

# mxtra

3/2016  
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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA & TASMANIA

## NatMeet comes to Tasmania!



**In this edition:**

**NatMeet XII - a roaring success!  
It's official: the MX-5 is a Unique Car  
A day's tarmac rallying in Gippsland**

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MX-5 Club  
of Victoria

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**Cover image:** *The one day it rains ... Will Campbell and Joan Read manage to see the funny side of a bleak day for the NatMeet Concours/Shown & Shine.*



Find us at:  
**MX-5 Club of Victoria**

*mxtra* is the monthly newsletter of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania Inc (#A0021659A). PO Box 7438, Beaumaris VIC 3193. Registered for Print Post: 100018450

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> please email photos to **Murray Finlay**, [secretary@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:secretary@mx5vic.org.au)

• or post: **mxtra**, Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania, PO Box 7438, Beaumaris VIC 3193

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# Pete's Perspective..

■ Peter Dannock – President [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

Since my last report, the 12th NatMeet has come on gone and was a roaring success for all who participated. During the week we had some great experiences:

- » two days of great motor sport on two different tracks
- » we shined and then showed off our cars
- » we drove some of the best roads in Northern Tasmania, perhaps some of the best roads in Australia
- » we indulged in the local food and drink

... and we had a lot of fun!

**NatMeet 2016 was a record in a number of ways:** 181 participants in 106 cars, 30% more participants than for Queensland in 2014. Some 50% of participants were first timers to NatMeet, another record and seven had participated in all 12 NatMeets. For those participants who drove across the Nullarbor, they were part of the biggest contingent to ever come to a NatMeet from Western Australia.

On the drives to Gowrie Park, Bicheno and Bridport, I was impressed with the small towns and countryside of northern Tasmania. Having some of the first penal colonies in Tasmania means that many of the towns look like English villages, with lots of old pubs, old brick buildings close to the road and avenues of deciduous trees.

The participant feedback from NatMeet was overwhelmingly positive and we could not have achieved this magnificent result without the organisation skills and support of a large group of people in the Club.

**The first group to thank** is the organising committee of David and Gail Collins, Bruce and Jenny Gray, Bruce Harvey and Cheryl Murray, Joan Read and Linda Nicoll. They did a remarkable job in overseeing the event organisation, everything went to plan and was executed like clockwork. Our Motor Sport Captains, Tim Emery and Randy Stagno Navarra, did a wonderful job in organising the two motor sport days. Thanks to Will and Coral Campbell, Grant Butler and Saeko Fujiki for their co-ordination of the Concours d'Elegance

and the Show and Shine. Thanks also goes to Alyssa and Murray Finlay for the artwork, John Cooper for coordinating the audiovisual presentations and Kelly Berggren and Tim Manion for taking lots and lots of photos.

The other group, too numerous to mention by name, are our Club members in Tasmania: they were fantastic. We could not have pulled this event off without their dedication and help in being the Run Leaders and Tail-end Charlies on all of the runs. On any day we had nine run groups of cars out on the roads of Tassie and their local knowledge certainly came in handy. Many people commented on how useful their running commentary over the radio was, as they drove through the countryside.

**I would also like to thank our sponsors** for the event: Mazda Australia, Shannons, Motor Active, Country Club of Tasmania and the Josef Chromy Winery. They were key to the success of the event.

As the hosting club, we can feel very proud of our efforts and I have no hesitation in declaring that we have just delivered the 'Best NatMeet Ever'. Well done to all involved.

**At NatMeet, Steve Maciver from Mazda Australia revealed** that there will be a retractable hardtop version of the ND released in Australia. Though he gave no timelines on its release, I am sure there are a few members who may just hold off their purchase of the all-new Mazda MX-5 until the hardtop is available. We hope to bring you more news on this as it comes to hand.

**Thanks to Richard Acfield and Siddique Fisher** for their articles in last month's *mxtra* on the MX-5-based Fiat 124 Spider. They were informative and insightful on the new model of the shared platform and owners will obviously get a good, reliable car. As Siddique suggested, will owners of the Fiat 124 Spiders be allowed to join the Club? Well, the Committee have considered the question and the answer lies within the Club's Statement of Purposes and Rules (ie, the Club's constitution).

*For your diary ...*

**See the full calendar for details**

## March

- 20 WV: Run to the Ranges
- 20 NTas: Devonport Motor Show
- 26 CEN: Bendigo Saleyard Dash

## April

- 3 CEN: Tyrone's Gippsland run
- 9 NEV: Tastes of the North-East
- 16 CEN: Two Spurs run
- 16 WV: Two Spurs / birthday run
- 17 EV: That Dam MX-5 run
- 23-25 NTas: Tassie Tiger Hunt
- 24 EV: Khanacross
- 26 NEV: Mansfield run

**The purpose of the Club is** "... to encourage the coming together of owners and drivers (and their respective families and friends) of Mazda MX-5 automobiles (the "Car") by actively promoting membership of the Club to all who own and/or drive the Car."

It goes on to state: "... the 'Car' means an Australian Design Rules (ADR)-compliant Mazda MX-5, Mazda Miata, Eunos Roadster or Mazda Roadster automobile."

After some discussion and consideration, the Committee have resolved to maintain the focus of the "Car" on the Mazda MX-5 marque; thus, owners of the new Fiat 124 Spiders will not be eligible to join the Club (unless of course, they also own a Mazda MX-5). Don't forget that you can get a copy of the Club's Statement of Purpose and Rules from the Club's website; it makes for fascinating reading.

Get out and enjoy your car, while the sun is still shining. **And remember ... leave sooner, drive slower, live longer.**

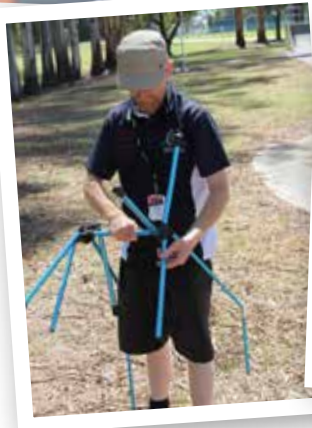
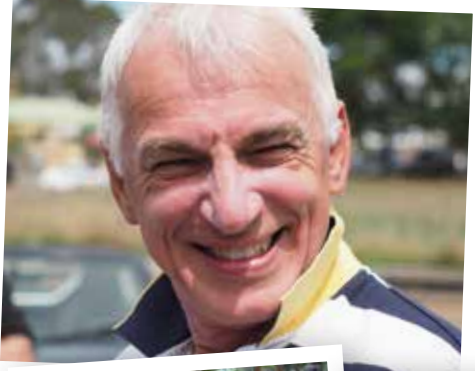
*Pete*



# Scene about



■ Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Marg Gillick, Karen Bradshaw, Tim Manion, Murray Finlay



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# Membership

Current membership count:

**669**

and growing!

■ Will Campbell – Membership Officer [membership@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:membership@mx5vic.org.au)

G'day again!

Fourteen new members, plus one renewal, is this month's tally.

A big welcome to you all and may you enjoy a long and fruitful association with the Club!

## Central Chapter

|                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Tufan Chakir     | 2010 Silver NC          |
| Theo Gidis       | 2015 Soul Red ND        |
| George Kovac     | Mariner Blue NA         |
| Martin Scerri    | 2015 White ND           |
| Regine Seifert   | 1991 Neo Green NA       |
| Vincent Sercia   | 2005 Brilliant Black NC |
| Steven Williamsz | 2001 Silver NB          |

## Southern Tasmania Chapter

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Cliff and Amy Senkbeil | 2015 Soul Red ND |
|------------------------|------------------|

## Western Victoria Chapter

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Greg and Stella Cox       | 2002 Grace Green NB |
| Ian Court and Sue Walpole | 2015 Soul Red ND    |
| John Pitman               | 2001 Silver NB      |

Enjoy your MX-5 and I'll see you out and about ...

*Will*

## Trading Post

### For Sale

1999 Silver NB (114,360km, Olinda)



For details of this and other items to buy, swap, sell or borrow, see the "Trading Post" section in the "Clubroom" section of the Club's website, [mx5vic.org.au](http://mx5vic.org.au)



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### Brakes - member discounts

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### Repco VIP Club retail discount

Financial MX-5 Club members may join the Repco VIP Club for 10% off full retail at any time, and up to another 30% off full retail with advertised offers.

Enter your details at <http://vip.repco.com.au/registration/register/1160>.

You'll receive a temporary "VIP" card via e-mail, with a plastic barcoded card and key tag following within 14 days.

Repco will e-mail you online catalogues and offers.

### Burson automotive products at trade prices



Current financial Club members can purchase automotive parts, tools, accessories and car care products at trade prices from Burson Auto Parts stores.

Simply ask for your discount when you purchase, present your current membership card and quote account number 112558.

Burson Auto Parts have more than 100 outlets on the east coast. Check out the range at [www.burson.com.au](http://www.burson.com.au)



### Car care products - member discounts

Waxit Car Care in Tullamarine is offering Club members 12.5% off all products (excluding already-discounted kits and the following brands/products: Polishangel, Vikan, Flex and Concours 900 Polisher).

Check out the Waxit range and order online at [www.waxit.com.au](http://www.waxit.com.au). Our Club coupon code is **mx5club**.

Please add your Club membership number to the "comments" section of your order.



