

# RALLYING ROUND

A comprehensive team effort turned a tired 1965 Cooper S rally Mini into a Works-style beauty.

Words: Karen Drury. Photos: Jim Jupp.



Roof rack, Gp2 arches, spotlamps and Monte plaque enhance this stunning restoration.

**M**otorsport connoisseur Kuno Schär, from Switzerland, felt that his collection of Italian racing and rally cars needed a boost with a bit of British blood. Of course a Mini was the ideal candidate and he bought this British-built 1965 Cooper S in Italy. "My dream, from when I was young, was to own a Mini as it is a very important rally car; a car of the 20th century and a real piece of rally history."

The right-hand drive Morris Cooper S has been through a number of owners since it was built on 22 November 1965. It was despatched from Longbridge (no Coopers were built at Cowley) on 7 February 1966 and was registered on 4 April 1966 with, strangely, a Southampton registration of JCR 626D, which it still wears. It was first sold by Marshalsea Bros. Limited of Taunton, Somerset. At some point in its life the Mini had been painted black and then restored to its original colours of Island Blue with an Old English White roof. It then went to live in Italy and was prepared for regularity rallies.

Kuno bought the Cooper S from former German touring car racer Gianni Giudici. Its previous owner was Italian car collector Paolo Nicola Cutrera, who had rallied it. The S was featured in the April 1989 issue of Italian magazine *Ruoteclassiche*. "I bought the Mini, very spontaneously, from my friend Gianni on 19 July 2000," he recalls.

Once Kuno had done the deal, his S was trailed to Gregor Nick of Nick's Garage in Zufikon, Switzerland. Although it was in a presentable condition Gregor recalls that it was just "make up" as it needed plenty of bodywork repairs. Kuno entrusted Gregor with a full restoration. It was also decided that they would ditch the more modern

rally components and instead modify it to period rally style, with a Works Mini theme, but keeping the original Island Blue colour. "An official Mini Works rally car cost too much for me so I bought this one but the car was in bad condition and needed restoration. I like the original colour so kept it that way rather than making it into an actual replica. Although I still wanted it in the Works style with roof rack, original Tripmaster, Speedpilot and Heuer watches," recalls Kuno.

Together with employee Marc Jäggi, Gregor stripped the Mini and arranged for the bodywork repairs to be carried out. "The business next door to my workshop does bodywork and painting. It took a while as they had to work on accident repairs in the meantime. Everything was rotten so they had to change the whole floor, the sides, the wings, the inner wings, the sills and also the boot floor. "It took us about three years to get the bodywork repaired," explains Gregor.

In the meantime Gregor and Marc were able to work on the other components of the project and Gregor rebuilt the engine. "It is a 1275 A-series engine overbored plus 20. It still has the standard AEG163 cylinder head and an SW5 cam. The engine was balanced, as we always do. This engine has about 85bhp. The inlet manifold is from a company called Bauer which was a well known tuner in Switzerland from the end of the 1960s to the mid 1970s. The car has the Weber 45 carb because it was fitted when Kuno bought it. The air filter and the pipes which the filter sits on were custom made by me."

The engine bay is a sight to behold and looks the part with its tall brake master cylinder and dynamo. The head and block

have been painted and all the ancillaries are spotless. Those custom air filters, sitting above the Weber 45 twin-choke carb, are a nice extra bit of eye candy.

The Mini had previously been converted from its original Hydrolastic system to run with rubber cone suspension. Gregor added adjustable components including bottom arms and tie rods at the front and camber brackets at the rear. »

## OWNER PROFILE

### Kuno Schär

**First car?** My first car was a 1961 Sunbeam Alpine, which I bought in 1972

**List some rally cars you have owned:**

1977 Sunbeam Lotus Castrol-liveried Gp4, rallied by Dimitri Mavropoulos; 1984/5 Vauxhall-Opel Manta 400 (Andrews Heat For Hire) GpB, rallied by Russell Brookes; 1986 MG Metro 6R4 GpB bought new by Bill Gwynne; Lancia Delta HF GpA, rallied by Yves Loubet.

