

# 2014 GS a goodie bag on four wheels

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meager covering of canvas.

There were no such things as windup windows, let alone power. You placed a clear plastic panel with small sliding air inlets between the doorsill and top and that was it.

Back then, owning a sportscar meant being a sport when it came to the weather. And you had to be to a real sport when it came the repair bills, particularly to tuning the carburetors.

And suddenly, there was the Miata.

A stout (for the time) unibody chassis, power windows, a leading edge (for the time) twincam engine and, glory be, a top that could be raised with one hand – it was perfect for the time.

We are now in 2014 and the MX-5 (Mazda dropped Miata some years ago) and that simple, yet inspired design has remained basically unchanged for a quarter of a century and has become the largest selling sportscar of all time.

I will always remember my first Miata like my first kiss.

It was a 1990 in French Mariner Blue with alloy wheels modelled after the very popular MiniLite wheels used on full-race Minis.

With a 1.6-litre, twincam four-cylinder with all of 114 hp and 100 lb/ft of

torque and a super short-throw five-speed manual driving the rear wheels, it was perfect.

There was enough power to have fun, but not enough to get you into trouble.

During that first 1990 drive, kids on the street gave me the Victory-wave, people followed me down the highway grinning and my neighbours descended on it when I drove home.

Over the years the MX-5 has evolved with a 1.8-litre engine for second generation and then a 2.0-litre in the third generation up until today, but never with turbos and senseless power that detracted from the original concept.

Tested here is a 2014 MX-5 GS, which is the middle of the three trim levels offered.

With standard six-speed manual transmission (six-speed automatic optional), its trusty 2.0-litre four-cylinder produces 167 hp and 140 hp. With premium fuel recommended, mileage is 9.7/7.1L/100 km city/highway.

There is a five-speed manual standard on the base GS while the topline GT comes with the works, such as the six-speed automatic and a power metal retractable hardtop.

At a list price of \$37,840 (including \$1,795 shipping) the GS is the way to

go with Bilstein shocks, limited slip rear differential, front tower stress bar and gunmetal 17-inch alloys. The power retractable roof was included in the price, which makes it a bonus.

Suspension is "right" which I mean is double front wishbones and a multi-link rear independent setup at the tail.

The tester came with no options and

I wouldn't want any to take away from the package.

I spent a full week with the 2014 GS and I don't think I turned the radio on once.

With a nice, alto exhaust tone and the occasional burble on an engine/rev-meshed downshift, it was a sound Coltrane could never match.

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