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HORIZONS

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

Third Generation Miata Unveiled at Geneva

By Kevin Morrison

The long awaited and much anticipated third generation Miata (NC series, in Mazda factory parlance) was unveiled this week at the Geneva Auto Show. The first question in everyone's mind is "how does it look?" and the second question is always "how much power?" Finally those questions have been answered, at least partially.

Stick this in your web browser and see for yourself, if you haven't already –

http://www.autoweek.com/files/specials/2005_geneva/mx5/pages/1.htm

For those of you not near a computer, here's a quick synopsis: It's most definitely a Miata. More closely related to the first generation car, the NA series, the NC abandons most of the styling cues employed in the NB series. Gone are the "coke bottle" contours of the lower side panels, and the "hump" in the rear decklid. The NC is almost a throwback to the "jellybean" look of the early Miata, with some definite aggression and attitude thrown in. The interior is thoroughly modern, and again takes some definite cues from the NA series car, and few from the NB.

The technical specs seem to still be a little up in the air, but what we know for sure is that the NC is 22 pounds heavier than the NB was, although that will vary with options. The engine is a 2.0 liter inline 4 cylinder producing somewhere in the neighborhood of 160 horsepower. The car will be available with a 5 or 6 speed manual, or an automatic transmission with F1-style paddle shifters behind the steering wheel. The body is 22 percent stiffer for flex and a whopping 47 percent stiffer for torsional rigidity. The engine has been moved rearward 5.3 inches to maintain the Miata's famous 50/50 weight distribution. Prominent fender arches accommodate 17 inch wheels with a track that is 3.0 inches wider in front and 2.1 inches wider in back. The wheel base is 2.6 inches longer and

the car is 0.8 inches longer, 1.6 inches wider, and 0.8 inches taller.

On the design, Mazda has the following to say:

"Seeing and touching are critical parts of the development, so it was crucial that the new Mazda MX-5 looks and feels like a spirited sports car. This is a discipline of



large and small details – the relationship of the wheels to the overall body shape at the grand end of the scale, down to the way the shift knob rests in the driver's hand at the fine end."

"The original Mazda MX-5 thrived for 16 years with but one major update. The design of the original 1990 model has been described as being a classic expression of simple, friendly and fun, for it carefully celebrated the virtues of compactness and efficiency.... The new MX-5 is clearly the son of its father..."

No doubt the Sun Riders will begin seeing NCs within our ranks within the next few months. The new Miata goes on sale this spring.

Steve and the Puzzling Problem

By Steve Cook

This is a story about the wrong way to go about diagnosing a problem. I recently moved my newly acquired 91 from the driveway to the yard. The car had been running great, and later in the day I went out to give my lovely bride of 34 years a drive in the pleasant sunshine. Imagine my surprise and embarrassment when it wouldn't start. CRANK, CRANK, CRANK.....NOTHING!!

Well, being the accomplished mechanic I envisioned myself to be, I diagnosed it as either a fuel or fire problem. You see, on BMW motorcycles and old Volkswagens, both of which I am well versed in, the problem is always either no fire or no fuel when it won't start. Having recently helped Owen Johns install his old rollbar in my new baby, I was quite familiar with the carpet on the package tray and the fuel pump area so that's where I started. I rolled back the carpet, took my trusty voltmeter and determined that I had no voltage to the fuel pump. And that's where I went WRONG...

Using my questionable (I know enough to get in trouble, as you'll see) wiring diagram reading skills, I figured out that the EFI main relay need to be checked. Sure enough, it checked bad. New relay \$70 so I borrowed one. NOT THE PROBLEM!! Next on the list was the circuit opening relay which provides power directly to the fuel pump. It checked good but didn't seem to be getting power from the ignition switch. (do ya see a pattern here?) Of course to get to the ignition switch and check it, assuming you are 270 lbs of mechanic, you need to remove the drivers seat. Oh, the ignition switch looked bad and didn't test right either...

Since it's too late to make this story short, I called Stuart at Just Miata and explained to him what I had done, all the detailed testing I had accomplished, and how I was ready to tow it over to him. He said "Steve, you are making the problem too big. Go back to the basics. Do you have spark? Do you have fuel? Pull a spark plug and check. Pull the fuel hose off and check." Well I had fire...had to be fuel, right? I opened up the intact plumbing and sprayed some starting fluid (never work on an old BMW without it) into the intake and the car started right up and ran until it used up the fluid. Stuart said to put a hose in the fuel tank

and see if you could hear the pump running. Well all those motorcycles, guns and Jimi Hendrix have pretty well ruined my hearing so I couldn't hear a thing. Besides I STILL WASN'T GETTING POWER TO THE PUMP!!

