

# A New MINI World According To Lohen

**Founded in 2004, Lohen is a MINI performance works based in Eccleshall, Staffordshire. Created to support owner Andrey Magiy's passion for racing, the company has gone from strength to strength developing many performance parts and packages for discerning MINI owners.**



With an increasing international demand for their bespoke engineered solutions and packages, audio has been on Lohen's radar for some time now. Having previously dabbled with standard off-the-shelf audio, they recently became interested in the bespoke plug-and-play packages offered by FOUR Car Audio. Birmingham-based FOUR Car Audio is the UK's official distributor for world-beating car audio manufacturer Audison.

In recent years, Audison has been throwing its spotlight on specific vehicles it felt could do with an audio makeover. The MINI is one such vehicle. We all know that the basic system is very basic indeed and although an "upgrade" option is available from MINI dealers, on a performance-per-pound basis, it does not represent good value.

We spoke with Head of Sales, Mark Readyhough, about Lohen's approach.

Mark has worked with Lohen for around five years having previously worked in a variety of sales and



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product development roles, including a stint at Alpinestars. Mark told us: "Our ethos is very much based around quality. Product quality is a given but the Q word is applied to everything from the sales and ordering process to aftersales support. We endeavour to keep as comprehensive a stock holding as possible. These days if you don't immediately fill a demand, the customer will go elsewhere. We also apply our quality mantra to development and testing. Many of our performance products are tested on our own race cars. This gives us confidence that our solutions can deal with the enormous demands of high speed racing which is naturally far more demanding than road driving. Aftersales is another very strong area for us and has led to us enjoying a high level of repeat business from a very satisfied customer base."

Regarding Lohen's experiences with audio, Mark continued: "We have been providing audio solutions for some years, however many of these required parts to be fabricated and a deep level of vehicle dismantling to integrate. Ultimately, this led to a high perceived cost. This dampened some of the interest in our audio upgrade packages. We were keen to address this as, although a small percentage of our customers ask us for audio at the moment, it is significant enough for us to do a bit more work on our offering and also an area that has great growth potential for us.

"Although our relationship with FOUR is new, we can see there is a direct correlation in how the two companies like to work. We have been delighted with the support and help we have been given so far. There is always a bit of upheaval associated with changing a supplier. On this occasion, FOUR has literally hand-held us through the process of change and our early experiences of handling and listening to the equipment have been a complete revelation."

I was interested in further exploring the differences between Lohen's previous audio offerings and the new Audison kit being supplied by FOUR CAR Audio. I managed to catch up with Workshop Supervisor, Jack Stevens. Jack has worked at Lohen for three years having previously worked maintaining his uncle's yacht in Spain (nice work if you can get it!). Despite having lived his formative years within 10 minutes drive, he had not heard of Lohen previously, but is now extremely pleased he managed to get a job with them. I asked Jack about his direct experiences of installing

audio at Lohen. He very much backed up the difficulties outlined by Mark and told us: "Although we didn't really have technical issues with our previous offering, speakers were often over sized. This meant we had to fabricate fitting kits in order to get them to fit. We also had to change the head unit. This required us to remove the dashboard and added considerable time to the installation. The Audison kit is literally "plug and play" and as the amplifier is so compact, it is very easy to hide it away inside the boot wall lining. We have received great support from FOUR on how to install and set up the amplifier which has a very sophisticated signal processor built into it and the benefits are already easy to see and hear."

While I was busy photographing and interviewing, FOUR's Technical Director Jas Dehele and Account Manager Lee Preston were carrying out a post run-in set up on Lohen's demonstration vehicle. They finished at about the time I was ready to leave and offered me the opportunity to have a listen.

I don't need asking twice, and climbed carefully into the drivers seat and connected my phone. I listened to a track from Tunng's album "Songs You Make at Night". This album is full of great sounds as well as intriguing songs and I love it! I went for a fairly upbeat track, "Abop". This has a lot going on in it and pretty strong bass and I was interested to see how the Audison Prima under-seat woofers would handle it. The standard fit under-seats are flabby and flat with not much punch. This was the complete opposite. Forceful, musical bass filled the cabin without swamping the rest of the frequency range. The soundstage was wide, high and deep. I like Audison Prima and have it in my own car. This superb MINI demonstrates everything I love about the equipment.

**I would strongly recommend this system to anyone wanting more performance from a MINI. □**

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**Lohen's  
TOP  
FIVE  
DRIVING  
SOUNDS**

Prodigy - Diesel Power Nas - Get Down Groove Armada - Purple Haze Red Hot Chilli Peppers - Give it away Faithless - Fatty Boo

**Equipment:**

AP8.9bit DSP Amplifier  
AP BMW K4E Component Speakers  
2x AP BMW S8-4 Under Seat Woofers  
ReAmp Cable for signal in and out  
Proper 8awg Power and Earth cables.

**Lohen**