

# Raising the Roof

**Ian Lamming** keeps the lid on the latest sports car from Mazda, the MX5

**J**UST when you think the MX-5 couldn't get any lovelier, it does.

The new RF confirms what I've often thought about sports car ownership; do we really need to take the roof off?

RF stands for retractable fastback and that means it's a proper hard-top that disappears only when the fancy takes you.

I'm a roof up man and seldom do I find myself even putting down the windows or opening the sunroof because the noise is such an irritant.

Even when drop-tops are easy to expose, generally at the dab of an electric switch, I fail to get the wind in my hair or, in my case, stubble.

But that's not to say I don't enjoy the sports car experience, that low slow, tarmac-skimming appeal of skipping along in a roadster, because I do.

RF is an acknowledgement to the fact that we don't really need more than 20 minutes in the sun for the required vitamin D fix, particularly as anything more leads to heinous afflictions of the skin and body.

And look what you get with the roof up, one of the most attractive coupes on the market with glorious lines and that legendary MX-5 cult

status complete with flying buttresses.

If the sun does ever venture out and you feel like being wild, free and in the open air, one press of the button sends the roof sections scurrying away to the storage compartments and you are back to the great outdoors. But the extra headroom means that it is less claustrophobic with it in place than traditional roadsters.

Underneath, and remaining at its heart, is the fact it is an MX-5. So the short throw gearbox snicks into place; the steering is sharp enough to shave your legs with; the ride transmits more information back to the driver than the internet to a student's social media pages.

Performance is more than enough to enjoy the ride and RF becomes the perfect tool for undulating country roads.

With a brand this strong and a beauty this deep, expect Mazda to play around some more with Speedster and Spyder concepts already on the books.

Could the MX-5 get any lovelier? Looks like it can.

## Fact File

- Mazda MX-5 RF
- Engine: 1.5 or 2.0 petrol
- Power: 131 or 160PS
- Top speed: 127 or 133mph
- 0-62mph: 8.3 or 7.3 secs
- Combined MPG: 47.1 or 40.9
- Transmission: Six-speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 142 or 161

