

Mazda's MX-3 is the newest in sporty coupes

Mazda Motor Corporation has unveiled a new sporty coupe aimed squarely at the Honda CRX and Nissan NX 1600/2000 markets.

Called the MX-3, the car will go on sale in the Greater Metroland area later this year.

What gathered most attention when the car was announced to the press recently in New York City is the choice of engines.

There will be a 1.6-litre single overhead cam, 16-valve in-line four cylinder engine as standard. As an option will be a 1.8-litre V6 with 24 valves making it the smallest displacement volume-manufactured V6 in the world.

That also means it is the only car in the sporty coupe class to offer the refinement of a V6, something Mazda hopes will not be lost on those buyers thinking of purchasing a car in this class.

Outwardly the car is very much in the image of the NX and CRX not to mention Toyota's Paseo which comes to the Canadian market this summer.

The low, sloping front end with its oval headlamps flows upwards to the flush-mounted

ROAD WORTHY

By JIM ROBINSON

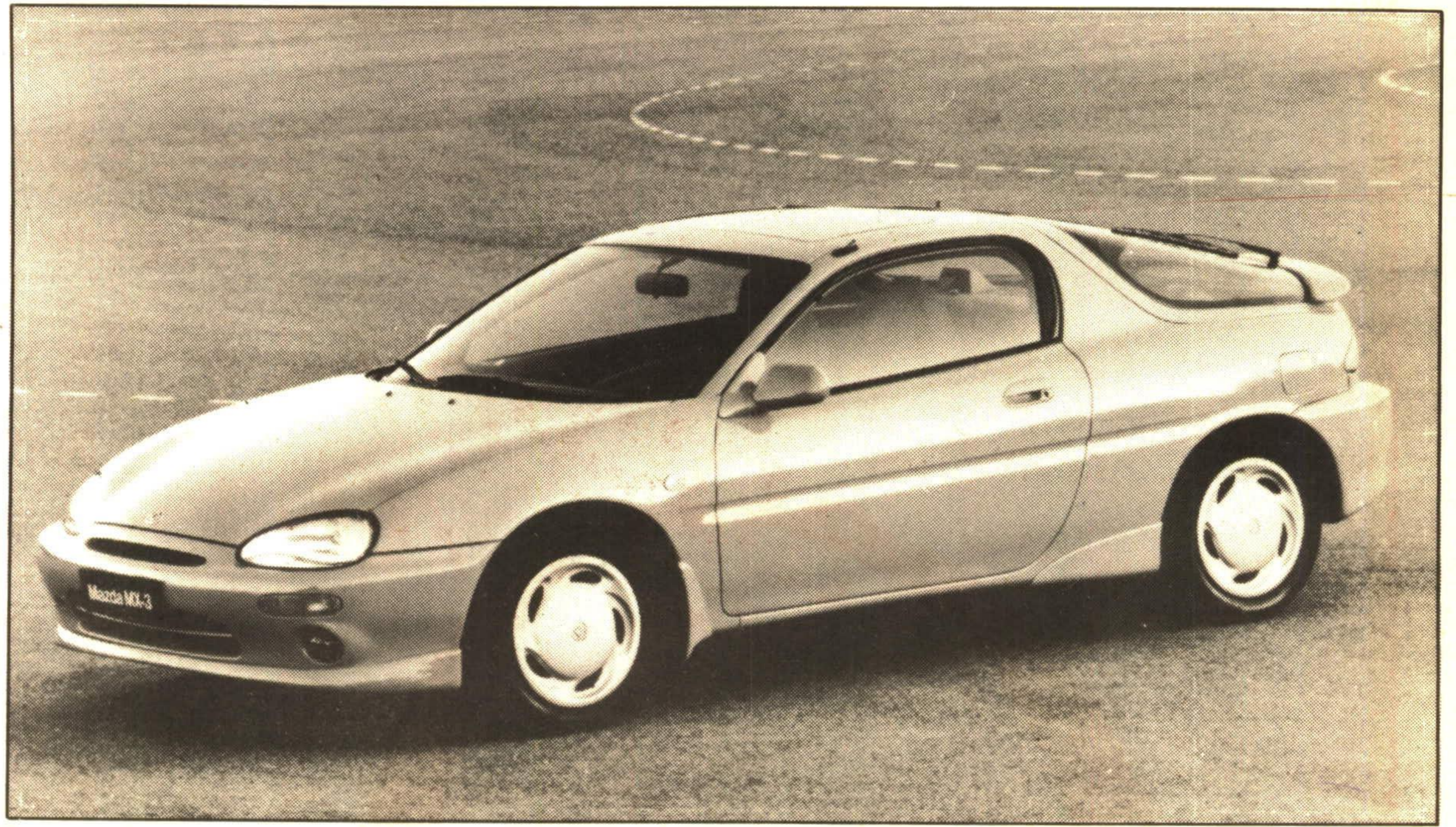
windshield with that line continued to a rounded tail with a heavy (to my eyes) valance panel over the rear bumper.

Inside the two-plus-two seating is biased to the two front seats, the rear two being very occasional. A large glass hatch can be lifted reminding me much of the Tercel of a few years ago.

This is a front-driver with a five-speed manual box. On the V6 you get disc brakes all around while on the four you have to settle for discs at the front and drums at the rear.

The V6 also features six-inch wide styled alloy wheels with P205/55 VR-rated 15-inch tires, surely big feet for such a little car. The four-cylinder model reverts to 14-inch wheels with P185/65 HR tires on 5.5-inch wide steel wheels.

The front end employs



Mazda has its MX-3 poised to contest the red hot sporty coupe market. The car goes on sale later this year.

MacPherson struts linked to a lower A-arm and Mazda's own Twin-Trapezoidal Link struts at

the rear. This is the same system pioneered on the mighty RX-7. Steering is power assisted and

speed-sensitive rack and pinion. Prices of the MX-3 are expected to be released by the summer.

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