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**MAZDA MX-5 MIATA:
HOW CALMNESS AND THOUGHT DELIVERED A BRILLIANT NEW VERSION OF
THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR TWO-SEAT CONVERTIBLE SPORTS CAR**

IRVINE, Calif., - Replacing a car rated as one of the greatest sports cars of all time – and the best selling two-seat convertible, ever – is a challenge that would make even the best designers and engineers nervous.

But when you meet Mazda MX-5 program manager Takao Kijima, he not only seems astonishingly calm, he even quotes from a Japanese artistic ritual *Yabusame*, which seems to highlight his inner tranquility. *Yabusame* shows a man on horseback, shooting an arrow into a target. To be successful, they must move as one, in harmony, and this is known as *Jinba Ittai*. It is this same sense of oneness and dynamic harmony – but this time, between man and machine – that was the overarching philosophy behind the brand new third-generation 2006 Mazda MX-5 Miata. A similar sense of well being, one senses, has helped Mr. Kijima and his international team keep cool and clear-headed throughout the new car's development.

“*Jinba Ittai* drove all of the development team's decisions, yielding a car so nimble and fun to drive that the driver and car achieve true unity,” says Kijima. “This unified rider and horse concept allowed us to create a new MX-5 that's true to the spirit of the original: exceptionally lightweight, and lots of fun to drive.”

The 2006 MX-5 Miata is all-new, sharing not a single component with the car it replaces, with significant key updates, including:

- A body structure that uses new materials and technologies to trim weight, improve crashworthiness, and increase rigidity;
- Fresh, modern interior and exterior designs that celebrate the iconic status of the original MX-5;
- Slightly larger exterior dimensions to provide room for taller occupants, as well as improved comfort and enhanced safety for both driver and passenger;

- more -

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- A linear and lively new 2.0-liter MZR engine;
- All-new platform with advanced front mid-ship layout;
- Improved steering, suspension, and brakes;
- Top-level craftsmanship and fit-and-finish that yields a high quality ‘fun’ appearance.

Mazda, of course, has a distinguished history of producing great sports cars. The first Mazda sports car to win worldwide recognition and praise was the rotary-powered Cosmo Sport launched in 1967. The RX-7, which followed in 1978, won the hearts of sports car enthusiasts and claimed many important race victories. The original MX-5 Miata, launched in 1989 as a 1990 model, revolutionized the affordable two-seat roadster market. Two years ago, Mazda’s introduction of the RX-8 redefined the boundaries of sports car design by offering spectacular performance and comfortable accommodation for four adults in one innovative sports car package.

All of Mazda’s considerable expertise and passion for designing great sports cars was drawn on for the latest third-generation MX-5 Miata.

Six versions of the new MX-5 Miata will be offered: the Club Spec, standard MX-5, Touring, Sport and Grand Touring. For the very first time from launch, Mazda also will offer 750 Limited special versions of the MX-5.

“The third-generation Mazda MX-5 Miata builds on the formidable qualities of the previous generation cars, and sets the standard for affordable roadsters for the 21st century,” says Yasunari Otachi, vehicle line manager for MX-5 Miata. “Our new model range also is the broadest ever, catering from the great value Club Spec right up to the Limited special version, which specifically celebrates the arrival of the car that probably, more than any other, sums and celebrates Mazda’s Zoom-Zoom philosophy.”

GREATER BODY RIGIDITY, NEW SUSPENSION FURTHER IMPROVES THE FUN OF DRIVING

Too much weight is bad for athletes, and just as bad for sports cars. Weight hurts acceleration, throttle response, handling and agility. It negatively affects braking distances and fuel economy. Mazda engineers worked hard to reduce weight wherever possible – while building a roomier, safer car.

Weight-saving measures include the use of an aluminum hood and trunk lid and many aluminum suspension and braking components. There is widespread use of high-strength and ultra high-strength steel in the unitary construction body, which boosts body strength while simultaneously cutting weight. The new 2.0-liter engine has an aluminum block and head, and the intake manifold and cam cover are made from lightweight composite plastic. In the end, overall weight has increased by just 27 lbs over the second-generation car – yet the car is roomier for tall or large adults, and safer for everyone, thanks to its stronger body and improved safety features (including standard side airbags and ABS anti-lock brakes for all versions).

How did Mazda achieve a vehicle that is roomier, stronger and safer? By utilizing the ‘gram strategy’. One of the imperatives for Mazda engineers was making every gram count by assessing the weight of the vehicle in the smallest possible increments. Under this ‘gram strategy’ imperative, for example, the design of the rear-view mirror was simplified, thus trimming 84 grams, or 0.19 lbs. While not a surmountable difference on its own, by applying this strategy throughout every nook and cranny of the MX-5’s design, Mazda engineers were quite effective in building a light, roomier, stronger and safer sports car.

