

Show Me Your Curves



2020

Happy New Year

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*The Official
Newsletter of*





Editor's message

By Doug Jackson



Happy New Year, everyone!

As we prepare our "New Year's Resolutions" for this coming year, I hope that you include participation in the various "Miatas of Muskoka" activities as part of your planning for 2020!

As I prepared for this edition of the newsletter, I re-read the previous January, April, July and October newsletters. As a group, we have done a lot of things together! I want to say a sincere "Thank You" to all of those folks who organized and led the trips, to all of you who acted as sweeps on the cruises, to those who are on the executive and spend hours quietly working on behalf of the membership and to those who strongly support our club through their enthusiastic participation. Congratulations for doing such an outstanding job!

Bob Macaulay has summarized the participation in MoM events throughout the year, in an article in this edition. The statistics are very interesting! As you read his summary, I hope that you will be inspired to engage in club activities to an even greater extent in 2020.

The compilation of the newsletter is certainly easier when folks write up summary articles, take photographs, find interesting articles online or in magazines and newspapers, discover funny jokes ... and then send them to me! Throughout the year, Cal and I have amassed some very interesting and informative material, and we try to share it with you. In our newsletter, we attempt to include all of the activities of our club during the current quarter, plus some other articles/photos/links/jokes that some (hopefully all) will find interesting. We encourage all of you to send any of the above to us ... we would rather have too much than too little for future newsletters!

There will likely be some emails and general messages in the next little while concerning the "Mid-Winter Blahs" lunch, the "Rock of Ages" theatre cruise, and the Annual General Meeting (AGM). They are all in the planning stages. If you have any suggestions for cruises for next year, please contact any of the Miataville Council. They would welcome any input and would particularly welcome volunteers to organize some club outings and cruises. Don't be shy ... let them know that you are willing to take on a leadership role!

Have a healthy and happy new year!

Doug Jackson





Season Wrap-up

2019...Another Great MoM Cruising Season!

Bob Macaulay

Well, another *Miatas of Muskoka* cruising season is in the books...the tenth, to be exact. And another great season it was, despite some periodic unsettled and less than ideal top-down weather.

As usual, member input prior to and at our April 2019 AGM resulted in a final Cruise Event Schedule for this year which included a total of 13 events. Of that total, 3 were originally planned to be overnight trips – 2 of those to be a single overnight, and one was to be 2 nights. However, 1 of the overnight trips was subsequently cancelled as our cruising season progressed – the Grey Cty./Walters Falls cruise – because we were unable to obtain any member volunteer(s) willing to take on the Cruise Director's responsibilities for organizing and running this trip. As we have learned in the past, the scenic geography and meandering backroads of Grey County lend themselves very well to very enjoyable Miata cruising, so we'll put this one on the list again in 2020 in the hope that a Cruise Director can be found.

As a result, excluding our periodic ice cream runs (more about that later), our final tally of actual cruises for the year was 12 events – 2 overnight trips (Sudbury/*Science North* and Ottawa/*Da Vinci Exhibition*), and 10 day-cruises. Three of the day trips were actually not official MoM events, but rather, were events organized by others to which MoM members were also invited – these included yet another Open House/BBQ hosted by our club's "home" dealer, *Orillia*

Mazda, a first-ever Miata Open House/BBQ hosted by *Cobourg Mazda*, and the 5th Annual "Moffatt's Rally for Kids", hosted by *Moffatt's Mazda* in Barrie.

Once again, a total of 8 different members/member couples agreed to act as Cruise Directors for one (or more) of our 2019 MoM events, and of those 8, 3 of them were MoM councillors. Thus, your MoM Council continues to encourage (and is very much hoping that) some "new blood" from among the general membership are willing to give Cruise Director duties a try on our 2020 events. As has been said in the past, the work required is more than offset by both the fun involved and the "rewards" of broadening your knowledge of some great "Miata roads" in the broader region, and enabling you to better know more club members in the process. So, once again, we implore you all to give it serious consideration and come to our April 2020 AGM with an open mind about the possibility of volunteering to organize a cruise next season.

Attendance and participation in our various cruise events was generally pretty healthy this year, ranging from a minimum of 4 cars to a maximum of 21 cars (a new club record!) at any one event. 8 of the 12 cruise events attracted 10 cars or more, and the overall average for all cruises was 12 cars per event.

Apart from our cruise events, we also had our usual ice cream runs ("ICRs"), both "regular" and "special," on the second and fourth Tuesday evening of every month, unless pre-empted by poor weather, which thankfully happened only twice this past season. We had planned for 5 regular ICRs; average participation in the 4 regular ICRs



which did take place was just over 7 cars. We also alternated the regular runs with 4 planned “special” ICRs, involving social activities beyond just cruising somewhere for an ice cream treat. This year, those special ICRs included mini-golf & dinner at Washago, a potluck dinner hosted by Bob & Carol Macaulay on Fairy Lake in Huntsville, dinner/ice cream and participation in the “*Hot August Nights*” custom/classic car show at *Weber’s Burger Restaurant* north of Orillia, and a planned bocce contest & picnic in Couchiching Park (in Orillia); unfortunately, the bocce contest/picnic had to be cancelled due to poor weather in early September. Average participation in the 3 special ICRs was just over 10 cars.

MoM enjoyed an influx of several new members who joined the club at the outset or during the 2019 season. As a result, as of the end of the season, which wrapped-up with the Fall Colours cruise in early October, our membership numbers were the highest ever -- a total membership in good standing of some 38 cars (67 people.) This provides a bit of perspective on the event participation numbers provided above.

I’m sure we all look forward to another successful cruising season in 2020.

