



BY NICK BATES

## Nick the Car Guy

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

### Fixer Upper

I've heard about car price fixing, what is it and does it really happen?

In short, assuming it does actually happen, price fixing is when prices and discounting are controlled so dealers may not sell a vehicle below a certain, set amount. This is done mainly to protect the brand (the lower the price tag, the cheaper the brand) and ensure that used vehicles' values aren't eroded. Rural dealers tend to have much lower overheads and can easily out-price dealers in suburban/city areas thanks to higher overheads.

### Whizzer and Chips

A rock chipped my windshield. Can I stop the crack from spreading?

Yes, as long as you catch it in time. Any branch of PG Autoglass or similar company have the expertise, but the trick is to get it done quickly. The repair will be better in the absence of dirt and moisture. It's far more economical than procrastinating and replacing the whole shield and most repairers will travel to your office. It should take them around 30 minutes.



Boulders: roof racks not required

### Fuel and Filters

Is it dangerous to run my fuel to a low level?

If you scrape the bottom of your barrel, where the dirt is more concentrated, it's more likely to be sucked up, thanks to greater swirl effects created in the tank. Most modern cars have numerous filters to prevent fuel reaching the injectors or carburettors, so changing them at major services is quite important. Tanks that are made of plastic have less chance of rust, and residue is reduced.

Nick Bates has been in the motoring industry for 20 years, he is a freelance journalist for The Star, The Mail & Guardian and Wheels24

# Dead Man Walking

**PERFORM DURING A CRISIS** > Fifteen pedestrians are killed on South African roads every day. Mainly by drivers just like you. Here's how to manage the trauma if it happens to you:

**The crash** If you hit a pedestrian stop the car immediately. Over 5 000 pedestrian hit-and-run crashes happened in 2004, says Johan Jonck of Arrive Alive. He warns that "failing to stop after an accident can lead to fines of up to R36 000, a nine year prison sentence, or both". Next, call the police and check on the injured, but don't panic. Fifty-seven percent of pedestrians killed are drunk, so there's a chance it won't be considered your fault. But forty-seven percent of drivers killed are drunk too, so be sure not to move your car unless given permission by a traffic officer.

**The court** Murder means proving that you intended to kill the person. You're not a murderer. But killing a pedestrian usually means a charge of culpable homicide. For that to stick, the state only has to prove that you were negligent



"Great, now I'll be safe"

in causing a pedestrian's death. You get compared to the "reasonable man", which is like a legal equivalent of the "average guy", and if you didn't act like this ideal, fictional man then you're screwed. That means "if you're drunk, speeding or without a driver's licence," says Jonck, then you could be convicted.

**The verdict** You're going to get a criminal record and harbour a lot of guilt. Obviously it depends on the case, but "for culpable homicide you're looking at a suspended sentence of approximately five years," says Jonck. And if you were excessively reckless then imprisonment and confiscation could be on the cards.

### FACTS OF LIFE

4.3

The billions of rands that pedestrian-related deaths cost in 2004. Source: [www.arrivealive.co.za](http://www.arrivealive.co.za)

# If This Van's Rocking...

### HAVE SEX IN YOUR CAR >

Seventy-three percent of men claim to have steamed up their cars. So if the restaurant's toilets are occupied then just remember to:

**Avoid the cops** You can be arrested for indecent exposure, so no main roads. But bury yourself in an alley and you'll be mistaken for dabbling in the flesh trade.

**Pad up** You'll be fine (unless the handbrake slips), but she can bruise her knees on the gearshift and bang her head on the roof. Be ready with considerate kisses.

**Ride shotgun** Let her drive, so you're already in the passenger seat.

**Flee the scene** You want to arrive with tousled hair, otherwise what was the point?

