



Media Information

## **MINI Vision Urbanaut: The virtual concept becomes a reality.**

In November 2020, the MINI brand revealed the MINI Vision Urbanaut virtual concept vehicle, an all-new interpretation of mobility through an innovative vision of space. Now, the BMW Group has made a physical model of the vehicle showcasing its space and sustainable materials. The model's world premiere will be at the DLD Summer conference in Munich on 1 July 2021.

“At MINI we see it as our responsibility to preserve and develop the unique characteristics of our brand over the upcoming years and those further ahead,” explains Bernd Körber, Head of MINI. “With our eyes fixed on the future, we have developed an idea, with the MINI Vision Urbanaut, of how we can take the MINI attributes – as here, with the focus on the ‘Clever Use of Space’ – into the future of mobility and interpret them in a typically MINI way. It brings the user’s personal space into the car and opens up various possibilities for them, from creating an urban oasis to experiencing freedom in the ‘Wanderlust’ moment. The MINI Vision Urbanaut represents our image of how MINI’s ‘Clever Use of Space’ could provide an answer to the needs of future cities and lifestyles.”

Oliver Heilmer, Head of MINI Design adds: “At MINI Design we believe that the best way to understand the overall concept behind the MINI Vision Urbanaut is to experience it. The feeling of space and the innovative materials are just asking to be explored. That is why it was very important for us from the outset to also make a physical model of the MINI Vision Urbanaut. And now that moment has come. We have planned and built every aspect of the model – which allows people to experience all of the facets of the MINI Vision Urbanaut – at our MINI Design Studio in Munich.”

### **Extending the idea of mobility beyond driving – the MINI moments.**

MINI sees its future self primarily as an enabler of and companion for unforgettable times, this is what we’re calling “MINI moments”. Inspired by the question “What kind of experiences do I want to have with my vehicle?”, they provide the conceptual platform for the MINI Vision Urbanaut – for times when you’re travelling and others when you’re not. What this means more specifically is encapsulated by the MINI moments “Chill”, “Wanderlust” and “Vibe”. The exterior and interior of the vehicle change to reflect the MINI moment at hand and so give the on-board experience the best possible stage and environment. Fragrance, sound and ambient lighting continue to enrich the baseline mood initiated by the

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chosen MINI moment. The transformation of the vehicle through the different moments can now be experienced in reality with the physical model of the MINI Vision Urbanaut.

The Chill moment invites you to catch a breath and pause in the here and now. The car becomes a kind of retreat, a haven where you can relax or work with full concentration. While the rear seat bench (Cosy Corner) invites various seating and lying positions, the backlit Loop above it takes on an appearance inspired by a green forest canopy and can also be dimmed. In the central area, the circular instrument folds down to become a table lamp, eliminating displays or switches that might remind the customer of their automotive surroundings.

Wanderlust is the only MINI moment where the MINI Vision Urbanaut is being driven or driving with automated driving functions. In this moment, the interior becomes the ideal place for driving the car, or being its passenger, and enables those on board to rediscover the romance of travel. When the customer wants to drive themselves, a tap of a finger on the MINI logo brings out the steering wheel and pedals. The user interface on the central circular instrument also adapts its visuals; alongside an animation of the route, additional journey information – such as visitor attractions and arrival time – is displayed here for those on board.

The Vibe moment puts time with other people at centre stage – in every way. Opening the side door and folding up the windscreen creates a welcoming scene that blurs the boundaries between the outside and inside. The central circular instrument becomes a media control centre. An animation of graphic equalizers moving with the music is projected onto surfaces of the front, rear, wheels and Loop above the rear seat bench, creating a club atmosphere. If those on board so desire, the car can even begin to resemble a boombox. Finally, there is the fourth option, the customisable “my moment”, which provides users with further scope for tailoring the design of the vehicle to their needs and desires.

### **Multi-faceted sustainability.**

As well as its wide range of uses, the MINI Vision Urbanaut also focuses on sustainability – and this can be seen and experienced directly in various aspects of the vehicle. The starting point for the concept was the “Clever Use of Space” for which MINI is renowned; i.e. it offers maximum space on the smallest possible footprint. Although the MINI Vision Urbanaut is only 4.46m in length, its height allows it to provide an interior space that can be used in many different ways and offers a whole new ease of movement inside the car. The electric drive system ensures emission-free mobility, yet another aspect is the scope for using the vehicle for purposes beyond mobility. The MINI Vision Urbanaut also creates an urban space for people when it’s parked, significantly increasing the amount of time they will want to use the vehicle or just hang out in it.

