CLUB



TALK

A Quarterly Publication of the MX-5 Club of NSW

Rear View With OK

A look back at our favourite runs

The first weekend run of the year was to the National Capital. We met at the Crossroads Hotel at 9 am on Saturday for a short sprint to Goulburn. This entailed travelling along the Old Hume Highway to Picton which included the section over Razorback Mountain. From Picton, we headed west to travel along some "MX-5 roads" through Thirlmere and Hilltop to a much needed pitstop at Mittagong. (And, yes, I did leave the Club banner hanging over the advertising board at the Crossroads Hotel...but thanks to Graham & Jean Cook for their efforts in having the publican retrieve it until my return on Sunday!!). The run continued from Mittagong through Bowral, Moss Vale Exeter and Bundanoon to lunch at the Paragon Cafe in Goulburn.

After about an hour and a half lunch break, we headed out along Braidwood Road towards Bungendore. About 10km from Goulburn awaited a surprise...The Wakefield Park Raceway. Peter Simpson and I knew that we could inspect this new track, but we were madly hoping that we could drive around the circuit. Special thanks here must go to Peter for convincing Paul Samuels to allow the drivers to take their cars onto the circuit and drive four laps (It should be on the record that the Club Captain sacrificed his drive and was passenger in his own car as Paul requested that he drive the lead car...I guess that is his prerogative as he owns the racetrack!) Thanks Paul for introducing our Club to your track....we shall return.

Anyway, from there a leisurely drive through Tarago to Bungendore where we stopped for afternoon tea and a stroll through the antique shops. Then it was only a short hop to our stay at the Brassey Hotel in Barton. I am told it was a wonderful sight as 26 MX-5s trundled two abreast along the dual carriageway from Queanbeyan to Canberra.

We had a superb meal at the hotel before retiring to recuperate for Sunday's events. Some of us did drink a little too much and were very slow on the Sunday..it is amazing how that nip in the Canberra air can cure a hangover.

For the run on Sunday, we had 28 cars, as Ron Sandeman and John Simpson from Canberra joined us for the run. It involved a lap or two around the new Parliament House, a circuit of Anzac Parade and some photographs, and then to a nearby petrol station for fuel. We found out that the electronics at some service stations cannot cope with every pump being turned on at the same time. After some confusion and scattering to other service stations, we were all ready to go...heading south from Canberra through Tharwa to Cuppacumbalong Station where we had a much needed morning tea break. The road from here back to Canberra via the Cotter Dam, is one of the best driving roads we have been on. It was a pity that some of the locals were out for a Sunday stroll on this stretch of road. The run ended at the Ginninderra Village in Canberra at lunch time which allowed everyone to return home at their leisure.

George Russ



Rearview Mirror - Page 1
President's Report - Page 2
From the Editors Dash - Page 3
The Shocking Truth - Page 5
Miata Modifications - Page 6

MX-5 X-Ray - Page 7 Going Topless - Page 8 Tail Pipe - Page 9 Members Only - Page 10

The President's Report

WOW! Did the last four months go as fast for you?

Sorry about the delays with this edition caused by several factors including my workload and our Editor's recent marriage! Bryan and Cathy were married in early August (with 5 MX-5s for the bridal cars) and Bryan has now transferred the editorship to Justin Ooi. Bryan has given a magnificent effort over the last two years in getting the magazine up and running and we thank him for the time and commitment that he has given to us - over to you Justin! Unfortunately, we are not getting a lot of contributions from people that have attended events, reducing the writing workload of the regular contributors.

I would like to highlight some of the activities from the last four months.

The inaugural NATMEET in Adelaide would have to be a major highlight for any MX-5 Club member. Wonderfully organised by the South Australian branch, and in particular Grant and Kerryanne George, we had 14 cars and 25 members attending. The team spirit that was built up at NATMEET and travelling in convoy to and from (thanks to Frank Johnson for all the organising) had a dramatic effect on the comradeship in the club.

Apart from all the wonderful drives and activities, NATMEET also introduced many of our members into sporting activities with the Race Day at Mallala - if only we had such a safe and relatively inexpensive track near to Sydney! Congratulations are in order for Paul Heeks who won the overall Concours with his beautiful green machine and also won the points score for the individual member competition. Steve Remington won the Concours prize for the best modified MX-5, and Elaine Caldwell won the Photo Competition - the reality was that everyone who attended was a winner!

