

[**ROADSIDE ASSIST**]



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS
WRITE TO MOTORING AT
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PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

In May 2019 my wife and I, both pensioners, bought a new VW Polo with manual gearbox. About five months and 13,000km later it came to a complete halt. VW said the clutch had completely burnt out and I'd caused this. A clutch isn't covered by warranty so I had to pay \$2800 to replace it. I've driven manual cars and trucks for 50 years and never had a clutch go on me before. I know the way I drive isn't the reason it failed, so is it possible it was incorrectly installed or manufactured?

Stephen Young, email

Tough one. It's going to be hard to prove or disprove one way or the other. I've spoken to VW Australia and it confirms the dealer's investigations determined driving style caused the clutch to burn out. Your experience with manual cars shows you're hardly a clutch novice but riding the clutch or even resting your foot slightly on it when driving can cause problems. Did you lend your car to anyone less experienced with a manual? I'd suggest getting hold of the damaged components and taking them to an independent transmission specialist for a second opinion. If there was a manufacturing or fitment error, they may be able to spot it.

DAMAGE LIMITATION

I have scrapes and scratches underneath the front bumper of my Soul Red Mazda3. I love the colour but have heard it's hard to match up. Any advice?

Rob Dive, email



Damage beneath front bumpers is very common and there's little to worry about. It can't cause rust as your bumper's plastic and it may only be visible from under the car. Mazda's Soul Red is tricky to repaint due to its complex coats and needs a trained professional for metal body panel resprays. A DIY touch-up paint kit should cover your needs and save money.

EURO APPEAL

I'm interested in a private sale 2013 Mercedes-Benz C250 AMG Coupe with 110,000km. What do you think of the car, what should I look out for and what's a reasonable price?

Stephen Harrington, email

Used Euro luxury cars are tempters, not least when they're this age and have lost a huge chunk of their original value. The C250 AMG Coupe Sport's quite a rare one but, depending on condition, I wouldn't pay more than \$20,000. They've proved pretty

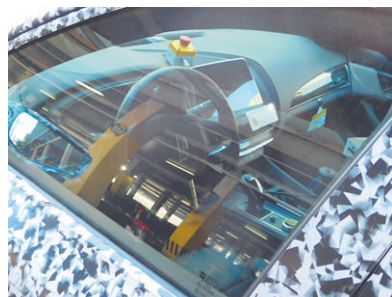
TESTING TIMES



I saw this camouflaged car in Knox, Victoria, with badges removed or covered except the Cadillac emblem on the steering wheel. It had lots of test gear inside.

David West, email

It's a 2020 Cadillac CT5, a rear or all-wheel drive luxury sedan with turbo four or twin-turbo V6 and — logically or potentially — a Holden Commodore replacement. No surprise, Holden won't comment



specifically. Spokesman Daniel Cotterill says: "Our team based at our Lang Lang proving ground are pretty well constantly engaged in engine emissions and transmission calibration work on GM products that are eventually sold in different places around the world. We can't confirm anything about the car in the pictures." Dear Santa, a V8 rear-driver would be nice.

reliable but as with all Mercs, you should expect parts and servicing to be expensive. Insist on full service history, no worrying noises from engine or transmission and no leaks — near-new tyres will be a bonus. It has a timing chain rather than belt so unless there's a dodgy rattle, you won't be up for replacement here. The C250 Sport has an AMG suspension tune — don't expect a cossetting ride but it'll handle superbly. Best advice, spend some dollars and have a pre-purchase inspection done by a Mercedes specialist.

BEAT THE HEAT

Re airconditioning, you suggest using air circulation to first cool a hot car. If the temperature inside a car is hotter than the outside temperature, recirculation is just trying to cool this hot air. I suggest rolling a window down, put aircon on fresh air to force the hot air out of the vehicle and, once cooled, use recirculate.

Laurie Rucker, email

I notice if you set most modern cars to maximum cooling it automatically selects recirculation. If opening windows cools things faster on a hot day, great idea.

UNDEREXPOSED

Re your SsangYong Musso ute test. I believe it and the Tivoli and Rexton SUVs are great

vehicles but they'll be a best-kept secret unless SsangYong starts television advertising. I'm keen on one but they're buried behind Isuzus at my local dealer. I'd like to see an awareness campaign.

Maurice Kemp, email

With only about 700 vehicles sold in Australia so far this year — well below expectations when relaunched here in late 2018 — the Korean brand won't have huge budget to splash on expensive ad campaigns. You're right, it needs more exposure championing such good points as seven-year warranty and cheap drive-away prices. Its new Hyundai Tucson-size Korando has just launched, too, with some tasty inclusions. Mass exposure's worked a treat for MG (sales up nearly 200 per cent over last year) so SsangYong could take a leaf from its book.

FUTURE FEAR

We're looking to trade in our 2015 Isuzu D-Max ute in 2021. Will its trade-in value suffer a substantial drop due to the influx of hybrid or electric 4WD dual-cab utes by then?

Gary Plier, email

No. Hybrid leader Toyota has hinted at a hybrid HiLux ute but this would be for the next generation, probably in about five years. Commercial electric utes eventually will make their mark but this will be long after your 2021 changeover.



Keep it simple, stupid

MAKING CARS MAKES US ALL SMARTER

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Only a couple of years ago, Australia was included in a handful of nations capable of designing, developing and mass manufacturing motorcars. That made me and many Australians proud. My disappointment with the loss of Australia's passenger vehicle manufacturing industry was sadly rekindled recently when reading an article about the Harvard Kennedy School's Centre for International Development study, Atlas of Economic Complexity.

The study highlighted Australia's dismal ranking, falling from 57th to 93rd between 1995 to 2017 in the global economic complexity stakes, while Japan and Switzerland have consistently led the pack. What this means for us as a country is, we're not that clever. While we've been digging rocks out of the ground, countries such as India and Turkey — in a very short time — have leapfrogged us with their superior technology and manufacturing capability.

The study pointed out what many of us feel is obvious: if we don't make complex things, with lots of high-level technology, we run the risk of being relegated to a largely minerals-based export market.

Why is it we need big studies to tell us the obvious?

When government encouraged passenger vehicle manufacturing to leave Australia, we dug a big economic hole in this country by reducing our economic complexity and industrial bandwidth.

Matched only by the big hole we make digging up things from the ground, it was a bad idea with longer term consequences we're only now just experiencing.

My hope is that we can get back in the game as electric vehicles become mainstream.

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

Share your thoughts
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