

MINI USA APRIL FOOLS RETROSPECTIVE



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MINI USA HIGHLIGHTS PAST APRIL FOOLS' MOMENTS TO HELP PEOPLE SMILE

MINI USA Recaps Some of its Best and Slightly Irreverent April Fools' Moments to add a bit of Brightness to the Day.

Woodcliff Lake, N.J., April 1, 2020. At a serious time when people around the world are trying to stay safe and healthy, and practice social distancing at home, [MINI USA](#) would like to remind everyone of the therapeutic power of a smile by highlighting some of the brand's most memorable and humorous past April Fools' moments since MINI re-launched in 2002. This is in honor of this April Fools' Day, a holiday that is widely considered to be cancelled this year.

Over the past 18 years, MINI has celebrated the levity and joy of April Fools' Day with outlandish models, concepts and accessories that were never intended to make it to reality. While most were simply virtual ideas to celebrate a holiday dedicated to jokes and pranks that's dated back to the 1500s, MINI did go as far to create one and launch it at a major international auto show in 2012.

"MINI has always had the ability to make people smile, whether through our humorous advertising and guerilla marketing stunts, or simply by the appearance of the familiar, smiling face that people see in the front grill of a MINI." said Andrew Cutler, Head of Corporate Communications, MINI USA. "We hope that during these difficult times, reminiscing about some of our past April Fools' Day moments will make people smile. It's an important part of helping us all get through this together."

Below are some of MINI's best April Fools' Day releases.

2002

MINI INTRODUCES REVOLUTIONARY THIRD HEADLIGHT: 'CENTERLITE' Another Example of When Three is More Fun than Two

Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, April 01, 2002...While most cars now come with either two or four front headlamps, MINI has introduced a groundbreaking *third* headlamp specifically for foggy English weather.

The third lamp is situated in the air-intake position, which previously fed the MINI Cooper S supercharger. Re-routing the air induction through a 'hairdryer technology' sub-mounted pump, has freed up this position for the 'fog-busting' third eye.

MINI's xenon headlamp technology has also been further developed for the center-mounted lamp. This revolutionary new technology emits a super-heated beam that dries out fog up to 100 feet ahead of the car and dramatically improves visibility.

A spokesman for MINI UK said; "We are delighted to be getting this technology as a world first. I have so often been caught out in foggy weather while bringing home my fish 'n' chips. This breakthrough really is a godsend, me old mate."

The dubious U.S. spellings for 'centre' and 'light' have been combined to form the trademark name of the system; Centerlite™. 'Centerlite™ can be used with the main headlights on or off, thus when using only the 'Centerlite' MINI can even more closely resemble the motorcycle riding experience.

While trials in the UK are proving successful, MINI admits that work has to be done to improve battery power for the third lamp. The large battery requires the removal of the rear seats and raising the roof height by 3 inches.

No word as yet whether this 'fog-busting' technology will make the U.S. market where cold, foggy conditions are not so prevalent. Newfoundland, however, has the item pre-ordered as a 100% standard feature.

The standard two-lamp MINI Cooper went on sale at MINI dealers on March 23 2002. With an MSRP of \$16,850 including delivery charges, the car will be joined by the even livelier, \$19,850 MINI Cooper S in the coming weeks.



A MINI showing the "Third Eye Fog Buster"

2003

REMOTE CONTROL STEERING AVAILABLE ON MINI Little Car Crammed with High technology Sets New Standards in Convenience

Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey April 1, 2003... MINI is well known for packaging high-technology into a small space and its latest innovation, *MINI Remote Steering™*, takes ease of ownership to new levels. With *MINI Remote Steering™*, MINI has produced the world's first commercially-available full-sized remote control car. Based on the proven 'Tamiy-ah-hah' model racing technology, the new system allows MINI owners to remotely operate their cars up to a distance of 150 feet.



Now, avoiding the rain is simple.
Thanks to Remote Steering, MINI comes right to your door.

This system provides a number of benefits. For example, it allows owners to arrive at their favorite restaurant, be seated at their table and then remotely park their car in the street outside. Furthermore, an apartment dweller in Manhattan can remotely bring their car up from the basement garage and position it on the street, ready to go.

