

Media information

17 November 2021

The MINI Cooper - the synonym for driving fun for over 60 years.



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A glance at history makes it clear why the names of the traditional British brand and the legendary sports car engineer are often mentioned in the same context.

Munich. For automotive fans with manual skills, the premises in the London suburb of Surbiton must have been a paradise. Scrap metal everywhere, car parts, tyres and a dedicated father screwing on cars and bikes in a garage. And in the middle of it, a certain John Cooper, who created the basis for an extraordinary career as an engineer of racing cars right there immediately after the end of the Second World War. To this day, his name is not only associated with great successes in Formula One, but also with the particularly sporty models of the MINI brand. It was thanks to John Cooper's commitment that a more powerful model variant of the revolutionary small car came onto the market just two years after the classic Mini was introduced in 1959.

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The Mini Cooper immediately impressed with its spirited power delivery and high agility. Even 60 years later, the names of the tradition-steeped British car manufacturer and the legendary sports car engineer are remarkably often mentioned in the same context when it comes to maximum driving fun with minimal external dimensions.

The basis for this connection is the truly authentic sporting spirit. In Great Britain, the desire to race reawakened soon after the end of the war. All over the country, tracks were marked out and competitions held. John Cooper had the talent and ambition to make his mark on this scene. He was just 23 years old when he and his father Charles founded the Cooper Car Company in 1946, which soon developed and built successful



Formula 3 and Formula 2 racing cars. The son's inventive spirit culminated in the construction of a new type of Formula 1 racing car in which the engine did not work in front of the driver, as was customary at the time, but behind him. Cooper celebrated his first victories with it in 1958. In 1959 and 1960, Jack Brabham even became world champion on Cooper. And the revolutionary mid-engine principle established itself

permanently in Grand Prix racing. Cooper's team remained active in Formula 1 until the end of the 1960s. Among the most famous pilots, besides Jack Brabham, were Sir Stirling Moss, Bruce McLaren and Jochen Rindt.

While his groundbreaking Formula 1 racing cars have long been history, John Cooper's influence on the sporting driving experience in production vehicles lives on until today. In this field, too, it all began with a revolutionary design. While John Cooper was busy making his mark on formula racing, engineer Alec Issigonis had developed a new small car for the British Motor Corporation. With an exterior length of just over three metres, the classic Mini offered an astonishing amount of space for four passengers and their luggage.

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Issigonis had arranged the engine transversely at the front, with the gearbox directly below. Wheels positioned far out and short overhangs did the rest. With its transversely positioned four-cylinder engine and front-wheel drive, the classic Mini provided the basis for a design for small and compact cars that was completely new at the time and is still in use today.



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The classic Mini started with an engine output of 34 hp, but it was light and exhibited strikingly agile cornering performance thanks to front-wheel drive, a wide track and a torsionally rigid body. While Issigonis primarily had a low-priced and economical vehicle for everyone in mind, John Cooper immediately recognised

the sporting potential of the classic Mini. The two ingenious engineers had already met during joint racing activities, later also cultivated business relations and developed an intimate friendship over time. Nevertheless, it took a lot of persuasion to raise the sporting temperament of the classic Mini. With the blessing of the BMC management, John Cooper therefore initially had a small series of 1,000 vehicles built, whose modified engine, expanded in displacement to just under 1.0 litres, generated 55 hp, which was enough for a top speed of 135 km/h. Cooper also provided a closer-ratio gearbox, a better-guided gear lever, disc brakes on the front wheels and wider tyres. In addition, the roof was colour-contrasted and the interior was two-tone. Thus, the first Mini Cooper came onto the market in September 1961.

The reactions were euphoric and left only one wish unfulfilled: even more power. Cooper and Issigonis, who had become convinced of the sporting talent of the classic Mini, increased the engine capacity to 1071 cubic centimetres. This increased the output to 70 hp. The chassis technology provided another important boost for the classic Mini's sporting career:

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Issigonis had also broken new ground in the areas of steering and wheel suspension, thus laying the foundation for the go-kart feeling that is still famous today. Homokinetic universal joints reduced the influence of the drive on the steering, a subframe to which the rear wheels were also attached improved directional stability, a rubber suspension and small telescopic shock absorbers ensured fine response and progressive spring action.

The Mini Cooper was immediately successful on racetracks and rally tracks. It became a legend with its appearances at the Monte Carlo Rally. In 1963, the Finn Rauno Aaltonen achieved the first class victory. In addition to trophies, the Mini Cooper gained more and more popularity year after year during its appearances. Its success in competition with numerous much larger and more powerful rivals made it a favourite with the public. The acclaimed highlights were the overall victories achieved with the Mini Cooper S at the Monte Carlo Rally in 1964, 1965 and 1967. Only then did the rally career of the classic Mini draw to a close.

On the road, the Mini Cooper thrilled its fans from 1961 to 1971, during which time its model designation became synonymous with passionate driving fun. The name John Cooper remained consistently present among fans of the classic Mini. The tuning kits developed by Cooper for Mini production vehicles met with great demand in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1990, the Mini Cooper returned to the model range. The 1.3-litre four-cylinder engine with initially 61 hp now worked under the short bonnet. Thus, fans once again conquered the hairpin bends and serpentine of this world with an agile and sporty Mini Cooper. This version with 63 hp was built until autumn 2000. The successor was already ready for take-off at that time.



