

TEST DRIVING THE MX5 ND

The wait for the latest MX-5 ND sports car is over since its release this week in Adelaide. Those clever people at Mazda have achieved something that very few manufacturers have managed to do, namely produce a modern engineering marvel that remains true to the original model/concept.

On a beautiful sunny Saturday morning, two demonstrator models were made available by Jarrett Motors for about 40 lucky MX5 club members and some of their family members, to enjoy a test drive, over a pre determined route that provided an excellent environment in which to experience this latest MX-5 creation.

The two cars comprised a Soul Red Metallic Roadster manual and a Ceramic Metallic GT manual with all the bells and whistles. Another car was present and it is in the process of sale to one of our club members (lucky devil, congratulations Peter Emes).

For competition minded people there was also on display the factory backed RX7 that won several Bathurst 12 Hour Production Races in the past. What a gem!

Thank you to Graham Jarrett and his superb staff who made the day so very enjoyable including morning tea and sausage sizzle for lunch. I discovered that David and his brother Graham share the same voice and accent. I had to be careful what I said to each lest I confuse whom I was chatting to.

Everyone will have their own interpretation but my experience confirmed that Mazda has successfully passed on the best genes of the original MX-5 NA and included an amazing compliment of features for an entry-level sports car at such a reasonable price. It has no peer in my mind.

My impression as a passenger in the manual base model is that it was more refined and quiet than I had expected and gave an impression of effortless progress with a surprisingly comfortable ride. The equipment levels exceed those of the original NA and shows just how far modern engineering has progressed. My overall impression is that this is a car that is very easy to drive and it delivers enjoyment in spades.

Did I mention the beautifully balanced brakes?

Dennis and I then proceeded to Paradise Motors for another pre arranged test drive of the automatic MX-5 GT resplendent in Ceramic Metallic, which I drove up the Gorge Road at a sensible pace to my utter delight and enjoyment. I found the ND steady on the road, easy to steer, responsive, and generated confidence (I have never driven up the Gorge Road before, always a passenger). It seems remarkably quiet and comfortable, and I especially appreciated the adjustable seats, which are an improvement over our NC.

The audio speakers in the head restraint were another nice feature that enabled us to hear the radio with the roof down. For me the controls were ergonomically perfect and easy to set up.

The auto gearbox was faultless and perfectly matched to the engine particularly in circumstances where very steep roads were negotiated. The key to success was big throttle angles. I read a road test recently that suggested that steep hills could challenge the smaller 1.5L engine fitted to the first release MX-5 ND, however, I did not find this to be so. I also noted that the car held a constant steady speed on down hill stretches, I understand this to be engine braking. It was hard to give this lovely car back to the dealership.

If any Club member wishes to try out the MX-5 ND, please do not hesitate to contact Jarrett Motor Co or Paradise Motors or any other Mazda dealership.

Don't we just live at the luckiest time in the luck country!