Ruth and I took a few extra days to drive the Great Ocean Road - two days of brilliant sunshine and a car that was purpose built for this road was a wonderful experience. At the General Meeting in April, we were able to show the NATMEET video, put together by Col Caldwell and Mark Schmitzer, which will provide all of us with memories of this wonderful event - including that famous (or infamous) double 360 degree spin out by Paul Heeks at Mallala. Our July General Meeting featured the genial speaker, NSW club member and founding father of the MX-5 - Mr Bob Hall. Bob was able to show us fascinating videos of the early development of the MX-5 and answer many questions from an enthusiastic audience - thanks Bob.

Our 'Third Sunday' social drives have been well attended with at least 25 cars on each drive since April. These drives included the Zig-Zag railway run, the Canberra weekend, the Wiseman's Ferry/Old Sydney Town run - what a sight to see all those MX-5s on the ferry - our Yulefest Dinner run to Mt Victoria was attended by 50 people and featured that wonderful drive along the Bells Line of Road. We now have four two way radios to control our convoys and special thanks go to Rolf Edler for making up the 'quick fit' aerials to improve the radio range.

Sporting events have been limited to Motorkhana days and that memorable Indian file four lap dash of 26 MX-5s around the Wakefield Park circuit, diverting from our run down to Canberra. Our first Motorkhana for '94 attracted 15 competitors and we are hoping for ar increase at the second run on the 4th September. If you haven't tried it before, please come along and enjoy a fun day in a fun car - it's safer than driving on the highway! We are hoping to have a sprint day at Wakefield Park in early November but are still negotiating with a couple of other clubs to make the day financially viable.

The theatre party to the Ensemble to see Reg Livermore was booked out and 30 people attended and enjoyed a wonderful performance, which was followed by an impromptu Chinese dinner for 26. The Yulefest dinner was also very successful and the Christmas party is on the 3rd of December as an evening function.

(Continued on Page 4)



It's time for some serious proactive action! The MX-5 Club of NSW is growing at an exponential rate and thus its time for a change. Firstly, a change in editor and a change in the newsletter. Bryan Wu has done an excellent job with the newsletter but with the growth of the club, he has had to relinquish his position to concentrate on his other duties (including that of Club Treasurer). I'm sure all members will join me in thanking Bryan for a job well done.

Fresh ideas, greater public awareness, and increased member activity are all necessary to maintain the healthy evolution of the club. In an attempt to achieve these goals, the Club Newsletter will be going through some major mutations in an effort to promote more member interest and contributions, increased participation in social events and generally, just an interesting and informative read.

So if there are any closet motoring journalists, photographers, artists etc, the Club would love to hear from you. Phone me on (w) 02-978-3501, (m) 015-204-872 or (h) 680-2560 if you would like to contribute to the newsletter. Cheers...

Justin Ooi Editor

NATMEET 96

The clock is ticking away and its only 18 months to the next National Meeting of MX-5s. The NSW Club is responsible for organising NATMEET 96 and the NATMEET committee will be formed next month.

The general committee has been discussing some of the major issues like where and when etc and these have already been raised at the last General Meeting.

Consensus at present is that the best location is Canberra and the best time is Monday to Thursday before Easter. The option of having it in Sydney at Easter would be extremely difficult, more costly and we would have cluttered roads to contend with. We are anticipating at least 70 cars to attend this NATMEET.

We also expect that some of our interstate guests will like to spend some time in Sydney over Easter and we are hoping that some of our members may be able to billet them to minimise costs.

If you missed out on Adelaide, make sure that you don't miss out on NATMEET 96. Start planning now to attend what will be a wonderful experience.

Peter Simpson

Just a Short Note from George and Colleen Russ...

We would like to thank all our friends from the MX-5 Club for their thoughts and good wishes on our recent wedding. In particular, special thanks to Peter Simpson, Tony Armstrong, Colin Caldwell and Mike Walkden-Brown for supplying sparkling MX-5s and for chauffeuring the bridal party.

The President's Report

(Continued from Page 2)

The Club's image has been highlighted by our new logo. The decal to put on your car will let other people know you are a club member - please affix it to the driver's side (top or bottom) of the windscreen. Cloth badges featuring the logo will be available soon and they can be attached on to caps, shirts, jumpers etc.