Opposition to the new system has been voiced however. Valet Parker's union president 'Denton Dour said; 'Hey, we loved driving this thing and now it looks like we're out of a job...whaddya gonna do?' he opined. *MINI Remote Steering™*, is now also likely to give street racing a whole new perspective as tuners abandon their hot rods in favor of playing with their hand-held.

MINI spokesperson, Donna Falforit said 'Clearly this once again highlights MINI as a high technology product. We have thoroughly trialed this new system and apart from the occasional interference with light aircraft and TV remotes, we are happy with it. Pricing is not set, but we think it'll be a winner, especially on a day like today.'

Journalist note: MINI is the 2003 North American Car of the Year. (Seriously folks).

2004

MINI USA INTRODUCES 8 SPEED GEARBOX

MINI's Forward Thinking Adds More Fun with 2 Speeds in Reverse

Woodcliff Lake, NJ - April 1, 2004... Hot on the heels of the announcement of the new MINI Convertible, MINI has announced the world's first 8-speed gearbox, now with 2 reverse gears.

Research has shown that MINI owners have the highest 'FGF' score (Fun Going Forward) on the road and so MINI engineers have developed a 2-speed reverse gear to increase the 'FGB' (Fun Going Backward) score to a similar level.

Called Double Back Shifting (or Double B.S.), the new system adds a second reverse gear and thereby allows MINI owners to reverse faster than the competition to speeds of up to 40 mph.

As well as increasing the FGB score, the new system, along with MINI's unique size, gives owners an almost unfair advantage when finding those elusive on-street parking spaces: If the driver overshoots the space, they can simply reverse in double quick time using B.S. to zip neatly into the space.

MINI gearbox engineer, Geary Ducshan said: "We worked hard to add this extra gear into the transmission. We are delighted with the results, the only disadvantage being the new larger box now takes up much of the passenger foot well, but it's a price worth paying."

The system has further advantages. Competitive minded drivers are clearly excited by this news and the SCCA is now looking at a reverse autocross challenge where MINI owners can enjoy B.S. to the max.

Pricing has yet to be announced, however, a MINI spokesman, said "this development is perfectly timed as there is no better day than April 1st to announce B.S."

2005

**MINI USA ANNOUNCES NEXT NEW SPECIAL EDITION; THE MINI PULLMAN
Special Model to Promote Flexible Transportation Initiative**

Woodcliff Lake, NJ - April 1, 2005... MINI, already known for cornering as if it were on rails, will now offer a special edition that will actually corner on rails. In light of the growing problem of gridlock and rush hour traffic, this special model is adapted to ride on all domestic gauge rail lines throughout North America.

In conjunction with the North American railway system, an exclusive right-of-way has been authorized for the specially equipped MINI to commute via rail during peak hours in major urban centers. This access, once only limited to railway utility trucks is now available to MINI owners who order the special model.

The MINI Pullman can access the railway at any major crossing gate provided care is taken not to enter into the opposing direction of prevailing rail traffic. A new feature in the onboard computer allows the MINI 'motorman' or woman to access individual rail line schedules to plan their travels while on the rails.

The MINI Pullman comes fitted with a special wheel package that easily locks onto standard gauge rail thus allowing MINIs to corner on the roads and the rails with equal aplomb. An upgraded dual air-horn warning system comes standard on the model to alert inattentive pedestrians and vehicles as the MINI Pullman enters into crossing gate areas.

To compliment this new model, MINI has created a line of apparel. Items from overalls to hats are available in a fetching grey ticking-stripe pattern. Accessories for the vehicle include a brass roof-mounted bell and a special auxiliary engine exhaust stack that mounts on the bonnet. For four additional passengers, a specially adapted hitch system allows for the MINI Pullman owner to add the accessory Commuter Caboose.

"Access to the national system of underground subway rail is under consideration, once the logistics of accessing the track through individual subway stations can be solved" said national railway spokesperson Lou Komodeff, "We look forward to sharing the rails with MINI as long as they are 'going our way.'"

