

Miatas

MOTORING

ISSUE 1, 2022



OLD SCHOOL

Stephen retells his journey from muscle car to *Little Blue* - pg 15



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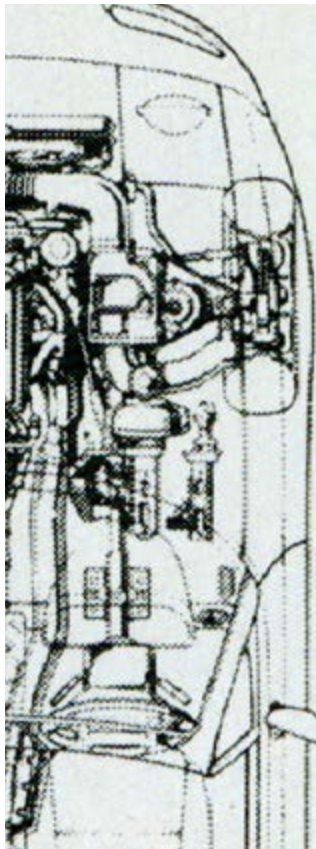
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THERE'S MORE ONLINE!

The tip of the iceberg. That's what you're holding in your hands. Over time, the MiataMotoring.com archive is going to be chock-full of stories and a wealth of technical advice. Check it out today at MossMiata.com/miatamotoring

WORD WRANGLERS & GARAGE GURUS

WE WANT YOU!

Share your experience, wisdom and talent with Miata enthusiasts across the country. Contributors whose work is selected for use in the magazine will receive credit on their Moss Miata accounts! Now, since there is no way to print all the terrific stories and tech articles sent to us, we will place relevant and first-rate submissions on MossMiata.com/miatamotoring for all to enjoy and benefit. Sorry, submissions that are published online are not eligible for Moss credit.

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Cover and main feature photography, general interest stories or medium-length tech articles. Tech tips, cartoons, illustrations, humorous anecdotes and other odds-n-ends that help make Miata Motoring great.



I Made a **HUGE** Mistake

by David Stuursma - Editor

What am I doing editing this magazine? I committed a cardinal sin—several sins, probably. Is this my penance? The transgression: I sold my '91 and in its place bought a ridiculously big van to pull apart and maybe one day go camping in. I went big.

When I bought Barry the Miata (cuz “he’s tougher than he looks”), I had a trailer hitch installed for a bike rack. And then I learned the hard way that the itty bitty extra weight of two bikes is more than enough to make a Miata squat and ruin the inner tread of the rear tires in less than a couple thousand miles. Without complaint, Barry spent his nights in a parking lot outdoors. He was unlocked and the keys never left the ignition. It was nice knowing at all times where my car keys were. I decided that I’d never worry about the car getting stolen or broken into. I would live life as if my top was always down and the sun shining. It was really great actually. Barry was so easy to live with.

The van gets locked. And I worry every single frickin’ time I put it in reverse because who knows what in the world is back there to run over.

The more time that goes by, the more I miss Barry and his can-do attitude. I miss trying to do lumberyard deliveries with him. I miss packing the passenger area to where I had to apologize that fifth gear wouldn’t be an option on this stretch of the highway. The office chair or the stand up paddle board or the door of the mini fridge was in the way of that dog-leg into high gear. Barry never objected. Actually, he loved singing the high-revving notes.

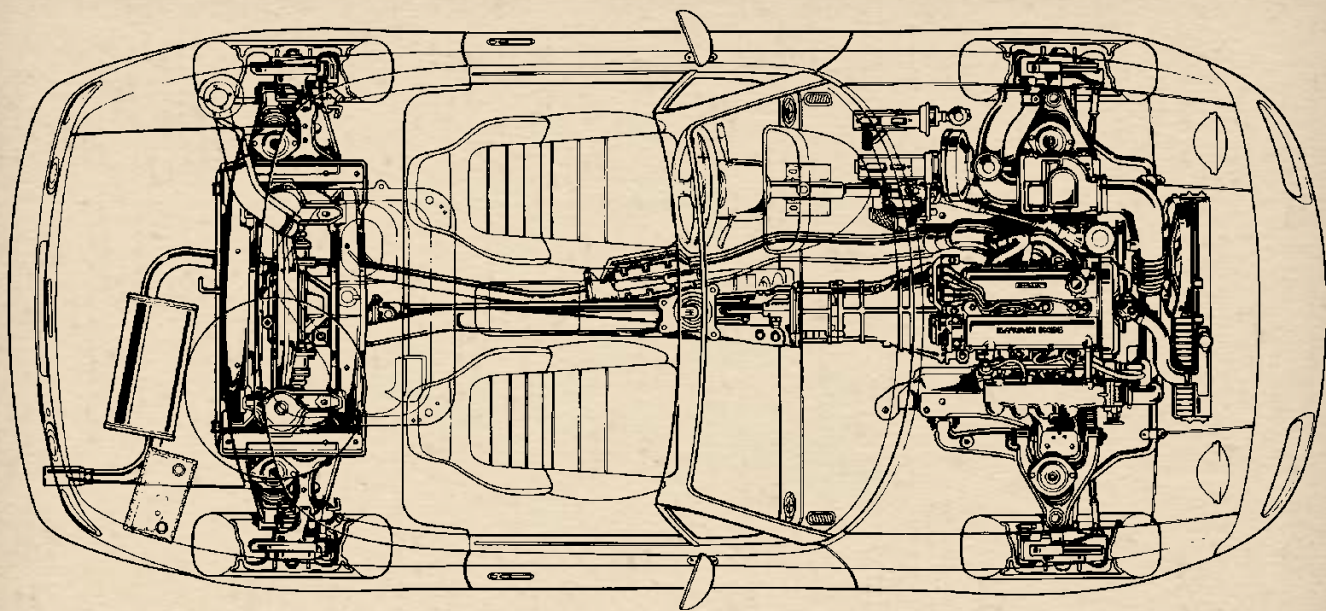
I’ve ended up hating that big dumb van for being so practical and spacious. The challenges of a big life with a little Miata were infinitely more entertaining.

