

NEWSLETTER

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QUOTABLE QUOTE

"That laughter costs too much which is purchased by the sacrifice of decency."

- Quintilian

NEW BMW 6 SERIES SHOWN

This is the next-generation BMW 6 Series that will go on sale in Europe early next year. It is launched as a convertible first and while it shares the buttressed soft-top concept with the old, fish-like 6, it is a far more elegant car. Incidentally, the top stows in 18 seconds and can be erected at speeds up to 40 km/h. The interior is reportedly made of better quality materials and



the iDrive system has a 10.2-inch screen. Launch engines will be the well-known boosted 3-litre engine tuned for 240 kW and 450 N.m in the 640i. The 650i uses the reverse-flow 4.4-litre V8 with 300 kW and 600 N.m.

Aluminium is used extensively in the suspension system and Active Damper Control is standard. The new car is a little larger, with more space inside and a larger, 350-litre boot (300 litres with roof down).

Our opinion: New 6 bang up to date on tech and drivetrains. Looks far better than the old haddock-like one too. •



VOLVO'S NAUGHTY S60 ARRIVES IN SA

The new Volvo S60 has been launched in South Africa and it is a far more exciting prospect than the staid old one. The swoopy new car certainly does not *look* conservative and the



notion is reinforced by the impressive drivetrains on offer. The base 2.0T costs R355,500 and offers 149 kW and 300 N.m

Our opinion: Elegant, rapid, very safe naughty for a Volvo. Snappy engines

from a turbocharged 2-litre engine. It is also offered with a 6-speed twin-clutch Powershift gearbox. The

151 kW, 420 N.m) with a 6-topping T6 uses a turbo-440 N.m coupled to all-wheel transmission.



and certainly somewhat and competitive prices. •



FORD FIESTA GETS BOOTED



Last month we reported on the new Mazda2 Sedan and this month sees the launch of its sister car, the Ford Fiesta Sedan. The sedan conversion is elegant if a little heavy-looking from behind. Besides the new tail end, the biggest news is the availability of a 6-speed twin-clutch Powershift transmission on both the sedan and hatch 1.6-litre petrol models, leapfrogging the competition to the market with this neat little piece of engineering and making the outdated 4-speed gearboxes from rivals like Toyota and Nissan seem positively prehistoric.

Our opinion: Ford's little sedan is late to the game but steals a march on the competition with the excellent twin-clutch gearbox tech. •



CHEAP HONDA HYBRID HERE

Hybrids make little sense except to provide bragging rights, because even though they are economical, they are expensive to develop, manufacture and buy. But Honda might be onto something



here, offering us their new Insight hybrid at a whopping R72,000 less than the cheapest Toyota Prius. Yes, it is only a 1.3 with electric help, but it actually competes reasonably well with a Golf VI 1.6 TDI in terms of size and economy, even if it trails a little on performance—and it costs the same R260,000. A 5-year/90,000 km service plan is included and it even has stability control, iPod/USB port, cruise control, electric everything and six airbags.

Our opinion: The first locally available hybrid that makes any sense to buy. Diesel Golf still better, but Honda has shown that hybrids CAN compete. It even looks rather sporty. •



ALFA GIULIETTA PLAYS GOLF

Alfa Romeo's eagerly anticipated Golf rival, the Giulietta, is now available locally at prices

starting from R243,000. If that sounds a little dear, consider that the 1.4 TBI Progression uses an 88 kW/206 N.m 1.4-litre turbo engine; a more powerful 1.4 TBI MultiAir Distinctive with 125 kW and 250 N.m costs R279,900 and the range-topping 1750 Quadrifoglio Verde offers a full 173 kW and 340 N.m for R330,275. A 5-year/150,000 km warranty and a 6-year/90,000 service plan are included in these prices.

Our opinion: It looks stunning and engines are powerful, modern and efficient. Overseas tests suggest it is not quite the Golf beater, but it's the best Alfa in years. •



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AUDI'S DEMONIC RS3



The Audi A3's swansong has turned out rather more Rammstein than Enya. The RS3 has been shown and it packs the monstrous 250 kW/450 N.m 2.5-litre turbocharged 5-cylinder engine also used in the TT-RS. This is good enough for a 0-100 km/h acceleration time of 4.6 seconds in this 5-door Sportback model. Naturally, Quattro is standard, as are 19-inch alloys, lowered sport suspension and a trip computer that includes a lap timer.

Our opinion: Demonic RS3 looks the part and sounds like a classic Audi thanks to that storming 5-cylinder. Fully deserving of the RS moniker. •



OPEL CORSA FACELIFT

Earlier this year, the Opel Corsa received a stronger, 74 kW 1.4-litre engine and steering and suspension tweaks. Now a facelift has been shown that will reach us early next year. There are new bumpers, light clusters and alloy wheel designs, as well as a Linea model with 17-inch



alloys and OTT Ford ST-like striping across the roof and lids.

The facelifted Corsa is sure to irk owners of the "intermediate" current model who had thought the changes are over for now. They now have an "old" car again. At

least it is heartening to see that Opel products are again getting their fair share of attention on the local market.

