

New Mini Cooper and Mini Cooper S

 By Ilse van den Berg

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The Mini Cooper has always been one of my secret favourites. Secret because, well, I didn't want to hurt my little trusty steed's feelings. But now that I've driven two of the new facelifted Mini Coopers, I am in a pickle... I *want one!*



The British premium auto manufacturer has made some updates to the Mini three-door, Mini five-door and Mini Convertible which includes fresh design accents, innovations in drive technology, additional customisation options, and an expansion of the digital services available as part of Mini Connected.

What's it like?

In general, I think a Mini Cooper is something to get used to if you've never owned or driven one. It's small, yet it doesn't feel cramped. How the British manufacturer does it, I don't know. All I know is that, since the very first Mini (which came out in the 1950s), it has made it its mission to make optimal use of tight spaces to deliver a compact yet comfortable car.

The cabin feels different to many other cars in its class - even the non-Sport version feels pretty sporty inside.



A slightly customised/personalised interior

First up, we had a ravishing red Mini Cooper five-door to take for a drive from Cape Town International Airport, via Stellies, the R310, Kalk Bay, Ou Kaapse Weg to the [Norval Foundation](#) in Steenberg.

We then switched over to a blue three-door Mini Cooper S which, by the way, stole my heart. It's quick, nippy and performed like a charm over Constantia Nek, through Hout Bay, and along the curvy Chapman's Peak Drive.

We did, however, find the automatic gearbox to give a little bit of a lag and every now and then sounded like it was struggling forward in the wrong gear (mainly when travelling at slower speeds).



Mini Cooper five-door



Mini Cooper S three-door

How about engine and safety stuff?

A detailed revision of the engines offered for the updated versions is said to "mainly benefit driving fun". According to Mini it also leads to a reduction in fuel consumption and CO₂ figures by as much as five percent, as well as optimising emissions so as to be able to comply with the more rigorous exhaust emission standards of the future.



The new transmission type allows for fast gearshifts, enabling sporty acceleration manoeuvres without torque interrupt. A seven-speed Steptronic sports transmission with double clutch is also available for the Mini Cooper S. This includes shift paddles at the steering wheel.

The engine covers are made of carbon fibre reinforced plastic (CFRP), so they are now lighter, too. The material used to make them is carbon fibre recyclate generated in the production of BMW i automobiles.



#TriedAndTested: BMW i8 and i3

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Mini Cooper five-door (AT):

100 kW, 0–100 km/h in 8.1 seconds, top speed: 207km/h, fuel consumption: 5.0–4.8 litres/100km, CO2 emissions: 115–110g/km.

Mini Cooper S three-door (AT):

141 kW, 0–100km/h in 6.7 seconds, top speed: 235 km/h, fuel consumption: 5.3–5.2 litres/100km, CO2 emissions: 120–119g/km.

What else?

The new Mini features some cute smaller details, and I'm all about the details. That's maybe why I like it so much.

For example, the rear lights now look like little Union Jacks! The British flag motif is recreated in the structure of the light functions. The turn indicators are horizontally arranged and the brake lights are vertically aligned, with the tail light additionally representing the diagonal lines of the British flag. All light sources forming the Union Jack graphic use LED technology.



Union Jack rear lights

Other new features include:

- LED headlights with Matrix function for the high beam.
- New Mini logo, new body finishes, Piano Black exterior.
- New light alloy wheels.
- Extended range of leather trim, interior surfaces and colour lines.
- Unique individualisation with Mini Yours Customised.
- Further developed engines with enhanced efficiency as well as increased capacity and torque for Mini One.
- Multifunction steering wheel and radio with 6.5-inch colour screen, USB and Bluetooth interface as standard.
- Optional radio and navigation systems with a touchscreen monitor.
- Telephony with wireless charging.
- Mini logo projection from the exterior mirror on the driver's side (aka a "puddle light").
- Mini Connected and Mini Connected XL with new functions.



#TriedAndTested: The all-new Suzuki Swift

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How many bucks?

Here's a price breakdown of the Mini Cooper five-door and the Cooper S three-door:

- Mini Cooper five-door six-speed manual: R380,400
- Mini Cooper five-door seven-speed double clutch transmission (2TF): R401,400
- Mini Cooper S three-door six-speed manual: R428,300
- Mini Cooper S three-door seven-speed double clutch transmission (2TF): R449,300
- Mini Cooper S three-door seven-speed Steptronic Sports transmission with double clutch and gearshift paddles (2TC): R452,600

Conclusion



The Mini Coopers are simply some of the best urban vehicles in my opinion, especially if you live or work in the city where parking and practicality is a priority. Plus, they looked darn cute and super cool at the same time.

I might just have to let my car go. I keep telling it, "it's not you, it's me..." and maybe the fact that you have a rusty spot on your bum." Maybe it's just time...

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out [Passing Stories](#)). She is also the editor of [Go & Travel](#), a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work [here](#) and [here](#). Contact Ilse through her website [here](#).

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