By using high-strength and ultra-high strength steel in the construction of the body-in-white, bending rigidity has been improved by 22-percent and torsional rigidity by 47-percent. Additionally, the rear of the transmission is rigidly linked to the front of the differential housing by a Z-shaped frame made of aluminum. This assures that the driver’s throttle inputs are faithfully and promptly conveyed to the rear wheels, ensuring the maximum possible oneness between car and driver.

Front suspension is by double wishbones, as in the best sports cars and race cars. They provide linear toe, caster, and camber changes as the wheels travel up and down. Anchor points are reinforced to provide the desired lateral stiffness and made from aluminum to reduce weight. No suspension system better relays feedback so accurately to the driver, nor induces such all-round stability. The new multilink rear suspension has long links to help linearity.

Springs are coil all round, and dampers are gas-filled for more accurate wheel control on difficult and taxing roads.

The power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering system is an improved version of the second-generation MX-5 design, being lighter and more precise. The four-wheel disc brakes have also been improved. Front discs are ventilated and increased in diameter by 0.78 inches to 11.4 inches. Rear discs are solid and increased in diameter by 0.16 inches to 11.0 inches. Response and linearity are both improved over the past design. Thanks to the new combination of increased braking power, larger tire sizes, minimal increase in weight, and better suspension geometry, overall stopping performance is significantly improved.

NEW ENGINE AND TRANSMISSIONS

An improved four-cylinder engine, offering better performance, and two new transmission choices – including an all-new six-speed automatic with steering wheel-mounted paddle shifters – increase the appeal of the MX-5 Miata.

The sophisticated new 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine gives strong performance, has an inspiring exhaust note, and most important of all, is brilliantly responsive. It reacts to driver commands with lightning-quick reflexes, and offers progressive power delivery. Such linearity is the key to all of the MX-5 Miata's driving controls. The MZR-series engine is shared with the engine used in MAZDA3, MAZDA5 and MAZDA6.

The engine is mounted front mid-ship, for ideal handling balance and nimbleness. It is 5.3-inches further back than the second-generation Miata's. It uses an aluminum block and head for lighter weight and structural rigidity, ultimately improving performance and refinement. Chain-driven double-overhead camshafts and 16-valve breathing are used for improved revving and flexibility. Variable intake valve timing improves low-end torque and high-end power. Response has been improved by the use of a flywheel lightened by 0.7 lb, a sophisticated electronically controlled throttle and enormously rigid drive shafts.

Maximum power is 170 horsepower at 6,700 rpm. For good tractability and ease-of-driving, at least 90 percent of peak torque (140 lb-ft) is available from 2,500 rpm to the 6,700 rpm redline. (Fuel cut off is at 7,000 rpm.)

Standard equipment is a close-ratio five-speed manual transmission, and a new six-speed manual gearbox is available, with gear ratios close-stacked to enhance the joy of sporty driving. Short, quick shift strokes have been achieved by use of triple-cone synchros on the first four gears. "Miata-like" shift quality became the benchmark for the industry when the first MX-5 launched in 1989. The new car takes performance feel to an entirely new level – think, and the car all-but changes gears on its own.

A new Sport A/T automatic transmission adds a fresh dimension to the MX-5's personality. Six ratios (up from four in the previous car) are provided to improve acceleration, driving refinement and freeway comfort. Paddles mounted behind the steering wheel command upshifts while buttons positioned on the spokes are used for downshifts. Coordinating engine torque with the shift sequence, results in smooth, seamless, and fast gear changes. The Sport A/T-equipped car is a joy to drive, with gear ratios perfectly matched to the engine's horsepower and torque output.

DESIGN BRIEF: ABOVE ALL, TO BE MODERN AND FUN

The design brief also was clear: To convey fun and modern styling but retain the iconic feel of the earlier generation MX-5 Miatas.

The new car's styling is based on the original, but is new in every way. The first- and second-generation MX-5 Miata exterior design is a rounded shape with a wide footprint, large-radius corners and deep side contours. On the third generation, the Coke-bottle shaped center section is eliminated. Instead, the designers have used an entirely new oval shape in which the seating area is now the widest portion of the car, taking cues from the Ibuki show-car. It makes for a roomier, safer cockpit and yet still expresses the compact look of a lightweight sports car.

This third-generation car is 1.8 inches longer, 1.6 inches wider and 0.7 inches taller. Wheelbase length is increased by 2.5 inches, primarily to give more cockpit space.

