

driven

clubMINI NSW/ACT magazine » Issue 01 » 2005 in review



President's report

MINIkhana @ Eastern Creek

Festival of the Falling Leaf

Mount Seaview retreat

clubMINI takes on the 6 hour

Wine Weekend

High Country Hijinx

Crossword

Sunset at Eastern Creek

Come and try!





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Cover image:

Alan Earnshaw, with his East Coast Targa livery still in place, hones his driving skills at the MINIkhana event at Eastern Creek in October 2005.



President's report

Welcome to the first clubMINI NSW /ACT Year in Review! Since clubMINI was launched in March 2005 one of our clear offerings to members was a quality magazine. Its taken us a bit longer but we feel we now have the foundations for a quality regular publication to members that highlights both the events that we have enjoyed and what is available in the year ahead for the clubMINI community. Its been a busy year for us all, not only in getting clubMINI up and running but also with me (or maybe my wife!) having our first baby and the rest of the committee juggling work and MINI commitments. The great thing is that when we weren't working our butts off, we were out enjoying our MINIs rather than writing about them ... can you blame us!

Back in 2004, a small group of MINI groupies decided to form a club that would be officially recognised by MINI Australia. After our discussions with the independent clubMINI in QLD, some representatives in Victoria and WA it was decided to form a National Club with the intention of launching in all 4 states ASAP. Eight months later, with QLD graciously giving up their name and web domain to the National body, all 4 states incorporated and proceeded to throw

a good old breakfast barbie to celebrate.

clubMINI was the first BMW/MINI officially recognised new MINI club in the world ... Pretty cool huh! From the 76 enthusiasts signed up on that first weekend, clubMINI NSW has grown to a very healthy 175 members and counting making us the biggest new MINI club in Australia. With a website, membership and an array of events that would impress the most seasoned of car clubs, clubMINI NSW is not just about a car now, it is most definitely a lifestyle.

I would like to thank some key people who have been very instrumental in making all this happen for you the members.

From the NSW committee I would like to thank ...

Stu Jones — for keeping us on track, actually forging the track and knowing how to do the official things.

Vic Widman — for designing an unbelievable calendar of events for both this year and the next. Without Vic's hard work we wouldn't have a club with such entertaining social events and therefore probably no club at all. (look out for clubMINI in Tasmania in early 2007 and event not to be missed!!)

Gary Willis — for the website!! Anyone who knows what it takes to

build a website knows how much effort is required to build and maintain one and this was a critical prerequisite from MINI for launch.

To the NSW committee for their time and effort and those who have attended events and made them the success they were.

Finally, thanks to all the members who have joined up and made clubMINI a fantastic club to be associated with.

It is also important to thank **Steve Amos** and **Ken Henry** from clubMINI QLD, without their foresight and help clubMINI would not have been a National club and therefore not officially recognised. I would also like to thank the whole QLD membership for voting in favour of giving up their name to the national club.

Last but not least, I would like to thank **Gavin Stocks**, who unfortunately is no longer with MINI, but who put in a huge effort to get the Official status passed through the machine that is BMW AG.

In finishing I would just like to say to all of you ... get involved, go to some events, come to the track and ... LET'S MINI!

Andrew Jackson
President NSW/ACT

Know your Committee

Ever wanted to know who's who in the zoo? Well following are the details for your clubMINI committee as well as key contact emails and numbers for enquiries.

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clubMINI merchandise



Moto Shirt



Polo Shirt & Cap



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FINAL TOTAL				\$

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- Option 1 cheque/money order:** made payable to clubMINI NSW Inc for the full amount of \$
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MINIkhana

24 April 2005 & 1 October 2005



@ Eastern Creek

» Words **Bryan Shedden** » Pictures 'various'

What a brilliant day! It meant a 5:30am start on a brisk April morning to sort out our little boy Alex (5 months) before driving the 1.5hr to Eastern Creek. Having never been to Eastern Creek before, Fiona and I were pleasantly surprised by the setup of the training rooms and viewing platforms over the figure 8 track were excellent. We even scored a little side room to dump all our baby stuff and give Alex a quiet place to sleep.

But of course the best bit was the driving and watching others drive. Once again this was a new experience for me — never been in a motorkhana before, but often wondered what it was all about. So for the benefit of those in a similar position, here's a quick summary of the day's events:

A verbal training session in the rooms by the Eastern Creek guys discussing the pros and cons of ABS, ASC+T, DSC, tyre pressures, etc (quick panic from yours truly when I realised I only had 26psi on my MCS!).

Two cars at a time around the figure 8 skid-track (run in circuit mode rather than figure 8). The sprinklers



were running the whole time (until the water temporarily ran out), so traction was very loose ... Not helped by the fact the instructor in the passenger seat delighted himself with switching ASC/DSC on and off or yanking the handbrake at the most inopportune times. I'm already grinning like a Cheshire cat at this stage.

With the waterworks on the figure 8 track stuffed (temporarily) we moved over to the skid pan (fully watered) this time with water that ran across the gently sloping concrete surface. Started with a big right-hand loop, like a roundabout. It was a great opportunity to learn how to throttle steer the MINI, backing to and fro from understeer to oversteer without needing to adjust the steering wheel. Great fun!

Still on the skidpan, they set up a slalom course to practice those standing

starts (lots of heroic wheel spin), easing on and off the throttle going round the hats, followed by a park in a 'garage' (no hard walls, just a set of witch's hats marking the corners).

I think that was about it for the 'training' and we then stopped for lunch. Not bad ... salad and ham rolls with soft drinks, teas and coffee, and fresh fruit.

Now back onto the track for the motorkhana events. We split into two groups between the two training areas. On the figure 8 track we raced one at a time doing three timed laps. The scores were based on 'split' times rather than 'fastest' times (ie. the difference between the lap times was what counted), so consistency was the most important thing here. On the skid-pan there were three stages. Slalom course, a clover leaf, and finally a wider slalom with a round-about and garage

park (bonus points for a reverse park). That took us the rest of the afternoon.

The instructors were in the passenger seat every time offering advise along the way (brake, brake! BRAKE!!!), and helping out with a little handbrake when it was needed (reverse parking!). The fastest we went all day would have been about 70kmh in second gear. It was gentle on speed but exhilarating due to the slippery conditions.

I think most would agree that the day was better than we could possibly have expected. I had an absolute ball and it took me ages to get to sleep that night, I couldn't stop thinking about big handbrake turns and powering on through massive oversteer. Fun fun fun!

