

CAR AND DRIVER

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MAZDA SPEED 3

10
CAR-DRIVER
best
25 YEARS OF
10BEST CARS



mazda MX-5 Miata

FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW,
MAZDA HAS TWO CARS
ON THE 10BEST LIST

MAZDASPEED 3 ONE VERY GOOD BAD BOY.

» Americans have a soft spot for lovable bad boys, and so do we, although bad boys *we* love have wheels. There's been a long string of them, dating to the first VW GTI, a 10Best choice back in 1983, and this hotted-up Mazda 3 five-door is the latest.

Hot is the right word. Mazdaspeed's merry pranksters pulled the stock 156-hp, 2.3-liter four, substituting a turbo

charged and intercooled version—also used in the Mazdaspeed 6 sedan—mated to a six-speed manual. This results in a noticeable gain in output—263 horsepower, 280 pound-feet of torque—as well as brisk forward progress: 0 to 60 in 5.8 seconds. Not as quick as a Subaru WRX STI, but way quicker than a VW GTI, and it's also bargain priced. Yes, there's torque steer, but it's manageable.

Other elements include brake and suspension enhancements, look-at-me exterior trim, seats worthy of a BMW, and racy-but-tasteful interior trim. With a base price of \$22,835, this package is unbeatable. But if the foregoing doesn't sound like enough, dealers blessed by Mazdaspeed will be offering a cold-air intake and cat-back exhaust that add up to an additional 30 horsepower. Sounds bad enough to us.



VEHICLE TYPE: front-engine, front-wheel-drive, 5-passenger, 5-door wagon

BASE PRICE: \$22,835–\$24,550

ENGINE TYPE: turbocharged and intercooled DOHC 16-valve 2.3-liter inline-4
Power (SAE net) 263 bhp @ 5500 rpm
Torque (SAE net) 280 lb-ft @ 3000 rpm

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed manual

DIMENSIONS:
Wheelbase: 103.9 in **Length:** 176.8 in
Width: 69.5 in **Height:** 57.7 in
Curb weight: 3200 lb

FUEL ECONOMY:
 EPA city driving 20 mpg

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MAZDA MX-5 NOW WITH A 12-SECOND POWER PLAY.

» The roadster formerly known as the Miata returns to the 10Best winners' circle for the second straight year, its eighth trophy since Mazda modernized the concept of the affordable droptop sports car in 1990. The Miata (Mazda still uses the name unofficially) made its latest 10Best comeback last year with a top-to-bottom redesign, the car's first complete makeover.

It has a new unibody, new skin, a new interior, a new powertrain—new everything.

In the process, the MX-5 lost its least-expensive-roadster title to the Pontiac Solstice but prevailed on the basis of its all-around goodness: It's quicker, more agile, more refined, quieter, roomier, more comfortable, better-looking.

Given all that, you might not expect

much in the way of MX-5 news for 2007, but midway through 2006, Mazda rolled out a Miata with a folding hardtop. Undo the latch, press the button, and 12 seconds later the top is stowed behind the seats, with no trunk-capacity consequences. It's remarkable, and so is the pricing, which, at just under \$25,000 for starters, makes it the least expensive hardtop convertible in the U.S. That's a title worth having.

VEHICLE TYPE: front-engine, rear-wheel-drive, 2-passenger, 2-door roadster

BASE PRICE: \$21,030–\$26,955

ENGINE TYPE: DOHC 16-valve 2.0-liter inline-4
Power (SAE net) 163–166 bhp @ 6700 rpm
Torque (SAE net) 140 lb-ft @ 5000 rpm

TRANSMISSIONS: 6-speed auto with manumatic shifting, 5- or 6-speed manual

DIMENSIONS:
Wheelbase: 91.7 in **Length:** 157.3 in
Width: 67.7 in **Height:** 49.0–49.4 in
Curb weight: 2400–2550 lb

FUEL ECONOMY:
 EPA city driving 22–25 mpg



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