



Show Me Your Curves

VOLUME 2, NO. 11

As the Sun Sets

Cruisin' Season Ends



Plus...

*Trillium Group Explores Muskoka
AGM Announcement
And more....*

MIATA VS LOTUS RETROSPECTIVE





This is one *Hot* Miata

This poor Miata met it's fiery doom during the riots in London, England this past August

On the Cover



We felt this shot appropriately demonstrates the theme of this issue As the Sun Sets on another Cruising Season.

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We want to here from you about this newsletter. Please use the Feedback Link to submit any comments, concerns or questions.

Thank you



[Feedback Link](#)

You Gotta Read This!

RETROSPECTIVE



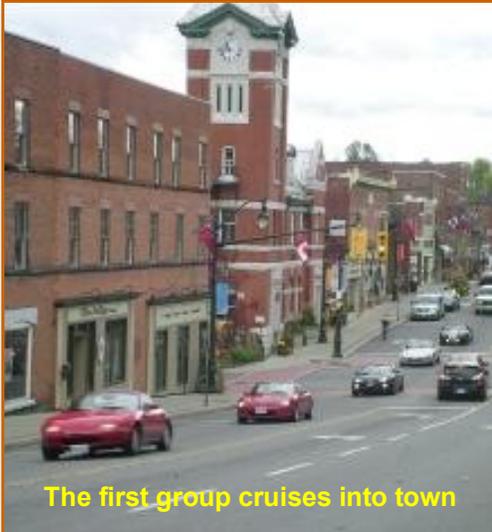
Miata explores its roots in road test comparison to Lotus Elan.

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In the Rear View Mirror

Trillium Fall Cruise - Oct. 16



The first group cruises into town

The Trillium Miata club of Toronto came to town during their annual Muskoka Fall Cruise. Starting out of Webers on Hwy 11 north of Orillia, the caravan of 27 cars, broken down into more manageable groups of 5-6 cars, cruised the back roads via Gravenhurst into Bracebridge to meet up with a couple of our members. The weather was very cool and as I waited at the top of Manitoba St. I had my top UP and my heater on. Boy was I surprised to watch the entire group roll into town with the tops DOWN!!

After the members from each group mingled a little, grabbed a coffee, made a pit stop and checked out the cars we headed out (topless of course). The route to Huntsville's 3 Guys and a Stove took us through Baysville & Dorset and was quite cool (okay, it was damn cold but with the heater on quite bearable).

We had quite an enjoyable lunch at the restaurant and while we did the weather turned for the better as the sun came out and warmed things up a little as we made our way towards Rosseau. The route taken carried us back to Port Carling before heading down to Bala and the Cranberry Festival.

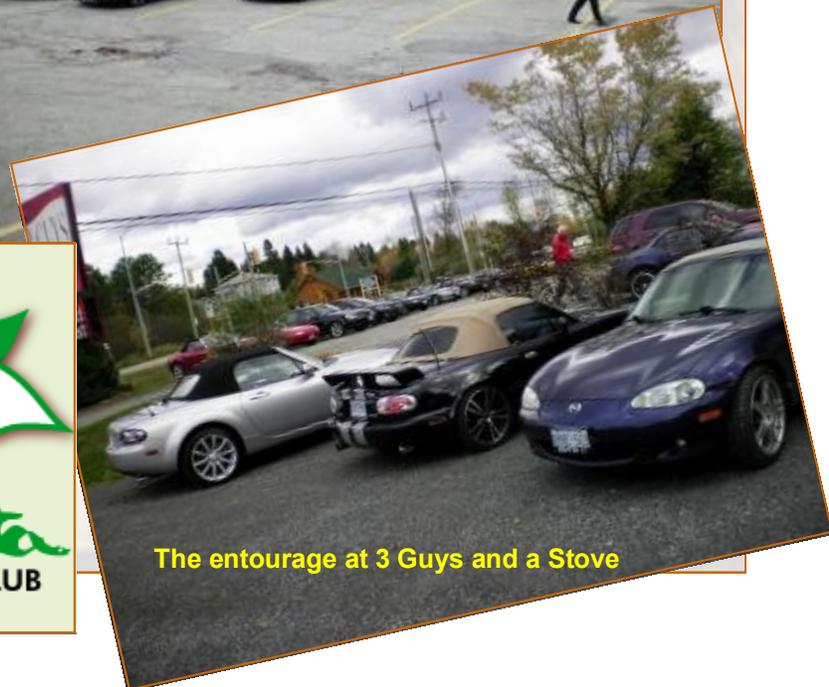
It was the last organized cruise for the year and everyone seemed to enjoy it.



