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## MINI Countryman

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**You shouldn't really be reading this now, as BMW had been intending the final 'reveal' of its latest MINI variant to be at the forthcoming Geneva show. However, thanks to that useful invention - the internet - the full press images were leaked and the company had no option but to issue a rush release.**

It's a full four-door (plus hatchback), and although **BMW MINI** has not announced detailed dimensions, it would appear from the official press photos to be mid-way in size between a **VW Polo** and a **Golf**. Compared with some of the wackier concept models such as the **Beachcomber** and **Roadster**, it's an instantly attractive car that should sell well.



Three petrol and two diesel engines will be available from launch, and the most exciting version is likely to be the **Countryman Cooper S**. This 1.6-litre four-cylinder has a twin-scroll turbocharger, direct fuel injection and fully variable valve timing. The result is a handy 184bhp, as well as meeting the latest EU5 emission regulations. All cars will have **Brake Energy Regeneration** and **Auto Start Stop** as standard, together with a six-speed gearbox. A six-speed automatic is an alternative choice for the city dweller.



The **MINI Countryman** will come with four individual seats, with a three-seat rear bench available as a no-cost option. Inside, all the usual clever MINI design features have been retained and the **Countryman** debuts the **MINI Center Rail** first seen in the **Crossover** concept from 2008.

And, naturally enough, your nearest **MINI** dealer will be all too eager for you to dip heavily into the options list.



It may look an off-roader, but **MINI ALL4** all-wheel drive is only available as an option on the top-model **Cooper S** and **Cooper D**. This is achieved via 'an electrohydraulic differential positioned directly on the final drive'. By varying the distribution of drive from front to rear, dependent on road

conditions, the **Countryman** can be 100% rear-wheel drive or 50:50, front/rear. It should be tremendous fun to drive.

Sadly, there are no plans at the moment to offer a half-timbered version as the 1960s original.

The production-ready car will be launched at Geneva with – one assumes – deliveries to start later this year. I'd have one.

***Text:*** Steve Wakefield

***Photos:*** MINI

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