

Auto watch

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2019

THE **GTR-50**

PG. **3**



DRIVING PLEASURE



COVER
VEHICLE
PG. **2**



Road trip in a CX-8? Yes, please!

by John Jones

A RECENT excursion to the City of Sails emphasised the qualities that make seven-seater turbo diesel Mazda CX-8 the perfect vehicle for a road trip.

One of the first things that made a strong impression in the GSX model chosen for the trip was the fuel economy for a vehicle of this size.

A full tank carried it all the way from Gisborne to Auckland and even with some travelling around the city there was no need to refill the tank until Matamata.

That worked out to about six litres per 100 kilometres and with cost of the refill, it was pretty encouraging to say the least.

And it was achieved despite the traditional Auckland gridlock that slows traffic to a snail's pace from about the Bombay Hills north.

Working against that and in favour of keeping the fuel economy low was the i-stop feature, which switches the motor off when you are stopped.

What also left a mark was the ride quality, something that is really important for a longer trip.

Because of its slightly larger wheel base and ACTIV intelligent all-wheel drive system, the CX-8 is a pleasure to drive.

Even at the end of a long and sometimes demanding trip, you can arrive at your destination without feeling so tired that all you want to do is find the nearest lounge chair.

And the CX-8 is so quiet, the people who designed it must have been involved in producing the stealth nuclear submarines.

Even New Zealand's heavy chip road seal could not make it surrender any road noise, something of an achievement to say the least.

The traffic sign recognition system comes into its own, recognising stop, no entry and speed limit signs, thanks to the forward-sensing camera. The detected speed limit is shown in the active driving display that flashes when the driver exceeds the limit before giving an audible alert.

This is a plus when the road construction season is at its peak with temporary limits everywhere.

One small distraction is the lane departure warning system which will start to pull you back if you are too close to road markings. This is great in a three-lane motorway but not always in sync with New Zealand drivers' preference to use as much of the road as possible.

Pulling down the two rear seats gives a massive luggage space.

Bags that would normally have to find their way to a seat can be fully accommodated in the huge 775-litre storage space at your disposal with the third row seats level.

The CX-8 proved ideal for a road trip and showed it knows its way around the urban jungle, too.





Limited GT-R50 simply incredible

NISSAN'S gamble to put the GT-R50 concept into production looks like it is paying off as "a significant" number of deposits have already been received for the car, and customers have started to spec them up.

To match the extreme looks of the R50, Nissan had to step up to the plate.

And that's exactly what they have done.

You will find the hand-built, 3.8-litre twin-turbo V6 from the NISMO GT-R sitting under the hood, which is good for 529kW and 720Nm of torque.

One incredible aspect of the R50 is how well Nissan managed to turn Italdesign's render into a reality. The only noticeable differences are the traditional rear-view mirrors, where the cameras once were.

As you can imagine, an exclusive car like this comes with a hefty price tag.

This R50 (above) starts from a whopping \$1.7 million, or about five times more expensive than a NISMO GT-R.

If you still want to get your hands on one of these extreme GT-Rs, you better be quick. Because it's celebrating the 50th anniversary, only 50 examples will be built and it sounds like they are selling like hotcakes.

The first customer-built model will be Nissan's drawcard at the Geneva Motor Show next year, and other buyers around the globe can expect a late 2020 delivery due to certification and homologation (official approval) regulations.

"Our customers have relished the personalised experience provided by Italdesign, who have a long tradition in the exclusive field of ultra-rare, bespoke high-performance vehicles," said Bob Laishley, a Nissan executive.

"Their experience with the GT-R50 has been incredible and I can say first-hand that each car will certainly be a standalone masterpiece." — Driven