First thing Saturday morning, after about 20 hours invested in this endeavor, I decided to try one last thing. I pulled the fuel pump out, cleaned the connections, jumped it from a 12 volt battery and discovered the fuel pump was running but it was VERY QUIET. No wonder I couldn't hear it. I put everything back together, just knowing I had fixed it. I STILL WASN'T GETTING POWER TO THE PUMP!! De-feated, dejected, discouraged and disgusted, I plopped down in my recently replaced driver's seat. I thought "what the hell, I'll give it one more try".....AND IT STARTED!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I beeped the horn and the wife came out, the neighbor came out, the dog started barking, the sun was shining, it got warmer, LIFE WAS GOOD.

The problem is I STILL WASN'T GETTING POWER TO THE PUMP!! Could it be possible that I'm checking it wrong? Who cares. That's a problem for our next tech day. Come see me diagnose another problem or two. Should be a show!!

Lakes Rally Wrap-up

- by Loren Williams, Rallymaster

Wow, what a day! We had a total of 12 entries in February's "Lakes of Hillsborough" Rally. It was a fairly typical "TSD" style rally and I think even those who got lost had a good time with it. The rally was split into two "legs", with a short "free zone" in between the two. (and I just realized how bad that sounds... but since my proofreader is on strike, I'll leave it)

Scoring was probably a little more complex than necessary. Each team started with 500 points on each leg. From that, points were deducted for being off of the target mileage (5 per tenth over, 10 per tenth under... shortcuts were not encouraged!), and for being off of the target time (1 per minute late, 10 per minute early... speeding was highly discouraged!). From there, one point per question wrong (out of 41 questions) was deducted, and up to 5 bonus points were awarded for listing any of the 50 (yes, fifty) named lakes that we drove past.

Of the 12 entries, we only completely lost one. Larry Sells and his wife never appeared at dinner. I hope they made it home okay! The results made it look like Ed Simon and Steve Cook also got lost... which they did, sort of. Steve Cook came solo and rather than attempt the rally with no navigator, he wisely chose to tail Owen Johns and he did not submit a score sheet. Ed apparently got lost somewhere in the middle of the first leg,

Continued on page 4

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by LoAn Nguyen

Dear Sun Riding Friends,

Here we are, already in March! Thankfully, we have had a mild winter and quite a few glorious, top-down-weather days in between. Here's to many more miles of smiles, uncharted curves, and beautiful sunny skies!

Board Meeting

In support of our 2nd Strategic Goal, the SRMC Board held its very first meeting for 2005 on Tuesday, February 8th. Individual committee budgets were proposed, reviewed and approved. Work is currently underway to establish/solidify relationships with local dealerships with the aim to enhance benefits to our members by securing a financial sponsor for our various events (auto crosses, Christmas Party, driving events, etc.) The next Board Meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2005. As always, all members are invited and welcomed. If you wish to bring an

A Special Sun Rider Birthday



At the February monthly meeting, we wished longtime Sun Rider Ed Simon a happy birthday. According to Ed, he turned 39 for the 39th time. Ed has been a Sun Rider since the beginning and was responsible for managing our name tag program for the last 5 years! Thanks Ed!

issue for discussion, please contact Secretary Kathy Davis and request that it be included on the Agenda.

Membership Survey

You may recall that in previous issue of our newsletter, I made mention of conducting a survey of the membership to collect data that will help guide our efforts to improve the club's activities and better serve our members. The survey is included in this issue of our newsletter. Please remember take a few minutes to complete and return it to me. For your convenience, the back of the form has been pre-addressed. An on-line version of this survey is also available on our website, for those members who prefer to submit it electronically. Your valuable input and involvement are greatly appreciated.

Name Badge Program

Are you wearing your "button" to club meetings and events? This nifty little name badge serves as an icon to identify club members and their beloved Miata (or any Miata-support vehicle.) It conveys a positive impression to new members or visitors to our events and projects a sense of "belonging" and camaraderie. The button bears the wearer's name and an image of his/her car. I am pleased to announce that every member who joins the club in 2005 will receive a complimentary name badge. If you qualify, please contact me to place an order for yours. Additional name badges are available for only \$3 each.

See you at the next event!

LoAn Nguyen



Continued from page 2
but he did find his way to the restaurant later.

