

Just Miatas and what it means to me

by Terese Mac Davis

I have been a sports car fan since I was a teenage girl. The past eleven years of my life have been in the world of sports cars. I restored first generation Mazda Miatas. They are the best-selling sports car of all time and the first generation Miatas are becoming classics. I've had every year (90-97), every color, every M Edition and even the most elusive 93 Limited Edition.



This is my story of finding cars, traveling the entire northern California country and meeting some of the most interesting people and seeing some of the most fascinating places in California and in the Miata world.

It's a story of bringing life back into a little car that has served its owners for years and just needs to have all the little stuff fixed that has been neglected. Taking a scruffy looking little sports car and turning it into a gorgeous car that gleams and captures your attention was our 'thing'.

My partner and I were fanatical about getting the car right, with everything working and mostly stock. We are both sports car people and were very picky about how a car sounded, felt, and drove, as well as clean and beautiful.

We did a lot of paint jobs, new tops and brakes and tires. We wanted to turn out beautiful, mechanically up to date Miatas that the new owners could fall in love with and drive away to enjoy for years.

I wrote the book '*Just Miatas, The Book*' which describes not only the people, but the process of restoring these little cars back to their beautiful selves. This little hobby of mine, which got way out of hand, not only paid for itself, but was the most fun I've ever had.

Just Miatas is the name of our little group. There's me and my partner, the team of experts that we've had work on our cars, *and* the people who get the cars when they're finished.

These new Miata owners get access to all my contacts and I was always available to give free advice. If a local *Just Miatas* (JM) owner had a problem we could just fix, we'd have him bring it over and we'd fix it. We were set up for it. We made referrals to our mechanic, and upholsterer who continue to service many of the *Just Miatas* cars in the Modesto area. As a new car (which might be 20 years old) owner, it's comforting to have someone to call if you have a problem.

There is nothing like the smile of a brand new Miata owner! There was such excitement and passion in these cars. It was a thrill to experience it time after time, and to experience it myself when I found a cool car (or one that I knew I could really turn around).

I formed the *Just Miatas Car Club of Riverbank* by calling all the people who lived locally and had one of my cars. We've been on lots of Miata runs and are about to have our 5th Annual Twaine Harte Street Faire Run. We're a very informal club with no dues or newsletter, just "Ya wanna go?".

This book focuses on the regular people who love Miatas, rather than just the performance and race buffs. It's not technical. The Miata is everyman's sports car and this is a story of many different people from all professions and means, who have one thing in common, the Miata.

I've found Miatas in dingy dirt floored San Francisco basement garages, on vineyard estates in Napa county, in cow barns, and in the back area of Oakland airport.

Imagine looking out your front window and seeing all those Miatas. I usually had four or five at any one time



I think I was considered a little eccentric around town, but lots of people drove by the house and did a double-take and one lady even drove around the block and then stopped and chatted about "all these cute little cars". When I bought this house long ago, I didn't know I was going to need seven parking spaces out front and a garage. Sadly, I never got a garage, but have a wonderful carport that serves as my "office".



I've retired from the restoring part, but still keep in touch with many of my JM owners. I've bought back several of my cars over the years. People outgrow a Miata and I'm always happy to buy back one of my own, because I've already done all the major work the first time around. One car I've owned three times! My neighbor across the street bought one and I got to see hers all the time, as well as my own.

The book, "*Just Miatas*" is due to be released in April of 2012. Please visit my (new) website www.justmymiata.com to see cars, read stories, see pictures, say hi on the Forum page... just take a little Miata break.

Terese