



Wheels in Motion

January 2023



Photo by Dennis Laslo



Wheels in Motion

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A night sky filled with golden fireworks and stars. The fireworks are in various stages of explosion, creating a vibrant display of light. The stars are scattered across the dark blue background, adding to the festive atmosphere.

HAPPY
New Year

Upcoming Events

SCCA at Sebring

Saturday, January 14th
Details on page 12

Car Show at Herons Glen

Sunday, January 15th
Details on page 11

Naples Zoo

Thursday, January 26th
Details on page 12

Chilli Cookoff

Saturday, February 11th
Details on page 13

Everglades Seafood Festival

Saturday, February 18th
Details on page 13

Sun Riders Miata Club Event

Sunday, February 19th
Details on page 13

Everyglades City Boardwalk Tours

Saturday, February 25th
Details on page 13

Annual Picnic & Election

Saturday, March 18th
Lakes Park, Ft Myers
This year it will not be catered,
It will be a BOYF (Bring Your Own Food)
Details as they become available

Monthly Meeting

Thursday, January 12th

Beef O'Brady's

1105 Taylor Road, Punta Gorda, FL
(map on the next page)

Monthly meetings are the 2nd Thursday of the month

Dinner at 5pm and meeting at 6pm.
Please RSVP to Kathy Engler by January 7th
at kathy.engler@gmail.com

Cover Photos:

This months front and inside (pages 13 & 14) photographs of this Sole Red MX-5 Miata at the Ed Howard Dealership were taken and enhanced by Dennis Laslo, our Membership Chairman. Back cover is from Sandy Bowers, but she wishes the event that made these photos possible, had never happened so she didn't have to send it!

JUST FOR FUN

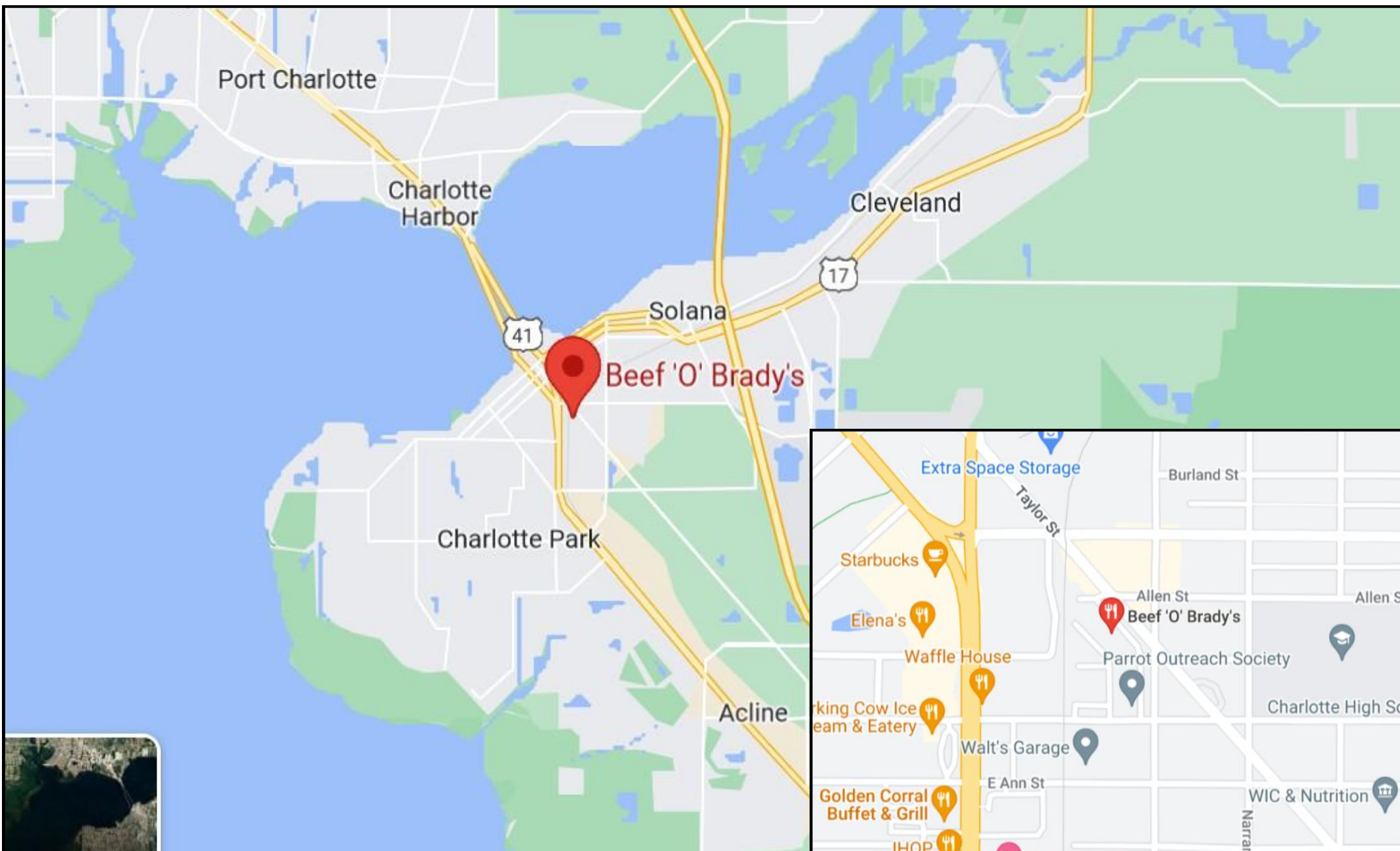
Breakfast Socializer:

Tuesday, January 24th

**Metro Dinner, 1720 Tamiami Trail Suite 100,
Port Charlotte, FL 33948.**

RSVP to Judy at memmx5swf@yahoo.com by January 20th

Map to the Miata Club General Membership Meeting



From the Editor's Desk

By Ron Lindensmith

Welcome to the January 2023 edition of the Miata Club of Southwest Florida newsletter. Lets start with a HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope everybody had a wonderful Holiday. And with a bit of luck we won't have another pandemic or a Cat 4 hurricane for many years! And in 2023 we should have a lot more Miata Club trips and events to pick from!

