



# MINI CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Media Information

19 January 2024

## January 1964: Historic victory for the classic Mini at the Monte Carlo Rally.



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**Their motto was: Anyone who doesn't believe in miracles is not a realist. Paddy Hopkirk made the British small car a motorsport legend with his overall victory in the Monte Carlo Rally 60 years ago - Timo Mäkinen and Rauno Aaltonen repeated the triumph in 1965 and 1967. Successes that shook up the sports establishment and changed and shaped the MINI brand until today.**

**Munich/Monte Carlo.** These days marks the 60th anniversary of one of the most spectacular successes in the history of international motorsport. With Irishman Patrick "Paddy" Hopkirk at the wheel, the Mini Cooper S won the overall standings of the Monte Carlo Rally. Happiness?

Coincidence? A quirk of fate? Probably not, because two more victories followed at the Monte Carlo Rally and numerous other successes until the

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end of the 1960s. Looking back, the reasons for this were: modern technology, top drivers and new logistics standards.

"Paddy Hopkirk's victory in the Mini Cooper S in 1964 marked a turning point in the history of Mini. It proved that the classic Mini was not only a charming city car, but also a successful car in motorsport. This tradition and passion for racing is in our legacy and can still be felt in our models today. Motorsport has shaped Mini and will always remain an important part of our DNA," says Stefanie Wurst, Head of MINI.

### **Blueprint for modern small cars.**

At the end of the 1950s, the rally greats mostly moved in stately and lavishly motorized vehicles through English forests, over French passes or from Liège to Sofia and back again. Austin Healey and Ford Falcon were the benchmark at the rallies and dominated the scene. They weren't really suitable for everyday use. During this time, Alec Issigonis, on behalf of the British Motor Corporation (BMC), built the the most modern car of its time: with its transverse engine and front-wheel drive, the classic Mini met the standard for small cars that is still valid today when it debuted in 1959.

An impressive sports career required a second brilliant car guy: John Cooper. He had achieved fame as a racing driver and wealth as a designer - and he was immediately convinced of the sporting potential of the classic Mini. Cooper, who in his Formula 1 cars did not place the engine in front of the driver, as was usual at the time, but behind him, summed it up to his friend Issigonis, who saw the classic Mini as more of a car for everyone: "That's a damn race car. Give it more power, improve the brakes and build the thing." The underestimated underdog - a role that MINI has been happy to take on again and again in its more than six decade history - was born.

### **64 years of the brand, 62 years of motorsport.**

The first Mini Cooper was created in 1960 - with an impressive 55 horsepower instead of the 34 horsepower of the original Mini from 1959.



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As early as 1961, the Mini Cooper, which was just three meters long, turned the world of high-speed drivers upside down. From now on, even the less well-off could tile across the country at least as quickly as the owners of pure sports cars and high-horsepower limousines. And on the rally trails and racing tracks, the little racers with their almost delicate ten-inch wheels won the trophies.

The classic Mini Cooper was tailor-made for the rally routes of the time. Hardly any body overhangs ensured a previously unknown neutral driving behavior.

And thanks to the rather modest 650 kilos that a Rallye Mini weighed at the time, the power-to-weight ratio was quite acceptable with the modest 55 hp. This construction was to become the origin of the famous go-kart feeling.

In May 1962, the classic Mini entered the winners' list of an international rally event for the first time. At the International Tulip Rally, which led from the Dutch municipality of Noordwijk to the French Riviera and back again, Pat Moss, sister of the four-time vice world champion and 16-time Grand Prix winner Stirling Moss, drove the classic Mini Cooper in the fastest time over the route.

### **Finnish ice speedsters and virtuoso left brakers.**

Also in 1962, BMC sports director Stuart Turner signed two talents from the Nordic forests alongside Irishman Paddy Hopkirk: Timo Mäkinen and Rauno Aaltonen. The Finnish ice hustlers and virtuoso left-hand brakers shared a love for hard acceleration - and yet couldn't be more different. Mäkinen was not a fan of many words and went down in history as the Flying Finn. Aaltonen speaks five languages fluently and pursued motorsports with scientific meticulousness, which later earned him the title of rally professor.

