Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2007 BMW Mini Cooper Convertible

Fun & Frugality

BY KATHLEEN CARR

The Cooper Convertible offers the excellent handling and cute, retro style of the Cooper hatchback with the added fun and versatility of a one-touch soft-top roof. The Mini convertible is in a league of its own; excellent-handling with all the charm and economy of a regular Mini, plus the added fun of a highquality soft-top that goes down at the touch of a button.

Though the hatchback Mini got aredesign for 2007, the convertible continues on largely unchanged for this year. Expect a redesigned convertible for the 2008 or 2009 model years. In the meantime, Mini has added the Sidewalk package, which adds a few thousand dollars to the base cost and features interior and exterior upgrades.

that the fabric can even fold back half-way (up to 16 inches), making a sunroof. Unlike most sunroofs, which are directly overhead, this one is slightly in front of you, so front-seat passengers actually can see the sky while their heads remain shaded. The half-top can be opened when the car is driving at speeds up to 75 mph and even features a heated rear window. In addition, the top can be lowered or raised from up to 49 feet away using the car's key fob. This has got to be the cleverest top ever.

The Cooper Convertible comes with a choice of two inline fourcylinder engines. The base model gets a 1.6-liter 115-horsepower engine, while the Cooper S gets a 168horsepower supercharged engine. The 1.6-liter engine of the non-supercharged version provides brisk acceleration perfect for city driving, merging or passing on the highway; we found it be lively 0-to-60 mph in 9.8 seconds, while Mini reports 8.9 -it still feels zippy.

A five-speed manual transmission is standard for the base model, while the Cooper S gets a six-speed Our compliments on the genius manual. Optional for the base model design of this soft-top; being such is a continuously variable automatic



Specifications: 1.6-Liter, 16-Valve, inline 4-Cylinder Engine; 5-Speed manual transmission; 26-City 35-Highway MPG; \$ 27,400. MSRP

progressive clutch.

transmission (CVT) and optional for the Mini, and the handling contrib-nering capability is left intact. the S is a six-speed automatic. We utes a large part of this car's fun preferred the standard manual; gear factor." That excellent handling is dashboard and controls are a bit changes are a delight thanks to light, achieved through the convertible's precise throws teamed with a smooth, retuned suspension. "It's no surprise that the drop-top versions When it comes to handling, most handle just the same as their hardfeel that the 2007 Mini Cooper Contop brethren, due to underbody vertible is a star thanks to its im- reinforcements and a rear crossbar pressively firm suspension and withintegrated roll-over headrests.

The Cooper convertible's quirky confusing; the switches are in all kinds of weird spots. Minis are also known for being endlessly customizable with interior color and trim combinations. New for 2007 is a special Sidewalk package that adds several special touches to the sharp steering. Steering is tight in The Mini's acclaimed go kart cor- interior. Features include English that is likely to change.

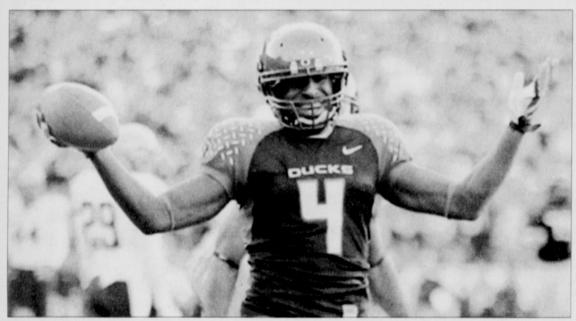
Malt Brown leather upholstery and gearshift, two-tone sport leather multifunction steering wheel with cruise control, chrome line interior, a center armrest, automatic air conditioning, sport seats and a Harmon/ Kardon HiFi sound system. The Sidewalk package also adds subtle exterior features.

Despite its compact size, the Mini convertible is probably the safest car in the compact class. To protect passengers in a crash, the Mini Cooper Convertible provides four front and side air bags. It also comes with an accident sensor, which automatically unlocks doors and turns on interior and hazard lights upon impact. If the air bags have been deployed, the car will cut off the fuel pump to reduce the risk of fire.

The Mini convertible surprises and delights with its serious motoring capabilities. Its chassis is extremely rigid for a topless car, so Drop the top and enjoy the ride

Fun and frugality may never have combined so purely and completely as in the Mini Cooper convertible. And from what we've seen of the second-generation version, which is right around the corner, none of

SPORTS



Oregon receiver Jaison Williams celebrates his touchdown during the first half of their college football game against Arizona State in Eugene, Saturday, Nov. 3. (AP photo)

Ducks Move to No. 3

Have shot at national championship

middle of the Pac-10, Oregon has Orleans. thrust itself into the heart of national title race. Dennis Dixon threw fourth-ranked Ducks defeated No. 6 Arizona State 35-23 on Saturday, LSU doesn't drop a game. their second consecutive victory over a Top 10 team.

standings released Sunday. Louisiana State University took advantaged of Boston College's second with unbeaten Kansas

looming in fourth. second straight appearance in the BCS national championship game on Jan. 7 with victories against Illinois and Michigan in its last two the problem of trying to chose begames.

games left and probably four with the Southeastern Conference title

(AP) -- Picked to finish in the game at the Superdome in New up two-third of a BCS average, and

That's no lock.