**Current rally cars owned:** Ex-Jolly Club 1977 Fiat 131 Abarth Gp4; ex Jolly Club 1974 Lancia Stratos HF i.e. Gp4; ex-Works 1968 Lancia Fulvia 1300 HFR. I also have a collection of racing cars including three Alfa Romeo Works cars (75, 155 GTA, 155 ITC plus three Porsches (925 Carrera GTS Club Sport, 911 Carrera Cup, 911 GT3 RSR)

**Dream car:** McLaren F1

**Favourite food:** Italian

**Does your Mini have a name?** No!

**Car club membership:** I'm Honorary President of Ferrari Owners Club, Switzerland and Founder and Team Manager of Swiss Historic Racing Team, member of Porsche Club Italy and member of Porsche Club Ticino





Much of the interior was sourced from Newton Commercial.

A big challenge for Marc involved creating the impressive Works-style dashboard which comprises a box painted crackle black, mounted to the right of the 200kph speedo binnacle, and a Halda Twinmaster. "We did a drawing of the wiring and went from there. It took hundreds of hours," recalls Gregor. Kuno bought the essential Halda Twinmaster and Heuer stopwatches, which sit to the left of the speedo, and are essential equipment for a period 60s rally car. They've resisted the urge to add too much clutter, such as Dymo tape, to maximise the classy styling of the interior.

Marc was tasked with finding the other rally-specific components for the project. "I sourced all the rally parts from England. We looked in different books to see how it should be and we tried to get it as correct as we could. The correct Lucas lamps were the hardest parts to find," recalls Marc, who has now set up his own classic car business: Jäggi Classics of Büro, Switzerland.

Kuno spent a lot of time trying to get details correct, to emulate the Works »



The unique accelerator pedal was made by Marc Jäggi.

"I have many books and also the official FIA homologation notes for the Works Minis."



A superb interpretation of a Work's-style dash with rally clocks and Halda Twinmaster.



## WORKS RALLY MINIS

During the 1960s BMC's Works rally Minis dominated the world's rally stages, particularly in 1293cc Cooper S guise. Most notably Cooper Ss won the gruelling Monte Carlo Rally outright in 1964, 1965, 1966 (when the brilliant Works Mini 1-2-3

clean sweep was notoriously disqualified) and 1967. Their striking livery has surely played a part in the popularity of these Works rally Minis, many of which were red with a white roof. The interiors were utilitarian with the gauges, switches

