



Media Information
30 September

David Richards: “I am very proud of what our team of engineers has been able to achieve.”

Paris. After studying accountancy, David Richards became a professional rally co-driver, finishing his competitive career by winning the World Rally Championship title with Ari Vatanen (FI) in 1981. Following the 1981 season, he devoted his time to developing his business interests, which led to the formation of his own rally team and the creation of Prodrive in 1984.

In this interview, the chairman and chief executive of the Prodrive Group talks about the development of the MINI WRC and MINI's contribution to this process.

Mr Richards, what does working together with MINI mean to you?

David Richards: “I have been involved in the World Rally Championship for more than 30 years, firstly co-driving Ari Vatanen and then subsequently managing several teams. I can honestly say that in all this time, I have personally never been so excited or seen so much interest in a new entrant, as we are seeing today with MINI. In the 1960s the original little red and white MINI captured the imagination of the world and won what was then the most challenging motor race in the world, the Monte Carlo rally. More than 40 years on and people still talk about this achievement with great fondness.”

Is it possible to add a further chapter to MINI' success story in rallying?

Richards: “I firmly believe the new MINI WRC car will capture the imagination of today's generation of rally fans just as it did then and, as in 1964, this interest will spread well beyond the world of motorsport. I have had so many people coming up to me and say that they had read about the new programme and would be cheering us on. I'm therefore sure that MINI's participation will lead to a rejuvenation of interest in the World Rally Championship and bring a whole new audience to this spectacle.”

When did you start to develop the MINI WRC?

Richards: “While we are only now unveiling the new MINI WRC, Prodrive has been working on its development since the beginning of 2009. It is the most well prepared and best engineered rally car we have ever built, and in its first tests, it is already exceeding the targets we set ourselves for the project. I have to be honest and say that when we started on this road towards designing a rally car to the new 2011 WRC regulations, we never thought we would be working with MINI. Right at the beginning of this journey, we established a small but focussed team of engineers with the task of developing a new car with complete freedom to design the ideal rally car to meet the new 2011 rules. For the first three

Company
Bayerische
Motoren Werke
Aktiengesellschaft

Postal Address
BMW AG
80788 München

Telephone
+49 (0)89 382 30641

Internet
www.bmwgroup.com



Media Information

Date 30 September
Subject David Richards: "I am very proud of what our team of engineers has been able to achieve."
Page 2

months we did nothing but analysis. We mathematically modelled every aspect of a rally car."



Media Information

Date 30 September

Subject David Richards: "I am very proud of what our team of engineers has been able to achieve."

Page 3

Why was the MINI Countryman such a good basis for a WRC version?

Richards: "This initial work threw up some very interesting findings and fundamentally changed the way we approached the design of the MINI WRC car and also where we focussed our engineering resources. We analysed more than a dozen cars from various manufacturers, measuring key elements like wheel base, centre of gravity, weight, track etc. It was only then that one of my team mentioned he had heard about a new MINI. Having run race and rally programmes with BMW in the 1980s and 1990s I was still in touch with many people in the company and they were able to confirm that this was indeed the case. A few quick measurements of the new car and we soon realised that it would be a great base for a World Rally Car.

How does MINI contribute to the development process?

Richards: "By the end of last year our focus was totally on the Countryman. MINI shared all its technical and engineering data on the car and we began applying our generic rally car design to the Countryman. I have to say that the support from both the engineering and commercial teams in Munich is extraordinary. At the early stage there was only a gentlemen's agreement in place, but since then there has been commitment to the project from all levels within the company."

On which areas of the car did you put particular focus on?

Richards: "One of the key tasks we set the engineering team was to make the car practical and economical to use for private teams without in any way compromising its performance. The car will be produced in reasonable volumes, in motorsport terms of 25 to 30 per year, and thus it has to be easily maintained in remote locations across the world. As a result, if you look at the new MINI WRC, its design is very clean and simple and, in engineering terms, that has taken a lot more time and effort. For instance, all four uprights are interchangeable as are the anti-roll bars, so our customers don't need so many spare parts to run their cars. There are also many innovative features around the rest of the car including the roll-cage design which will make the MINI extremely safe."

Are you happy with the results of your team's work?

Richards: "I am very proud of what our team of engineers has been able to achieve and the early testing results are extremely promising. By combining the experience of David Lapworth our technical director, who has been with Prodrive since the very beginning, with the inspiration and new ideas from a team of young engineers we have been able to produce a radically new car. However, let's not underestimate the challenge that faces us as I'm sure our competitors are working equally hard on their new cars for 2011, but if you are going to be a



Media Information

Date 30 September
Subject David Richards: "I am very proud of what our team of engineers has been able to achieve."
Page 4

new entrant to any championship, there is no better time to join than when there's a new set of technical regulations and a new tyre supplier."

For questions please contact:

Jörg Kottmeier, BMW Corporate Affairs, Head of Sports Communications, Office: +49 (0) 89 382 23401, Mobile: +49 (0) 170 5666 112, joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de

Ingo Lehbrink, BMW Corporate Affairs, Sports Communications, Office: +49 (0)89 382 76003, Mobile: +49 (0) 176 20340224, ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

Cypselus von Frankenberg, Head of MINI Product Communications;
Office: +49 (0)89 382 30641, Mobile: +49 (0)170 7965284, Cypselus.von-Frankenberg@mini.com

Media Website: www.press.bmwgroup.com
E-mail: presse@bmw.de