MINI spokesperson, Hugh Moore said, "MINI has mastered the art of cornering on the roads. Now we can claim that MINIs do literally corner on rails." MINI has scheduled the first prototype testing on public railways to commence today, April 1st, 2005 ☺

2006

MINI USA ANNOUNCES NEW "BUILD YOUR OWN" PROGRAM
Virtual Experience Becomes "Reality" for Owners to Build Their Own MINI at Home

Woodcliff Lake, NJ – April 1, 2006... Because MINI owners love to customize their cars, MINI announces today a brand-new "Build Your Own" program that gives customers the hands-on experience to build their own unique MINI.

MINI USA.com enables customers to easily configure their MINI online before ordering. This feature has been so popular that MINI has decided to create a unique pilot program to give select customers the opportunity to actually create the car of their dreams with their own hands.

In this pilot program, all of the car's components can be specially ordered on-line and the parts will be delivered in installments, much like a book club, starting with the chassis parts and body work and then moving on to interior trim and engine.

"In 6 short weeks the customer can build their custom MINI in their own garage," said Lou Spartz, MINI's head of the *Individualized Direct Ideal Order Trial* program, or *I.D.I.O.T* for short. "Clearly, the greatest hurdle is in painting the body, so we will be sending owners a can of spray paint each week in the color of their choice - and of course, one for the contrast roof."

"This new MINI Build your Own program will be made into a reality TV program," said MINI spokesperson, Hardy Harrah, "We plan to chronicle a year of creative MINI owners in action building their own cars and we expect the television broadcast to air April 1st next year. ☺

2009

MINI TO INTRODUCE "PERPETUAL MOTION" MAGNETIC PROPULSION SYSTEM

- New magnetic system delivers world-leading fuel efficiency to MINI PR-0401
- Hundreds, possibly thousands of miles range with magnetic power
- Drive across the USA in a MINI for just a few dollars

Woodcliff Lake, NJ, April 1, 2009... MINI USA looks set to take a world lead in fuel efficiency with the announcement today (April 1) of a revolutionary magnetic propulsion system that will allow a MINI to drive to several hundred, possibly even thousands of miles with little charge and no need for fuel.

MINI USA has developed a unique Propulsion / Repulsion 0401 (PR0401) System that is just one short step away from perpetual motion in an automobile.

MINI's PR 0401 System uses a series of magnets situated in the MINI's four wheel hubs to both pull and push the wheels in the desired direction, exploiting the magnets' natural tendency to attract and repel. Not only does this system allow the MINI PR to travel extraordinary distances for just a few cents, it produces virtually no noise as the electric motor can be switched off once the car is moving.

Professor Lirpa Loof, Head of Magnetic Attraction Technology at MINI USA, said: "The Mini E is already leading the way in EV performance, reliability and eco-friendliness but this amazing new system will push it onto another level. We could soon be seeing families travel across the USA from coast to coast for just a couple of bucks."

"The only energy this system uses is a small draw on the battery to start the vehicle moving forward with an electric motor, and then the magnets take over and their natural properties do the rest. This has to be the ultimate range extender," he added. "Anyone who has played with magnets as a kid or travelled on a Maglev train will understand precisely how this technology works and the kind of performance we are talking about."

Once moving, only tiny amounts of electric current are required to switch on and off the magnets, as the polarity of the fixed and moving magnets is rapidly switched from positive to negative. The magnets first attract and then quickly repel each other pushing the wheels in the desired direction – either forward or reverse.

One challenge that Professor Loof faced with the PR system was the speed of the MINI PR... and how to control it! The speed at which the magnets attract and repel each other is instantaneous, which means in theory the vehicle is capable of phenomenal speeds, restricted only by the time it takes to switch the magnets' polarity and the wind resistance and drag of the MINI PR's body. The MINI EV PR development vehicles are currently restricted to a top speed of 250 mph.

"For years, engineers have dreamed of developing perpetual motion for transport," said Professor Loof, "And thanks to MINI PR, it looks like we are almost there with a new model that will debut next April 1."

2010

MINI USA TAKES AUTOMOBILE PERSONALIZATION TO A NEW LEVEL
Revolutionary new paint system allows quick, unlimited exterior color changes on the new MINI.

Woodcliff Lake, NJ – April 1, 2010... MINI, a leader in the manufacturing of customized vehicles, is set to take personalization to a whole new level with a revolutionary paint system that will allow owners to change the exterior color of their vehicle as often as they change their mood.