# Track Torque

■ Tim Emery – Club Captain - Motor Sport [captain@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain@mx5vic.org.au)

## 2016 City Mazda MX5 Sprint Championship – Round 1, Phillip Island

After a break from motor sport for a couple of months over Christmas and New Year the MX-5 Motor Sport Team were back at Phillip Island for Round 1 of the Sprint Championship. As in previous years we always try to get a mix of tracks across the rounds of the championship and kicking off at Phillip Island is always a great start to the year.

With over 30 MX-5s entered and a total entry of 120 cars, the WRX Club again ran a great day and, despite the number of cars entered, the groups and number of runs for the day worked out OK. It is always great to welcome new MX-5 competitors to our events and our first round for the year was no exception with four new members hitting the track and most looking to run the whole Championship. Welcome!

Check the report on Round 1 on page 30.

## NatMeet Motor Sport Track Days

After a lot of planning and months of lead up, our NatMeet Tasmania track days were conducted at the start of the NatMeet week on 13-14 February.

With almost 40 MX-5s entered from around Australia for Saturday's official NatMeet track day at Symmons Plains and 30 for Sunday's Baskerville track day, it was going to be a full weekend of MX-5 action on the track. With almost all competitors having never been to Symmons Plains or Baskerville before, everyone was looking forward to experiencing two new circuits.

The format of the NatMeet track day was a combination of 'Regularity' and 'Sprints', so it was not only about the fastest time. It was great to see MX-5 Club members from around Australia comparing notes on lines, checking each other's times and, as always, enjoying some *competitive spirit*. More importantly, it was great to see smiling faces, squeaky brakes and straight cars all leaving the track on Saturday afternoon.

With slightly fewer cars entered for the Baskerville track day on Sunday, it was

an opportunity to, again, learn a new track and have some fun after the more competitive NatMeet event was over.

The Baskerville circuit is perfect for MX-5s and a number of the interstate members commented on what a great track it was, with comments like "How did you find this track?" and "Why can't this track be in Victoria?". Based on the feedback we just might have to plan another 'Tassie Track Days' event ... stay tuned!

## City Mazda – back supporting Mazda MX-5 Club Motor Sport

Anyone who has competed in our Club's Sprint Championship and 6 Hour events will be aware of the amazing support given to us by City Mazda. They have been the naming rights sponsors of the Club's MX-5 Sprint Championship for three years; they've been supporters of our 6 Hour teams for over six years and again have renewed their partnership for the 2016 season. I would like to thank the City Mazda team for their continuing support.

*Tim*

*"The older I get, the better I was!"*

## Contacting the Club Committee ...

*With a number of changes on the Club's Committee, we're finding that some emails are ending up on the wrong inboxes.*

This is probably because members want to send something to, say Club President Peter Dannock, type his name into the address book and the computer's memory automatically drops in his previous club ("secretary") email address.

The main ones affected appear to be:

| Official        | new address  |
|-----------------|--|
| » Peter Dannock | <a href="mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au">president@mx5vic.org.au</a> |
| » Murray Finlay | <a href="mailto:secretary@mx5vic.org.au">secretary@mx5vic.org.au</a> |
| » Don Nicoll    | <a href="mailto:editor@mx5vic.org.au">editor@mx5vic.org.au</a>       |

The full list of correct addresses can be found in the Committee list shown on page 3. Please make sure you update them in your email program/address book.

The best way to avoid the automatic addressing is to empty your email program's "autocomplete list" cache.

If you're using Outlook for your emails, this can be done by following these steps ...

### On a PC:

File > Options > Mail > Send Messages  
> Empty Autocomplete List

### On a Mac:

It seems there is no easy way to delete the entire autocomplete list, but you can do them individually (which is fine if you're only doing a couple).

In the top menu, click on "Contacts Search". Change the two drop-down menus to "Search All Fields" and "All Folders". When the field comes up showing the "old" name, double-click on that field; in the next window that appears, click on the offending email address and then click the "minus" sign that appears to its left to remove it. Close that window and re-start your Outlook program.

For other email programs, you will have to ask *Dr Google*.

*In any case, when you send an email to a Club official, please just have a quick look at the address to make sure it's going to the correct email address. ■*



# NatMeet XII in Tassie ... all about the car!



See pages 17-20



NatMeet charman Dave Collins wrangles the cars for the pre-Concours photo shoot at Josef Chromy Winery outside Launceston.

# Every picture tells a <sup>“unique”</sup> story ...

■ Words & photos: Richard Acfield

Recently, a journalist from Unique Cars magazine contacted the Mazda MX-5 Club and asked to be put in touch with anyone who owned a 2005 MX-5 who would be interested in having their car used in an article featuring four older sports cars/coupes. I was asked if I would be interested and of course jumped at the chance; what follows is a description of my day on location in The Basin with Unique Cars Magazine.



*John Bowe ... which one is best?*

Nestled at the foot of the Dandenong ranges lies *Como Gardens*, the site of the photo shoot. This is a privately-owned property featuring a magnificent landscaped garden that has a train track snaking through it and a large barn full of automotive treasures. The owner, George Hetrel, invited me to inspect the contents of his barn while I waited for the magazine crew to arrive.

George's barn is quite famous amongst vintage car enthusiasts but what I found inside the barn was a complete surprise to me. His collection of cars and car memorabilia has to be seen to be believed, including enamelled signs, posters, badges, old fuel bowlers and machinery from

the first half of the 20th Century.

**The cars?** I think I counted about 16 from all over the world, ranging in age from an 1896 Benz to a 1969 Aston Martin DBS. Smack in the middle of this collection sits the pinnacle of pre-WWII automobile development, a 1936 Mercedes 540K Supercharged Cabriolet which George has had restored and painted in bright red. It must be worth an absolute fortune. If you've ever seen photos of Adolph Hitler waving to adoring crowds whilst standing in an open Mercedes, this is the type of vehicle I'm talking about. Professor Ernst Heinkel drove this particular car for three years just prior to WWII while it was on loan

from Mercedes. The Heinkel Company produced many aircraft used by the Luftwaffe during WWII.

**Eventually the magazine staff arrived**, as did the three other cars that were to be featured in the article.

- » A recently-restored 1969 MGB,
- » A totally original 1969 HK Holden Monaro 186
- » A circa-1995 Nissan Skyline R33 GTR that has just been imported from Japan.

Rounding out the four was my 2005 Velocity Red MX-5 NC Limited Edition, in my eyes the nicest looking car there. I had polished it to within an inch of its life and was very gratified when I observed one

of the journalists taking close up shots of the paint work as it glistened in the sun. The photo shoot had been postponed by a week so the immaculately clean MX-5 had been sitting in the garage for almost two weeks when my wife suggested we go for a drive on the weekend prior to the actual shoot. I was horrified and quickly said "no way" as there was no chance I was going to risk getting dust, mud or bird dirt on our immaculate little car prior to its big day.

The crew was surprisingly large, consisting of three journalists, two photographers and, believe it or not, John Bowe – the famous Touring Car racing champion. John was to drive all four of the vehicles and give his expert opinion on each.



*John Bowe test-driving my NC*



*George and his train*



*1936 Mercedes 540K  
Supercharged Cabriolet*

The journalists were all dyed-in-the-wool petrol heads whose knowledge of cars was encyclopaedic. Amongst the cars they owned were a 1964 Shelby Mustang GT350, a Sunbeam Tiger and a highly-modified VW Beetle used for hillclimbs. I thoroughly enjoyed talking about our cars with them despite my limited knowledge of some of the more technical aspects of the conversation.

**The shoot at Como Gardens lasted for five hours** with a huge number of photos being taken. These included group photos, individual photos, photos of interiors, photos of badges, photos of wheels, overhead photos, low down photos and photos of the cars with their owners sitting in

them; the list goes on and on. A more comprehensive portfolio is hard to imagine but you can rest assured that only a few will be used. A DVD containing every photo taken will be sent to me.

We then moved out on to the local roads for John to do the test driving, but not before George took us all for a ride on his miniature steam train. A photo was taken to show the staff back at the Unique Cars office what a "hard day" the journalists and photographers were having. Test driving went for about an hour, by the end of which I was beginning to suffer from the heat. I was sorry I hadn't worn shorts and brought a wide-brimmed hat.

**Before we took off home I**

**had a chat with John Bowe**

and of course asked him what he thought of the MX-5. He told me he thought it was quite sophisticated but didn't elaborate any further. I'll just have to wait for the next issue of *Unique Cars* to find out what he really thought. A clue may lie in the fact that when we chatted about the car and the MX-5 Club he asked me to provide him with the Club details as he thought it sounded interesting, particularly the track days. I have since sent him our contact details; it remains to be seen whether he pursues the matter any further.

The article will be in the next issue of *Unique Cars*, the cover of which will feature a photo of all four cars together.

The magazine has agreed to provide the Club with the article so it can be re-printed in **mxtra** if we so desire. The entire article covers 16 pages, with four pages being dedicated to each car, so it may be too large to include in **mxtra** but we will see.

