

# MX-5 retains fun-and-smile spirit

 By [Henrie Geysers](#)

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The new fourth-generation Mazda MX-5 retains the same winning smile-on-your-dial recipe which made it one of the top selling two-seater rag tops of all time and it has already raked in a number of prestigious awards - including 2016 World Car of the Year award.



The popular and very likeable roadster has already also been honoured with World Car Design of the Year award, Car of the Year in Japan and the UK, and many other prestigious awards.

## Universal appeal

In many ways the MX-5 is a bit old-worldly, but that also strengthens its universal appeal because the Japanese white coats wisely chose not to tinker with the basics so they stuck to the successful formula of rear-wheel drive, mid-engine position for perfect balance, ultra-light body and quick, sharp steering.

They also stayed with a normally-aspirated 2.0-litre engine which churns out 118kW and 200Nm which is sufficient for a 0-100km/h dash of 7.59 seconds and a top speed of 214km/h. But this car has never been designed for straight-line speed but rather for agility and cling through the corners in the spirit of the traditional wind-in-your-hair sports car driving. It even retains a canvas top which has to be rolled and folded away by hand and tugged behind the backs of the driver and passenger seats.



## Eye-pleasing improvements

Where the clever Japanese did make some eye-pleasing improvements is in the car's visual appeal so that it now brags with handsome curves, sharp edges, wide, low grille, slit-eye headlights and sporty alloy rims, wrapped with low-profile rubber, so that the overall affect is a low road-hugging stanch.

The engine also has a deeper, louder growl to compliment the fun of whipping the car through its close-ratio six-speed gearbox. There is the odd bit of clever modern gadgetry such as limited slip diff which shifts power to the left or right back wheel as required during enthusiastic cornering, as well as stability control to keep the car pointing in the right direction during hard cornering. Hill Start Assist is also useful, particularly because the little Mazda does squirt off from start quite enthusiastically and the clutch tends to grab at high revs.



The overall result is a small, affordable two-seater which provides barrels of fun when the pleasure pedal is mashed to the floor. The MX-5 has been given a few useful extras but none of these distract from the sheer driving fun this little convertible roadster provides. At R399,800 a pop (inclusive of a three-year unlimited km service plan), expect to see more of them on the road in the near future, because rand-for-rand and smile-for-smile it is hard to beat.

## ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

Henrie Geyser joined the online publishing industry through iafrica.com, where he worked for five years as news editor and editor. He now freelances for a variety of print and online publications, on the subjects of cars, food, and travel, among others; and is a member of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists. [henrieg@africa.com](mailto:henrieg@africa.com)

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