



Media Information

22 September 2026

MINI Rebelle Rally Team Wraps Training as New Model Variant Nears Global Debut

- *Felicia Killman and Erika Ferrer, piloting MINI's first-ever Rebelle Rally entry, have completed field training on dunes, rock, and loose terrain.*
- *The pair have inspected the finished vehicle they'll campaign across 1,500 miles of rugged terrain, though the model stays hidden until its global reveal days before.*
- *BMW Group engineers James Wallace, Dennis Heaphy, and Eran Garma led the build, backed by outfitting and technical partners including Thule, GoPro, and Pelican Cases.*

Woodcliff Lake, NJ: The [MINI USA](#) Rebelle Rally team has kicked its preparation into high gear ahead of the brand's first-ever appearance in the competition, combining rigorous field training with in-depth engineering sessions as the debut of MINI's new adventure-oriented model variant draws closer. For Felicia Killman and Erika Ferrer, the countdown recently became real: the pair got their first look at the fully prepared vehicle they will pilot across 1,500 miles of rugged western terrain. The model itself remains under wraps; its final look reserved for a global reveal just before the rally hits the stages.

Training and preparation have thus far consisted of intensive field sessions across varied terrain. Killman and Ferrer have spent time learning to pilot the vehicle through dunes and rocky environments, as well as loose terrain where precision and feel matter most. Beyond the driving itself, the pair has also trained in the fundamentals of map and compass navigation, the only tools allowed once the rally starts. GPS is banned entirely, so the event comes down to old-school orienteering. Each session has been designed to build not just confidence in the vehicle, but muscle memory and decision-making under pressure.

"Seeing the finished vehicle was definitely one of those 'oh boy, we're actually doing this' moments," said MINI team driver, Felicia Killman. "James, Dennis, and Eran have put so much time and thought into getting this MINI ready for the Rebelle, and seeing everything finally come together made me even more excited to get out there. We've had an opportunity to complete various trainings in the dunes, on rocks, and with the maps and compass, but pretty soon it's just Erika and me, the MINI, and 1,500 miles to figure it out. I cannot wait to test this car and myself at the Rebelle Rally."

"This rugged looking SUV is impressive - I won't pretend otherwise - but the training that kept me up at night was mastering navigation. Reading terrain, trusting the compass over

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instinct when they disagree, knowing when to slow down and recheck a bearing. That's the real rally." said Erika Ferrer, Navigator.

Engineering the Entry

Behind the scenes, a dedicated team of BMW Group Engineers, James Wallace, Dennis Heaphy, and Eran Garma, has led the vehicle's preparation, working to ensure the model is built to withstand the demands of one of the country's most grueling off-road navigation competitions. Balancing their regular engineering responsibilities with this passion project, the trio has invested countless hours in the build, problem-solving the unique demands of off-road durability while bringing their motorsport expertise to bear every detail.

"We were thrilled to take on the challenge of preparing the MINI for something this demanding, leaning on the team's engineering expertise and passion for the project every step of the way." said James Wallace, BMW Group Engineer. "For every bracket, every mount, every panel, we gave thought to what happens when it's in such rigorous conditions forty miles from pavement, and that's only something you can solve by testing, adjusting, and testing again."

A Team Effort: MINI's Rebelle Rally Sponsors

The build has also come together with the support of a group of outfitting and technical sponsors, each contributing gear built to handle the rally's toughest miles:

- [Thule](#) – The Swedish outdoor gear company has been engineering roof racks and cargo solutions since 1962, and its systems will carry the team's extra gear across the rally's 1,500 miles of terrain.
- [DealerTire](#) – A leading U.S. tire distributor that partners with BMW NA and other major automakers, DealerTire outfitted the vehicle with a full set of all-terrain tires and spares built for rugged, unpredictable ground.
- [Pelican Cases](#) – Known for rugged, weatherproof protective cases trusted by outdoor and industry professionals alike, Pelican is keeping the team's mission-critical gear safe from dust, drops, and the elements.
- [Morimoto Lighting](#) – A leader in high-performance aftermarket automotive lighting, Morimoto equipped the vehicle with roof and grille-mounted lights for visibility on the rally's long, remote stages.
- [Heinlein Racing Development \(HRD\)](#) – A New Jersey-based motorsport shop with roots in professional racing series like IMSA and World Challenge, HRD engineered the vehicle's skid plate and interior mounting systems for off-road durability.

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- [Peak Design](#) – The San Francisco-based travel and camera gear brand outfitted the team with durable, purpose-built bags and luggage designed for life on the move.
- [GoPro](#) – The action-camera pioneer is equipping the team to capture their Rebelle Rally journey on camera, from the training grounds to the competitive stages.
- [MINI Motoring Protection](#) – As part of MINI Financial Services, is providing funding support for travel, vehicle shipment, and media support, and giveaways throughout the campaign.

With training underway and the build nearing completion, the MINI team is on track for its new model variant's global reveal this fall, setting the stage for the brand's inaugural entry into the Rebelle Rally.

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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 authorized MINI USA dealer organization is represented by a network of 105 MINI full passenger car sales and service dealers located throughout the US. 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.

Journalists note: Media information about MINI and its products is available to journalists online at www.press.bmwgroup.com/usa.

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