Cheers
Bryan



clubMINI road trip



Festival of

29 April – 1 May 2005



Beautiful sunny weather greeted the 8 MINIs that gathered on the foot steps of Old Parliament House for lunch on Friday 29 April. This set the scene for the next two days, great social atmosphere, superb looking vehicles and a FUN time. Some of the Canberra contingent that could only manage a lunch time break also joined us for a sandwich in the Rose garden but sadly waved us good bye as we left for our Snowy Mountain run on the way to Tumut. We were all a little curious at the sight of the Tumut Bus Service coach that pulled up as we departed, some thought for a moment we were leaving the MINIs and taking the nanny coach.

The afternoon journey over the Mountains, despite the dire warnings of sleet and possible snow, proved to

be far from it. The lowest temp noted on the dash being 10 degrees and a beautiful, bright, setting sun rays made for a great colour contrast photo shoot on the side of the Snowy Mountains Hwy. It was interesting to note the expressions on the faces of on coming drivers as they counted one to eight MINIS' driving in convoy across the mountains. There can be few other cars that attract so many admiring glances when travelling in convoy.

Arriving at our accommodation in Tumut just after sunset we were pleasantly surprised with the quality of our 'very good rate' rooms.

The ongoing social aspects of clubMINI were further advanced when we all decided to take the Booze Bus to the local Golf Club

for dinner. Apart from the squeezey bus which we were sure was driving with its front wheels in the air, the evening gave us a chance to meet and get to know each other over a couple of ales and a reasonable meal.

Saturday dawned equally beautiful with a slight frost and low fog burning off to a glorious day which even saw us in T shirts. After a hearty breakfast in the Motels restaurant we all set to polishing and preening our MINIs ready for the Parade. We had time to walk the strip in Tumut before assembling with the myriad of floats, trucks, historic cars and marching bands ready for the big parade.

clubMINI was the 4th group in the parade just behind Dr Harry in the horse and cart, so dodging the dung (from the horse not Harry) was going to be a real test. The gaggle of MINIs looked a real treat and received resounding applause from the Tumut crowd which must have numbered well over a 1000. Tony Barber was the MC and even gave us a wink and nod and a stern warning about 'smoking them up'. But egged on by the young ones in the

crowd we just had to do a little wheelie. This seemed to start a trend for the rest of the MINI drivers and we now wonder if we will be invited back next year? But the crowd made us do it!

At the end of our Parade we had an assembly point right on the main road where our beloved MINIs were on display as the rest of the afternoon activities continued. The local Park with its Falling Leaves thanks to the onset of Autumn was the scene of much merriment with stalls of food, handicrafts and even toy MINIs, yes a few were purchased.

The clubMINI members enjoyed being part of the crowd, strolling around inspecting the local wares and the locals.

A quick run out to Blowering Dam for some, blew the cobwebs out of the tail pipes in the late afternoon and after a posed shot on the Dam wall it was back to base to get ready for the evenings fireworks. One thing you find in a country town is everything is fairly close by, so we took the short drive to the local park to watch the fireworks just after dark and then with the MINIs safely tucked

the Falling Leaf

» Words **Vic Widman** » Pictures 'various'

away back at the Motel we were able to walk to the centre of town to enjoy another great meal together in the Wool Pack Hotel. The chat and banter around the table went for hours and it was obvious many new friends had been forged.

Sunday dawned cold and wet, with misty rain falling; we were so lucky the parade had fallen the day before. Another great brekkie and then we loaded our goods and chattels into the MINIs and headed for the hills. The planned cream buns at the wonderful bakery in Batlow was thwarted by the fact the Bakery no longer opened its doors on Sundays, but the local Wilga Apple orchard did a roaring trade in bags of apples that were simply delicious.

We found another little roadside 'Pancakes and Blue Berry' outlet and descended in a crescendo of wailing superchargers in the mist to the delight of 'Hans' the cook.

Refreshed and filled it was time to climb higher in the mountains to delightful Tumbarumba and onto the lookout over Paddy River Falls. Having enjoyed the opportunity to stretch the legs and view the beautiful falls we headed towards Tumut 2 or was it 3? Power Station along the Elliott Way. The road was a delight with fast sweeping bends allowing the speed limit to be maintained. The height of some Brumby 'Dumps' on the road proved too much for the MINIs low clearance and the sweet smell of manure permeated one or two vehicles.

The steep descent to the Tumut River where our lunch of salad rolls awaited courtesy of a nearby bush retreat provided more opportunity to mingle and mix. The next stop after the equally twisting climb up the mountain was at the Highest Town in Australia, Cabramurra. But height in the wet misty conditions meant zero visibility and even my avid descriptions of what the view actually looked like did not paint a sufficient picture to impress the gathered crowd. Or perhaps it was the 6 degree temperature that saw us make a hasty retreat for the warmth and comfort and burble of our MINIs.

The roads were quiet and just maintaining the speed limit meant we were having fun on the twists and turns. A brief visit to the brand new car park at Mt Selwyn saw Tiaan try his luck at his very first hand brake turn whilst Gerrard, winner of the inaugural MINikhana showed him how to do it the right way. The MINIs in the mist then headed off after terrorising the local possums and enjoyed the drive back down the Snowy Mountains Hwy in clearing conditions and eventually warm sunshine to Cooma.

The weekend Drive drew to a close as we partook the hospitality of Tiaan's Dad who invited us to his Canberra home for tea before setting off on the long cruise control run back home.

As the clubs first official DRIVE Weekend it was a real blast and everyone enjoyed it immensely, a mix of good roads, plenty of social time, great meals and great company. Makes us look forward to next year, by then the oldies will have forgotten the wheelies and we will once again lead the Parade.



List of attendees

- » Vic & Julie Widman
- » Mary Jordan & Kyle Rollinson
- » Gary Skewes
- » John & Megan Mouradian
- » Cherie Rose & Gerard Junek
- » Tiaan & Wal Wolzak
- » Michelle D'Amico & James Burrows
- » Merv & Heather Dunlop



clubMINI road trip



Mount Seaview retreat

18–19 June 2005

» Words **Steve Borg** » Pictures 'various'

Mount Seaview is situated approximately 77km west of Port Macquarie.

This was a weekend of spirited driving, on some of the best Mini roads one could possibly ever encounter. The Oxley highway presents 47kms of tight twists and turns with Mount Seaview at the end. All in all 8 cars were on the run; this was a very spirited bunch lead by Chris Bucknor.

