

CLASSIC DRIVER

[The Autozam AZ-1 is the mini NSX you didn't know you needed](#)

Lead

If you always wanted a Honda NSX but live in a congested city or simply don't have a large enough parking space, this pint-sized Autozam AZ-1 coming up for auction at Broad Arrow's Monterey Jet Center sale is the micro supercar for you!



At the start of the 1990s, Honda, Suzuki and Mazda were looking to inject some fun into the kei class of cars in the Japanese market, taking advantage of relaxing regulations which now allowed engines with a whopping 660cc and 63hp. The Honda Beat and Suzuki Cappuccino were a good starting point, but perhaps none came closer to creating a kei supercar than Mazda with this, the small-but-mighty Autozam AZ-1.



Looking like something straight out of 'Ghost in the Shell', the AZ-1 started life as a Suzuki concept car and eventually hit the road as a gull-winged pocket rocket. Designed by the father of the MX-5, Toshihiko Hirai, the AZ-1 isn't just the only coupe among the Kei sports car ABC, it's also the lightest at 720kg, which is important when you consider that the AZ-1, Beat and Cappuccino had almost identical power figures. In fact, the AZ-1 was powered by a mid-mounted Suzuki-sourced 657cc 3-cylinder turbocharged engine with, you guessed it, 63 horses and 63 lb-ft of torque.



As the most advanced kei sports car of its era — boasting a tube frame chassis with aluminum honeycomb bulkheads dressed in fiberglass body panels — the AZ-1 was also naturally the most expensive at around 12,000 dollars when new. Couple that high price with the severe economic recession Japan had just entered, and it's no surprise that the AZ-1 never became the sales success Mazda might have hoped for. In total, only around 4,500 of these wild little cars were built, making them somewhat of a rarity today.



This [1992 example](#) has covered just 32,227 miles and benefits from the desirable Mazdaspeed bodykit fitted to later cars. Despite its small size, the AZ-1 can accommodate drivers of most sizes, unlike the Beat, and offers unparalleled levels of sheer enjoyment on the road. If you want to try this JDM dream machine for yourself, be sure to keep a close eye on [Broad Arrow's Monterey Jet Center auction on August 17th](#).

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