

Mazda commemorates launch of Cosmo Sport

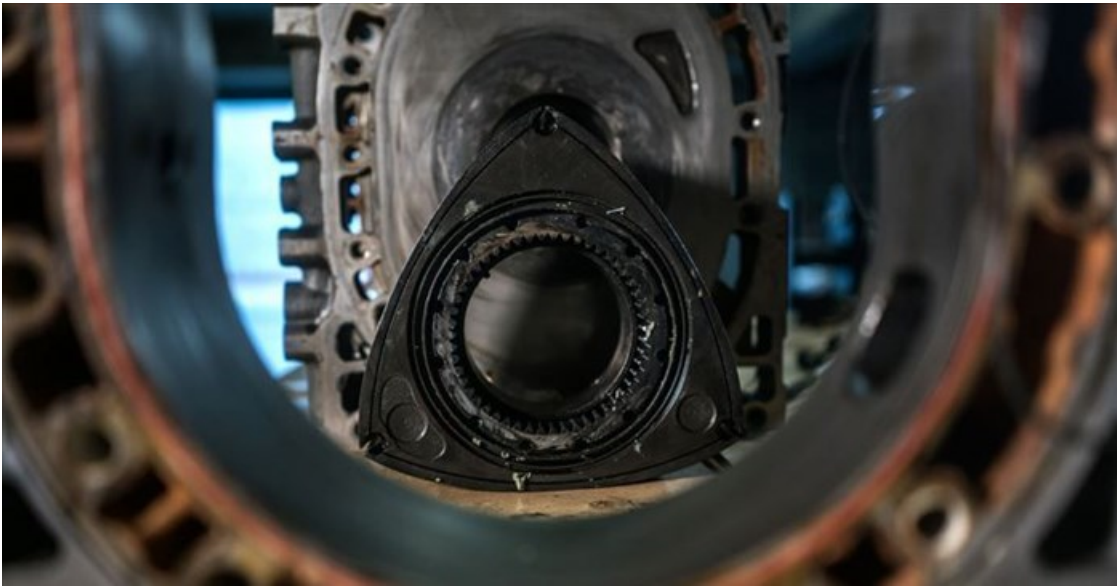
50 years ago, Mazda launched its sleek two-seater rotary-powered Mazda Cosmo Sport which marked the beginning of a legacy of fun-to-drive cars and motorsport success.

Back in 1967, the Cosmo Sport was the world's first car powered by a twin-rotor engine. Also known as the 110S, it was also the car manufacturer's first sports car, supplying the DNA that has gone into models like the Mazda RX-7 and Mazda MX-5, and indeed every vehicle the Japanese marque manufactures today.



Although only 1,176 were built, the Cosmo Sport was monumental for Mazda, marking its transformation from a maker of predominantly trucks and small cars to an exciting, unique brand characterised by its convention-defying approach to engineering as well as design.

The company's engineers overcame numerous hurdles to making the rotary engine commercially viable, testing prototypes over hundreds of thousands of kilometres prior to the market launch.



Having harnessed the rotary's potential to deliver performance levels equivalent to much larger and heavier reciprocating piston engines, Mazda would go on to build almost 2 million rotary-powered vehicles, also achieving racing success. The RX-7, for example, dominated its class at IMSA (International Motor Sport Association) events throughout the 1980s. But its biggest single triumph on the track came in 1991, when a Mazda 787B powered by a 2.6-litre four-rotor powerplant producing 710PS won the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

It was the only non-reciprocating engine ever to win the illustrious endurance race and the first victory by an Asian brand.

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