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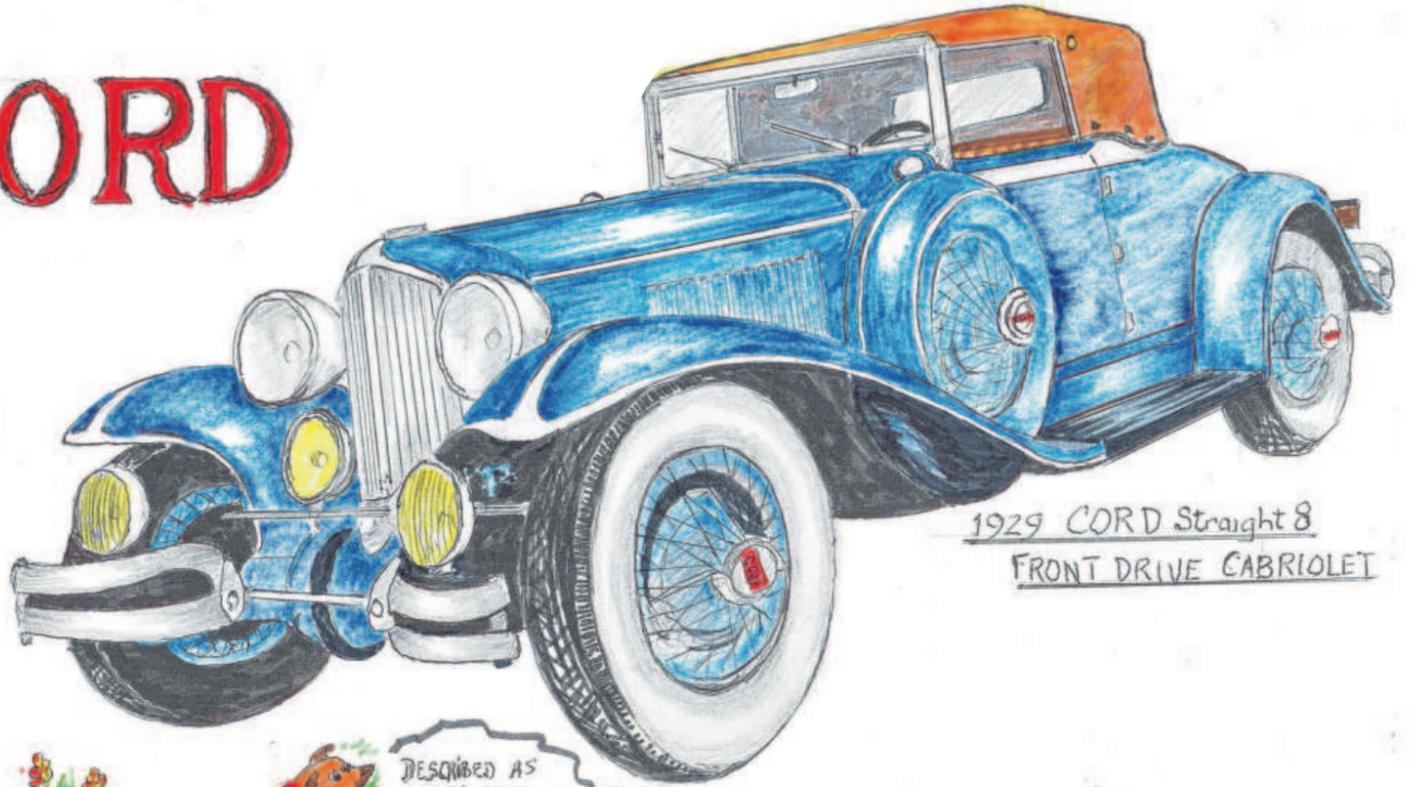
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CORD



1929 CORD Straight 8
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DESCRIBED AS IMMORTAL - INTRODUCED BY AUBURN AUTOMOBILE CO. IN 1929. "HAYLEY"

Doug Curtis
12-12-19.

Described as immortal, introduced by Auburn Automobile Co in 1929 — Hayley

'IMMORTAL' CORD AHEAD OF ITS TIME

Story, illustration by Doug Curtis

THE Cord was a car built by Errett Labban Cord of the Auburn Automobile Co of Auburn, Indiana, USA.

The car was built to maintain a sales position between Auburn and Duesenberg cars.

The rakish but beautiful and ahead-of-its-time Model L-29 featured a

Lycoming straight eight side valve engine that developed 125bhp at 3400rpm.

It used a single dry plate clutch and a three-speed gearbox with a front-wheel drive.

The vehicle had a wheel base of 137 inches and a height of just 61 inches and the styling was similar to the more expensive Duesenberg.

There were four different body styles available — a four-door sedan, Brougham, Phaeton and the Cabriolet that I have drawn.

