

My MINIs' journeys from build to delivery, via the Port at Bayonne, NJ:

This information is current as of October 2013. It is an update on my October 2012 post on NAM from information learned during the purchase of my 2013 MINI R56. My most recent purchase is a 2014 MINI Cooper S Countryman ALL4, R60.

The Oxford, UK, MINI factory is 67 rail miles from the Southampton Port. Cars are transported by rail when there is space at the port and your MINI has been assigned to a vessel. The MINI Oxford Plant can be viewed on Bing Maps or Google Earth at N 51 43.969' W 1 11.677'

The Countryman and Paceman MINIs are built at the Magna Steyr's plant in Graz, Austria. Cars are transported by rail, a 1.5 day trip, to Bremerhaven Port, Germany. Magna Steyr's plant can be viewed on Bing Maps or Google Earth at N 47 1.295' E 15 28.794'

All MINIs bound for New York are shipped from either Bremerhaven or Southampton via the MINI Distribution Center (VDC) in New Jersey to your dealer, in my case a [New Hampshire dealer](#).

First, visit www.MINIUSA.com and build your new MINI. Be methodical; be sure to examine all the available color options, available Packages, vehicle options and accessories. Talk to MINI owners and a dealer. Follow the instructions. It is great fun and a very simple process.

Shop different dealers, talk to MINI owners and have confidence and trust in your chosen MINI dealer. Not all car dealers, even MINI dealers, are created equal. A three or four hour drive to pick up your new MINI can be very rewarding and certainly offsets the advantage of purchasing from a local dealer in whom you have no confidence. After all, MINI's are made for motoring. Huge discounts on MINIs are not normal but a quality dealer makes a big difference.

You will have a Motoring Advisor (MA). Next to you, the MA is the most important individual in this process. The MA is with you from start to finish. They are there to help with planning, ordering and delivery of your new MINI. You should attempt to develop a bond with your MA. You need to have mutual trust. Your MA should be responsive to your MINI and purchase related questions or concerns. They can be one of your greatest assets during the purchase and waiting process. A good MA should know more than you and always be able to answer, or find the answer, to your MINI, motoring, dealer and purchase questions. Another great source of information about all things MINI is ASK-MINI. ASK-MINI is discussed below.

Know in advance about fees. Fees vary greatly from dealer to dealer and appear to be cash cows for some dealers. If you choose an out of state dealer they may not perform all the services covered by these fees. In that case you may need to take care of some bureaucratic hassles after you take delivery of your new MINI, when you should be motoring. This is not always the case but you should ask if this is important to you.

Lastly be very watchful for add-on fees to install options. I obtained detailed quotes from eight different dealers prior to my purchase. Fees and install costs vary greatly and can make what appeared to be a good deal, a very sour deal.

The MINI Owners area at MINIUSA.com is fun. You need to create an account with your Production Number. This number, and additional login instructions, should be provided by your MA. This is where you learn about your MINI, its ordered options, and see videos that show how things work. You can read and/or download an owner's manual and warranty information. Unfortunately this site is slow to update. Once you get to the production process, it is virtually useless. It could be a wonderful resource if it was maintained and kept current. Your MA will always know more than you can find on the Internet.

Always have the following numbers handy:

Production #: _____

VIN #: _____

Your MA should provide this information to you shortly after you place your order.

Once your MINI appears in the Owner's Lounge call 1-866-275-6464 (ASK MINI), ext 2, (production #), ext 1, for Production updates. Call often. Talk to a real person, the automated system is not much better than the MINI Owners Lounge area. Your question should be "Have you the status of production for my MINI please?" Use the production number, not the VIN. They can tell you projected dates for production start and completion, when your MINI is in the paint shop, the body shop, assembly, etc. Once they tell you it has arrived at the port, you can move on. The ASK-MINI customer service people are extremely, friendly, patient, knowledgeable, and well trained. This is a great resource!

If you are like me you will probably be especially interested in:

Production start date: _____

Production completion date: _____

MINI is at the port: _____

MINI is manifested: _____

When production starts, figure nine days for production to be complete. Awaiting transport to port can be one or more days. The Magna Steyr MINI Plant is one-two days rail time from the Bremerhaven Port. Cars are transported regularly but getting space can take time. Mine was transported two days from production completion. Your MINI will not be assigned to a ship until it is at the port. This process can also be days or weeks. I found this to be a frustrating period because I was not sure on which RoRo (roll-on roll-off vehicle cargo ship) it would manifested.

Check Wallenius Wilhelmsen (WW) schedules to determine what ships are sailing from Germany, Bremerhaven or UK, Southampton, to USA, NY:

<http://sagaweb.2wglobal.com/AppSchedules/>

Use your VIN to Track & Trace cargo:

Go to: <http://www.2wglobal.com/www/wep/index.jsp>

See the drop down box under Customer Tools, I want to, on the right.