Just as how I don’t have to have the car to help steer the magazine, I hope these pages find their way into the hands of Miata-less folks, too, who find them enjoyable to read. If this first issue is any indicator of the future, we are going to have us a great time.

I was admittedly nervous at first, unsure of who would help contribute, but submissions rolled in and those nerves settled down in no time flat. The stories you’re about to read are from authors who repeatedly said how excited they were to share their experiences with Miata friends they’ve made. James from *Throttle House* responded to my email request in about the time it takes to blink, saying, “The Miata community is the best! Just let me know what I can do!”

Norman, the author of the lead story, I met entirely by accident. He had written a short story about a Porsche 914 he owned and was giving tips to anyone who wanted to try and steal it. I was still laughing as I read his bio at the end, which said he’d been involved in the Miata development team. Digging a little deeper, I found out that he published a Miata magazine in the '90s. I must have been forgiven of my Miata sins because Norman has offered a helping hand with this and future magazines.

It’s my hope that each issue, and there’ll be two a year, raises the bar of automotive literature and photographic art a little bit higher each time. For this to happen we need your help. This magazine is a Miata community thing. You can make it into whatever you want it to be, and I’m honored to help make that happen. Send me stirring stories and epic photos, and let’s have some fun. **mm**



GOOD *Bones*

by Norman Garrett
Former Mazda Concept
Engineer

Maybe you've heard the story: The original Miata was designed by a small group of employees working at Mazda's Design Studio in Southern California. We were given freedom to work on a variety of "no limits" projects, and we were all lamenting the recent demise of the British sports car industry. Triumph and MG had just finished their collective death rattle in the US market in 1981, and customers were left without anything to buy in that segment. While those two companies only represented around 40,000 cars per year, it was an active market. In 1983, the best sports car you could buy would be a used Triumph, MG, Alfa Romeo, or similar. No new sports cars could be found in the entry level (read "affordable") range. Our own RX-7 was moving upscale and this left

a spot in Mazda's product line for an entry level sports car. Porsche's 911 always had its little brothers (sequentially the 356, 914, 924, 944, and the Boxster...) so it seemed natural for the RX-7 to have the same as it evolved.

Starting with Bob Hall from the Product Planning Department, we floated the idea of filling this 40k car per year market with something better but in the same spirit as all those lovely European sports cars that we all had grown up with. We took a poll one day among our team and discovered that we had owned some 65 significant sports cars combined, from Austin Healey 3000s and cheap Porsches to Spitfires and Alfa Spiders, with even one Lamborghini Countach in the mix. From this we had a great design database of what worked and did not work when it comes to "sporty



New Mazda R&D Studio, circa 1989.

cars,” as Carroll Shelby used to call them. And thus, the Light Weight Sports (LWS) project was born.

We were in competition with two other studios within the Mazda system: one in Tokyo and the homeland studio in Hiroshima. My job was to put all the best “sporty car” stuff under the skin the designers were styling in clay. Tom Matano managed the design/styling department, with Hayashi-san from the home office helping manage the project. Designer Yagi-san did the first clay model, and Mark Jordan and Wu-Huang Chin made dozens of sketches to focus what would evolve into the shape we all have come to love. The final clay model was sent to Japan for “productionizing.” On the engineering side, having studied race car design on my own and in engineering school, my goal was to make the Miata handle like a dream and to be race-ready with minimal modification. My concept drawings set the basic layout and weight distribution, two critical factors to get

right with a sports car. No amount of suspension tuning will fix a poorly laid out package or imbalanced weight distribution. The original package also included double-wishbone suspension at all four corners for optimal camber gain during cornering. The higher-ups in Mazda’s Engineering Department in Japan did the heavy lifting of finalizing our design—the actual nuts-and-bolts engineering of making the car possible, and they did an amazing job (and continue to do so today in the current product line). None of the passion we put into the design was lost on its way to production. This is a very rare thing in today’s automotive world. Between the manufacturing plant and the accountants, most cars are unrecognizable by the time they get to production (reference the Pontiac Aztek, which was loved by most at the concept stage...).

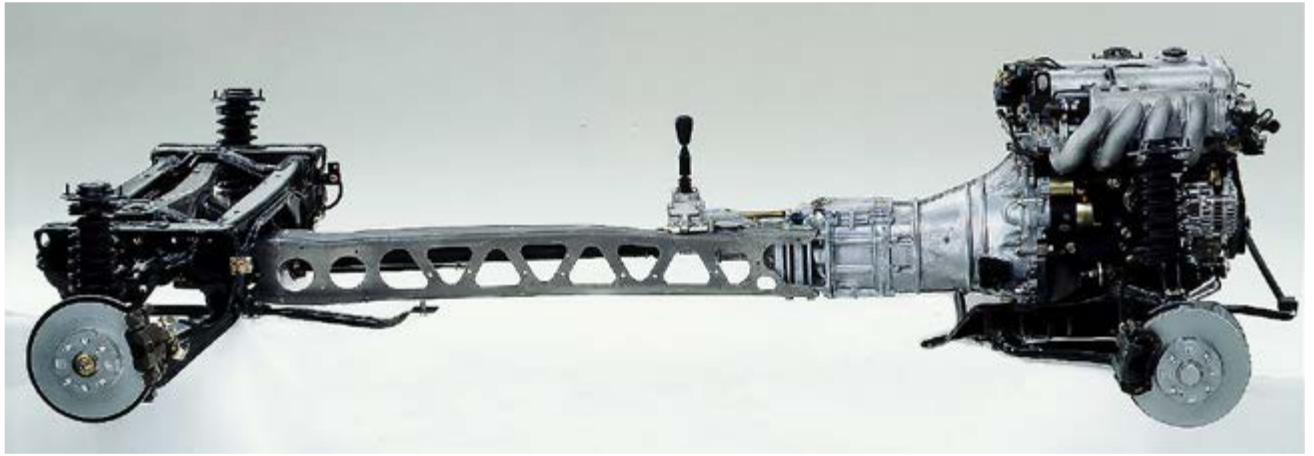
We were adamant that the car had to be rear wheel drive. This was a difficult sell in a company that in the '80s mostly made front wheel drive cars. It was the 323 GTX that