The ground-breaking MINIMagic paint system, exclusively available on MINI Clubman, will give MINI owners the chance to completely change their MINI's exterior color in only a few minutes and with just the effort required to apply a single coat of wax - a world first for an automotive manufacturer.

The MINIMagic paint system will be available with any of the Clubman's stunning paint colors, starting this spring.

"The introduction of MINIMagic will transform how owners select the exterior colors on a new MINI, offering even more ways to personalize their MINI," said Jim McDowell, Vice President of MINI USA. "Gone are the days when our customers wondered if they made the right choice of paint color. With MINIMagic, if they change their mind, changing the color of their MINI can now be done as simply as changing a shirt or rinsing your hair from blonde to brunette!" he added.

The new, innovative range of MINIMagic paint finishes are first applied at the production facility in Oxford, United Kingdom, as the first stage in a two-part process. All it takes for the customer to activate an on-demand color change is a simple application of the second part of the process - a quick wipe over the painted surfaces with the patented MINIMagic paint polish. In minutes, the transformation - from Light Coffee to Cosmic Blue for example - can be completed.

The permanence of the color changes can be selected by the customer, with three different second-stage polishes available - one month, six months or permanent. If left alone, the one-month and six-month paint finishes eventually revert to the vehicle's original paint color, a process that happens in just a few hours at the end of the chosen period.

Paul Lisch, Head of Exterior Aesthetics and Paint Finishes at MINI USA, said: "MINIMagic will bring a whole new meaning to the concept of car cleaning and restoration. As easily carried out as a wash and a wipe, our owners can have a 'new' MINI Clubman that is capable of matching any atmosphere or any occasion."

The MINI Clubman, exhibiting some real 'MINIMagic', can be seen on the MINI display from April 1st during the New York Auto Show, held at the Jacob Javitz Center in New York City.

2012

**NEW AMPHIBIOUS [MINI COOPER YACHTSMAN](#) TO LAUNCH IN NEW YORK...
BESIDE THE HUDSON RIVER**

Woodcliff Lake, NJ – April 1, 2012... MINI customers will be able to boldly go where no motorer has gone before when the all-new MINI Cooper Yachtsman makes its world premiere at the New York International Auto Show next week, right beside the Hudson River.

Designed to bring MINI ownership to people who regard the 70 percent of the earth's surface covered by water as their home, the new MINI Cooper Yachtsman is a corner-carving crustacean that promises go-kart-like handling and a sensational combination of amphibious* and landphibious performance both on and off the water.

Certain to be as popular in New York harbor as it will be at the Jumeira Palm marina or Monte Carlo harbor, the MINI Cooper Yachtsman is fitted with a shark-resistant undercoating as standard, and can carve through water at speeds up to 61 knots, while promising an equally rewarding driving (but not diving...) experience – on-road or off-land.



“Our exciting MINI Cooper Yachtsman is the ultimate extension of the MINI brand, expanding our line-up to seven models in the USA and offering consumers even more ways to enjoy MINI ownership in a manner best-suited to their individual taste and location,” comments Jim McDowell, Vice President of MINI USA.

“The Yachtsman will become an instant status symbol, a car/boat combo that evokes ‘land/sea envy’ in equal measure. Originally endorsed by the British Royal Navy**, the Yachtsman brings a new level of versatility to MINI ownership. So, if you’re cruising along and someone yells ‘Lake’ – no worries. Simply downshift, grab a life-vest, hit the water and let Yachtsman take care of the rest!” adds McDowell.

Showroom appeal of the MINI Cooper Yachtsman is matched by dockside allure as the 169.8 inch long craft sports Reef Blue metallic paintwork contrasting with silver alloy wheels and matching silver rudder. The exhaust snorkel is finished in body color and the extendable rooftop antenna comes with a ‘get-you-home’ 20-ft white sail (in case of emergency) which can be deployed for zero-emissions sailing.

With room to sleep two people, the cabin features waterproof rip-stop upholstery, seat cushions which double as flotation devices, and a Marine Chronometer for celestial

navigation in the event of a sat-nav glitch. For junior 'sailors', the glove box holds MINI-branded water wings, a pirate flag and eye patch.