For starters we have the drive on back roads to Sebring for the big SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) race on Saturday, **January 14th** (yes, the day and date have changed). Pete Ambrus is leading it and I plan to be on this trip for sure. Even if the weather is damp (unlikely) I'd go because races cars in the wet is way fun to watch!

Then on Thursday, January 26th Gary Stuber will lead us to the Naples Zoo. This is a simple trip and everybody is on their own at the zoo. Some will give it a quick walk thru, some will spend more time looking and my wife, Elaine, and I will likely be the last to leave as we will be taking lots of photos! It's possible there may be some kind of a meet up at a restaurant or a park for a picnic lunch... maybe. But this is in season and restaurants are crowded.

We start off February with a Chili Cook-off at the home of Dick & Jean Fischer on Saturday the 11th. I wish I could be there, but I have Saltwater Aquarium / Coral Conference in Lakeland, FL that weekend.

There are a couple of possibilities for later in February. We were considering a trip to Everglades City on the Saturday, February 25th to do a park boardwalk in the morning, have lunch at the Havana Café and then another boardwalk before heading home. There is also a Seafood Festival in Everglades City the weekend before, on Saturday the 18th. The Miata Club from South Florida (Miami area) will be there as well. On that same weekend the Sun Riders Miata Club (Tampa) will be doing an event. As I understand it, they will be doing a tour of a winery somewhere south of Bradenton, then doing lunch and after that, driving the 'Tail of the Gecko'. Goggle it. I believe it's on a road(s) east of I-75 and runs north, kind of parallel to I-75. Members of our club are welcome to join them. Just go to their website, find their calendar of trips and RSVP for it. I'm pretty sure I'll be on this one.

Everyone Needs a Little Sunshine

By Sandy Cole

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL;

I apologize for not getting a report into the newsletter last month. (*editor's note: the truth is, Sandy sent one to me and I lost it*). I trust you each had a HAPPY and safe Thanksgiving. And, hopefully the holidays will bring lots of love, hope, peace and joy. The activity and event schedule is filling up. That is really exciting. I hope many of you can support the members planning efforts and find joy in sharing the time together. YOUR ideas and suggestions are also encouraged. So please speak up.

There is no doubt that Hurricane IAN left a mark on each of us in some way. Several members had huge losses (homes, cars, boats, etc). Unfortunately, I don't know all who were affected, but suggest we pray for victims in general. Until last Saturday, there had been NO other requests for Sunshine, to my knowledge. I am so very sorry to report that Don Cole, my beloved husband of 61+ years passed away. Fortunately he did not suffer and I am blessed with lots of love, care and support. For future, Please be sure to let me know via email, phone or otherwise if you are aware of other needs.

December Birthdays are still celebrated despite all the holiday festivities. Please acknowledge the following members. Sandy Bowers, William Dean, Roy Gosse, Nylene Henry, Hannelore Kahles, Brenda Keith, Elaine Weissborn and, Judy Western. We hope you all have a very Happy Birthday.

As a side, I would like to step down from my SUNSHINE LADY position. (it can be Sir or Mr. Sunshine). It has been a terrific way to put names with faces and has really helped me to feel a real connection with my fellow MIATA owners. If you would like to talk with me about my responsibilities, please call me. It's a HAPPY and REWARDING job.

'THERE IS A LESSON TO BE LEARNED WITH EVERY EXPERIENCE'

ENJOY LIFE'S BLESSINGS .

SUNSHINE SANDY

Have You Seen Any of the 2024 & Beyond Miata Guesses?

I've see and read a lot about the 2023 and other future Miata generations. A few are pretty tame and I tend to agree with most of them. I think the 2023 Miata will be very much like all the previous ND2 Miatas.

