

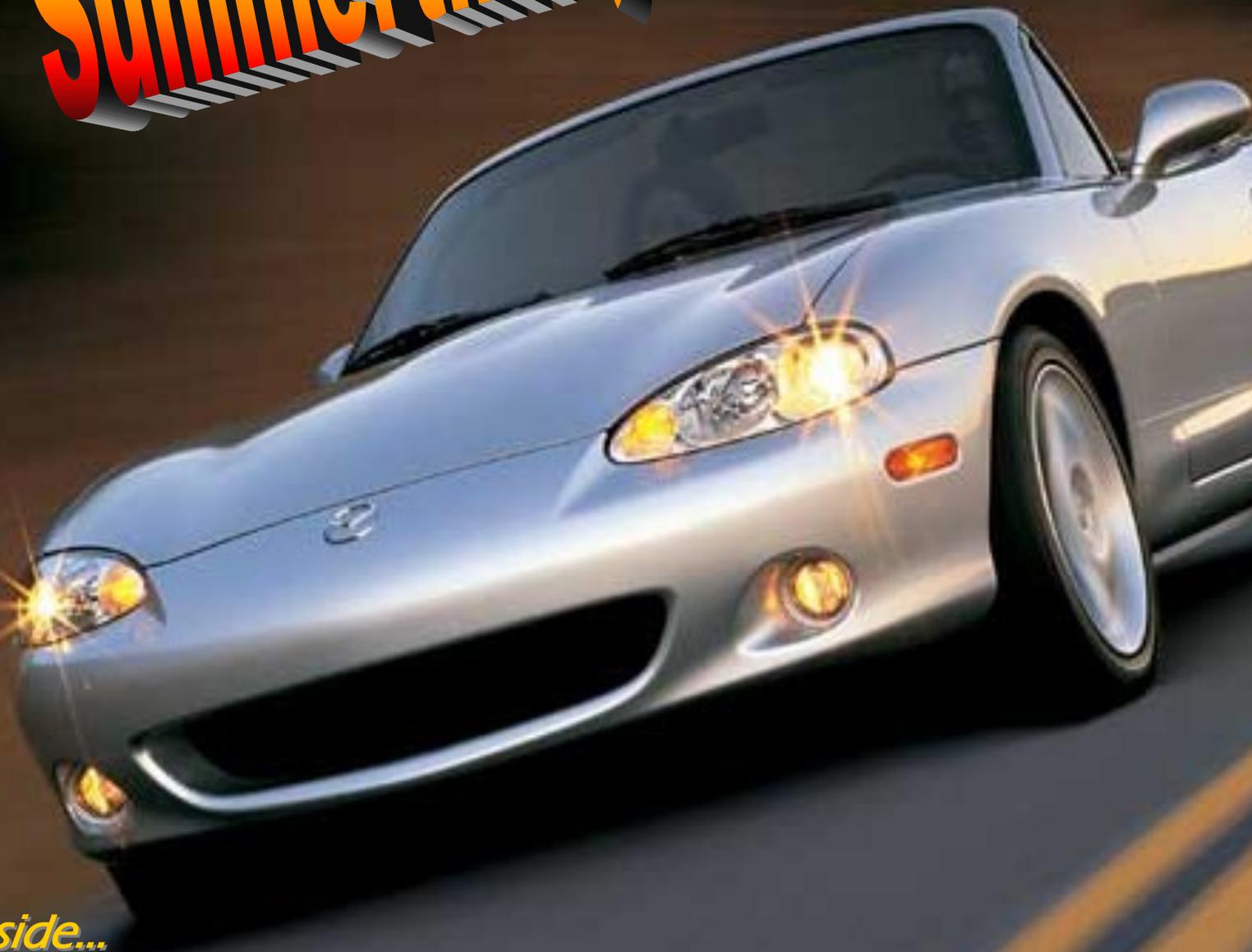
NEWSLETTER OF



Show Me Your Curves

VOLUME 4, NO. 6

Summertime, Summertime



Inside...

