

Road Runner

Volume 2, Issue 4
October 2018



A Monthly Publication for the Members & Friends of the First Coast Miata Club

First Coast Miata Club

Board of Directors

President: Linda French

Vice-President: Gary Kight

Events: Arved Grass

Secretary: Lisa Corner

Treasurer: Mike French

Membership: Mike French

Newsletter Editor: Colin Busch

at cbusch64@aol.com

Web: Kim Cordero

Facebook: Hank McLeod

Ottis Castle Tour and Lunch at Aunt Kates on the Intracoastal

Saturday, 20 October

Caravan Departure Time: 10:00 am

Caravan Starting Location: McDonalds, 450 SR 13, Saint Johns, FL
32259-2835

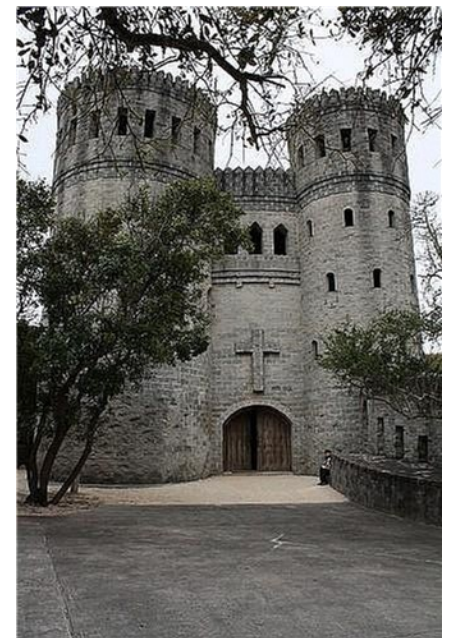
(This is NOT the McDonald's on Loretto Rd and San Jose! Go further south on San Jose to the next McDonalds located in Julington Creek Village. There's plenty of parking at adjacent banks and shops.)

Castle Ottis (yes, three 't's) was built between 1984 and 1988. Based on Irish stone castles from 1,000 years ago. It was never intended to be a residence or a business. The aim was to create a work of art, one that would invoke the spirit of an old Irish abbey or Christian church. The result is this majestic landmark along the St. Augustine shoreline, one officially recognized by the American Institute of Architects in 1992.

Open to the public only on the 3rd Sunday of each month, or by a private event or tour such as ours.

Rusty Ickes, one of the two builders, will lead us on a one-hour tour and regale us with its unique origin and construction story, and answer all your questions. Afterwards, we'll caravan a few blocks up the road to Aunt Kates for a leisurely lunch overlooking the intracoastal waterway.

A MUST see and do and something you will be telling your friends about for years! Although there is no charge for the tour, personal contributions of appreciation to our guide are appreciated.



Inside this issue:

Factory Restored Miata	2
Miata RF Price 2019	3
Miata Review	4
Miata Review	5
Jim's New Ride	6
FCCM Events Calendar	7
Tow Truck Tug O War	8

Mazda hands over first factory-restored Miata

The first customer car in Mazda's Miata restoration program is done.

In August 2017, Mazda announced that it will be offering factory quality restoration work for the original, NA body Mazda MX-5 Miata introduced in 1989. The program also included parts support, as Mazda wants to underline how much the original Miata still means to it. The program was launched with exemplary work carried out on a Miata owned by Mazda, but the first customer car has now been finished.

The first car was picked from 600 applications sent to Mazda. Out of all these cars needing factory certified work, the 1992 British Racing Green V-Special owned by retired tomato farmer Keiji Nishimoto was chosen to be the first. The Eunos-badged limited-edition car was bought new by Nishimoto, and he told Mazda the car had been instrumental in creating some wonderful road-trip memories. The V-Special edition came in a British roadster-style color combination: "Neo" green over tan leather, complete with a retro-style Nardi wood wheel. The car also has a front strut bar and a limited-slip differential.

Nishimoto had already been planning to get his car restored, but getting it done by Mazda during the summer was even better. The car was finished in August, and it was officially handed over to its owner in September. To have owned and enjoyed a car for a quarter-century and getting a chance to experience it in as-new condition again must be a fantastic experience. Nishimoto says the car is now good for another 25 years of driving.

For the time being, the TÜV Rheinland certified restoration program is only available for Japanese customers. But since a large percentage of first-generation Miatas are still on the road, and a large percentage of those will need bodywork done in all the usual places, we would happily see Mazda reach out to European and American customers as well.



Mazda Miata RF gets price bump for 2019

Over the past couple of months, Mazda has been releasing information about updates for the 2019 model year of the MX-5 Miata. We got details about the car's 2.0-liter I4 making 181 horsepower and 151 pound-feet of torque. The car also gets a telescoping steering wheel, new door stops, updated cupholders and seat levers, standard rear-view camera and 17-inch wheels. Later, we learned the new Miata would also be a smidge more efficient. Now, Mazda has announced pricing for the 2019 Miata RF.