Our membership, and attendance at activities, continues to grow and I am delighted to see an active younger membership. We now have a good balance of young and not so young, couples, singles, males and females. If you haven't been along to any of our functions for a while - please make the effort. I am sure you will find it worthwhile.

All of these activities are the result of a very active committee. They have worked hard to make changes that the members were asking for and the attendance has rewarded that hard work. Don't forget the Annual General Meeting in October - Happy Motoring.

Peter Simpson

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Did you know we have a home away from home in the Lower Hunter Valley? Club members Suzanne Munroe and Richard Jenkins own and run the Burncroft Guest House (as you are aware from reading previous issues of Clubtalk).

Colleen and I have just spent four fabulous nights as their guests. Burncroft is their home and they have three double rooms which are available for use by guests. This is definitely the place to relax and unwind. A word of warning... if you take the dinner, bed and breakfast package, Suzanne is an excellent cook so be prepared to eat copious amounts of food!

The property is nestled amongst the wineries at Rothbury, which is at the top end of the region. Next time you are planning a weekend (or weekday) trip to the Hunter, we suggest you contact Suzanne and Richard at Burncroft.

George Russ

We've got the Runs...

A major aspect of the Club's activities are the social runs held on the 3rd Sunday of each month. These runs basically entail leisurely drives in convoy through the outskirts of Sydney to a scenic destination in the country. Often morning teas and lunches are prearranged for the end of the run.

In the past three months, we have had drives up to Mt Victoria in the Blue Mountains, a leisurely run down to the Burragorang Valley near Camden and also a short burst to Old Sydney Town via Wiseman's Ferry.

However, even though Club membership is well over 100, only a consistent 30 or so regulars attend these runs. Why is this so???

Besides the understandable reasons such as work and social commitments, we believe some members may have the misconception that the runs are only for serious drivers....WRONG! Any driver could easily manage the leisurely pace we usually maintain on our runs (except maybe a Ford Capri driver).

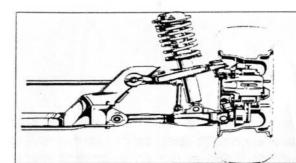
But, seriously, the runs are purely social, and are meant for all to enjoy. They are all extremely well organised and monitored, with four 'control' vehicles equipped with two-way radios to ensure no-one gets lost in traffic. The roads chosen are well maintained (wouldn't want to damage our precious Miatas), safe yet enjoyable, and usually free of traffic of 'other' drivers in their poor excuses for motor vehicles.

Alternatively, if you would like to drive at your own pace, you could meet us at the end of the run, for a bit of lunch, a bit of social gossip, and a whole lot of car talk.

So why not dust off that old beret, grab that great tweed houndstooth jacket, and wrap that long woollen scarf and come for a seriously relaxing cruise on our next MX-5 run. (Alternatively, for the younger set, slap on the Charlotte Hornets cap, slip on the Stussy T-shirt, and wrap those Oakleys around your face).

The next day run is on the October 16th weekend. Make sure you make it, especially since its one day off my birthday (Hint Hint! - I'd really like a brand new black clubman for my 25th). Check the flyers for more details on the run.

Ed.



THE SHOCKING TRUTH

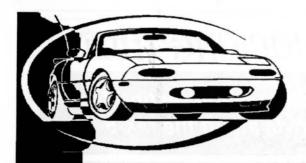
A Compilation of interesting facts and trivia about the MX-5

At the last General Meeting, we were graced with the presence of one of the fore-fathers (make you feel old Bob?) of the Mazda MX-5, Bob Hall. He shared with us an excellent presentation in relation to the "birth" of the MX-5. The video and adlib commentary by Bob was very informative and entertaining, not too mention funny, thanks to his quick, dry sense of humour (a trait he must have picked up in Australia).

With a lot of help from Leanne Chow (See, I promised you I'd get your name in print - Ed), the following interesting trivia and facts were compiled about the creation of one of the true automotive classics.

Did You Know...