*Como Gardens* has open days throughout the year and these are well worth attending, more information is available on their website: [comogardens.com.au](http://comogardens.com.au) ■

*Look out for the latest edition of Unique Cars in your local newsgent.*

# A pleasant Saturday in the hills ...

■ Words & photos: Steve Miller

*Having been alerted to the possibility of running in the Touring Event of the Mt Baw Baw Rally by Chapter Captain Peter Ferguson, I made some further enquiries.*

The offer was for a one-day of competition at the discounted entry fee of \$200 for Saturday, 20 February, the price including a BBQ lunch and two-course evening meal. The proviso was the need to purchase an AASA club racing licence for \$75 for a year as they are the sanctioning body for the four events which make up the championship. All this was accomplished online and my entry finalised on the Monday before the event.

Setting off from Lilydale on Friday to check in and have safety scrutineering completed also saw an offer of free overnight accommodation provided by the organiser, Peter Washington, who was most friendly and obliging. Run briefings and safety instructions were held that night and driver sign-off sheets filled in before settling into the comfort of a bunk bed to await a damp start in the morning as the mountain was shrouded by cloud from the previous afternoon onward.



The Touring Event of the rally only requires standard road-going features and an approved helmet to compete and for unregistered vehicles a four-day rally pass can be obtained to allow road use from the Friday to the following Monday.

*Touring Event* cars are not to exceed 135km/h, which is monitored by the fitment of a Rallysafe instrument provided by the organisers. This instrument gives tracking data and allows for safety alerts to be transmitted to the cars. The technology is such that should you spin 180° they can tell you are facing the wrong way at the control centre.

The make-up of the competition is for outright race cars to set off at 30-second intervals and race uphill on closed roads to the end of the stage. Regularity competitors follow in the same way and, when the course has cleared, Touring is released with no overtaking allowed and instructions to maintain at least a two-second gap to the car in front.

The field was graded according to experience/car performance and positions swapped between runs to get the best spread. This worked very well for the group which ranged from a very potent Skyline GTR at the front to an Austin Healey 100/6 with drum brakes at the rear.

As Friday afternoon wore on the cloud descended on Mt Baw Baw to give a lovely alpine feel to the place and a heavy mist

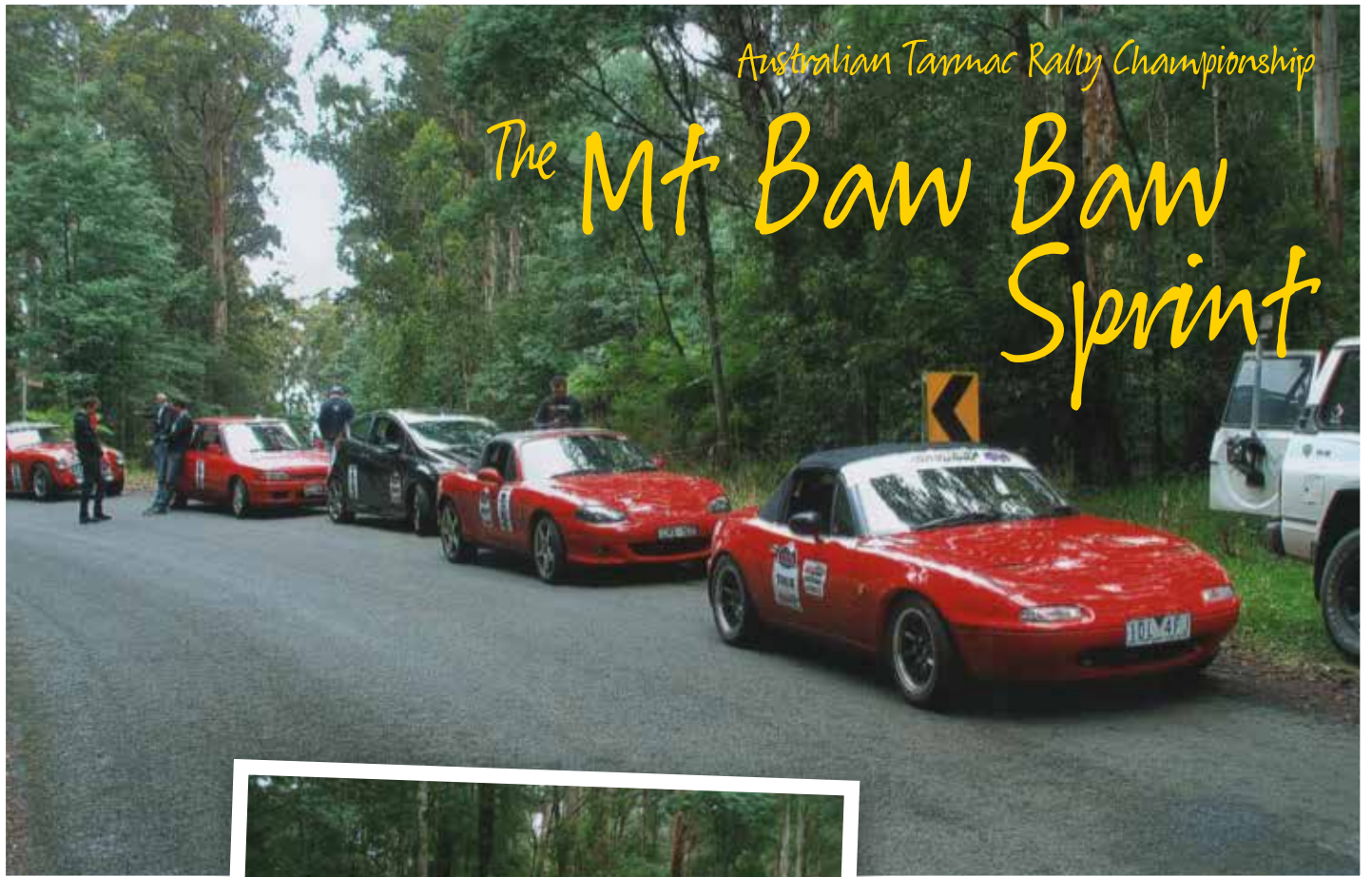
drenched the summit overnight, meaning a damp start to Saturday's competition.

This began with a transport leg down to a starting point in the valley for a shakedown run into Tanjil Bren where four 16km runs to the top of Mt Baw Baw started. These were supplemented by four shorter runs in the valley to give around 100km of flat out fun, all on closed roads that dried out after the first couple of stages.

How comfortable it feels to be able to run flat out under controlled conditions. The 135km/h speed limit – and knowing there was no-one coming the other way – meant there was no need to lift off the accelerator, and having some sections of the course repeated meant I could learn and practice the course.

Being a proper rally, Tulip-style notes were provided for each stage so that navigators or co-drivers could help out, although in touring it wasn't necessary. Sharing of driving took place in a couple of cars and there were two people competing who were Tour supervisors, one leading the other midfield followed up by Phil Brock in the sweep car at the rear.

A nice BBQ lunch helped refresh the field before the convoy set out to start the second part of the day, which included a new leg out and back in the valley before the last charge of the day up to the summit of Baw Baw. For those competing on the Sunday a further eight stages awaited.



Australian Tarmac Rally Championship

# The Mt Baw Baw Sprint

*Waiting in the valley for the Stage start to Tanjil Bren*



Saturday evening's dinner was a choice between three roast meats plus a selection of vegetables and a range of three deserts catered by the Mt Baw Baw Alpine Bar and Bistro. All in all an extremely well-run event providing a new experience from circuit sprinting.

The coming three events are:

- » **Lake Mountain Sprint** 28-29 May
- » **Snowy River Sprint** 24-25 Sept
- » **Great Tarmac Rally** 10-11 Dec  
*This takes in Marysville, Lake Mountain, Cambarville and Reefton*

If you are like me and have dreamt of events such as the *Mille Miglia*, *Targa Florio* or driving the *Nurburgring*, here is a wonderful opportunity to experience a little of the magic of these early races.

The *Saturday-only \$200 special* is a rumoured possibility for the next events also which would represent really good value compared to the normal one-day price or \$350 or two-day price of \$600.

**I hope to see you there. ■**



*^ Lining up on Baw Baw for transport section down valley - start of Saturday*

# Chapter chatter ...

## 7.2.16 | Eastern Victoria ■ Words, photos, organiser: Peter Ferguson

**This was a run designed to give the girls something to do as well as the fellas.**

*(Ed. So, only the fellas like car museums in EV?)*

Starting from Traralgon, after the obligatory coffee, we took the back roads out to Maffra where they have the Japanese car display on at present.

It's about to change to old farm vehicles – the display changes several times a year to ensure something different is there to encourage people to visit often.

While the fellas were looking at cars, the girls were able to take in the monthly street market of farmers produce and variety goods – this sounded terrific in theory, but it turned out the market was not that flash. No matter, there were a few shops open (*one of the girls bought a bra!*) and some coffee shops available, so the girls had a good wander and chat.

The run was advertised as not having MX-5-type roads, so members were free to bring along other vehicles if they liked. Although we had a fairly small attendance with six MX-5s, we did have a Skoda Yeti and two Vespas front up!

In addition, Travis's wife, mother-in-law and the two kids (one of them only six

weeks old) met us at Maffra to join in as well.

When we got to the Shed, there were two white NA MX-5s and an MGB visiting. We had a good "spar" with the MGB owner, offering to help push start it as it has Lucas (*prince of darkness*) electrics. We also cautioned him about taking care not to slip in the pools of oil under the car! It was all taken in good spirit.

"Leave-behind cards" were pressed into the hands of the two MX-5 owners, and we bent their ears about the advantages of Club membership.

