

[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

FUEL AND FRANK ADVICE



I own a new Volkswagen Tiguan 132TSI 2.0-litre turbo. When refilling with the required 95 RON fuel, I noticed a label on the filler cap saying E10 fuel could be used. Wanting clarification, I contacted VW Australia. What a farce! I was first told no, then yes, but it's not recommended. I pointed out their advice was confusing and still needs clarifying. The Tiguan is brilliant, by the way. Michael Bigarelli, email

VW Australia responded saying: "Volkswagen vehicles will run on E10 with a minimum of 95 RON. However, most E10 in Australia is below this standard." This is true, most E10 has an octane rating of 94. If you want to use it, at United servos the E10 is 95RON. For model year 2019 vehicles, VW says it has changed its fuel label info inside the fuel flap to indicate that E10 can be used, but it also stipulates 95RON minimum.

THE GOOD OL' DAYS

I'm looking for a new car to replace my 28-year-old Subaru Liberty. I've tested Hondas, Kias and Hyundais — all are suitable, except for extremely poor airconditioning. The aircon in my Subaru is freezer cold and I haven't serviced it since new. Makers need to lift their game with aircon fit for Australian summers. Leon P, email

I had a retrofitted airconditioner in my 1976 Toyota Corona — it blew like an Arctic storm. But in older cars, the aircon gear could be huge, heavy and very inefficient and held far more refrigerant than modern jobs. When this greenhouse gas leaked, you created your own hole in the ozone layer. New cars may not blow quite as cold but they're lighter and far better for the planet.

LIMPING HOME

We have a 2010 Nissan Navara D40 with 116,000km. Recently it's been losing power and barely gets to 60km/h. We've spoken to a couple of mechanics but they were unable to provide a solution. Internet forums show others have had similar problems and suggest you switch the engine off for a few minutes, which helps temporarily. Do you know of a proper solution?

Heather Newton, email

Sounds as if it's going into limp mode to protect itself. There are numerous instances of this happening on D40s but for different reasons. You need to go to a Nissan dealer or specialist with the required diagnostics to find the cause, hopefully quickly. Possibilities include the exhaust gas temperature sensor, fuel pump suction control valve or even wiring connections.

EXPENSIVE FIT

Re Great Expectations. I have a 2015 BMW 318i with just 19,000km on the clock and only serviced at BMW. The last service cost \$1100 but they told me I also needed a new battery (\$950) and wipers (\$149). I was taken aback and said no. I took it to a Euro car specialist. He tested the battery for free, said it was fine but



FALLING LEAF

Your review of the eye-wateringly expensive Nissan Leaf didn't mention the second spectre limiting its appeal: resale value. What will one be worth in a few years? Initial cost, resale and range anxiety: the unholy trinity. Anthony Watkins, email

No question, EV resale values in Australia are far

worse than conventional cars. Most experts suggest this will change over time — EV resale values are improving in such markets as the US and Norway — but who knows when? However, as EV and battery technology improves, today's options for current zero-emissions motoring will look old hat very quickly.

the car just needed a long run to charge it. He called BMW to price a battery: \$585. I'm now inclined to take my car to the local mechanic. Heather McLean, email

I accept prestige dealers charging a higher labour rate than the local mechanic but I can't abide unreasonable mark-ups. If the battery costs \$585, you're being charged nearly \$400 for them to fit it. Unacceptable. If you trust your local mechanic and he uses original BMW parts and approved lubricants, take your business there.

BITTER LEMON

Re lemon laws. Such legislation wouldn't be necessary if car brands acted with honesty and integrity in serving the needs of customers. Evidence clearly shows the Australian Consumer Law is being ignored by companies time and again. I fully support the Queensland Government protecting the rights of customers, and hope other states follow. George Zamola, email

Laws that came into force in Queensland on September 1 will help buyers of faulty vehicles enforce their consumer rights, involving amounts up to \$100,000 (previously \$25,000). What Australia really needs is a national law stating

clearly and unambiguously when a manufacturer must repair or replace a problematic car or give the buyer a refund.

SPOILED FOR CHOICE

You wrote that Australian buyers have 40-odd new small SUV models to choose from. Isn't this crazy? The cost of designing, testing, manufacturing and marketing so many models must add significantly to the purchase price. Richard Tiainen, email

The choice is indeed crazy, partly due to 50-plus car brands vying for Australian dollars. Helping to keep costs down, many brands and models share what's known as "modular platforms". For example, VW Group's MQB platform is modified for use from city cars to large SUVs, including the VW Golf, Audi A1, Audi Q3 and Skoda Kodiaq. It makes it relatively cheap to top with a new body style.

THE RIGHT TOOL

We own a 2018 VW Amarok with 16,800km on the clock. A loud ticking noise developed in the engine. The dealer told us there's a camshaft problem. It's covered by warranty but a special tool is required — and I'm told there's only one in Australia. Our dealer's on the waiting list to use it. I could be waiting years for the repair. Gary Cook, email

VW Australia has said you're right but not quite to the level you fear. To fix the camshaft a specific tool is needed but it's now with your dealer and I'm told you've been contacted to have the repair done.



Drive like Moss

MECHANICAL SYMPATHY IS GOOD FOR YOUR CAR AND WALLET

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Sir Stirling Moss was testing the Aston Martin DB3S at Silverstone one day when he pulled into the pits asking that the left-rear tyre be inflated three PSI. The crew pretended to pump up, then let Moss go. When he promptly returned demanding his wishes actually be obeyed, the crew realised Moss knew his stuff.

That's called mechanical sympathy. Moss had it in spades. And, while you may not be a knighted British racing driver, there are some simple steps you can take to improve yours.

Tyre pressure not only impacts your ride, having tyres correctly inflated can improve fuel efficiency. Rotating them occasionally and getting a wheel alignment will also pay off in extended tyre life too.

Check your fuel gauge regularly and top up before you hit empty. Fuel tanks can contain dirt and other nasties at the bottom, don't let these get into your engine. And use the correct fuel, as indicated in your vehicle's handbook.

If you drive a manual car, get your hand off the gear lever while driving. You could be wearing out the synchros. And remember, the clutch is not a footrest.

Use your gears — manual and automatic — to induce engine braking on steep declines, which will lessen reliance on brakes. And get into a lower gear when ascending big hills. It's not good for the engine, chugging uphill in top gear.

Following this advice won't win you a Formula One championship, but it will save your vehicle, and some money to boot.

Prepared by the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce in the interest of better motoring.



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