

21-Year-old Notre Dame Student Designs 2018 Mazda3

By: Emily Luiz, Dec.19 2007

Anticipation ran through the crowd surrounding the Mazda booth at the 2007 Los Angeles Auto Show; as the automaker was about to unveil its newest concept car... a lump of clay. However, to 21-year-old Mallory McMorrow of South Bend, Ind. this was more than a lump of clay; it was a dream come true and the beginning of a career. For women in the automotive industry it was a step towards the future as it is still one industry heavily populated by men. McMorrow is helping shape that future with her success in automotive design. From November 14- November 24 the lump of clay was sculpted into McMorrow's vision of the 2018 MAZDA3 by Franz von Holzhausen, director of design, Mazda North America Operations and Mazda's design team.

As an industrial design major at the University of Notre Dame, McMorrow had one thing on her mind- cars. She even earned the nickname, "car girl," from her classmates. In the past McMorrow utilized her background in graphic and industrial design by focusing primarily on product design, including automotive cleaning and car products. When faced with the challenge of breaking into the automotive industry, McMorrow scoffed at the idea that she should, "keep her options open and even how she should 'think about interiors (because) ...women work on interiors.'" McMorrow's Professor, Paul Down, told her of a perfect opportunity to showcase her abilities and prove her critics wrong. A challenge to design a car for a leading manufacturer was open to the public through the social networking site, Facebook.

To generate new ideas and innovative designs, Mazda held a nationwide automotive design competition. More than 300 contestants submitted a 150-word

description of their vision of the 2018 MAZDA3, and an optional sketch drawing to the Facebook profile created for the competition making submissions viewable to all voters.

Amongst a flurry of unique ideas, the competition narrowed by votes and in a landslide victory, McMorrow's design was voted number one. She was rewarded with a trip to the Los Angeles Auto Show where she saw her vision come to life. The design was morphed from a written description into a two dimensional rendered drawing by Mazda designer Jacques Flynn, before it was sculpted into the final model.

"I was thrilled when I opened up the images of the final renderings," said McMorrow. "I'm proud to say that the end design was still definitely *my* car."

Her unique concept can't be categorized as a commuter car or boring sedan because it is not an undersized sports coupe and doesn't have an awkward, disproportionate hatchback. McMorrow designed the car to handle every curve of the road combining the fun of a speedy sports car with the functionality of taking a few friends on a road trip. Instead of a quarter of a sun roof, the entire roof is a sun roof. The design works in reality going from the showroom to the sales floor without being tweaked for the masses, while maintaining a style will cause heads to turn and mouths to drop before the rev of the engine. McMorrow concludes the purpose of her design is, "A MAZDA3 that gets me – the everyday sports car, the 5-door that makes me forget I own a 5-door."

Many reactions were generated from the design challenge. Von Holzhausen and those at Mazda say the 2018 MAZDA3 is a step in the right direction and are hopeful that, upon receiving her degree, McMorrow will hit the ground running. Auto Show attendees realized the automotive industry is no longer a man's domain. When

commenting on the unique design they were positively surprised positively about how a girl worked on creating this design.

In addition to McMorrow, finalists in the Mazda Design Challenge included Christopher Chung, Silver Spring, Md.; Preston Gilliam, East Bend, N.C.; Andrew Kinomoto, Bothell, Wash.; and Danny Song, San Mateo, Calif.

McMorrow was recently hired as an intern at Mazda. She now knows she can trust her gut instinct and is hopeful about her future, “Now, thanks to this contest, I have a completely refreshed feeling about pursuing a career in cars,” said McMorrow.