Scavenger Hunt

MX5 Superlight Concept

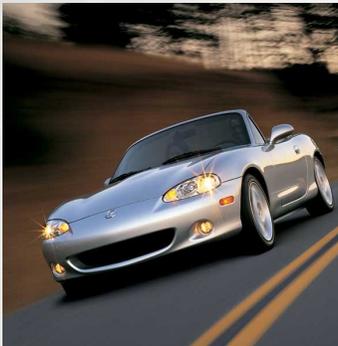
Miata Elan Connection

And more....



Remember this "Balanced" shot from a previous issue?
To answer the question, how'd they do that? Check out this behind the scenes video [here](#)

On the Cover



This month's cover is an old PR photo that seems to express that "Summertime" feeling.

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In the Rear View Mirror

Scavenger Hunt

Our Bridge Over Troubled Waters scavenger hunt took us all over the region counting fire hydrants, mailboxes, solving puzzles, visiting cemeteries all under a beautiful cloudless sky for a wonderful afternoon.

Each car was dispatched from the Home Depot parking lot taking us through the surrounding area in search of clues to answer the multitude of questions (90+) . The questions were tricky ones too and it took a few minutes to get the hang of the process before proceeding to the next destination on the docket. Although each participant left at different times several cars did cross paths in search of clues that had been missed or just plain misinterpreted.



CDs Lynn & Ted calculating results

Eventually all of the participants actually made it to the Riverside Inn where we enjoyed a lovely lunch and found out which Members would hold bragging rights as winners.

Carol & Bob McCauley finished first with 76 out of a possible 96 points; second was Eno and Marina Hoekstra with 73 points and a tie for third with 65 points was shared by Doug & Sheila Jackson and Gord & Laurel Bauldry.

Although the hunt was a definite challenge all agreed we should add another to next season's schedule.



A couple of PRHT wannabes?



In the Rear View Mirror



Ice Cream Cruises - Continue to be popular

This year's weekly gatherings continue to be a hit especially on those warm summer nights when you have just gotta get out and enjoy a little topless driving, a little conversation with friends and of course ice cream!!

Special Notice: This year's corn roast will replace our ice cream cruise on September 4th and again will be hosted by Maureen & Don. You won't want to miss this.





Lookin' Down the Road

Ladies Cruise - July 21st (CD Heather Frazer)

Heather will provide the ladies with some cruising, dining, shopping and more (ice cream?).

Huronia Cruise - July 27th (CD the Landers & the Giggs)

Our third trip to the land of Samuel de Champlain as the Landers will provide the cruise and the Giggs will host a BBQ afterwards.

Ottawa Cruise - Aug 16 - 18 (CD the Macaulays & the Bauldrys)

Our longest and largest cruise of the with be an "Overnighter" to the Nation's Capital and we will be joined by Members of Underground Miata Club (Ottawa group).

Port McNichol Cruise - August - TBD (CD Dick Smyth)

Dick has agreed to blow the dust off his Mazdaspeed and lead us on a cruise around Port Nichol.

St. Jacobs Cruise - Sept. 14th (CD Heather Fraser)

How does a day cruising down to St. Jacobs for a lovely lunch and a little shopping sound?

Trillium Muskoka Tour - Sept 27 - 29th

The Trillium group will have an overnight tour (for them) to Muskoka this year. Saturday evening will feature a BBQ picnic at Richard Rutsch's cottage, as we did last year. Our group has been invited to participate in any portion or day or day of the tour you would like. It would certainly make sense to come out for the full-day on Saturday.

Please contact Richard Rutsch (416-805-6919 or rutsch@sympatico.ca) to register.

Fall Colours Cruise - Oct 6th (CD Michael Topping)

Our Fourth Annual Fall Colours Cruise will again include guests from the Niagara Peninsula Miata Club





In the Rear View Mirror

Scavenger Hunt - Pictorial



Miscellaneous



Mazda Corral - Mobil 1 Grand Prix of Mosport

Mazda Corral

Mobil 1 Grand Prix of Mosport - July 18-21, 2013

Help support Mazda at this event, watch the MX5s Racers in action, join the Parade Lap...

