

Motor News

MOTOR SPARES

Toyota retains top spot among car firms

RATING | Toyota has retained its position as the top-rated motor manufacturer in the world in the annual Intrabrand survey, which has been running for 14 years and ranks brands in terms of their value. Toyota was 10th overall in a list where Apple displaced Coca-Cola as No 1, with Google No 2 and Coca-Cola now in third place. Among motor companies Toyota was followed closely by Mercedes-Benz (11) and BMW (12), with other ranked companies being Honda (20), Volkswagen (34), Ford (42), Hyundai (43), Audi (51), Porsche (64), Nissan (65) Kia (83), and Ferrari (98). This was the first time that Chevrolet (89), General Motors' lead brand, was ranked in the top 100.

New boss for Wesbank

CEO | Chris de Kock, 45, will take over from Brian Riley as CEO of Wesbank on January 1, 2014. De Kock, who is currently head of sales and marketing, joined Wesbank as a new business clerk in 1987 and worked his way up the ranks. Wesbank has an annual turnover of R85bn and more than a million customers.

Tracking down the poachers

HANDOVER | Unitrans Volkswagen, as the founder of the Unite against Poaching initiative, has contributed more than R6m to the Honorary Rangers, as well as vehicles. The handing over of a Volkswagen Amarok 4x4 bakkie by Kevin Gillmer, divisional CE of Unitrans Volkswagen, to Maj-Gen Johan Jooste, officer commanding special projects Kruger National Park, confirmed the company's commitment to ensuring that the rangers have the skills and equipment to continue to fight poaching. Another Amarok, already in use in the park for the transport of the Unitrans Volkswagen Tracker Hounds Unit, has been renewed.

Technology is watching you

SCANNER | Lightstone Auto, a provider of data, analytics and systems on automotive assets, has announced a significant enhancement to Live, its patented mobile application scanning solution launched last year. The solution enables all parties in the vehicle sale, financing and insuring space to access data on a vehicle and its driver. In addition to its original functionality of being able to scan a vehicle's licence disc, it can now also decrypt the barcode on a driver's licence card automatically returning the information on the cardholder.

London taxi back on the road

RESCUE | Geely SA's parent company, Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co, which owns London taxi maker Manganese Bronze Holding, has restarted production to help supply 500 units of the London Taxi TX4 model to China. Production restarted last week — seven months after Geely rescued Manganese from administration.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

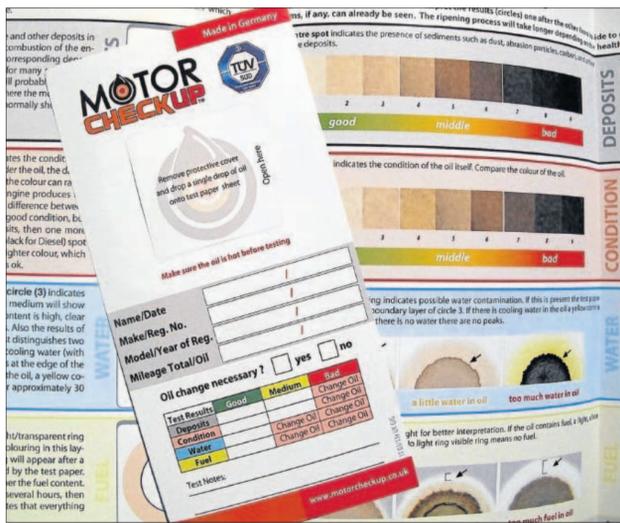
Health check looks good on paper

Roger Houghton witnessed a new way to find out the condition of your vehicle's engine

THE rate of advance of automotive technology is moving faster now than ever before in an industry with a history stretching back more than a century.

Many of the recent developments are linked to huge leaps in progress in electronic applications. It was therefore unusual to attend a motor industry product introduction that has its foundations not in electronic or mechanical wizardry, but rather in what appears to be the mediaeval realm of chemistry that went under the name of alchemy.

What the event in Sandton was all about was a piece of magic paper, infused with chemicals, that is able to provide an indication of the health of an engine (both petrol and diesel four-



Just add a drop of oil and chemistry will do the rest.

stroke power units), as well as the state of brake and power steering fluid and transmission oil.