Congrats to our winners! Kevin and LoAn aced the rally about as well as I expected anyone to. The Flowers & Peppi teams were close behind and very close to each other both making a small mistake (possibly the same one) in the first leg that cost them some mileage. Prizes? Well, I started the day with a pair of movie passes. Quick thinking prompted me to poll the entrants and they were willing to contribute \$5/car for first and second place prizes. More quick thinking later got the manager of Cody's to donate \$20 in gift certificates! Very cool.

Back to the results... 4th place was the biggest surprise to me. Owen and company got completely lost and confused at one point, but the catch is that he'd already recorded his first leg time and mileage... he was effectively lost in the "free zone", which didn't count! So, he got to the finish really late, but his results were actually very good...almost good enough to take 2nd or 3rd! Way to go Owen. (even though we know his navigator and spouse, Faith, deserves all of the credit)

Thanks for coming to the rally, folks! I am definitely inspired to try another one, possibly later this year. I've even come up with a concept for it... "Calvinball". Get ready!



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Membership Survey

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Your valuable input is greatly appreciated! You can also fill out this survey on-line at <http://www.sunriders.com/asp/survey.asp>. If responding by mail, just fold this page up, put a stamp on it, and drop it in the mail.

ABOUT YOURSELF

Your Name (Optional):

1. How many years have you been a member?
2. Have you held any elected or appointed position? If yes, which one(s)?
3. Would you consider holding an elected or appointed position next year? If yes, which one?
4. Are you a member of Sun Riders Motorsports?
5. Do you own/drive a Miata?
6. Are you a member of any other car/truck/cycle club? If yes, which one(s)?

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Of the various SunRiders events, which ones do you like best and always try to attend?
2. Which ones do you like least and rarely or never attend?
3. Which ones do you want to see more of?
4. Would you consider organizing such an event in the future?
5. Do you attend the monthly membership meetings?
6. What do you like best about these meetings? What do you dislike about them?
7. Would you like to recommend a new restaurant for the next monthly meetings? Which one(s)?
8. Do you receive up-to-date information regarding our events and activities?
9. Are you receiving our newsletter in a timely manner?

SUN RIDERS MEMBERSHIP

1. Have you received our 2005 Membership Directory?
2. Do you feel that membership in our club has a valuable return on investment?
3. What additional benefits do you think our club could offer its members?
4. Would you recommend membership in our club to your friends and families?
5. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the club?
6. What are its weaknesses and opportunities for improvement?
7. Please include any additional comments, suggestions, or ideas you would like to offer. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Thanks for completing the Survey!

Place
Stamp
Here



Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay
P.O. Box 26071
Tampa, FL 33623-6071

NEW MEMBERS!

Please extend a warm welcome/welcome back to our newest members:

Janet Johnson

Sergio Schifano

Thomas Tomlinson

Pete Brown

Steve Cook

Mark Cookman

Robert Appleby

Remember, new members to join as of January 1st of this year 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.

If you have not received your New Member Welcoming Packet, please contact membership@sunriders.com



What's going on?

- by Loren Williams, VP & Events Coordinator

The first two months of 2005 were filled with events. Hopefully some of the event chairmen will write about their events, I'm not going to go into detail on all of them here. But, we had several drives, a rally, autocrosses, tech sessions, random dinners in addition to regular monthly meetings. There was a club event of some sort at least 3 weekends out of every month. We're a busy lot!

The schedule for March and April is pretty full, still lots of things going on. But the schedule beyond that is largely open. Please let me know if there is an event you'd like to organize. In particular, I'd like to see people volunteer to organize driving events on the 4th weekend of each month. Everything after May is open!

SUNRIDERS MIATA CLUB OF TAMPA BAY 2005 Officers

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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!

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Calendar of Events

March 12/13 - Two-Day Autocross, St. Pete. See sunridersmotorsports.com for details.

Wednesday, March 16 - Monthly meeting. 7:00PM, Ya Ya's Flame Broiled Chicken. 1390 34th St. N. St. Petersburg. Tire kicking in the parking lot at 6:30.

Saturday, March 19 - Mystery Drive. Cancelled, will be rescheduled.

Sunday, March 20, 4pm - "Night of Relaxation" Party at Steve & Susie Beach's house, call Kathy at 727-415-0479.

Saturday, March 26 - Miata Wax & Detail Session (details not available, watch the email list or contact Steve Cook)

Saturday, April 2 - Dade City Run - joe@sunriders.com for more details.