The run started at Thornton, west of Newcastle. From here, the route was via Gloucester and Walcha. We travelled down the famous Thunderbolts Way and the Oxley Highway. These roads are some of the best country roads I had driven on for some time. As well as having spectacular scenery.

Chris Bucknor planned the run with precision, knowing all the main sights and the best places to stop and quench our appetites.

The first morning was a crispy cold winter morning. Many of the MINI owners experiencing for the first

time the 'Ice Alert' chimes on the cars, temperatures in some areas that day were as low as -1 degree in and around Sydney.

These weekends away are a great opportunity to meet new friends and socialize. Well this weekend was no exception.

Saturday night proved to be a very enjoyable night with good company, good food and the odd drink or two. The proprietors of the "Mount Seaview Retreat" were the perfect hosts and catered the weekend to our needs. The accommodation was very comfortable, however no view of the Ocean!

Our trek home saw us travel via Walcha & Gloucester and then on to the historic town of Morphett. Here the ladies had the opportunity to look at many a gift shop and then finally sit down to afternoon tea in one of the many cafes in the town.

This was my first weekend away with clubMINI and enjoyed it so much; we have been on all the other weekends away since.



This weekend was a great getaway with a very special group of people.

I look forward to the next run.

List of attendees

- » Michelle & James
- » Merv & Heather
- » John & Megan
- » Steve & Denise
- » Chris & Judy
- » Andrew & Melody
- » Allan
- » Mellissa, Darren & Allen

Come and try!



» Words **Merv & Heather Dunlop**

If you are a clubMINI Member and haven't come along to any of the Club outings — do yourself a big favour and COME & TRY soon.

Although only a recently founded Club, the activities calendar has something to suit all enthusiasts (that's what you are if you own a MINI) just check out the events calendar on the website.

A quick overview of the activities we have participated in this year. Festival of the Falling Leaves, Tumut in the beautiful Autumn month of April. Excellent run linking up with Canberra members and continuing on through some of New South Wales spectacular scenery arriving in Tumut Friday evening. Participating in the Festival Parade on Saturday. Lots of free time, friendly social activity and of course the great driving in the MINIs. Extremely well organised weekend compliments of Vic Widman (Events coordinator).

The activities calendar has something to suit all enthusiasts— just check out the events calendar on the website.

The next weekend away was north to Mt Seaview Resort, just west of Wauchope. Some really interesting roads along Thunderbolts Way and spectacular scenery. Really good driving roads and another very special social weekend, meeting more of the Club members. This weekend organised by Chris Bucknor, who resides in the Newcastle/ Hunter region and had a great knowledge of the roads in the area. The weekend wound up in Morpeth, just in time to enjoy afternoon tea.

The Observation Run organised by Vic was

WICKED! It all started at McDonald's Thornleigh with some very interesting questions and they just got more and more devious — particularly when Vic 'organised' for the Berowra Ferry to be out of action on the day and really threw the whole event wide open. Finished up at Warragamba Dam and instead of losing people, somehow we gained one or two. Great family day and very well supported by members.

Bathurst was the next destination with the weather on Saturday morning damp and the cars were rather dirty before we left Eastern Creek (although Steve Borg somehow managed to keep his car bright and shiny all weekend!). This run was organised by Stu Jones and his plan was to introduce us to The East Coast Rally roads which proved very interesting and exciting (Stu participated in the East Coast Targa the following weekend) and we all managed to arrive in Bathurst intact. However the real enthusiasts took

to Mt Panorama with a vengeance and after about 10 laps, the locals who live around the track must have thought there was a very 'slow' race being staged with the MINIs completing so many laps. Sunday also took us over and through some interesting roads and towns. An added bonus to a clubMINI weekend is the non stop entertainment on the CBs between Stu at the head of the convoy and Vic at the tail. No further comment — come along and experience this for yourself.

The MINIKhana and Track Days are covered elsewhere, but do COME & TRY — the Club is very friendly and it is fun to show off your MINI.

Did I mention that we (Merv & Heather) are possibly/probably/maybe the oldest members of the Club? Doesn't matter, there is something for everyone with a great group of people.

Merv & Heather Dunlop
BRG 2004 Monte Carlo Cooper S

clubMINI track report



clubMINI

15–16 October 2005



May 2005: I get a call from Stu Jones, 'Robbo, have you heard of the AROCA 6 hour race? It sounds like a lot of fun. I'm trying to get a MINI team together, are you in?'. I'm thinking to myself 'that sounds like fun!'

3:50pm Sunday 15th October 2005 : I'm in my MINI race car, having just come out of the pits. I'm on hard compound semi-slick race tyres which are stone cold, and have very little grip. There is torrential rain. I'm heading down the straight of Eastern Creek at 180kmh, and I can barely see a thing due to the spray from the track. As I approach turn one I see a rapidly closing lotus about to overtake me on the inside. I'm thinking to myself 'Help! How did I get into this situation!' However, I made it through the turn, and 10 minutes later had the honour of crossing the finish line, taking the chequered

flag, and successfully completing the last leg of the 6 hour race for the clubMINI team.

This is the story of the clubMINI entry in the AROCA 6 hour endurance race.

The 6 hour race is run every year by the Alfa Romeo Owners Club (www.alfaclubnsw.org.au). The race is run over a 2 day weekend with qualifying on the Saturday, and the race on the Sunday. The race itself runs for 6 hours, as a relay type event. It is often thought of as 'The Bathurst' of club racing. Each team has one car on the track at a time. A 'baton change' is performed when a car pits, and a new team car goes onto the circuit. There are 2 concurrent competitions, 'Outright' which is the team that has covered the most distance at the end of 6 hours, and 'Handicap' which is based on nominated lap times, and rewards consistency. To enter, cars need to be a CAMS log-booked race-car, which means roll cages, harnesses and all the safety gear.

When Stu suggested entering the race, with a MINI team, I thought it

was a fantastic idea. The only problem, we only had my car and Stu's, and we needed at least 3 cars. Stu made some calls to our Queensland friends Iain and Grant Sherrin from the Sherrin Racing Team (<http://sherrinracing.com.au>). Stu and I have competed against the Sherrin's and their 2 MINIs in numerous rallies. The Sherrin's were keen, and agreed to ship the cars down from Queensland for the event. We had a team!

Neither Stu nor myself, or anyone from the club had any experience with this kind of event before. Therefore we decided to team up with the NSW BMW Club (www.bmwclubnsw.asn.au) who have entered this event many times. They were entering 2 teams, and we decided to pool resources and make the most of their experience.