The display in the Shed featured early iconic Japanese cars ... some interesting stuff: three Prince GTs, a Bellet and a Bellet GT, a Toyota Corona 1600 GT, Corolla, Crown ute, MR2 and an early Cressida with a difference (a diesel that Toyota bought out for evaluation), a Datsun 1600 (of course!), 1300, 180B and a 260Z, a Daihatsu ute, a Mazda RX-7, a Nissan Skyline, several early Japanese motor bikes and, of course, a white Mazda MX-5 (we left a card on the seat!).



^ A very rare picture of Alan Laine eating a parmigiana. Oh, wait ...

✓ Travis on a Vespa ... a few horses down on what he's used to!



There were also a couple of interesting Russian Tatras with rear-mounted air-cooled V8 engines. *They are for sale if you're interested!* And there was also a giant *land crab* (an Austin 1800 for those under 40 years of age), and several old race cars and various non-Japanese bikes.

A lot of good time was spent chatting either inside or out in the shade under the trees – it was about 32°C, so a bit warm in the sun!

The Shed made us very welcome and also took some photos for their own use and for us.

As I said earlier, because they constantly change their displays (three or four times a year), the Maffra Shed is a great place to visit – if you're down that way, don't miss it!

It is run purely voluntarily by their club and is always really interesting. ●





# Maffra Shed run



◀ Lunch in the pub

✓ The Toyota Corona 1600 GT;  
One of the Princes



One of the Tatras ▶



# My favourite MX-5 road ...

■ Words: Richard Acfield

## *Haleakala Crater – Maui, Hawaii*

My wife Lorraine and I found ourselves at a loose end having just completed an early morning scenic helicopter flight from Maui International Airport (Hawaii) along the coast of Maui and over to Molokai, a nearby island and former Leper Colony.

The flight was spectacular, especially when we flew along the 2000ft cliffs to suddenly see hundreds of waterfalls cascading down towards the sea in three or four leaps.

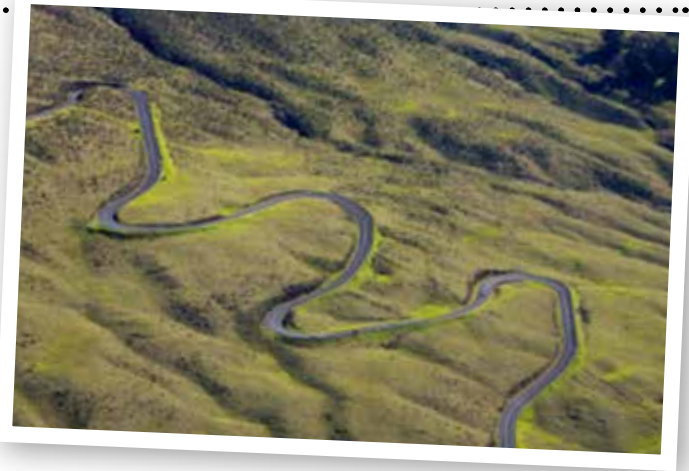
### **How could we top that?**

I had heard that the drive up to the summit of the dormant volcano, *Haleakala*, was well worth the effort as the view was spectacular. So off we went in our hired four-door Hyundai to experience this view. The summit is at 10,023ft above sea level and the road was reportedly 27 miles long and somewhat windy.

At first the slope was gradual and the bends were well spaced. I commented to Lorraine that this would be a great road for an MX-5. Then the slope steepened and the tight hairpin bends got closer and closer until I was thinking that this would be *fantastic* in an MX-5. The Hyundai was an automatic so I missed out on the joy of winding my way through the gears; a six-speed manual would have been superb. The corners were not flat but were well cambered, which gave me a lot of confidence. Advisory speed signs were never higher than 20mph and often 15mph or lower. Concentration was required as we started to encounter hired Chev Camaros and Ford Mustangs coming in the opposite direction. As you probably know, neither vehicle is famous for its road holding, which was sometimes a problem on this somewhat narrow two-lane road where they tended to cut the corner slightly, not leaving a lot of room for us. Fortunately this only happened a couple of times.

Then we started to encounter downhill bicycles in large groups. They like to coast the 20-odd miles at breakneck speed down this twisting and somewhat dangerous (for bicycles) road. These groups were well behaved and it was interesting to reflect on the tiny brakes they were relying on to keep their speed under control. I believe that there have been several fatalities, as a result of which they are no longer allowed to start inside the National Park, which leaves the last seven miles bicycle-free.

**My Hyundai was doing quite nicely and I was having a ball but, my goodness, what I would have given to have been in an MX-5.**



Reaching the entrance to the National park we paid our \$15 for a three-day pass and proceeded to the summit.



So far we had experienced trees and then grass as far as the eye could see. **Then, all of a sudden, we were on Mars.** Hardly a plant was to be seen, and those that you could see were weird. These so called *sword plants* only grow on the slopes of Haleakala and are like nothing I've ever seen.

The terrain was made up of crumbling red scoria which made us feel we were on another planet. At this stage we slowed down as groups of the Hawaiian state bird, the *Nene*, were wandering all over the place ... and they have no road sense.

Finally, after an hour and a half of mind-blowing terrain and a superb driving experience, we arrived at the summit car park. Out we jumped to walk to the viewing platform but came to an abrupt halt.

Being a pilot I should have remembered that temperature decreases with altitude, having left the airport in 29°C we suddenly found ourselves in 7°C, in shorts and tee shirts! Regardless, we rushed to the top to get a view, and what a view! We could see almost 500 metres; the top of the mountain was shrouded in cloud.

Nevertheless the view within the crater was worth the trip – it was just like the photos from the *Mars Rover*. We didn't stay long as our goose bumps were getting goose bumps, so it was back into the Hyundai for the downhill run.

This was just as much fun as the climb, although I was beginning to wonder how the brakes were coping. We could sometimes feel the G forces as you entered a tight corner and the camber squeezed us into the seats. We stopped at as many lookouts as possible for the view, and to let the brakes have a rest. Reaching the flat again we decided to come back again but unfortunately never got the chance.

I'm not aware of any companies that hire MX-5s on Maui; the nearest experience I could find was to hire a replica vintage Porsche. I don't think a Mustang or a Camaro would be as much fun as my Hyundai.

**If you're ever on Maui you must drive up to the Haleakala Crater (I highly recommend the helicopter flight to Molokai as well). I would also check the tyre pressures and add a few PSI. ●**



If you have a favourite MX-5 road, you're welcome to submit a short description (150 words) and a photo to [editor@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:editor@mx5vic.org.au) and share it around!



# NatMeet XII - all about the car!



*So much fun!*

*Such great roads!*

*So many great people!*

*Brilliant organisation!*

*Sensational scenery!*

*Wonderful food and drink!*

*Could it get any better?*

*(... No!)*

Another Australian MX-5 Clubs' biennial national gathering, "NatMeet", has come and gone and, for me anyway, this was the best yet! Certainly it's the best of the six I've been to (and I was on the organising committee of two of those!).

Everything was thought of, every contingency planned for. If there were any issues, the organisers certainly didn't let on. Their focus was entirely on the participants, and the participants' focus was entirely on the event theme: "It's all about the car".

We shared this event with a record 181 fellow Club members from around the country – seven of whom have been to all 12 NatMeets – in a record 106 MX-5s, including a record number of Western Australians! Distance was no tyranny when *TasMXnia* beckoned!

The roads were superb – how jealous are we non-TasMXians that the natives have these roads in their back yards? The food was great, the Launceston Country Club and the other venues were excellent ... even the weather put on a show, with brilliant sunshine on all but (or course!) the day of the concours d'elegance and the show and shine.

For the record, Queensland won the overall event, equalling NSW's four wins (SA has won three and WA one), and a Queensland, Mark Seville, was crowned individual champion.

*~ Murray Finlay*

◀ *Campbelltown had a different idea*



^ *The Concourse d'Elegance and Show & Shine at Josef Chromy Winery*

# NatMeet XII - it was all about the car!

## First day

NatMeet XII kicked off formally at the beautiful Josef Chromy Winery for a *Tastes of Tasmania* lunch followed by a *Concours and Show & Shine*.

NatMeet chairman Dave Collins introduced Bruce Gray and Bruce Harvey, the committee men, and welcomed all to NatMeet XII, Launceston, *TasMXnia*. President Peter Dannock welcomed everyone on behalf of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania and thanked the sponsors for their outstanding support: Mazda Australia and Shannons for today's lunch and awards.

Dave then went on to thank those who had made a significant contribution to the organisation of the event. He started with thanking the wonderful partners of Dave, Bruce Gray and Bruce Harvey – Gail, Jen and Cheryl – for putting up with 18 months of talking about nothing else, taking over the phone, tables full of lists, samples and papers, heads buried in the computer and, in Bruce Harvey's case, Cheryl travelling the roads of northern *TasMXnia*, over and over, planning the exciting runs for the next three days. Thank you ladies!

Thanks were also given to Joan Read and Jen Gray for managing the menus and liaising with the restaurants to produce a wonderful selection of tastes for us over the next four days; Linda Nicoll for planning the welcome and registration pack contents; Murray Finlay for putting together all the printed material and organising production of badges and screen banners; Kelly Berggren and Tim Manion, our photographers for the event; John Cooper for managing the AV production; the run leaders and tail-end charlies who were to keep us on those Targa roads and to the judging coordinators for today's Concours and Show & Shine.