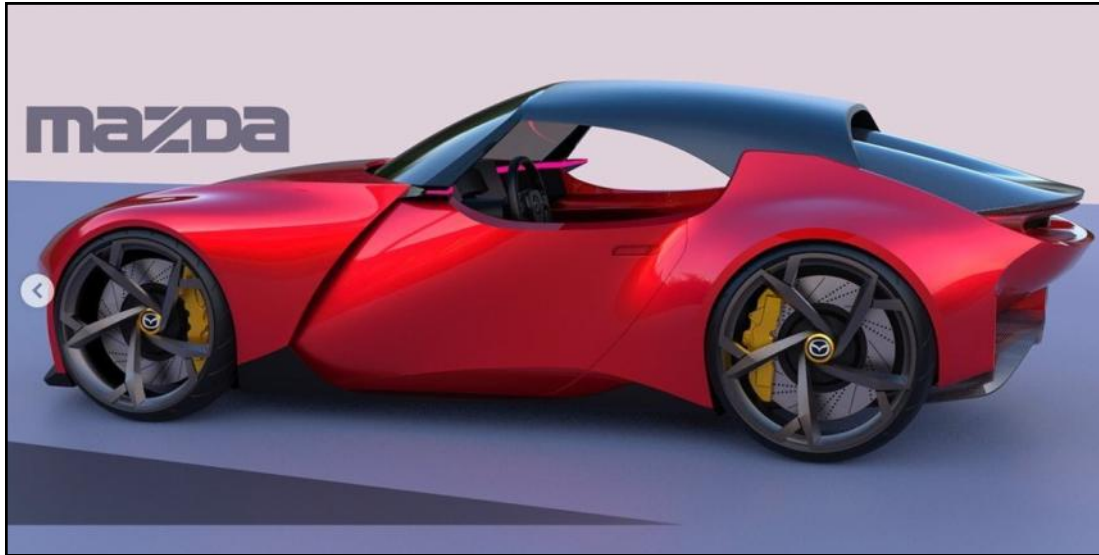
But some have been pushing other enhancements to the ND for 2023 or 2024. I read a promise of a turbo version making 255hp. And others offering slightly body changes like a new hood, or grille or both. And my favorite is wider rear fenders for bigger wheels and tires. Why would a Miata, with under 200hp, need wider wheels and tires?

Then it gets really crazy as they look a bit further down stream. Wilder body changes like a speedster version, or a true fastback coupe and even a sports wagon! One article claimed Mazda would hook up with Toyota and due a joint venture. Toyota has been big on this idea. The Toyota 86GT is half Toyota (body & interior) and half Subaru (chassis, engine, suspension). The Toyota Supra is half Toyota and half BMW Z4. So the talk is a Toyota version of the Miata with a turbo 4 cylinder and the Mazda version with a Wankel rotary!

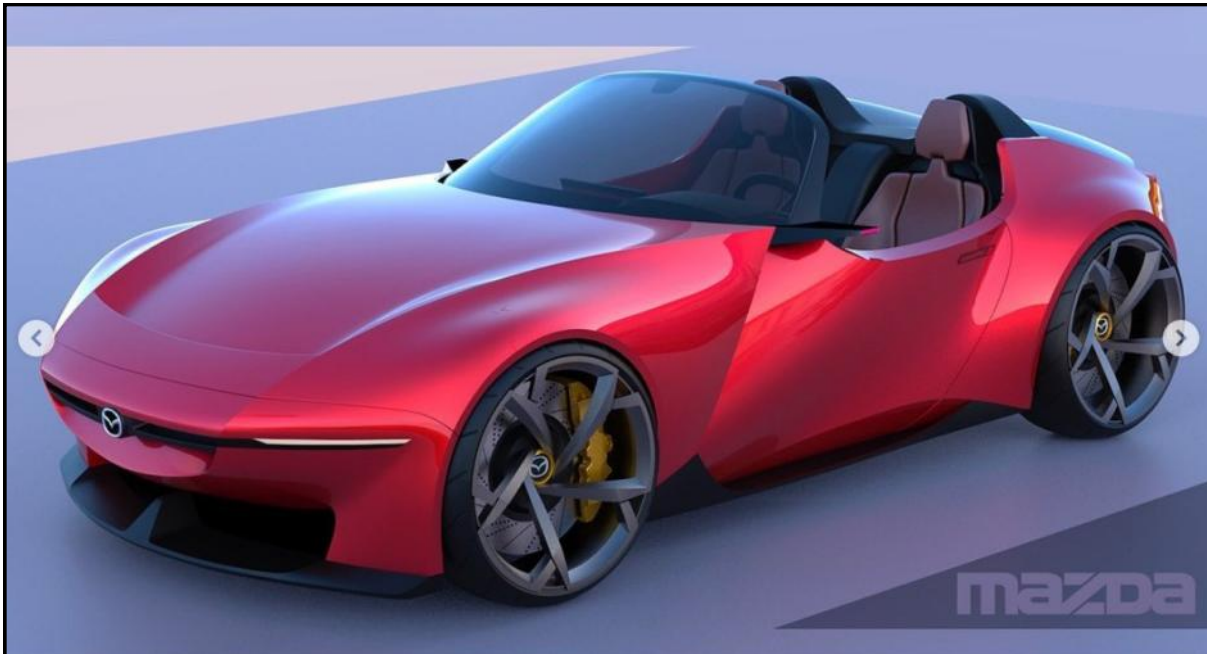
The more likely candidate in my humble opinion is, that about 2024 or 2025, the NE generation will debut as a new body and a hybrid. Probably still a 4 cylinder and maybe at slightly less horsepower, mated to an electric motor with enough battery power to get you 100+ miles. But the electric motor can also assist the internal combustion engine under heavy acceleration giving it 0-60mph times similar to, or slightly better than the current ND package.



...and Here Are the Really Crazy Ideas!



According to a photo Ross Clark (a MCSWF member) saw, he says, "The 2024 Miata has a tribute to the first gen NA's."



2023



1,280 × 720



1,891 × 1,080



2023
Miata
CONCEPT



1,280 × 720

Mazda Vision Study Concept Previewed As Sleek Sports Coupe

By:Adrian Padeanu

Mazda has updated its mid-term agenda by accelerating plans to embrace electrification in the coming years in light of increasingly stringent emissions regulations. While this sounds like an announcement virtually every other automaker has made or is about to, something else caught our attention. Although it's not mentioned in the press release, an accompanying video shows a mysterious sports coupe. What is it? A "Vision Study Model" for now.

