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50 YEARS OF THE MAZDA ROTARY

Few collaborations between people of different nationalities has resulted in revolutionary automotive technologies that is as significant as the Mazda rotary engine. Similar to British and French engineers coming together to create the Concorde supersonic jet, the Mazda rotary is the product of German ingenuity and Japanese adaptability, and has stood the test of time as an unlikely candidate shortlisted for the greatest automotive engines ever made.

SHAER REAZ



Mazda Cosmo Sport

Launched in 1967, the Cosmo was the first production car powered by the 110 HP, 1 litre 0810 rotary motor. The Series I was a product of the global space race, and the design reflected similar aspirations through a flying saucer shape and aircraft derived rotary motor. It's highly significant for being one of the best looking cars ever made, and showing the world the rotary engine is powerful and reliable enough to be put into serial production.

Mazda Luce Rotary coupe

Designed by GiorgettoGiugiaro with smooth flowing lines similar to BMW's 3.0 CSL, the Luce was the only FWD rotary in Mazda's history. The 13A wankel motor produced 126 HP and 127 lb-ft torque, while production numbers stood below 1000 units produced, making it one of the rarest Mazda coupes in history.



Mazda RX3/Savanna GT

The first of the legendary Rotary Experimental (RX) series of Mazda's sports cars to carry the name, the RX3 now has a cult following in Australia and New Zealand, where they're tuned to within an inch of their lives as drag spec cars.

Mazda RX7

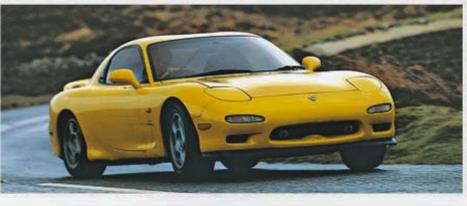
FB/Savanna

By the time the first generation of the RX7 series went into production in 1971, the rotary engine had become synonymous with Mazda. The FB was sold in huge numbers all over the world, with a significant number making it into Bangladesh. Now, most are dead or disfigured beyond repair.



Mazda RX7 FC

The second generation of the RX7 took 80's wedge styling to new depths, resulting in a car that was incredibly square but also evocatively gorgeous. By now the Japanese were perfecting the secret art of drifting on mountain roads, and the RX7 FC with its balanced chassis and 215 HP 13B turbo rotary was a favourite of these underground street demons. It would later be immortalised as the weapon of choice for Ryosuke Takahashi, the brooding, calculative street racer in the Initial D manga/anime.



Mazda RX7 FD

No other rotary Mazda is as well-known as the RX7 FD, which took 90's tuning culture by storm and introduced an entire generation to Japanese drifting and tuning thanks to Sony's PlayStation and numerous street racing games. It got so out of hand that people started associating Mazda's winged emblem with sportiness, even assuming the 115 HP, FWD, arthritic Mazda Axela is sporty just because of the Mazda badge. The 13B-REW motor in the RX7 was available with 276 HP and had tremendous potential in the hands of tuners.

Mazda RX8

Some say the RX8 was a sacrilege to the RX name, that it was less pure and not really a car for enthusiasts because of the rear hinged half-doors and non-turbo engines. The RX8 was definitely a car for millennials, having loads of style and lesser substance underneath. It had tremendous handling abilities, though, and the RENESIS engine had lots of potential if cared for. The 1.3 litre displacement meant it was a cheap sports car, and markets like Bangladesh got loads of units because the RX8 was practically a hatchback according to its displacement on paper.



FELIX WANKEL father of the rotary



As far as bad introductions to famous people go, this is probably going to be one of the worst because we'll dispense with one fact that should not put anyone in a positive light: Felix Wankel, inventor of the rotary engine, was a Nazi. Yep. It'd also be pertinent in this case to point out that the rotary engine itself was designed as an aircraft motor, a tool to establish German dominance over the skies of Europe during World War II but never got there because he was captured by the French.

His own designs of the rotary engine came with a few problems - it was too unreliable, too loud and prone to detonation. However, Mazda took on the challenge and solved most of the issues, notably the rotary "chatter".