We also needed some helpers on the day. The helpers are required to time laps, signal to drivers from the pit-lane, refuel, help scrutineering and co-ordinate drivers etc. This is where our team captain Alan Earnshaw came to the rescue, and agreed to organise volunteers from clubMINI.

After several administrative glitches the weekend of the race arrived, and the team came together at the Eastern Creek circuit. The Sherrin's cars arrived from Queensland, with Donald their mechanic. Saturday was a busy day, with administrative paperwork, scrutineering and driver and team briefings. Qualifying went well, with all 4 MINIs setting competitive times, and meeting all requirements to qualify for the event. We felt a little 'outgunned' in our MINIs. All of our cars are road registered and road legal. However, the vast majority of the cars in the race were non-registered race specials.

On the Sunday morning the team of clubMINI volunteers looked resplendent in their clubMINI motor sport uniforms. We were blown away by the support given by the Club members, with over 20 volunteers turning up and helping during the day. Alan was busy coordinating and assigning tasks, and all volunteers were kept busy during the day.

The clubMINI team drivers were all very nervous on the race morning, with none of us ever having

takes on the 6 hour

» Words **Andrew Robinson** » Pictures 'various'

raced in this kind of event before. However, when the start time came, everything seemed to come together. The MINIs ran beautifully with no mechanical problems, all drivers drove well doing competitive

and consistent times. The clubMINI team of volunteers was amazing, with everything running smoothly without a glitch. The rain came late in the day, which made things interesting, but everyone performed their roles well.

At the end of the race everyone was relieved to have made it through with no mechanical dramas. The clubMINI team had done well, coming 12th out of 24 outright, and 6th out of 24 in the handicap. This is a great result,

considering it was our first year, and that we were competing against some true race cars!

Stu and I would like to thank the Sherrin's for being great team mates and driving so well. Donald their mechanic, and the boys from Peak Performance were also a great help during the day, helping sort our minor problems. The volunteers from the BMW club were fantastic, and we learnt a lot from them.

However, most of all, we would like to say a huge thankyou to the many volunteers from clubMINI. Alan and his team were fantastic throughout the weekend. There were too many people to name individually, but they all did a fantastic job, especially considering it was our first event. Many of the other teams commented on how well organised and professional our clubMINI volunteers were, which is a big compliment coming from experienced teams! Thankyou to everyone who helped out during the weekend.

Hopefully, we may have mini entry next year, and do it all again!



Wine Weekend

12–13 November 2005



Eleven MINIs assembled on a glorious day opposite the RAAF base at Richmond to be welcomed by a squadron of flies. Whilst we waited for the full contingent to arrive we enjoyed the hospitality of the Café and practised our fly swatting skills. Steve Borg did a great job of parading our new clubMINI Moto shirts which look great in their racy red and brilliant black livery. A few sales were made to boost Steve's retirement fund.

The eleven MINIs and Peter Murphy and family who would join us to our lunch stop at Rylstone

headed off just before 9:30am.

It was a well mannered flock of MINIs (we are still not sure what we call a bunch of gathered MINIs*) that made its way up Bell's Line of Road. The first port of call was a visit to the beautiful Mt Wilson area where rainforest meets mountain gardens with the Rhododendrons in full flower making a beautiful site. The plan was to enjoy a quiet coffee in the grounds of a quaint café in Mt Wilson, but the owner had other ideas, dictating all sorts of rules to his 22+ customers that left us a little dismayed. In

fact whilst I was trying to negotiate the possibility of a reasonable approach to give this guy about \$250 worth of coffee and cake orders the remainder of the members summed him up quicker than I and decided they would not be spoken to in that way, So we left!

The Bells Line of Road is a great drive with spectacular views of honey gold cliffs along its way. For new visitors to Australia from Seattle, Chris and Heather in the Cabrio, they were having a great time enjoying the 360 degree view with the top down, but someone should have warned them of the fierce sun in Australia and their red glow almost matched the MINI Moto shirts.

Maccas at Lithgow proved why they do so well from a business sense and served us with no fuss and in no time; perhaps the Mt Wilson man should work for Maccas to learn a little common business sense.

We followed the Mudgee road to the turn off to Rylstone and marvelled at the emerald green fields that were testament to the possibility that the drought had broken. The Globe hotel at Rylstone is a great spot for lunch and the brilliant sunny weather and now only a few flies helped us enjoy a great lunch of chicken legs and salad. It was becoming obvious that this MINI Drive was as much about eating as it was about driving. We said farewell to Peter and family as we headed along the Lue Road obviously named after Lue the fly! This was a much quieter road traffic wise and the 11 MINIs in cruise mode looked a treat as we snaked along the country roads past some great scenery.

We hit the Wine town of Mudgee at 3pm on schedule and headed for the Wine and Cheese tasting at the High Valley Winery. More food and drink was seen to be consumed. This gave us the opportunity to explore the various wineries



clubMINI road trip

» Words **Vic Widman** » Pictures 'various'



around Mudgee and there are heaps of them, Helen and Bill and Julie and I found the Poets Corner Winery and although Helen and I do not drink wine, we still found it loads of fun watching our respective partners sample the good Wine.

The relaxed itinerary in the afternoon saw everyone explore the beautiful surrounds of Mudgee and filter back to our Motel to either enjoy the selection of wines in Michelle's room or wash dust and bugs of their MINIs.

The evening meal in the motel was a highlight and Helen once again showed that not only is her MINI Cooper a star attraction but she too is the life of the party. We partied on for several hours enjoying a great meal and making the most of the hospitality of our hosts

John and Marni at the Wanderlight Motor Inn.

Sunday dawned picture perfect and even the hangovers were being kind, we had a prize for the best show and shine and Helen's Black Eyed Purple was an easy winner with a bottle of Mudgee's best being awarded.

Ross and Anita had done their maths and knew it was quicker back to Canberra if they retraced to Lithgow, so we said our farewell to their Cherry Red MCS. Ross wanted to catch the V8 action on the tele anyway.

After 9am we headed north on the Ulan road to Cassilis, and despite seeing a large red roo cross the road we managed to ensure there were no red backs in our exhausts! By now Chris and Heather were glowing a lovely crimson colour

but kept the top down on the Cabrio and enjoyed the scenery like no-one else could. The Golden Highway was not as busy as I thought it would be and we were soon in Merriwa taking time to enjoy another coffee and the local café. With the cruise control set at the speed limit plus a couple we slid into Denman and Broke and finally arrived at the beautiful Hunter Valley Gardens at 1pm. Here we had our group photos and let everyone do their own thing around the shops, food outlets, wineries and magnificent gardens.

