

# 2009 Mazda RX-8 On Sale With Eight-Year Warranty - Car News

**Updated RX-8 gets a performance package and Mazda doubles the warranty.**

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Already one of the best-handling cars on the road, the 2009 Mazda **RX-8** is en route to dealers, and will go on sale this month with the new R3 performance package and backed by a monster warranty.

Customers will be delighted to find an extension to Mazda's warranty, now covering the rotary engine for a full eight years or 100,000 miles, whichever comes first. The balance of the powertrain remains warrantied for five years or 60,000 miles, and the basic warranty remains three years or 36,000 miles.

And Mazda is extending this eight year/100,000 mile warranty *retroactively* to all **RX-8s** built between 2004 and 2008, a period during which, we should point out, the sexy coupe earned a spot among our esteemed **10Best** winners three times.

As for the R3 performance package, it includes Bilstein shock absorbers and front suspension crossmembers filled with urethane foam, the latter supposedly facilitating a smoother ride, minimized NVH (noise, vibration, harshness), and greater suspension control. This we can't wait to verify for ourselves. We may never get off the track.

### No More Power, But It Sure Looks Faster

Unfortunately, the R3 package does not include any modifications to the car's tiny, 1.3-liter naturally aspirated two-rotor rotary engine, and thus probably won't meaningfully improve the RX-8's acceleration figures (the last RX-8 we tested hit 60 mph in 5.9 seconds). Although, the differential gear ratio has been lowered from 4.444 to 4.777, so maybe a bit quicker off the line compared with the 2008 model.

Also new for 2009 is a variable redline indicator, which rises as engine temps rise to a max of 7500 rpm for the 212-hp version (mated to the six-speed automatic) and a gotta-hear-it-to-believe-it 9000 rpm for the 232-hp version (paired to the six-speed manual).

But it sure looks faster with the R3 package. A curvy new front fascia, rear bumper, spoiler, and larger tailpipes jazz up the exterior substantially, and even make the 2009's controversial new nose more palatable. The graphite-finished 19-inch wheels are dynamite, and will come mounted with high-performance tires.

If only they could figure out a way to raise the fuel economy from its abysmal 16 mpg city/22 highway, which is worse than many three-row crossovers that weigh nearly a ton more. For an improvement in that regard, we're going to have to wait for the next-gen rotary, which is said to have direct injection for more precise fuel metering.