COLLECTIBLES

ROTARY IN SCALE

We love the rotaries but a scale model would be much more easy to maintain. Let's start with the easy ones. 150-300tk will get you lovely Hotwheels or Matchbox versions of the FB and FD RX7. Hotwheels launched the SA22C in 2012 replete with wide fender flares and that delectable spoiler shaped like a small ramp. Designed by the venerable Jun Imai, this is a must have for 1:64 collectors. It is so well done you can make out the individual fender rivets. And last year Hotwheels showed off a FD3S prototype similar to the old Matchbox casting but with way better stance and proper wheels. Can't wait for that.

If you go up a notch, Autoart and Biente make the best and also most reliable RX7 in 1:18 scale. What? Reliability issues in diecast models? The FD RX7 is available from Kyosho but I have read on many forums about minor paint rash appearing on them.

They are \$70-150 on eBay. A brand new Savanna is \$140 while the Initial D FD3S in yellow is \$205 brand new from the current Autoart catalogue. The Cosmo is available for \$140 but the Japanese police versions are always cheaper for any car. The Cosmo is about \$115 and if you're feeling brave, you can give it a makeover into a stock car.

If you want to build your own kit the RX7 is a current issue from Tamiya. With engine it'll cost about 1500tk if you have anyone traveling to a Tamiya store in Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand or similar Asian countries. Tamiya stores keep a consistent pricing everywhere. If you have the skills, you can build your own version with aftermarket wheels and accessories. I currently have three RX7 projects on the workbench.

I haven't even touched on 1:43 scale in this article. Head to our site for the rest.



WORDS & PHOTOS: E.R RONNY

MAZDAS IN BANGLADESH



One of the many Toyota powered Rx7 Savannas in Dhaka.



Might be the only Rx7 FC in the country. Wedge shape looks cool.

There are plenty of Rx7 and Rx8 Mazdas in the country, with most of the Rx7s being FB series cars that are in various states of disrepair. People are catching on though, and restoring these pop-up beauts back to their original glory. Want a rotary Mazda? Look around, you'll definitely find one or two, but be prepared for Toyota piston motors instead of original rotary power.



Super rare Spirit R Rx7, one of two FD Rx7s in the country.



Mazdaspeed edition Rx8 is fast and good looking.

COULD YOUR DREAM OF OWNING A FORD MUSTANG IN BANGLADESH FINALLY BE REALISED?

Yes, it could. Bangladesh is officially getting the Mustang Ecoboost via Ford's dealership, AG Automobiles.

UNDER THE HOOD
2.3 litre Ecoboost 4 cyl (310 HP, 320 lb-ft)
6 speed auto/manual gearboxes.



HANDLING/BRAKING
Independent rear suspension
12.5 inch ventilated brake rotors
AdvanceTrac ESC
235/50R19 tyres, 19-in wheels
Adjustable electric power steering

INTERIOR EQUIPMENT
6-way power bucket seats
4 way adjustable head-rests
Dual zone climate control
USB smart charging
Folding rear seats

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?
No word on that yet. Whatever the cost, owning a Mustang is owning a piece of American muscle in Bangladesh, and you can't put a price on that.

Infographic: Shaer Reaz

BUET LAUNCHES AUTOMOBILE CLUB



On Tuesday, 28th March 2017, BUET Automobile Club got the show on road officially. BAC (BUET Automobile Club) held a lavish show at the inauguration with VC Professor Dr. Saiful Islam as the chief guest, the program also had the presence of Dr. Maglub AL Noor, Dr. Rafiqul Islam, Mr. Forkan Bin Kashem, Mr. Tanveer Ehsanur Rahman, Jannatul Ferdous and the Club Moderator Dr. Ashiqur Rahman.

The program progressed with different segments displaying some contributions of Bangladeshi engineers on automobiles. There was an interactive quiz time for the audience in the program. The club shared their visions and work-plan with the members at the end.

The program, associated by Honda and Mobil had a handsome number of attendees.



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