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MINI – “Car of the Decade”. **German automotive publication “Automobilwoche”** **names the original premium small car the most** **important vehicle development of the last decade**

Munich. The MINI is a globally successful model that has become a permanent fixture on the streets of modern cities. The British premium small car has established itself worldwide as a symbol of urban driving fun and became an essential part of its drivers' mobile lifestyle. The MINI has now been named “Car of the Decade” by a jury compiled by the German automotive magazine “Automobilwoche”. The Munich-based auto publication's experts found that no other model has had a greater influence on the development of the automobile industry since the start of the 21st century than the premium segment's first small car.

The MINI began on its road to success in 2001. With the re-launch of the brand and the concept of a premium small car combining expressive design and exceptionally agile handling with almost endless possibilities for individualisation, the BMW Group made a highly successful venture into a new market segment. The MINI was named “Car of the Decade” not merely by virtue of its continually growing market success, however, but primarily for the impetus it has given the automobile industry. The “Automobilwoche” jury highlighted MINI's status as a “cult small car” whose success unleashed “a wave of similar products”. Although competition has since become much fiercer, MINI clearly maintains its leading position ten years on. MINI remains the only manufacturer to develop its own premium small cars independently, and achieved a new global sales record of 234,175 vehicles in 2010.

MINI's unique character is based not least on the authentic reinterpretation of the construction features and values that caused a revolution in the automobile sector in the brand's early years. As the first car of its kind, the classic Mini introduced in 1959, with its transversely mounted front engine and innovative interior concept, was able to offer maximum space with a minimal footprint. The

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classic Mini made automobile history with this principle, and although it provided the inspiration for many models produced by other manufacturers, it retained its status as a one-of-a-kind original throughout the decades. In 1995, readers of the British magazine “Autocar” voted it “Car of the Century”.

Following in the footsteps of its classic predecessor, today’s MINI is continuing that success story. The second MINI generation introduced in 2006, with an expanded model range that includes the MINI Convertible and the MINI Clubman, is reporting steadily rising sales figures. Around 1.8 million MINI cars have been sold worldwide. The MINI family was joined by the MINI Countryman in autumn 2010. This, the first MINI with four doors and a large tailgate, delivers the brand’s characteristic driving fun outside of urban traffic scenarios – and is even available with MINI ALL4 all-wheel drive.

In addition to the growing diversity of the model range, innovative technology provides a further guarantee that the MINI, with its very current appeal, will always be able to reach out to new target groups. State-of-the-art engines and comprehensive MINIMALISM technology allow excitement and driving fun to be combined with exemplary consumption and emission ratings. The best example of this is the new MINI Cooper D with a maximum output of 82 kW/112 hp and CO₂ emissions of 99 grams per kilometre. This high level of efficiency is also an important factor in the sustained popularity of the MINI, according to the “Automobilwoche” jury. The fact that “this small British car is also ecologically correct” rounds off the image of this consistently successful pioneer in the premium small car segment.

The “Car of the Decade” was announced as part of the “Auto-Star” awards. “Automobilwoche” bestows this title on “individuals, companies and products that were consistently successful and shaped the automobile business over the last decade,” explained editor-in-chief Guido Reinking, who presented the award for “Car of the Decade” to Ian Robertson, member of the Board of Management

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of BMW AG, responsible for Sales and Marketing, and Wolfgang Armbrrecht, Senior Vice President MINI Brand Management. Besides Reinking and “Automobilwoche” publisher Helmut Kluger, “Auto-Star” jury members also included president of the German Federation for Motor Trades and Repairs (ZDK), Robert Rademacher; long-standing president of the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), Bernd Gottschalk; as well as automobile industry experts Prof. Willi Diez from Nürtingen University and Prof. H. Dieter Dahlhoff from the University of Kassel.

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