Current distribution of club memberships (cars) is as follows:

Muskoka –	14	(Bracebridge area 6, Gravenhurst area 1, Huntsville area 7)
Simcoe Cty. –	21	(Orillia area 7, Barrie 4, Horseshoe Valley 1, Coldwater 1, Midland/Penetang 4, Washago 1, Wasaga Beach 3)
Other –	3	(Peterborough, Pembroke, Newmarket)

In addition, it may be of interest to some of you to know the distribution of the 4 generations of Miata in the club, as of the end of the 2019 season:

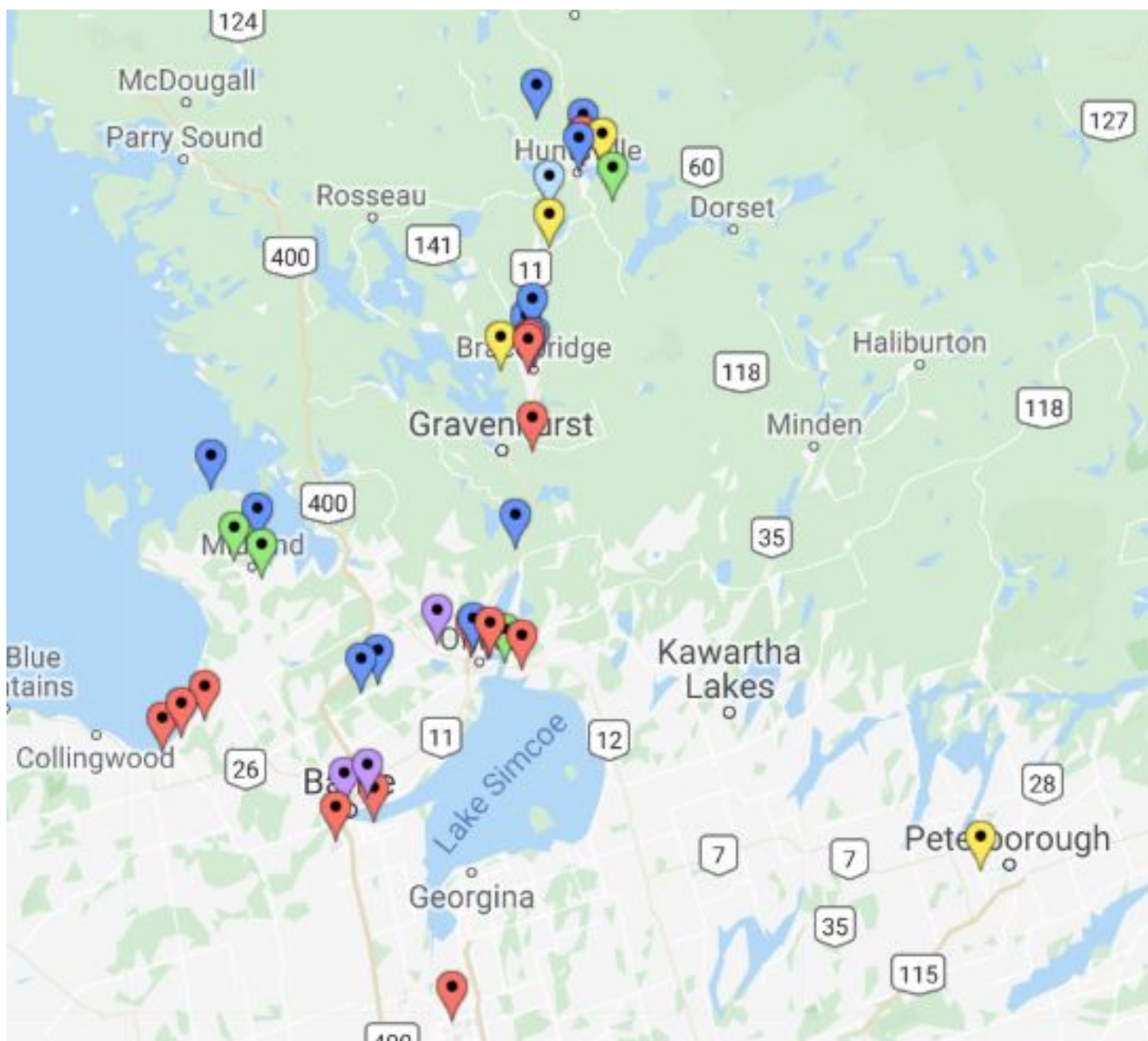
NA (1990-1998) –	3 cars
NB (1999-2005) –	12 cars
NC (2006-2015) –	17 cars
ND (2016-present) –	6 cars (2 soft-tops, 4 RFs)





Where do our Members Live?

Map by Michael Topping



EDITOR'S COMMENTS:

Bob Macaulay has written a very interesting and informative summary of the year's events, which is included in this newsletter. He wrote about the geographical distribution of the membership of our group. Michael Topping has once again prepared a map which shows the location of our cars. This graphic illustration is very much appreciated!



Events upcoming . . .

Membership

Get ready for the upcoming season. In the near future I will be posting information regarding this year with some possible new changes. Be aware of emails coming in and hopefully we can streamline the registration process.



Upcoming Events . . .



***Date, time and location
To be announced***

AGM

Annual General Meeting



"Rock of Ages" Cruise and Theatre:

August 29, 2020 – 2:00 pm

For the fifth year in a row, a block of tickets has been set aside for our Miatas of Muskoka Car Club to attend a performance at King's Wharf Theatre in Penetang. In previous years, we have seen "Mamma Mia!", "Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat", "Hairspray" and "Beauty and the Beast". This year, we have tickets reserved for the musical "Rock of Ages"!

***Rock of Ages** is a jukebox musical built around classic rock songs from the 1980s, especially from the famous glam metal bands of that decade. The musical features songs from Styx, Journey, Bon Jovi, Pat Benatar, Twisted Sister, Steve Perry, Poison and Europe, among other well-known rock bands. It was written by Chris D'Arienzo, with music supervision, arrangements and orchestrations by Ethan Popp.*



Fans of '80s arena hard rock music will dig this awesomely hilarious musical comedy that wails with big chords, big hair ... and an even bigger heart.