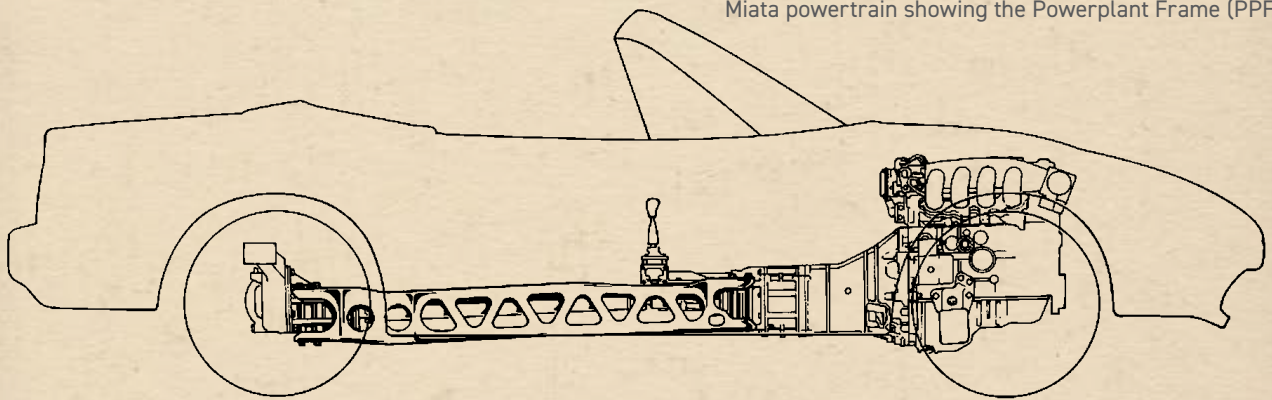
The three competing studio designs included mid-engine, rear-drive, and front-drive configurations.



The second clay model for the P729 project with the improved engineering package. Note the high quality of the clay model work, including the clear windshield and quarter windows.



Miata powertrain showing the Powerplant Frame (PPF).



cracked the door open. Part of my job was to raid the Mazda parts bin for components to use for the Miata's design that were already in the pipeline. This saves cost and time when developing a car. One day a bunch of us studio hacks were riding back from lunch in a 323 GTX AWD and it hit me that I was sitting on top (literally, in the back seat) of the solution to our RWD pitch: the GTX had a nice compact independent rear suspension and differential. I adapted that diff into the double wishbone rear suspension design and we had our RWD at an affordable price for our presentation to the home office in Japan. The final rear differential is a different unit, but the GTX rear end got us over the design hump, as it were.

This scenario was repeated over and over during the project. The Powerplant Frame (PPF) that connects the engine/transmission unit to the rear differential was

important to the engineers from a driving standpoint: Locking these major assemblies together greatly improves the on/off throttle response of a manual transmission car (think autocrossing). I remember going to the engineering library at UCLA, long before the internet made such searches instantaneous, for weeks to research old SAE papers on the Ferrari Daytona which had such a frame member connecting the drivetrain front-to-back.

However, this novel powertrain structural component carried with it extra cost. We were able to keep it in the project because it helped the manufacturing team put the car together: The entire drivetrain can be lifted up and secured to the unibody with four bolts, similar to how a front wheel drive's front subframe assembly is done. One hand washed the other in a departmental sense

and a very unique feature of the Miata came out of it.

The Engineering Team's job was to make the car drive as good as it looked, and to be a true sports car in the competition sense of the term. So, in addition to fighting the battle with the design team on the styling surfaces ("no, the hood can't go lower, there has to be an engine in here"), we were keen to make sure the necessary engineering went into the chassis, suspension, and subsystems so that the car would be a joy to drive "in anger." One late night in Hiroshima, I was working hard to find a way to lower the engine 10mm for the styling team who wanted a lower hood line. My boss, Maebayashi-san, one of many remarkable engineers at Mazda, came by and, in a moment of cleverness, told me to move the engine rearwards 20mm by putting a "dent" in the firewall. This made enough room at the front of the cam



Mazda's OG Miata team: Dean Case, Norman Garrett, Bob Hall, Mark Jordan, Tom Matano.

cover to create the needed clearance for the desired hood line. It also helped handling by moving the center of gravity rearward in the chassis. You can see this setback in every Miata's firewall—all from a 10:00pm Wednesday night drawing board



brainstorm back in 1985. There were thousands of moments like this in the project, aimed at making the Miata drive and look like a dream. In the end, I like to think that the reason the Miata is so endearing, in addition to its looks, is how it drives, behaves, and rewards its driver.

