

# Road Runner



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR  
THE MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF THE FIRST  
COAST MIATA CLUB

August 2018

## First Coast Miata Club

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## THIRD TIME'S A CHARM - POWELL'S REVISITED

**DESTINATION:** Powell's Dairy Freeze in Starke FL

**WHEN:** Saturday, August 18, 2018

**START:** Baldwin Park N' Ride (US 301 and US 90) W/ Beaver St,  
Baldwin FL 32234 at 6 pm

**DEPART:** 6:30 pm sharp

The drive will be 55 miles of all back road driving through a rural setting. The roads will be fun and traffic almost nonexistent. After a great summer evening of MIATA driving, nothing is better than some good old fashion burgers, dogs, French fries and great MILK SHAKES, and Powell's has some of the BEST!

So all you MIATAPHILES mark your calendars, shine all those terrific A's, B's, C's and D's and we will see everyone on the 18th! We all scream for ice cream and Miatas!

If you have any question just call Jim Sparks at 904-635-6030.

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## Redefining a Legend: How Mazda Designed the 4th Generation MX-5 Miata

### Part I: Teamwork Makes the Dream Work (Parts 3 & 4 will be in future newsletters)

Back in 2011, designers from Japan, the U.S. and Europe, led by MX-5 Chief Designer Masashi Nakayama (MX-5 program manager since July 2016) and under the direction of Ikuo Maeda, Mazda's global head of design, were tasked with redefining Mazda's legendary roadster. Program Manager Nobuhiro Yamamoto kicked off their efforts by setting targets for what would define the next-generation MX-5—a vehicle whose size and weight they knew would be more comparable to the first-generation's than any that had come since, with the objective to “innovate in order to preserve.”

Their work—and the work of teams from Mazda Corporation in Hiroshima and Tokyo, Japan; Irvine, California-based Mazda Design Americas; and the Frankfurt, German-based Mazda Design Europe shaped Mazda's smallest but perhaps most vital car. All of the design departments had to work under a very difficult fact: the MX-5 is timeless, somehow being both classic and thoroughly modern at the same time. They had to figure out how to make the car appeal to a new set of buyers without alienating those who made it the best-selling roadster of all time.

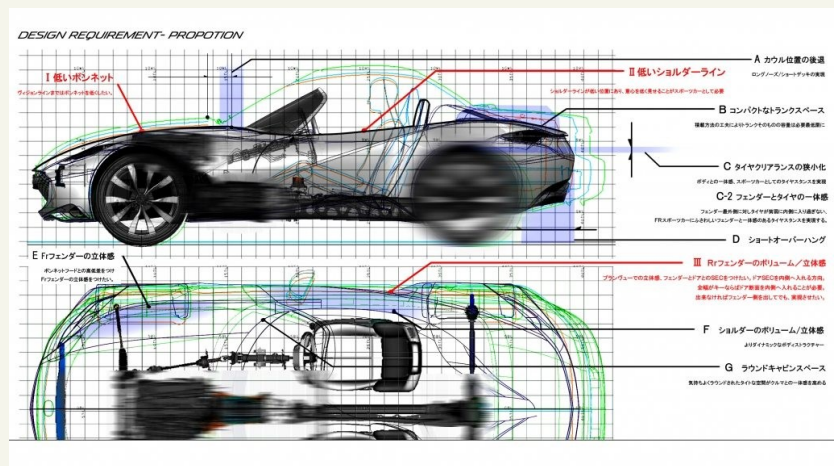
Upon setting targets, the program team set proportions of the MX-5. Rather than retaining the familiar, somewhat symmetrical shape, with the cabin in the middle of the car, the lines of KODO—Soul of Motion design called for a cab-rearward look, evolving the car's proportions with some of the same appeal of exotic, European roadsters of yore. Designers and engineers moved the windshield back 70mm from where it had always been.

With the MX-5's “hard points”—where the structural elements of the car like the windshield would be—set, the teams were provided three objectives for Mazda's next-gen sports car: Beautiful proportions, a roof opens and closes beautifully and details that tickle minds of enthusiasts. The teams had to create a car that complemented the KODO design language but also expanded upon it in a way that was unique to the MX-5.

“Our goal was to find a solution to reach that goal. Therefore we defined a task to ourselves, which was to satisfy seemingly conflicting elements of ‘simple and distinct image’ and ‘emotional and expressive image’ at the same time,” said Nakayama.

“We made a commitment to never freeze the design until we get there. Upholding this high goal, the journey of developing this car's design had begun.”

In June 2011, all of the studios submitted 1/4-scale clay models showcasing what they felt the next generation MX-5 should look like for evaluation. Each brought unique details that deserved consideration.