Posted on Mazda Japan's official channel, the 36-minute-long video features President and CEO Akira Marumoto talking about the automaker's steps it needs to take toward reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. The last five minutes of the video reflect "Mazda's vision for the future," and the first thing you'll see is the MX-5 ND. Previous generations of the beloved Miata also make an appearance before a white coupe is shown.

Although we are tempted to say it's an early look at the fifth-generation MX-5, we may be getting ahead of ourselves. After all, the

achingly beautiful Vision Coupe Concept from 2017 never materialized into a production car. But what if it is the next Miata after all? The concept illustrates a coupe with a fixed metal roof, which has happened before as the NB received a true coupe derivative in Japan where only 179 units were ever sold.

Logic tells us those butterfly doors are reserved for the concept as a subsequent production car would have a regular setup. With zero details shared by Mazda, all we can do is speculate as to what this concept may portray. It does have the proportions of a rear-wheel-drive car judging by the short rear and a long hood to accommodate a longitudinally mounted engine.

The Japanese automaker has pledged to keep the RWD + ICE formula alive for the next-gen Miata. However, some form of electrification is expected to meet those tougher emissions regulations we mentioned earlier. The bulging fenders are an MX-5 trait while the round taillights split into halves make us think of the NB.

Overall, the concept gives us the impression it looks small enough to be a Miata rather than something more sophisticated to revive the RX. The rotary engine is officially coming back in 2023, but only to serve as a range extender rather than for a sports car application. Let's keep in mind an interesting MX-5 test mule was spotted a few months ago, so a new sports car is certainly on the way.

Editor's Note: I want this car!



Joe “The Barber” Reda Memorial Car Show



Sunday, January 15th, 2023 - 11:00am - 1:00pm

Please join us for the 7th and Final Car Rally

20651 Marathona Court (in the Preserve)

Free: Raffles, Food, Drinks

All antique cars and motorcycles welcome!

“Thank you for being my friend and for all your support over the years.”



Jesse Dunham at zoomzoom02@gmail.com

If you would like to show your Miata, come on out. Let me know at zoomzoom02@gmail.com.

I will rope off an area for us. there will be no judging of cars just show and tell.

Arrive half hour before the show. When I know how many will be there, I will email the directions.

All proceeds go to a local high school ROTC. If you have any questions call me, Jesse Dunham at 239-313-0152.

SCCA Sportscar Races at Sebring

**There was a bit of confusion
around the date of this event,**

the correct date is Saturday, January 14th

This will be a fun (hopefully) back roads drive to Sebring International Raceway that will take close to two hours. Anybody who wants to, can drive around the north side of the track to the airport on the east side and have breakfast at the airport restaurant (their breakfasts have been pretty good the few times I've been there).

Unlike past years, there is no need to stop at the SCCA Registration Office to check in and sign a waiver (yea!). Just go to the front gate and pay the Sebring attendant and you are in. The bad news is; it costs \$35/person and \$10 parking/car. The other bad news is, you are a spectator and limited to spectator areas. Unlike past years, you can NOT access the paddock and see the cars and crews. This is a huge event for the SCCA and paddock space is limited and spectator safety is paramount.

If you want to sign up for this event,

please RSVP to Pete Ambrus at pzambrus@yahoo.com.

Pete has been a member for 3 years now and the Events Committee want to thank him for stepping up to lead this event.

Once you have signed up you will get an email from me with more information as I get it. Right now we plan to leave from the Cracker Barrel off of exit 170 (Kings Highway) and I-75 as a starting point. Probably meet at 7:30am and plan to leave at 7:45am.

Visit the Naples Zoo



SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, January 26th

Gary Stuber, a new member of only 8 months, has offered to lead this trip to the Naples Zoo. Gary will start a caravan from Exit 191 on I-75 at 7:30am. There's a 7-11 / Mobil station right off the exit. This should work for those in Venice and points north, as the exit is at the south end of Venice and the north end of North Port.

Then we'll travel south from there on I-75. We'll stop at Exit 141 right after the bridge to pick up any from the Ft Myers locale around 8:30am. From there, we could stay on I-75 to Exit 105. That's the exit for the zoo.

Naples Zoo has a nice website for more information:

<https://www.napleszoo.org/plan-your-visit>

The plan is, after we arrive at the zoo, you are on your own and can wander as you please. Those interested can bring a picnic lunch to the zoo's area. There is also food to purchase (pizza, sandwiches and salads) - check out the website. Beer and wine is also available at the zoo, but you can't bring in your own alcoholic beverages!

Admission Prices for Naples Zoo:

Adults (ages 13 and up)....\$22.95

Children (ages 3 - 12)....\$14.95

Children ages 2 and under...FREE

Military Adults (w/ valid military ID)*...\$17.95

Please RSVP to Gary at stubonline@aol.com.

We will email info to those who RSVP for this trip.

Chili Cook-Off

Save the date: Saturday, February 11th

This will be a chance to show off your chili making skills!
It will be held at Dick & Jean Fischer's home in Port Charlotte.
More info will be emailed out to everybody when it is available.

Everglades Seafood Festival

Save the date: Saturday, February 18th

Dana Breda has stepped up to lead this event.
The Miata Club of South Florida (Miami area)
is doing a trip to this Festival as well.
More details will be emailed to you as they become available.

