

DriveBy

TE AWAMUTU'S MONTHLY MOTORING MAGAZINE, THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2010

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Reliving fascination of flight



BY DEAN TAYLOR

I thought it would be a bit like taking coals to Newcastle — but it turns out my brother-in-law Des Grant likes aviation museums, even though

he is a pilot for a living.

In last month's *DriveBy* I showed you the Wright Brothers engine at the Scottish National Aviation Museum near Edinburgh.

According to Des the museum is one of the best he has visited and says

it is well worth the effort. We had a few hours, you could spend a day.

There is plenty to see and do, including getting on board a Concorde, getting up close to war planes from around the world and having a (virtual) go at flying a Zeppelin.



WAR MACHINES: Vulcan (V for nuclear capable apparently) looks the part, but that German thing at left, how did it even fly?



TC120810DB02B/C



TC120810DB02A

CONCORDE is simply impressive — and a marvel of design as total thrust is, according to Des, less than that of one engine on the Boeing 777 he flies.

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Mitsubishi ASX adds another choice



BY DEAN TAYLOR

A brand new Mitsubishi has hit the market aimed at offering another choice in the medium market and an alternative to a hatchback.

The ASX (Active Smart Crossover) is a compact crossover, five door, five seat vehicle. It has that distinctive Lancer frontal treatment and shares the same engine in four of the models.

I drove the 2WD Sport from Ingham Motors, a well appointed and roomy enough vehicle for a family.

The ASX comes in 2WD and 4WD, LS and Sport, plus there is a diesel Sport version. The latter has a six speed manual transmission, probably to deal with the diesel's extensive torque.

Both engines develop 112kW. The petrol variant delivers 200Nm of torque from 4200rpm, whereas the diesel has 305Nm from just 2000rpm.

Petrol models use Mitsubishi's CVT (constantly variable transmission) with six speed sport mode - a manualised version with set ratios. In the Sport model paddles can be used to select the gearing, as well as the shifter.



I like the system — the paddles especially are simple, precise and effective.

If you need to alter from the drive mode it is instantaneous, and the power of the ASX through a six speed is very good.

It is pretty much a given these

days that new cars come with a terrific array of safety features, good accessories and good sound systems, and the ASX is no exception.

The standard specification includes adjustable leather steering wheel, cruise control,

remote central locking with immobiliser and alarm, trip computer, air conditioning and four-speaker audio system.

The safety package comprises seven airbags, electronic stability and traction control, hill-start assist and seat belt warning.

There are three rear headrests, a three-point centre rear seat belt, two ISOFIX child seat mountings and three tether anchors.

Claimed economy for the petrol models is around the 8l/100km mark, while the turbo-diesel's is around 6l/100km.



Use more air to save fuel

A survey by the AA has found that 48% of cars could have underinflated tyres, meaning nearly half our private vehicles could be wasting fuel and compromising safety.

The results follow an earlier test by the AA that found that driving with tyres 7psi underinflated increased fuel consumption by nearly 8%.

AA PetrolWatch spokesperson Mark Stockdale says after proving underinflated tyres use more fuel, the AA wanted to know how many people might be driving on them.

The AA survey involved a random sample of 150 vehicles undergoing a warrant of fitness check.

As well as finding 48% of the vehicles had underinflated tyres, only 17% had tyre pressures at or within 0.5 psi of the manufacturer's recommendation.

Underinflated tyres wear more quickly, affect cornering, braking and water dispersion and increase rolling resistance.

- Check tyre pressures monthly when they're still cold after travelling a short distance.
- Find your recommended tyre pressures on a label inside the driver's door or in your vehicle manual.

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Lights on do reduce the risk

Reduce the risk — headlights on, that's the message that has been pushed around the region for some time.

Inspector Leo Tooman, Waikato Road Policing Manager, says the most effective way drivers can reduce the risk of crashing, especially during winter months, is to turn their lights on and be seen.

"It's so simple but so effective, and we need to get into the habit quickly," he says.

"Winter has arrived late this year but the fog and visibility issues are now upon us. If you make sure other motorists can see you, your chances of having a crash are reduced significantly."

The headlights on message is also critical for cyclists and motorcyclists, who are encouraged to further improve their visibility by using lights and wearing reflective clothing.

SPECIALISED LIGHTING

Automotive electrician Nigel Pitcon says a number of modern cars come with the ability to automatically have headlights or daytime running lights on, or can be simply modified to make that work.

He says the best systems feature on the expensive models, the use of LED daytime running lights — but that is



also available as an aftermarket fitment.

Mr Pitcon recommends this alternative to using headlights as the latter does have an effect of the longevity of the bulbs.

