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## In the rearview mirror: The Mazda 3 turns 20

The Mazda 3 is celebrating its birthday: 20 years ago, the model made its debut in the compact segment and has sold more than six million units in four model generations to date. In 1999, Mazda began a project to replace the compact 323 - known elsewhere as the Familia or Protégé - with a new model series featuring hatchback and sedan versions. Mazda design centers in the U.S., Germany and Japan were involved, with chief designer Hideki Suzuki in charge. In 2001, the decision was made in favor of the design by Hasip Girgin from the European design center in Oberursel near Frankfurt, who subsequently spent six months refining it in Hiroshima.

The finished vehicle celebrated its world premiere in the fall of 2003 at the 60th International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt; a month later, the first generation of the Mazda 3 was launched in Japan. Two and a half years later, the Mazda 3 MPS (Mazda Performance Series) with a 260 hp (191 kW) 2.3-liter gasoline direct injection engine with turbocharging, which was also used in the Mazda 6 MPS, was unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show. The traction of the front-wheel drive benefited from electronic torque management as well as a limited-slip differential.

The second generation of the 3-series was presented at the Los Angeles Auto Show and the Bologna Motor Show in fall 2008. Like its predecessor, the new model was based on the C1 architecture developed jointly by Ford, Mazda and Volvo, but later received the first components of the company's own Skyactiv technology, such as the new 2.0-liter gasoline direct injection engine with the i-Stop start-stop system. There was also an MPS again, which received numerous improvements.

The third generation of the Mazda 3 was launched in fall 2013. It was based entirely on the new Skyactiv technologies with new engines and driven. In addition, the series said goodbye to the previous C1 platform and got the newly developed Skyactiv platform, which was also used for the first generation Mazda CX-5 from 2012. For the first time, the Mazda 3 also adopted the new Kodo design language and introduced innovations such as the GVC driving dynamics control system. The third generation also formed the basis for the Mazda 3 Skyactiv-CNG Concept, a concept vehicle powered by natural gas. Only offered on the domestic market, the Mazda 3 Skyactiv-Hybrid featured technical components from cooperation partner Toyota.

In its fourth and current generation, the Mazda3 made its debut at the Los Angeles Auto Show in November 2018, with a market launch in spring 2019. Inspired by the 2017 Kai Concept vehicle with its sleek, sculptural body, the vehicle received several design awards, including the 2020 World Car Design of the Year award. Also winning awards is the e-Skyactiv X engine, which features compression ignition in part-load conditions, combining the advantages of diesel and gasoline engines. (aum)

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## Images for article



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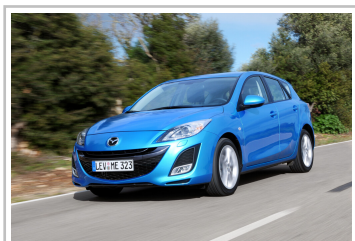


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Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Mazda



Mazda 3 MPS (2011).

Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Mazda



2.3-liter turbocharged engine of the 2011 Mazda 3 MPS.

Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Mazda



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Mazda



Mazda 3 MPS (2011).

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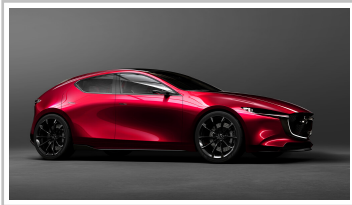


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Mazda 3, special model "100th Anniversary Edition" (2020).

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