

[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

RICH PICKINGS



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

In my lifetime I'll never be able to buy a car costing over \$30,000, yet the majority of your letter replies and articles have cars in this price range. How about cars, brand new or used, that are good buys for us poor people?
Paul Williams, email

What about my used car column every week, Paul? Don't tell me it's ignored and only good for lining the budgie's cage? We like to keep a balance but the reality is the majority of new cars on sale cost more than \$30,000. Of 2019's top 10 sellers, only three had a starting price under \$30K — the Hyundai i30, Toyota Corolla and Mitsubishi ASX. Depending on your needs, you can still drive away excellent new cars for under \$21,000, including a Kia Picanto, Suzuki Swift, VW Polo, Skoda Fabia Wagon or Hyundai i30.

WEIGHT A SECOND ...

Re space-saver spares. I have to take issue with your comment that "there seems to be little point hauling around a heavy full-size spare when a space-saver will do the job temporarily". The difference in weight would be of no particular consequence — it's not as if a full-size spare weighs a tonne!

Julian Minnekeer, email
I agree — these "doughnuts" are dangerous, throwing off the handling balance and braking ability of a vehicle. Your response about a weight issue was very poor to say the least.

John Hill, email
Saving weight, and therefore fuel, is a valid argument for a space-saver, plus it often frees up more boot capacity. I reckon a large chunk of our population couldn't lift a 19-inch full-size spare on to their SUV's hubs; far better chance with a lighter space-saver. I believe the customer should have a choice. For new cars, brands could make a full-size spare an option, ideally at no cost, for those driving long distances or on unsealed roads. Urbanites — some who wouldn't have the first clue about changing a wheel anyway — could live without.

FUTURE PLANS

I have a two-year-old Toyota LandCruiser Prado Kakadu and it's absolutely fantastic. I turn over vehicles after a certain amount of kilometres — I've owned about 10 Prados and use them for farm inspections. Do you know whether or when a new model is coming? I don't want to buy a soon-to-be-superseded model if a new one's arriving mid-year.

John Stringer, email
Nothing's confirmed, John, but the current Prado platform is now more than 10 years old so it's certainly ripe for update. But I wouldn't expect anything by June or July, or even in the 12 months following that. The current model still sells very well and Toyota's in a state of flux with its hybrid and electric plans, so a new Prado would no doubt have

to be designed around accepting a hybrid or electric set-up. Unless your Kakadu has done huge kilometres, I'd feel safe keeping it another two years — hopefully a new Prado will be on sale then.

KOREAN QUERY

Re dual-cab utes you recommended. I recently bought a SsangYong Musso XLV dual-cab, which comes with seven-year warranty and roadside assist for \$35,000 drive-away. It has to be the quietest diesel I've driven.

Rob Hendy, email
It's an excellent warranty and very competitive price. I haven't driven one but my colleagues have plenty to say about the well-equipped Musso, though they question the styling, auto gearbox and ride comfort. The lack of ANCAP crash rating, combined with minimal dealer coverage and poor resale, would curb my enthusiasm but value for money makes it worth a look.

KEEP DREAMIN'

I'm downsizing from a Ford Falcon to a Mazda CX-5 or Subaru Outback, the naturally aspirated petrol versions. I can't get accurate real-world fuel consumption figures for either — the figures quoted by manufacturers are dreamland. Your opinion on each please?

Graham Hill, email
Fuel economy is highly dependent on type of driving. Stop-start urban use means greater thirst than using light throttle at constant speed on the highway. If most of your drives are urban, the manufacturers' combined economy figures aren't attainable. Some are, as you allude to, laughably off. Mazda quotes 7.4L/100km for its CX-5, and Subaru says 7.3L for the Outback. Both are all-wheel drive using a 2.5-litre non-turbo petrol engine. On my



tests, I returned 9L in the Subaru and 8.8L in the Mazda. Both are fine SUV choices — the Outback has the edge for off-road work — but be aware both are due for an update later this year. If fuel economy is paramount, consider a Subaru Forester Hybrid.

MORE MUSSO?

I want to replace my 2006 Toyota HiLux with a new tow vehicle. Our caravan is 2050kg fully loaded. I can't decide from the popular utes, so what about the SsangYong Musso? I like its 3500kg tow capacity but the 2.2-litre engine seems a bit small.

Ian Johnson, email
The Musso's 133kW/420Nm outputs are about the same as a Mitsubishi Triton but down on, say, a Holden Colorado's 147kW/440Nm. See the Korean Query letter above for the Musso's pros and cons — it's worth considering. You should tow your caravan to a dealer and insist on test driving one with your van attached. If you're on a budget, consider a Colorado as there are good deals now (obviously). The Triton's warranty matches SsangYong's seven years.

SMART ROTATION



Re spare tyres, I insist at every service that my 2015 Honda Accord V6's tyres are rotated, including the spare. What's the point of keeping a serviceable tyre in your boot?
Michael Sargent, email

Quite right. In theory this buys you 20 per cent extra tyre life. Some suggest replacing a tyre after six years, worn or not. It would be wasteful to throw away an unused spare after that time when it could have been rotated into service.



The big steal

DON'T MAKE IT EASY FOR THIEVES

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Late model cars are difficult to steal without having the key. But as a spate of well publicised home break-ins shows, thieves have also moved with the times in order to get their hands on them.

According to Victoria Police statistics, around 600 residential burglaries each year also involve vehicle theft; that in 30 per cent of burglaries there are no visible signs of forced entry; and that less than two per cent of burglaries involve any confrontation.

Further, seven out of 10 post-2001 cars are stolen with the owner's keys and 45 per cent of cars are stolen from the home. In other words, we could be making it too easy for crims to steal vehicles.

And the news gets worse. An often-overlooked problem is that stolen vehicles are used in other crimes, sometimes very serious ones. Stolen cars could also be driven on toll roads and be involved in accidents — both of which could leave owners seriously out of pocket.

Having a car stolen is something nobody wants. So here's what owners can do to lessen the risk.

Always store car keys out of view and away from external house doors and windows. Ensure keys are at hand at all times and never leave them unattended in a public place. Don't leave a spare set of house keys or car keys in a vehicle, and lock them whenever they're left unattended, including driveways.

So, protect your property and do your bit to deter thieves from stealing your car.

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

Share your thoughts
ceo@vacc.com.au

