

# BUYING

Classifieds | Buying guide ...everything you need to buy a Mini

## 1. Mini Cabriolet

If you're planning a summer of Mini motoring you might be tempted to buy a convertible. Check out our ultimate buying guide to make sure you find a good one.

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### Want to buy one?

- ⊕ Individuality, rarity, fun to drive, attention-grabbing looks, wind-in-the-hair motoring
- ⊖ Expensive to buy, fabric hood an easily vandalised liability, impractical except as a two-seater, lacks power for motorway driving



Surprisingly it took over 30 years before a convertible Mini went into production, even though both BMC and the later BL and Rover Group management would have been aware of the aftermarket conversions available.

Crayford had developed a convertible conversion as early as 1963, while Auto Design's well-engineered open-top conversion was still available in the early '90s. BMC had the open-top Moke in the '60s but, despite design studies for overseas markets, there was

never any indication that a true open-top Mini would be available from the factory.

That changed in 1991 when LAMM Autohaus produced 75 rhd cars to be sold in the UK through 12 selected Rover dealers. All were snapped up within just a few weeks of going on sale despite a considerable price tag of £12,250. This success highlighted a gap in the market and plans were made to develop a similar open-top Mini at Longbridge. At this time the existing Mini was selling in very small numbers, so the Cabriolet

was the perfect way for Rover to improve the image of a car living on borrowed time.

LAMM continued to build open-top Minis for European markets for a number of years but, rather than form a closer relationship with this company, Rover Special Products division brought in two design and engineering consultants, Karmann of Germany and Tickford of Newport Pagnell. Their brief was to develop a Mini Cabriolet based on the concept of the LAMM car.

Karmann already had a reputation for engineering drop-top versions of the VW Golf, Ford Escort and Jaguar XJ-S and Tickford had produced hood assemblies for the Jaguar XJ-S, the fwd Lotus Elan and the MG RV8, so with the former beefing up the bodyshell and the latter designing the hood, a pre-production car based on the Cooper 1.3i appeared at the NEC Motor Show in October 1992. Apart from some detail differences and a better hood arrangement, it was remarkably similar to the LAMM Cabriolet.