- * Mazda Japan was initially adamant about producing a fixed roof coupe. Thus the designers of the MX-5 had to promote their prototype to the board with the hardtop on. They then later revealed the fact it was indeed a convertible!
- * The MX-5 could well have been a mid-mounted engine, rear wheel drive machine if not for the fact that Toyota revealed the new MR2 at a motor show. The specs of this car were too similar to one of the three proposals put forward (front engine-front wheel drive; mid engine-rear wheel drive; front engine-rear wheel drive)
- * The MX-5 is unlikely to ever get an engine bigger than a 2 litre because Mazda Japan sees any vehicle which is 2 litres or more as not being a small sports car They want this trait to be retained by the MX-5. (How unfortunate...wouldn't you love to see the Mazda 929's three litre shoe-horned into an MX-5...ED.)
- * Initially, a fibreglass cowling behind the seats (similar to the Capri Clubsport) was to incorporated into the design of the MX-5. However, one of the main criteria put forward by Hirai and Mazda USA was that the roof must be easily raised from the driver's seat without having to remove the seat-belt this was not possible if the cowling was added.
- * Why does the MX-5 have pop-up headlights? Supposedly, Japanese women find pop-up headlights very sexy. (Whoaa Baby...I might get pop-up lights surgically attached to a part of my anatomy...ED.)
- * Initially, the first few design concepts had two humps on the bonnet not one in the middle.
- * Door handles changed to make them more 'user friendly' for women with nails.
- * Hirai's inclusion into the project instigated changes to the car which make it what it is today a sports-car not a boulevard cruiser.
- * Extensive research into the exhaust note to get it sounding just right.
- * The MX-5 project actually started around 1982....a long 7 year haul to get the car on the road.
- * Mazda employed a expensive external marketing outfit to think up names for the car but they came up with such 'beauties' like Tarago. Finally, a dictionary was flicked through looking for words starting with the letter 'M'. They came upon 'Miata' which in old German, means 'reward or prize'.
- * Air intake had to be lowered as the original bumper design did not conform with U.S. safety standards.



Bolt on performance parts for the MX-5 are becoming more readily available as the popularity of the car sky-rockets. In the next few issues, the different alternatives to improve your MX-5's performance, handling and aesthetics will be examined in detail.

In relation to performance enhancements, there are numerous modifications which may be implemented, either individually or, more effectively, in conjunction with other performance enhancements. Bolt on changes include: -

- Exhaust systems and free flowing catalytic convertors
- Extractors and headers
- Airbox modifications
- Computer chips

In this issue, the focus will be on the air intake systems of the MX-5. More specifically, the Loch Stewart and Jackson Racing systems will be overviewed.

An engine's performance is dictated by two primary factors, the injection of fuel and the intake of air. Since a proper ratio of air to fuel is necessary for good combustion, the secret to performance increases lies in the improvement of airflow. Improvements in air flow may be obtained simply by replacing the stock paper element with a more free breathing unit like the foam style Unifilters. This rather simple modification is not going to result in neck snapping performance but it is a step in the right direction.

Taking the modification one step further would include the modification of the airbox to allow easier breathing and also the induction of cold air from outside the engine bay. This is what the Loch Stewart system attempts to achieve.

Loch Stewart, an active member of the Queensland MX-5 Club has been doing some research into the 'asthma' problems of the MX-5. The result is a very neat and relatively inexpensive unit which should give your MX-5 a noticeable increase in power. Essentially, the installation involves the removal of the standard air box and replacing it with a new unit which draws air from outside the engine bay via a hole cut in the fire wall. The resulting improvement in airflow is due primarily to the cold air induction from outside the engine bay and the reduced plumbing in which the air has to travel through. The airbox costs around \$325.00 plus freight for members of the MX-5 club. This price does not include the cost of a new foam filter which usually retails for around \$55.00.

The system described above is a cheap, effective but relatively low-tech way of increasing the number of horses under the bonnet. The car's reliability should not be compromised since no mechanical or electrical parts are replaced. However, because the original air meter is retained, optimum cold air induction can never be achieved. The Jackson Racing system does this, but at a considerably heftier cost of around US\$ 900.

Oscar Jackson, the brains behind Jackson Racing in Huntington Beach, California, discovered that the significant breathing problems were caused by the standard mechanical airflow meter. This air meter is essentially a spring loaded door which opens wider as the engine draws more air. This door creates high restrictions at all engine speeds, manifesting itself in slow throttle response and lack of torque. This problem is overcome by replacing the standard air flow meter with a new airbox, air filter, ancillary electronic control module and a Bosch hot air-mass sensor.

(Continued on Page 7)

Engine Misfires?

