

January-March, 2006

Volume 12, Issue 1



HORIZONS

The Official Newsletter of the Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

President's Corner

Well, here we are, already a quarter of the way through 2006. The club is off to a good start this year, with a number of new officers coming in to take the reigns. In February, our good friends at Russell Mazda invited us over for another meeting held in their showroom. They rolled out the red carpet and really made us feel welcome. Mario Farias, the general sales manager at Russell, tells us they are planning a BIG event this summer. The tentative date is June 4 and the event is going to be the first-annual **Miata Summer Bash**. It will be held on the grounds at Russell Mazda in Clearwater. They have room for literally hundreds of enthusiasts' cars, so it could potentially be a really big event. Keep the date open and we'll be sure to let you know more details as they become available.

The upcoming April and May monthly meetings are being organized by Susie Beach and will be held at the **Lee Garden Chinese Restaurant** in Tampa (where we have met a few times in the past).

In March, Woody Woodbury leads us on a drive to **Roaring 20s Pizza 'n Pipes**, a unique restaurant near Ellenton that combines a 20's flair, a giant pipe organ,

and pizza! Here's hoping Woody will organize more great events like that for us!

While I've got your attention, you may note that this is the first newsletter of the year, and it covers three months instead of the usual two. This is because our newsletter editor, Kevin Morrison, has been very busy with other things and has not been receiving many submissions of material from you, the club members. The editor's job is to edit, not write, the newsletter; so please contribute material. Any time there is a gathering of club members, someone should volunteer (or be appointed) to write up a short summary of the event. A club like this is about building a community, and the best way to do that is to share our experiences with each other. Not everyone can attend every event, but we all love to hear about things that are going on.

Finally, I'd just like to say we're starting to see quite a few of the "new" Miata/MX-5s showing up in the club. The new model has been receiving glowing reviews in the automotive press and it seems our members agree. Whether you own a brand new one, or an original from 1990, the experience is the same - pure enjoyment!

LoAn Nguyen

PHOTOS FROM January-March



Above, the January meeting was held at Salsarita's in Oldsmar. Burritos and quesadillas abound!



Above and Right, the February meeting was at Russell Mazda, who were gracious hosts, as usual.



NA



NB



NC

The three generations of Miata MX-5s are the NA series ('90-'97), NB series ('99-'05) and the NC (2006+). These designations are the Mazda internal model codes and can be found in the VIN on each car. The practice of calling them M1 and M2 that became popular when the NB came out is not encouraged, since an M3 is, after all, a BMW.



2006 MX-5 Review

By Kat Bryce

My early thoughts on the new 2006 MX-5. I have been driving a 2006 sport in Winning Blue [she is still withholding her name] for a month now. My early impressions are.... WOW. I have been fortunate to have owned and driven a 1990, 1994 Automatic, a 2000 Sport and now a 2006

Sport, and by far the 2006 has the power all the others were lacking. The acceleration off of the line is really nice. And the brakes are just awesome. It is very sure with the ABS but she will also stop on a dime. This

took a little getting used to. The creature comforts are there too. I LOVE the stereo and cruise controls on the steering wheel. The stereo is very good and easy to hear top down or up. The one lever top is great too. What an improvement! I have learned how to easily raise and lower the top from the driver's seat. This was difficult in the 2000 and impossible for me in the 1994. The trunk space is really nice, however I'm a bit uncomfortable going spare-less. The only time I've ever needed a spare, the tire was not going to be patched, it was shredded! The behind the seats storage compartments are kinda, forget-about-it. I only



put things there that would be rarely used. They just are not very easy to use. Another creature comfort that has a lot of WOW factor for me is the A/C controls. You can direct the A/C to your legs, lap, face and windshield. The added lap air is really nice when running top down and you need added heat or A/C. Plus the controls are now a dial, no preset fan levels, I REALLY LIKE that! I wish the center console had storage instead of cup holders. There really isn't


good places to keep the cell phone, PDA, business cards, etc. I am an appraiser and for me they are a necessity. I've solved that with an organizer that I strap in the passenger seat. I

don't like the sunvisors. The old ones I used to keep the sun off my face no matter the direction I was heading. These will only shade the top of the windshield. But they are more inconspicuous for those who hated the sun-visors. I also feel the seats are just a little narrow and they push on my thighs. I'd like a little more leg room. I guess I'll just have to go on a diet. Sigh... Looking forward to more joy rides with my new toy.