Dave introduced Rod Belbin from Shannons who supported us in providing all the trophies for NatMeet and was sponsor for the day's Concours and Show & Shine.



South Australians ...



Western Australians ...



The band on the "In the Garage" theme night



Peter and Brenda Phillips accept



Kelly Berggren



Gail & Dave Collins



Rob Krygsman, Leanne & Dave

## The results:

### National Champion (pts)

- » Queensland 2,063.11
- » NSW 1,860.63
- » Vic/Tas 681.53
- » WA 422.04
- » SA 127.60

### Individual Champion (pts)

- » Mark Seville (Q) 280.51
- » Chris Ward (Q) 254.75
- » John Tait (Q) 230.19

### Concours d'Elegance

- NA Std: Christopher Ward & Wendy Merefield-Ward (Q)
- NA Mod: Mark Seville/Ruth Simpson (Q)
- NB Std: Peter & Maureen Hilkmann (N)
- NB Mod: Diann Miller (N)
- NC Std: Henri & Maureen van Roden (Q)
- NC Mod: John & Marian Tait (Q)
- ND: Frank & Liz Cooper (Q)

**Shannons Choice:** Craig Morrison (N)

### Show & Shine

- NA: Amy &
- NB: Simon
- NC: Ralph & Jane
- ND: Warren



Victorians and TasMXnians ...



the NatMeet Champion award



The gala dinner at the Launceston Country Club Resort



Evans, Linda & Kyp Kassabis



Ken Beaton



Winning outfit:  
Rae Edwards, SA

### Last day

The final day of the NatMeet XII concluded with the gala dinner and awards presentations. It was a great evening, with Queensland taking out the NatMeet National Champions award.

Peter Dannock thanked everyone for coming and making it such a fantastic event. Big cheers from all. He asked the Committee and partners and everyone who had contributed to NatMeet XII to stand and thanked them all on behalf of the participants, a great rousing cheer was delivered.

Dave Collins summed up the event: "We chose the saying *It's all about the Car* as it sums up all the reasons we love getting together with our MX-5s, whether you just love a drive, a race, a chance to have a social gathering over a meal, coffee or just to sit and chat. An opportunity to catch up with folk you have not seen for a while. An opportunity to lift the bonnet and talk dirty! It's any combination of these. I think NatMeet clearly has all these elements, that's why we love them and I believe we have provided those opportunities this week." A big cheer went up.

So on that final message Dave declared NatMeet XII over – in true big event style, he resisted the well-worn phrase of "best event ever" – that's for others to say. There was no flag to hand over, so the symbol between NatMeets – the moulds for the chocolate cars – were handed to Allen Weber, the South Australian Committee representative.

Allen gave a short talk on the early planning that has started for NatMeet XIII in South Australia, and asked for a show of hands on who would likely attend. There was almost a 100% response. Time will tell. Allen expressed his thanks for a fantastic event and is aware of the amount of work they had ahead of them. They had a huge act to follow and was frankly scared (*expressed a little more colourfully than shown here*).

Folk could not get enough ... a farewell breakfast was held next day before about 30 cars led by the Tasmanian Chapter leaders headed down to Hobart via different routes.

### Line

& Romeo Perin (N)  
Corston (W)  
Waddington  
elle O'Reilly (Q)  
n & Blake Hotz (N)

### Motor Sport – Symmons Plains

|                                      |                    |         |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Class 1 - Standard NA6A & NA8:       | Peter Dannock (V)  | 1:14.22 |
| Class 2 - Standard SE & NC:          | Bryan Shedden (N)  | 1:12.22 |
| Class 3 - Standard ND:               | Peter Barnwell (N) | 1:11.10 |
| Class 4 - Limited Mod NA & NB:       | Ross Cali (Q)      | 1:17.13 |
| Class 5 - Mod. Norm. Asp. NA6A:      | Phil Mayo (N)      | 1:14.14 |
| Class 6 - Mod. Norm. Asp. NA8/8A/8B: | Warren Hotz (N)    | 1:14.32 |
| Class 7 - Turbo/Supercharged:        | Kim Cole (V)       | 1:08.05 |
| <b>Regularity</b>                    | Bryan Shedden (N)  | 49 pts  |



*The party is over and we have a chance to reflect on the fantastic event we were part of. Some words of thanks from folk who thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Many thanks to everyone who attended for helping to make it happen.*

Good afternoon

Brenda and I are finally back in Queensland after days in Tasmania and days on the road. I have not spoken to all of the Q'land contingent BUT I am certain that individually they will say the same thing to you: Congratulations. NatMeet XII was a triumph of planning, execution and delivery. Those of us who have been organisers in the past know what you have individually and collectively been through during these last two years and to have been a part of the sensational outcome was a genuine pleasure for us all. Our friendships, both new and old, the pleasure of the runs and the immaculate organisation of the meals (especially Bicheno) and your selection of music on the two nights were fully appreciated by we Queenslanders.

Please urge your fellow Victorians to meet us again in Adelaide in 2018 so that we can extend the enjoyment we experienced with you last week.

And thank you all again on a brilliant outcome.

~ Peter Phillips – President, Mazda MX-5 Club of Queensland

Just wanted to say on behalf of Diane and myself how much we enjoyed our first NatMeetXII and to thank you all for putting so much effort into making it the great event it was.

We had a great time at every single one of the different activities and I think it's a great credit to you and all the helpers that it all went off so well. I know how much work you would have all put in and I hope you all take the time to give yourselves a well deserved pat on the back.

Thanks for a great time.

~ Murray Heazlewood (Vic)

~ Others ...

- » "Congratulations again on NatMeet – it was absolutely sensational."
- » "Many thanks for your hospitality down in Tassie and congratulations to all concerned on a fantastic event. I had a great time and thoroughly enjoyed myself behind the wheel."
- » "The NatMeet in Tasmania was great! Your Vic/Tas group has set the bar very high for future NatMeets!"
- » "Great food, how did you do it for the cost?"
- » "The attention to detail has made all the difference."
- » "Runs were great, roads – what a joy, food great, we were well looked after."
- » "Loved the packed lunches, in fact loved all the meals!"
- » "Fantastic – easily the best NatMeet of the six I've attended (even better than Beechworth!)."

Thanks for organising a great meeting! We know they are not simple events!

~ Neville Fair & Denise Peck (Qld)

Just a quick note to say thank you for a great time! We had a blast, we love Tasmania and it's been our third trip in a 5 in the last five years (in fact Tassie is the reason my sister and I have MX-5s in the first place!).

~ Helen Green (NSW)

Hi Dave and crew,

just a short note to say how much Robyn and I enjoyed attending NatMeet. It's a tribute to you all that everything went so well and it couldn't have been more fun!

~ Alan Conrad (Vic)



^ The Victoria/Tasmania contingent at NatMeet XII

# Chapter chatter ...



## 28.2.16 | Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Peter Ferguson ■ Photos: Rob Krygsman, Gippsland Car Club ■ Organiser: Peter Ferguson

*A small group of only four cars (one of them not quite an MX-5!) turned up for the first Khanacross for the year. Also present were a fairly large contingent from the Austin Healy Sprite club plus several from the host club, Gippsland Car Club.*

As usual the GCC's superb hillclimb track and part of the bitumen car park were used for the several runs. The weather was perfect and with the relatively small turn up, everyone had plenty of on track action with seven runs, but the event still finished early enough to head for a coffee shop for the inevitable MX-5 de-brief. (the later it gets, the faster I was!!)

Steve Banks experimented with tyre pressures which transformed into some excellent on track handling, but the high pressures in the rears led to some interesting handling in the slow events on the car park – ie, ploughing on full lock transposed into a tyre-smoking wheel spin in a moment – enough to create something looking like fog!

Member Bill Roder did not want to dirty up his SE so he brought along his bargain basement MR2. Beautiful car! Both Bill and wife Margaret drove it. Bill's style was flamboyant and the little MR2 seems to have plenty of poke. He's now trying to work out how to put some MX-5 badging on it!

Unfortunately no times were available on the day – these get emailed out later, but the aim of the day seems more like having fun (and wearing out tyres!) than looking to be super competitive.

Another great event run by the Gippsland Car Club (GCC)!

We will have a much better showing at the next event in April – many of our "usual suspects" were away this time or only just home from NatMeet. We invite all to come along on 24 April ... Central Chapter members in particular take note, we'd love to have you come along ●

## Khanacross at Bryant Park



^ Main photo: David Salter, ready for a run.

Inset: left - Rob Krygsman; centre - Bill Roder; right - Steve Banks

# Chapter chatter ...

21.2.16 | Central + Eastern Victoria ■ Words: Simon Acfield ■ Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Bob de Bont, David Salter

*OK, before I start this report on Bob's Boolarra Run, I have to confess: I'm a car nut. I love cars, in particular my little red '89 NA. You need to know this, lest you judge me for the words you are about to read ...*

Cruising down to Pelican's Cafe in Tooradin, it's a sunny 25-30°, clear skies and life is good. I find a sense of anticipation builds every kilometre I get closer to the rendezvous which is only heightened when I catch up to, and follow, a gorgeous Neo Green NA.