MTV had a show a few years back called "Dating in the Dark." Contestants would meet in a darkened room and have real discussions for long periods before getting to see what each other looked like. Strong bonds and sometimes love evolved in the darkness, which made the experiments cool. For the Engineering Team, we looked at the

Miata's development in just the same way. If you were blindfolded and put into a Miata, then had your blinders removed and allowed to drive the Miata around a racetrack, we wanted you to fall just as madly in love with it, regardless of how it looked once you got out and stepped back for a full-on view of its styling.

To make a great car it takes both great looks and great personality on the road. Mazda is to be congratulated for embodying this double-punch with each of the Miata MX-5 generations. Not an easy thing to do once. It is remarkable that Mazda has done it four times, from the NA to the ND.

More stories to come... **mm**

Norman Garrett in a Spec Miata at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca.

2 of a Kind

by Katelynn Dubiel



My dad was a second-generation GM employee. I've been interested in cars my whole life, but it was drilled into my head that American cars were the only way to go and anything else is garbage. I believed that for a long time. My passion for cars landed me at Kettering University studying electrical engineering. I've been there for a few years, while simultaneously working for General Motors, and I decided it was time to put some money into a hobby. It was time for a project car.

I spent weeks scouring Facebook Marketplace, looking for something within my budget and preferably a stick shift. Years before, my coworker had told me to buy a Mazda Miata, back then I had yet to realize that my options were beyond *only* American cars, but his words stuck in my mind. An NA Miata popped up for sale and I asked one of my friends from school to come look at it with me. His two

roommates tagged along, one of whom owned an NB. We caravanned over an hour, to the middle of nowhere, only to find a Miata that looked a lot better in photos than in real life. It wasn't worth the asking price.

I was visibly bummed, and my friend's roommate, Al, saw that. Even though we just met, he kindly offered to give me a ride in his Miata back to campus. We spent the next hour or so chatting away and learning about each other. Al took it upon himself to help me car shop. Together we kicked the tires of a 1997 M-Edition. I was hooked and bought it the next day. The only hurdle I had to jump was that I didn't know how to drive a manual yet, so my friend had to drive it back to campus for me. I spent the next week or so practicing how to drive my new-to-me Miata. Once I started getting the hang of it, Al gave me excuses to drive by asking me out on coffee dates and cruises in our Miatas. I didn't see this as much of anything

at first, but we grew close and talked every single day. We spent the rest of our school semester working on our cars, going to events, and just enjoying adventures together. One of my favorite memories from those first few months is when Al and I put underglow lights and reindeer antlers on our Miatas and drove them to the downtown Rochester's Christmas Big Bright Lights Show.

Before the school semester ended, Al found a deal on a set of 949 6UL wheels that he couldn't pass up. He was going to hop in the car and drive all the way to Illinois alone. Not on my watch. I packed up my schoolwork and told him I was coming with. It was an exhausting six-hour drive each way, but way more fun together. A few weeks later, Al officially asked me to be his girlfriend, which I obviously accepted.

In March of 2021, we organized a trip to the Tail of the Dragon. 300 turns in only 11 miles? That sounds like a blast, especially in a Miata! Since both of us wanted to drive, the only answer was to take both of our 20+ year-old Miatas over 700 miles from Michigan to North Carolina. We talked about going down with a group of friends, but in the end we decided it would be a perfect trip for just the two of us. We spent a week or so prepping the cars: oil changes, polishing, last minute car parts, etc. On a Thursday morning, we set off for the 12-hour drive. The trip was an absolute blast. We spent four days doing whatever we wanted to do. And we both took our camera gear to capture the incredible driving scenery.

Right after the trip, I bought a Silverado that was supposed to be my daily driver and tow rig. Well, I loved driving my Miata so much that the truck mostly sat. So much for a new daily. Sadly, though, in July of last year, I got into an accident on my way to work and smashed up my Miata pretty badly. Thankfully, the frame wasn't bent and I was able to drive home. Al and I sourced a new



hood, front bumper, core support, and headlight cover just a few hours away. The parts were blue and my Miata was green, so I decided it was a perfect opportunity to repaint the Miata. I was torn between painting it blue or green, and then as a joke I said, "Let's paint it orange." Turns out orange was the way to go. After all the new parts were installed, dents were pulled out, and things were fixed, Al and I learned how to paint a car in our own garage. It's not perfect, and there is a lot we would change for next time, but the car is awesome in orange!

Now that my Miata was fixed up and looking fresh, it was time to take her racing. Al and I made it out to the track three times last summer, twice at Waterford Hills, and once at Gingerman Raceway. It was awesome to see how the Miata handles and performs. My Miata started out pretty much stock other than paint, wheels, and tires. For this season, Al and I spent all winter working on upgrades. We both did coilovers, swaybars,

brakes, seats, and harnesses. We are both very excited to get back out there and see how they perform!

Aside from cars, drawing is another hobby of mine. I decided to combine the two. I drew illustrations of our Miatas and then had them made into stickers. The art really took off to where I started my own website and got my little business registered as Racing Line Creations LLC. This was a huge victory for me and has also been a fun way for me to get even more involved in the Miata community and clubs.

In January of this year, Al and I drove back up the Tail of the Dragon on a trip home from Florida. It was astonishing how peaceful and gorgeous the drive was with the ground and trees covered in snow. And Al made the moment infinitely more special by proposing to me. It was definitely was the most "us" thing to do. Everyone was very happy for us, but nobody was shocked. We were the Miata couple who did everything together.

