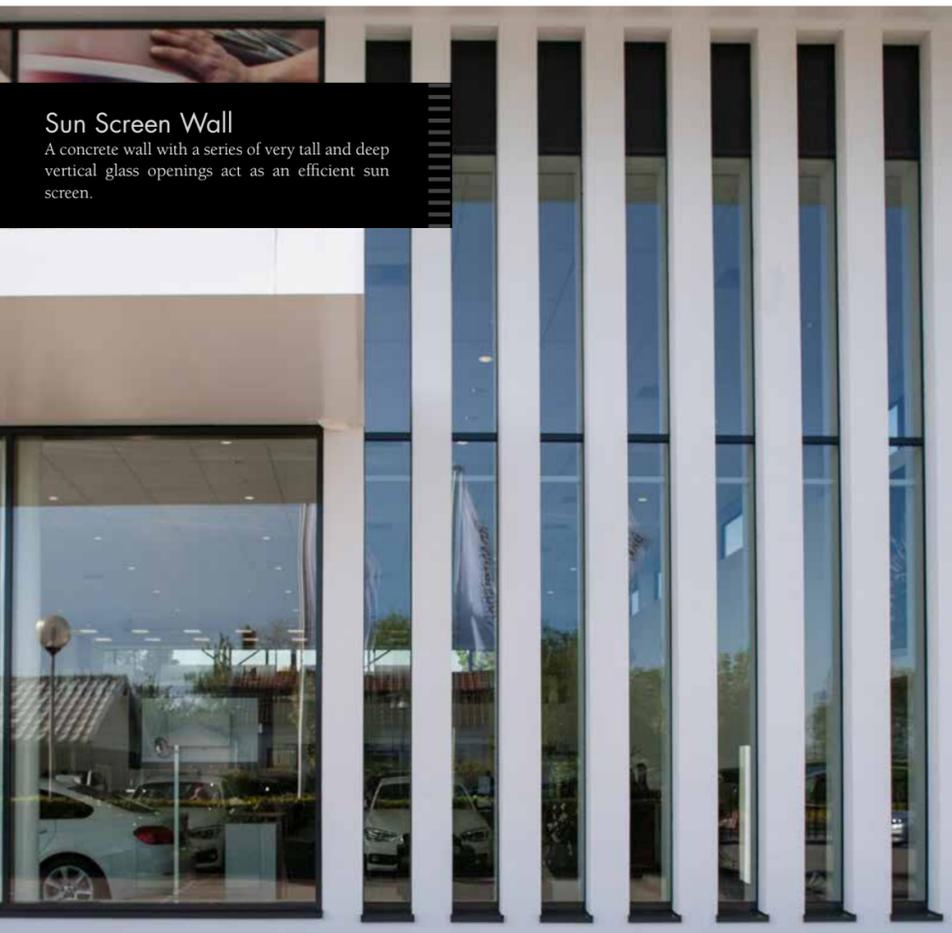
The concept includes the use of tablets with animated product configurations and in-depth explanations of features supported by visuals and films. If a customer decides to buy a new car, he or she meets with a salesman in a quiet environment.



### Bauhaus

The Bauhaus school of art and architecture is closely linked to the names of the famous 20th Century architects Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. It was established as an art school in Weimar in Germany in 1919, and closed in 1933 by pressure from the Nazi authorities that had just come to power earlier that year.

The Bauhaus school was founded with the idea of creating a "total" work of art in which all arts, including architecture, would eventually be brought together. The Bauhaus style was marked by the absence of ornamentation and by harmony between the function of a building (or an object) and its design. Bauhaus has had a profound influence upon subsequent developments in art, architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design, and typography.



### Sun Screen Wall

A concrete wall with a series of very tall and deep vertical glass openings act as an efficient sun screen.