Saturday, April 9 - Autocross, St. Pete.

Sunday, April 10 - Tech Session at George Andreu's warehouse - loren@sunriders.com for more details

Saturday, April 16 - Winery trip (possible camping) - Jonathan Skinner - jonathan@sunriders.com for more details.

Wednesday, April 20 - Monthly meeting. 7:00PM, Ya Ya's Flame Broiled Chicken. 1390 34th St. N. St. Petersburg. Tire kicking in the parking lot at 6:30.

April 22-24 - Savannah weekend trip, Kat Bryce miatakat@earthlink.net for more details

Springtime in Savannah

by Rocco Waldhelm and Pam Barker

We hope you're planning to come with us to Savannah in April. Springtime is going to be a great time to be in Savannah with beautiful weather, spring flowers, good friends and new friends, and lots of fun.

Members from both the Sun Riders Miata Club and the Carolinas Miata Club will be attending this event. Susie and Steve Beach will be leading the contingent that travels from Tampa on Friday morning, April 22nd and returns on Sunday evening, April 24th.

This prepaid trip includes: 2 nights stay at the Baymont Inn, a 90-minute walking Ghost Tour on Friday night, a trolley tour of the Historic District on Saturday morning, dinner on Saturday night at The Lady and Sons Restaurant, and a breakfast buffet with an ocean view on Sunday morning at the Dolphin Reef Restaurant on Tybee Island.

Detailed itinerary information can be found here:

<http://www.carolinasmiatclub.com/calendar/Savannah.htm>

The trip cost breaks down as follows:

	Per Couple	Per Single
Room (2 nights)	\$152.32	\$152.32
Ghost Tour	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
Trolley Tour	\$ 40.00	\$ 20.00
Saturday Dinner	\$ 46.58	\$ 23.29
Sunday Breakfast	\$ 26.00	\$ 13.00
TOTAL**	\$284.90	\$218.61

**includes all taxes and tips

Please make checks for the appropriate total from above payable to Rocco Waldhelm.

Mail payment to:
Rocco Waldhelm
4718 Magnolia Ridge Dr.
Waxhaw, NC 28173

Please include your name(s), address, and telephone contact number(s) including cell phone, and your preferences of a king or double bed and smoking or non-smoking room. There is a limited number of each type of room; therefore, first-come, first-served.

Check must be received by April 15, in order to confirm all reservations. Upon receipt of your check, we will contact you by telephone with your hotel confirmation number. You will also receive a final itinerary and Savannah maps and visitor guides by US mail so that you can plan your free time.

If you must cancel your trip, we will make every effort to cancel reserved rooms/activities and return all money to you; however, if your cancellation is received very late, there may be some penalties with the hotel or the providers of our tours. We will advise you at that time.

Pam and Rocco can be reached at home at (704) 243-1969, by cell at (727) 235-2432 (Pam) or (727) 510-0605 (Rocco), or via email at



Motorsports News
by Chad Sutton, Motorsports Director

In January we had a very successful autocross school for people who were new to autocross, or just wanted some seat time to brush up on skills. The school comprised 4 elements consisting of a skid pad, slalom, threshold braking area and a cornering apex drill. Don took on the major task of organizing this event and did an excellent job making sure all 23 students got lots of seat time. Once the school portion of the day ended the four individual elements were merged to form one autocross course that students and instructors ran. It made for a very enjoyable course (especially the skid pad section!). All this activity made for a late day, but everybody was still off of the site by 5:00 PM. Not bad at all. Thanks Don!!

The February event we had scheduled was cancelled due to SPC requiring their facility for other use. Unfortunately this came with not a lot of warning and there just wasn't enough time to get anything rescheduled for February.

However, SPC did provide us with two back-to-back days in March and we are going to make the most of it. On March 12th and 13th Sunriders Motorsports will be hosting two days of autocross. Pre-registration is filling fast and it looks to be a really good event providing lots of runs, and a discounted rate for those who sign up for the whole weekend. The course will stay fairly similar for both days so we are looking for fairly early start on Sunday. Lunch will be provided both days. Come out and join us for one or both days. There is a limit of sixty drivers so if you think your going to attend be sure and pre-register at <http://www.sunridersmotorsports.com>.

We also have an April autocross planned at SPC on the 9th. Planning is just beginning but you'll be able to find more information and pre-registration data, where else, <http://www.sunridersmotorsports.com>.



HORIZONS

Sun Riders Miata Club of Tampa Bay

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

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