

BIG MINI...

The car that reintroduced America to "small"... goes long

The wraps are now off the new MINI Clubman. On sale in Europe this November will be three model configurations: the MINI Cooper Clubman, the MINI Cooper D Clubman and the MINI Cooper S Clubman. In the US market the MINI Cooper Clubman and the MINI Cooper S Clubman will be available early next year. Although US pricing has yet to be announced, the MINI Clubman is expected to be positioned between the MINI hardtops and MINI convertibles.

The MINI Clubman is clearly a MINI from every angle. Yet it is distinguished by a split-rear-door design and longer proportions. The rear doors are further highlighted with the C-pillars in contrasting silver or black. Inside, an enlarged luggage area may be further extended in flexible configurations, offering convenient loading, especially with the addition of those two rear doors. In addition, a "Clubdoor" on the right side swings to the rear, increasing access to the back seats. Rear seat passengers enjoy 3.15 inches more legroom compared to the MINI hardtop.

MINI pitches the Clubman as the modern successor to legendary classics—the Morris Mini Traveller, Austin Mini Countryman, and Mini Clubman Estate.

At launch, the MINI Clubman will be available with three engine variants:

- The MINI Cooper S Clubman, powered by a 1.6-litre four-cylinder with twin-scroll turbocharger, direct gasoline injection and maximum output of 175 hp at 5500 rpm.

- The MINI Cooper Clubman, with a 1.6-litre four-cylinder with 120 hp at 6,600 rpm and featuring fully variable valve management for performance and economy.

- The MINI Cooper D Clubman with a high-torque, low-emission diesel engine; however, this for Europe only, for now.

Despite its longer proportions, the MINI Clubman retains MINI's "wheels at the four corners" stance and the legendary go-kart feeling of the familiar MINI. The chassis and suspension are specifically reengineered, with front McPherson struts and springs for excellent wheel control, keeping the steering smooth in control and responsive. The suspension is further tuned to expertly manage the dynamic affects of engine power under acceleration or when applying

the brakes. A central-arm rear axle benefits from BMW Group's engineering and development, and the rear suspension is unique in the MINI segment, with lightweight aluminum longitudinal control arms and anti-roll bars for sporty and stable handling. On the MINI Cooper S Clubman the suspension is tuned to the vehicle's additional power. The MINI Cooper Clubman comes with 15-inch wheels, while the MINI Cooper S Clubman features 16-inch rims with runflat tires, allowing the driver to continue even after a complete loss of tire pressure.

Speed-sensitive EPAS Electrical Power Assisted Steering is precise, while also providing significant weight reduction over conventional hydraulics, electrically generating power-assist only as needed, further increasing vehicle efficiency.

The sport-tuned characteristics of the MINI Clubman are supported by an array of braking and traction management technology—anti-lock brake control (ABS), Electronic Brake Force Distribution (EBD),

Cornering Brake Control (CBC) and Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) including hill start-off assistance—all standard. In addition, a Brake Assistant recognizes emergency application of the brakes and immediately builds maximum brake pressure in panic situations.

Although not available on US models at the time of launch, a Brake Energy Regeneration feature ensures that output from the engine is converted primarily into drive power, with electricity generated for the on-board network only when the engine's drive power is not in demand, for example when the car is rolling freely in overrun (engine braking) or during application of the brakes. To achieve this effect, the alternator is automatically disengaged from the engine while under power, that is when accelerating and pulling the car. Accordingly, the power that the alternator would consume and take away from the engine in the conventional mode now remains fully available for even more efficient and dynamic acceleration.

Adequate electric energy to the on-board system is ensured at all times, since the alternator is activated again as soon as the engine's drive power is not in demand or the driver applies the brakes.

The MINI Cooper S Clubman, MINI Cooper Clubman, and MINI Cooper D Clubman are all equipped standard with a six-speed manual gearbox. A six-speed automatic is available as an option, featuring a sport-tuned manual mode that allows the driver to select gears by means of paddles on the steering wheel.

A new Auto Start Stop feature on manual gearbox versions of the MINI Clubman also serves to improve efficiency by switching off the engine in idling situations. (This option also will not be available for US models at launch.) Whenever the car comes to a stop, Auto Start Stop automatically switches off the engine as soon as the driver shifts to neutral and takes his or her foot off the clutch pedal. To restart the engine, all the driver has to do is press down the clutch pedal again and

KEEP RIGHT >>





the engine restarts automatically without delay. Auto Start Stop helps to maximize fuel efficiency in city traffic, essentially reducing consumption of energy and generation of exhaust emissions to zero in a very simple way every time the car comes to a stop.

A gearshift point indicator, standard on manually equipped models, advises the most efficient style of driving. An electronic control unit continually analyzes engine speed, driv-

ing conditions and gas pedal position, and calculates the most efficient style of driving relative to the gear selected. The system then alerts the driver when a gearshift is recommended to maintain optimum efficiency.

The three versions of the MINI Clubman are identical to their MINI hardtop brethren in their design and body structure up to the B-pillar. Up front, iconic design elements include the characteristic large round

headlights, round corner lights, and the hexagon radiator grille. In addition, a chrome trim band extends around the entire car at shoulder level.

The MINI Clubman offers more than 40 combinations of exterior paintwork, enhanced by a wide range of accessories, options and special equipment geared specifically to the MINI Clubman. A perfect example of this is "Hot Chocolate," a brown metallic color exclusive to the MINI Clubman. In all, the MINI Clubman is available in 12 body colors—three non-metallic colors Chili Red, Pepper White and Mellow Yellow, as well as metallic colors Astro Black, Sparkling Silver, British Racing Green, Pure Silver, Lightning Blue, Nightfire Red, Dark Silver, Laser Blue and of course, Hot Chocolate.

Inside, the customer can combine four interior colors and five Color Line variants with one another as desired. The seats are available in standard upholstery, a combination of cloth and leather or all-leather upholstery in a variety of styles and colors. In addition to two standard interior trim choices, customers can choose optional English Oak, Piano Black, Fluid Silver and Brushed Alloy.

The MINI Clubman measures the same in width and is hardly any higher than the MINI hardtop. The design features new renditions of classical design elements inspired by the classics from the '60s. The rear end is intended to be elegant, clear and very graphic, accentuating a compact rear look for this larger new model. ■

