

NEWSLETTER

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QUOTABLE QUOTE

"We shall have to repent in this generation, not so much for the deeds of the wicked people, but for the appalling silence of the good people."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

EXCITING VWs COMING SOON

There are several new VWs afoot. At right is the completely new Touareg, launched just ahead of its Porsche Cayenne twin. New Touareg is vastly more economical and over 200kg lighter than the outgoing model, which sold 500,000 units. It will be offered in a hybrid version too, but the V10 TDI will be dropped. Below is the new Polo GTI, powered by a 132kW version of VW's 1.4-litre "twin-charger" engine, good enough for a 0-100km/h sprint in little



over 7 seconds, yet it is far more economical than the outgoing 1.8T. It will feature the Golf GTI's XDS electronic limited slip differential and a 7-speed DSG transmission will be available. Another new Polo derivative just shown for the first time is the new CrossPolo (below), soon available in Germany in a range of engine options. It will arrive here in due course, possibly with a

similar choice of petrol and diesel engines as the outgoing CrossPolo.

Our opinion: New Touareg prettier and more responsible. Lighter new Polo should be a real cracker with 132kW and hopefully handle better too. CrossPolo again a curious styling exercise, but rather good-looking, if useless, off-road. •



FINTEC'S HAJADU IS QUAD FUN—ONLY SAFER



Fintec's new Hajadu (left) is an exciting and good-looking off-road recreational vehicle. However, its beauty is more than skin-deep. So, if you are concerned about the poor safety record of quad bikes, this could be the answer. Indeed, a quad bike is easily unsettled because it cannot be leaned into a corner and it sometimes starts bouncing uncontrollably when landing after having been airborne. People have sustained severe injuries—and some have died—when they were involved in a quad roll-over accident. In an accident such as this, you have

go flying, landing on the behind, sometimes landing on see, the Hajadu offers a (and right) and you are secured point harness (far right). Even size your Hajadu, you will strengthened roll cage. Not because with its long-travel,



no protection. You simply ground with the quad close top of you. As you can proper roll cage (above in your seat by a multi-if you do manage to cap-remain safely within the that such an event is likely, fully independent suspen-sion (even at the rear, se above photo) it is also far more stable than a quad. •



OFFICIAL: KIA SPORTAGE

Last month, we had shown you leaked patent office images of the new Kia Sportage, but this is



the real thing. As we had expected, it is very good-looking, somewhat blunt *derrière* notwithstanding. Two-litre petrol and 2-litre turbodiesels are expected with class-leading outputs of 123 and 135kW respectively. More than likely, a version of the Hyundai/Kia 133kW 2.4-litre 4-cylinder will replace the underwhelming previous 2.7 V6. It shares its architecture with Hyundai's ix35 Tucson replacement but it is arguably prettier. Its official launch is at the Geneva Show in March 2010.



Our opinion: Another outstanding Kia, it seems. But it's Peter Schreyer's inspired new styling direction that has really launched the Kia brand of late. •

NEW AUDI A1, RS5



The first official pictures of the new Audi A1 are out. It will be available in several engines, from baseline models with a 63kW 1.2 to a S1 for later

release, using a 132kW 1.4TSI engine, rumoured to be the first "S" Audi without Quattro. Audi released official photos of the new RS5. It



will be fitted with a naturally aspirated 4.2-litre V8 engine with 331kW. The below racing seats will be offered as an option.

Our opinion: New Audis keep coming thick & fast. A1 a Mini rival with premium finish, RS5 an M3 eater that gives the RS4's epic V8 a new lease on life. •



BMW X5 FACELIFTED



BMW is expected to show its revised X5 at the New York Auto Show. There are new LED-laden light clusters and a new

iDrive system inside, but other than that, the cosmetic changes are limited. However, there are new engines. The previous 3-litre naturally aspirated engine is replaced by the N55 single-turbo 3.0 with 225kW and 400N.m. Similarly, 4.8 V8 is replaced by 4.4 V8 twin turbo, upping power to 300kW. On the diesel side, the xDrive 30d gets the new 180kW 3-litre turbodiesel and the xDrive 40d the latest twin-turbo 3-litre diesel, now with a full 225kW/600N.m.

Our opinion: Sensible changes, better economy. One of the best trucks. •



NEW NISSAN PATROL!



There is a brand-new Nissan Patrol about. It is also the first fully independently sprung Patrol (Shock! Horror!). Initially powered by a

294kW/560N.m 5.6-litre V8 and with a terrain-selectable system like Land Rover's Terrain Response, the Patrol is said to be even better off-road, if lacking the constant-clearance live axles... There is more suspension travel and every amenity known to man. For the first time, Patrol gets hill descent control and hill-start assist. There is plenty of (fake?) wood in the handsome new interior. No news on if we will get it.



Our opinion: Better looking than an LC200 and packed with clever tech. •

SUZI SX4 4x4, SWIFT SPORT

Suzuki's SX4 has been improved with a 6-speed gearbox and an engine with 112kW and 190N.m; the auto is now a CVT and economy is much better. A 4x4 version is now available too. The long-awaited 92kW/148N.m 1.6



Swift Sport (picture) is due here in June, promising a 9.2 sec sprint to 100km/h. It will be a 3-door only; wheels/tyres are 195/45 R17s.

Our opinion: Superb SX4 even better and available with all-weather traction. Swift Sport should be a heap of fun and looks the part too. •

FACELIFTS FOR AURIS, RAV4

Facelifted Auris and RAV4 models is due at the Geneva Show. The Auris will reach us by March already, but the RAV4 will arrive later



in the year.