Julie and I were the last MINI to leave the car park around 3:45pm and were home safe and sound by 6pm. Another fabulous clubMINI drive had come to an end and we were all looking forward to our next big drive in early December to the High Country.

List of attendees

- » Vic & Julie Widman
- » Cherie & Gerard Junek
- » Michelle D'Amico, James Burrows & Anita Rooney
- » Merv & Heather Dunlop
- » Helen & Bill Eggins
- » Ros & Raoul Merten
- » Ross & Anita Kelly
- » Steve & Denise Borg
- » Alex Frost
- » Chris Karstens & Heather Dawson
- » Stu & Carrie Jones

* Designer's note: I think they should be called a 'smile' of MINIs.

High Country Hijinx

10–14 December 2005

December 2005 saw the first of our club's major MINI drives take place.

There were 10 MINIs that joined us for five days of High Country Hijinx. Starting from Sydney we headed down the Hume Hwy to Goulburn and then onto the arty and crafty town of Bungendore via Tarago. One thing that we have learnt from our drives is that they involve three major points, driving, eating and shopping. Well at least the drives that I seem to be left to organise incorporate this regime. But it is a good mix for everyone on the drive and all parties seem to have a fabulous time.

After lunch and meeting some of our Canberra members in Bungendore, who joined us for the drive around Canberra (thanks go to Liam for the pics) we followed what we best describe as MINI roads to Tidbinbilla Space Tracking station. I'm sure everyone knows what a MINI road is, loads of bends with fast sweeping corners. In fact,

the high country drive was full of MINI roads and the driving aspect was superb.

At the space tracking station we found more food and relaxed under the canopy of the huge wide dome as it searched deep space. A quick top up of fuel in Canberra before making our way to our overnight stop in Cooma where at last I had chosen a Motel that met our standard (for those of you not up on this IN joke, the motel I selected for our recent Bathurst Bash was a case of mistaken identity being a 2 star instead of the expected 4 star.)

On this drive we had a total package for our accommodation over the 4 nights, dinner, bed and breakfast, this meant we did not need to worry about designated drivers for our evening meal as each stop provided an in-house restaurant.

The other great thing about these Drives is that we do not make crack of dawn starts with a leisurely





clubMINI road trip

» Words **Vic Widman** » Pictures **Liam Camilleri**



cooked breakfast usually around 8am. But I had awoken early in Cooma and took the opportunity for a little early morning drive to source a couple of spots of interest for our day's drive. This found a great lookout on the outskirts of Cooma with views to the Snowy Mtns which still had glimpses of snow on its upper peaks and an amazing road to Jindabyne.

After brekkie we headed off to the lookout in convoy. There is little on our roads that can turn the heads of the early starters in a country town like a convoy of MINIs.

Then we headed for Jindabyne by Vic's special route. Long straight stretches through the treeless plains of the Monaro plain, followed by sweeping bends, in the crystal clear morning, it was a joy to drive.

We had secured support from MINI Australia for this drive in the form of a BMW X3 carrying spare wheels and tyres for our MINIs, thanks to MINI Australia. We sourced our own driver, the lucky Wayne who acted as our tail gunner and made sure all the "Smarties", as he called our MINIs, (he reckons the brightly

coloured MINIs looked like a pack of Smarties driving down the road?) made it safely to each check point, whoops I mean eatery or craft shop.

We landed in Jindabyne and found the best café in town for more food and some fuel for the MINIs.

The next leg of our journey would be a great drive too, over the Snowy Mountains via the Alpine Way, sealed all the way these days, it provides a superb drive and the roads were quiet and the skies blue as we headed for Victoria. Our two Cabrios were topless through the mountains

and despite the sun burn their drivers, Chris, Gai and Trevor simply loved the experience. Chris in particular has been having a ball with the Club in his Cabrio. From Seattle in the USA and only out here for 12 months, he reckons he has seen more of the real Australia with the Club than any travel agent could ever arrange for him.

We had our passports stamped as we headed into Victoria and enjoyed more eating in the quaint town of Corryong, the home of the real Man From Snowy River, Jack Riley. After lunch, on the way up the Murray Valley

Hwy there was a short spate of car swapping as Helen and then Bill experienced the power of a JCW over their standard Cooper. One thing is for sure, if you ever travel with Helen, don't expect to get the chance to talk to her, you just sit there and listen, alternatively Bill is very quiet and was a good passenger who needed the occasional prompt to utter a few words, must be a result of sitting with Helen all day. Anyway, Miss Daisy, as Bill and Helen's Cooper is dubbed, was still voted the best presented MINI with its gleaming chromies, pretty daisies and perfectly reflective deep purple paintwork. It is a credit to both of them.

The Kiewa Valley is another beautiful road in north east Victoria and it winds up the Kiewa Valley with towering mountains flanking its every turn. At Mt Beauty we crossed the range on a switch back road that had our power steering working overtime, stopping briefly at a great lookout over the Kiewa Valley we were soon arriving in the beautiful town of Bright.

Our accommodation tonight was in the High Country Motor Inn and it was superb. The weather was hot, around 30 degrees, clear skies and daylight to 8:30pm allowed plenty of time to wash the cars yet again, refuel, explore the

tree lined streets and even relax around the bar in the restaurant.

After another great meal we had a special treat with a visit from two local Cherry Growers who explained how they made cherry wine, cherry sauce, cherry cherries and even seedless cherries. Needless to say we also had the opportunity to sample their wines and cherries and many of us purchased some really fresh fruit at great low prices.

Day 3 saw us make a leisurely start from Bright, the tree lined streets looked even better with a bunch colourful Smarties parked in them. The Parks Victoria attendant at the entrance to Mt Buffalo was impressed with our turn out, but we were blown away by the scenery as we drove up Mt Buffalo. If you have never been to this great location, make sure you see it soon. Chris in the open top Cabrio was beside himself with the scenery, despite his bout of hay fever. We climbed higher and higher with unusual granite rock formations at every turn, the giant Jelly Bean being a favourite. We had spotted a lookout atop the highest rocky peak on what is known as "The Horn" but the final 3 kilometres of gravel road deterred some from venturing on. But for those of us who braved

the corrugations were rewarded with a fabulous view after a short but steep climb. The lookout was truly impressive and at 1750 metres high with an unobstructed 360 degree view over the High Country it was certainly worth the accumulation of dust on the rear window.