Two town cars were also built as well as a few boat-tailed sports cars. Prices at the time ranged from \$3095 to \$3295.

They were popular with the elite but production was under 4000 units in three years.

Sleek and aesthetically pleasing and powerful as the Cord L-29 was, it could not have been introduced at a worse time.

Its introduction coincided with the stock market crash and sales, while consistent, were small.

In 1931, their prices were reduced to \$2395 but these cars were phased out of production in 1932 with just 4429 being built.

In 1937, the name Cord came to the forefront with the now famous 1937 Art Deco body design that even today is regarded a top American car.

Personally I prefer the body styling of the 1929 model.

AUTO ACTION AROUND TOWN

Saturday 21 December
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Sat 1pm-4pm Main Rd, Makaraka

Gis. American Car Club
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Tairawhiti Aviation Museum
Open Tuesday 9am-4pm and
Sunday 9am-4pm Gisborne Airport

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62 Carnarvon Street 867 9444
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329 Gladstone Road 867 8368
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Mustang EV coupe? 'Never say never'



WHEN Ford pulled the covers off the Mustang Mach-E SUV earlier this year, it was one of the boldest moves the blue oval has pulled in years.

Not only did they turn the Mustang into an SUV but they also replaced the V8 with an electric power train.

Now the Mach-E looks to be selling quite healthily, it sounds like Ford is looking at the possibility of bringing electric power to the Mustang, and realising that incredible concept seen at SEMA earlier this year.

After Ford unveiled the Mach-E at their star-studded event in Los Angeles last month, President of Automotive Joe Hinrichs spoke about the SUV.

Quizzed about whether the electric Mustang will ever be a coupe, he said it would not happen "in the near future but probably some day".

This was backed up by big boss Bill Ford

telling reporters "never say never" when asked about the concept.

This is interesting because he was hesitant to badge the Mach-E as a Mustang before its release.

There's no question as to what the electric Mustang will look like, but what powertrain will sit underneath remains up in the air. If it's like the electric Mustang at SEMA, it will be faster than most seen over the years.

This is because the Mustang Lithium EV project contained 671kW and 1356Nm of torque, with a six-speed manual transmission that sent power to the rear wheels.

Completed in conjunction with Webasto, the coupe will probably never go into mass production with the crazy power figure and manual transmission, but it's impressive to see how the Mustang is taking the electric movement in its stride. — Driven

OUTLANDER HYBRID GETS AN UPGRADE

HAVE your cake and eat it.

That's the sales pitch with the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV, or plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, which has just been updated with more urge.

As the name suggests, it's an electric car that can be recharged and run on electricity, but there's also a petrol engine to allow longer drives without worrying about where to recharge.

The update has not touched the exterior styling or the five-seat layout but has brought other changes, including increased battery capacity and new touchscreen and instrument cluster.

Each model gets a 2.4-litre four-cylinder engine in place of the outgoing 2.0, which goes against the downsizing movement in the quest for better performance.

The front electric motor is unchanged, producing 60kW, and the rear motor steps up to 70kW, making acceleration snappier.

Snappy is a relative term — the claimed 0-100kmh time has been shaved by half a second to 10.5 seconds.

Acceleration is acceptable and useful at low speeds, with the torque of the electric motors shuffling things along sweetly.

Call for more and the modest 2.4 takes its time winding up, adding its 94kW to the outputs of the electric motors for easier hill climbing or overtaking.

There's a Sport mode, which keeps the

petrol engine idling rather than shutting it down. It makes for quicker responses to throttle applications although things are still towards the more relaxed end of the mid-sized SUV spectrum once you're doing more than 80kmh.

Unlike the propulsion updates, the Outlander PHEV's suspension soldiers on unchanged. It doesn't take many bumps and curves to learn things aren't always composed. The body will lean in bends when pushed, the tyres reach their limits early and the steering is light. The suspension tends towards soft,

albeit with some clumsiness over larger bumps. That puts the emphasis back on the partial electric drive.

Claimed average fuel use is 1.9L/100km, or about a quarter that of similarly-sized SUVs. Over the

previous model, however, it has increased by 0.2L/100km, or 12 percent.

Such figures are academic. Drive it gently around town and you can easily use no fuel, instead relying on the 13.8kWh battery for about 50km of emissions-free motoring.

