

MiniFest 2006

Months in the planning, great in the expectation, satisfying in the execution. That just about sums up MiniFest in Hobart on 5 November.

The Mini Car Club of Tasmania's first MiniFest was at Montrose in 2004, when we attracted 124 Minis (and a Morris 1100!), a pretty impressive turnout for a Club which had about 50 members at the time. So when a repeat was planned for this year, we knew it was going to take lots of work to beat that effort.

First of all, we couldn't get the Montrose park – it was already booked, so we searched around for an alternative. We finally settled on the Hobart Regatta Grounds, a large expanse of grass just adjacent to the City, but with no useful building nearby it had its problems. We need an indoor area to set up displays and photos of the Club's activities.

Fortunately, the Hobart MINI Garage took an immediate interest in the event and supported us in a big way – they arranged for a marquee to be set up for the day, and we were on our way. We invited Bob Holden to come over for the event, to help celebrate the 40th anniversary of his historic win at Bathurst, and much to our delight he accepted! And Hobart MINI Garage helped with his arrangements too, a major boon for a small club. And Willson Automotive tricked up a Cooper S to look just like Bob's winning car. Thus MiniFest started to come to life.

The week leading up to the event was not promising. Anxious looks at the weather forecasts and chicken entrails confirmed that twelve degrees and drizzle were on the agenda – great, that'll keep a heap of cars safely locked away. We had a large gathering for our regular Thursday night club meeting, at which Bob held court, and on the Friday night Hobart MINI Garage hosted a cocktail party so the ladies could get dolled up, photographed and just slightly tipsy. It was all a wonderful prelude to MiniFest.

Fortunately the Sunday dawned clear and bright, and although it was cold, the wet stayed away and at 9am the cars started to roll in. And they kept rolling in! It wasn't long before we passed the magic 124, and the number kept heading north.

Club President Gary Willson had a few ideas for the day up his sleeve, and you can see the results on the aerial photo – a hundred Minis making the word MINI, including Sharon's MINI as the full stop! Sharon had the first MINI in Tasmania, and her chequered roof was just the thing. The final tally was a little over 180, including seven cars off the showroom floor and a visitor from Victoria. So we had more than enough cars for a double underline!!

We handed out a heap of trophies, we had a band on the back of a truck, we had amazing displays, the Rotary Club ran out of burgers (but had plenty of snags), we looked over some wonderful cars, we

chatted with Mini-lovers, we got Bob to sign a hat or a poster, and we finished up with a drive through Hobart's beautiful waterfront area, disturbing the peace of the latté set in Salamanca Place and completely clogging the streets with a conger line such as has never been seen before in Tasmania. Ah yes, for a day we were in Mini heaven!

It all came together beautifully, and the feedback so far has been great. Many thanks to Hobart MINI Garage, Willson Automotive and Shannon's for your support – we'll talk again!

So it's time to start thinking about next time – when will that be? 2009 is the Mini's 50th birthday, but can we wait that long??

Photos will be available for sale from the Club soon – please stand by while we sort out pricing... ..