



MINI Roadster Concept



Mini are going after the Mazda MX-5 with their recent Roadster Concept. An individualistic, performance focused two-seater that according to the BMW press release is to meet the demands of a "modern and self-confident" target group. I imagine it would be a lot of fun for those of us that fall outside of the what has been known in the past as a "yuppy", as well. Given that my first drive behind the wheel of any car was a canary yellow 1st generation mini on a dirt track around Deep Creek behind my grandparents home on the Northern Beaches of Sydney - age 7 - the Mini always holds a special place for me.

If I was considering buying an economical 2-seater commuter that is fun to drive (which I am) would I buy a Roadster over an MX-5, for me the answer is no as I have sworn to never - ever - buy another front wheel drive car. Besides, the reason I am looking at an MX-5 is to pass it on to my children when they are old enough to drive - I like the idea of a cheap 2nd gen MX-5 for them. No back seat to put friends in, not over-

powered and a hell of a lot more stylish than a Corolla for not much difference in money. But I digress.

The styling of the Roadster falls into the cute basket rather than the beautiful, but it is very cute indeed. The verbose BMW press release expounds the virtues and practicality as an urban escape vehicle with more than enough luggage space for the two occupants.... It is tempting. The idea of a weekend away cruising up the F3 to the NSW Hunter Valley wine district with enough room for the overnight bags and space left to pick up a couple of dozen of the best the region has to offer has great appeal. It would probably turn as many heads as the Porsches you all too commonly see there.

The Roadster features a "through-loading" opening area between the luggage compartment and the passenger compartment, with the bulkhead featuring a lockable opening between the two sections. Above the bulkhead is a rollbar that deploys when needed and provides a significant improvement to safety over the normal convertible. The single-piece aluminium

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- 2 Seat sportscar
- 6 speed Manual
- 1.6-litre four turbo
- 208 bhp 155 KW
@ 6000 rpm

bar covers the width of the interior and electro-mechanically raises within 150 milliseconds.

It will be interesting to see what MINI do with the production version. The concept interior is well appointed with quality materials and finish. BMW have stated the performance focus, however there is a move to even smaller engines. This as we know though these days does not mean it has to be at the expense of output. This is a car that lends itself to a hybrid drivetrain.

Rod Halligan





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Year Launched 2009
 Frankfurt 2009
Specs based on John Cooper Works Challenge Edition

ENGINE

Configuration 4-cylinder in-line
Layout Front Traverse
Displacement 1.598 litre 97.5 cu in
Bore 77 mm 3 in
Stroke 85.8 mm 3.4 in
Valvetrain DOHC, 4 valves
Fuel delivery Fuel Injection
Induction twin scroll turbo
Power 212bhp /158kW @ 5500 rpm
Torque 280 Nm / 207 ft lbs @ 1750 rpm

BODY

Unitary Steel Weight 1205 kilo 2656.6 lbs
Length 3958 mm 155.8 in
Width 1683 mm 66.3 in
Height 1356 mm (53.4 in)
Wheelbase 2547 mm 100.3 in
Front track 1453 mm 57.2 in
Rear track 1461 mm 57.5 in

DRIVE

Front Wheel Drive
Transmission 6 - speed manual
Suspension McPherson struts lower wishbones
Brakes ventilated discs front, solids rear, ABS