Our opinion: Popular RAV4 improved. Auris remains a bit dull and forgettable. •

MERC E ESTATE, NEXT CLS



The new Mercedes E-Class Estate's local release is imminent. Like other E-Class models, the drowsiness detection system and active

bonnet pedestrian protection system will be standard. An optional 3rd row of seats faces backwards, just like Es of old. Nine airbags are standard and on Sport and Avantgarde models, the high beams adapt their range according to prevailing conditions.

Alongside is Mercedes' F800 Style Concept, giving a hint as to what the next CLS will



look like when it is launched in 2011. Swoopy but less obviously a Mercedes, its styling is bound to

elicit a lot of comment. It previews Mercedes' new styling direction.

Our opinion: E Estate even more practical than before, and better built. F800 stole all the E's curves, but does it work? •

VOLVO S60 LOCAL LINE-UP



Volvo's new S60 will only reach South Africa at the beginning of 2011, but Volvo Car SA has released details of the local range. The sole diesel model will be a 2.4-litre D5 with 151kW and 420N.m.

The 2-litre turbo petrol (2.0T) will pack 149kW and 300N.m and the flagship 3-litre twin turbo will produce 224kW and 440N.m. Later, there will be more engine options, including



1.6 petrol turbo models perhaps more diesels.

Our opinion: S60 packs impressive engines; looks are distinctly Swedish. •

RENAULT CCs

Renault has shown its new Mégane CC (right). The folding hard top is an all-glass affair and lowers in 21 seconds. Even more interesting is the pretty little Wind (below) a small hard-top convertible



with Twingo mechanicals.



Our opinion: Mégane CC a niche model, but cheaper and cuter Wind could conceivably be rather popular here, IF we get it at all. •

FIAT PUNTO EVOLVES

This year, we will see an Evo version of Fiat's Punto. It is a sportier, better-equipped version of the Grande Punto, including revised styling with different bumpers, more airbags, ESP and new dash materials.



A new MultiAir 1.4 engine and a 1200 engine should be available.

Our opinion: Pretty and criminally overlooked Grande Punto gains a new, evolutionary dimension. •

COMMENT: THE TOYOTA RECALL DEBACLE

OK, so Toyota has been naughty. Revised evidence suggests that State Farm, a U.S. insurer, has already alerted their government of certain Toyota warranty claims activity in 2004, and not 2007 as originally thought. In addition, more evidence has come to light suggesting Toyota had considered their small 2007 "floor mat recall" as a cost-saving exercise to appease the critics, and that they have succeeded in limiting U.S. safety investigations—branding these as "wins". To add fuel to the fire, they have lobbied in Washington for "favourable recall outcomes" and "safety rule-making favourable to Toyota", successfully delaying vehicle safety rule implementation covering electric shock, impact and door lock rules. All things considered, Toyota President Akio Toyoda will face some tough questions in an upcoming extraordinary appearance in front of lawmakers.

Be that as it may, is the furore surrounding Toyotas' "unintended acceleration" justified? Well, much of the uproar has to do with the litigious and paranoid nature of Americans. Only a fool would not notice a gradual stiffening of an accelerator pedal, or a mat repeatedly getting caught in it. Failing that, the worst that could happen is that you cannot get the accelerator released. You could do many things to avert

disaster: press the brakes, apply the handbrake, select neutral or switch off the engine. Be sure of this one unassailable mechanical engineering principle: the brakes are far stronger than the engine—that is why they can stop much faster than you can accelerate. If anyone ever tells you their car ran away with them, *no matter how hard they pressed the brake pedal*, they were stepping on the accelerator instead.

Audi's sales collapsed in America in the late 1980s when stupid Americans, unused to the German car's pedal placement, inadvertently stepped on the accelerator instead of the brake, running over toddlers, grannies and garage walls alike. It wasn't the car's fault, but American moms cried foul nonetheless, just as they are doing now with Toyota, and sales of Audis fell from 74,000 in 1984 to 12,000 in 1991. And there was not actually anything wrong with their cars, except for idiotic operators stepping on the wrong pedals.

Neither does the current recall make Toyotas bad cars. Have yours fixed and keep on driving forever and a day, as Toyotas are wont to do. But there is no fix for stupidity. Even staying off the roads won't help; Americans can injure themselves in their sleep and by the break of day, they would have found a scapegoat to sue. - Cobus Potgieter •

NEWS SNIPPETS * NEWS SNIPPETS * NEWS SNIPPETS

- Porsche is launching a Turbo S version of the 911 with 390kW and 700N.m at Geneva. It will be available in both Coupé and Cabriolet.
- A new generation VW Beetle is due in 2010, boasting more space. An R model is mooted, possibly with the VW Group's 195kW 2-litre.
- A 2.5-litre turbodiesel Hyundai H1 wagon is now available at R359 900. It offers 120kW/

- 392N.m and is available only with a 5-speed automatic transmission.
- Last year was their centenary and this year, Audi celebrates thirty years of Quattro.
- More Audi RS3 test mules are being spotted. It is expected to use the 250kW/450N.m 5-cylinder turbo engine from the TT-RS for a 0-100km/h sprint in around 4.8 seconds.

- A limited edition (only 300 will be made) Mazda BT-50 Edge is now available at R345 000 in white, blue or silver. Based on the 3.0 CRDi Double Cab, it offers special trim and equipment.
- Peugeot launched their 3008 family car recently, at prices ranging from R248 500 to R325 600. •

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NEWS * NEWS



Hyundai's new ix35 (above) and Sonata (below) will be here shortly. Diesel (2.0) and petrol (2.0 and 2.4) ix35s will be offered. There will be only one Sonata: a 133kW 2.4 with a 6-speed automatic gearbox. •

