

Join up for my war to win us all a better ride

OUR roads are crap. And with the scalpel about to scythe through public spending, they're going to get worse.

Which is why I'm spearheading a new lobby group called the Road Users' Alliance. Hungary and Poland spend more on roads than we do, and over the last decade we've increased our motorway capacity by a big fat zero.

To join in the outrage, sign up at www.rua.org.uk, and download the free Road File 2010 - you'll be shocked by some of the numbers. If we don't make the next government take roads seriously, we really will be in the sherbet dip.

It's a steal: The gizmo that can read your locks



HERE'S some good news if you've lost your keys, or if you're a car thief.

A new hand-held key replicator called the Electronic Key Impressor (EKI) has a probe that electronically scans your door lock and provides data for a laptop to access a list of keycodes.

The EKI currently only works on Fords, but it won't be long before it can read all car door locks. Grand Theft Auto.

Lexus has got Prius power but it's not a pretty sight..

BELOW is Lexus's posh new Prius.

An Audi A3 and BMW 1-Series chaser, the CT 200h uses the Prius's 1.8-litre petrol-electric hybrid drive-train and a new front drive platform, so will offer a sportier feel with around 130 horses and mid-50s mpg.

The electric motor and nickel-hydride battery alone will only propel the car a couple of miles, but in normal driving CO2 emissions should be reduced to around 95g/km.

Sadly, like all Lexuses, styling is anything but unconventional. We'll be getting it in the UK early next year, starting at around £21k.

Five goes live... electric BMW



BEEMER SWITCHED ON

BMW have unveiled a 5-Series hybrid, to join the X6 and X7 ActiveHybrid range.

A 40kW motor allows it to travel in electric-only mode at town speeds, while a 300hp twin-turbo six-pot means it should also be quite quick.

When market leaders such as BMW start filling their showrooms with hybrids, it's proof that eco motoring has gone properly mainstream.

Quentin



IN January Paul Barber of Stoke-on-Trent bought a 21,000-mile 57-reg Volvo S80 from a local dealer. The salesman assured him that it came with a full service history, which he promised to provide. After repeated phone calls, Paul still hasn't received anything. Is it worth pursuing?

dealer history Paul's car is worth up to £1,000 less. It will also put off prospective buyers.

As a matter of urgency, he should get the garage to find the original book or supply a duplicate, stamped up from their records. Failing that, they should compensate Paul for

QUENTIN SAYS: Having a service history is really important. Without a proper



misdescribing the car. He should not hesitate to involve Trading Standards.

JAGUAR'S B SUPER-SMOOTH NEW XJ

LAST year I was granted a secret preview of the new Jaguar XJ prototype. I was slack-jawed at how horny it looked, and told the nervous Jag bosses not to worry.

But never in my wildest imaginings did I expect their controversially-styled new limo to drive so amazingly well. We've got used to great Jags. The XF and XK are world-class - but this one, well, it's an absolute, ocean-going, 22-carat belter. And that's just the entry-level diesel.

Threading round London in the V6 3.0 litre twin-turbo oil-burner, I was stunned by its delicate all-smoothing ride. The capital's crumbling roads felt like silk, but gone was the marshmallow bounce of previous XJs.

This is a wonderfully edgy, communicative and urgent supersaloon. Jab the throttle and it sprints forward, cracking 60 in just six seconds, feeling livelier than a GTI.

Top shout is limited to 155, but between 70 and 100mph it's devastatingly quick. And with 40mpg, you can cross countries on just one tank.

The interior is a hi-tech funfair with touch screen, virtual gauges, paddle-shifts, three-mode switchable six-speed gearbox and florid chrome detailing. Tradition and technology blend beautifully.

You could spend £87,000 on the top-drawer 5.0 V8 Supersport, but for me the basic diesel is epic value and only marginally slower. The new XJ is simply the world's best-driving and most engaging luxury car. And it's a triumph that's truly British.

WHO'D DRIVE IT

Seekers of subtlety



Stiff aluminium body and brilliant chassis make this best-riding Jag yet

TECH FILE

ENGINE: 2993cc V6 turbodiesel
POWER: 271HP
0-60: 6.0sec

MAX: 155MPH (limited)

PRICE: £53,775

IN A WORD: Best big car by far

No drama here..



Willson

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Good for
a laugh
... Rexton



Q I'M thinking of buying a Ssangyong Rexton 4x4. Is it a good buy or just a lumbering giant? - *Eileen McCarthy, by email*

A WHATEVER you do, don't. The Korean-built Rexton has wallowy handling, dull steering, jiggly ride and the engine isn't powerful enough.

Worse still, you'll lose bundles in depreciation when you sell, and passers-by will point and laugh. Sorry - it's a complete clunker.

Q I HAVE a 2000 left-hand-drive Opel Vectra for sale. It's on Spanish plates, and would be ideal for anyone who wants a car for use in the sun. What's the best way to sell it? - *Alan Kemp, by email*

A LEFT-HOOKERS are good news and actually worth more than RHD at the moment.

Put it on the Auto Trader website, clearly stating it's LHD and Spanish-registered. You'll be surprised how much interest you get.

HELP!
You ask
me

IG LEAP

THE BEST LIMO OF ALL



Ancient
meets
modern

The twin-turbo V6 diesel is good for a genuine 40mpg



Hot hybrid
...Hispano

THE £700,000 AUDI R8

HISPANO Suiza has been around for ever, but the obscure French marque has now popped up with a hybrid supercar based on the Audi R8 V10. Due to be

launched at next week's Geneva show, the £700k coupe is claimed to have 750 horses, run to 60 in 3.4 and be good for 210.

An extra 150bhp could be

squeezed out of a new hybrid drive system.

Crazy price, but it looks a real piece.

Great name to drop at dinner parties, too.

Show's over for the Hummer horror

HUMMER symbolised everything that was wrong with America.

Overweight, selfish and out of step with the world. Even the Chinese found them offensive.

But GM, believe it or not, were tone deaf to the Hummer's growing global irrelevance.

Few will mourn its passing, except perhaps Billy Bob from Indiana with his mullet and medallion, who thought his Humvee pulled the babes.

America's youngest auto brand was always too infantile to grow up. RIP.



What a
bummer..

WARRING COLES' HOT-SEAT

THIS week's most topical celeb motor has to be Cheryl Cole's old Audi R8. Fully specced and loaded, the dark blue 12,000-mile 2007 beauty is up at £67,000. Ironically,

it has hubby Ashley's name on the registration document, so you could say you're getting a couple of celebs for the price of one. Well, they used to be a couple...



Coles
apart?