A vote was taken to hit the shops back in Bright so we descended that terrible descent with flint stones flying at every turn, well we actually drove down quite sedately enjoying the view once more, truly spectacular!

Lunch and shopping in Bright (more eating and spending) was over by 1:30pm and we left this great town for Mt Hotham. The road up the mountain is another classic MINI road, more twists than a politicians promise. A group photo atop the mountains at 1800 metres and then onward through Dinner Plain (sideways glances for more food?)

The road up Mt Hotham is another classic MINI road, more twists than a politicians promise.

and we descended the eastern side of the range into Omeo. During a short break, to enjoy an ice cream and watch people's jaws drop as they counted off 10 MINIs we were informed that the road ahead was subject to a grass hopper plague. Whilst I was in the shop, a vote was taken for me to lead the group through the little hoppers. Well! Driving across a road that is literally moving in front of you is rather interesting, even the Cabrios put their roofs up to keep the little jumpers out. Those behind me were glad I was clearing the road for them and the tail enders had few splatter marks to boast off.

It was a different story at the front and the grille and radiator on MINI2V was inches deep in smelly yellow stuff that seemed to have a myriad legs and heads. I left the cleaning to Julie, which impressed her no end until a local farmer came to her rescue and showed her how real men clean grass hoppers out of grilles. He was also secretly checking out all the brightly coloured Smarties!

Our third night was in the quiet town of Orbost, well it was quiet until we arrived, we certainly know how to fill up the car park in a Motel. The temperatures was in the mid 30s and the now very dusty, and bug

It was a wonderful

5 days of great

roads, shopping

and eating but

above all we all

made loads of new

friends who all

share the passion

of owning a MINI.

splattered MINIs were in a desperate need of a good wash. Fortunately water restrictions do not apply in these parts and we found a hose and stretch of lawn to park under a shady tree and bathe our beauties. It was some time during this exercise that a teeny, weeney, itsey, bitsey spider decided to weave his cobweb across the outlet of my JCW exhaust. Well the sight of a spiders web across my exhaust pipe was too much for some to resist commenting on my ability to 'blow the cobwebs' out of the exhaust and cast dispersions on my driving style!

Another big night in the restaurant, much laughing and hilarity, we soon cleared it other patrons, a good time was had by us!

During the night our fine weather disappeared with a strong southerly blow and we woke to light rain. At Cann River for a short stop to eat and shop, there is definitely a trend here, we were accosted by this fellow with a broad English accent. Turns out that he owns a MINI in England, participates in many club drives in the Home land and was thrilled to bits to see 10 MINIs in, of all places, Cann River. I have since emailed a photo of him and our MINIs to him back in old England town.

Our route took us back up to the mountains to the town of Bombala. With the misty rain and the higher altitudes we found ourselves driving through fog and it was on this day that my MINI developed the ability to produce its own fog, inside the cabin. As it turns out there was a minute hole on in the heater core and whenever the heater was slightly engaged the cabin would fill with steam, Merv and Heather (often confused as Norm and Helen) who were following me at the time actually thought we had caught fire as the steam filled the cabin and pored out the windows. (The problem was later fixed by Col Crawford Motors under warranty in time for me to join the Eastern Creek Track Day a few days later)

After the misty surrounds of Bombala we headed back down to the coast where the rain had dispersed and enjoyed a

drive along the coastline, and oh yes, a meal and more shopping in Merimbula. Another posed photo overlooking a pristine beach near Pambula, more onlookers enjoying our experience and we were off to, yes you picked it, more shopping and eating at the wonderful old heritage town of Central Tilba.

Our last night's accommodation had been planned to knock everyone's socks off and after being a little lost as to its whereabouts I think we achieved our goal. Amooran Court is a 5 star apartment block opposite the Narooma Golf course and looks directly out to sea to Montague Island. The rooms are huge and well appointed and the price was unbelievably low matching the 3 star accommodation of the previous night. It was a short walk across the road to the Golf Club for dinner with views out to Montague Island also and the fading light of Daylight saving made for a fitting last night for all of us.

Day 5 of our journey and we were once more in bright sunshine as we threaded our way up the Princes Hwy to Mogo just south of Bateman's Bay. Known for its craft shops it had to be another stop for us, plus we found this great model shop full of car models including a MINI

which found its way into my Christmas stocking.