Standard equipment features a six-foot marlin rod with roller guides, an international trolling reel with 130-lb test line and (on the port side) the latest MINI safety technology – FLOAT (the Frantic Lever Operated Active Trim) adjuster. On the starboard side there is a spring-loaded herring chucker.

In line with MINI's customizable nature, a full range of unique accessories for this latest addition to the MINI product line-up includes a Customizable Klaxon (choice of sea lion, porpoise, sperm whale, dolphin, seagull or mallard duck), and personalized Under-Hull Messaging – recommended factory fitted graphic options such as 'Suck eggs, Kraken' and 'Mermaid Magnet' are sure to be popular choices.

On sale from April 1st as a model year 2013 vehicle, the Yachtsman combines typical MINI driving and boating fun with the same discerning craftsmanship, select materials, styling and all-round 'typical British understatement' that are hallmarks of the world's leading boat builders.

For propulsion, each MINI Cooper Yachtsman is powered by a turbocharged 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine with a twin-scroll turbocharger, direct injection and variable valve control to generate 181 hp. Outdrive to the constant-pitch propeller is managed by a specially-fitted gearbox mounted mid-ship with six forward speeds. Although the new model weighs 4,600 lb (fully laden), the sprint from 0 to 60 mph is completed in 6.6 seconds (on land) and in 2.4 minutes (on water). Top speed (on land) is 141 mph.

Developed after extensive testing of punt prototypes on the River Isis (near MINI's manufacturing facility in Oxford, England) and in the deep waters off Greenland (where The Kraken of legend lurks), the MINI Cooper Yachtsman is priced at US \$236,000 and comes with a fully incomprehensible warranty that includes 3-year no-cost moorage, annual dry-docking and free barnacle removal, for the original captain.

You can see the MINI Cooper Yachtsman on the MINI Stand at the New York International Auto Show in the Jacob Javits Center from Wednesday April 4th.

Editors' Notes

**The Yachtsman is not the first amphibious Mini. The book 'MINI MISCELLANY - Fifty Years of facts, figures, stories and oddities featuring the world's greatest little car' carried this interesting tale...*

"Bizarre as it may sound, a Mini entered the 1977 River Severn Raft Race. Longbridge engineers converted a standard Mini into an unsinkable four-paddle-wheel-drive amphibious vehicle which they christened 'Aqua Min'. However, it was not the first Mini to swim. Nine years earlier, an amphibious Moke swam in the River Thames for the Sammy Davis Jr. film *Salt and Pepper*. Since the movie was a James Bond spoof, it was only right that the Moke should have machine guns fitted behind the headlights."

***And subsequently unendorsed.*

2016

MINI UK DEBUTS THE NEW [MINI HIPSTER HATCH](#)

World Premier of MINI Hipster Hatch • Instagram Filtered Windows • Twin-deck cassette player as standard • Fixed-gear drivetrain • Upcycled alloy wheels, stonewash denim upholstery

Hoxton, London, April 1, 2016: MINI has whipped a fair-trade Peruvian cotton sheet off its latest model this morning in Hoxton, London. Featuring Instagram filtered windows, Twin-deck cassette player and a fixed-gear drivetrain, the new MINI Hipster Hatch launches today.

Avant-garde and upcycled, the MINI Hipster Hatch is effortlessly stylish and the perfect companion for a spot of vintage clothes shopping, or indeed the odd trip to the market for artisan kale.



Motorists no longer have to settle for the natural colour of their surroundings (#nofilter), thanks to the exclusive and fully adjustable Instagram filter on all exterior window glass. Live life in LO-FI. Or Clarendon. Or Crema. In fact, occupants can choose from 12 pre-loaded Instagram window filters and turn any journey into a nostalgic memory at the touch of a button.

The new MINI Hipster Hatch has just one forward gear with a maximum speed of 25 mph. Taking inspiration from the 'Fixie' pedal bike, four of the forward gears have been removed to give the driver a greater feeling of control when popping out for a superfood smoothie.

The stonewash denim upholstery means the four seater MINI Hipster Hatch is a match for even the tightest pair of jeans, allowing the driver and passengers to coordinate their outfits accordingly.

Inside, a twin-deck cassette player harks back to when it was all about the music, allowing occupants to sidestep the mainstream with their own mixtapes. On the outside, MINI Hipster Hatch boasts alloy wheels carefully upcycled by hand from previous alloy wheels.