It's 1987, and aspiring rocker Drew meets and falls madly in love with Sherrie, a fresh-faced Midwesterner who has recently moved to Los Angeles to chase her movie star dreams. Will their stars rise? Will their love last? Find out in the worldwide phenomenon featuring 28 classic rock tunes like "We Built This City," "The Final Countdown," "Wanted Dead or Alive," "Here I Go Again," "Harden My Heart," "Can't Fight this Feeling," and "I Want To Know What Love Is."

Don't stop believin' ... the music that ignited a generation will be rockin' on stage in August in Penetang ... we want you there!



Doug and Sheila Jackson will be sending out a specific information sheet early in the new year but circling the date on your calendar NOW for Saturday, August 29th is important! The day will consist of a cruise, lunch, theatrical experience and early dinner. Watch for detailed information soon!





Events enjoyed . . .

Haliburton/Kinmount Picnic Cruise:

September 24th, 2019
by Bob Macaulay

On Tuesday September 24th, 11 *Miatas of Muskoka* cars gathered in Baysville at the LCBO parking lot, on a fresh, cool fall morning, for a little pre-cruise socializing and a quick drivers' meeting. [Thankfully, no tire blowout for the Cruise Directors on the way to the Baysville meeting spot this year!] Although the *MoMers* coming from Simcoe County had apparently driven through some rain on the way to Baysville, by the time they arrived here in "God's Country", the sun was poking through partly cloudy skies. Shortly after 10 AM, we headed out in a single group, under a bright sky giving us mix of sun & cloud, and temperatures in the mid-teens. The planned route took us along 117 east to Dorset, then south on Hwy. 35 -- surely one of the nicest scenic routes in all of central Ontario, especially in the fall -- to Carnarvon, where the group jogged west a short distance to Bobcaygeon Road, and then headed south on it to Minden (sorry for the "new" potholes...they weren't there on our test run last fall!)

At Minden, we continued south on the pleasantly twisty Deep Bay Road, which parallels Hwy. 35 but runs on the west side of the Gull River and Gull Lake. At Moore Falls, we re-joined Hwy. 35 south to Norland, then took Monck Rd./Cty. Rd. 45 (the former hwy. 503) east to Kinmount, and shortly before noon, we arrived at our picnic spot in the very pleasant Austin Sawmill Heritage Park, which overlooks the Burnt River. This is a nice spot with a view of the original mill pond and dam, and static displays at the adjacent restored mill; for those interested, more information is here:

<https://directory.explorekawarthlakes.com/Home/View/austin-sawmill>



We had the park almost to ourselves and enjoyed a nice leisurely lunch at several tables under the picnic



shelter. Shortly after the group's arrival, Dave & Diane Phillips arrived separately to join our group lunch. Thanks to Judy Gigg and Carol Macaulay, we all got to enjoy a couple of "extra" dessert treats. After a group picture on the kids' play equipment, we departed via another nice Haliburton County road "back route" into Minden, where we stopped to enjoy the scenic town overlook at *Panorama Park*, and we then went back onto Hwy. 35 for our obligatory ice cream stop at *Kawartha Dairy's* long-standing Minden store. From there, the group dispersed and headed home in various directions. As this was MoM's designated charity cruise for our 2019 season, donations in support of this year's benefitting charity, *The Sharing Place Food Bank* in Orillia, were received from all participant cars, and from a MoM member who would have liked to join us but was unable to participate. Member donations totalled \$480; as on last year's charity cruise, *MoM Council* decided to top-up that participant total with a club donation of \$545, to produce a collective *MoM* total donation of \$1,025. In addition, in support of our fund-raising efforts on this cruise, *Orillia Mazda* (our "home" dealer) kindly contributed their generous cheque for \$500. As a result, *The Sharing Place* will be receiving a grand total of \$1,525 raised through this cruise, in support of their programs.



On Oct. 3rd, we presented the funds to Bruce Duncan, TSP's Manager of Operations & Volunteers. Bruce gave us a tour of their facilities, which are quite impressive, and serve an ever-increasing clientele in the Orillia area. They were very grateful to accept our collective donations totalling \$1,525 (including a \$500 cheque from Jenn Volz at Orillia Mazda.) Both Stephen Robbins of our club and Jenn Volz are on the board of TSP. Aside from Steve's own donation, he was instrumental in facilitating that generous contribution from Jenn, in support of our MoM charity cruise. We have thanked them both for their contributions on our behalf. Thanks, and congrats to all involved, for your support of this very worthwhile community enterprise.

**Bob & Carol Macaulay,
Cruise Directors**





Club Celebrities . . .



A local family will be on the debut episode of the new Canadian Family Feud. Peggy Madill, far left, is shown with host Gerry Dee and her grand-daughters Paige, Brooke and Jaida Faragher and their mom, Krista Hastings. Contributed photo

On December 12th, Cal Lander circulated an email informing our MoM members that Peggy Madill, her daughter Krista and three of her grandchildren, Paige, Brooke and Jaida would be appearing on the debut show of “Family Feud Canada”. Of course, those of us in the club know that Peggy is an outgoing and dynamic person, so it comes as no surprise that her daughter and grand-daughters are equally energetic and enthusiastic! The performance of all five women from three generations on the December 16th, 2019 show was great fun to watch. We found ourselves questioning, “How can they come up with those answers so fast?”, numerous times during the show. Obviously, these family members know each other very well! A press release earlier in December said:

“To put the local family's feat in perspective, thousands of families applied to be on the Canadian version of the long-running game show.

From those, 600 families were chosen for on-site auditions and out of those 600, only 70 families were chosen for the first season.