Oliver's Parking Lot



On the road



The entourage at 3 Guys and a Stove



Lookin' Down the Road

Annual General Meeting - November (date to be determined)

The Annual General Meeting we discussed briefly in the last newsletter was to take place some-time in November. However, as everyone knows, life happens, priorities changes and other things get in the way. A number of members travel south (or out west!!) and wouldn't be available anyway so we may hold off until the spring but that decision has yet to be determined.

We still intend on having the meeting but will communicate to all in a separate email when details have been ironed out and everything is in place. If there are any issues/ items you would like to see included on the itinerary please feel free to email us with your subject manner so we may include them on the agenda.

CB or not to CB?

we have discussed briefly in a recent newsletter about the benefits of having a CB radio in your car during cruises. Not only does it provide a life line for lost cars it also increases safety by highlighting potential issues discovered while enroute and can also enhance the journey with interesting info of sightings along the way. I would think that we are more or less in agreement they are a good thing to have, the question becomes how to best handle the issue in a cost effective manner without everyone going out to buy/install a CB radio in their vehicle.

To that end we have looked at a potential solution with member Don Dawe, a licensed ham radio operator. We intend to experiment with two modified hand held radios which we hope could be used with other hand held walkie talkie type radios. We will do something in the spring to test these units and if successful will have found an inexpensive option that provides us with the benefits of a CB on the road and the added option of contact with members even if we are stopped on a walkabout or some such thing. Again, the idea is in the infant stage but we will test this on a cruise early in the new year.

Please note if you have a pair of these hand held walkie talkie type radios please let us know so we may include them in our little test.



Helpful Hints - Miscellaneous Items

Miata Recalls

All true Miataphiles are familiar with the web site Miata.net which contains oodles of information not only on the cars themselves but on clubs, vendors and basically all things in the Miata world in general.

Recently Don Dawe was surfing through this site when he came across a listing for all factory recalls that have been issued for the Miata worldwide.

Simply follow this link <http://www.miata.net/garage/tsb/index.html> and you can review the specific recalls for year and model. Perhaps a Dealer fix was required for something you haven't been aware of. It's certainly worth checking out.

License Plates / Insurance

Everyone puts their baby away for the winter and brings her back to life in the Spring often cancelling their insurance to save some dough. What if your license plate tags become due during that time? If you attempt to renew your license sticker you must have proof of current insurance else the sticker will be refused. Most Miataphiles will renew their insurance in the Spring and then obtain their sticker BUT you will still have to pay the full amount for the year, damn government!!

MIATA FUN

How about this, you too can afford a Miata. A JDM pedal car (NA model) available by Toshima available on Japanese Yahoo Auctions.

Prices vary from \$200 to \$2,000 based on condition.



Did you Know

How Safe is a Miata?

Have you ever asked yourself, as you are counting the lug nuts of the Peterbuilt tractor trailer sitting next to you at a stop light, how safe is my little Miata?

Below is a brief article by a Miatafile out of western Michigan describing his feeling after an accident.

How safe is a Miata? An illustration.

Saturday night, 4/18/09, around 10:00 pm: My wife and I are driving home in our '95 from having dinner with my folks. As we reach a quiet country intersection, we realize only too late that the Jeep Wrangler traveling perpendicular to us isn't stopping for the stop sign. He t-bones us at roughly 60mph.

What ensues is a blur of ambulances, paramedics, and a night in the ER for both of us.

We're released the following morning. I (the driver) have a broken collarbone, two chipped teeth, a left hand swollen to twice it's size, 4 staples in my scalp to close a scalp laceration, what feels like half the side window glass in my scalp, and some big, ugly bruises. My poor wife (passenger) has a broken ankle, a black eye, and numerous dark, ugly bruises. However bad it sounds, we're just thankful to be alive today.

Here are some pics my brother-in-law was kind enough to post:

 PICS

"Your car won," was the first thing he said to me. The frame of the Jeep was not only bent but also twisted. The floorpans had actually buckled beneath his feet, and an entire rear wheel had broken off from the impact.

The Miata had been impacted solidly in the drivers door and slammed up against a large oak tree on the passengers side.

While I strongly feel that the grace of God was at work here, the pics are illustrative of how well our Miata survived. Scratch that - *how well our Miata protected us.*



Miatas around the World

A look at what's happening in the world of Miata

GOG X—Gathering of the Green

The tenth meeting of the 1991 British Racing Green Special Edition Miata took place in Asheville, North Carolina this past September. The event is specific to the 1991 Miata Special Edition (Limited Edition in Canada) models and is apply named **Gathering of The Green** or GOG for short. The event is held every two tears and has been hosted by a different Miata Club each time.