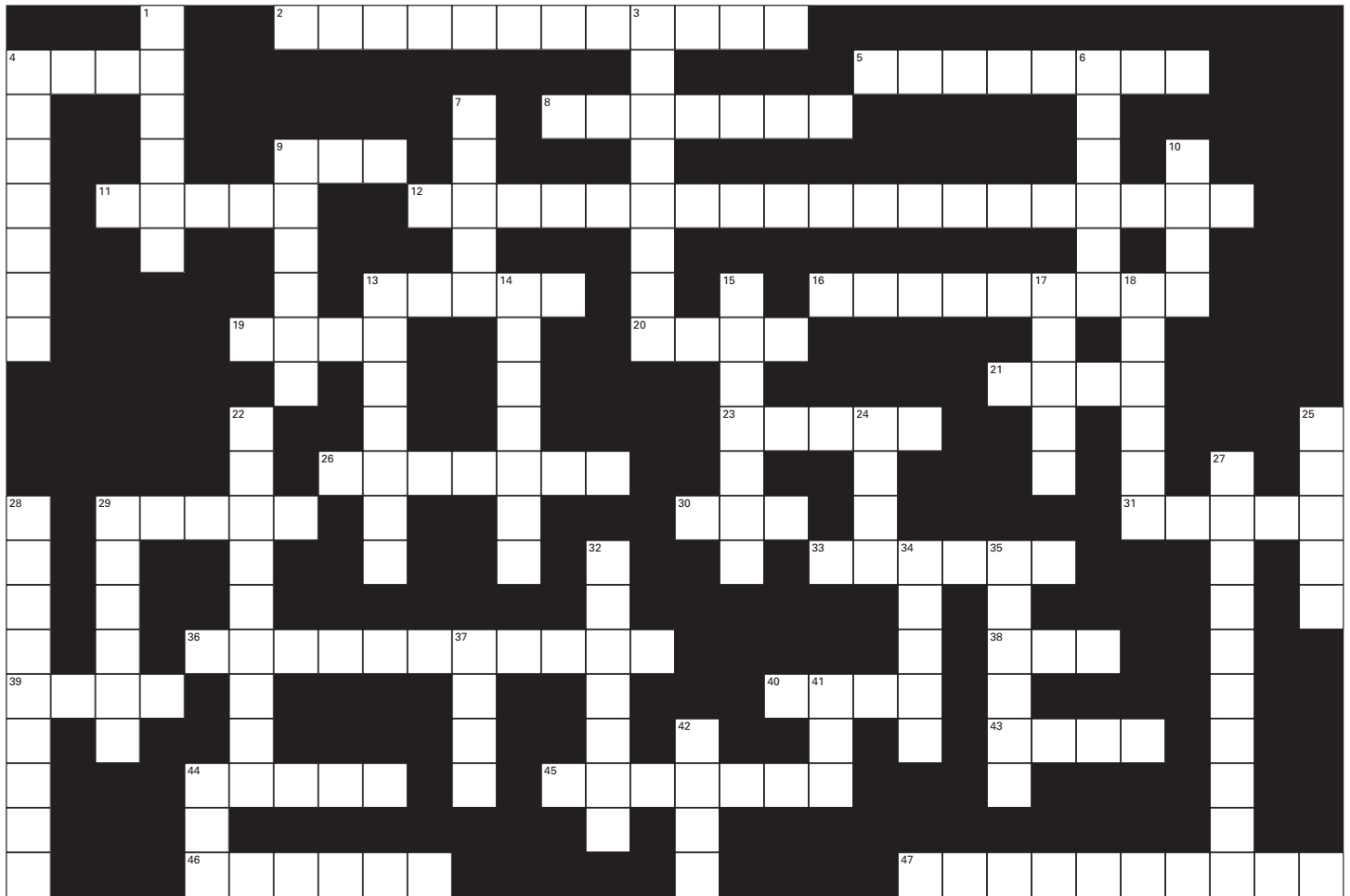
Bateman's Bay was the partial finishing point for some of us as their homes were more directly found up the coast whilst the rest headed up another great MINI road, the Clyde Mountain. We stopped for lunch in Braidwood before finally regrouping where we had started at Pheasants Nest.

It was a wonderful 5 days of great roads, shopping and eating but above all we all made loads of new friends who all share the passion of owning a MINI. All I can say is look out for the next BIG MINI drive.

List of attendees

- » Helen & Bill Eggins
Cooper
- » Bryan, Fiona & Alex Shedden
Cooper S
- » Ros & Raoul Merten
JCW Cooper S
- » Ross & Anita Kelly
Cooper S
- » Merv & Heather Dunlop
Cooper S
- » Cherie & Gerard Junek
Cooper S
- » Trevor & Gai Palmer
Cooper Cabrio
- » Chris Karstens
Cooper Cabrio
- » Peter Starling
Cooper S
- » Vic & Julie Widman
JCW Cooper S
- » Wayne Desmond
X3 support vehicle

clubMINI crossword



All questions and complaints to Brad Cook and Andrew Robinson! Copy this page and submit your answers at the Birthday weekend or by Friday 7 April to secretary@nsw.clubmini.com.au to go in the draw for some huge prizes!

Across

2. The current MINI Cooper S engine is fitted with one of these.
4. Racers use this saying when they lose 'I was not in the...'
5. In 1966 Minis took the first 9 places at Bathurst. This race was then called the ... 500?
8. The D in DSC is an abbreviation for?
9. Current owner of the MINI name?
11. Make sure your radiator has enough ... ?
12. The official Australian club for MINI owners has this web address?
13. In September 2000 the MINI Cooper was launched at this motor show?
16. A MINI only race in the UK is the John Cooper ... ?
19. The Hunter Valley is famous for ... ?
20. The MINIs rotors, callipers and master cylinder help you do this?
21. www.mini2.com has a forum where you can go and have a ... about your MINI?
23. The original Italian Job was filmed in what Italian city?
26. The company who last manufactured the Mini in Australia was?
29. Italian fashion capital featured in *MINI International* magazine?
30. Wheel alignment adjusts camber and ... ?
31. 'Charlie Crocker didn't drive a MINI, rather he drove an ... Martin'
33. One factory upgrade for the audio system is by ... (and 6 down)?
36. What powered the MINIs used in the LA Subway for The Italian Job remake starring Mark Wahlberg and Charlize Theron?
38. Put this in your tyres?
39. Driving a MINI makes you do this?
40. John Cooper's son's first name is?
43. Now discontinued, a colour to buy your MINI in was Solid ... ?
44. Slang name for classic Mini is The ... ?
45. This light is located on the rear-centre of 2004 and prior MINIs?
46. The MINI is manufactured in this suburb of Oxford?
47. The MINI CVT has paddles to choose between Sports Drive and ... modes?

Down

1. The name of the German company developing an AWD MINI is?
3. MINIs are sold with these on their wheels as standard in Australia?
4. Leyland had a factory in this Sydney suburb back in the 70s?
6. One factory upgrade for the audio system is by ... (and 33 across)?
7. The name of one of Australia's recent drivers in the A1 Grand Prix of Nations is Will ... ?
9. The MINI Chrysler based engine is built in what country?
10. What should you do when you see another MINI?
13. French automaker PSA is a conglomeration of (13 down & 32 down)?
14. MINIs have ... appeal?
15. The C in DSC is an abbreviation for?
17. Check this and the website for clubMINI updates?
18. In 2004 BMW introduced the cabriolet at what city's motor show?
22. Rumour that MINI will make a van version has prompted them to reuse this name?
24. Finish this quote 'hang on lads, I've got a great ... ?'
25. MINIs have a choice of halogen or ... headlights?
27. The BMW MINI was designed by Frank ... ?
28. Designer of the original mini was Sir Alec ... ?
29. Another old Mini manufacturer?
(In Australia they built cars and trucks.)
32. French automaker PSA is a conglomeration of (13 down & 32 down)?
34. The prior owner of the Mini name to BMW was ... ?
35. A colour to buy your MINI in is Burnt ... ?
37. A choice of blue to buy your MINI in ... (2004 and prior)?
41. Common abbreviation for car stereo equipment?
42. A famous TV show reviewing cars is Top ... ?
44. The original manufacturer of the Mini was ... ?

Sunset at Eastern Creek!



clubMINI
track report

19 December 2005

» Words **Vic Widman**

What a cracker of an event this turned out to be. The decision to go to a Twilight meeting was a real winner as we avoided the heat of Summer and enjoyed the balmy evening weather and the excitement of driving under varying conditions.