Click on "Track & trace my cargo."

Enter your VIN as the Cargo ID.

Click the black Track button under the Quick Search box.

You will also see your Bill of Lading number and Booking number. Make a note of these numbers. It is best to only enter the Cargo number, which is your VIN when you track your MINI so you don't need to scroll through all the vehicles on the manifest to find yours. The Bill of Lading or Booking numbers will tell you how many MINIs are on the ship for your port. If you want to do some investigation you can search some Bill of Lading or Booking numbers adjacent to your number. You might learn what other makes of vehicles are on your ship, and how many vehicles are going and where.

To learn about your ship – you need to join to get additional information.

<http://www.fleetmon.com/en/vessels/>

http://www.fleetmon.com/live_tracking/fleetmon_explorer/

Radio checks: You will need your vessel's call sign from the above link:

[http://www.sailwx.info/shiptrack/shipposition.phtml?call=\(callsign\)](http://www.sailwx.info/shiptrack/shipposition.phtml?call=(callsign))

Now for the most fun, and excitement, of all. . . actually track your ship live at:

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/>

To zero in on the Port of Bremerhaven, Germany go to:

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/default.aspx?centerx=08.5500¢ery=53.5750&zoom=14>

Loading area. GPS coordinates: N 53 34.560' E 8 33.162'

To zero in on the Port of Southampton go to:

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/default.aspx?centerx=-01.3975¢ery=50.8863&zoom=14>

Loading area. GPS coordinates: N 50 53.180' W 1 23.848'

A good view to catch your vessel as it approaches NY is:

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/default.aspx?centerx=-65.8000¢ery=42.8000&zoom=7>

If your vessel is stopping in Halifax go to:

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/default.aspx?centerx=-63.5098¢ery=44.6199&zoom=14>

Auto Port Halifax

To zero in on the NJ port go to:

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/default.aspx?centerx=-74.0704¢ery=40.6670&zoom=14>

Customs, first stop!

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/default.aspx?centerx=-74.1437¢ery=40.6968&zoom=14>
VPC – zoom in to see the cars. GPS coordinates: N 40 41.811' W 74 8.622'

At each of the above ports use your mouse to move the map and zoom in or out. You should only need to watch Cargo Vessels, Ships Underway and Anchored/ Moored. The other vessel types can be unchecked on the left side menu. If you look at all ship traffic the screen gets too busy. You should also check "Show Ship Names." You will not be able to track a vessel in the open sea. You will see them a few hours prior to their approach and departure of land masses. I set the link zoom at 14 to show the actual dock where the ship berths. You should initially zoom out to see more of the area.

There are often additional stops between Bremerhaven and Southampton. These can be seen by returning to <http://sagaweb.2wglobal.com/AppSchedules/> and entering your vessel's name or voyage. These waypoints could include ports in Scandinavia and Zeebrugge, Belgium. Each voyage itinerary varies.

Once your MINI is built be sure to go to: <http://www.bmwarchive.org/vin/bmw-vin-decoder.html> and enter the last seven digits of your VIN. This will show complete information and a nice picture of your MINI. You can print it and stare at it as you await its arrival.

You will be able to track your MINI through Booked, Received at Terminal, Loaded on Vessel, Discharge, Delivered From, Customs Release and Liner Release entries as they appear. The WW schedules are fairly current to within a few hours. Once that process is complete you are at the mercy of your MA. MINIs remain at the Vehicle Distribution Center for final checks and then are sent, by road or rail, to the dealer. This can be one or more days. Have your MA provide you with updates or screen shots from www.dealerspeed.net. This site is restricted information and without a user name and password you will not be able to access it.

My MINIs had uneventful trips to New Jersey. The day after they were released from the shipping vessel they were on a truck for the less than one day journey to my New Hampshire dealer.

MINIs arrive at the dealership with suspension blocks, protective wrap, etc. The dealer installed accessories, final cleaning and more last minute checks are performed at the dealer. The Certificate of Origin (CO) from US Customs can take 48 hours via FedEx after the vehicle arrives at your dealership. The vehicle cannot be released without this document in the dealer's hand.

The entire process went extremely well. This transaction yielded no unpleasant surprises. My MINIs arrived exactly as I built them on www.MINIUSA.com. They were both delivered to [MINI of Bedford](#) well within the time frame initially promised. My MA and dealer are OUTSTANDING!

Remember to visit and join: <http://www.northamericanmotoring.com/> (NAM).

There is a lot of useful MINI information on this forum. You can learn about the experiences others have had owning a MINI. I hope this information is useful to all prospective motorer's.