## Part II: Focusing Energy

After the initial proposals, themes were narrowed down to one study from Japan and one from the Irvine, California-based Mazda Design Americas. Sharing their proposals in February 2012, they began sharpening their focus on what the production 2016 MX-5 roadster would be.

The Mazda Design Americas full-size proposal used sharp, aggressive lines to push the purity and spirit of the roadster. Mazda Design Japan's design expressed movement through changing surface volumes. Clay modeler Yukiharu Asano worked through Japan's Golden Week holiday in May 2012 (when the office is ordinarily closed) with MX-5 Design Chief Masashi Nakayama to hone their proposal until Asano had an "ah ha!" moment. Breakthrough. They had found their design.

When the American design team arrived in Japan to share their final proposal, both teams sat down together to go over their designs. Nakayama felt the American proposal didn't capture raw emotional excitement in a way that would captivate enthusiasts. The U.S. team felt there was still too much of the first-generation car tied up in the Japanese proposal. Progress needed to be made to get this small, yet crucial, vehicle perfect, as it would be the car that would anchor the entire Mazda brand. The fact that the U.S. is the MX-5's largest market was further ground for keeping the dialogue alive and open between the two design centers.

Both Japanese and U.S. designers worked on an interior theme. Derek Jenkins, who was the U.S. director of the design at the time, and Julien Montousse, the current design director who was the lead on interior design out of Irvine, went to Japan to further refine the U.S.-developed concept.

The Japanese theme was realistic for production but was too voluminous given the fourth-generation MX-5's slimmed-down exterior proportions. The design Montousse worked on was driver-focused and looked svelte, but it lacked the simplicity Nakayama and Maeda wanted.

Still, it was a start, and the Japanese team requested Montousse spend the next six months in Hiroshima to hone his theme into what would become the MX-5's interior.

As progress continued in Japan, Montousse and Masato Ogawa, interior design manager in Japan, led development of the MX-5's cabin with a focus on breaking down the feeling of being contained in a car. One of the ways they accomplished this goal was to make interior panels body-colored, with the fenders feeding a visual illusion that they flowed into the car. Because custom design cues like this can be expensive to produce and lost between the time when the design team creates them and the engineering team builds them for production, the design team positioned the door panels as an aftermarket accessory—buy the car with black panels and swap them at the dealer. The engineering team supported the idea, thankfully.

In some prototype "mules"—chopped-down third-generation MX-5s that served as testers for the fourth-generation car—designers placed body-colored interior panels at the top of the doors and plastic bumps above the front wheel wells to simulate what the driver of the fourth-gen MX-5 would see. Their goal was to show how the production car would feel to drive, visually, psychologically and emotionally.

On October 3, 2012, all of the teams converged for their final proposals, with the Japanese theme leading the way with overall direction and the U.S. and European themes providing details to make the MX-5 stand out. Mazda designers shared the goal of making a car that looked and felt uniquely Japanese, yet it was globally relevant. Mission: Accomplished.

## The Drive-In Drive That Took A Wrong Turn, or Two

The trip to Ocala to meet with The Villages Miata Club, have dinner, then revel in the nostalgia of a drive-in movie in a convertible started well, but took some unexpected turns.

A few days prior to the event, dinner plans changed. We were warned the theater filled up fast and early so it was decided to dine at their concession. No problem. Then came the day of the event.

At the Sunoco Station in Salt Springs the caravan took a comfort break and things took another turn. Gary & Rachel's Miata died when they tried to leave. Gary made several attempts to get going. Each time the car would start, then die seconds later. After considering the options, the caravan went ahead and Mike and Linda, the Tail Gunners, stayed to lend aid if they could, and keep company. Several more attempts to start Gary's car failed. The Sunoco was well stocked with all kinds of stuff but didn't have a 2002 fuel filter. (Joking. They did seem to have every other kind of car part though.) After much hood looking, wire wiggling and chin scratching, AAA was called for a tow. Help was coming in 1 hour and 40 minutes. It was then 4:30 pm.

As the foursome waited, message traffic from John and the caravan said they met with "the village people" but ran into torrential rain. Another change of plans. An indoor theater instead of the drive-in.

Back at the Sunoco, an hour of the 1 hour and 40 minute wait time had elapsed when AAA called and said the driver they scheduled said he didn't want to drive that far and turned back. They were seeking another tow company. They'd call back.



Dining at the Sunoco was ok. They had a Subway inside, but it was out of chicken and cucumbers. No matter, change of dinner plans. Go with beef. The dining area there was unique, one table surrounded by racks of hunter clothing, fishing lures, beef jerky, baby food, beauty products, and every kind of candy bar, snack and beverage known to man. Also, every kind of "man" came into the station. This was a busy place. Not one minute went by without another customer arriving. There were all kinds of people to be seen and they were dressed in every conceivable way; barefoot, flip flops, tats, hats, daisy dukes, plumber view pants, see-through tops, swimsuits and all bathed in various scented mixtures of sweat, perfume, bug spray and marijuana.