Your Mazda Corral Ticket includes:

- Four-day admission to the Grand Prix of Mosport
- Access to a private tented area and parking in Corner Eight - Friday to Sunday
- A chance to drive your Mazda on a parade lap
- Sunday BBQ Lunch
-

Ticket price includes HST. NO REFUNDS



Helpful Hints - Horn Replacement

It was suggested in a recent email by one of our members that perhaps we could examine the installation of replacement horns to avoid the anaemic Roadrunner "meep-meep" that Mazda supplies in the Miata. Sounding like a good idea for the is column I preceded to spend waaaayyyy too much time reading posts , articles & comments on the pros and cons of air horns vs aftermarket horns vs junkyard horns from other vehicles.

After sifting through this fodder I was becoming googly eyed when I came across a post by Mark Booth, a long time Miata owner, photographer and past contributor to our little newsletter as well a Moderator for Miata.net which capsulated everything for me in his post dated March 6, 2006.

The San Diego Miata Club hosted an Air Horn Tech Day a couple of months ago and Tom Thompson (Thompson Automotive) installed Nautilus horns in several Miatae, including an NC. His approach was to remove some of the screws along the front edge of the lower pan and simply work through the gap created. He did not remove the entire pan, nor the front clip nor any wheels. Space was tight but it worked like a charm.

The version he sells is the "Compact" Nautilus, quite a bit smaller than the standard one yet sounds exactly the same. I've got the Compact Nautilus in my '01 and I love it! Great sound!

A photo of the Compact Nautilus and an mp3 sound file can be found at Tom's site here:

http://www.thompson-automotive.com/Air_Horn.html

This simple solution has it all, it fits each generation of Miata, comes with a customized bracket for an easy "plug & play" type installation, is inexpensive and is sold by a very reputable firm specialized in Miatas.



Compact Nautilus horn and custom Miata Installation Kit.

Did you Know ?

Ask Bob...

It was early spring, 1979 when Bob Hall, the west coast editor of Automotive News and Autoweek was visiting Mazda in Hiroshima. When Mazda managing director, Kenichi Yamamoto asked his opinion regarding "What kind of cars should Mazda build?".

"A low-priced, open-bodied sports car" was Bob's answer who then proceeded to draw a sketch which marked the beginning of what we now know as our beloved MX-5 Miata.

Bob is considered the true father of the Miata and now retired, lives in Australia. Bob had a column on Miata.net many years ago whereby he answered questions (good & bad) posed to him from subscribers. This particular one concerns the comparison of the Lotus Elan to the original Miata

Many have commented on the less-than-subtle resemblance between the original Miata & a certain Lotus model, including photos of the Lotus reportedly in the possession of development team member(s). Though often casually referred to as the "Japanese MGB" of the 90's, I see no engineering or stylistic link w/the MGB; the Lotus, on the other hand, had a twin cam 1600 cc engine, 4-wheel independent suspension, a very unique chassis design, and looked a hell of a lot like a Miata.. (or vice versa.) Any real connection w/the Lotus? (And would Colin Chapman care?)

B Keiper, Columbia, MO, USA

Boy, am I glad somebody asked this one. Thanks Mr. Keiper! While I really don't like tooting my own horn, I'll take full credit, or I think I should say blame, for the many 'legends' regarding the long-held concept that the Miata was a shameless cribbing of the Elan, 'proof' (to some) that the Japanese have never had an original idea. The sole reason that anyone ever saw shots of an S3 Elan with the clay models of the Miata come from my own personal greed. Here's what happened.

The head of the Product Planning group in Irvine, a wonderful gentleman named Hiroshi Iida, came to me with a worried look in his face and some budgetary documents. Essentially what he was worried about was the fact we hadn't used up enough of the budget Mazda had allocated for competitive vehicles for that fiscal year (1983-1984). Normally you'd say 'so what?', but in this case there were problems. We were budgeted on a 'Use it or lose it' basis. Because of the cyclical character of car product cycles, we had a year which required few competitive vehicles to be evaluated against prototypes or to provide benchmarks for upcoming programs. The bad part was that the following year we had a couple of prototypes coming over as well as a project we'd need a benchmark car for. So we had to use all or most of the budget allocated. We had about \$15,000 left unspent.