Tour of 3 Everglades Boardwalks & Lunch at the Havana Cafe in Everglades City

Save the date: Saturday, February 25th

We will meet in Ft Myers and caravan down to the
Big Cypress Oasis Visitor Center. Then visit the Kirby Storter Roadside
Park. Followed by lunch at the Havana Café and then a visit to the brand
new Big Cypress Boardwalk.
There is no leader for this trip, but if you volunteer, Ron Lindensmith and
Judy Western will help you with all the details.
Mrhandyrsl@hotmail.com or justducky1414@comcast.net

Sun Riders Miata Club

Winery Tour, Lunch and Drive the Tail of the Gecko

Save the date: Sunday, February 19th

The Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa is doing an event that looks
interesting. A tour of a winery somewhere south of Bradenton (I think),
then lunch somewhere nearby and then they will go drive
The Tail of the Gecko (a popular motorcycle tour)
that runs north along the east side of I-75.
Their Club is happy to have members of our Club join them.
All they ask is that you RSVP the leader of the trip. You can see the
event on their website calendar at:
<https://www.sunriders.com/calendar>

Retirements

We have two pending retirements from the
volunteer staff /Board of Directors of the Miata Club of Southwest Florida.

Our Sunshine Lady, Sandy Cole, would like
to have somebody step up to be
the new Sunshine (Person) and take her place.

Our Event s Coordinator, Donna Noyes,
is stepping down from her position.

Both of these valuable members will be missed and the Club needs
somebody to step forward to take over these positions.

Contact any Board Member if you want more information.



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2022 MX-5

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Photo of the Month



Photo by Dennis Laslo



Photo by Dennis Laslo



Recently, Mazda North America Operations announced updates to the 2023 Mazda MX-5 Miata. The new MX-5 continues Mazda's long-standing tradition of pure, effortless, joyful driving. Well-balanced, light-weight, with great power-to-weight ratio are features that make the MX-5 a popular car to drivers. To add a personalized touch to the MX-5 Miata, clients can pick new exterior paint color options in Zircon Sand.

All MX-5 Miata models will have a front engine, rear-wheel drive layout. It will be powered by a Skyactiv-G 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine producing 181 horsepower at 7,000 rpm, with 151 lb-ft of torque at 4,000 rpm matched to a six-speed transmission. MX-5 Miata Sport and Club variants are paired exclusively with a six-speed manual transmission, while the MX-5 Miata Grand Touring has either a manual transmission or a quick-shifting six-speed automatic transmission with steering wheel-mounted paddle shifters.

The well-received Kinematic Posture Control (KPC) will still be featured in the 2023 MX-5 Miata. Mazda developed the software-based suspension performance technology and it manages different vehicle systems to deliver improved precision and confidence to the MX-5 during high-g cornering, working as a harmonious extension of the driver's body

without adding weight to the vehicle. MX-5's rear suspension helps in keeping the car planted when braking, while the KPC applies a very slight brake to the inner rear wheel during high-g cornering. This pulls the corner down, minimizing body roll, and enabling a more linear feel to the steering response in tight or rough corners. When accelerating through a corner, it uses a slightly stronger braking, improving the limited slip effect.

MX-5 Miata Sport

The MX-5 Miata Sport will only have a soft black top, and it will come with a variety of standard features. With safety as the primary focus of the two-seat roadster, it is equipped with dual front airbags, side-impact airbags, and side-impact door beams on top of the numerous i-Activsense safety features it already has. i-Activsense safety features includes Smart city Brake Support, Blind Spot Monitoring with Rear Cross-Traffic Alert, and Lane Departure Warning.

Interior features of the MX-5 Miata Sport include a seven-inch full color touchscreen display with the Mazda Connect Infotainment system which can be integrated with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto and controlled through the multi-function commander knob. To help a wider range

of owners get their ideal driving position, the three-spoke, leather-wrapped steering wheel has a tilt and telescoping function. It also has mounted buttons so that controls for Bluetooth, audio, and cruise control are easily accessible without taking the drivers' eyes off the road. Other interior comfort features include cloth bucket seats, leather shift knob and parking brake, six-speaker audio, Mazda Advanced keyless entry, dual USB inputs, two removable cup holders, climate control, power doors, padded door armrest, and power windows with one-touch down feature.

Exterior features that come as standard include the metallic black 16-inch aluminum alloy wheels, dual exhaust, LED headlights and taillights, high mount brake light cover, gloss black door mirrors, variable-intermittent windshield wipers, daytime running lights, and rear glass window with defogger.

MX-5 Miata Club

The roadster's dynamics are further enhanced in the MX-5 Miata Club as it is sport-tuned with Bilstein dampers, limited slip differential, and front shock tower brace.

Other features of the MX-5 Miata Club include a black soft top and it adds sporty design elements like the gloss black front air dam, seat back trim, and rear lip spoiler. New for 2023, and available only for Club models and above is the Zircon Sand exterior paint. Additional features that can be seen in the 2023 Club model that is not available in the Sport model include the black metallic 17-inch aluminum alloy wheels, trunk lid-mounted shark fin antenna, LED daytime running lights, black cloth seats with light gray stitching, body-color high mount brake light cover, and vinyl leather material which can be seen throughout the interior of the model.