The special cotton paper is made at a mill in the Black Forest in Germany and the testing system, which goes under the name of Motor Check Up, is the result of years of experimentation by a multiskilled German Dr Gert Horstmeyer, who has been nicknamed the "Engine Whisperer".

Motor Check Up was launched in Germany in 2005 and has been given certification by the TÜV, the German quality standards organisation. The TÜV is involved in checking the manufacturing process of the kits as well as conducting annual audits to ensure standards are maintained.

It was launched in a number of countries worldwide before arriving in SA, where it is being marketed by a company in the Imperial Holdings stable which also distributes and markets Motul lubricating oil in this country.

It is headed up by Kia SA senior executive Ray Levin, with operations under the control of Justin Levy, who also looks after Motul.

Until now it has been time-consuming and costly to determine the condition of an engine without dismantling it or using specialised testing procedures, but now it is possible for anyone,

even the man in the street, to determine the condition of a vehicle's engine quickly, reliably and inexpensively.

Just as a medical doctor takes a drop of blood to check on your health so Motor Check Up needs only a single drop of oil or fluid to evaluate a component's health.

Having the capability to diagnose contaminants, including water, unburned fuel and even glycol from the cooling system can lead to the prevention of costly repairs, while increasing the life expectancy of the engine and improving overall performance.

When the drop of oil or fluid lands on the special paper it spreads into a number of different coloured concentric rings, known as a chromatographic effect. Comparing the varying shades of the rings to various tables provided with the test kit, the condition of the engine or other components can be gauged.

From the inside, moving outwards, the rings give indications of contaminants such as degradation (caused by poor combustion and/or metal particles) as well as the water, coolant and fuel present in the oil.

Retail prices are R189 for a test kit for one fluid, usually engine oil, and R460 for a kit for four fluids — engine and transmission oil, and brake and power steering fluids.

ROAD SAFETY

Traffic chiefs take the intelligent route

Sean Nurse attended the announcement by the RTMC of its new Intelligent Traffic Enforcement Management initiative

ACTING CEO of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), Gilberto Martins, recently announced that his department has started with the implementation of the Intelligent Traffic Enforcement Management (ITEM) initiative. This has been introduced due to the need for urgent intervention when it comes to stemming road carnage.

The recent spate of fatal road crashes has received quite a bit of

press and sparked a renewed public interest in road safety. The new initiative plans to have a different approach to the policing of our roads. The plan is still in its infancy but will be implemented on the run and will evolve with time.

The first change is the removal of the seasonal intervention where there is a huge police presence on the roads only during the respective festive periods. The new strategy will be a 365-day dynamic intervention

strategy where policing remains consistent throughout the year.

Other changes will include the measuring and reporting back on the results to the public on a regular basis. These reports will be a result of weekly impact assessment studies on findings from areas deemed to be important in terms of incidents. The collective results will then be sent to provincial and local governments as part of the impact assessment report. The first review and assessment of



Acting Road Traffic Management Corporation CEO Gilberto Martins.

the efficacy of the programme is set to take place in November.

Another objective is to target certain road user groups using data collected from specific regions. The police will be targeting weigh bridges, toll gates, truck stops, taxi

ranks, bus stops, train stations as well as border points. Recently 400 taxis and buses were stopped and checked for roadworthiness during one operation in Gauteng. The scary statistic is 198 minibus taxis and 28 buses were impounded for infringements.

Accident reports are going to become more thorough to pinpoint which roads in each region are to be most carefully monitored. Each accident will receive an RTMC number and will record the number of people killed, the number of people injured, the type of vehicles involved and the type of accident as well as the location. From these statistics it becomes easy to determine on which roads the most incidents occur. The zones with the most fatalities or incidents will be known as nodal intervention zones.

One of the most important announcements Martins made was the implementation of a 20-point roadside inspection check for all vehicles stopped by police. A copy of the inspection will be sent to the vehicle owner for his/her personal records. There will also be more information provided to the operators, drivers and transporters of impounded vehicles with regards to actions needed to repair the unroadworthy vehicle, as well as road safety material disseminated at check-points.

■ Sean Nurse is the 2013 SA Guild of Motoring Journalists bursary student, currently working at Motor News.

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