Soon enough we arrive but, on first driving through the car park, we are surrounded by Morris Minors and motor bikes. Never fear ... 20 MX-5s have turned up and are sitting round the back car park. To my count, there are five NAs, one NB, nine NCs and surprisingly five NDs ... *and they certainly stand out!*

After everyone has managed to secure a coffee from either the busiest or the slowest coffee shop in the Southern Hemisphere, Bob gives the briefing for the day. He imparts plenty of sage-like advice for the ensemble before hitting the roads and you feel like this run is in safe hands.

The Boolarra run took in places like Poowong, Korumburra, Yarragon and Mirboo North. I can honestly not tell you what any of these places are like except for the Boolarra picnic ground, where we stopped for lunch. The organised amongst us brought chairs, packed lunches, coffee. It was perfectly civilised.

For the likes of me, it was to the pub or the Boolarra general store where we managed to clean out the bain-marie of all its fried food. I'd recommend the sausage roll with sauce, you cannot go wrong. Oh ... the dusty roadworks with a massive convoy of open-top convertibles won't be forgotten anytime soon either.

On the run itself, we seemed to go from cruising winding roads, admiring the rolling hills and landscape to ... serious road carving conditions with tight twisty turns, blind crests, narrowing shoulders ... a natural hunting ground for a pack of MX-5s!

**Both sets of conditions are perfect for the MX-5 but, I find, create a very different mindset. Case in point:**

For the first part of the run, cruising along, I found myself sitting behind the rump of a gorgeous Soul Red ND. It was a time of peaceful reflection and admiration for the little car in front of me. If they'd been around when I was 14 I surely would have had a centre-fold picture of a Soul Red ND on my bedroom wall as a teenager growing up. So infatuated with the rear end of the car in front, at our first pit stop I had to introduce myself to proud owners and drivers, Nicole and Alistair. In equal parts,

I offered glowing praise to their athletic and elegant rear end but also apologised for my gushing and slightly creepy enthusiasm for their new pride and joy!

Conversely, when the roads got twisty, third and fourth gears became my friends. Setting up for the corner, getting on the accelerator early and allowing the induction note of the little 1.6L to take over as it revs out to 6,500rpm. Carving from apex to apex the car just settles and steers through the corners with incredible tactile feedback.

Of course these types of roads lay down plenty of challenges in front of the driver, probably none more challenging than the dappled light cast from trees overhead. It's like driving on a road with camouflage. Overall though, just thinking back to it now makes me want to get the keys and go for another six-hour run.

Aside from the fantastic roads, awesome cars and enthusiastic drivers, I'd have to say the people I met and talked to provided the clearest and brightest highlights. Listening to Dave (proud owner of a Grey ND) quiz Bob on the best approach to clean an engine bay for car show judging was insightful. Or discussing with Geoff, our Central Chapter Captain, the benefits of driver





.....  
■ Organiser: **Bob de Bont**

training or even just following one of the better steerers in our Club. Or Bob again telling a group that the key to ensuring you always obey the speed limits is to go faster through the corners so you can cruise on the straights ... and many more moments of insight and humour with too many people to mention. *Yep, you can learn a lot on these runs.*

**The funniest moment of the run** would have to be a group of us watching Alistair try to put the top up on his ND. He seemed to want to keep the sun off his seats while we all got a coffee before heading home. This however wasn't the funny bit ...

The funny bit was ... **it wasn't his car!** He'd completely mistaken another person's car for Nicole's new shiny car. I think Nicole should put a little smiley face on the windscreen somewhere just to help out Alistair in future.

I'd like to thank Bob for organising the run and Geoff for performing Tail-end Charlie detail. Their professionalism made a seamless and truly fun day.

Oh ... and I was so impressed with the Soul Red ND I ordered one when I got home. A 1/10th radio controlled car made by Tamiya. Should arrive in a week!

See you all at the next run. ●



*Geoff Roche springs a candid shot attempt*



*A left turn at Thorpdale*



^ June & Dennis Barry



# Chapter chatter ...

**21.2.16 | North-Eastern Victoria** ■ Words & photos: Marg Gillick ■ Organiser: Ron Gillick

*Everyone knows that, up in the north-east, we only have beautiful weather or perfect weather ...*

We chose *perfect* for this run which was short on numbers, but Ron had included plenty of corners.

Beechworth was the starting point, where we welcomed Peter and Anita Silva from Central Chapter, then to Stanley, Gundowring, Tangambalanga and Lockhart Gap for morning tea and to admire the view.

Next we travelled to Mitta Mitta with a detour up to Dartmouth Dam (with an obligatory U-turn) before lunch, just to see how empty it looked ... it is down to 45% capacity having been at 100% the last time we were there only a year ago.

Then it was back to the Mitta Pub and enjoyed the hospitality and quick service for lunch.

Peter then asked if we would like to do a bit of *geocaching* ... treasure hunting with a GPS.

We left the sealed road, took a wrong turn up a dusty road, another U-turn down to a track that was way too rough and narrow for an MX-5 ... finding the cache was called off as we needed to walk about 400 metres down this goat track to find it.

**We turned for home on the Yabba Road following the Mitta Mitta River to the Hume Dam, then headed to Yackandandah for cool drinks and ice-creams and a chat. ●**

## The road to Tangambalanga







*... and other tongue-twisters*



# Chapter chatter ...

21.2.16 | Western Victoria ■ Words: Virgie Hocking ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw ■ Organiser: Lawrie & Virgie Hocking

*On a beautiful Sunday morning at 9.30am, 11 cars assembled at Rimmington Drive, Sebastopol, for a nourishing morning tea of lamingtons, shortbread, burned hot cross buns and other bits ...*

The folks started with a good chit chat and at the same time Lawrie was very happy to show off his three not-so-expensive toys. The one he is very proud of is his project that he has been doing for almost twenty years, the *Bambino Fiat 500 Abarth*. I hope he will finish it soon – I wonder if he is taking so much time intentionally just to keep him occupied ...

After everyone had their morning tea and a visit to *Cardinal Pell's little house* (the loo), Lawrie and Ian gave an information talk for the run on that day. Ian also welcomed our new couple, Gerard and Sally Nagle.

The group left at 10.30am from Rimmington Drive, through Morgan Street Sebastopol, moving to Ross Creek, Smythesdale, through Staffordshire Reef and Berringa. Then it was a left turn to the Old Station Road,

Cape Clear Road through Illabarook, Rokewood Junction through to Dereel before moving on to Mt Mercer-Dereel Road where we saw a few *Tellytubbies* (windmills) ... interesting to see them. I tried to count them but I couldn't do it; the MX-5 cars wouldn't stop, they just wanted keep going. *Revheads!*

We kept going through Inverleigh and after an hour and a half of travel we stopped at Winchelsea for a lunch break and more *chika chika*.

### **That was only half of the run.**

The first half run was a bit boring, slow (I know 'cause I managed to close my eyes) but wasn't too bad as there were some winding roads too and I got to see the telly tubbies.

After lunch we moved on again from Winchelsea via Princess Highway, and turned left to Barrabool Road through Barrabool. This is where the

excitement began – a few winding roads. We kept going through Russells Bridge, Steiglitz Road, Anakie via Slate Quarry Road and stopped at Meredith for an *ehe* (toilet stop). At Meredith we were met by big loud music. Not sure where it was ... *in the park or in the pub?*

I thought we were "gonna" stay to join the party but the men just wanted to keep driving; it certainly proves that they love their MX-5s.

After we had our little short break from Meredith we continued along Ballan-Meredith Road, through Ballark, along Mt Edgerton-Ballark Road, and past Mt Edgerton, Yendon via Yendon-Mt Buninyong Road before stopping at Mt Buninyong.

John, Noellene and I guarded the cars while the rest climbed up the tower. Lawrie was very pleased no-one was trying to

stop him climbing the tower this time. I guess everyone knows he is well enough after going through a major operation three months ago.

The roads from Meredith were very good and windy. Even Lawrie gave his car a test to see how good it is. Some roads were a bit rough. I wonder if he deliberately did it so that I couldn't sleep ... *it nearly broke my bra instead!*

From Mt Buninyong, three cars decided to head home earlier while the rest continued through Buninyong, via the Colac-Ballararat Road through Napoleons, back to the main road to Albert Street, Sebastopol, and finished where we started, back at Rimmington Drive.

**The rest stayed for a social gathering doing lots of chat chat, a few drinks and a barbecue tea. ●**



^ No level crossing removal program out here!



^ Approaching the Tellytubbies



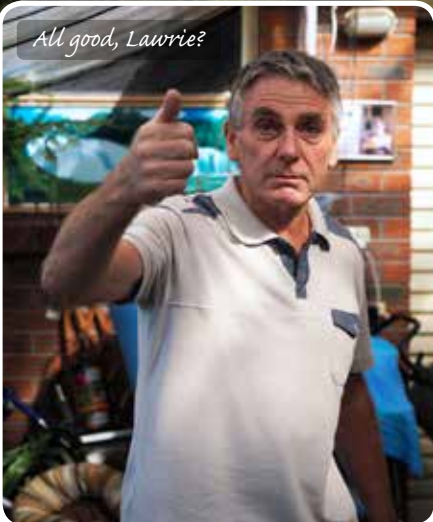
✓ *The view from Virgie and Lawrie's place*

*Lawrie & Virgie's run*

# Sebastopol to ... everywhere!



*All good, Lawrie?*



*Virgie enjoys a well-earned break at lunch*



^ *Sebastopol wildlife ...*

# Chapter chatter ...

19-21.2.16 | Southern Tasmania ■ Words, photos & organiser: John Waldock

*As a follow-up to NatMeet, we in the south of the State put on a few runs for those keen and brave enough to want more MX-5 mayhem.*

**On the Friday morning, 19 February,** a group of we NatMeet veterans made our way to Hobart via the east coast. After leaving the Midlands Highway at Campbelltown we made our way to Swansea via the Lake Leak Highway. We managed to miss any significant traffic on the way and enjoyed a lovely drive. We arrived in Swansea for lunch, the weather improving and causing some thoughts of sunscreen and hats.