Many MX-5 drivers from around the globe have struck a slight driveability problem in the middle RPM range. New plugs, adjusted throttle switches, etc, have had no effect until they try one last item - spark plug wires. More often than not, these simple parts will introduce a slight skip or stumble that can only be cured by a wire-ectomy. Even if resistance measures out acceptably (no more than 5000 ohms per foot of length), they can still be at fault. If your car has more than 50,000 km or is older than 3 years, keep your eye on the plug wires.

Front Oil Seal Leaking

Some owners find oil leaks originating at the front crankshaft seal, especially around the 100,000 km mark. Since the timing belt needs to be changed at this point anyway, make sure the crankshaft seal is replaced at the same time.

Petrol Smell in Boot

Make sure not to "nurse" your fuel tank when filling up. If the filler neck is holding fuel, either fuel can slosh against the tank cap, or your vent hoses can become wet with fuel. Thus, when filling up, stop filling when the nozzle clicks off once.

The Miata D-I-Y Bible

Rod's Mazda MX-5 Manual is a recent publication which should interest most MX-5 enthusiasts. Said to be the most detailed manual yet published for the MX-5, it is also renowned for being easy to read and follow. With over 350 pages and 1600 photos and illustrations, every facet of the car is covered and explained in clear, concise detail. The manual was prepared with the assistance of Mazda.

The book retails for around \$64.95 but Club members are given a discount of 33%.. Details to order are as follows:

Message Books 22/104 Old Pittwater Rd Brookvale NSW 2100 Tel 02-905-5693 OR Fax 02-905-3671

These hints are courtesy of the *Miata Magazine*, published quarterly by the

Miata Club of America

Soft Top Stoppers

Nosing around your rag top, you might find that one of your "down stoppers" for the soft top is missing. This small rubber cushion keeps your softtop from being pinched when in the down position. Small but important. Take a look at yours...if its gone see your dealer for a replacement part.

MIATA MODIFICATIONS

(Continued from Page 6)

The Miata Club of America has rated the Jackson system as the best "Bang for Bucks" modifications for the MX-5. Praise for the system has also come from one of the cars original design team members - Bob Hall. As a member of the MX-5 Club of NSW, Bob recently made a presentation at the last General Meeting. He spoke very highly of the Jackson System and included it on his wish list of "Things to improve the Miata". The problem with the system is its availability in Australia. After speaking to several MX-5 and Twin Cam specialists, the general consensus is.. "Great system...if you can get your hands on one...". So if any club member has connections in the States, the Club would dearly love your help in further investigating the availability of the system.

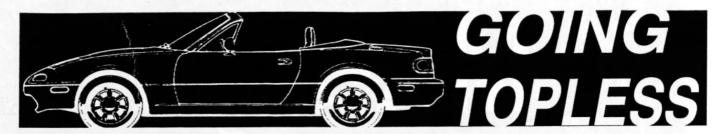
If however, the money and trouble involved in obtaining the Jackson system is a little too much for some, the Loch Stewart unit is a good alternative. Several members of the club already have units fitted. I'm sure they'd be happy to relate "traffic light" stories to those interested. Alternatively, there are other systems on the market such as the HKS unit. Airbox modifications however, like many other performance enhancements work best in conjunction with other changes - specifically exhaust systems. It no use if air which is now fed in more efficiently is still restricted in its exit. The area of exhaust and extractors will be covered in the next issue...stay tuned.

For those interested in the above units, either phone me (ED.) or try the following numbers directly.

Loch Stewart Performance Kits - QLD Phone 07-878-1098

Jackson Racing (CA USA) - 16291 Gothard St, Huntington Beach California 92647

Information sourced from the Miata MX-5 Guide and the Queensland CLub Newsletter



A revealing insight into an MX-5 Club member's life

Our first member to "Go Topless" is Andrew Schaeffer, a 24 year old yuppie type who works for Westpac. Andrew, a very new member to the club was the first guinea pig for this "Jana Wendt meets Hinch" type probing interview. Watch out, as we slowly work our way through the membership list. I think the next victim may be Jean Cook. I'm sure we would all like to see her "Go Topless" next issue (especially since it would make it very difficult for Graham to come after me with a meat cleaver if he is still in Hong Kong...) Anyway, on with the show...

Q. What made you buy the MX-5?

A. I've always had free-revving twin cams and enjoyed their qualities. The MX-5 was a natural progression.. I was also wrapped in the idea of having a convertible. The MX-5 is easily the best car I've owned.