Celebrities . .

Mom Peggy Madill, daughter Krista Hastings and Krista's three daughters were chosen for the first episode of the new CBC show.

Hastings has been a registered nurse for 22 years and serves as a care co-ordinator with the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network. The mother of five is a hockey mom in the winter and a lacrosse mom in the summer.

The three sisters all work at St. Louis Bar and Grill and each attends Georgian College in either Orillia or Barrie. Brooke and Jaida are identical twins."



Peggy and Gerry Madill introduced themselves in the July 2019 edition of this newsletter but had participated in MoM cruises before that date and have continued to take an active role in our club, acting as sweeps for several club runs. Peggy bought her 2013 black Miata MX5 GT in May of 2019 and is looking forward to the 2020 cruising season after she and Gerry return from their winter holiday in Portugal.

Congratulations, Peggy, to you and your family!





Events enjoyed . . .

Fall Colours Cruise

by Michael and Sue Topping



This year marked the tenth annual Fall Colours Cruise anniversary making it the longest running annual cruise enjoyed by the Miatas of Muskoka. There is respective article on this cruise elsewhere in the newsletter.

The 2019 Fall Colours Cruise was plagued with ominous weather predictions calling for thunderstorms for days prior. It appeared to be a Saturn rocket countdown as the original group of 25 cars started to whittle down one at a time as the date drew closer eventually settling at 21.

	Sun 09/29	Mon 09/30	Tue 10/01	Wed 10/02	Thu 10/03	Fri 10/04	Sat 10/05
	Sunny	Risk of a thunderstorm	Risk of a thunderstorm	Cloudy with sunny breaks	Chance of a shower	Cloudy with showers	Mainly sunny
	15°	18°	25°	13°	11°	11°	12°
Feels like	15	19	32	12	9	9	11
Night	8°	14°	12°	6°	6°	5°	8°
POP	10 %	40 %	70 %	30 %	40 %	60 %	30 %
Wind (km/h)	11 NE	15 SE	18 SW	17 N	17 E	15 N	13 N
Wind gust (km/h)	17	23	27	26	26	23	20
Hrs of Sun	11 h	4 h	2 h	3 h	1 h	3 h	8 h
24 Hr		1.3 mm	10.15 mm		5 mm	1.3 mm	

However, we all know God drives a Miata (a very Special Edition, I'd imagine) so the group was in high spirits as they gathered on a bright sunny morning at the Gravenhurst Wharf parking lot. We set out winding our way through the local backroads, taking in the colours (and there were lots to take in) enroute to the pit stop in Rosseau. The three groups arrived at different times at our pitstop as Google Maps has a way of messin' with you.



The second leg of the cruise continued through more Muskoka countryside (and more colour, too) to the Ridge on Manitou Golf course for lunch. This was all



accomplished and we were cozily seated inside before the heavens opened up and the forecasted thunderstorms finally arrived.

After lunch a small group meandered back to Gravenhurst for the MoM tradition of ice cream.





Events enjoyed . . .

Season End Banquet

By Gail Lander

On Friday November 15th with all the Miata's asleep in their beds, 33 members of our club mourned the end of the cruising season and had an early start to celebrating Christmas. The plans were started with Chris and Laura at Tailwinds Bar and Grill at the Rama airport in early October



and we were extremely impressed with their organization, flexibility and overall willingness to work together to make the evening memorable. Great thanks to Bob Macaulay for his help in taking care of all the emailing required to organize such an event.

At 5:00 o'clock we met in the "Pilots' Lounge" room very tastefully decorated for Christmas and the young ladies who served our drinks and early orders of our "sweet potato fries" were so anxious to please. We had chosen from a prearranged menu consisting of soup or salad, 3 different entree choices and 2



Events enjoyed . . .

dessert choices. All were tastefully presented and were absolutely delicious. The chef outdid himself and even came out to check on our reactions to dinner.

Our resident photographer, Doug Jackson, set up the computer on the big screen so that we could watch his great collection of pictures taken during all our cruises during the past season. What a treat! Thank you, Doug!

The whole evening was pure pleasure and it was pretty well established that we would go back to Tailwinds in the future. For those who unfortunately were not able to attend this evening you missed a great experience and we certainly missed you as well.



**YEAR
END
CELEBRATION**





Meet the new members . . .

Third Year Summary

by Doug Jackson

This project began with the first newsletter of 2017, when Cathy and Mike Fedorowich introduced themselves to the membership. During the rest of 2017, we had introductions from Al Fitkin, Ted and Karen Dirnstein, Steve and Wendy Bazuk, Ken and Brenda Payne, John and Barbara Brown and Lynda Gigg.

During 2018, we had articles submitted from Gloria Weber, Jack and Leslie Van der Meer and Clarence and Donna Pardy.

In 2019, "Meet the New Members" articles were received from Don and Sharon Penrose, Jim Even, John Dunn and Mary Anne Love, Michael and Glenna Tinney, Peggy and Gerry Madill and Marie and Mike Schlorff. In this edition, we meet Bob and Sue Phillips and Rick and Shaun Fox.

Some of the newer members of our club may be asking themselves, "Who are some of the long-standing members of the group?" "Can we get some interesting background about a few of the folks who take an active part in the club?" Well ... what do you think? Would you like to feature a number of these folks next year in our quarterly newsletters? Let a member of the executive know! Who would you like to feature?





Meet the New Members:
Robert and Susan Phillips



The Phillips's; Bob & Sue

Sue and I, along with our pet Shit-Sui, Tasker, moved to Midland in January 2009, after we retired. Prior to that we lived in Brampton and commuted into Toronto each day for our jobs. Sue was an Administrator for the School of Hospitality at George Brown College and I completed my Banking career at Canada Mortgage & Housing Corp. as an Underwriter. Before that I worked as a Consumer Loan Officer in a couple of Chartered Banks.