The MINI Vision Urbanaut sets out to use resources responsibly. From the beginning of the concept phase the team focused on consistently reducing the number of components and avoiding unnecessary use of materials. This has been achieved by developments including clever dual-functionality for the dashboard (it can turn into a daybed) and the debut appearance of a circular OLED centre display – which recasts itself as a stylish lamp in the Chill moment – above the table. Maximising length of use by ensuring materials can be replaced is likewise a

priority. Changeable covers are a good example of how this can be achieved. In addition, the interior has been created without the use of chrome or leather, an approach that will also be rolled out in the next MINI model generation.

### **High-quality and sustainable material innovations.**

The interior of the MINI Vision Urbanaut features a high proportion of recycled materials and they are almost exclusively renewable and recyclable. Dominant in the interior are textiles made from recycled materials (including wool, polyester and Tencel) which blend cosiness and quality with softness and comfort. The designers also paid extra attention to solutions composed of a single type of material – known as “mono-materials”. These are easy to recycle further down the line and can be turned into new products. The use of renewable and recyclable cork on the steering wheel and sections of the floor adds a special touch thanks to its natural feel. The materials for the MINI Vision Urbanaut highlight the extremely high levels of visual and haptic quality that a sustainably designed interior can offer.

### **An experience for all the senses.**

The MINI Vision Urbanaut covers all sensory angles in creating the perfect on-board experience. A key element of the interior design is therefore a carefully honed approach to fragrance and sound. “The holistic approach addressing all the senses creates a truly unique and unforgettable experience,” explains Annabell Coffinet, Fragrance Designer at the BMW Group. “A distinctive fragrance signature sticks in the mind and can remind you of a positive atmosphere and overall experience. In this way, we are creating another, very personal connection with particularly memorable times. We also wanted to link the MINI brand identity with a fragrance signature for the first time. This hint of something intangible, refreshing and unexpected brings emotion to how the brand’s message is communicated, a kind of highly recognisable international signature. It will be discreet and revealed as part of a welcome scenario.” Bringing balance to the sensory experience, Renzo Vitale, Creative Director Sound, gives the various textures of the welcome scenario fragrance a matching sound. Additionally, he composed the music for the Chill, Vibe and Wanderlust moments. In the Chill moment, the vehicle wraps the user in the subtle soundscapes of a forest, with rustling leaves and flowing water filling the interior – a fitting complement to the dimmable forest canopy effect. Acoustic sounds set the seal on the relaxation-rich experience. The Wanderlust and Vibe moments are accompanied by a soundtrack of specially composed music which can be played both inside and outside the vehicle.

### **Analogue love, digital connection**

Another aim with the MINI moments was to use digital integration to intensify or enrich the analogue experience. This “analogue love, digital connection” approach runs throughout the vehicle. An additional digital level has been integrated below several of the analogue surfaces. Examples here include the table inside the vehicle (which initiates the MINI moments when the MINI Token is placed in one of the slots), the lamp with OLED display and the LED matrixes in the interior under a layer of textile or in the front and rear ends of the car. These areas of the vehicle

bring together the analogue and digital worlds into a new and immersive experience.

### **Bringing together the BMW Group's model-building expertise.**

As an innovative space concept, the MINI Vision Urbanaut was designed from the inside out. The designers created the spacious interior experience before developing the exterior, using floor plans, pieces of furniture plus wooden scale models to provide an indication of size. Over the course of the project, augmented reality was employed to create a digital model, which was then systematically optimised. The physical model of the MINI Vision Urbanaut was then put together from start to finish at the MINI Design studio in Munich. Here, the BMW Group gathered all the expertise available to transform virtual visions into physical reality. Upholsterers, modellers, mechatronics engineers, programmers, paint specialists and others worked alongside the designers to turn a vision into a physical model of almost prototype quality. After all, the MINI Vision Urbanaut is not only a static model, it's driveable too. Every part has been specially designed, precision-manufactured using cutting-edge tools and crafted by hand. The high degree of artistry inside the MINI Vision Urbanaut is highlighted by an interior design that is reminiscent of a modern living space. The construction of the model therefore extended from a classical vehicle build via furniture-making all the way to programming and smart high-tech integration.

### **Ends**

#### **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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