We are both very excited to get married in 2024. We are planning to have a car show at our wedding and have all of the guests bring their cool rides to show off—with our Miatas front and center. I have had my Miata for 1.5 years and Al has had his for two years now. I can't wait to see where we go from here. **mm**



Check out Katelynn's website at:
RacingLineCreations.com



Follow Katelynn and Al's IGs:
[@m.edition.millie](https://www.instagram.com/m.edition.millie) and [@high.octane.media](https://www.instagram.com/high.octane.media).



The Car That Helped Build **THROTTLE HOUSE**

by James Engelsman

For some, it's an accidental graze of the hands while reaching across a buffet, or a momentary meeting of the eyes across the dance floor, that forms that first connection. For me, it was a Miata meet on a balmy day in July in Ontario, Canada. And whilst the connection was not a romantic one, it was one that sparked a partnership that has held true for almost half a decade now.

That's right, the *Throttle House* as you may know it began because I met a bearded bloke called Thomas

at a Miata meet in Toronto. He looked past my flaws: my loathing of anything French and my poor taste in fashion. And I looked past his: He owned an NC. But in much the same way a book can recommend a person, so can a vehicle. The Miata is one such vehicle.

But that requires a little bit of backstory. My jump to the Miata was a familiar one, top-down rather than bottom-up. I didn't 'graduate' from a cheaper car, but instead I realized that the car embodied all the traits and characteristics that I wanted



Some of you may recognize this location: Miatas at the Gap, 2018!

driving to be. Until that moment, I had subscribed to the erroneous notion that one must upgrade their vehicle, or desire to upgrade it at all times. I had gone from a Vauxhall Corsa, to an Audi TTS, to a Subaru BRZ, to a full blown Jaguar F-Type R with a 550HP V8.

Five years ago I caught a glimpse of a 2016 MX-5 GT sitting pretty at the dealership and made an impromptu stop-in. I'd be lying if I said that it wasn't in part inspired by the rapidly depreciating Jaguar that I was sitting in at the time. And I'm not kidding, I lost 30 grand on that vehicle in 18 months, and barely put 6,000 kilometers on it. Long story short, a month later I was driving a vehicle that cost me the same as the depreciation on the Jag.

And yet, I felt no remorse, no resentment. Quite the opposite, in fact. My wallet was a lot heavier, and

the Toronto roads that felt too short and busy, suddenly sprouted into a Mario Kart track. The taste of triumph and power the Jaguar gave me were

“The taste of triumph and power the Jaguar gave me were replaced by joy and euphoria”

replaced by joy and euphoria, far nicer flavors.

Instead of Corollas flipping me the bird in the Jag, I was getting waves and hellos from other Miata drivers.

I was able to put my foot down, all the way, for more than a second, and through multiple gears, before hitting the speed limit. For the first few

weeks of ownership, getting in the car had the stress relieving quality of one of those wirey head massager things through my hair. So it was cheaper, more fun, better sized and far more economical. I felt I had lost nothing in the trade, and gained 50 grand. Well, 46, but that's because I pretty quickly wrapped the car blue (damn you Mazda for still not having a proper blue for the ND) and did a few aesthetic/noise upgrades. I don't have a name for the car but I plated it 4 SAGAN, after the late humanist and scientist

Carl Sagan, a man whose words and ideas I am very fond of. The car, then, became my own Pale Blue Dot.

Two years and a few glorious road trips through our fair continent



The Miata meet where I met Thomas.



See automotive shenanigans at
[YouTube.com/throttlehouse](https://www.youtube.com/throttlehouse).

later, I left the corporate world behind. The same world that had afforded me luxuries like the F-Type but one that I was still very happy to leave. The switch to the MX-5 and some other key decisions meant that I had bought myself some time to figure out the next work project. I had suddenly gone from changing my car every year to having no intention of looking elsewhere at all. It took longer than that to feel the same about my now fiancée.

I'd always had a passion for cars, but though there is the phrase "if you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life," I was also experienced enough to know you can accidentally sell your hobby into a working hell if you aren't careful. So I was cautious, I was hesitant. I'm not someone that has a mile long list of hobbies.

So in 2018 when I met Thomas at the Miata meet, he had already started his YouTube channel, and it was already called *Throttle House*. In relative terms, it was at its very beginning with barely 20,000 subscribers, and growing sporadically, but slowly. I still considered myself a little shell shocked from the corporate world, and I wasn't ready to attach myself fully to something yet. Still, I felt I had some community building skills I could bring to the table, and so I offered him my help for free and with the intention of never being on camera. But here's a man at a Miata meet. Someone who surely has similar priorities to me. I had to assume he had a penchant for the joy of driving, the lack of ego that comes with Miata ownership and an approach to life that suggested he lived within his means. He looked at me and my MX-5, I looked at him and his. Hands were shaken.

A few years later and we've crossed the two million subscriber mark and yes, despite my protests, I ended up being on camera. It turns

out we get on great and complement each other's skills greatly. If you aren't familiar with *Throttle House*, we produce car review videos almost exclusively for YouTube. We tackle new cars mostly, with a few glances back at the oldies. When I first bought my Miata, I had probably driven 20 cars in my life. Now I've driven almost every single new car made in the last four years, and then some. Hundreds.

I'm spoiled. I've driven Aventadors in the canyons of Los Angeles. I've driven BAC Monos full pelt on track. I've baja'd F-150 Raptors across the desert and sipped champagne in the back of a new Rolls-Royce Phantom. I've spun out in a Ford GT at 140kph and lived to tell the tale, and I've spent a day redlining a Lexus LFA just for kicks.