While living in Brampton, we raised two children, Vicki and Greg. We have two Grand Children, Ian 20 and Matthew 14. I am involved in the Masonic Fraternity and recently served as the District Deputy Grand Master of Georgian North District. Sue and I are both involved with the Order of the Eastern Star.

We both enjoy watching hockey and Lacrosse. Sue served two years as the Registrar of the Ontario Minor Lacrosse Association and I served on the executive of the Ontario Lacrosse Association. I refereed Minor Hockey, coached and served on the executive of our local minor hockey organization. We were season ticket holders with our local Junior Team, the Battalion of the OHL. During the last four years we lived in Brampton, we billeted two players from the team. We also enjoy spending our winters in Florida at our trailer in St. Petersburg.



We purchased our first Miata privately in July 2014, a silver 2001 model. We enjoyed many hours and many miles riding around the area. We enjoyed it so much, we decided to upgrade and recently traded that one in on a 2014, Red Hard-top Convertible.

We got involved with the Miatas of Muskoka Car club quite by accident. One evening in early July this year, we were enjoying an ice-cream cone at the Midland Dairy Queen when we spotted another Miata parked there. I spoke to Clarence & Donna Pardy about their car and told them we had a Miata. Clarence suggested I look up the club's website and consider joining. I did and the rest is history, as they say. We thoroughly enjoyed the Fall Colours Tour and the year end dinner. We have made new friends and look forward to many more summers of happy motoring in the club.



Meet the New Members: Rick and Shaun Fox

Shaun and I are newcomers to the Miata World and are looking forward to many new adventures in our new toy. And with Miatas of Muskoka!

We sold our 2004 Honda Goldwing after returning from our third trip to the Blue Ridge and started the hunt for its replacement. After many hours on line and several test drives, we found our “new to us” 2016 GT in August. Since the first day, we’ve had a blast! We have attended the Fall Colour Cruise and the Season End Banquet as guests and thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone.

We are long-time residents of the Barrie area, having moved to Midhurst in 1983. Shaun retired from her career as a librarian in 2012 and has enjoyed every minute of it. I retired from the insurance restoration industry in 2014 – it lasted 4 months! I received an offer I couldn’t refuse and have been working in the same industry, part time, ever since. With the ability to take extended time away as part of the bargain, we

have enjoyed time in Florida, cruising from England to Portugal, Spain and the Canary Islands, travelled to Australia and New Zealand, several motorcycle trips including going out west, down east etc. etc. Life is good!

Shaun and I have been married for forty-four years. We started our life together in St. Catharines. From there we spent several years in Kitchener before migrating north. We have three children, two grandchildren and two step-grandchildren, all of whom live in the area.

We are looking forward to a vacation somewhere warm again this winter and are excited for the arrival of spring, unwrapping our little white convertible and hitting the road with MoM for many cruises (and lots of ice cream)





Special Blog . . .

Two Blogs from Two Cars: About the Same Photo

*Inspired by Doug after sitting behind two teenage girls
during an hour-long subway ride in Toronto*

I

I can't believe how much my life has changed since my owner's wife brought that cute little silver gal to live here. For over thirty years, I've been the centre of attention during the summer. In the winter, however, I was always put in the freezing cold garage, sharing the space with a snowblower and a snow-and-slush-covered Honda van. Things changed when Sheila adopted that little silver beauty. Now, I just feel like a proud, but aging, grandpa to a teenager. I know I'm an original, 1st generation old fellow, with a wheezy engine, a suspension that creaks and groans and a body that is showing signs of aging. But last winter, I was treated royally. Sheila insisted that the two 'summer cars' were to go to a heated storage facility. It was fabulous! The two of us parked close to one another and I kept a watchful eye on her all winter. I just felt like a grandfather watching out for my grand-daughter, particularly when we were surrounded by many strange



So like when Bob said he was going to sell me I go yeah whatever sorta like a new 'venture then I go to this new place and I gotta share space with this old guy so I'm like freakin out but my new owners really like me and we go lotsa cool

places so I'm OK with that. I useta go in the winter under a blanket and nobody bugged me but then Sheila says I gotta go to a freakin warehouse and I'm like no way but she goes it's heated and I'm all like you know real happy about that. Anyway I have to be like right beside this old red guy who's like old enough to be my grandfather and he's got these real weird headlights that pop up and who has them anymore but it was OK cause there were some really strange cars all around us that sorta grossed me out and I kinda liked having the old geezer near. So then like summer comes and I have a blast and go lotsa places but the old guy not so much,



Blog . . .

and unfamiliar automobiles. Doug and Sheila took a picture of us together in the fall leaves and are making plans to put us away in the same facility again. I can hardly wait! Once again, I'll do my best to watch out for her. I know she is cute and attracts a lot of attention. My job, as a 1st generation gentleman, is to look out for my 3rd generation friend. At least, I like to think of her as my friend.



just to the golf course and who wants to go there not me. So a

couple of days ago they park the two of us under the fall leaves in the front yard and Sheila goes we're taking you back to the storage place and then I get these flashbacks of being like surrounded by you know like aliens and she knows I'm upset and goes don't worry cause the grandpa car will be there and I'm like that worries me too cause he's so old and what'll I do if one of those muscle cars gets all frisky or one of those classic cars from the 50's gets all smooth and wants to do stuff or one of those real old Model T's gets all loopy. So seems like I'm goin there anyway but I'm kinda like hopin the old red guy is close by.



Security is having a big brother.



© PNTS



Mazda News . . .