From then on, Mini began to reach for the stars. No matter how hopeless a task seems, Mini has always faced competition throughout its long



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history. The ingenious basic principle of the vehicle and the three top drivers were important pillars of success. Just like the professional logistics developed by Turner. He set new standards in terms of service organization and was the first team boss to send ice spies to the special stages. John Cooper continued to fine-tune the combustion chamber volume and produced 90 hp in the model now called Mini Cooper S after the displacement expansion to 1071 cc defined for the 1100 class.

By the way, the Mini Cooper S was visually similar to any everyday Mini. No sporty tailgate, not even a tachometer, instead a thin plastic steering wheel and spartan seats without lateral support. A shelf instead of the dashboard, external body folds and hinges. Thanks to the economical furnishings, a certain amount of space in a tiny car and an extreme economy of space. In short: a bold simplicity.

### **Behind every success there is hard work.**

Even in the 1960s, it wasn't easy to win the Monte Carlo Rally without any prep work. In 1963, Rauno Aaltonen took his first class win at the Monte. And yet the success in the overall ranking in 1964 was a big surprise for the competitors - the competition seemed too overwhelming. 277 cars took part in the 33rd edition of what is probably the most famous rally in the world. The meticulous preparatory work and the weather conditions with plenty of ice and snow benefited the classic Mini. And so overnight the underdog and frightened favorite not only became a crowd favorite, but also a motorsport legend.

### **Ice, snow and 34 hairpin bends over a length of 24 km.**

It was the legendary "Night of the Long Knives", the penultimate stage of the rally, that brought the Mini Cooper S with starting number #37 and the since famous license plate 33 EJB to victory in the winter of 1964. During the test at the Col de Turini in the French Maritime Alps, 34 hairpin bends have to be mastered over 24 kilometers - a real challenge in snow and ice at a pass altitude of 1,600 meters. Hopkirk reached the finish line just 17 seconds behind his closest rival, Bo Ljungfeldt, in the much more powerful Ford Falcon with a V8 engine. Due to the handicap



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formula in force at the time to compensate for differences in weight and performance, the classic Mini was in the lead in the overall ranking. And he also defended his lead in the final circuit race through the streets of Monte Carlo.

In the home country of the classic Mini, the victory was of course celebrated enthusiastically. Hopkirk received a congratulatory telegram from the British government and the Beatles were among the first to congratulate him. "There came an autograph card from the Beatles," Hopkirk later recalled, which said: "Now you're one of us, Paddy." A great memory." Hopkirk became a motorsport hero overnight and something like the fifth Beatle.

### **A win can be luck, a winning streak is skill.**

The classic Mini continued to dominate the Monte Carlo Rally in subsequent years. Timo Mäkinen won with a big lead just one year later. The displacement expansion to 1275 cubic centimeters also helped. Mäkinen was the only participant who remained free of penalty points over the entire distance. Despite tons of snow and ice, the organizers had scheduled a second night trip through the Maritime Alps. Mäkinen and his Mini Cooper S were unimpressed and won five of the six special stages on the final stage.

In 1966 the supposedly ultimate triumph came when the Mini pilots took places one to three. The race management disqualified all three vehicles because of allegedly non-compliant lighting technology - a technology including the characteristic additional headlights in front of the radiator grille, which is still one of the most popular accessories in the brand's range to this day. Even French rally enthusiasts were embarrassed by the disqualification. It only underlined the legendary status of the classic Mini. From now on, Aaltonen, Mäkinen and Hopkirk were considered the "Three Musketeers" - and sales of the classic Mini skyrocketed. In 1967 Aaltonen took overall victory - and yet the end of an era began to emerge. The following year, Vic Elford won in a Porsche 911 - Aaltonen saved the honor of the classic Mini with third place.



