

ADVERTISING FEATURE



**Value-driven**

**ANIMAL FRIENDLY**

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



**G**reg Rust, Shane Jacobson and I have interviewed quite a few famous faces and motoring personalities on THE GRILLE podcast – Jeremy Clarkson, David Brabham, Mick Doohan, Molly Taylor and Daniel Ricciardo to name a few.

It's got me thinking about another big name: Sir Lewis Hamilton. Now, you'll be pushed to find someone who doesn't recognise that name. He is a seven-time Formula One world champion after all.

He also happens to be the most famous vegan in the automotive world.

The rise of veganism – and awareness of the philosophies behind it – has been driven by figures like Hamilton and the impact is far-reaching. It goes above and beyond the kitchen table. For example, there has never been so much choice when it comes to vegan and sustainable car interiors. More and more vehicle manufacturers are branching out and offering alternatives to traditional leather.

Back in 2019, Tesla announced the interior of its Model 3 was "100% leather-free". Now, they've had a few issues with quality control but that's another story. Last year, Volvo announced all its cars would be completely leather-free by 2030.

Other marques are heading down the same track – looking at velour, leather-like performance material, faux-suede and more.

WhichCar recently did an animal-friendly round-up. Most major manufacturers have at least one 'vegan-friendly' car option already, with Ford well and truly topping the list with 28 models offering animal-free interiors. Honda takes second place with 20 and Nissan has 19 vegan-friendly models.

The automotive industry is constantly evolving and adapting, and I love to see it. What's next?

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce



**ON THE WAGON TRAIL**

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT [CARS@NEWS.COM.AU](mailto:CARS@NEWS.COM.AU) OR PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

I'm happy with my 2007 Subaru Liberty wagon but it's starting to cost me money. I want a replacement all-wheel-drive wagon but as there's no new Liberty what would you recommend? I don't like SUVs so my choice seems between a VW Passat Alltrack and an AWD Skoda Superb or Octavia. Any others? Gary Wilson, email

If you've been happy with your Liberty I'd head to Subaru and test the Outback. It might be classified as an SUV but it's essentially a high-riding wagon, with the added advantage of all-wheel-drive smarts, excellent safety and strong value for money. There's no AWD Skoda Octavia Scout on sale, while the 4x4 Superb, talented though it is, is an old model now. The Passat Alltrack is also worth a close look, with its smooth engine-transmission combination and its enjoyable driving dynamics. While you're at VW, check out the new AWD Arteon wagon too. Pricey, but gorgeous.

**SHOP AROUND**

My 2011 Holden Commodore Berlina's cabin fan stopped working after 320,000km. As this is also the airconditioning fan, and it was 39C, I needed it fixed immediately. The Holden dealer established it was a faulty fan and that the centre console and maybe the dash would need to be removed, so it'd be approximately \$2000 to fix. I tried a Mycar outlet and the quote dropped to \$770, then an auto electrician quoted \$340. He said only the glovebox needed removing and it'd take two hours. My final bill was \$343, not the \$2000 Holden quoted. Shop around, people. Terry Ireland, email

I know not everyone has time to shop around, especially when the job is urgent or if the car is immobile. Your example proves the worth of getting as many quotes as possible before

committing. Specialists for a particular problem, such as airconditioning, are a good start.

**BARELY DRIVEN**

Our second car is a Kia Seltos and for various reasons it's driven only 2500km in the past 12 months. It's due its two-year/30,000km service which costs \$450. The Kia service centre said it's a requirement to maintain warranty, but surely it doesn't need such an expensive service when its last service was only 2500km ago? Ken Robinson, email

Time degrades your car's vital fluids, so maintenance is not always about kilometres travelled. The Seltos' two-year service is a major one and includes oil and filter, oil system cleaner, fuel additive, new brake fluid and new cabin pollen filter. It's a painful bill after only 2500km, but don't risk that seven-year warranty by skipping it.

**SMART STOP**

Re: criticisms of stop-start features, my 2018 Subaru XV's version has been excellent. It gives the driver the option of engine on or off depending on brake pedal pressure when idling. Particularly good when you know your route and where the longer red light wait times are. In a year it has saved me 26 litres of fuel and 22 hours of engine wear, plus 22 hours less emissions. Ben Smith, email

Excellent to hear and your savings are impressive. The Subaru's system sounds smart enough to be "opt-in" as many drivers would prefer.

**CONVENIENT MALFUNCTION**

Re: stop-start, my 2017 Jaguar XE has the function and like many other drivers, I got used to turning it off as soon as I started the engine. After about a year I no longer had to switch it off; had the computer recognised my dislike for the function and intelligently made this the default? Alex Gallacher, email

Wishful thinking, Alex. Having checked Jaguar XE



**ACCESS TO SPARE**

We want to replace our 2012 Toyota RAV4. It must have a full-size spare wheel we can access without removing all our rear luggage as we travel long distances and not always on the best surfaces. What SUVs are suitable? It seems ludicrous that a spare wheel is in a hard-to-access location. Bill Bromfield, email

The rear door spare wheel was an old RAV4 signature. Easy access to the spare, but that side-opening boot door was heavy and potentially dangerous, especially for young kids. Rear-mount spares often impair rear vision too. You could get a Jeep Wrangler with its spare on the rear, while ute-based large off-roaders – the Isuzu MU-X, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport and Ford Everest – all have spares under the car that are surprisingly easy to access. If they're too big, then you may have to settle for a vehicle with a spare under the load floor. I'd consider a Subaru Forester or Toyota RAV4.

owner forums, it appears the stop-start system has stopped working for many. It's likely yours has just broken. Unreliability, in this case, being most welcome.

**BLOOD, SWEAT AND BRAKE DUST**

I wish those who design fancy alloy wheels had to try cleaning them before they were approved. If they did, I'm sure designs would be simplified and user-friendly. My Mk6 VW Golf R and Mazda6 Atenza's alloys are both guilty as charged. Michael Maher, email

So very true. I used to own a BMW E30 3 Series with multi-spoke BBS alloys. Stunning wheels but I lost many hours cleaning them with a toothbrush, always skinning knuckles in the process.

**TIME TO FUTUREPROOF**

My 2013 Volvo S60 T6 has satellite navigation maps as old as the car. I've contacted my dealer and Volvo Australia regarding map updates and been told it can't be done as my vehicle requires updates via DVD. They've now moved to USB updates instead. Tivi Theiveyanathan, email

According to Volvo Australia's website your S60 uses the iGo navigation system, now an 11-year-old unit. There are no recent DVD updates that would give you properly up-to-date maps. I'm afraid your circumstance mirrors many others with ageing sat navs across many car brands – updates are being phased out, rendering these units near useless. For futureproofing, buy a dash-mounted GPS, or better yet, speak to a car audio specialist about an aftermarket head-unit with Apple CarPlay/Android Auto and your maps will always be up to date. A unit costs from about \$400 plus a few hundred more for installation.

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