Visit the club's resources on the web!




I'm sure you are all aware of the club's website at sunriders.com, but if you haven't visited in a while you might not be aware of what's available there. First and foremost, the club's event calendar is there, so you can find out about upcoming events. There's a collection of various tech articles and photos from past (way past) events. A page of links gives a sampling of the many other Miata-related websites. Finally, the Web Forum, at www.sunriders.com/forums/ gives you a place to ask questions and connect with other Miata owners in the area.

Another way the club communicates is the Yahoogroups email group. Found on the web at groups.yahoo.com/group/sunriders/ the Yahoo group is primarily an email discussion group. Once you subscribe to the group, you receive emails sent by other members of the group, and if you reply, the email goes to everyone in the group. It's a lively discussion and is really the heart of the club. Try it!



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NEW MEMBERS!

Please extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

Walter Szpila
Lee Bruckart
Matt Merryman
Alan Anderson
Richard Dalton
Brandy Wackerman
Manny Soler
Mary Dunkin
Barbara Moore
Mark Porter
Frank Johnson
Celine Davidson
Stephen Foster
Marcel Fecteau
Charles Hirt
Scott McEnelly
Jeff Bell
Vicky Reynolds

Remember, new members receive a complimentary name badge. Please contact LoAn (topless@sunriders.com) to place your order. Additional name badges can be ordered at only \$3.00 each.

Visit us on the Web!
At www.sunriders.com you can see the latest event schedule, update your member information, and participate in our web forum where you can get answers to tech questions or just chat about your car. Not yet a member? You can join and pay online!



Sun Rider Birthdays

January

Jan. 1 — Tim Fleishman
Jan. 19 — Mark Spahr

February

Feb. 1 — Brian Hollands
Feb. 3 — Ed Simon
Feb. 7 — Molly Norris
Feb. 15 — Daniel Anglin

March

3/7 Rosemary Woodbury
3/11 Rocco Waldhelm
3/21 Jan Reese
3/24 Scott Houston
3/29 Joe Wessling

April

4/2 Betty Welker
4/10 LoAn Nguyen
4/24 Ellen Rolleston
4/26 Steve Beach
4/28 William Flowers

Happy Birthday, Y'all.



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Stuff the Lawyers make us say: All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SunRiders Miata Club, Miata Club of America, Mazda Motors, or the Board of Directors of any of these organizations. Technical advice given is based on the writers' experience with their particular cars. Unless otherwise stated, these procedures are not "Factory Approved". SunRiders assumes no responsibility for the use or misuse of any information presented herein. Use any information at your own risk. Some assembly required, batteries not included. Keep away from small children and point away from face when lighting.



Calendar of Events

Saturday, March 25.

Drive some backroads to the Roaring 20's Pizza and Pipes near Ellenton for some good eats and wacky pipe organ music.

Meet at the St Pete College Allstate Campus in St. Pete at 11:45 AM, leaving at 12:00 sharp. For details call Woody Woodbury at 727-786-8745.

Wednesday April 19th.

Monthly Meeting at the Lee Garden Chinese Restaurant at 8309 W Hillsborough Ave. in Tampa. Meeting starts at 7PM.

Wednesday May 17th.

Monthly Meeting at the Lee Garden Chinese Restaurant at 8309 W Hillsborough Ave. in Tampa.

Sunday, June 4. Russell Mazda is hosting the first annual *Miata Summer Bash* at their headquarters in Clearwater. More details to come as they become available. Plan to be there! This will be a big event!

Wednesday, June 21 - Monthly meeting. Location TBA.

Miatas on the Internet

There is a wealth of Miata information on the internet. If you're new to Miatas, though, you may not know about them and it would take years to find it all. What follows is a small collection of very good resources for Miatas, including some of the more popular aftermarket vendors.