Side surfacing is rounded yet taut – like the skin over a muscled body. Door mirrors continue the elliptical theme established by the original MX-5 Miata.

Head and tail lamps are mounted inboard to reinforce compactness, central to the car's design philosophy. The headlamp design is different from previous MX-5 configurations: the lens cover is shorter in height but steeply slanted to sweep around the corner of the car. The tail lamps combine the traditional elliptical shape from previous design generations with new, modern materials. The rounded grille opening is similar to the original MX-5 Miata, and is part of the car's iconic shape. The front bumper is cleaner and more aerodynamically shaped. Seat-back bars add an eye-catching detail to the rear view.

The revised body shape is excellent for stability. Side skirts, tire-area deflectors and the front spoiler are designed to control airflow under the body and along its sides, minimizing drag.

The soft top is reshaped and re-engineered. It provides a sportier, more classic appearance with a flatter upper surface and a longer rear contour that flows smoothly into the rear deck. The lowered shape blends smoothly with surrounding body contours so well that no separate 'tonneau' cover is needed.

The new Z-fold design makes erecting and folding the roof even easier. It now uses a simple, central latch handle rather than the previous model's two latch handles.

The optional detachable hard top has a sweeping shape that widens out to the rear window for a light, modern and aggressive look.

Eight paint colors are offered. Of these, four are new: Galaxy Gray and Copper Red, which are suitable for a modern sports car image, and True Red and Marble White for the more traditional roadster look.

INSIDE BRIEF: THE PERFECT ENVIRONMENT TO ENJOY DRIVING

The interior design theme balances comfortable snugness below shoulder level with openness above, to give the impression of riding in open air.

The T-shaped instrument panel is consistent with Mazda design-DNA while the center console accentuates the backbone of the car. Strong horizontal and vertical theme lines connote rigidity and sports car capability. The black center stack is as simple and functional as possible. The arched hood over the instrument cluster and four circular vents are part of the MX-5 Miata's cabin identity.

The larger exterior and redesigned cabin means an increase in legroom (by 0.4 inches) and headroom (by 0.3 inches). Fore-and-aft seat adjustment is increased by 2.0 inches over the previous MX-5. Another improvement is the addition of a tilt steering wheel adjuster offering 1.3 inches of vertical movement. Stowage space has also been substantially improved: all models get front door pockets with bottle holders, a lockable glove compartment, lockable rear center console, driver and passenger back-panel storage boxes, a rear tray and a driver seat back pocket.

Wind in the hair is one thing, but nobody enjoys cockpit turbulence and buffeting, especially on long drives. Small quarter windows block drafts between the windshield pillars and door mirrors into the cockpit.

A newly designed aero board located between the seat back hoops is taller than before and perforated to slow down reverse-flow air that rushes into the cockpit. Mesh construction helps to reduce weight.

The quality of craftsmanship used in the new MX-5 is quite unlike any MX-5 before. From the details of bright-trimmed gauges to the “piano-black” finish on the dash, the new MX-5 feels and looks like a far more expensive vehicle than it actually is.

BORN FOR THE USA

The MX-5 Miata was conceived primarily for the US market, and throughout its 16-year history, America has always been the biggest market for what has become – easily – the world’s most popular two-seat convertible. The Club Spec is a new version, and represents the least expensive way of getting into an MX-5 Miata. As with the next step-up MX-5, it gets a five-speed manual gearbox, 16-inch aluminum sports wheels, power-assisted door mirrors, dual exhausts, power windows, cloth upholstery, AM/FM/CD player with four speakers, dual front airbags and side airbags. In addition, the MX-5 gets air conditioning and a leather-covered steering wheel.

The Touring version, in addition, gets fog lamps, cruise control, Advanced Keyless Entry with retractable key and steering wheel-mounted cruise and audio controls, among other extra features.

The new six-speed manual gearbox with leather shift knob is standard on the MX-5 Miata Sport, as are bigger 17-inch alloy sports wheels. The Grand Touring gets leather seats, faux leather door trim, cloth soft top, and a BOSE® audio system with seven speakers. When upgrading to the Grand Touring with Premium Package, the vehicle gets Mazda Advanced Keyless Entry & Start System. The top-range 3rd Generation Limited adds exclusive Velocity Red paint with Red or Black leather upholstery, chrome grille, windshield trim, headlamp bezels,

fog lamps bezels and door handles, chrome rings around the gauges and vents, silver instrument panel finisher, stainless steel scuff plates and unique-design 17-inch wheels with bright finish, among other unique features.

Mazda North American Operations is responsible for the sales and marketing, customer parts and service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States. Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., MNAO has more than 700 dealerships nationwide.

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