All Club models will have wireless Apple CarPlay which will enable either the driver or the passenger to connect easily to their enabled iPhone as soon as they enter the MX-5 to help them get on the road quicker. On top of all the standard Sport features, the Club model will also have SiriusXM satellite radio with a three-month trial subscription, Bose 9-speaker premium audio with a subwoofer and headrest speakers for both the driver and passenger seats so as to keep the premium experience even with the top down.

MX-5 Miata Club with Brembo BBS Recaro Package

Petrolheads will definitely appreciate the additional features that can be found in the MX-5 Miata Club with Brembo BBS Recaro Package. It includes Brembo front brakes with red-painted front and rear calipers, heated Recaro sport seats, and dark gunmetal 17-inch BBS forged wheels. Additional design features include an aero kit with gloss black side sill extensions as well as rear bumper skirt.

The MX-5 Miata Club with Brembo BBS Recaro package is available in either black roof RF, black soft top, or retractable flashback. By simply pushing a button, the MX-5 RF can open or close its roof, giving the MX-5 RF the look of either a sporty coupe or a stylish convertible.

MX-5 Miata Grand Touring

The ultimate package, the MX-5 Miata Grand Touring has all the valuable performance and dynamic features that can be found in the MX-5 Miata Club, adds a few more comforts, without compromising the authentic, lightweight standards of the MX-5 Miata. It is available in a black soft top or body-color RF, with additional safety features which include High Beam Control, Adaptive Front-lighting System, and Traffic Sign Recognition.

Instead of the gloss black front air dam and rear lip spoiler that can be seen on the Club, the Grand Touring models are equipped with dark silver 17-inch aluminum alloy wheels, door sill trim plates, and body-color heated door mirrors with auto-dim driver's door mirror. Automatic on and off function is featured on the headlights while the windshield wipers have rain sensors.

As an option, the MX-5 Miata Grand Touring can have Terracotta Nappa leather seats instead of the standard black leather seats. The dark interior accents are also then replaced with bright silver finishes as it adds heated leather seats, automatic climate control, Mazda Navigation system, three-year SiriusXM Traffic & Travel Link subscription, and auto-dim rearview mirror with HomeLink.

The 2023 MX-5 Miata will be on sale starting this winter.



HOW ABOUT AN NC MIATA WITH POP UP HEADLIGHTS!

It turns out, these are illegal in many countries.

But not in the US.

But car manufacturers don't do pop up headlights anymore because most of the world has banned them

Cape Coral Art Sale and Picnic

By Ron Lindensmith

What an event! The turn out was crazy!



The photo is not deceiving, only 2 out of 10 cars that had sent us an RSVP showed up. And Amy (standing by her car above) was the only one. She is a new member in the last couple of months, and I was embarrassed for the club at non-existent turnout! I did get emails from 2 members who backed out for scheduling reasons, but I expected about 8 cars to show up.



Key West Holiday Parade Trip

By Dana Breda

Another Miata Club of Southwest Florida Key West Holiday parade event has come and gone and it was a great time. 8 cars/16 club members met on Friday morning at the Cracker Barrel in Naples. Sandy and I stayed in Naples on Thursday night so we didn't have to face the early morning drive from Cape Coral. The group was on the road by 8:30 in the morning. A couple cars were running late but met us on the way. It was a little chilly at first, but we had the tops down right away. It often rains a little this time of year but we had a great day to travel this time – in fact, the weather was perfect all weekend.

On the trip down to the Keys we stopped at the Oasis rest area on US 41 where we walked the boardwalk and saw the gators, and at the RaceTrac in Florida City for fuel before heading south on US 1.

Our lunch stop was at the Islamorada Fish Company, a restaurant that's part of the Bass Pro complex there and is always enjoyed by the group. The huge tarpon were there in the lagoon as usual for all to see. After a great lunch, we broke ranks and made our way on down to our lodgings in Key West. Our dinner Friday night



was at the New York Pasta Garden, a place we've been to many times and that is right off Duval Street (and has parking, which is a big deal in Key West).

Saturday morning we all went our own way; some met for breakfast and others just toured the island. Sandy and I met the Wisnewskis for lunch at the Seaside Café at the Mansion, a place that's been rated #1 on Tripadvisor for the past couple years.

We met up at the staging area (a local school parking lot) for the parade at 4:00 pm to decorate our Miatas. The parade started a little after 7 pm; a very nice lady with a radio and a "Santa's Helper" T-shirt corralled us and we were off and waving to the kids. I didn't drive my car in





the parade again this year because of some modifications I've made to my car, but I did get a new video for the website and the Facebook page. Our Miatas have been in this parade every year since 1993 with the exception of 2020 – that's 28 years! Lots of people along the way recognize us and appreciate our participating. If you haven't been there, you cannot imagine how big the crowd can be and how many kids there are. The parade route is a little over a mile and a quarter in length and it's packed with people. I was told the parade would be limited to 55 participants (floats/car clubs/bands/etc.) this year but I counted 72! It's a big parade...

Lodging went sky-high after 2020/Covid but I noticed that prices had come down a bit this year.

Many thanks the members who came and the prep they did for our trip to Key West. We'll do it again next year; put it on your calendar!











Engineering Explained:

6 Reasons Why the Mazda MX-5 Is the Best Driver's Car Under \$50K

In the past year I've driven over 100 different cars, but for the money nothing has induced more joy than the 2016 Mazda Miata MX-5. Here are six reasons why, and also why I won't be buying one!



