MOTORING

CUBAN CONFUSION

KING CAB ARRIVES

GOLF A MIXED BAG

STORY BARRY GREEN
IMAGES AUTONEWS
ONE GLANCE AT the 2016 MINI Cooper Clubman and Fiat 500 X and it’s evident that any link with their original namesakes is tenuous in the extreme. These are no ‘baby’ cars a la the 1959 Morris Mini or 1957 Fiat 500, but grown-up offspring in every sense – performance, safety, comfort, features and, especially, size.

Strictly speaking, the Clubman is a stretched hatch – a small station wagon of sorts – while the 500 X is a compact SUV. But they have plenty in common to justify being tested side-by-side.

MINI COOPER CLUBMAN
At $34,990, the Cooper is the entry level to the Clubman range. For the same money, you get a choice of six-speed manual or six-speed auto (as per our test car) to go with a 1.5-litre, turbocharged three-cylinder petrol engine that is also found in the BMW 2 Series Active Tourer.

BIGGER THAN the previous Clubman, the newcomer also shares the same platform as the Active Tourer. It is 270mm longer and 90mm wider than the current five-door Cooper hatch, which makes it nearly identical in these dimensions to the 500 X.

But more than that, the 2016 Clubman is better packaged than its predecessor. A full-sized rear door on either side replaces the single, token offering that opened into traffic, while a pair of spring-loaded ‘barn’
The Cooper Clubman is the more driver-focused, but for small cars both boast the practicality and functionality to fulfil the role of an everyday drive without major compromise. At the same time, they offer plenty by way of style, personality and individuality.

**CONCLUSION**

**MINI COOPER CLUBMAN**
- **SAFETY:** ESC, ABS, 6 airbags.
- **CONNECTIVITY:** Multimedia interface with 6.5-inch monitor, Bluetooth streaming audio, 6 speaker Hi-Fi.
- **WEIGHT (KERB MASS):** 1320kg.
- **TYRES:** 205/55 R16.
- **TOWING (BRAKED):** 1300kg.
- **WARRANTY:** 3yr/unlimited km.

**FIAT 500 X CROSS PLUS**
- **SAFETY:** ESC, ABS, 7 airbags.
- **CONNECTIVITY:** Uconnect system with 6.5-inch high-resolution touchscreen and navigation, Bluetooth streaming audio.
- **WEIGHT (KERB MASS):** 1405kg.
- **TYRES:** 225/45 R18.
- **TOWING (BRAKED):** 1200kg.
- **WARRANTY:** 3yr/100,000 km.

The Cooper Clubman comes well equipped but is no match for the higher-specification Cross Plus, which is brimming with more safety, security and creature comfort features than we have the space to list. The 500 X is not short on style, with plenty of personalisation options such as 12 exterior colours and multiple wheel and detail designs.