



**M**INI has staked out an enviable position all its life, a rare combination of fun driving experience and premium panache in a small car. The example here is both an S model and a convertible, which should deliver plenty of both.

Our MINI experiences often cover a wide spectrum. Great little car, decent performance, an upper stratum brand position, with very nice style and design details—quilted and stitched leather, “style fiber” interior trim, sexy application of red instrument and feature lighting at night, a fuel gauge that should never let you run out and will also stroke your senses—but with downsides we find hard to ignore. The doors typically took three or four tries to lock—sometimes just two as we got in the groove, but we often gave up on keyless and pulled out the key to be (we hope) sure. The backup camera did not always come on when in reverse. And mind you, keyless entry and backup

camera were among the add-ons that brought this car’s price from a base still barely in the \$20s to just a hair shy of \$40 grand. This price runup is also necessary for navigation and decent audio.

The non-S MINI Cooper now comes with a 134-hp, 162-lb-ft 1.5L 3-cylinder turbo (compare this to 123/148 in Ford’s impressive 1.0L 3-cylinder turbo, which we’ve track-driven most enjoyably). The S has a 2-liter four-cylinder that ups the game to 189 horses and 207 lb-ft. As surely as a rodeo specialty rider can get more performance out of four horses than a normal rider can squeeze out of a full corral, the MINI Cooper S provides a precision kick in the pants. Ours was a perfectly mapped sport automatic; a 6-speed Getrag manual is available.

The trunk is very small and oddly shaped. That and the locking uncertainty are things to consider from a destination road trip standpoint. But if you have the price of entry, even when you check off

**SPECIFICATIONS**

<b>ENGINE/DRIVE</b> .....	2.0L TwinPower 4-cyl turbo / FWD
<b>HORSEPOWER/TORQUE</b> .....	189 hp / 207 lb-ft
<b>TRANSMISSION</b> .....	(6-spd Getrag manual standard)
<b>DRIVING MODES</b> .....	Sport, mid, green
<b>SUSPENSION</b> .....	F: MacPherson; R: multi-link
<b>BRAKES</b> .....	Four-wheel disc (vented front)
<b>WEIGHT</b> .....	(manual 2985 lb) auto 3025 lb
<b>TURNING CIRCLE</b> .....	35.4 ft
<b>CARGO VOLUME</b> .....	top closed 7.6 / open 5.7 cu.ft
<b>MPG</b> .....	25/34/29 city/hwy/comb

<b>BASE PRICE</b> .....	<b>\$29,600</b>
<b>MELTING SILVER METALLIC</b> .....	500
<b>CHESTERFIELD LEATHER MALT BROWN</b> .....	1750
<b>FULLY LOADED</b> .....	4750
<b>PREMIUM PACKAGE:</b> Keyless entry, wind deflector, auto-dim mirrors, heated front seats, satellite radio (1yr), Harman Kardon premium audio	
<b>SPORT PACKAGE:</b> 17" propeller spoke wheels, dynamic damper control, LED fogs, LED headlights	
<b>TECH PACKAGE:</b> Rear camera, rear park distance control, MINI Connected XL, real time traffic	
<b>WIRED PACKAGE:</b> Navigation, enhanced USB/BT	
<b>SPORT AUTOMATIC TRANS</b> .....	1500
<b>MINI YOURS STEERING WHEEL</b> .....	250
<b>INTERIOR STYLE FIBER ALLOY</b> .....	350
<b>STORAGE PACKAGE</b> .....	250
<b>DESTINATION CHARGE</b> .....	850
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$39,800</b>

all the option boxes, the MINI Cooper S Convertible will in return check all your boxes—and always put a smile on your face. ■

# Smiles always included

BY JOE SAGE