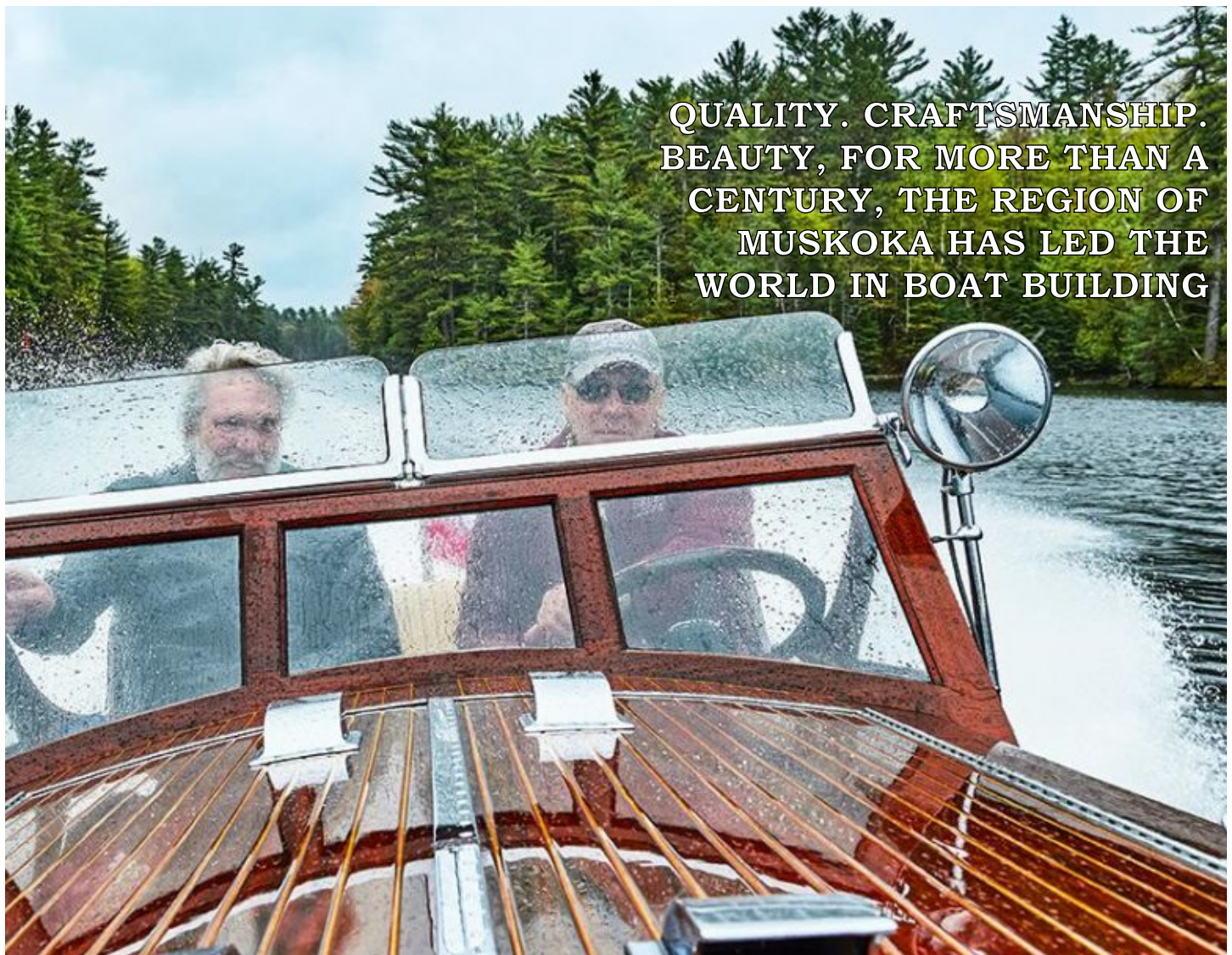
Reprinted from MAZDA STORIES Summer 2019

THE BOATBUILDERS OF MUSKOKA



Muskoka in Ontario is famous for its classic wooden motorboats, which have graced the local waterways since the early 20th century. We visit the area in a Mazda CX-3 to meet a family-run business that restores and builds these beautiful craft, and get a flavour of what 415 hp feels like on the water...

Words by Gavin Conway, Photography by Sian Richards



**QUALITY. CRAFTSMANSHIP.
BEAUTY, FOR MORE THAN A
CENTURY, THE REGION OF
MUSKOKA HAS LED THE
WORLD IN BOAT BUILDING**



Owner and builder Peter Breen tugs the long, gleaming, chromed gear lever of his 28-foot “gentleman’s racer” as it glides out of its slip on the Severn River in Muskoka. The massive 8.0-litre V8 engine cranks slowly and then explodes formidably into life, playing its thunderous rumble off the wooden walls of the boathouse.

Overhead, grey clouds threaten rain, but Peter isn’t bothered. He’s smiling, enjoying the knowledge that I really don’t know what’s about to hit me, all screaming 415 hp of it. Indeed, I do not. As Peter opens the throttle, the V8’s exhaust note begins to harden from a baritone rumble into a ferocious yowl as the revs rise.

This boat might look exactly like the 1920s design it is based on, but it is capable of 96 km/h, which is damned fast for any boat of any era. Not only that, it handles brilliantly, carving unbelievably tight turns as it flies effortlessly across the water. And Peter has named it *Cash Injection*, for reasons that will soon become obvious.



Peter is one of a band of wooden boat restorers and builders who operate in the Muskoka region; the boats they restore and build are known worldwide as “Muskoka boats.” The most famous, and collectible, are speedboats from the 1920s and 30s, built with absolutely uncompromising quality, using the finest mahogany.





Peter Breen's boats follow that tradition. It's impossible to overstate the quality and craftsmanship that go into a Breen re-creation. I've never witnessed such a perfect marriage of beauty and brawn.

To call a Breen boat a replica is unfair, because the boat is built with exactly the same traditional crafts used to build the originals.