We departed Swansea, venturing south via Orford, where we stopped for a photo opportunity of Maria Island before continuing to Richmond to see the famous bridge. A few of the group wanted to see the view from Mt Wellington and so we made our way up. No snow alas, but it was a surprise to everyone wearing shorts just how cold and windy it can be up there.

**On Saturday afternoon, 20 February** a group of local members and “NatMeeters” made our way out to New Norfolk for a drive and afternoon tea. We did manage to lose one of the locals but we all eventually arrived at the café for a chat and nibble. It was a short run compared to what we had been doing during the week, but a good chance to see a bit more of Tasmania.

**On Sunday, 21 February,** we had originally planned to head out to Strathgordon but unfortunately the road was closed due to the fires in the south-west. “Plan B” was a run to Southport via Huonville and Dover. It was a lovely day, clear skies and the roads allowed a good clear run. We drove south, ending up at Southport for an opportunity to visit the southern-most pub in Australia. We returned to Dover where we lunched by the beach before heading back to Hobart via Police Point Road, a lovely coastal drive featuring views of Bruny Island. A few of the group chose to turn off at Huonville to experience the drive along the Channel Highway whilst some of us decided to pause at *Willy Smiths* for a lovely cider and chat about the day. ●



^ *The view from Mt Wellington*



^ *A rest stop on the e*





*east coast road*



*^ Catching breath at a coffee stop*



*^ Pre-run gathering at Rosny Park*

## *The Post-NatMeet runs*



*^ The famous Richmond bridge*

# Round 1 at the Island ...

■ Words: Noel Heritage ■ Photos: Lisa Burge

*The excitement mounted as finally Round 1 of the new season loomed. In the off season some cars had clearly had major touch-ups – some had had major mechanical re-works, some had been on a diet (pity a few drivers did not do the same!) and some had apparently just sat in the carport since before Christmas. Not that that mattered as, being an MX-5, a turn of the key and away she went anyway.*

A casual review of the line-up detected a few members who had been busy beavers, with Robert Parr's new aero package being the centre of much attention ... especially the very impressive front air splitter (remember this).

Equally impressive was a certain grey NC that had had a complete re-spray prior to a forthcoming journey south for NatMeet. Can't have the Show and Shine brigade (of both MX-5 and Porsche variety) giving you a hard time over your hard-won battle scars from the occasional (*only occasional?*) departure from the racing surface can we?

A certain much-flogged red NA was also seen to be much closer to the ground than was previously the case, with some slight improvements in the breathing stakes as well.

Team Kyalami made a welcome return with the black NB having been on a strict weight loss program. Looked absolutely spectacular as usual until some dirt was detected inside the left rear wheel well. Ten demerits for that one, Ray. It was also good to see the "fully-sponsored" works driver back on the scene and showing no mercy to his team owner and major sponsor.

And talking of bling, a welcome return for our past Club Captain - Motor Sport Daniel White, *aka the Singing Fixed Operations Manager* (and recently upgraded to the *Singing General Manager*).

While most people have bike racks on their cars to carry all their bikes, rumour has it that Daniel has a guitar rack. Great to have him back on the track with lots of talk regarding all the new tyres he has been purchasing of late.

Sign-in done, scrutineering done, drivers' briefing done, pep talk from the Club Captain - Motor Sport done and we were on our way. Weather looked ominous but held off for what ended up being a near-perfect Goldilocks day ... not too hot and not too cold.

A few cobwebs had to be blown out after the lay-off though fortunately most of us (stress *most* of us, not *all*) managed to stay on the black stuff in various degrees of control or lack thereof.

*However, remember a certain new aero package and especially the front air splitter?* Well, rumour has it that if you go backwards into the kitty litter (reportedly at a great rate of knots by the way) at Turn 2, said same splitter can become a very effective shovel (and speed brake)!

Estimates varied but a couple of bucket loads of Phillip Island's finest kitty litter had to be removed from said underpan and engine bay before a certain NB could re-join the fray.

Moral of the story is that aero packages typically do not operate as intended in reverse! Next time you visit The Island and wonder why many of the pot holes in the gravel area behind the pits are filled

with transplanted white kitty litter, you'll know why.

Back on the track the competition was hotting up and, before the day was done, three new Club lap records had been set:

- » **NA Clubman:** Robert Downes @ 2:02.3092
- » **NB Clubman** (Gentleman Heavy sub-section): Noel Heritage @ 2:02.0620 and
- » **Open:** David Wilken @ 1:46.4833

*[... Bit of a worry when one of the new lap record holders has a senior's card!]*

Way too soon the day was done and it was time to load up all the gear, drag the weary cars and even wearier bodies home and start counting the days to Round 2 at Broadford.

**Pleasing to report:** we all seemingly went home basically unscathed (albeit some had some souvenir kitty litter) and hopefully our couple of first-timers had a great time and will be back to join us at future motor sport days.

If you are tempted to give it a try but apprehensive for any reason, come and give it a go.

**It's a blast and you will be amazed at what you and your car can actually do. Lots of friendly people happy to show you the ropes. ●**

## 2016 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship - Round 1 | Phillip Island ~ 30.1.16

| Results - Round 1 | 1st               |              | 2nd           |             | 3rd                            |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Open              | Dave Wilken       | » 1:46.4833* | Dave Moore    | » 1:58.3685 | ---                            |
| Restricted Open   | Paul Ledwith      | » 1:51.4053  | Tim Meaden    | » 2:00.7241 | ---                            |
| Super Modified    | Russell Garner    | » 1:53.9552  | Robert Parr   | » 1:56.5495 | Colin Denman Jones » 1:56.5901 |
| Modified          | Nicholas Cannizzo | » 1:58.8973  | Dean Hasnat   | » 1:59.6654 | Daniel Luong » 2:02.9859       |
| NA Clubman        | Robert Downes     | » 2:02.3092* | George Vellis | » 2:10.2981 | ---                            |
| NB Clubman        | Noel Heritage     | » 2:02.0620* | Max Lloyd     | » 2:03.3094 | Peter Dannock » 2:05.3163      |
| Standard NC       | Alan Conrad       | » 2:00.6207  | Ian Vague     | » 2:06.4937 | ---                            |
| Standard NB       | Ben Mott          | » 2:05.6752  | Simeon Ouzas  | » 2:11.4522 | ---                            |

\* New Club lap record



2016 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship standings after Round 1 | Phillip Island - 30.1.16

| (corrected points) | 1st                      |      | 2nd           |     | 3rd                |     |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------|---------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Overall Champion   | <i>Too early to say!</i> |      |               |     |                    |     |
| Open               | Dave Wilken              | » 10 | Dave Moore    | » 7 | ---                |     |
| Restricted Open    | Paul Ledwith             | » 10 | Tim Meaden    | » 7 | ---                |     |
| Super Modified     | Russell Garner           | » 10 | Robert Parr   | » 7 | Colin Denman Jones | » 6 |
| Modified           | Nicholas Cannizzo        | » 10 | Dean Hasnat   | » 7 | Daniel Luong       | » 6 |
| NA Clubman         | Robert Downes            | » 10 | George Vellis | » 7 | ---                |     |
| NB Clubman         | Noel Heritage            | » 10 | Max Lloyd     | » 7 | Peter Dannock      | » 6 |
| Standard NC        | Alan Conrad              | » 10 | Ian Vague     | » 7 | ---                |     |
| Standard NB        | Ben Mott                 | » 10 | Simeon Ouzas  | » 7 | ---                |     |
| Standard NA        | ---                      |      | ---           |     | ---                |     |

# Round 1 at the Island *(continued)*

2016 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship | Round 1 ~ 30.1.16



^ Russell Garner



^ Alan Conrad



^ Robert Parr



^ Robert Downes



^ Ray Monik



^ Dean Hasnat



# Got a Bat Flattery?



■ **Words:** Peter Ferguson, Eastern Victoria Chapter Captain – owner of an NA and an NC

*I have meant for some time to get myself a mobile battery for those times when one of our four cars won't start – particularly the BT-50 ute that we keep mainly for towing the van ... it can go many weeks between starts.*

I had intended to get one of the fairly big units that *stupid cheap auto* sells for \$100-\$150.

Then I came across a tiny unit at Harvey Norman that looked like a small book. I got on line to see what these are all about and found a wide variety of capacities and prices.

These things can supposedly start a car numerous times and also have a torch built in plus power adaptors for USBs, phones etc. It has a 240volt charger plus a 12 volt adaptor so that once you get the car started, if away from home, you can then charge it back up from the car – brilliant! Seems like a great all-rounder.

I thought this would be a great thing to have on MX-5 runs and with us when away in the caravan.