Daytime running LEDs use little power but have a big effect.

National Hill Climb Contest back

A national hill climb series is being reintroduced to the MotorSport New Zealand motor racing calendar this year.

MotorSport president Shayne Harris said it is anticipated the first round will be run early in the spring and will be open to all classes of cars.

"The event will carry series status in its first year and it is our intention to upgrade it to a full championship event carrying gold star status once the competition becomes established.

"The format will involve two qualifying weekends in each island, with one day on tarmac and one on gravel with the final to be held by the end of



HAMILTON Car Club's Ngutunui Hill Climb.

April 2011 in the South Island. The final will alternate between the islands in the following years," he said.

"Cars will compete on both tarmac and gravel surfaces.

"Hill climbs were hugely popular

with the public and we believe they will prove so again. In the early years of hill climbing most events were held on tarmac, and the list of winning cars includes single seater Ferrari, Cooper BSA, Begg Ford and March 77B. The growth of rallying and four wheel drive cars has seen the winners list switch to saloon cars

"Hill climbing is one of the oldest disciplines on the New Zealand racing scene with the first national championship being found in 1957. It continued as a stand alone competition until 1994 when it was combined with motokhana and autocross as part of a ClubSport Championship.

"We now plan to re-establish it as a stand alone championship," he said.

Hundreds of Fords rumble into Claudelands in memory of Henry



PHOTOS BY DEAN TAYLOR



31: Very cool blown flathead V8.

TC120810DB04L



32: Very desirable 351ci V8 Cabriolet.

TC120810DB04I



33: Very retro rod 289ci V8 Coupe.

TC120810DB04J

YANK TANK — can you tell?

TC120810DB04H



GREAT effort by a young guy on this '76 Escort. I gave it my vote.



TC120810DB04F/G



TC120810DB04C

I really can't fathom how Mustang could get it so right, and then so wrong!



THAT'S what started it all. The only Model T there — and it won Sponsor's Choice. I think I heard the owner say he spent over 50 years on the restoration.

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Modifications done wrong put lives at risk



BY DEAN TAYLOR

Last month the Motor Trade Association called for Transport Minister Stephen Joyce to push ahead and introduce vehicle power restrictions for young drivers as signalled in the Government's Safer Journey's Strategy.

Some Australian states have already introduced vehicle power restrictions for drivers under 25 as a condition of their learner or restricted licenses. While implementing a similar regime in New Zealand would not be without challenges, MTA believes the time is right for its introduction.

The organisation also wants stricter controls over vehicle modifications — highlighting the recent case where a Christchurch teenager pleaded guilty to dangerous driving causing the death of a toddler, admitting to operating a vehicle that had been modified and that was not suitable to be on the road.

MTA spokesman Ian Stronach said "While high powered cars are a significant issue on their own, as this case has sadly shown, improper modifications can be equally dangerous."

"Younger owners are often tempted to carry out modifications themselves, in many cases without realising the affect even minor changes can have on the vehicle, especially under load or at higher speeds."

Car lovers in New Zealand I believe can consider themselves lucky compared to many overseas countries.

For a start we still allow car owners to modify their vehicles, albeit under tighter and tighter regulations. All types of tastes and outcomes are catered for.

My XY Falcon that featured in this publication recently needed certifying for its modifications — it is part of the game and a fact I accepted when I began the process.

In fact I am happy to have an independent assessment of the modifications, because in the first instance I, and my loved ones and friends, are in the car and I want it to be safe.

I was frankly horrified when I took the Falcon to the Henry Ford Memorial Day in Hamilton and saw organisers letting obviously unregistered and unwaranted vehicles being driven in to the show.

Now to be fair there may have been just a handful from hundreds of cars, but I thought at the time it was a dangerous move in these times of high expectations for public safety at events.

As it turned out two of those vehicles, both XW Falcons, were leaving as my wife and I were walking back through the gate after going out for lunch.

I could sense trouble looming and we watched as the highly modified ute ignored the 'no burnouts' rule and attempted one on the public road.

The wheel studs on the back passenger side obviously broke and the huge wheel took off down a side road as the Falcon slid into the curb.

It was a miracle no-one was hurt or worse, and that there was no damage to other than the offending Falcon.

The MTA say owners considering any sort of modification to their vehicle need to ensure they have the work carried out by qualified and experienced technicians, and that there is effective inspection at the time of issuing a WoF and an ongoing prioritisation by Police to monitor the roadworthiness of vehicles and come down hard on those outside the law.

Fair enough.

'Big yellow taxi' takes out the 2010 Snowball Run

What should have been a great event for a car mad family instead became a tribute to the tragic loss of a wife and mother — and a winning one at that.

