

[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

HAPPIER CORONA TALES

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT
CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR
PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

Re your 1976 Toyota Corona nostalgia, I'll share my 1978 Corona Fastback affection. I've been using this classic as a work car the past 20 years. It's covered 330,000km in that time and never missed a beat. Apart from regular maintenance, it's only needed a new clutch three years ago and brake master cylinder last year. It's been a gem.

Colin Todd, email

I've not seen an old Corona Fastback in years. What a survivor. Like a faithful dog, you build affection for a car that proves reliable. Toyota seemed to corner that market back in the 1970s.

FIRST LOVE

I can relate to your Toyota Corona experience. My first car was a 1975 four-door version, 2.0-litre, manual and painted bright red. An honest dependable car that survived the rigours of an inexperienced P-plater driving from Melbourne to Wagga Wagga while at uni. I often wish I had the means to buy another and restore it.

Rob Leary, email

Here's some expert financial advice. Grab that \$10,000 COVID-19 superannuation early release and treat yourself to a 45-year-old Toyota for nostalgia purposes! Okay, terrible idea, but no shame in pining for an old favourite. Anyone else regret selling their first car? Let's hear about your first loves and favourites.

IN A FLAP

Re your mudflaps advice, the prices you quoted were dealer genuine accessories. Nobody should be harassed by the "aftermarket specialist" lurking in car dealerships these days, upselling grossly price-inflated accessories and paint protection. Mudflaps for any model can be bought on the web for about \$25-40. Just be sure to get ones that are model specific.

John Lapworth, email

Fair point. Aftermarket mudflaps are easier to recommend than, say, non-genuine oil filters,



airbags or brake parts. That said, I'm not advocating World Rally Championship Sparco mudflaps for your Granny's Toyota Yaris. It won't make her Sebastien Loeb.

PAR EXCELLENCE

A few weeks ago you gave good advice to a golfer looking for a suitable car to carry his clubs and trolley. I bought a VW Golf Wagon for that very purpose, and it carries my golf bag and fold-up buggy with room to spare in the boot. My only beef is no full-size spare.

Phil Jefferson, email

The Golf Wagon's foolishly overlooked by many who seem to have eyes only for SUVs. You can drive one away for less than \$30,000, the turbo engine



and chassis are superb, and, yes, the golf kit fits in, so the model's aptly named. A boring choice? Who cares when it's such a good all-rounder.

BUYER'S MARKET

I'm interested in the final generation (ZB) Commodore VXR, which is one of the sleekest cars on the market. It's had good reviews, but with Holden closing its doors, I have some reservations. Why has the new Commodore been so unpopular? Can Holden (or GM) be relied upon to provide service and parts in future? VXR's I've been following on classifieds sites aren't selling, yet dealers aren't lowering prices. Will they be reduced significantly soon? Finally, hand on heart, would you buy one?

Tony Reece, email

The imported (Opel Insignia) Commodore wasn't unpopular — 6000 sales last year was respectable, but not when you compare to the 94,000 Aussie-built Commodores sold in 1998. Rusted-on fans saw the Euro car as an impostor and shunned it, while Australian tastes shifted from sedans to SUVs. The ZB Commodore is a solid, well-engineered car. The VXR's a sporty, handsome model, but don't expect V8 Commodore SS thrills. General Motors has promised to: "Provide servicing and spare parts for at least 10 years" but resale values are a worry. Yes, prices will come down if they don't sell. There are plenty out there, so make an offer, see if the dealer will budge and then wait him out. Would I buy one? Possibly, if it suited my current needs, but I'd probably favour a Kia Stinger.

POOR COMMAND

I own a 2013 Ford Falcon FG XR6 with only 56,000km and full service history. The Interior Command Centre or ICC (the 8-inch colour touchscreen) has failed and a new one apparently costs thousands. I've heard this is a known fault, but Ford's only offered me 25 per cent of the cost. I feel this is unfair and I may have cause for complaint under Australian Consumer Law. Any advice?

Manny Thomas, email

As you know, your Falcon's long out of warranty. Should you expect the ICC to last more than 7 years? Yes, but I still reckon your consumer law case would be arduous and possibly not successful. Don't spend thousands on a new unit. If you want to preserve originality, buy a used ICC (I've spotted some online for under \$500 with warranty), and see how generous Ford is with a discount on fitment. My advice? Head-units have come on miles since 2013. Seek advice from a car audio specialist and have a modern head-unit fitted with Apple CarPlay/Android Auto. The only real negative is your steering wheel audio buttons may not function with the new unit.



TESLA TRIBUTE

In 2015 I bought a Tesla Model S 70D. I've owned about 60 cars and the Tesla's by far the most amazing and reliable car I've ever had, not to mention its performance. I've not had a single problem, service is every two years (cost \$500) and I've had no range dramas. I charge it at home off-peak at night once a week, and have easily travelled interstate using one of the hundreds of Superchargers across the county.

Trevor Withers, email

Okay, how much has Elon Musk paid you for this, Trevor? Only kidding, I know many of you Tesla

owners are hugely satisfied, including one of my neighbours who is equally smitten with his Model S. For balance, some owners have criticised everything from their delivery delays and customer service to build quality and electric range. They are, however, incredible and fascinating cars with mind-bending performance. There may be thousands of Supercharger stations globally, but Tesla's website suggests only 36 throughout Australia — none in the NT or Tasmania. There are hundreds of "destination chargers" but these charge at a far slower rate.



Auto is open

WE'RE HERE TO KEEP AUSTRALIA MOVING

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Australia's leaders — the Federal and State Governments, medical experts and emergency services personnel working on the frontline — are doing an amazing job battling the coronavirus situation. And while it's incredibly difficult for all of us at the moment, I fully back the decisions of those in charge.

But there is one thing that's causing confusion and concern for motorists and business owners that I want to clear up, and that is the ambiguous information being provided about what people can and cannot do out in the community.

At the moment we're told we can only go out for four main reasons. To buy the things we need, to exercise, to give and receive care, and go to school and work if we need to. That's sound advice that has saved lives.

But I want to focus on the first point. A lot of people are telling me they think their local automotive business has had to close because it's not an essential service.

That's just plain wrong.

With the exception of public vehicle auctions (online is OK), the entire automotive industry is open for business. So if you need to buy a car, motorcycle, truck or tractor, if you want your car serviced or your crash-damaged vehicle repaired, if you need tyres repaired or replaced, a new battery or a cracked windscreen fixed, then you can.

I am going to say this loud and clear — auto is open for business.

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

Share your thoughts
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