Q. What did you drive before the MX-5

A. A supercharged Corolla Twin Cam and before that, a Suzuki Swift GTI

Q. If you had a long serious drive ahead of you, who would you want in the passenger seat

A. A co-pilot with a helmet intercom and rally notes.

(What a boring answer, I would have said any girl from Baywatch wearing a water soluble dress while I'm driving through a thunderstorm with the roof down....ED.)

Q. What do you like most about the MX-5

A. Its handling ability

(Yet another boring answer, can't you be more expressive and say "...because it sticks to the road like poo to carpet...ED.)

Q. What do you like least about the MX-5

A. Undoing the zipper on the soft top...oh, and I wish it had a little more power

Q. What's your favourite stretch of bitumen

A. Old pacific highway up towards Gosford

Q. What's the worst accident you've ever had

A. I rolled the Swift GTI in front of some high school girls on a Saturday afternoon on one of Sydney's main streets

Q. Have you had any proposals of marriage while sitting at the lights?

A. No, but lots of interest from school girls though (Lock up your daughters, this guy seems to be unhealthily infatuated with high school girls...ED.)

Q. What modifications have you done, will you do, to the car?

A. To date, I've added GAB shocks, RSR springs, 16 inch ENKEI rims and a GAB strut brace... I hope to bolt on a a NELSON supercharger, JACKSON air flow meter, and 2.75 inch headers and exhaust

Q. What would be your ultimate car

A. 288 GTO Ferrari V12 Twin Turbo

Q. Did you buy the MX-5 to satisfy delusions of sexual grandeur

A. I like cars for their driving pleasure rather than their pose value (Unless of course there is a school bus full of high school girls, ehh Andrew?!...ED.)



Someone forgot to explain the term
'Car Bra' in detail to Pete Stanton.
And if anyone is wondering, that's
Leanne Chow's 'uplift factor' hanging
off the aerial. For a good time,
ring Leanne on...





Chris Campbell proudly demonstrates his new invention... the practical MX-5.

As the demand for MX-5s grows in Australia, Mazda Japan has had to employ additional vessels for transporting them across the Pacific.



Members Only...

The following companies have agreed to offer special services and discounts to MAZDA MX-5 Club Members. Please note that you must produce proof of membership by showing your current Club Membership Card

Ammon International Pty Ltd

Ammon International are professional manufacturers of Car Leather seats. For the MX-5, two seats in full leather (your choice of colour) will cost only \$975. Price includes full installation and a three year warranty. Ammon is located at 1 Parramatta Road, Five Dock. Contact Alex Chien on 716-6749 or 716-6829.

A.M.R. Motors Mazda Service

Complimentary loan vehicle, 10% discount on labour, free extrerior and interior wash and clean. AMR Service is located at 370 Parramatta Road, Petersham, Contact Dominic or Robert on 569-2844

A.M.R Motors Mazda Insurance

For details on Mazda's new Comprehensive Car Insurance, contact Darryl on 569-2844.

John Newell Mazda Service

VIP Service, Free Loan vehicle. Unit 3. 9-13 O'Riordan St, Alexandria. Ph 319-0011

Trivett Classic Mazda

Trade prices on all parts, discount on labour, free loan car and free car wash and vacuum. Located at 364 Princess Highway, Rockdale, contact Carlo or Peter on 599 3399.

Finishline Car Accessories

Discounts on MX-5 accessories, free courier delivery PO Box 272, Caulfield South, Victoria 3152 (Call Barry Helfenbaum on 03-527-6924)

AMG

10% discount on body kits, wheels, tyres, sports exhausts and suspension parts 500 Glenmore Rd, Edgecliff Ph 327-6508. Ask for Simon Stratford or Brian Connell.

Ian Luff Dynamic Safety Advance Driving

\$25 discount on car control courses. For details, phone 820-2030

Burncroft Guest House

Burncroft is a small guest house set on 20 acres in the Lower Huneter Valley, with views across the valley to Watagan Mountains and Brokenback Range. Your hosts are club members, Suzanne and Richard, 10% discounts for MX-5 club members, for reservations and information, phone 049-307-246

NOTE: Please note that the Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW does not endorse or recommend any product or service provided by the above companies. It is listed as an information service for our members only.

The engine sounds so crisp and strong, you



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is a publication of the MX-5 Club of NSW Inc.
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