The power gauge in the dash shows you how to keep in the EV zone. Push the accelerator to the floor and the petrol engine eventually chimes in. Once the batteries are depleted, you're relying solely on unleaded and will be slurping many times the 1.9L claim.

It's best suited to predominantly shorter electric-only journeys with the occasional long-distance adventure. — news.com.au





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SOLD! For \$10.1m

BUYING a grand prix-winning Formula 1 car is bound to set you back a few pennies, but what about one that was driven by Michael Schumacher?

That's bound to break the bank.

Unless your bank account was comfortably sitting over the eight-figure mark, then the F2002 Ferrari that Schumacher (pictured below) drove to victory during the 2002 season would be well out of your price range.

When it went under the hammer at RM Sotheby's auction in Abu Dhabi over the weekend, the F2002 fetched \$10.1 million, making it the second-most valuable Schumacher-driven car.

In 2017, his car from the 2001 season sold for \$11.4 million.

Bearing the chassis number 219, Schumacher enjoyed victories in the Ferrari in Austria, France and San Marino, and never finished a race lower than second during the whole season.

His incredible performance throughout the 2002 season earned him the fifth of his seven Formula 1 titles.

He managed to secure it with six races

in the bag, making it the fastest that any driver has won the Drivers' Championship title.

After securing a win at the French Grand Prix, Ferrari decided to retire No.219, and use it as a test car for the remainder of the season.

Since then, various collectors around the world have owned it, but now it's back in Ferrari's possession, who are refreshing the engine and transmission for the new owner.

A Schumacher-driven 1992 Benetton B192 F1 also went under the hammer at the auction, and fetched \$1.1 million.

A percentage of the proceeds from the auction will be given to Schumacher's Keep Fighting foundation, which was established by the driver's family after a skiing accident in 2013 resulted in him being put into an induced coma. He has been receiving medical treatment and rehabilitation since.

Schumacher's car wasn't the most expensive item to sell at the RM Sotheby's auction.

That title went to a Pagani Zonda Aether that fetched an incredible \$10.4 million when it went under the hammer.



Double champ Lawson to defend both crowns

TOYOTA Racing Series champion and New Zealand Grand Prix winner Liam Lawson will defend both titles when the 2020 series begins next month.

The five-round TRS contest will debut a new chassis, turbocharged engine and Hankook tyre package offering increased power and aerodynamic performance with what is shaping up to be a full 20-car field of rising international racing stars.

But defending the TRS crown wasn't an automatic option for the 17-year-old who used his 2019 success as a launch pad to join the Red Bull Junior programme, where he was thrust into a two-pronged single-seater campaign.

"I wasn't sure I wanted to do it (TRS) again after winning it this year. But as the year has gone on and it's got closer, I've got more and more excited," says Lawson.

Lawson's local backers are funding the 2020 TRS campaign.

"The car looks quite similar to last year," says Lawson.

The teenage Kiwi ace will again drive as part of the M2 Competition team, who have won five of the last seven TRS titles.

Lawson thinks the switch to the new FT-60 car and new team alliances between some of the regular TRS squads and top-line European teams could make the series unpredictable.

"It looks like there will be a really good grid

and it's always nice to race at home. I think it's going to be exciting."

Lawson clinched the 2019 TRS title as a 16-year-old and turned 17 the day after winning the NZ Grand Prix at Manfeild.

After signing with the Red Bull programme, he was runner-up in the EuroFormula Open Series and 12th in the FIA Formula 3 Championship.

It all happened at a hectic pace.

"During TRS I still had no idea what I'd be racing this year. We had no plans.

"The Red Bull deal made everything possible. It was an amazing opportunity and something I'd dreamed of doing.

"There wasn't much time to think about it. We were straight into pre-season testing in March and then the first Euro Formula race. I think the biggest break I had this year was three weeks in between races and there were a couple of times where I had four weeks in a row of solid racing. It was massively busy but it was very cool.

"The experience and the seat time I've had this year has been incredible.

"Every time you step up to a faster car you learn little things. There's so much more to learn about driving the car and also off-track like the physical training stuff, which I had to ramp up a lot this year driving the F3 car.

"Everything goes up another level."



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