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The takeover of the Rover Group by BMW at the beginning of 1994 opened up completely new perspectives for the MINI brand. At the International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt in 1997, the study of a MINI Cooper was presented, which offered the prospect of a new edition of the unique British small car. As a modern interpretation of the traditional vehicle concept, it combined the classic values of its predecessor with the requirements of a modern automobile on the threshold of the 21st century. Thus, in 2001, the new MINI saw the streetlight of the world.



The new MINI was bigger, chicer, more colourful and, of course, technically up to date. And it also transferred the typical go-kart feeling of the classic Mini into the modern era. At the same time, the MINI produced in Oxford, England, presented itself as the first premium vehicle in the small car segment. Unlike the classic one, the MINI Cooper was now immediately part of the starting line-up. With a maximum output of 85 kW/115 hp, it lived up to its name. Engine and chassis design immediately formed a harmonious alliance for maximum driving pleasure. The four-cylinder engine, once again mounted transversely at the front, now had a displacement of 1.6 litres. Its power enabled the MINI Cooper to sprint from standstill to 100 km/h in 9.2 seconds and to reach a top speed of 197 km/h. The high-quality chassis technology of the MINI Cooper included McPherson struts on the front axle, axle shafts of equal length and a multi-link rear axle unique in the small car segment, disc brakes on all four wheels as well as the DSC (Dynamic Stability Control) driving stability system.

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The desire for even more power was also fulfilled with the modern MINI. The 120 kW/163 hp MINI Cooper S followed as early as autumn 2001.

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In November 2006, the new edition of the modern MINI was launched with an evolutionary design development and a fundamental technical overhaul. "From the Original to the Original", the MINI's visual appearance, which has received the highest marks of approval, was refined in numerous details, which in particular emphasised the sporting virtues of the compact curve artist even more clearly. The MINI Cooper with 88 kW/120 hp and the MINI Cooper S with 128 kW/175 hp, which were available at the time of their market launch, immediately impressed with their enhanced performance and significantly reduced fuel consumption and emissions. Two years later, the sporty characteristics of a Mini Cooper could also be experienced for the first time with a highly efficient diesel engine. In the MINI Cooper D, 81 kW/110 hp, and in the Mini Cooper SD, which was introduced shortly afterwards, 125 kW/170 hp provided a powerful drive.



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When developing the modern MINI around the turn of the millennium, Mike Cooper had already brought the know-how gathered in his family into the project. John Cooper's son was passionately committed to particularly sporty versions of the MINI. In the following years, the tradition-steeped connection became even closer. At the beginning of 2007, the BMW Group acquired the brand rights of John Cooper Garages. As a result of this arrangement, the John Cooper Works brand has been an official part of the MINI brand since 2008. Since then, the extremely sporty John Cooper Works models have represented the maximum power and performance that can be experienced in a MINI.

Even in the current model generation, the MINI Cooper is the epitome of an extra portion of driving fun, which is now realised in a wide variety of forms. With a three-cylinder petrol engine under the bonnet, it now produces 100 kW/136 hp. In addition, the Cooper name is anchored in the entire range of the current model programme.



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The brand's first all-electric model is called the MINI Cooper SE (power consumption combined: 17.6 - 15.2 kWh/100 km according to WLTP; CO₂ emissions combined: 0 g/km). Powered by a 135 kW/184 hp electric motor, it combines sustainable mobility with characteristic driving pleasure, expressive design and premium quality. On the other side of the spectrum is the new MINI John Cooper Works GP (fuel consumption combined: 7.3 l/100 km; CO₂ emissions combined: 167 g/km according to WLTP). It is powered by a 225 kW/306 hp four-cylinder turbo engine, making it the fastest MINI ever registered for the road. Whether locally emission-free in everyday urban traffic or with the irrepressible urge to take to the racetrack: every MINI with the Cooper name in the model designation carries the unique British sporting spirit of an association that has existed for 60 years.

Fuel consumption, CO₂ emission figures and power consumption were measured using the methods required according to Regulation VO (EC) 2007/715 as amended. They refer to vehicles on the automotive market in Germany. For ranges, the NEDC figures take into account differences in the selected wheel and tyre size, while the WLTP figures take into account the effects of any optional equipment.

All figures are already calculated on the basis of the new WLTP test cycle. NEDC values listed have been calculated back to the NEDC measurement procedure where applicable. WLTP values are used as a basis for the definition of taxes and other vehicle-related levies that are (also) based on CO₂ emissions and, where applicable, for the purposes of vehicle-specific subsidies. Further information on the WLTP and NEDC measurement procedures is also available at www.bmw.de/wltp.

For further details of the official fuel consumption figures and official specific CO₂ emissions of new cars, please refer to the "Manual on the fuel consumption, CO₂ emissions and power consumption of new cars", available at sales outlets, from Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH (DAT), Hellmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen and at <https://www.dat.de/co2/>.



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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2020, the BMW Group sold over 2.3 million passenger vehicles and more than 169,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2020 was € 5.222 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.990 billion. As of 31 December 2020, the BMW Group had a workforce of 120,726 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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