



ASK SMITHY

with **GRAHAM SMITH**

GOT A QUESTION?
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SCRUBBED BY HONDA

Q I BOUGHT a new Honda Accord Euro last year fitted with Dunlop tyres. After seven months and less than 8000 km, the inside edge on both front tyres was worn to an illegal condition. Three tyre specialists have declared that my vehicle's wheel alignment was the cause. After approaching the dealer and Honda Australia they have offered no help or any goodwill gesture towards the \$500 for replacement tyres. Honda say they have noted my disappointment. Do you consider that I've been treated fairly?

Peter Waring
email



Tyresome: one Honda Accord Euro scrubbed out front tyres at 8000km

A ASSUMING you aren't a tyre-burning petrolhead, I don't think you have been fairly treated at all and would recommend you pursue Honda for a resolution. Though tyres are a consumable and not covered by the warranty, you should have confidence you will have much longer tyre life than 8000km. Honda should come to the party with part-payment at the very least. Not only that, they should also check the alignment and make sure there isn't a problem that will affect the life of the new tyres.

ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Q CAN you tell me if a vehicle that isn't driven often is likely to develop problems? If so, why? I have a 1985 Nissan Bluebird that I might drive every three to six months. What should I do to avoid problems?

Robert Daddona
email

A CARS that aren't regularly driven can develop problems. Seals dry, belts harden, oil drains back into the sump, leaving the engine dry.

Running an engine circulates oil through the engine and coolant through the cooling system, but it doesn't help the gearbox or rear axle. It's a good idea to give your car a run once a month. If you can't, keep the battery on a trickle charger and change the oil regularly.

DOOR LOCK PROBLEM

Q MY daughter's 1995 Hyundai Excel Sprint has a broken driver's-side door handle as a result



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of an attempted forced entry. The remote central locking and the key-operated door lock both work, but the door cannot be opened from the outside. Can you suggest what type of place would repair/replace this?

Stephen Harrington
email

A MOST mechanics would be able to do the job for you, and you would certainly find a Hyundai dealer prepared to do the work. You could also ask a panel beater, but I would look for a mechanic who works on Hyundais and I'm sure they would happily do it for you.

LPG FINE FOR YEARS

Q THOUGHT I'd let you know that my 1995 Holden Caprice V8 has done 426,000km on LPG. It gets 6.7-litres/100km on the highway and 10.4-litres/100km overall, and to this day does not burn oil. My old VN is still going well at 500,000km on LPG. I am often asked if you can put a four-cylinder on LPG and I say, yes, that in New Zealand many cars are on LPG, CNG (compressed natural gas) or fuel oil.

John Fletcher Smith
email

A YOU'RE doing well, and you're right that any car can be made to run on LPG. But while you can walk into most installers and buy a system for a Falcon or Commodore, there are few systems for four-cylinder cars.

TERRITORY QUERY

Q IS MY 2006 SY Ford Territory suitable for dual-fuel conversion using the Sequential Gas Injection LPG system. I've been told it will increase valve recession. My VS Commodore V6 had factory dual-fuel and the heads were rebuilt after 60,000km. I'm wondering if the Territory will suffer the same problem. Will a Flashlube valve-saver system ease the problem?

Noel
North Geelong

A VALVE recession rises on engines running LPG because it's a dry fuel with none of the lubricating properties of petrol to protect the valves. Your Territory will be no different and my contacts suggest the head will need a rebuild at about 100,000km. I have no experience with the Flashlube system so I can't offer an opinion.



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