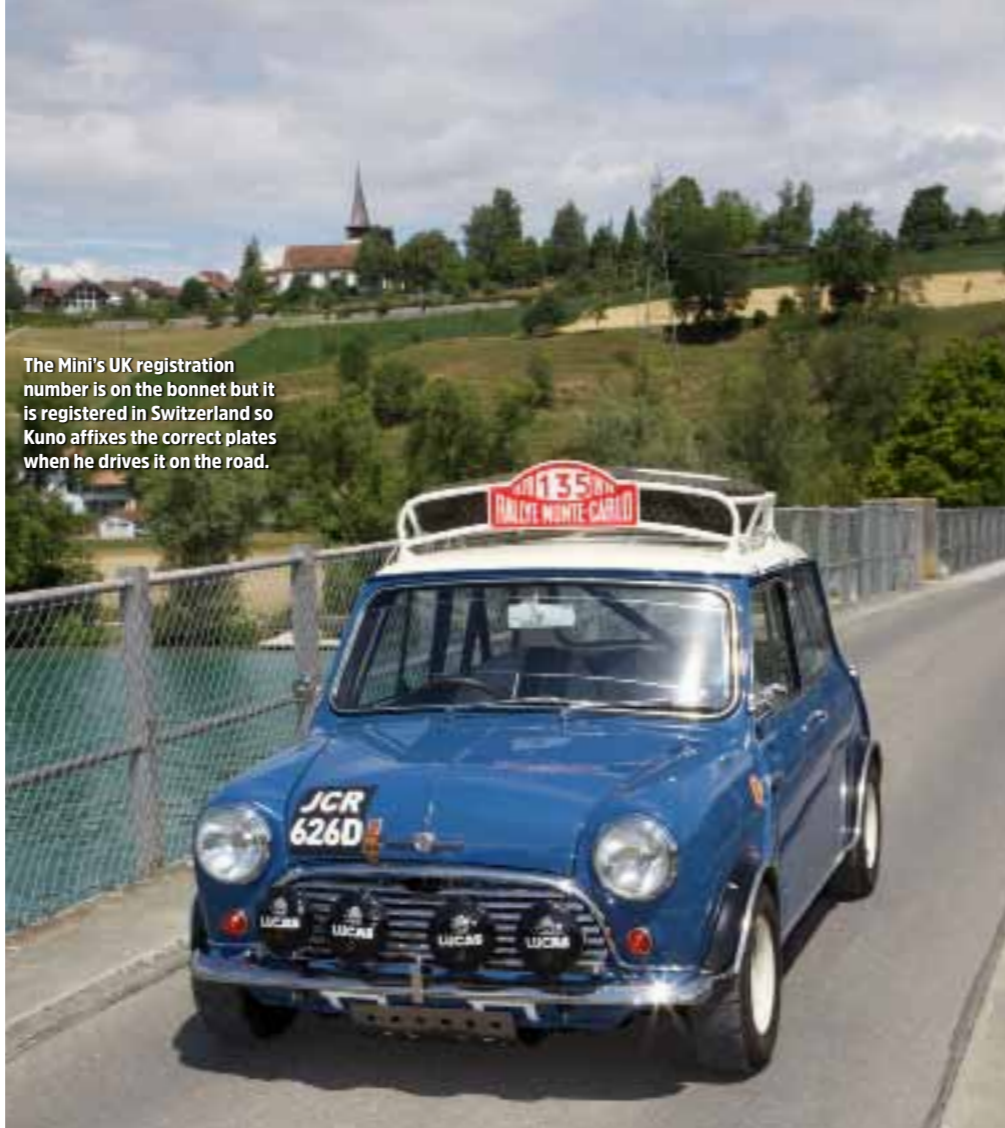
and rally equipment within easy reach of the driver and co-driver. Drivers and co-drivers would often have the instruments, gauges and switches positioned to their requirements. Photos: Stuart Turner.

styling. "I have many books and also the official FIA homologation notes for the Works Minis so I could work out what is and is not original for the period." Although the Mini's exterior styling was not based on a particular Works Mini, it has many similarities to the 1967 Monte winner, LBL 6D, which was rallied to victory by Rauno Aaltonen and Henry Liddon. Note, in particular, the Gp2 arches, spotlights with covers, Monte rally plaque and vinyl bonnet-mounted number plate.

To complement the dash Kuno opted for seats from Newton Commercial, in grey, with the fluted inset sections in light grey/gold brocade. There's a recliner for the passenger and a bucket style seat for the driver, plus Willans harnesses. The interior is further enhanced with Newton cards, headlining and a darker grey carpet. The period leather-rimmed, three-spoke steering wheel has plenty of patina, which adds a sense of nostalgia to the overall vibe of the Abingdon-inspired cockpit. And check out that very cool, thin accelerator pedal extension which was made by Marc.

Kuno received the transformed Mini from Gregor in 2010 and it is now maintained by Marc at his workshop. Kuno is very glad to have fulfilled his dream of owning a Mini but he won't be rallying it. "I drive this car only for pleasure, not speed rallies, not competition, just for fun! I will only drive this car maybe two times in the year, on sunny days. I am happy with this car but now realise that, for the same cost of the restoration, I could have bought an unrestored Works Mini or a new Jaguar XKR!" That may be true but it's quite refreshing to see such a cool rally Mini that is a different colour to the norm, especially one that has been so meticulously put together.

Following this Mini to our photoshoot location was a pleasure. It looked well at home in the Swiss countryside with its tall trees and sweeping bends. It sounded fantastic as the rasping exhaust note from the tuned A-series filled the air. It evokes a sense of nostalgia for the Mini's heyday which Kuno, Marc and Gregor have encapsulated brilliantly. This Mini is



The Mini's UK registration number is on the bonnet but it is registered in Switzerland so Kuno affixes the correct plates when he drives it on the road.

