

Made in
DETROIT
Mild, but very
tasty Countryman
shows Future

Jill Raymer, Detroit, MI

By Victor Roberts
Photos by Steven Miric



Jill Raymer freely admits that her one-off custom Countryman isn't meant to crawl rocks, and forge streams. "I have enjoyed this car for what it is—an All 4. It is not a 4x4. I have those, too, and would never take this car off road like I do those," admits Jill, a RN, recently gaining her Nurse Practitioner certificate.

The interesting facet about the Countryman is that it wasn't built by

MINI to be much more than a family utility vehicle with some trail ability, such as taking the family to the cabin in the woods. With a lower ground clearance, and an entry/exit angle at each bumper that's nowhere near what 4x4s with a 2-speed differential are, MINI wanted something that was safe and durable for the family to compete in the utility segment. They didn't count on the American penchant for adding 4x4 style to the small SUV!





courtesy of DetroitTuned.com

Enter the guys at Detroit Tuned (DT). Known for a few creative ideas in our community—such as their super-charger bypass valve and turbo oil line leak fix—the team innovated the first-known skidplate for a Countryman, and set about making Jill the first modded Countryman in a 4x4 style to debut at MOTD 2012, for which she has won Best Countryman three years running.

Not heavily modded with bolt-on aftermarket parts, she fitted a Forge blow-off valve, and a customized Magnaflow exhaust. With the addition of SP Performance brake rotors, Hawk HP pads, DT stainless steel lines, and ATE Super Blue fluid, Jill's braking better on road and off road.

With the addition of a NM Engineering 22m solid rear anti-sway bar, and two sets of alloy wheels (stock for winters in Detroit, and ASA GT06 18x8-inch for Summer) she's set for snow and show. The Schroth harnesses, and Craven Speed gauges for oil pressure and water temp make motoring safer, too. The Optima "Yellow Top" battery also makes Winter mornings safer as it has a lot more cold cranking amps than the anemic factory battery!

What makes this Countryman All 4 S



unique is it's one of the very first installs of the 2-inch lift kits from Cooper Crap. As Jill says, "It's a very capable, back-road, off-the-beaten-path, gravel road star." As reported by several MC2 readers, their Countryman is now more stable with the Cooper Crap lift kit than it was stock. It uses stock struts.

The pushbar/lightbar assembly out front is a one-off, mandrel-bent steel assembly built by Detroit Tuned for her to house two PIAA driving and two PIAA

fog lights; we're told it's attached to the bumper's interior alloy using grade 8 hardware. DT was first to market with their alloy skidplate, and is still the only one we know of for the Countryman. They also had the factory roof rack powder coated, and were well ahead of the curve in painting the front air intakes, skuttles, calipers, and grille surround with red paint

before the JCW came to market.

With her lightweight 8x10-foot Livin Lite trailer in tow on the MiniFinis concealed trailer hitch, Jill's a fixture at MINIs On The Dragon, often covered with mud until she cleans up for the car show. (She does this to tease those that spend a lot of time cleaning their MINI after long trips!) She says it doesn't even cause any lowering of ride height, and notices no trailer sway.

With nearly 75,000 miles on the meter, Jill's very happy with her Countryman, but does admit it's seen its fair share of manufacturing defects with the clutch and pressure plate, high-pressure fuel pump, thermostat, and tire pressure sensors all covered under warranty more than once she says. Look for her to be sporting a matching kayak and mountain bike MOTD 2014. It'll be painted in the matching colour scheme, no doubt. ■