This year's event, hosted by the Ridge Runners Miata Club based in North Carolina, included such things as the required Meet & Greet, breakfast/lunch gatherings, several tours into the mountains, a photo shoot opportunity for all as well as interviews in a local TV spot. A BBQ dinner on the Saturday evening program included a performance by the Whitewater Bluegrass band. In all, the event drew 38 cars including 5 Canadian vehicles from across North America. The next GOG (in 2013) will be hosted by the Tulsa Oklahoma Miata Club.

BRGs heading out to the mountains



Canadian Contingent at GOG X



1991 BRG Miatas Everywhere!!



Chet Young
Founder of the GOG
being interviewed
For Local TV



Retrospective

Miata vs Lotus Elan Comparison

In our Vol.1 No. 3 newsletter we pointed out the similarities between the Miata and the car it was based on, the Lotus Elan. While cruising the Miata websites of the world I came across an interesting perspective article comparing the Miata to the car it emulates the Lotus Elan on a site out of Australia. This article was originally posted in January 2009 and I thought you might enjoy a little historical perspective so we have provided a slightly edited version of it here. Our thanks goes out to Adam (original author).

After thriving during the sixties, the small sports car market faded away as the late seventies approached, bringing with them stricter safety and emissions regulations in the wake of the oil crisis. This crippled the all important North American market and saw the demise of long time British favourites like the MGB, Triumph Spitfire and the Lotus Elan, widely regarded as the most capable of all in its genre.

By 1979 fear of a worldwide oil shortage had abated and talk of roadsters being totally outlawed in the US also waned. Enter Bob Hall, an American journalist with a perfectly timed idea. The story goes that, upon meeting with the R & D head of Mazda North America, Mr. Yamamoto, he was asked a last question before parting: "What do you think we should build for this market next?" Bob responded without hesitation: "A lightweight sports car."

Two years later, Hall had joined the Mazda research team and continued to sow the seed amongst the Japanese engineers. Its chance to sprout came in 1983 when Mazda held an in-house design competition with three entries to be considered; a front-drive hatch similar in concept to the Honda CR-X, a mid engine concept mimicking the Toyota Mr-2, and a traditional British influenced small capacity roadster, with rear wheel drive. The roadster won, project P729 was instigated and the precursor to the MX-5 began development in earnest.

The final product, powered by an 116bhp 1597cc DOHC four was shown at the Chicago show in February 1989 with several styling cues influenced directly by that sixties English roadster market that it was striving to revive. Seasoned road testers commented on several design features that emulated the Elan- the shape of its cam covers and contours of the bodywork, not to mention the pop up headlights. Even the drive experience nodded to its illustrious forebear, with manual steering a standard, narrow tyres on small wheels, an engine with a thirst for revs (accompanied by a slight rortiness to the exhaust note) and even an engineered-in 'click-clack' to the gear shift for added sixties 'authenticity'.

To Mazda's credit they never denied seeking inspiration from the past. MX-5 concept engineer Norman Garrett attributed Chapman's "driver and car as one" approach as a model for his team to pull towards a similar goal. They were known to have two Elans at their disposal during development and came to know them intimately, Garrett stating that the Elan captured their "essence of our philosophy with simple, timeless design." He went on to say that the MX-5 had more of a personality, though he was perhaps being a touch one-eyed. To redress the balance, we decided to bring an original example of each car together on a lovely Melbourne summers day to form an unbiased opinion.



Retrospective

Con't

The Elan

Our featured Elan is a 1968 Series 4 DHC is an Australian delivered car that was shipped unpainted to Geoghegan's, who were the Lotus agents at the time. Originally rated at 110bhp, this car has larger, 45mm Weber carburetors rather than the Strombergs most Series 4 Elans utilized.



The car was painted in the Lotus Gold Leaf team colours, inspired by the Lotus GP car schemes of the period. This example presents as better than new with unmarked black seats and perfect dash highlighting its microscopic mileage. And the detail...even the more modern tyres it wears are dimensionally correct at 155/80/13.



You can really hear those big Webers filling their lungs as you extend the firmly sprung throttle through the length of its travel- but the best thing about a well sorted Elan is its steering. It feels lithe and delicate like the rest of the car (save the carbs and the fabled twin cam exhaust note, all crackly on the overrun) but still tells you what you need to know about the surface beneath. "I get the most pleasure from it out on a curvy road where you just set it up for the corner and sail it through. I don't push it too hard on the straights except on track...it's all about nailing the corners.

