

## A DAY OF OIL AND MINI

It was going to be one of those days. You know one of those days that you have been waiting for, planning on. It was the weekend and I was going to start my Mini. I had been waiting for about 7 years for this. After dragging home a almost-mini-car, doing major body work, replacing major componants such as engine, two paint jobs more body work, dragging the car from Utah to California, then finding the Webber DCOE carb mounted to the head not functioning and having to replace same with a set of twin SU's I had picked up in some trade or other, I was ready. I went out into my two car garage were the mini was on the left side and Clar's Miata, top down setting off the drivers side of the mini. I wanted room. I wanted this to be a day for just me and the mini. Not to be shard with any other car. Beside I needed to have the mini's doors open so I could easily get in and out as I worked the key switch, starter etc.. So out dam car. Out of my way. I need focus. I need room. Once Clar's new white with the-top-down Miata is cleared out the garage is mine, I turn to the mini and rase the bonnet. I want to hook-up all my test gages to motor all functions and set the car up properly for its first run. I put on the vac gage, the timing light, dwell/tack meter, and screwed in a remote oil pressure gage on a 18" long rubber hose. I had my cup of coffee, note pad, and motor manuals. I take a drink of coffee check the oil and go over the drivers side door and open it. I slide into the tight fitting bucket seat and turn on the ignition key in the dash. With the fuel pump ticking I push on the floor mounted starter button, and press on the accelerator pedal.

The starter spun and the engine caught. As it settled into an ideal I got out to survey my test gages, leaving the drivers side door wide open enjoying the full space of the almost empty garage. I am standing in front of the idling mini watching the gages as the cars warms up. Everything is looking good, dwell, ideal speed, oil pressure. Vac needle steady. Life is good. The engine is warming up and I am just enjoying the experience of the first start-up standing in front of the car look down at the motor. My serine world is all of sudden totally disrupted as hot oil is hitting me directly in the chest. I am covered in oil. The remote oil gage rubber line has ruptured. I am stuned. I have to turn off the motor, now. Gaining my wits I sprint for the open drivers door. As I round the open door I hit the second hot oil spray that's made a large and growing puddle of oil on the smooth concrete floor. I have just been covered by oil all over the front of me and now I am lying flat on my back in a another puddle of oil with an oil spray in my face. After slip-sliding back upright I finely reach the key switch and shut the whole thing down. Really, all I could do was laugh. The oil was not so hot that I was burned and I was really, really covered from head to foot in nice fresh 10/40. And Clar thinks nothing ever happens worth seeing out there. Oh by the way rember the new white Miata that was next to the mini. If I had not moved it, I would have filed it up with that nice warm 10\40. Maybe it's best Clar's not hanging around the garage while I am working.

Frank Cunningham 1995