

# BMW Isetta

In 1994, **Helmuth Vötter** (\*30.12.1943 – †28.05.2023) acquired the BMW Isetta from Mr. Demel of Salzburg. At the time, this iconic microcar had been stationary for many years and was in extremely poor condition—it had even been used as a chicken coop for a while.

Helmuth Vötter personally collected the "Knutschkugel" (literally "kiss-ball," a German nickname for the Isetta) on a trailer. Due to its heavily deteriorated state, he dared to drive it to Kaprun only after nightfall.

With great enthusiasm and attention to detail, he restored the Isetta to life in his workshop. After completing the restoration, he proudly displayed it in the hotel lobby, where it remains to this day.

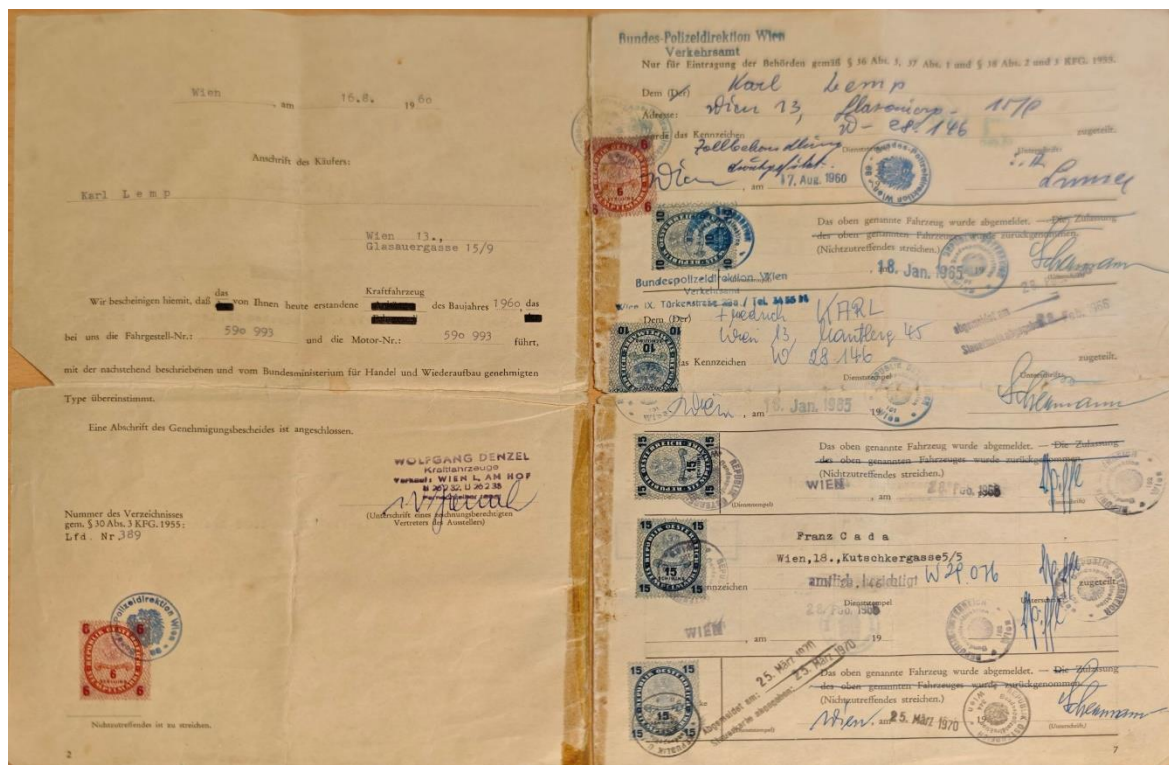
## BMW Isetta – The "Knutschkugel"

The Isetta remains an icon of Germany's postwar economic miracle. With its charming, bubble-like shape and unusual **front-opening door** (which included the steering column), it made automotive history.

As an affordable "people's car," it offered many families in the 1950s the step up from a motorcycle to a car—compact, economical, and full of joy.

Its affectionate nickname, "**Knutschkugel**", stems not only from its unique design but also from the feeling of closeness and comfort it symbolized.

To this day, the Isetta represents **the spirit of optimism of that era** and remains an unmistakable piece of automotive culture.



Here are the most important facts:

## History

- The Isetta was originally designed not by BMW, but by the Italian company **Iso Rivolta** (known for motor scooters and refrigerators).
- BMW acquired the license in 1954 and adapted the car for the German market.
- Production period at BMW: **1955–1962**.

Wortlaut des Bescheides, mit dem die Type genehmigt wurde:

BUNDESMINISTERIUM  
FÜR HANDEL UND WIEDERAUFBAU

Raum für  
Stempelmarken.

Prügestempel

**Typengenehmigungs-Bescheid**

An

die Firma Wolfgang D e n z e l

in W i e n I.,

Zahl 193.029-IV/29-1959

Am Hof

Prüf-Nr. F/ 310/1959

**Spruch:**

1. Das Bundesministerium für Handel und Wiederaufbau genehmigt gemäß §§ 28 und 29 des Kraftfahrzeuggesetzes 1955 unter den im Punkt 2 angeführten Bedingungen die im Punkt 5 beschriebene und im Punkt 6 durch eine Zeichnung dargestellte Type. Für die Genehmigung ist nach der Bundesverwaltungsabgabenverordnung 1957, Tarifpost 248, ein Betrag von 350 Schilling zu entrichten.