And yet, my lust for a Miata replacement is nil. Zero. Nada. In the time that I've owned it, I've added a daily to the stable, and though I may sometimes spend February or March teasing myself with Porsche configurators, after that first drive in April in the Miata, I still ask myself, "Why the hell would I spend more to change this experience?" If joy is your priority, you can spend 200 grand and still not find any more of it. Sure, the Cayman or the F-Type

might be objectively better, but for all the positives they come with, it still doesn't match the Miata equation. I think I worked out that the F-Type, with insurance, depreciation, gas and services, cost me nearly \$500 an hour for the amount of time I spent driving it. Now assuming there's a bunch of men reading this, I don't need to tell you the more fun and dirty way you can spend \$500. Am I right, fellas?

Miata parts. Yeah, that's right. \$500 pays for a new exhaust, or a cool acrylic wind blocker that says Miata on it! Yes, I have both. And boy did I get my hands dirty installing them. All totaled, I've probably not parted with more than 40 grand for the Miata experience so far, including purchase.

Simply put, the Miata makes me happy. Even now, I'm spec'ing out a Lotus Emira online. Hey, I'm still a car enthusiast, what do you want from me? But if I do decide to get it, it's gonna have to squeeze in next to a little Japanese roadster, because I can drive another 400 cars and a Mazda MX-5 will still have a space on my driveway. Fortunately, it doesn't take up much of it. *mm*





OLD SCHOOL

in its own way

by Steven Guterl

Two years ago, I had a completely different view on cars.

I was a muscle car guy. I've always had a love for classic, timeless cars that create the nostalgia of another era. In my college years I worked and saved to restore a 1966 Mustang. My best friend at the time, Andrew, drove a 1983 RX7 FB. I didn't really get it, but I loved the way that car looked and sounded. There was something unique about an older Japanese car, and through Andrew's eyes I learned a lot. He and I would work side by side on our cars together. Every day I would spend time fixing rust areas, stopping leaks, tuning the suspension, and swapping out motors to find a reliable layout to finally be happy with. Out of blood, sweat, and tears the Mustang of my childhood dreams emerged.

Not even a full year after the fresh paint had dried, I was hit by a car that

swerved out of its lane, sending my car into a pole, nearly splitting it in half. I was, and still am so grateful that nobody else was harmed. I remember being in the hospital on the phone with Andrew commiserating about my ruined car. It was an eye-opener and made me appreciate how beyond lucky I was to live this life and hold close the friends and family who love me.

When I had recovered from my injuries, I need wheels just to get from point A to B. I'd never recover the money I put into the Mustang. Restoring another old muscle car was off the table. Fortunately, I could live vicariously through my friend Ryan, who bought one of my Mustang shells. He and I would wrench on his 302 small block mounted on a stand running on gas siphoned from a pickle jar. Eventually Ryan dropped the motor into the frame



and it cheered me up to see his car get a new heart. That same week I became friends with Stephon. When Andrew and I were younger, skateboarding up the street to get pizza, we'd pass by Stephon working on older JDM cars that Andrew was crazy about. I remember being in Ryan's garage and hearing the whooshing sound of an external wastegate. Stephon pulled up Ryan's driveway with a turbo installed in his 1993 Mariner Blue Miata. I was in awe. It sounded nothing like the old school V8 I was so enamored with, a different beast altogether.

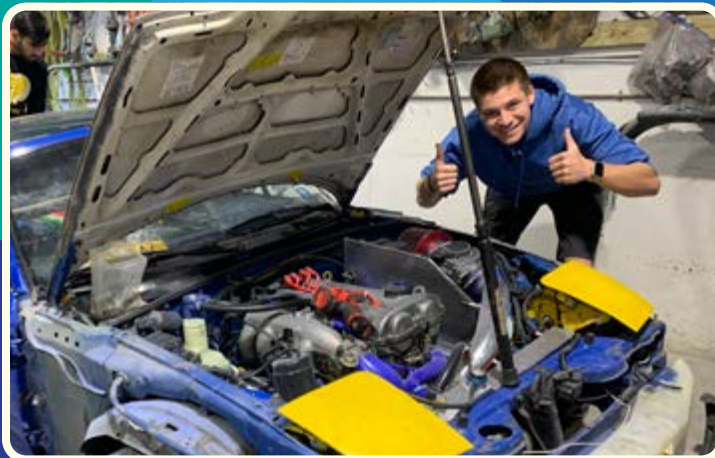
He invited me to climb in and check it out. The lights from all the gauges lit up the grin on my face. I fit perfectly into the Buddy Club seat. Headlights pop up at the push of a button? Who knew I needed that! I saw how a Miata could be a special,

timeless blank canvas for its owner to make his or her own. Ryan must have come to a similar conclusion. Soon thereafter he picked up an LS1 swapped Miata. Stephon and I would spend long hours in Ryan's garage, learning about and tuning two completely different Miatas and discovering their near limitless capabilities. Every Miata I came across sang with the potential to reflect its owner in a way that most cars can't. Plus, the price was right for me, and parts were easy to come by. I was convinced.

In February of 2020, Ryan and I drove to Long Island to pick up a completely stock 1990 in Mariner Blue. I had recently pulled my old 302 motor from the wreck of my old Mustang and had it mated with a new T5 transmission. It was my intention to swap the drivetrain of the Miata

with old school American muscle. But as I continued to work, save, and go to school, I decided to take a shot at building another old '60s Mustang instead, because every time I got into the Miata, I just couldn't stop smiling. The smoothness of the shifter, the tight steering, the nimbleness of the independent rear suspension, the feeling that the car wanted to be driven harder and harder—it all spoke to me. I cared about the car and as a result, I put care into it, detailing every nook and cranny of the engine bay until I could eat off of it, bolting on Racing Beat headers and exhaust, putting in chassis bracing, swapping in stiffer Meister R suspension, and doing all of the basics like brakes and tires.

