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Who is John Cooper of MINI Cooper Fame? by [Robert Vadra](#)

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Whether you have your eyes on a MINI Cooper S or a MINI John Cooper Works Roadster, you may wonder who John Cooper is and why his name is often synonymous with the MINI brand. John Cooper was a legendary race car driver and car designer from Surrey, England. He and his father co-founded the Cooper Car Company which built small, single-seat race cars.

One of Cooper's most notable designs featured a small engine placed in the rear of the car. Innovative and game-changing, Cooper's rear engine design affected motorsports forever. Formula One and Indy 500 cars alike evolved as a result of Cooper's design.

What do rear engine designs and Formula One have to do with the modern MINI Cooper? In the late 1950s, another car company, British Motor Corporation (BMC), introduced a small economy car that quickly became an icon, the 'Mini.' During its heyday, the Mini was marketed under BMC's two primary brand names, Morris and Austin. Numerous models were introduced including the Austin Mini Countryman, Morris Mini-Minor, and even a Mini pickup. Where others saw Minis as economy cars, John Cooper saw the potential for competitive motorsports.

After gaining approval from British Motor Corporation, John Cooper collaborated with BMC designer Sir Alec Issigonis to race-tune the Mini in 1961. It featured a race-tuned engine, front disc brakes, twin carburetors, a closer ratio gearbox, and other performance Mini parts. The Morris and Austin Mini Coopers were introduced in 1961. Two years later, Cooper and Issigonis developed a more powerful edition, the Mini Cooper S. The original Mini Coopers were destined for rally racing and they quickly proved themselves worthy of the John Cooper name with multiple Monte Carlo Rally victories from 1962 through 1968.

The Mini Cooper brand and design was later licensed to other car companies, hence the introduction of the Authi Mini Cooper in Spain and the Innocenti Mini Cooper in Italy. In the United Kingdom, the Mini Cooper name disappeared for nearly 20 years before being revived in 1990-1991.

Today, the MINI nameplate is controlled by BMW after numerous car company mergers, acquisitions, and breakups. BMW MINI cars have become iconic in their own right, and BMW continues to honour John Cooper with several MINI Cooper models including the MINI Cooper S and several John Cooper Works editions. John Cooper served as an advisor to both Rover and BMW's new MINI design teams. He lived to see the new MINI Cooper bearing his name before his death at age 77 in 2000.

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The next time you see a [MINI Cooper S](#) or MINI John Cooper Works on the road in Barrie, take a moment to thank John Cooper for his contribution. If you want to own a new or used MINI Cooper, do yourself a favour and stop by MINI Georgian where you'll find a large selection of MINI cars for sale, exceptional [MINI service](#), and a team of MINI Barrie car consultants committed to your complete satisfaction.

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