

THE ALL-NEW MINI COUNTRYMAN

The pre-launch hype had it that Mini had miraculously invented a whole new species of vehicle. But privately, the Countryman's designers say they simply made something for people who want a car that looks like a Mini but need more space. And in that respect it's a success.

The Countryman's engineers say they made a car that drives like a Mini. Unfortunately, they couldn't. Because it's higher than a normal Mini and has more supple suspension, the Countryman rolls more in corners and feels comparatively soggy. Oh, it's a lot better than most crossovers, but the agility of the normal Mini hatch is just a distant memory. And the extra

height and width and complication increase the drag and weight. Sure enough, even the Cooper S version doesn't have the get-up-and-go you'd expect. It has a bit of a drink problem, too.

Ah, but what about the 4x4 version? Well yes, for an extra grand or so you can have drive to the back wheels, too. It's good for powering out of wet roundabouts, no doubt. (Can't verify this because our test drive was dry.) And, if you fitted all-season tires, it would be reassuring if you live somewhere snowy. But really the 4WD option doesn't do enough to turn the Countryman into either a great on-roader or a great off-roader. Whether it's the 2WD or the 4WD, the Countryman's long-travel suspension means it's got a pretty supple ride. Especially over crappy town streets. And the faux-SUV styling - wheel-arch protectors and chunky bumpers - mean you'll be well insulated against parking lot knocks.

So it's going to be the car for the image-conscious urbanite with kids. Or someone who lives up a farm track and needs a bit of extra ground clearance. But not the person who loves driving.

Paul Horrell, Consultant Editor of TopGear magazine



Vehicle Type	front-engine, 4-wheel-drive, 4-passenger, 5-door hatchback
Engine Type	turbocharged and intercooled DOHC 16-valve inline-4 cylinder, aluminum block and head, direct fuel injection
Displacement	98 cu in, 1598 cc
Power (SAE net)	181 bhp @ 5500 rpm Top-Speed: 134 mph
Torque	192 lb-ft @ 1700 rpm
Transmission	6-speed manual or 6-speed automatic w/ paddle shifters
Dimensions	Wheelbase: 102.2 in Length: 161.8in Width: 70.4 in Height: 61.5in 0-60 mph: 7.0 sec Curb weight: 3260lb Top speed (drag limited): 134 mph
Suspension	Front: MacPherson strut suspension w/ equal length driveshafts. Rear: Multi-link w/ aluminum alloy longitudinal arms. Anti-Roll Bars: Front and Rear.
Fuel Economy	Manual: 32 HWY. 26 CTY. 29 COMB. Automatic: 32 HWY. 25 CTY. 28 COMB.

OTHER MODELS



COOPER COUNTRYMAN



COOPER COUNTRYMAN S



COOPER COUNTRYMAN S All4

And Coming Soon the MINI E



THE NEW VOLKSWAGEN GTI

Our GTI sped from 0 to 60 mph in 6.1 seconds and hit 100 mph exactly 10 seconds later; the quarter-mile was covered in 14.7 seconds at 96 mph. A five-door, six-speed-manual 2010 GTI, the only other '10 we've tested thus far, accomplished the same tasks in 6.3 seconds, 16.2 seconds, and 14.9 seconds at 96 mph while weighing a whole nine more pounds. Chalk up the negligible differences to a less-green engine in the three-door—it had 4000 more miles—as well as the DSG's quicker shifts and launch-control function.

Given that the redesigned 2010 GTI isn't much different mechanically from its 2007-09 predecessor—including the same 200-hp, 2.0-liter

turbo four-cylinder—the numbers are pretty similar here, too. For example, a 2009 five-door equipped with DSG exactly matched this 2010 model by hitting 60 in 6.1 seconds and posting a 14.7-second quarter-mile mark at 96 mph. The only outlier? A 2007-model-year DSG three-door we tested waaaaay back in 2005 for a comparo, which was 0.5 second slower to 60. The discrepancy can likely be blamed on the older car's lack of launch control.

Now that the numbers are out of the way, here's where we wax poetic. The GTI, in any form, is a pure delight, something any hot-hatch shopper should sample, even if a car with higher horsepower (say, the 263-hp Mazdaspeed 3) is what would truly slake his or her thirst. The VW's steering is light and precise, the ride-and-handling balance is among the best in the world, and the interior is fabulously turned out. (Go for the plaid cloth seats instead of our tester's leather; spec'ing leather also nabs sport seats with bigger bolsters, but the base chairs are fine and much cheaper.) And the best part is that all of it comes in a hugely practical hatchback body that starts at just \$24,215 with the six-speed manual. Cargo room remains the same if you opt for the three-door, but we prefer the five-door layout for its easier rear-seat access, even if it does cost about \$600 more.



Vehicle Type	front-engine, front-wheel-drive, 5-passenger, 3-door hatchback
Engine Type	turbocharged and intercooled DOHC 16-valve inline-4 cylinder, iron block and aluminum head, direct fuel injection
Displacement	121 cu in, 1984 cc
Power (SAE net)	200 bhp @ 5100 rpm Top-Speed: 124 mph
Torque	207 lb-ft @ 1800 rpm
Transmission	6-speed manual w/ automated shifting and clutch
Dimensions	Wheelbase: 101.5in Length: 165.8in Width: 70.0in Height: 57.8in Curb weight: 3171 lb
Suspension	Front: MacPherson strut. Rear: Independent 4-link. Anti-Roll Bars: Front and Rear.
Fuel Economy	Manual: 31 HWY. 21 CTY. 25 COMB. Automatic: 32 HWY. 24 CTY. 25 COMB.

OTHER MODELS



GTI 5-Door



GOLF 3-DOOR/
5-DOOR



GOLF TDI
3-DOOR/5-DOOR

And Coming Soon the Golf blue-e-motion