2. Bedingungen:

Bis zur Klärung einer Konstruktionsfrage im Zusammenhang mit § 24 KFG 1955 ist die Heizung so abzuschalten, daß sie nicht in Betrieb genommen werden kann.

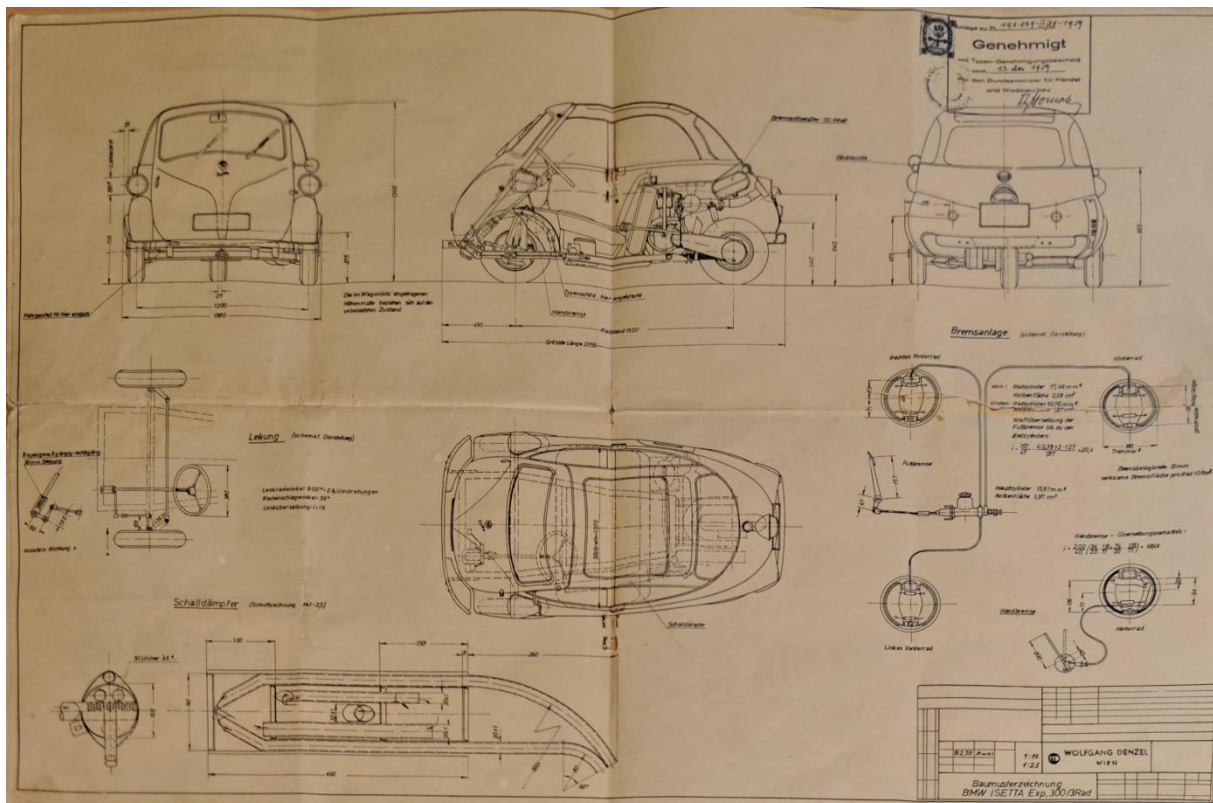
3. Name und Wohnort des Erzeugers des Fahrgestelles und des Aufbaues:

Bayerische Motorenwerke A. G. München.

4. Firmenmäßige Typenbezeichnung: BMW Isetta Export 300/3 Rad

## Design & Engineering

- **Shape:** Egg-shaped, bubble-like, hence the nickname "Knutschkugel."
- **Entry:** Via a single **large front door** that swung forward along with the steering column.
- **Seating:** For two people, with some storage space behind the seats.
- **Engine:** Single-cylinder four-stroke (initially adopted from BMW motorcycles).
  - Displacement: 247 cc (later 298 cc).
  - Power: Approx. 12 hp.
- **Top speed:** Approx. 85 km/h (53 mph).
- **Fuel consumption:** Very economical—around 3 liters per 100 km (78 mpg).



## Significance

- In the 1950s, the Isetta was an **affordable car** for families transitioning from motorcycles to cars.
- It played an important role in Germany's **economic recovery** (the "Wirtschaftswunder" or economic miracle).
- The Isetta was a key part of BMW's **survival strategy** after the severe economic crisis of the 1950s.

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## ☀ Cult Status

- The "Knutschkugel" is now a **symbol of the postwar era** and the desire for mobility.
- It is a sought-after **collector's item**, displayed in vintage car museums (like ours 😊) and at classic car rallies.
- Thanks to its unique design, it has achieved cult status worldwide — charming, space-saving and unmistakable.