Photo Credit: Doug Berger, NWAPA Run to The Sun Event 2015

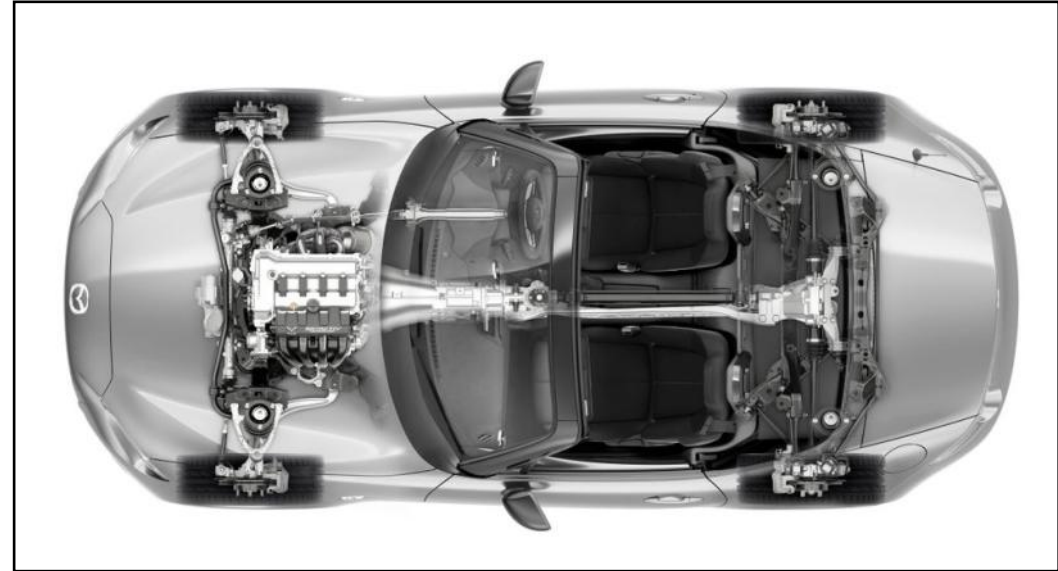
Today is a great time to be a petrolhead. There are truly incredible cars which can be obtained for less than \$50,000. I've driven the Nismo 370Z, the Scion FRS, the Subaru WRX & STI, the Ford Mustang GT & Eco-Boost, the VW GTI, and the Mitsubishi EVO, yet none of them have made me grin quite as wide a when I was behind the wheel of the 2016 Mazda Miata MX-5. Here's why:

1. Horsepower Is Not Everything
2. It's Not for Everybody
3. It Finally Looks Good
4. The Underdog Barks the Loudest
5. Three Perfect Pedals & Aggressive Gearing

Engineering Excellence

The Voice of Reason: Why I Won't Be Buying One

1. Horsepower Is Not Everything



If you take the weight of the eight cars I've listed above, the Miata weighs on average 988lbs (450kg) lighter than each. Can we reflect briefly on that?! We're talking about some of the most iconic affordable sports cars, and one literally weighs one thousand pounds less than the others?! It's remarkable to say the least. In a world where every year introduces a new Hellcat (oh hey, I've got more power than you), the Miata blazes its own unique trail, not even allowing the carbonfibre-tubbed Alfa Romeo 4C to beat it in weight in the US market.

It's hard for people to wrap their heads around unless they take the time to get behind the wheel, but horsepower truly isn't everything. There are certain laws of physics which you simply cannot avoid by adding weight. Lighter cars will be more agile, more nimble, have quicker steering response, better predictability and controllability, and ultimately more grip all else equal.

The critics will moan "if only it had just 50 more horsepower" without wondering why it doesn't. These statements are made without an understanding of how well weight, power, and cost are related. If your goal is to keep the car affordable, you can only pick one: low weight or high power. That's because adding power means bigger brakes, beefier axles, and a more robust drivetrain. From the inside out the car must become heavier

to compensate. Yes, you can add power and keep the weight down, but as the 4C demonstrates, the price skyrockets. The MX-5 manages to perfectly balance more than just the weight on each axle. Mazda has kept weight low while maintaining an incredibly affordable \$25k starting price.

2. It's Not for Everybody

The 2016 Mazda Miata MX-5: Best Drivers Car Under \$50K

Whether it's car makers, journalists, department stores, or coffee shops, they all share one thing in common. The vast majority attempt to meet the needs of the largest quantity of people possible, in the hopes of obtaining the biggest market share. Chances are, the Mazda Miata isn't right for you, and that's part of what makes it so incredible. Instead of pandering to the masses, Mazda stays true to only those who appreciate dynamic driving. There's no glove compartment. The sun visors are a cheap thin plastic. The cupholders are equally unimpressive. You're not buying this car because you want to check off a large list of features, you're buying it because you only care to tick one box: the joy of driving. Now don't let me lead you to believe the interior is heavily flawed. The seats are incredibly comfortable, well bolstered, and the seating position is low as it should be. My one complaint is that as someone over six feet, I wish the steering wheel could telescope. That said, I can't simultaneously brag that the car isn't made for everyone and then whine that it's not perfectly suited for me.

The car only seats two, the trunk fits a grocery trip, and the cabin noise levels are higher than most new cars. It even has what many might consider to be excessive body roll, although the precise amount of roll was dialed in by engineers determined to provide the car with the greatest feel. If you don't like driving, buy something else. If you're only mildly interested in cars, you'll be a regular CTzen after just one take behind the wheel.