I couldn't think of a single car that we needed to buy for any upcoming project, till lida-san said 'what about something for the lightweight sports car project?'. This caught me totally unaware, since the project was still nowhere near approval. He explained he was indeed serious, so I sat down and gave it a thought. The next day I asked him if the car would be handled as a normal company car would be, and if it would be ok to buy a used car. When he explained that a used car would be fine and that it would be sold as an ex-company car after the depreciation period (about two years back then), and that we should 'just buy anything, and buy it before the end of the financial year'.

Now, a brief digression. I was a huge fan of 'The Avengers', and like many adolescent males of my generation I was hopelessly enamoured by Diana Rigg's character of Mrs. Emma Peel. And not only because she drove a Lotus Elan. But I liked the Elan too. And I had lusted after Mr's Peel's pale metallic blue Elan S3 that appeared in the second series of Mrs. Peel's episodes. Almost as much Mrs. Peel, in fact.

So after a call to Dave Bean, the West Coast's Lotus guru (based in Santa Barbara, California in those days), I raised the idea of buying a Lotus Elan. Much to my surprise, lida-san gave the whole thing the ok, adding if used the Elan as my company car it would keep our competitive vehicle fleet budget up while freeing up the lease costs of a departmental company car.

A quick trip to the guys in accounting and numbers cruncher Tim mentioned that I could buy the car after two years for something like \$4500. So I'd have the Elan as a company car for two years, then get it at a significant savings. A call back to Mr. Bean in Santa Barbara and gave him an idea of what we wanted (1967 Elan S3 drop head coupe in silver blue metallic with a black interior, a new galvanized chassis and universals in place of the rubber doughnuts), sent him a cheque as a deposit and waited.

About six weeks later, I drove up to Santa Barbara to pick the car up from Bean's. I was the happy driver of a company-owned 'new' Elan S3. It even had California license SJH 498D (Mrs. Peel's original number - SJH 499D had already been taken).

Much to our surprise the lightweight sports car program was placed into 'off-line' status, so the timing of this acquisition was near faultless. We used it for a couple of videos we sent to Japan (it was the only 2-seat open sports car Mazda owned in the United States) as well as a study into backbone chassis for the lightweight sports car, a layout I favoured if only because we could put a new body right on top of the chassis.



Later in 1984 (when it was decided to take the lightweight sports car project to an even more official level), Japan - lacking any sort of open two-seat cars there at Mazda HQ - asked for us to ship the car to them. Now even though 'my' master plan had me driving this Elan for the rest of my life, my bosses wanted the car! What could I do? Well, in a word, nothing. In a couple of weeks our shipping agents, Harper Robinson, had made all the arrangements and a truck appeared with a 20 foot container. I nearly shed a tear when 'my' Elan was packed up in the container and shipped off to an unknown fate in Japan. And I went back into my 323 company car which had been nicknamed 'the beige bucket' by Mark Jordan. Sniff!

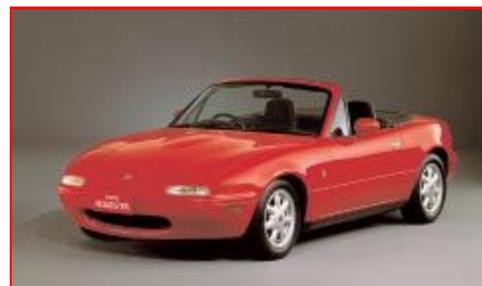
Nine years later, on one of my last trips to Japan as a Mazda employee, a co-worker there discretely took me aside after a meeting, whisking me to a garage between the design centre in Hiroshima and the river. Flicking the lights on I saw 'my' Elan sitting there on low tyres, dusty and with a pretty big gouge on the bonnet but otherwise looking fine. He mentioned that car was taken out to the Miyoshi proving ground three times when it first arrived in 1984. In early 1985 it did a stint in engineering while it was investigated to see just how small the still not approved lightweight sports car could be and meet the gauntlet of corporate and governmental design rules. It went back into the garage afterwards and there it stayed. It might still be there for all I know.