At 6:45, AAA called back. They had a tow truck, but he'd be another two hours getting to the Sunoco. There was no choice but to wait. Gary wanted to give the car another go but was afraid it would die again and then they'd be stranded along a two-lane deserted road. We bought some playing cards and checked in with the caravan.

They were out of the movie and having fun with the "village people". They sent a selfie of them using the light of their cell phones to read menus at the World of Beer in Spanish Springs.

At the Sunoco, the beer cave and wine displays were looking better and better. After 3 or so more hours, or 10:10 pm, the tow truck finally arrived at the Sunoco. Problem, it wasn't a flatbed. Despite the driver's assurance, there was concern that lifting the rear of the Miata high enough to tow would tear the bumper off the front end. The driver left empty-handed. The Sunoco was now closed and the foursome was alone.

Gary decided to give the car another try for the umpteenth time. It would either run or die. The angels smiled this time as the engine caught! Gary revved it up and FLEW out of the parking lot! If it died, the momentum alone was going to get him the 70 miles home. Mike and Linda followed in hot pursuit. Everyone held their collective breaths through miles of dark, unpopulated roads first, then dozens of stops at traffic lights. Fortune continued to smile and Gary and Rachel got home safe and sound at the stroke of midnight.



All-in-all, not the event that was planned, but still one to remember.

## A Thank You Note

Most of you reading this have been members much longer than we have, so are already aware of what wonderful human beings Linda and Mike French are. Rachel and I were recently witnesses to how truly selfless and caring they are.

Who willingly sits in a gas station in the middle of nowhere for six hours? No matter how good the provisions and people watching, that's a long time! However, the old expression rang true that day – time really does fly when you're having fun. Linda and Mike turned a stressful situation into an enjoyable evening with friends.

We can't thank them enough for their kindness. We are also thankful to the rest of the group for turning around to offer assistance, and the texts the next day to check up on us.

We are proud to be part of such a great club, with members who look out for each other.

Thank you!

Gary Kight and Rachel Schwerdtfeger



## **FCMC Events Calendar**

- **August 14 6:30 pm - Monthly Club Meeting**

The meeting will be held at Tom & Betty's Restaurant at 2134 Park Ave, Orange Park FL 32073. The meeting starts at 7 pm but come as early as you can to get the most out of your evening. Enjoy dinner at your leisure and mingle with your Miata friends. There is lots to talk about. What an evening!

- **August 18 6:00 pm - Powell's Take 3**

With the sweltering heat of a Florida summer day behind you, what better way to enjoy your Miata than to drop your top and take an evening drive with the end result being some classic American food like burgers and fries and ice cream! See the front page for all the details.

- **September 11 6:30 pm Monthly Club Meeting**

The meeting location is to be determined

### **Happy August Birthdays To:**

**Mary Lyons, Mike French, Gloria Talbert, Lance Moore, Phillip Cram, Sandra Stockwell, Nancy Rentz, Paul Hellings, Robin Graham & Mary Frisbie**

### **Welcome To Our Newest Members:**

**Jeff & Mandy Carling and Bob & Ann Liner**

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



Redneck Wheelchair 3

**We're on the Web! Check us out!**  
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## **'I am now a woman': Man changes birth certificate to save on car insurance**

A man in Alberta, Canada wanted to buy a new Chevy Cruze, but being a male and in his early 20s, and with a less-than-perfect driving record, he was shocked at the cost of insurance: \$4,500 a year.

So he became a woman. OK, biologically he remains a man. There were no surgeries and he doesn't literally identify as female. But the man, David, says he changed his gender to female on his government-issued identification. Wait, how's that? "I have taken advantage of a loophole," he says.

He got the idea when, stunned by that \$4,500 quote, he asked the insurance agent what coverage would cost if he were a woman. The answer: \$3,400.

"I was pretty angry about that. And I didn't feel like getting screwed over any more," he said. "So I asked them to change my gender on my auto policy, and she's like, we can't do that."

So he found another way. Alberta is one of several Canadian provinces where residents can legally change the sex on their birth certificates by just checking a different box. You simply need a note from a doctor or psychologist saying you identify as a different gender.

"It was pretty simple. I just basically asked for it and told (the doctor) that I identify as a woman, or I'd like to identify as a woman, and he wrote me the letter I wanted," David told CBC. It was a lie, of course, but once you've gotten your birth certificate amended, it's a snap to get your driver's license changed, and then bring on those sweet savings in that sweet, sweet Chevy Cruze. Worth it, right?

David thinks so. "I am now a woman ... I now pay \$1,100 less for auto insurance. I won. The end," he wrote on Reddit.