

A HISTORY OF MAZDA'S BOUNDARIES-PUSHING SEDANS

New Mazda 6 Sedan Turbo Sedan

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Mazda has been building flagship sedans for decades—cars that make the driver feel special and serve as a beacon for the Mazda brand through their sophisticated design and technology. Mazda is going even further than ever before, adorning the interior with Japanese Sen wood, Nappa leather and other luxuries to go along with its new turbo engine.

Here's a timeline of some of the highlights that show just how Mazda got where we are today with Mazda6.

1966- 1973

MAZDA LUCE

1966-1973 Mazda Luce

Pronounced *loo-chay*, Mazda's first flagship sedan entered the Mazda family in 1966, joining a lineup consisting of the Carol (subcompact car), Familia (compact car) and Capella (midsize car). It was sold in the U.S. for just three model years, known as the Mazda 1500 or 1800 in some markets, from 1971 to 1973. The Luce was designed by famed designer Giorgetto Giugiaro, who penned many Lamborghinis, Maseratis and even a Nikon camera.

Later in the model's life, Mazda built a two-door version called the R130, dropping its standard four-cylinder engine and rear-wheel drive for a two-rotor engine and front-wheel drive, completely re-engineering the car. Fewer than 1,000 were built, all for right-hand-drive markets, securing collector status for truly discerning enthusiasts. Just two Luce R130s are known to exist in the U.S.; Mazda North American Operations owns one in Irvine, California.

1972- 1977

MAZDA RX-4

1972-1977 Mazda RX-4

With the Luce still on dealership floors, Mazda launched the next boundary-pushing sedan called the RX-4, Mazda's first rotary powered sedan.

Available as a sedan, coupe or station wagon, the RX-4 was known for its power, driving engagement and the smoothness of its rotary engine. In the era, it was marketed as a car that went "hummm" when piston engines went "boing boing."

The 1970s were nothing if not great for the rotary engine. Almost everything Mazda sold in North America featured the engine. Unfortunately, they weren't the most fuel-efficient cars on the road, which left a wide opening for the start of Mazda's era of piston-engine cars, starting with the hyper-efficient GLC compact car in 1977.

1986- 1991

MAZDA 929

1986-1991 Mazda 929

The Mazda 929 arrived back in North America in 1986, with two generations sold overseas in the meantime. By '86, the Mazda 929 grew into a larger, rear-wheel-drive luxury flagship sedan, equipped with rare-for-the-day luxuries like available heated seats and even oscillating vents on the dashboard. It was also Mazda's first car to offer a V6, a 3.0-liter engine that made as much as 150 horsepower in its first iteration.

1992- 1995

MAZDA 929

1992-1995 Mazda 929

The original concept for the final 929 to be sold in the U.S. was a car that was dignified for royalty and Japanese government officials. It competed against the luxury makes of the day, equipped with a 200-horsepower, 3.0-liter V6 engine, a solar panel that was used to power an interior ventilation fan, four-wheel steering and even standard leather seating surfaces. Much like today's Mazda CX-9 crossover SUV, its engine was marketed as one with readily usable power and an abundance of amenities.

1995- 2002

MAZDA MILLENIA

1995-2002 Mazda Millenia

Replacing the Mazda 929, the Millenia was a true premium sedan, packed with many engineering firsts. Perhaps the most intriguing was its 2.3-liter, supercharged Miller Cycle V6. Ahead of its time by a decade, the Miller Cycle engine pumped out 210 horsepower, yet returned respectable fuel-efficiency and spirited performance.

The Miller Cycle, which is similar to the Atkinson Cycle, keeps intake valves in the engine open longer than normal in order to facilitate smoother airflow throughout the engine—learnings still used in today's SKYACTIV engines and tomorrow's SKYACTIV-X compression-ignition engine. The engine won a Wards 10 Best Engine award four years in a row.

The car wrapped around the engine drew plenty of praise, too.

2003- 2008

MAZDA6

2003-2008 Mazda6

The Mazda6 merged learnings from the midsize 626 and premium Millenia, returning to form with a car that truly reinvigorated the midsize sedan segment. It was sportier and more expressive than its competition. It even came in a bright yellow color in a segment that was literally full of beige cars. The Mazda6 was exactly what Mazda needed, bringing an exciting flagship to a brand that was about to become chock-full of award-winning cars like the Mazda3 and RX-8.

2009- 2013

MAZDA6

2009-2013 Mazda6

A larger, more sumptuous Mazda6, it is perhaps the oddest sedan Mazda had sold because of its unique configuration. The Mazda6 sold in North America was both longer and wider than the Mazda6 sold elsewhere, stemming from the need to compete against larger midsize cars sold on the continent. An added benefit was the addition of a 3.7-liter V6 engine, built specifically for North America.

As with the first-generation Mazda6 and the models that have come since, the goal has been to position the car in a class above its competition, including interior design and comfort. But, Mazda continues to offer a manual transmission for those who prefer DIY shifting.

2014- 2017

MAZDA6

2014-2017 Mazda 6

One of the first all-new Mazdas from the ground up since the brand regained its independence, the 2014 Mazda6 was a global midsize sedan that was aimed toward the premium end of the segment. Featuring SKYACTIV Technology, the new Mazda6 was markedly more efficient than its immediate predecessor, as well as more elegant, featuring design cues from Mazda's SHINARI (2010) and TAKERI (2011) concept cars.

Unique to the Mazda6, the car received substantial upgrades during every year of its model life, whether an all-new interior, added sound insulation, a new infotainment system, Nappa leather, upgraded safety systems or even a switch from available high-intensity xenon headlights to LED units that emit greater light intensity, yet are also more energy-efficient.

No wonder, then, that it continued to win comparisons and critical praise throughout its model life.

2018

MAZDA6

2018 Mazda 6 Turbo

It may look much the same as its immediate predecessor, but the entire chassis has been re-engineered to deliver greater refinement, better handling and improved ride. Inside, passengers will enjoy truly luxury-car levels of accommodations, complete with Mazda's first-ever available ventilated front seats, Japanese Sen wood interior trim, Nappa leather and heaps of technology.

Perhaps the most dramatic departure for the Mazda6 is its melding of customer wants and needs, blending the sportiness for which the Mazda6 is known with a new direction that's more sophisticated and effortless. That led Mazda's engineers to add the award-winning SKYACTIV-G 2.5T turbocharged engine to the options sheet. The result is a rethink of Mazda's midsize sedan, elevating it beyond its mainstream competitors to challenge premium sedans without any pretenses.



EXPLORE THE MAZDA6

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