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In 1970 it was finally over. The Leyland Group ran into financial difficulties - a magnificent chapter in motorsport history was closed. In July 1971, the last Mini Cooper S rolled off the assembly line.

### **Proven principles and new models.**

The motorsport successes of the early years shaped the brand into the new millennium. And the heritage is carefully maintained and developed further. Front-wheel drive, engines mounted transversely at the front, short body overhangs, agile handling and plenty of space for passengers in a small footprint - elementary characteristics that were transferred from the classic Mini to the new MINI, which has been available since 2001, refined and transformed into the premium segment. New variants such as the MINI Clubman, the MINI Convertible and the MINI Countryman were added - they can all be immediately recognized and experienced as MINI.

Only a few vehicle concepts have survived a similar time span as the MINI. Hardly any other vehicle has achieved such popularity. None of them has ever been implemented in such a wide variety of variants as the MINI. Driving a MINI was and is not just pure transportation, but also an expression of your own style. The classic of automotive history has become a timeless, cross-generational, and class-spanning vehicle.

### **MINI surprised everyone again – its successes at the Dakar Rally.**

And of course, since the takeover by the BMW Group, motorsport and the name John Cooper continue to play an important role. In 2011 and 2012, MINI continued its motorsport history with the John Cooper Works WRC at selected rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). From 2012, the MINI ALL4 Racing, designed specifically for marathon rallies, took on a special challenge: the Dakar Rally, the ultimate endurance test for drivers, vehicles and teams. The performance and reliability of the MINI ALL4 Racing led to four consecutive Dakar successes from 2012 to 2015, followed by numbers five and six in 2020 and 2021.



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And once again the motorsport world had underestimated the little guy who had always achieved such great things.

The brand name John Cooper Works guarantees outstanding performance not only on the racetrack, but also on the road. John Cooper Works tuning kits for series vehicles were already very popular in the 1970s - they emphasized the most important virtues both visually and technically. A tradition that continues with the new MINI. There are also extreme athletes with the addition of John Cooper Works and an output of up to 225 kW/306 hp.

### **Private motorsport teams continue the tradition.**

The passion for racing still exists and is now lived by private motorsport teams. In 2021, the Bulldog Racing project was created in Nürburg which is dedicated to classic endurance racing. When Bulldog Racing's MINI John Cooper Works made its first appearance at the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring in 2022, the John Cooper Works defied all odds for 40 laps and was taken out of the race after an accident. The combative effort thrilled the fans and the red speedster quickly became a crowd favorite.

In May 2023, in the second 24-hour race, the Bulldog Racing Team achieved a highly acclaimed second place in its class with a MINI John Cooper Works 1to6 Edition at the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring. As one of the few vehicles with a manual transmission, the near-production version relied on classic MINI virtues: low weight, a lot of series and even more emotion. In 2024, the Bulldog Racing Team will be racing in the "Green Hell" again with a MINI John Cooper Works racecar.

### **On the way to becoming a purely electrically powered brand.**

The future of the MINI feeling is almost silent, locally emission-free, but extremely powerful. The MINI Cooper and the the MINI Countryman have been showed already, while the new MINI Aceman, a completely new vehicle that sits between these two models, will follow in the first half of 2024. And the MINI John Cooper Works models are also being gradually electrified - a new chapter in the brand's more than 60-year history.



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Fuel consumption, CO2 emission figures and power consumption and range were measured using the methods required according to Regulation VO (EC) 2007/715 as amended. They refer to vehicles on the German automotive market. 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 have already been calculated based on the new WLTP test cycle. NEDC figures listed have been adjusted to the NEDC measurement method where applicable. WLTP values are used as a basis for the assessment of taxes and other vehicle-related duties which 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](http://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 free of charge, 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 over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2022, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.4 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2022 was € 23.5 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.6 billion. As of 31 December 2022, the BMW Group had a workforce of 149,475 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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