Now the details. One of the original documents I prepared described the Mazda lightweight sports car as 'an MGB that will start on a rainy day and won't leak oil on your driveway'. The position of the car in the marketplace was much more in the area inhabited by the likes of MGB and Sunbeam Alpine, particularly in terms of affordability (based on weekly wages vs car cost, not the direct dollar amount) and size. The Elan was a smaller (too small to meet even basic criteria like Mazda's toe working space requirements), appreciably more expensive vehicle. Yes, as you know the car with the 1.6 litre engine, twin cams and independent rear suspension there are Elan similarities. But only the 1.6 litre engine was part of the specs going in. The original engine was a 1.6 single cam, though this was altered later to a 1.6 single came 3-valver, and later yet again to the 1.6 twin cam we know. The car also started out riding on strut front suspension and with a rigid rear axle hung on five-link geometry with coils.

As we got into the project and started using a little lateral thinking, the other bits fell into place. Norman Garrett proposed the first independent rear idea, using all the bits from the rear of the old 4wheel-drive turbo 323 GTX, including the tall rear struts. Japan eyeballed that and tried seeing if they couldn't do something better and stay within budget. They did.

The twin cam engine came about as a result of Japan going DOHC mad on 323-class cars, so with that sort of generous sales volume, the twin cam engine became economically feasible. So despite what you might have heard or believed, similarities with the Elan are more coincidental than planned. As for Mr. Chapman's opinion, well my Ouija board is notoriously unreliable (I have a Lucas-built one). But at least Mazda had the brains to make it rear-drive. You couldn't say that about the last Elan...

Bwob





SPOTLIGHT ON

2009 Mazda MX-5 Superlight Concept

Exciting things are happening at Mazda these days with the eminent introduction of the new Mazda3 sporting the Kodo styling design, the recent introduction of SKYACTIVE technology, their objective is to built more efficient vehicles for your Zoom-Zoom.

Mazda has been focusing on weight reduction as a core base technology as part of their SKYACTIVE philosophy. Rumours claim the new ND will be significantly lighter than the current NC version of the Miata so let's explore the MX5 Superlight Concept car that was introduced at the 2009 Frankfurt Motor Show, perhaps we'll see a little of the upcoming ND.



Designed by Mazda's European R+D centre in Oberusel, Germany, "to evolve the MX-5 to a higher and extreme level," was the main challenge for the design team said Project Lead Designer Hasip Girgin.

Mazda Europe Head of Design Peter Birtwhistle, Girgin and the team took a 1.8-litre MX-5 and stripped it down to its bare essentials. In place of the soft top, the Superlight has two large roll-over hoops with integrated wind deflectors and because the car is always roofless, the doors don't need exterior handles. To open them, you pull a leather tie inside the cabin.



They left the windscreen and roof off altogether, and fitted an aluminium hood with a carbon fibre extension that incorporates the rear view mirror and covers the instrument cowl.

The light weight challenges extended to inside the cabin, the instrument panel is made of fibreglass-reinforced plastic; the gearlever and hand brake out of aluminium partly covered with leather. There's no HVAC system at all, and no noise and vibration isolation either.

A specially tuned chassis with a Bilstein® B16 coil-over suspension and Eibach® stabilizers give the body of the MX-5 Superlight version a ground clearance that is 30 mm lower than the production MX-5.

The team also left a goodly part of the car as it was originally such as the engine, its sporty hydraulic power-assisted rack and pinion steering system and precise-shifting five-speed manual transmission is the same as that of the regular roadster. Also from the production model are the 205/45 R17 original-equipment tires and alloy wheels which are some of the lightest on the market today.

All in all, Mazda's crash diet has taken 160kg from the curb weight of this car. The "Superlight" weighs in at 2,200 lb (1,000 kg), making it 100 lb (45 kg) lighter than the original NA series MX-5. The team's test drivers reported that the MX-5's key dynamic traits were only enhanced by the lack of weight.

"We want to push forward with weight-saving measures, because light cars are fun to drive," says Birtwhistle. "It could be possible to build this car, or one very like it, in limited numbers, but more important will be its influence on our design and engineering agenda. Because wouldn't it be great if we could make every new Mazda 160kg lighter?"



Superlight unveiled at 2009 Frankfurt Show



In the beginning, a brand new NC is stripped



Fibreglass inlays being test fitted



New paint, stripped interior



Detail shot showing LEDs in back of roll bars



Simple yet attractive interior



Three switches; fuel pump, ignition, starter