Our opinion: Corsa now really attractive. Still lacks an engine between the 74 kW 1.4 and 110 kW 1.6 turbo. •



EURO/SA SPEC JETTA SOON



The Jetta is the most popular European car in the USA. Here is Jetta 6 in Euro (read "South African") spec and it differs from the US version. On the other side of the pond, the Jetta is tailored to the taste of undiscerning Americans and employs a torsion beam rear axle



and Tupper-like fascia finish. The version you see here uses the multi-link suspension of the Golf and an upmarket fascia finish. Jetta is due here next year.

Our opinion: Jetta 6 has grown and looks worryingly dull. Should be an excellent drive on its Golf 6 suspension and it's certainly very spacious inside. •



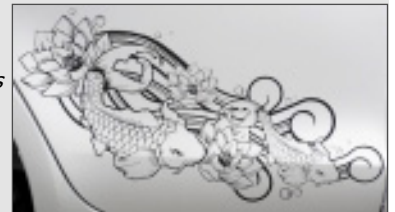
ETIOS DUE, YARIS UPDATED



This ugly little car is called the Etios. It is a cheap new Toyota meant to compete at the bottom end of the market and it will reach South Africa within 18 months in hatch and sedan models. Engines will be 1200 and 1500 petrol units.

The new Yaris Zen is out and it looks just like the old one, so we've not bothered to include a picture. The picture you see below is of the gaudy graphics on its flanks, as ill-conceived as those on the Fiesta Tattoo of unblest memory. Prices start at R126,000 and includes a 3-year/60,000 km service plan.

Our opinion: Etios will do the job reliably but it's a shame it is so ugly. Yaris still overpriced, even in Zen format, and the tattoo is silly. •



STRIKING NEW ELANTRA

The stunning new Hyundai Elantra was shown in the USA and continues Hyundai's fluidic sculpture styling theme. It should reach South Africa some time next year to replace



the dreary current model.



Our opinion: Dramatic curves make Jetta 6 alongside look dated. Let's hope the engine options don't disappoint. •

MÉGANE BLOWS ITS TOP

Renault's new Mégane CC is here, complete with blacked-out folding glass roof. It costs R359,900 and is only offered with one engine, a 96 kW/190 N.m 1.4-litre turbocharged petrol engine. It is covered by Renault's 5-year/150,000 km warranty.



Our opinion: It's just not pretty. And the little 96 kW engine will have a hard time moving the heavy convertible body. Resale value will be poor too. Pass. •

COMMENT: THE GREEN DRIVE

Call me a sceptic, but I've never thought much of this whole global warming thing and I've said as much in these pages. One volcanic eruption contributes more CO₂ to the atmosphere than all people combined, ever, and scientist cannot even agree that it is a greenhouse gas. However, CO₂ comes out the exhaust pipes of cars, so it is measurable and taxable. It follows that manufacturers are trying their best to increase efficiency and fuel consumption on modern cars.

While I'm irritated with the whole CO₂ hullabaloo, I cannot deny that this green drive has brought other wonderful advantages to us, the motorists that drive cars every day. Take the new VW Touareg 3.0 TDI V6 as a case in point. It is a 2.2-ton automatic SUV, yet its efficient turbodiesel engine not only returns a spectacular average consumption of 8.9 litres per 100 km (under local driving conditions); it also blasts to 100 km/h in less than 8 seconds, running the old V10 TDI rather close. There is even a hybrid petrol Touareg with even better performance.

Mazda's new SkyActiv engines are also good examples of superb efficiency. Instead of employing turbocharging, Mazda has set about opti-

misising existing naturally aspirated technology while reducing cooling, pumping and friction losses to the minimum. Direct injection and a very high 14:1 compression ratio have resulted in an engine that should return close to 25 km/litre efficiency, even under South African driving conditions. They have achieved an amazing 20 percent efficiency gain with their turbodiesel engine as well, utilising the same 14:1 compression ratio and employing variable valve timing and two-stage turbocharging. They are even reviving their Rotary engine and has pledged a 30 percent efficiency gain, despite increasing engine size to 1.6 litres from the current 1.4 litres. The 16X Rotary arrives in 2012.

There are many more examples of efficient new technologies that will give us more power on less fuel. At last, cars are starting to get lighter again, too, with widespread use of aluminium, plastics and composites in car construction. It is very unlikely that a Golf GTI will ever weigh 860 kg again but for the first time we can look forward to a 1.3-ton hatch that is not only much faster and safer than tin-tops of 30 years ago, but even more fuel-efficient. - Cobus Potgieter •



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KIA'S NEW OPTIMA

The spectacular Kia K5 (Optima) will be here soon to fill the spot the awful Magentis once did. Optima is sporty, spacious and beautiful, but the engines a little breathless, unless we get Hyundai/Kia's superb new 200 kW turbo petrol. Let's hope.



Our opinion: Superb styling and excellent quality. More



stylish than the Sonata. Holding thumbs for the 2.0T engine. •

NEWS SNIPPETS

- VW's 2009 Concept Bluesport is getting the green light and will spawn a small Audi R4 and sub-Boxster Porsche. A Golf VI Cabrio will also reach production early 2011. VW is also keen to enter the WRC and will remain active at LeMans, but has ruled against any F1 involvement.
- Surprisingly, Hyundai/Kia has sold more cars in Europe so far this year than Toyota.
- Mahindra has bought SsangYong on the eve of the brand-new SsangYong Korando's local launch.
- Mazda's new SkyActiv engines have shown what can be achieved by optimising and refining existing technology. Both petrols and diesels have a 14:1 compression and are 30 percent more economical than previously. •