3. It Finally Looks Good

As an engineer by trade, I try to avoid subjectivity, but the new MX-5's styling evokes an emotion I cannot deny. I've never thought of the Miata as particularly eye-catching, which is part of the reason why I have never tried one out prior to this generation. I've been fortunate enough to have

some dangerously appealing vehicles in my driveway, though rarely will a passerby comment. On day one of having the *Ceramic Metallic* ND at my garage door, within hours I'd already received two compliments by strangers. In fact, at a press event in Washington state, the Miata sat alongside a Rolls-Royce, Maybach, Jaguar F-Type, Cadillac ATS-V, Viper, Hellcat, and numerous others, and yet a gentleman came running over asking "is this the new MX-5?!" When you're trying to find the best meal on Yelp, you don't look at the number of dollar signs beside the restaurant. Instead, you look at the ratings and reviews; the MX-5 is 5 stars on the inside and out.



4. The Underdog Barks the Loudest

We live on a planet of eternal competition. People aren't satisfied unless what they're driving is the best. Their car is better than yours, period. Horsepower and 0-60mph figures will commonly be quoted as proof. Your Miata is dumb, and will get smoked at the lights, they'll boast. It's unfortunate that their ego prevents them from driving something truly more enjoyable. You won't be winning stop light races, you probably won't be posting the fastest lap times, and you're going to lose 9/10 rev battles. When it's all over though, on that perfect mountain road, no one is going to be smiling more for the amount of money they've spent. For less than \$30k, you'll experience a machine that flawlessly harmonizes

man and road.

5. Three Perfect Pedals & Aggressive Gearing



Photo Credit: Doug Berger, NWAPA Run to The Sun Event 2015

To be clear, all of the models I mentioned at the beginning of the article offer the correct number of pedals, but not so often is the combination executed so favorably. Shift throws are short, with moderate effort required and a unique notchy engagement ensuring the gear is in place, while the clutch pedal makes use of the entire travel. The sandwiched disc bites as soon as you begin releasing your foot from the floor, but it isn't fully engaged until you've released all the way. Take your time for smooth, precise shifts with absolute control, or hammer through them as fast as your feet allow. Both the brake and the throttle feel linear; there's no spike in the throttle to make the car appear to have better response than it really does. All three pedals provide the level of control you want (and expect) from something aimed at being a driver's car.

As far as the gearing, it's becoming all too common that the need to shift gears is being taken away from the driver. With tighter fuel economy restrictions, certain cars seemed to be geared for efficiency (looking at you,

VW GTI and Porsche Cayman) rather than outright speed. The Miata has one of the most aggressive gearboxes on the market, providing the joy of shifting gears and allowing for on-demand wheel slip under 40mph. Though I've never driven it, I'd imagine the Porsche Cayman GT4 might be the best driver's car period, but only if they gave it shorter gears.

6. Engineering Excellence

Engineering Insight: Holes in the Chassis?

When designing a driver's car, there are certain givens which allow for the greatest experience. Mid-engine (the Miata's 2.0-litre longitudinal I4 impressively sits behind the front axle), rear wheel drive, and a well-balanced weight distribution (50/50 for the MX-5, with a driver in the car). Arguably, the automobile is the most technically advanced product available to the masses for consumer use. Also debatable, the ND packs some of the best engineering into a modern-day car, budgets considered, and for that it deserves applause. Oh, and did I mention I managed 44 miles per gallon when I tested it out?



Free to a good home:

I have a car cover that fits 09-13 but my hunch is it will fit up to a 2015. The cover itself is of a gray fabric. We likely bought it around 2013. It does have a pocket for the antenna and if memory serves there are side mirror pockets as well. I'll gladly take it to the next event for whomever may want it or they are welcome to pick it up at my house in Ft. Myers.

[Amy Sherrets at wezoomzoom@hotmail.com](mailto:wezoomzoom@hotmail.com)

Dana Breda says: I still have the original Bilstein shocks with 40K miles and the front shock tower brace from my car (a 2014 NC).

I'd give them away for free.

[Dana Breda at dbreda@earthlink.net](mailto:dbreda@earthlink.net)

I've written a couple of articles in the past about easy-to-use waxes to eliminate problems with dirt and love bugs. This one is about cleaning the car before applying the wax.

After coming home from the Key West Holiday Parade, my car was coated with a black, greasy film which looked like it could be from aircraft or truck exhaust. I don't normally use soap on the car, but this time I gave it a good wash down with Dawn liquid. The film was gone and it looked pretty clean at that point. I then went over it lightly with a clay bar. The pictures below show what the bar took off the paint AFTER the Dawn scrub. A coat of wax after that and the paint looks like new. The clay will super-clean your windshield, too and the whole car can be done in 15-20 minutes.

You can get the bars from Amazon, Auto Zone etc.; they're cheap and reusable to a point. No need to buy the special lube for them, soapy water is fine.

Dana



The photo caption read:

New BMWs Basically on Clearance Sale

Editorial comment: I like a lot of the BMW product line, but I can certainly understand why this one is on sale.

That is probably the ugliest grilles I have ever seen...
twice as bad as the Edsel!



THE END

By Sandy Bowers



Just thought I would show you these beautiful photos!
A BIG truck hauling hurricane debris hit the back of our beautiful little Miata at a traffic light.

The guy didn't even know he hit Steve. Steve had to chase him down to get the info. Fortunately, the car is drivable.

Merry Christmas to us!