But there's a thoroughly modern twist here. Peter makes boats of unsurpassed grace and style, but he builds for clients who want the excitement of high performance. "The *Margaret Shirley*, for instance, has a handmade 575 hp-Ilmor [race prepared] engine in it, one of the hottest gas engines you can buy. It'll push that boat into the 110 km/h range."

All of the hardware, cleats, deck lights and chrome instrument panels are cast using 1920s hardware. The results are stunning—even an informed observer wouldn't guess that Peter's boat isn't from the era. Cheap, Peter is not. He says his average restoration will run between \$400,000 and \$500,000. As for a boat built from scratch, "a lot" would be a safe bet.



"THE *SS BIGWIN* CARRIED GUESTS SUCH AS CLARK GABLE, LOUIS ARMSTRONG, WINSTON CHURCHILL, GRETA GARBO AND LOADS OF OTHER HOUSEHOLD NAMES OUT TO BIGWIN INN ON THE ISLAND"

"We do boats the same way they were done in the 20s with real planks, real dimensioned wood, almost

always with white oak frames," explains Peter. "We do everything traditionally, the same way they did in the old days, including steam bending of the frames, which is more of a skill and harder to do than the more common laminating."



So how did the Muskoka region become so well known for its gorgeous powerboats? Well, around the



turn of last century the boats became a way for the very rich, many of whom had palatial cottages around Muskoka, to show off their wealth and status. Additionally, having few roads meant that if you wanted your speed thrills, a gentleman's racer was the best fix.

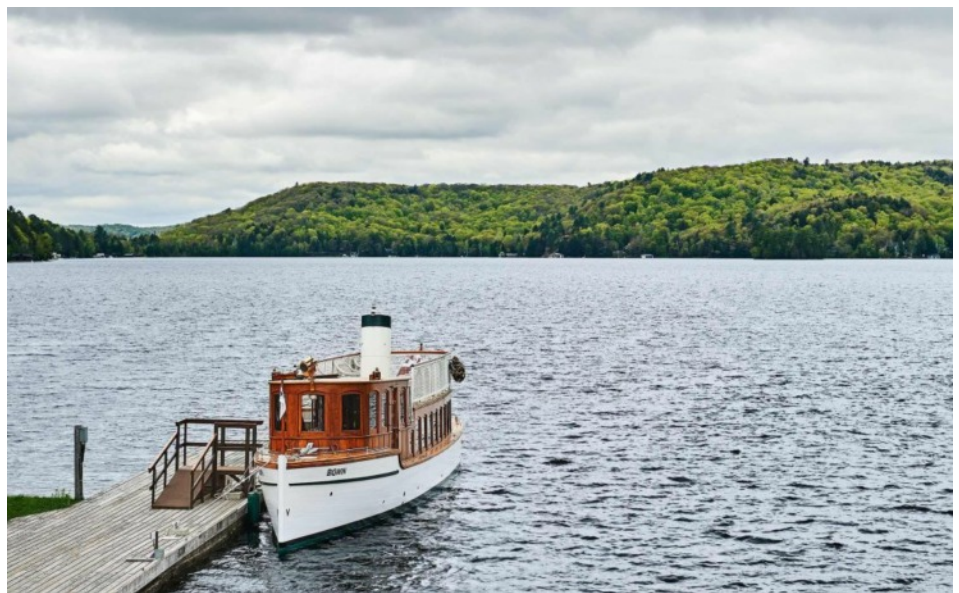


Muskoka is also a stunning part of Canada. Its breathtaking natural setting invites exploration, and the craggy rock of the Canadian Shield gives the place a moving, rugged beauty. One of the best roads takes you on a loop around Lake of Bays, going through charming villages filled with characterful red-brick homes, family-run stores, restaurants and marinas. They are places that feel of another era.

In our travels, we stumble across another famous Muskoka boat: the *SS Bigwin*. The 109-year-old boat has been exquisitely restored. Originally privately owned, the *Bigwin* ended up being sold in 1925 when it started service as a ferry to Bigwin Island, the largest and at one time one of the most glamorous islands in North America.

"It really was a spectacular place back in the day," says *SS Bigwin*'s captain, Shawn Ruhl.

"The *Bigwin* carried guests such as Clark Gable, Louis Armstrong, Winston Churchill, Greta Garbo and loads of other household names out to Bigwin Inn on the Island." And the *SS Bigwin* has another uniquely modern twist, explains Captain Ruhl: "It is the first fully electric passenger-carrying boat in Canada."





2019 MAZDA CX-3



The Mazda we chose for our Muskoka adventure was a CX-3. With a decent 148 hp on tap, courtesy of its 2.0-litre four-cylinder gasoline engine, we were able to combine spirited performance with decent fuel consumption—we recorded over 7.0 l/100km on open road runs. Even better, on the twisting roads of Muskoka, the CX-3 has sharp, precise steering and fine handling balance—in short, this crossover is fun to drive. That's largely due to Skyactiv-Vehicle Dynamics, a suite of technology that makes the CX-3 a smoother, more comfortable drive. Our CX-3 also came with the reassurance of all-wheel drive for the region's inevitable rough dirt roads.





Techie Stuff . . .

Ethanol in your Fuel Tanks

from Clarence Pardy

For those of you looking for safeguards against the ravages of ethanol-blended gasoline, there are a number of precautions you can take. The first is that you can simply avoid it in the first place. According to Dan McTeague, a noted petroleum analyst, Shell and Esso 91 are both ethanol free. All other grades from the companies have some ethanol content, but the mid-grade blend is pure gas, which means it not only corrodes less than ethanol blends, but is less likely to deteriorate when stored. Don't be misled into thinking higher octane gas contains less ethanol. In fact, it has more! The octane rating of pure ethanol is 100, but when it's blended with gasoline, it performs as if it's 112. In other words, higher-octane blends — Petro Canada's 94 and Esso's 93 — use more ethanol, not less.

