

A Mini Cord at John Cooper Garages. The body was originally seamless, as on Chilean cars, but was subsequently given seams, to serve as split lines in the mouldings; the spats were moulded in, and the roof incorporated ribbing. (Mike Cooper)



This beach car remained a one-off, as did three different attempts at a convertible. (Mike Cooper)



Venezuela

Astonishingly, the glassfibre Mini was revived in the Mini's twilight years as a collaborative venture between Rover and Venezuelan company Facorca. The deal was set up in 1990, with a surviving Chilean car being sent to Venezuela, followed by a posse of Rover engineers.

Manufacture of the plastic Mini, the Mini Cord, duly began in December 1991, using UK-supplied 998cc powerpacks, instruments and other components; local content included trim, the radiator, and the wheels and tyres. Talk of a production of 3,000-5,000 cars per year proved more than little over-ambitious: after 113 Mini Cords made in 1991 and 768 in 1992, output dropped to 391 units in 1993. A change of ownership saw 24 cars assembled in 1994 and a mere 15 in 1995, in which year production ceased; amongst these later cars were a number of Cooper-badged models, still with the 998cc engine but with wide black wheelarches and 13in Revolution wheels; most were in silver. Of the 1,311 Mini Cords built, many were exported to Colombia.