

VOICE AUTOMOBILE

2019 MINI Clubman All4



By Nauman Farooq

The current generation model of the MINI Clubman has been around for a few years now – I tested one back in 2016 – so has time enhanced its appeal, or has it gone the other way around?

I initially wasn't a fan of the second-generation Clubman (model code: F54), feeling that it isn't as sharp to drive as the smaller 3-door and 5-door Cooper, or preferring the bigger Countryman model for its added practicality. But, something different happened this time around – read on to find out!

Styling: The styling hasn't evolved at all since this model was introduced, and that's not a bad thing, because it still looks fresh. MINI has done a great job of carrying out the styling theme from the smaller models, but stretching them to create the Clubman. Is it perfect? No -as all Clubman's, you still have a split rear door, and a roof spoiler that would contact your head if you were carrying something out of it in a hurry- but that is all just keeping with the character of the



Clubman; if you want better visibility and easier access to your trunk, buy a Countryman.

Interior: Step inside, and it'll be familiar to anyone who has been in any new MINI model. The dashboard and centre console all look the same in all current MINI models, and that's not a bad thing, because ergonomic layout is very good. Pretty much all the switches fall easily to hand -except the drive mode selector switch- and thanks to gimmicks

like colour changing mood lighting on the dashboard, doors, and foot well, it does make you feel like you're in something a little bit special. The carbon black leatherette seats (on my tester) were excellent, I took this Clubman on many long drives, and never once did the seats feel uncomfortable – I'd even say, they are the most comfortable seats of any vehicle in its category – and its three stage heated seats warm up nice and toasty quite quickly.

I only wish it had a heated steering wheel, something that's sadly missing from all MINI models.

Powertrain and Driving Dynamics: The Clubman is currently available in three engine tunes. At the top end is the "JCW" model, which pumps out 228 hp. Just below that is the "S" model which is good for 189 hp. My tester was the base model, which has a turbocharged 1.5L three-cylinder engine that produces 134 hp. That doesn't sound

like a lot, but thanks to its 162 lb-ft of torque -and when mated to the optional eight-speed automatic transmission- this Clubman proved to be far faster than I was expecting. While those who just look at numbers will say that a 0 to 100 km/h time of 9.6 seconds is actually quite slow, but trust me, the feel of the powertrain, the way it pulls in the mid-range, and especially the response it shows in 'sport' mode, this Clubman is

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