Going on sale in August, the 2019 Miata MX-5 RF starts at \$33,240 (including \$895 in destination fees) for the Club trim level with a six-speed manual transmission. That's a price increase of \$435. That doesn't seem so bad when you consider the extra 26 horsepower and higher redline. The Club 6MT can also be optioned with Brembo brakes and BBS wheels for an extra \$3,770, or the Brembo/BBS/Recaro package for \$4,670. The MX-5 Club with six-speed automatic comes with paddle shifters and sport mode for \$33,840, but isn't available with the Brembo/BBS packages. The i-ActiveSense package, which includes features like Smart City Brake Support and lane-departure warning is a \$450 option for the Club 6AT.

MSRP for the Grand Touring trim starts at \$34,230 with a six-speed manual transmission, which is \$585 more than the outgoing model. The new GT-S package for the Grand Touring 6MT adds \$750, and comes with a front shock tower brace, limited-slip rear differential, Bilstein dampers and a hand-painted black roof. The Grand Touring with six-speed automatic goes for \$35,305. Auburn Nappa leather adds another \$300.

In terms of exterior colors, there are three premium options to choose from, each with its own added price. The gorgeous Soul Red Crystal tacks on another \$595 to the price of the Miata RF. Machine Gray Metallic adds \$300, while Snowflake White Pearl Mica costs \$200.

Pricing for the soft-top version of the 2019 Miata hasn't been announced yet.



2019 Mazda MX-5 Miata First Drive Review - Autoblog

When Mazda announced that the 2019 Mazda MX-5 Miata was getting a serious increase in power, I was both excited and nervous. At 181 horsepower, it's the most powerful production Miata ever offered, beating out turbocharged Mazdaspeed Miata's 178 horsepower. Plus it has more revs to play with. But what had me worried was whether this power would mess up the friendly, playful character of the Miata. The 155-horsepower 2.0-liter engine is just about perfect, with good midrange torque and short gearing that always made it feel quick in nearly every rev range.

I could imagine a couple of ways the new engine could affect that sweet balance, too. It might become more serious and less fun-loving. I also feared that in pursuit of a higher redline and more horsepower, the low-end of the rev range might become painfully slow.

All of this was on my mind when the assembled reviewers were briefed by Mazda engineers about the car. The amount of power and torque over engine speed is nearly identical between the old and new ND Miatas right up to around 4,500 rpm. And then from there, the 2019 continues making more power all the way to its 181-horse peak at 7,000 rpm, 500 rpm higher than the previous model's redline. This was a good sign.

Mazda managed to get these gains through many small upgrades. The throttle body is wider with a slimmer throttle plate, the intake manifold has longer runners and dual paths, and the intake ports are larger. The exhaust valves, ports and header pipes are bigger, and the exhaust cam has a bit more duration and lift. The pistons were redesigned with slimmer skirts for less friction and new tops for better cooling. The rods have stronger, shorter end bolts for less weight, and the crank is stiffer. Finally, the fuel injectors run higher pressure for better fuel atomization. Mazda also sought greater refinement, adding a dual-mass flywheel to help with transmission noise and vibration, adjusting the electronic throttle to flutter a bit to eliminate vibration from the engine rocking under power, and tweaking the muffler for a smoother sound.

The true test is actually driving the car. Over the course of two days, I racked up hundreds of miles between a Miata RF Club and soft-top Miata Grand Touring. And what I learned is that I really shouldn't have worried — and heck, with Mazda's nearly 30 year track record of fun Miatas, I really, really shouldn't have worried. The 2019 Miata is basically the current car, but with an extra little layer of icing.

Let's start with the engine. When surface streets give way to a highway on-ramp is the time you'll first notice the extra power and revs — and you'll notice the revs more than the power, since the car is able to hold each gear a little longer to savor the little engine's furious growl for a few moments more. The power, though, is more subtle. It basically continues the current Miata's smooth power past the old rev limit of 6,500 to the new one of 7,200. It feels just like the old car, but it just keeps pulling for longer. Then on backroads, the muted bass of the intake and the higher snarl of the exhaust combine with the power to encourage you to keep the engine as close to redline as possible.

Also evident when driving around are the changes intended to make it all more refined, and it comes through in the sound. There's plenty of the old growl, but the whole engine sounds much smoother. It's lost any raspiness and off-pitch notes the old one had.

What hasn't really changed with the Miata is, well, basically everything else. Chassis-wise, it feels as nimble and stiff as ever. Its light weight lets it quickly change directions without drama, and the somewhat soft suspension results in some body lean, but it also means it can handle uneven back roads without being upset and bumped loose. The chassis is constantly letting you know which end of the car is getting a little loose, so you have plenty of time to correct with throttle and steering inputs. The steering is delicate and light, which fits the personality of the car perfectly.