Vendors:

www.flyinmiata.com (turbos, superchargers)
www.finishlineperformance.com (factory parts)
www.miatamania.com (aftermarket parts)
www.good-win-racing.com (wheels, exhausts, etc)
trussville.buymazdaparts.com (factory parts)
www.brperformance.net (superchargers)
www.rspeed.net (aftermarket parts)
www.adrenalineracing.com (aftermarket parts)
www.partsgroup.com (used parts)
www.mazmart.com (used parts)

Resources:

www.miata.net
www.miata.net/garage
www.mazdamotorsports.com
www.miata.passionroad.com

Discussion:

www.miataforum.com
www.sunriders.com/forums
www.tampabaymiatas.net/forum
<http://brpforum.infopop.cc/6/ubb.x> (superchargers)

This is just a tiny sample of what's out there! No matter what you are looking for, the internet has something about it. Of course, there is a lot of bad information out there as well, so don't believe everything you read.

Miata Trivia!

Can you answer these questions?

1. In what year was the first M-edition made?
2. How many 1999 Anniversary Editions were made worldwide?
3. What color was the 1996 M Edition?
4. What brand of wheels were on the 1993 LE?
5. In what year was the 1.8L engine introduced?

Answers:

1994, 7500, Stoughton Mico, BBS, 1994

Product Reviews

by Kevin Morrison

I have installed quite a few upgrades to my 1994 R-package Miata in the last year or so. What follows is a few quick product reviews.

Suspension - Tein Basic coilover shocks.

All I can say is WOW. I'm very pleased with this setup. I lowered the car by about an inch in front and a half inch in back, while at the same time improving the ride quality about a million percent over my old Bilsteins. These shocks/springs absorb all kinds of bumps with unbelievable ease. The initial impression I got upon backing out of the driveway was "soft". After just a little driving, though, it's not soft, but rather "supple". The Teins have a shortened shock body compared to stock, which gains you about an inch of suspension travel. So, even though I lowered the car an inch or more, it doesn't bottom out on the bumpstops. I got the setup from Adrenaline Racing for about \$700.

Engine - BR Performance MP62 Supercharger.

This is basically a bigger version of the venerable M45 supercharger that's been available for Miatas for years. The bigger blower moves more air at lower psi, and produces less heat, so you get more power without spinning the bejesus out of the blower. That's the theory anyway, and after having this on my car for the last 3 months, I'm a believer. It's not scary monster crazy levels of power. BR Performance claims 180 hp at the wheels for the base kit (it's highly upgradeable, if you want more). The stock clutch still works fine, and nothing else on the car needed to be upgraded to compensate for more power. But

when you put the hammer down and the boost comes on, instead of the car saying "perhaps sometime soon I'll speed up for you", it says "LET'S GOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!" and the next thing you know you're in danger of getting a speeding ticket. Passing in traffic is a whole new experience and some restraint is required. The kit, though, is very high quality. The components are top-notch and the kit is very well thought out. I did have a few issues which were only partially my fault, and the instructions really need some work, but overall I'm very happy with the kit. The kit is available from BR Performance for about \$3800.

I.L. Motorsport dual hood lift kit.

After the supercharger installation the hood prop rod became mostly unusable, so I ordered this kit. It consists of two pneumatic lifts which attach to the hinges of the hood, and the front fender, just ahead of the firewall. For the fender end, you use an existing hole, but on the hinge end you have to drill a hole and tap it for an M6 bolt. Once that's done, the lifts just screw in place. I really like this modification! Once you pop the hood and give it a start upward, the lifts are strong enough to open the hood without your help. Conversely, on the way down, they help pull the hood closed, so you just drop it and let it latch itself. Finally, the lifts are chromed and look pretty nice under the hood. At \$89.95 from RSpeed, they are a little pricey, but I think worth it.

That's all I have room for this time, but I'll try to share some reviews of the other things I've bought for my car recently in future newsletters.

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Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

Visit the club's web page at www.sunriders.com

Participate in the forums: www.sunriders.com/forums/

Renew or join online: www.sunriders.com/membership.html



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