



The Rover Cabriolet was more up-market, with a full-width burr walnut fascia, three instruments and a clock, a glove box, face-level ventilation, a leather-rimmed steering wheel, pile carpets and specially designed front seats.



types of Mini followed — and why they're still in production today.

Even in the early days though, BMC (as it then was) dabbled with open-air Minis. Mokes were developed as rugged little fun cars; twin-engined versions followed in four-wheel drive experiments; and the styling department eventually built several 'beach car' prototypes — some completely without sides — but no convertibles.

Not then, and not for some time, did the engineers at Longbridge seriously consider building an open-air Mini. Crayford of Kent, on the other hand, did — selling a number of simply-equipped conversions — and although BMC (and later British Leyland) no doubt looked at these cars, they never followed up.

By the '80s the fashion had died down. Enthusiasts had stopped talking about the possibilities and most people forgot that Minis could have their tops chopped off — until 1991. Suddenly, one of Rover's German dealers, LAMM Autohaus, decided to go ahead with a conversion of its own.

Engineered with typical Teutonic thoroughness, it soon attracted Rover-UK's attention. The company then decided to import a mere 75 cars, selling

them through just 12 selected Rover dealers. Launched in June 1991, the allocation sold out within days — but no more were ever imported.

Although this car was the inspiration for the 'official' Rover Mini Cabriolet which followed, it was different in some details. Based on the latest Mini Cooper package — at that time therefore, with a carburetted engine — the bodyshell kept the standard screen but nothing else above the waistline. To stiffen up the remaining bodyshell, there were extensive changes to the hull, including reinforced sill sections, a brand-new crossmember and work around the B-posts.

The massive fold-back hood frame was hinged immediately behind the doors — the layout ensuring that the quarter windows were in flexible Perspex — but there was no blind spot. Because of the car's tiny size, the hood had to fold back and live under a massive cover around the tail. This, in fact, was one of those rare convertibles which looked better with the hood up.

Extra styling features included a full colour-matched body kit, which included massive front and rear wheelarch extensions, a big front spoiler incorporating extra driving lamps, side skirts and a large rear bumper.

**Comes  
across as a  
thoroughly  
appealing  
little car**



## CLUBS

Although there is no club specifically looking after the late-model Rover Cabriolets, any of the scores of Mini clubs in the UK — and around the world — will make you welcome. Crayford convertible owners should contact Barry Priestman at 58 Geriant Road, Downham, Bromley, Kent BR1 5DX. Tel: 0181 4611805.

## BOOKS

There are no books specifically about the Mini Cabriolet, but two volumes can be recommended for general interest:  
*The Complete Mini* by Chris Rees. 160 pages, 250 illustrations. £16.99. This describes the Cabriolet in detail.  
*Mini, 35 Years On* by Rob Golding. 256 pages, 200-plus illustrations. £16.99.