



The first generation NA Series – introduced 1989

MX-5



NA6 – 1989 to 1993

Following a 10-year gestation period initiated by USA journalist Bob Hall convincing Mazda that there was a market for a Roadster that had pretty much stopped being supplied by other manufacturers, Mazda finally developed and released the NA on to the global market in 1989.

It's amazing how "right" Mazda read the market with its pent-up demand for a two-seater, drop top, reliable and fun roadster that had not been available to the public since the demise of cars like the MGB, Spridget, TRs, Fiat 124 etc.

Amazing also was Mazda's ability to deliver a car that was "right" straight out of the box with few, if any, issues that needed to be sorted during early manufacture.

Remember, this was not an evolution design, but a brand new car!

The most serious "issue" was probably the short nose crank problem – which was not a technical concern so much as something that could cause problems if not serviced properly.

Not many manufacturers achieve such quality straight off, and this combination of quality and demand meant that the production line had to get up to speed very quickly.

In fact, while it took from late 1989 to 2016 to produce 1,000,000 cars (27 years) – an achievement in itself – the first 250,000 cars (one quarter of that production) was achieved in the first three years!

Straight off the showroom floor, the car provided:

- Spirited performance and fun handling
- Fun, top-down motoring
- Independent suspension
- 4-wheel disc brakes
- 5-speed gearbox that was like "a hot knife through butter"
- A relatively stiff chassis
- A folding roof that worked superbly, and didn't leak – *and* an optional fibreglass hardtop
- A heater that *worked*, and an optional air conditioner.

And, unlike some of its British predecessors:

- Lights that worked, and kept working
- Reliable electrics
- Oil that stayed inside the engine, gearbox and diff!
- Mechanical reliability (it's nothing for an MX-5 to do more than 300,000km + before needing any major works).

Early cars were mainly *Classic Red*, with some *Crystal White* and a few *Mariner Blue*.

Released into Australia in October 1989, this was the first of three generations of MX-5 that won the coveted Wheels "Car of the Year" Award.

1989 trophies, left to right:

- Modern Motor's Best Car
- Wheels' Car of the Year
- Car Australia's Car of Australia