Last November Sandy Sharp bought her husband Graham an awesome birthday present — entry into the inaugural Cannonball Run, a one day event put on by Auckland Motorsport.

The idea was to pick a theme, and dress yourselves and your car to suit.

The run was held in January and the couple, and their sons Jeremy and Alistair, relished the opportunity to have some fun in their yellow 1973 Chrysler Valiant two door hardtop coupe.

They chose the theme of bumble bees based on the Chrysler's distinctive colour scheme and became the Sharp Bees.

Mr Sharp describes the day.

We left from Albany on the day, travelling to Hampton Downs Racetrack for a look around the new facility.

From there we went to Tauranga, then onto Rotorua for lunch, then up to Paeroa before heading back over the Bombays and back

to Albany for prize giving.

Along the way there was a series of challenges to carry out, photos to take and places to find — a great mystery run. To our amazement we finished eighth overall out of 119 teams.

When the boys from Auckland Motorsport announced they were organising a two day Snowball Run in June Mrs Sharp told her husband they had to enter again as a family.

She registered the family team, but the very day after she paid the entry fee in May Mrs Sharp died suddenly and inexplicably in her home.

As the date of the Cannonball Run approached, Mr Sharp and his boys made the decision to participate in the run in memory of Sandy.

We changed the theme to Taxi, from the TV programme of years ago.

We needed another team member to take Sandy's spot in the vehicle and be co-driver, so I recruited one of the boys from my hot rod club, Grahame Howell.

As well as being a mem-



TC120810SP06

YELLOW TAXI owner Graham Sharp (back right) with his sons Jeremy (right) and Alistair and Snowball Run team-mate Grahame Howell during the event.



ber of Te Kuiti Rod and Custom Club, he is also the Te Kuiti fire chief. He fitted in well with the team as we have done local runs together in the past,

On this run we again left from Albany and travelled south to Huntly for a golf ball and spoon mission, then to Candyland at Taupiri

and onto Huka falls via Morrinsville, Matamata, Tirau, Tokoroa and Whakamaru — carrying out missions along the way.

That night we checked into our motel in Taupo to get dressed up and ready for the Deadman's Ball, Dinner and Show with fellow competitor and comedian Ewen (The Westie) Gilmore.

The next day started with an early morning chal-

lenge — a quick dip in Lake Taupo at 7am, the golf challenge and then onto four hours of racing the cars around Taupo Racetrack.

The the trip back to Albany was via Wharepapa South, Te Awamutu to Hamilton and up SH1 for prizegiving. After all the points were tallied Team Taxi was announced overall winners and dubbed 'snowball kings' for 2010.



TC120810DB06

WINNING RIDE: Graham Sharp in his 1973 Chrysler Valiant two door hardtop coupe — his street driven car which runs a 360ciV8, Chrysler automatic transmission with ProMatic manualised shifter and Ford 9" diff.

*Fuel consumption of 9.9L/100km tested to ADR 81/02 (combined). **XR6 50th Anniversary Sedan RRP of \$52,790 does not include on road costs. XR6 50th Anniversary Ute available from \$45,290 + on road costs.



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Buy New Zealand's most popular car (near new) for under \$20K



BY DEAN TAYLOR

Looking back through the DriveBy archives, and it was only last year that I test drove a petrol Toyota Corolla for the first time. My verdict then of New Zealand's most popular car — excellent.

Now Toyota dealerships are offering two-year-old Signature Class models for under \$20,000 — excellent.

Previously I drove the automatic version of the petrol Corolla — and I have driven the awesome diesel six speed manual.

This time Waikato Toyota supplied a 2008 Corolla GX manual. It had done just over 30,000 kms, hardly run in for these proven models.

The deal includes three year warranty, three year roadside assistance and three year WOF.



It represents fantastic value for money.

The 1.8 litre 16 valve Dual VVT-i engine develops 100kW of power and 175Nm of torque. I thought that was impressive last year, and nothing has changed.

The six speed transmission ensures the power is available throughout the

normal driving range.

I like the gearshift positioning in the car and the design features of the centre console and dash.

It is also good to see that features I thought were good last year, are still working well in a model that has been driven for a couple of years.

As I said previously, you

get a lot of features, including air conditioning, electrics, a great stereo and heaps of safety features such as front and side airbags and ABS, EBD and BA braking, for a base model car.

And there might be a lot of them on the road, but they are still good looking and modern.



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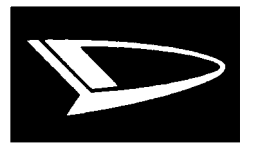
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