Oregon (8-1) and Kansas (9-0) four touchdown passes and the are close enough to at least have a shot at passing the Tigers, even if

The BCS could be heading for a repeat of last season, when Ohio Oregon moved to third place in State locked up the top spot the the Bowl Championship Series week before Thanksgiving and several teams jostled for the other spot over the next two weeks.

It came down to Florida and first loss of the season, moving to Michigan and the Gators got the votes they needed to pass the Wolverines in the final BCS stand-Undefeated Ohio State (10-0) is ings. The outcome didn't sit well still in first, and could lock up a with Michigan and showed the glaring flaws in the Bowl Championship Series.

The system hasn't changed and Alabama 41-34. LSU (8-1) has at least three to play in the title game could come up again in the coming weeks.

LSU has a BCS average of .941. game on Dec. 1. Winning out could The Tigers are second in both the their business could determine get the Tigers a spot in the title Harrisandcoaches' poll, which makes which gets a shot at the title.

are No. 2 in the computer ratings.

Oregon's BCS average is .918 and Kansas is at .843. The surprising Jayhawks still have a big game against sixth-place Missouri left on the schedule and a possible Big 12 championship game. Winning both would give Kansas' numbers a substantial boost.

Oklahoma's average is .839. Missouri, West Virginia, Boston College, Arizona State and Georgia round out the top 10.

In the AP Top 25, the first five teams are Ohio State, LSU, Oregon, Oklahoma and Kansas.

LSU, which has been living on the edge for the past month, won another close game Saturday. The Tigers came from behind to beat

Kansas routed Nebraska 76-39 tween several worthy contenders and Oklahoma pounded Texas A&M42-14.

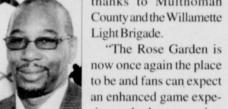
If all these teams keep winning, how impressively they go about

Blazers Home Opener Thursday

First of fourgame stand

The Portland Trail Blazers have announced that only standing room and single seats remain for opening night vs. New Orleans on Thursday, Nov. 7 at

7:30 p.m. at the Rose Garden. The first 15,000 fans entering the Rose Garden will receive a commemorative cap, courtesy of Wells



to be and fans can expect an enhanced game experience, both on opening night and every other game this season," said Trail Blaz-

ers president Larry Miller. "We have a young and exciting team and we have made significant upgrades to the building, including a new Fargo. The lights on the Morrison high-definition scoreboard, a new support the start of the season, a new restaurant, Pyramid Taproom Champion teams.

thanks to Multnomah at Schonely's Place, named after County and the Willamette our legendary broadcaster."

Tickets are moving fast for the remainder of the opening week.

The games include Friday, Nov. 9 vs. Memphis, when the first 10,000 fans receive a free Greg Oden Bobblehead courtesy of Wells Fargo; Saturday, Nov. 10 vs. Dallas, which includes a special halftime ceremony honoring soldiers who have returned from duty in the Middle East; and Tuesday, Nov. 13 vs. Detroit, when the team honors its rich heritage with a special ceremony celebrating the Bridge will shine red and white to state-of-the-art sound system and 1990 and 1992 Western Conference

Veterans of All Wars Parade and Planning Committee **Invite You To:**

The 33rd Annual Veterans' Day Parade & Program

When: Sunday November 11th, 9:45 A.M. Where: Hollywood District between NE 40th and 48th Ave. and Sandy Blvd.

The parade includes veterans groups, community groups, representatives from all military service organizations and local high school bands. The parade will conclude with a ceremony at Ross Hollywood Chapel Veterans Memorial Flag Pole. War memorabilia available for viewing. Covered seating for seniors and disabled will be available at the ceremony location.





Sponsored By:

Ross Hollywood Chapel and The Hollywood Boosters Association

*Please donate this holiday season to the "Toys For the Deployed" at the parade & at Ross Holiday Chapel, 4733 NE Thompson, Portland, Oregon 97213 Please drop off your unwrapped toys by December 15, 2007.

For more Information Contact: Lynn at 503-281-1800.

Local Weightlifter Qualifies for Greece

A northeast Portland weight- Natural in Los Angeles. lifter is on the fast track to reaching the top of his sport.

pionship at the Oregon State Greece. Natural competition, Julius "The Antidote" Thomas won a gold more information, call Thomas' medal Sept. 22 at the USA All manager at 503-270-1620.

He now qualifies to compete internationally and is trying to After sweeping past the com- secure sponsors in order for him petition April 28 in his first cham- to represent the U.S. team in

To make a contribution or for



Julius "The Antidote" Thomas

PSU Home Finale Saturday

This Saturday afternoon a pair of teams headed in the wrong direction will meet at

the Portland State University overall and 2-4 in the Big Sky host the Montana State Bob- Conference. Montana State, cats in the final home game of which was in the top 20 just the season for the Vikings.

games heading into this week, rado and a home loss to Norththe longest losing streak in four ern Arizona.

PGE Park at 1:30 p.m. when seasons. The Vikings are 2-7 two weeks ago, comes off a PSU has lost four straight bad road loss at Northern Colo-