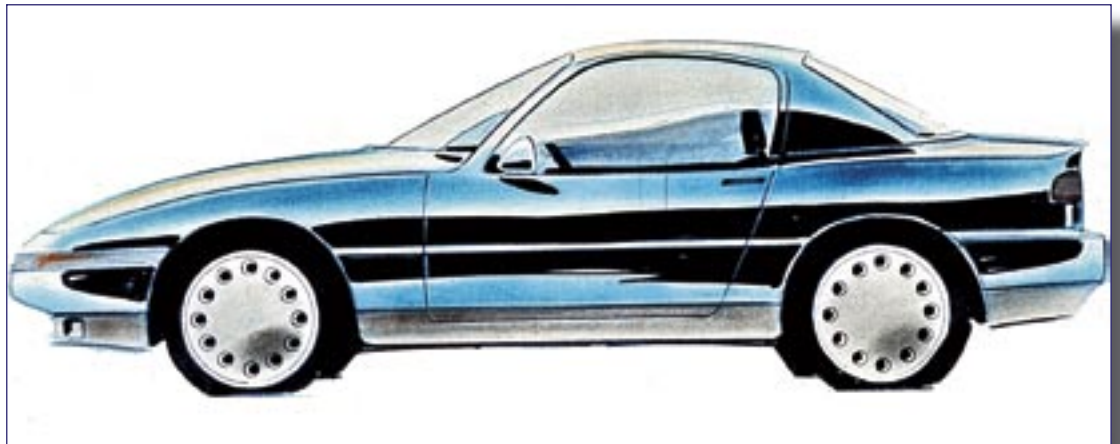
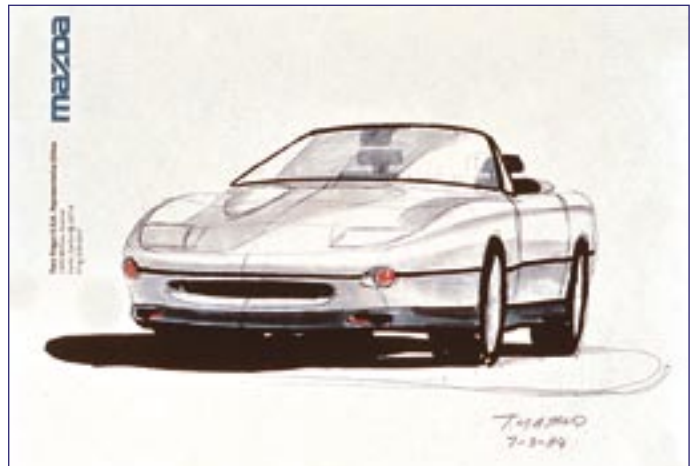


The MANA team actually drew a diverse range of sports car proposals, but, in reality, it was the lightweight open two-seater that appealed the most.

A roadster with a detachable hard-top in place. A closed coupé was also investigated, at least on paper.



Another of the design drawings submitted by MANA for its ideal lightweight sports car. According to Fukuda-san, hundreds of sketches were produced, a number of the proposals resembling vehicles like the Morgan three-wheeler, Lotus Seven, and the Porsche 550 Spyder.



An original design sketch from Tom Matano, dated March 1984.



Another view of the Special Package model, this time with the optional hard-top in place.

The S Special at speed in the ideal sports car arena.



J Limited II. Based on the Special Package model, the J Limited II was finished in Sunburst Yellow, just like the original J Limited. However, the windscreen surround was finished in black on this occasion. Bucket seats with independent headrests were used, a CD player was a standard fitment, and Pirelli P700-Z tyres were mounted on the familiar 6J x 14 seven-spoke alloys. Limited to just 800 examples, prices started at 2,030,000 yen for the five-speed version, with the optional automatic transmission adding a further 50,000 yen. Roadster sales in Japan added up to a total of 16,789 units for the year, by the way.

raising power from a modest 114bhp to 130bhp, and boosting maximum torque output to 112lbft. However, the new models also benefited from an uprated suspension and a stiffer body (through the use of the additional bracing described earlier) to give a better ride and improve handling. Inside, the old high backed seats were replaced with a new type (like those found on the J Limited II) incorporating an

1994 model year in the UK

Although the SE continued to be listed at £18,686 (its original launch price), by now the cost of a standard 1.6i model had risen to a hefty £16,490. However, on 18 April, Mazda UK announced two new models to supercede them - the MX-5 1.8i and 1.8iS.

The main difference compared with earlier models was obviously the increase in engine size (to 1839cc),

The options available for the Eunos Roadster. Many of these items eventually found their way onto Japan's various limited edition models.



Testing at the Miyoshi Proving Ground. As well as being put through their paces in Japan, the S1s were also shipped to America and Europe for extensive testing and evaluation.



that were published after the leak, but, much to Mazda's dismay, virtually everyone knew the full details of the MX-5's replacement months before the planned launch at the 1997 Tokyo Show.

Although specifications were fairly clear by now, no-one outside the company knew what the car was like to drive. It was obvious that Mazda was not going to let the new car fall below the standard set by the first generation model, but it would be reassuring to know for sure.

Writing for *Road & Track* in September 1997, Thos. L. Bryant teased enthusiasts with the following statement: "In the spring, Mazda Motors of America's Vice-President of

Public Affairs, Jay Amestoy, suggested that a small group of us should go to Japan to meet with the people designing and engineering the upcoming new Miata ... I am sworn to secrecy, but I will allow as how the new version is sure to please."

The scene was set ...



Although only 5mm (0.2in.) wider in reality, the new car looked far wider and lower visually. As Martin Leach (the MD in charge of Product Planning, Design & Programs), said: "It's got more presence." Clinics had been held in both America and Japan, the car's biggest markets.



Interior of the 1.8iS, with a Nardi three-spoke steering wheel. The Windblocker can clearly be seen in this picture, folded down behind the seats. On colder days, it can be raised to an upright position, thus stopping chilly drafts in the cockpit.



The 1.8iS was the UK's top model, priced at £18,775. It came with 6J x 15 alloys and a host of extras as standard, but the detachable hard-top was still a pricey option at £1475.

Below: A rear view of the European (lhd) spec MX-5. This picture shows the soft-top fully erected (and therefore has the new glass rear window), along with the latest rear light design which eliminated the need for a separate foglight.





The Appearance Package brought a front and rear airdam, plus side skirts, while the Interior Trim Package consisted of an aluminium-look dash panel, matching door trim parts, and

Body colours were actually the same as those listed in Japan, although black leather was available, augmenting the



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