Stephon became an instructor at New York Safety Track, and he encouraged me to track my car. As a



passenger in his turbo Miata, decked out with full racing aero, Stephon taught me skills and techniques that opened up a whole new world of driving experiences. In my car, trying to go fast on track without the power and torque of a V8 under the hood is the best way to learn how to carry as much speed as possible through each corner.

I got a great deal on a beautiful '66 Mustang and thought the Mazda had served its purpose. I would part ways with the Miata and get back to where I left off with my Mustang dreams. And then on July 14, I crashed the Miata into a guardrail while racing at NYST, smashing in both the front and back of the car. It was deemed totaled, but not unfixable. And that's when I realized how much this little car meant to me. Even then, the car didn't fail to

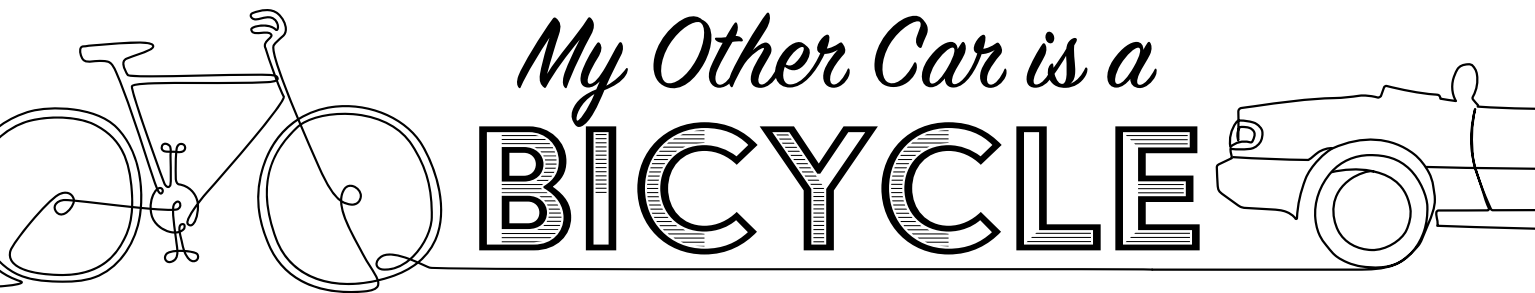
keep me safe. It never let me down once within my time of owning it, despite everything I had put it through. When I looked at the Miata after the crash, every panel bent out of shape, the pop ups bashed into different directions, both bumpers cracked, smashed, and hanging off the car, the iconic "happy" look was gone. It was heartbreaking to me. Every joyous drive and every late-night project replayed in my mind.

I decided to sell the Mustang and all the parts I collected for the 302 project to bring little blue back to her glory.

With Moss Miata, I was able to replace absolutely everything that was damaged from front to back in a matter of days with amazing support along the entire restoration process. Deciding to stick with it and fix the Miata was something I

cannot be happier about. Because of this machine, I have grown so much as a driver, mechanic, and as a person. I have met and learned from so many great people that I could not imagine being a part of any other car community. Thank you to everyone who shares this passion for these sports cars. Thank you for your encouragement, knowledge, and friendship.

Track day after track day, traveling from state to state—including a visit to Andrew in Florida to see his new RX7—bounding over every little bump in the road of life, the car has never failed me. Every single banged up panel or broken part I made sure to put in the work to fix it. I had to make it even better than before, because in a way, that is what the car did for me. **mm**



My Other Car is a **BICYCLE**

by Doug Miller

On a warm pleasant summer day in 2014 a good customer came to our bike shop for service. Brian's bike was on a carrier on the back of a 1990 red Miata. I admired his car. It was the first time I had ever taken note of this or any car, really. I was a bike guy. Two weeks later Brian returned to our shop and offered me the use of his car while he was gone to see the Tour de France. Of course I accepted and within two days of driving I said to my wife, "I have to have a Miata."

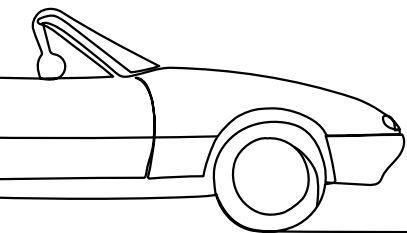
My wife and I built our cycling business as a shared passion. One aspect of a bicycle I've always enjoyed is their agile responsiveness; it's true whether on a mountain bike or a road bike. The input is direct and once you've acquired some skills, you

feel in control. Of course speed on a bicycle is equally a rush. And then a Miata rolls into my life, and I'm feeling much the same exhilaration and joy as I experience on a bike.

After extensive reading about the culture of Miata I found one for sale locally. As a bike mechanic I found it quite easy to service, repair, and modify. I was hooked. My wife, still pretty cool on the idea, had not even driven the Miata and brushed aside my enthusiasm. Finally, one day I came home to find she and the car were gone. Some time later, the door opened and in walked Patty with a huge grin. "I get it," she spurted. "That was fun."

Mechanical as bicycles are, they do not pose the variety of challenges enjoyed when working on a well-





designed car. It became quickly apparent that Miata offered very approachable challenges. Plus, my new passion for Miata offered a relief from the day in, day out experience of retail and service. And so began a legacy of Miatas in our household, Patty and I each with our own, plus a '91 I had modified for autocross events. In time I found a new rhythm in my life. I would buy a decent car, update it with new suspension, replace the timing belt, do whatever it needed, and sell it locally. I eased into my Miata habit with the help of miata.net, forums, and was pleased to find the passion shared by the likes

of Moss. I quickly got acquainted with many helpful and interesting enthusiasts both personally and commercially, like Dave Biagioni of Dave's Miata Garage in Oakville, Ontario. He is renowned throughout southern Ontario. Dave represents how devoted and broad-based the Miata culture can be.