Related to all this are some interesting differences and lack of differences between the two cars. I drove, an RF Club with the BBS and Brembo package, and a soft top Grand Touring. The Club is definitely a bit more stiff, though still exhibiting lean on corners. The wheels certainly are sharp, but the Brembo brakes didn't feel particularly stronger than the standard units. Save your money and buy some upgraded pads and the wheels of your choice. Also noticeable between the two cars was the RF's extra weight. For reference, the RF is a bit over 100 pounds heavier than the 2,339-pound manual soft top. Going around corners, you could feel the whole car pushing wider.

Inside, nothing has changed either except the inclusion of a telescoping steering wheel. As Mazda representatives explained, it was its own major engineering project to keep weight down; the new unit only weighs another half pound. Still, the driving position is quite comfortable and low. The interior is also still attractive, and the controls are a breeze to use. The cupholders are still subpar, and the passenger side is still tight.

There are a handful of other small changes to the Miata. The most notable is the GT-S, which finally lets buyers have all the comfort features of the GT along with the Club trim's stiffer suspension and limited-slip differential.

The important takeaway: Even with the extra power and tweaks for refinement, Mazda hasn't ruined the Miata formula in the least. It's the same light, playful little car that's stolen our hearts for years, made just a little sweeter.



More powerful 2019 Mazda MX-5 a joy to drive for Jim Cripps



The Skyactiv X 2.0 Liter inline engine bumps the 2019 Mazda MX-5 Miata's power from 155 horses to 181. This, plus some interior upgrades such as a telescoping steering wheel, comfortable redesigned seats, and the retracting power hard top that fits nicely into the spacious trunk, where more than enough to convince Jim Cripps, a die-hard NB lover, to switch up. Also, the fact his former pride and joy was giving him some repair issues.

Jim attests his 2019 Soul Red Crystal Metallic Miata retains its good looks as well as making him look good. But it also gets more power, better fuel economy, a better interior, and more options to customize than ever before. This is sounding like it could be the best Miata, yet. We can't wait to try it out. But it won't be in Jim's car, it doesn't look like he's getting out of his very soon.

FCMC EVENTS CALENDAR

- **October 9 – 6:30 P.M.: Monthly Club Meeting at Tommy’s Pizza**

Our monthly meeting will be held at Tommy’s Brick Oven Pizza at 4160 Southside Blvd, Jacksonville FL 32216. Come early for the food and stay after and pop your hoods!

- **October 20 – 10:00 A.M.: Ottis Castle Tour**

We are meeting at the McDonald’s in Julington Creek Village on San Jose. This is a once in a lifetime event so don’t miss it! See the front page for all the details of this exciting and different drive!

- **November 17 – DeLeon Springs & Altamont Springs**

It’s a two springs drive! First, an early morning drive to DeLeon Springs for brunch followed by a drive to Altamont Springs for the Art, Craft and Wine Festival. More details coming soon!

- **December 1 – FCMC Holiday Party at the Bethesda Center**

More details as this gets closer, but expect the usual fun and games!

HAPPY OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS TO:

**Cindy Busch, Chuck Belinski, Linda French, Jeff Eakle,
Dave Talbert, Ken Tureski, Gary Kight, Steve Shap, Stan Sobatka,
Joan Wagner, Gregory Dehart & Patrick Morrow**

The *Road Runner* is published monthly for the First Coast Miata Club of Northeast Florida. The editor and the First Coast Miata Club assume no liability for information contained herein, or for injury or damages resulting from use of such information and should be used at the reader’s own discretion and risk. Neither contributors to the newsletter nor the editors express approval, authentication or encouragement of the contents. Neither the First Coast Miata Club, its officers, nor its members are responsible for injury or damages incurred during the events. All members are required to possess valid individual drivers licenses, insurance policies in accordance with Florida state law, and to follow all laws and regulations.



First Coast Miata Club
c/o Mike French
4027 Pinto Rd.
Middleburg FL 32068



It must be time for Halloween.

We're on the Web! Check us out!

Web Page: www.firstcoastmiataclub.org

Group Page: facebook.com/groups/firstcoastmiataclub

Florida man tries to break free from repo man's tow truck

Florida man is at it again, this time going one-on-one with a tow truck to prevent his Ford Super Duty from being repossessed. The incident took place in Homestead, Florida, and resulted in the arrest of Yohanys Lopez, the F-250's driver.

Lopez was behind on payments on the F-250. He saw the truck pulling away and ran to catch up in order to retrieve a few personal items. The tow truck driver saw Lopez enter the F-250, so he parked his F-450 and approached Lopez. He also began filming the incident on his phone. Lopez fired up his truck and made an unsuccessful attempt to free it from the tow truck. As the rear wheels were already in the air, it was never going to end well.

The F-450 never really fights back as there isn't anyone behind the wheel. The F-250 is in four-wheel drive, so it does have a bit of pull from the front end. There are some gnarly snapping and grinding sounds as the F-250 struggles to free itself. The rear end of the truck is a hot mess by the end of the footage. The truck made it to the ground but couldn't break free from the safety chains.

Police arrested Lopez and he's facing grand theft and criminal mischief charges.