For those storing their vehicles for the winter, specialty gasoline makers — yes, there are boutique gasoline manufacturers! — offer ethanol-free formulations specifically tailored for a long shelf life (as much as two years). For those on a budget, a trip down to Canadian Tire for some fuel stabilizer is usually good enough to preserve your pump gas — use that Shell and Esso 91 stuff — over the winter.

A little creativity — and common sense — can help here. For instance, when I ride my classic 1982 Honda CB1100R frequently, I'll

often fill up with Petro Canada 94, which does contain ethanol, for its higher octane, the gas never in carburetor long enough to cause damage. However, whenever I know she's going to be laid up for a while — especially over the winter — I make sure the last tank I run through her is ethanol-free. That same common sense applies to other vehicles. For instance, the point to the plug-in aspect of the modern PHEV is to actuate the gasoline portion of its drivetrain as infrequently as possible. For particularly careful owners of longer range PHEVs — Chevrolet's Volt comes to mind — that can mean refuelling as infrequently as every three months. It behoves the careful Volt owners, then, to ensure that ethanol isn't

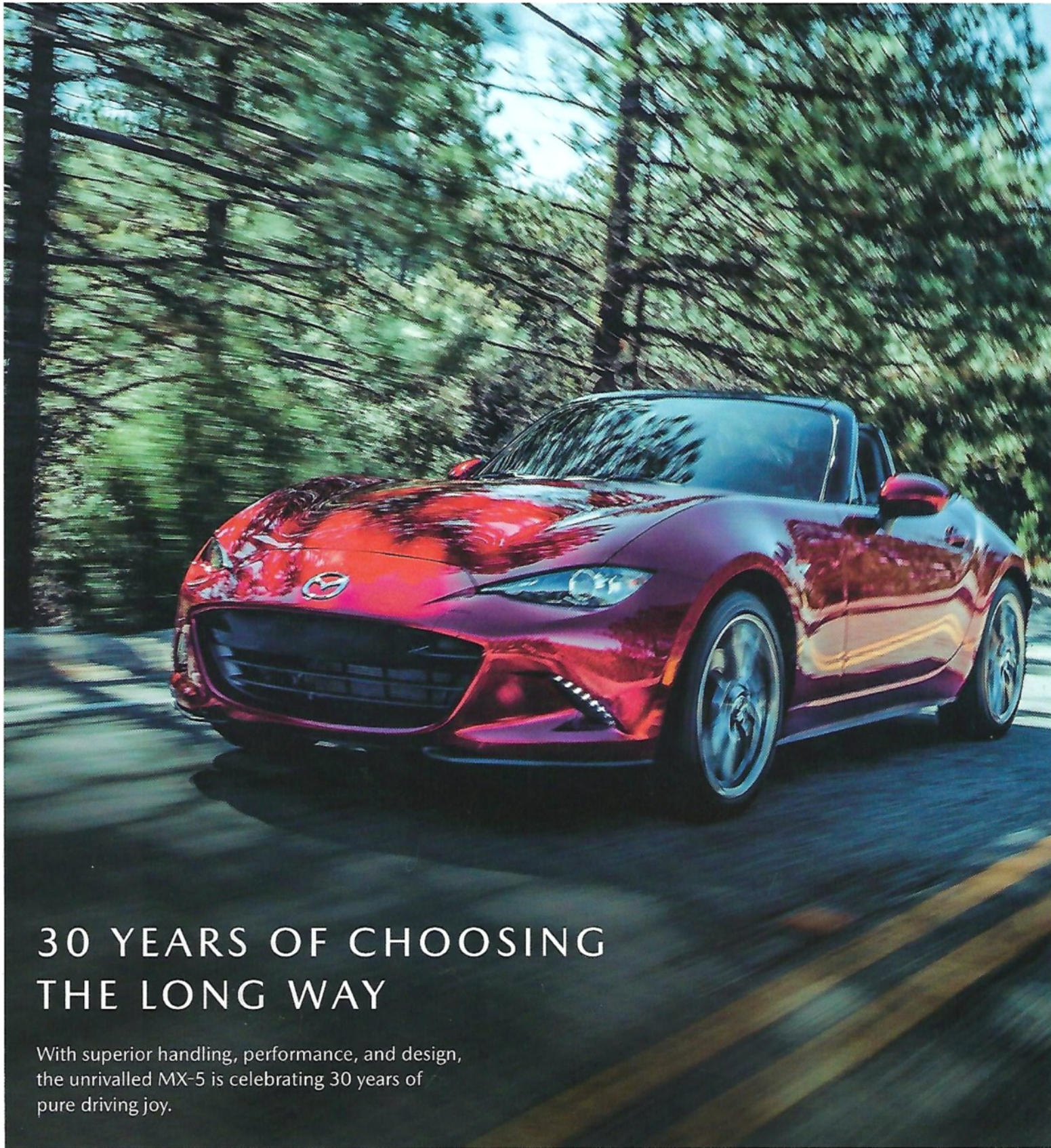
gumming-up the car's drivetrain and shop for an ethanol-free pump. Yes, most PHEVs will have corrosion-resistant pipelines, but it never hurts to err on the side of caution.

More troublesome for older, carbureted vehicles is that ethanol is 35 per cent oxygen. Burning it can cause an older carbureted

engine to run "lean" — combining too much air with too little fuel. In mild cases, said overenthusiastic blending of oxygen can cause older engines to stumble, spit and cough. In a worst case scenario, it can even lead to catastrophic — as in big, gaping holes — piston failure. For the true gear head, yes, that does mean that the very thing you're trying to prevent — the "pinging" caused by lower octane fuel — is exacerbated when you fill up with premium 94 because your hot-rod is now running hotter thanks to a leaner mixture.

Yes, it's a paradox, but forewarned is forearmed.





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