"The MINI Hipster Hatch is like no other we've built before" said Ivana Nuwatto, senior external product launch experience curator at MINI UK. "Inspired by the kind of innovative thinking only found when you ignore the script and ask what those who refuse to be categorized want from a car – features like fixed gear drive, twin-deck cassette player, upcycled details and Instagram filtered windows to name but a few."

A limited number of MINI Hipster Hatch will be available, so if you've got FOMO, get one before they're all gone.

2017

NEW ACCESSORIES FOR THE MINI CONVERTIBLE: [THE JOHN COOKER WORKS PACKAGE](#).

MINI special projects has cooked up an innovative accessories package for the MINI Convertible. The MINI Convertible with the MINI John Cooker Works Package.

Oxford, April 1, 2017. MINI is pleased to announce a new accessory that's perfect for the culinary entrepreneur. The MINI Convertible can now be fitted with the new John Cooker Works package and turned into a mobile street vendor. The MINI Convertible receives a solid-oak food sales and preparation surface.

This features an induction cooker with integrated fume hood. The vehicle's generously proportioned 160 - 215 liter luggage compartment of the MINI Convertible stores the required cooling technology, while a high-voltage Natural Food Nanotechnology® battery ensures power supply and is charged by the standard brake energy regeneration system while driving. Food waste is further utilized by the NFN® battery system to sustainably power the unique vehicle.

The solid-wood surface made from sustainably grown oak in Cornwall, folds to fit the contours of the interior when the roof is down and serves as a stable storage for food and beverages in spite of the light-weight construction technology used. The package meets all food regulation requirements and can be used for hot and cold dishes alike. Customers selecting this new pack benefit from a highly flexible food sales vehicle, with a menu of applications including selling sushi, ice cream or fresh juices.

Only the driver's seat needs to be folded down in order to install the MINI John Cooker Works Package. This creates an amazing amount of space under the solid-oak surface which can be used for storing ingredients and cooking utensils. Should the weather suddenly turn, the convertible roof can be closed in only 18 seconds with the food surface in place.



Potential customers could include start-ups looking to prepare their culinary masterpieces directly in front of their customers' eyes, or kiosk operators who need a spacious food presentation area, the MINI Convertible with John Cooker Works Package offers countless opportunities for businesses.

The introductory price is €1.959,00 / \$ 1.959,00 / £ 1.959,00 and the package can be ordered at selected MINI partners as of today.

"The strikingly painted and backlit mirror caps and side scuttles in Citrus Yellow give the MINI Convertible an sharp street food look. We applied the knowhow we gained from our

MINI Yours vehicle personalization program”, says Sue Scheff of the MINI Design Team.

The Sport Stripes for the John Cooker Works Package are in Chilli Red and Berry Blue.

“Street food businesses are a great complement to established restaurants and offer their customers fantastic variety. However, typical street food trucks are often too big and cumbersome for our city centers. The MINI Convertible can be used by street food vendors to whisk their food directly to the customer and even right onto festival grounds”, says Matt Erdee from MINI Business Innovation.

The John Cooker Works Accessory Package perfectly matches the Salt, Pepper and Chilli MINI equipment packages.

“The MINI Convertible is now even more unique than ever before and is the smallest multifunctional food truck in the world”, says Finn Gerfoud, Head of Development of MINI Special Vehicles.

Be it on the streets of Shanghai, in front of Barcelona’s office blocks or whipping around tourist hotspots in London, the MINI Convertible with John Cooker Works Package is an eye catcher making life hard for the burger van chips or the corner café.

About MINI in the US

MINI is an independent brand of the BMW Group. In the United States, MINI USA operates as a business unit of BMW of North America, LLC, located in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey and includes the marketing and sales organizations for the MINI brand. The MINI USA sales organization is represented in the U.S. through a network of 121 MINI passenger car dealers in 39 states. MINI USA began selling vehicles in the U.S. in 2002 with the introduction of the MINI Cooper and MINI Cooper S Hardtops. Since then, the MINI Brand in the U.S. has grown to encompass a model range of five unique vehicles.

Journalist notes: Media information about MINI and its products is available to journalists on-line at www.miniusanews.com.

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