Back at road speed, the Elan feels approachable and forgiving in its responses. Turn it in and there is minimal weighing up through the wheel, as expected in a sub-700kg machine. You do, however, sense the nuances of road surface through your fingertips. Let this settle in your mind for a second before the seat of your pants tells you that weight is transferring to the outside front wheel, assisting direction change through supple springing. Turn-in phase complete, you pick your trajectory, adding throttle pressure to balance the forces as weight transfers rearward, digging the back tyres in to slingshot you through the exit. Its poise is utterly addictive; feeling tip-toe agile yet somehow planted and able to provide astonishing levels of grip for a car made in the sixties, running miniscule tyres, and "All this with Triumph Herald steering!"



The Elan is synergy defined- a whole being greater than the sum of its parts (including Lotus Cortina switchgear and Alfa Giulietta stop and indicator lenses), and oozes personality out of every pore.

Retrospective

Con't

The MX-5

David James is well known in MX-5 circles, having previously been president of the Victorian MX-5 club, and still being heavily involved today. His example is one of the 45,000 made in 1989. The car is unmodified save for some adjustable Koni shocks, set to full soft for road use.



Climbing into its cockpit is less of a moment than in the Elan, for is it a much simpler experience. Simplicity of design oozes from the MX-5, with subtleties like the rear tail-lights and diminutive chrome door handles adding a touch of class. "It's such a well thought out car, everything about it was designed to be user friendly," From the moment we pull out in the MX-5, the differences to the Elan are perceptible. The main controls meet their design brief of being a car fit for a world market, being tactile yet easy to use. Its steering is instantly heavier although that is to be expected with another 250kg or so riding on fatter, 185/60 tyres with 14 inch 'Minilite' style wheels. You do miss out on the fuel system symphony through temperamental carbs but the exhaust note, an area the Japanese carefully considered in the development phase, makes up for it.

Engine-wise the MX-5 spins eagerly and responsively to its 7200rpm redline, and is well matched to a wonderfully slick, short-throw five-speed gearbox. The motor loves revs, as its 135nm torque peak @ 5,500rpm indicates, but there is never really a step up in its delivery, no top end sparkle to really make the Mazda dance. This contributes to its friendly nature, but is not ultimately exciting when compared to the Ford based twin cam in the Elan, which feels alert and torquey at lower revs before hardening its note as the redline approaches. Again, the weight advantage contributes significantly to the Elan's superior acceleration, its snorting engine note also worth at least 20 imaginary horsepower.



Back in the MX-5, everything feels a dimension bigger, as a consequence the key human interfaces feel weightier and more solid in the Mazda and this is reflected in the handling balance. There is less a sense of delicate poise, and though agile when compared to most, it falls short in such exalted company.

Mixed curves reveal more of its repertoire, its aluminium 'Power Plant Frame' (a structure bolted between gearbox and diff) contributing to the Mazda feeling more 'all-of-a-piece' than the Elan, but the disadvantage here is that subtle transitions in weight are not as well defined. More reassuring is the meatiness evident in the MX-5's steering, allowing you to more completely feel the build up of cornering forces; a bonus in communicating on-track grip limits. Even under brakes, the car feels planted with a nicely firm pedal building confidence in its stopping abilities. At corner exit, even under heavy throttle, oversteer just never seems to enter the equation. This would make an ideal track car for someone new to rear-wheel drive.



"Applying throttle through the exit of the curves, power oversteer just never seems to enter the equation unless really provoked"

Retrospective

Con't

Conclusion

Both of these cars are icons of their time and feel almost magical compared to frumpy modern machines with their agility and user-friendly, unfiltered controls. But it is difficult to truly judge them based on 'personality' as it is a matter of personal taste. Are Lotus electronics endearing or frustrating? That depends on the person

Ignoring their relative values, if you wanted to choose one for weekends only, and are handy with the tools, it would be the Elan. Its engine is more characterful, and developing your skills over time to match its handling characteristics would provide a source of great pleasure. It also has the cachet of a Lotus badge which is difficult to ignore.

The MX-5 is more instantly friendly, a car you could use every day if you wanted. Its cornering traits are more predictable, its limits less daunting to challenge. And it's utterly reliable while providing most of the thrills found so abundantly in the Lotus. When you do factor in price the Japanese roadster becomes still harder to ignore, but I just have to. Though my mind prefers the Mazda, my heart loves the Lotus.



“ Both of these cars are icons of their time and feel almost magical compared to frumpy modern machines ”

And Finally.....