We had as many as four Miatas at a time. I was riding less but wrenching and driving more and loving it. In 2019 we retired from our cycling business in Ontario and moved to Prince Edward Island only months ahead of the pandemic. Our remaining MX5, a 2006 GT nicely modified and in

Winning blue came by auto transport. This was our 14th Miata. In those few short years, I had refurbished and sold 13 others, a mix of NA and NB, from fully stock to modified.

When buying Miatas, I looked for cars that had not seen winter driving, although I did get fooled a few times. Rebuilding rusted bodies is outside my interest and skill set. It's been a hobby for me, not a business. I refurbished and sold only to move on to the next one. I never gave notion to the idea of any other car but Miata. It seemed important to stick with what I had come to know and enjoy. It sometimes cost more than I

The foldout camper was designed to be used with motorcycles. Our bikes and gear fit neatly on top and inside. The NC pulled this easily at 120km/hr from Ontario thru most of Texas—almost 8000kms on that trip. That's how I live both passions.



Having worked with a few cyclists who developed or inherently have balance issues, recumbent trikes, of which there are many, became a go-to solution.

Once in trike myself, I realized how much more like a Miata a trike is with its low rise and razor sharp handling. An electric assist makes it even more so.

expected to make a car right, but the mechanical challenges have a value that's all their own. Looking back, I have pretty much done all mechanical work except for a complete engine rebuild. I serviced and installed suspension, exhaust, differentials, clutches, superchargers, belts, seals, etc. Some challenges were more frustrating than others but all doable and completed successfully.

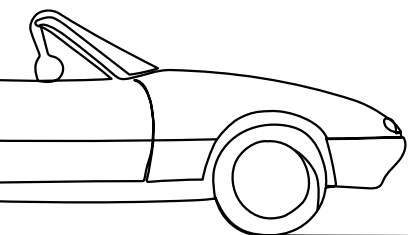
My advice to someone interested in Miatas is to define their interest as best they can. If you're not looking for a project, then buy a car you know is in good condition and go out there and enjoy the drive. If project minded, then have a good idea of your skill set so you avoid buying a Miata with needs way beyond your abilities. Treat it like a progressive learning experience.

In the spring of 2021 we weren't driving much and, numbed by various Covid restrictions, we

decided to sell our beloved '06. Within days it was sold and within a day of that it hit me: "What have I done?!" I also came to realize that it was Miata wrenching I was perhaps missing the most. Of course, once you start looking you can quickly find a Miata for sale in need of TLC. Within weeks I found two nearby NBs and I was back in the game. Some cleaning, new belts, brakes and suspension got these two prepped and ready for new owners. But a lump in my gut told me I had let go of a favourite: our '06 GT complete with Ohlins suspension, Borla exhaust and other upgrades. Did I want to try getting back to that level or be content with a stock '03? By early fall I had missed out on a few nice Miatas. Prices had risen rapidly during Covid times. Meanwhile, I was also meeting some local Miata enthusiasts in

my own neighbourhood. They are everywhere.

But the Miata gods heard my grief and led me to a gorgeous '05 GT, located just outside of Montreal, 12 hours away. And in classic red, the one colour Miata I never had nor imagined liking. Friends were planning to travel to within minutes of that location. I could travel with them. The price was right. The owners, both retired from Canadian military, were delightful to strike a deal with. So, in mid-September we acquired #17, in excellent condition ready for some nice upgrades. What a perfect way to scratch a Miata itch. Now at age 71, I swear this is my last Miata. It's time to do more driving than wrenching while I can. Cruising the coastal roads immersed in the scent of sea air is pure top-down delight. And to think I almost checked out of Miata culture. **mm**



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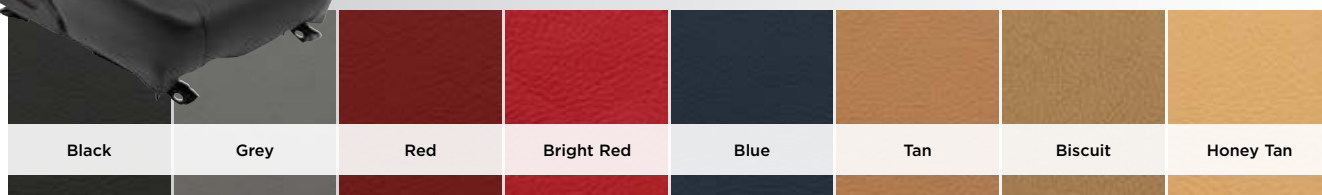
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CAR CALENDAR

Call for Entries



There is no theme. Your car doesn't have to be perfect, or even close to it. Our goal, pure and simple, is to try and put together the coolest car calendar imaginable, with photos that possess something uniquely magical. It could be the storybook setting, or maybe the shot has the "just right" touch of light on the sheet metal. Perhaps the image captures a sense of motion and movement that feels like a dance, or your favorite picture is one from the thousands you took during your restoration. We're talking about the kind of photo that makes you stop, smile, and thank the heavens for the experiences that only Miatas can bring.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

- Photos of high resolution are needed to print well. Will a smartphone camera do this? Probably, but be sure the settings are for the largest size photo. A dedicated camera would probably give better results. Try and submit a photo that has a file size greater than 1MB.
- Photos in a horizontal orientation are much preferred over portrait layout.
- Even if they don't get used in the calendar, submitted photos may be used in other fun Moss projects or material. We suspect we'll get more awesome photos than we know what to do with!



MossMiata.com/miata-calendar