

# Introduction

– the purpose of this book



The purpose of this book is to offer a quick, yet detailed and in-depth guide, to finding a Mazda MX-5 matched to your budget, as well as your needs. Always a popular car, there are plenty for sale. Some are honestly described, and owned by enthusiasts, but there are those that are described as being in excellent condition, but hide lots of problems for the next owner. Once you know which model and specification you're after, and how much you're prepared to pay, its time to start reviewing the classified ads, websites, and auction houses to get a feel for the market, and start viewing prospective purchases.

You may have to be prepared to travel a fair distance to find the car that you want, and although it may sound perfect over the telephone, in the flesh it's totally different. Try not to be too disappointed; the right MX-5 is out there for you, and the more you see, the more you can compare and gauge exactly what you are (or aren't) looking for in your ideal MX-5 – your patience and persistence will pay off.

Now in its third generation, the MX-5 first burst onto the automotive scene in 1989, with the original NA 'first generation' model. The Mk1, as it's otherwise known, came with a 1.6-litre, four-cylinder, double overhead cam engine at the front, rear-wheel drive, independent double wishbone suspension, front and rear subframes, and light monocoque construction. Recognisable by its pop-up headlights, at the time of its launch, it was the convertible sports car that the world was waiting for. This winning combination has since evolved: the second generation



**The original ... a Mk1 Mazda MX-5.**

# 1 Is it the right car for you?

– marriage guidance



## Tall and short drivers

Suitable for all but the exceptionally tall/large driver.



The MX-5 cabin may look small, but those that are tall needn't worry. By fitting a smaller steering wheel, removing the foam from the seats, or swapping to seats from a Lotus Elise, more room can be made.

## Weight of controls

Direct, balanced, light steering. Gear change close-ratio and precise, moving easily up and down the gears. The hydraulic clutch is light, as is the brake pedal and accelerator.

## Will it fit the garage?

**Length:** MkI 3975mm/13ft; MkII 3975mm/13ft.

**Width:** MkI 1675mm/5.49ft; MkII 1680mm/5.51ft.



... this Mk1 is a UK model.



The original ... a Mk1 MX-5 with its famous pop-up headlights.

The slate black interior of a Crystal White Mk1 MX-5.

A MkII MX-5 with its fixed headlights, this is a 10th Anniversary limited edition model of which 7500 were made worldwide, with 600 for the UK market, all with 6-speed gearboxes.



The revised interior of a MkII MX-5. Although similar to a Mk1, notable differences are the dashboard, and all MkIIs came with airbags as standard.



Each country has had various special and limited editions across the whole of the range: these were equipped with extras including different colour paintwork, leather seats, interior trim, and various performance upgrades. This stunning Mk1 with subtle modifications is a Eunost Roadster VR-Limited Combination A, of which 700 were made in metallic Vin Rouge mica paint.



Some Mkls came with optional factory-fitted aluminium pedal covers. This car is also fitted with Japanese Domestic Market floor mats, which were optional on the Eunos Roadsters, and came in several different designs.

## Pedals

4 3 2 1

Check that there's the right amount of wear for the mileage. If you can, look for fatigue cracks in the pedal box: this allows the accelerator to flex, preventing full throttle. Some limited editions came with aluminium pedal and footrest covers.

## Wheels

4 3 2 1

The basic, standard wheels on the Mkl and MklI MX-5s are 14in, however, some limited edition Mkl cars also came with 15in wheels (an optional factory upgrade for both models). There have been many discussions about the optimum wheel size for an MX-5, and the general consensus is that 15in alloys are best for driveability and handling. Alloy wheels are one of the most popular modifications, so many come with aftermarket sets, and the limited/special editions often came with alloys specific to their model. Check each of the wheels: look under the centre caps, if there are any (these often go missing), ensure all four wheel nuts are in place, and look closely for any severe damage or kerbing to the rims.



These are the standard fitment 14in alloys as found on most Mkls, otherwise known as 'daisies.'

## Tyres

4 3 2 1

Assess the tyres, ensuring that they're all legal. Do all four tyres match, or are they mismatched, and an unknown make? Tyres can make or break the handling, and well made tyres are key. Tyre pressures should be set at 26psi all round.



Beautiful BBS 15in alloys wheels, which came as standard on several of the Eunos Roadster limited editions.

Usual brake checks are the pads and discs, but check the brake hoses, too, as the original fitments may be corroded.



### Brake discs & pads ④ ③ ② ①

Check the brake discs for wear and scoring, and the pads to see how much wear is left. Replacement pads and discs are economical. 1.8 cars will have larger discs and pads than the 1.6 models. Some cars, if stood for a while, may have seized callipers, although new or reconditioned ones can be easily purchased. Check that the handbrake is working.

### Cam belt ④ ③ ② ①

The cam belt should be changed every 60,000 miles, or every five years. Check with the owner when this was last done; if they don't know, it may be worth factoring this into any negotiation. However, it's important to note that the MX-5 engine is 'non-interference,' so should the belt break, the pistons and valves won't collide with each other (although the car will still cease to run, and a tow will be necessary).



Engine bay of a MkII, virtually the same layout as the MkI.

### Alternator/power steering belt ④ ③ ② ①

Check both belts for perishing or cracks that would indicate a change is due soon.

### Fuel lines ④ ③ ② ①

Check that the rubber hoses aren't perished, split, or have leaks.

MkI engine bay with strut brace and aftermarket induction chamber and air filter.