**"I drive this car only for pleasure, not speed rallies, not competition, just for fun!"**

a startling departure from the red and white Works-style Minis that we know and love. To keep the car's original colour when putting together a project themed such as this is a bold move but it looks fantastic and it certainly stands out. Plus it maintains the authenticity of the Mini. For Mini fans it's satisfying to know that, although Mini may no longer be at the top of the world rallying game, it is now

a sought-after and credible classic for those savvy with the international classic car and classic rallying scene.

**Kuno would like to thank:** "Heartfelt thanks to Mr Gregor Nick ([www.nicksgarage.ch](http://www.nicksgarage.ch)) and Mr Marc Jäggi ([www.jaeggi-classics.ch](http://www.jaeggi-classics.ch)). They worked to my exacting standards in line with my other classic cars."



1293cc A-series engine was built by Gregor Nick. It is fuelled by a Weber 45 DCOE twin-choke carb.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Modified 1965 Morris Mini Cooper S

**Engine:** 1275cc Cooper S A-series engine bored 0.020-inch to 1293cc . crank, rods, flywheel balanced . single Weber 45 DCOE twin-choke carburettor, custom air filters . Bauer inlet manifold . OE AEG 163 cylinder head . SW5 camshaft . ARP 11-stud cylinder head kit . Champion HT leads . Lucas DLB105 coil . Champion plug leads . Lucas C40 dynamo . stainless steel braided oil pressure gauge hose . aftermarket deep-impeller water pump . 11-blade plastic fan . 13-row oil cooler, stainless steel braided hoses . centre-exit upswept exhaust . approximately 85bhp . **Gearbox:** 1275cc Cooper S box, rebuilt . chrome gear lever . diaphragm clutch . **Brakes:** Alloy-bodied Benditalia remote brake servo . Cooper S 'tall' Lockheed brake master cylinder, reservoir expanders . Front: Cooper S AP twin-pot brake calipers . Cooper S 7.5-inch solid discs . Rear: Cooper

S brake drums . **Suspension:** Converted to dry rubber cone subframes, refurbished . adjustable rear camber brackets . Mini Spares Hi-Lo kit . adjustable bottom arms . adjustable tie rods . **Wheels:** 4.5x10-inch Cooper S option steel wheels, painted Old English White (WT3) . Yokohama A032-R 165/70x10 radial tyres . no wheel trims . two extra steels, with studded tyres, on roof rack . **Interior:** 4-point Willans harnesses . Works-style dashboard box . Halda Twinmaster . Heuer stop-watches mounted on dash . 200kph Smiths speedo . Lucas washer bottle in passenger footwell . map reading light . front, rear bolt-in rollcage, rear diagonal bar . custom accelerator pedal . remote gearshift . wooden gear knob . chrome gear lever . three-spoke steering wheel . Newton Commercial headlining . Newton grey/gold brocade interior trim . Newton grey/gold

brocade bucket drivers' seat . Newton grey/gold brocade recliner passenger seat . Newton grey carpet . additional gauges: 80mm Smiths tachometer, wide-band lambda gauge . dash-mounted fuses . additional dash switches, lights . flexi nav light . **Exterior:** UK-spec 1965 Morris Mini Cooper S bodyshell . replacement panels: floor pan; body sides, wings, inner wings, sills, boot floor . Gp2 arches . alloy Monza-style fuel caps . Lucas boot-mounted fog lamp . alloy sump guard . Lucas spot, fog lamps, vinyl covers . stainless steel spot lamp bracket . H4 headlight conversion . OE headlamp rings . Works-style roof rack . Works-style front, rear car-lift brackets . front, rear towing eyes . A-pillar-seam-mounted mirrors . Works-style heated front windscreen . heated rear windscreen . BMC rosette sticker on wings . Monte rally plaque . boot lid, bonnet straps