The club also had an excellent roll up to this event too, with 22 MINIs participating on the evening and two guests. It all started with us gathering at the track at 4:30pm for a briefing with our professional instructors from Eastern Creek Driving Solutions. James and his assistants are a wealth of knowledge when it comes to track driving, and not just how to go fast but how to preserve your MINI whilst enjoying its capabilities.

We walked the circuit stopping at various corners with our instructors explaining braking points and apexes.

We were split into two groups, those first timers and those who had

done some track time previously. There was no pressure, no foolish driving and clear instructions on when you should overtake and everyone followed the guidelines and enjoyed the thrill of driving fast on a professional race track.

James and his crew rotated between drivers, sitting in the passenger's seat with each driver explaining braking points and apexes and in some cases doing the steering from the passengers seat to help you understand how to pick the fastest line through a corner.

The two groups swapped over every 30 minutes and there was plenty of track time for all. We were fortunate to also have Nick Peak from Peak Performance join us at the Track and offer his suggestions on tyre pressures and advice when things seemed to be going a little ordinary with tyres and brakes.

Our skilled drivers, Stu Jones and Robbo had their quick MINIs on the Track

too for more testing and Robbo was heard to say that he thought it was the best track day he had attended, real praise for the event.

The event included a light dinner and drinks and added to its value. Track time proceeded throughout the evening with the last session being an open session from 8pm to just on dusk at 8:30pm. This allowed us to experience the unique situation of driving into the dusk and dodging the odd duck as it made its way towards the local dams.

By 9pm we were packing up and comparing notes, for some it was their first time on a race track and their adrenalin was still pumping. For others they had achieved their personal best time and they were pumped too and all throughout the group there was camaraderie and respect for each other.

This proved to be a great event, it didn't take all day to participate, it was reasonably priced for what

we received and we all had a fabulous time doing something we are not permitted to do on the road and that is drive the MINI to its limit.

We will do another of these events real soon hopefully before the end of daylight saving so keep an eye on our events calendar.

List of attendees

- » Bryan Shedden
- » Ros Merten
- » Merv Dunlop
- » Chris Karstens
- » Peter Starling
- » Vic Widman
- » Ged Dew
- » Andrew Jackson
- » Steve Borg
- » Tom Browell
- » Andrew Robinson
- » Sarah Ryman
- » Stu Jones
- » Carrie Jones
- » Melissa Turnock
- » Alan Jones
- » James Burrows
- » Tiaan Wolzak
- » Steve Mursa
- » Peter Downes
- » Kathie Comb
- » Brian Douglas
- » (there were two others whose names escape me, sorry!)



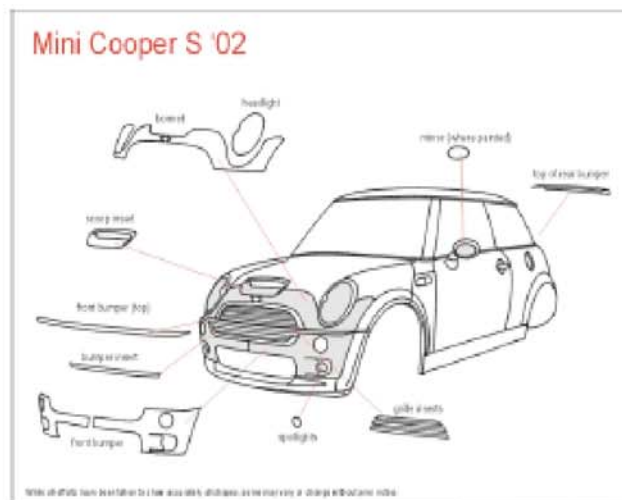
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lights, grill, mirrors and
top of rear bumper,
door handle cups)
extended bonnet kit \$50

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spotlights and bumper
insert)



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*Protection for regular bonnet kit finishes level with rear of supercharger scoop,
extended kit approx 120mm behind scoop with better protection at side of lights.

clubMINI 2006 Calendar NSW/ACT

Check the site at www.clubMINI.com.au/nsw/events.html for the most up-to-date information

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 26 Jan 06 | clubMINI Australia Day Bash
FREE Entry & prizes for the best dressed Aussie. |
| 24 Feb 06 | Twilight Track Event - Eastern Creek Raceway
Event Fees will apply. Includes professional trainers & light dinner. |
| 26 Feb 06 | Lower Barrington Drive Day
FREE entry. |
| 20 Mar 06 | MINIs Celebrity Transport to the Red Carpet
FREE Entry & dinner for all volunteer chauffeurs. |
| 26 Mar 06 | clubMINI 1st Birthday BBQ @ Bicentennial Park, Homebush Bay
FREE entry. |
| 09 Apr 06 | Classic MINI Road Run @ Old Pacific Highway & Putty Road
FREE entry. |
| 28 Apr 06 –
30 Apr 06 | clubMINI Visits the 'Falling Leaf Festival' in Tumut
Event Fees will apply. Includes accommodation, meals & trip costs. |
| 20 May 06 | clubMINI MINikhana @ Eastern Creek Raceway
Event Fees will apply. Includes professional trainers, hire of skid pan & lunch. |
| 18 Jun 06 | Let the Other Half Drive Day
FREE entry. |
| 09 Jul 06 | Observation Rally
Event Fees will apply to cover printing costs, route notes & prizes. |
| 05 Aug 06 –
06 Aug 06 | Thunderbolt's Revenge
Event Fees will apply. Includes accommodation, meals & trip costs. |
| 17 Sep 06 | Royal National Park & Kangaroo Valley Drive Day
FREE entry. |
| 28 Oct 06 –
29 Oct 06 | Bathurst Bash
Event Fees will apply. Includes accommodation, meals & trip costs. |
| 19 Nov 06 | Early Xmas Party Drive Day
FREE entry other than National Park entry fees along the way. |
| 09 Dec 06 –
10 Dec 06 | Wine Weekend in Mudgee & the Hunter Valley
Event Fees will apply. Includes accommodation, meals and trip costs. |
| 10 Feb 07 –
24 Feb 07 | clubMINI Goes to Tasmania
Event Fees will apply. Keep an eye on the website for further details. |

Numbers may be limited for some events. Book early to avoid disappointment.

clubMINI Members will have preference at all events. Non-members add \$10 per day to all event costs.
All event details & costs are subject to change where absolutely necessary.

contact events@nsw.clubMINI.com.au

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