So I bought one as per this link:

<http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/30000mAh-Car-Jump-Starter-12V-Charger-Battery-Multi-functional-USB-Power-Bank-AU-/281692723117?>

**It cost \$60 so seemed a reasonable bet.** The one I bought has 30,000 mAh. I have seen them from 12,000 to somewhere around 48,000 and widely varying prices. I decided to go mid-range.

The unit is ridiculously small. I look at it the way I look at 747 and A380 passenger jets: I have flown on them heaps of times but I still don't believe something that size can stay in the air!

Same with this little battery pack: there is no way that something this size has enough grunt to start a car once, let alone numerous times. I have read some claims where they can start a diesel engine 12 times – *this surely is crap!*

**However, this morning I went to start the NC.** I was pretty confident I was going to have problems; the last couple of days the cranking has been slower and slower. It's a relatively new battery but there is a gremlin somewhere that I must get around to getting interested in tracing.

Anyway, sure enough: *clack clack* and the gauges jumped all over the place then nothing. Dead flat!

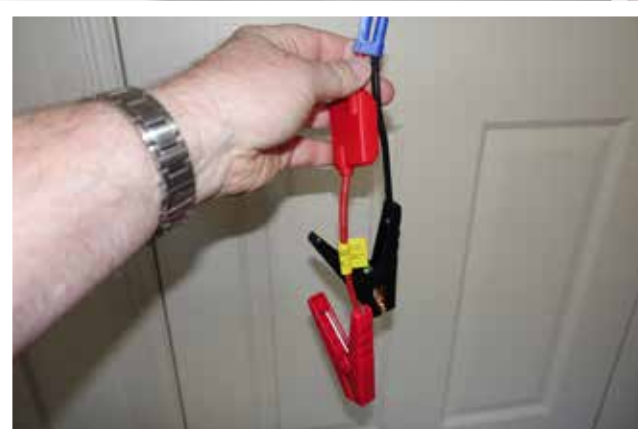
So ... open the boot, grab the gizmo and hook it to the battery. Turn the key and you'd think it was a fully charged battery turning over the engine. It worked beautifully! *I now know the thing works.*

On the NC, following a flat battery there are two issues you are left with:

1. The *DSC off* is left lit up – easily fixed by turning the steering (while the engine is running and preferably on a smooth concrete floor) fully from one lock to the other. *Logic?* Don't ask me; I just know it works.
2. The *traction control* stays lit also. This always seems to disappear on the next one or two start-ups so don't fret.

**So, the device ...**

It's cheap, it's small enough to carry in the boot of whatever car you are in – why wouldn't you get one? It's brilliant! (though I'm still not fully convinced they actually work). ■



■ **Please note:** All "Tech Talk" information is provided as a guide only. All work is carried out at the owner's risk.

# Spider update ...

## The new Abarth 124 spider

*The Abarth 124 Spider — the up-power version of the MX-5-based Fiat 124 Spider — made its debut at the 2016 Geneva Motor Show, marking Abarth's comeback to the international stage.*

*Here's Fiat's official media release to mark the occasion.*

Heir of the roadster that drove Fiat to its first European Rally Championship win in the 1970s, the Abarth 124 Spider is a fun, unconventional car destined to become an icon of driving pleasure just like its predecessor.

Being a typical Abarth, the new 124 Spider is designed for thrills and performance and has all the qualities needed to satisfy even the most difficult-to-please drivers: rear-wheel drive, sophisticated suspensions and a four-cylinder 1.4 MultiAir Turbo engine with 170 HP under the bonnet available with a six-speed manual or six-speed automatic Sequenziale Sportivo gearbox with paddle shift. Its style and proportions also express dynamism at its best: streamline silhouette, stretched bonnet, two seats near the rear axle to really "feel" the road. The interior design also reflects the painstaking performance-oriented care for which cars sporting the *Scorpion* badge are famous while still being packed with safety and comfort equipment.

The new Abarth 124 Spider aims at sweeping a new generation off their feet with its performance and technical DNA. It combines the authentic roadster experience packed with thrills, technology, safety and a touch of unmistakable Italian design.

The car can be ordered now with a price of €40,000 (\$A60,000) for all Europe and will be available in dealerships from September.

### **Performance DNA**

The new Abarth 124 Spider combines the great sensorial experiences of excitement and driving fun that only a Spider can give. Developed with input from the Abarth Racing Team, the car exemplifies at best the distinctive Abarth values: performance, craftsmanship and technical excellence. It is the car that will bring back the smile on the driver's face.

### **Rear-wheel drive architecture with Mechanical Limited-Slip Differential**

The 124 Spider is designed for thrills and performance and has all the qualities needed to satisfy even the most difficult-to-please drivers. For exceptional dynamism, the Abarth 124 Spider is equipped with a sports mechanical Limited-slip differential as standard to secure drive and traction in the most critical situations and provide incomparable dynamic behaviour.

### **Perfect weight distribution and lightweight design**

Abarth 124 Spider creates a new benchmark in the sporty roadster segment and this is confirmed in numbers. Much of the weight is concentrated between the axles and the engine is installed behind the front axle to guarantee agility and superior driving feel. Sophisticated mechanicals and the use of special materials have contained the weight to just 1,060kg, which results in a weight-to-power ratio of 6.2kg/HP, the best in its category, and perfect 50:50 weight distribution in running order, which translates in great agility and performance.

### **Supercar mechanics and suspensions scheme**

The suspension of the 124 Spider has a high double-wishbone layout in front and a five-link set up in the rear, specifically tuned for greater braking and cornering stability. Steering ensures a great driving feeling with the use of a dual pinion electric power assist system.

The Abarth dynamic vehicle set-up ensures customers can get the most out of the rear-wheel drivetrain, always aiming for the true driving pleasure. Also the *Abarth by Bilstein* dampers, together with stiffened anti-roll bars, provide ultimate handling and driving comfort.



▲ *The Abarth 124 unveiled in Geneva*

The Brembo braking system, with aluminium front callipers, guarantees very short braking distances and excellent resistance to brake fade, making the pedal always feel pleasant and safe.

### **Powerful engine and sporty gearboxes for an extraordinary driving experience**

The Abarth 124 Spider offered in the EMEA region is equipped with a powerful, reliable four-cylinder 1.4-litre MultiAir Turbo engine. It delivers 170 HP (about 124 HP per litre) and 250 Nm of torque. It has a top speed of 230 km/h and goes from 0 to 100 km/h in 6.8 seconds. Furthermore, the sound of engine really matters in an Abarth car, so the Record Monza exhaust come equipped as standard, generating a beautiful growling sound.

The Spider is available with a six-speed manual or the automatic Sequenziale Sportivo gearbox. The first is characterised by quick and accurate shifting with a short-throw, direct lever.

The Sequenziale Sportivo gearbox is the result of careful tuning to exploit all the engine torque and conveys genuine racing sensations. Using the lever or the paddles behind the steering wheel, shifting is extremely fast and the performance of the car is boosted even further by setting "Sport" mode on the driving mode selector.

### **Throttle-steer driving style**

The Abarth 124 Spider comes with state-of-the-art electronic devices and active safety features but, to ensure the Abarth provides a proper race car feeling when driving on-track, the new 124 Spider lets the driver disengage the electronic controls to experience the perfect mechanical balance and linear engine response, the trademarks of a genuine rear-wheel drive sports car.

### **Design true to the Abarth DNA**

The car's design reflects the superb mechanical layout of the car, a key element to achieve the perfect proportions for a sport car: A long bonnet to underline the importance of the engine and the powerful attitude of the car, reduced overhangs to emphasize its agile attitude, a cabin close to the rear axle to let the driver feel the road. ■

## ***A new option for the MX-5 owner***

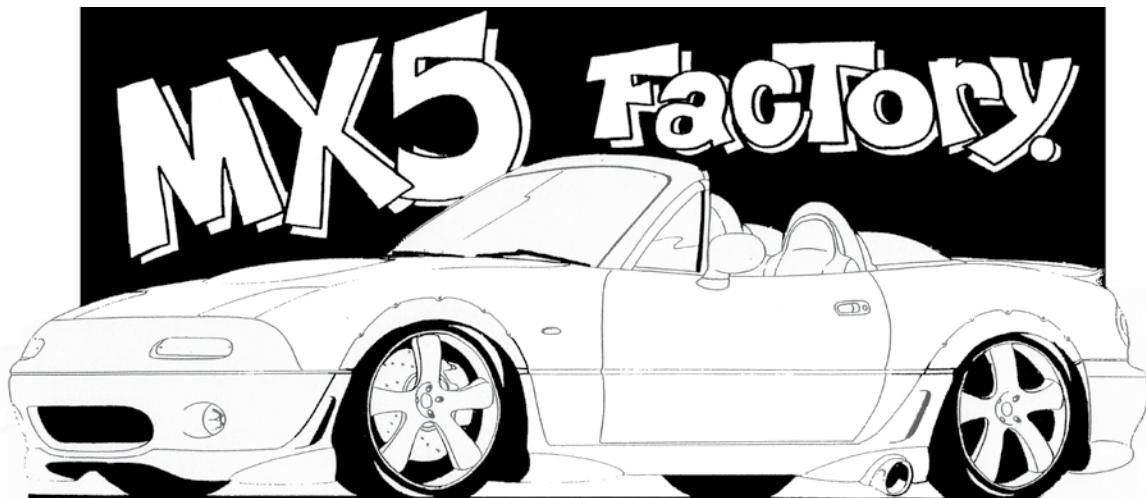
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