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SHIFT

SHIFT ZONE

Beauty is a matter of perception. How the beauty of an object is judged can vary to so great a degree, it is sometimes a wonder people agree on something, at least. This week on Shift, we bring you (after many disagreements with co-workers) the list of the best looking cars on sale today, minus the Jaguar F-type, in no particular order. Why leave out the Jag? Because people compare it with the E-type, and that is blasphemy. Sit this one out, F-type. --Shaer Reaz, Sub-editor, Shift.

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Haojue

BIKER TIPS

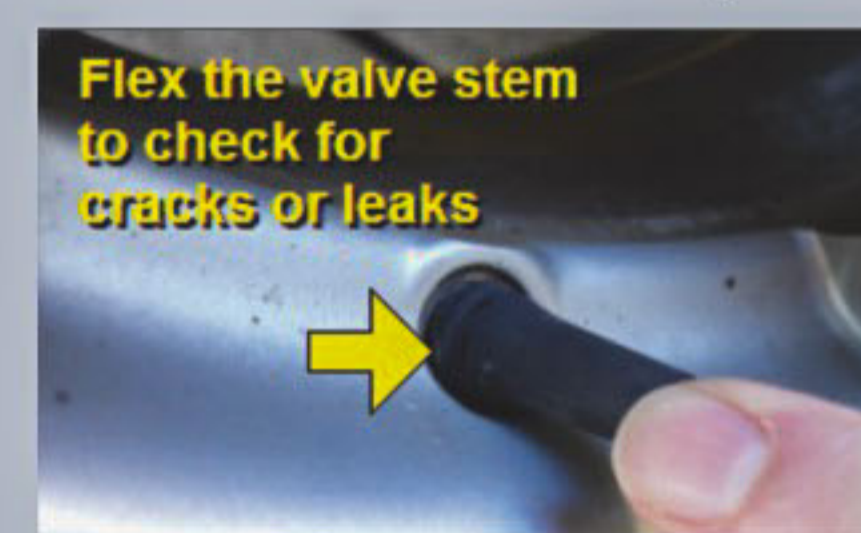
TYRE VALVE: Brake maintenance



Modern tyres are not just blocks of round rubber to help you go round and round. They provide all kinds of support such as stopping in time and cushioning against bumps and, well, that's about it. All that cushioning doesn't work though, when there's low air pressure. We talked about how too much and too little pressure could be bad for safety and performance. This week, we point out the culprit that's often behind the loss of pressure.

Modern tubeless tyres are brilliant because they don't instantly deflate from small punctures. It's often a gradual leak that helps you get somewhere safe before being overtaken by a murderous rampaging cow. But tyres can sometimes mysteriously sag even when no puncture is apparent. It's cause of the valve; the one that goes 'hissss' when you press it.

The tyre valve is a device that allows air to travel in one direction. Air goes in



and won't come out. If the air comes out, it's no longer a valve, it just becomes a political promise: completely useless. These valves are made of rubber. Rubber ages. Also they can get pulled or twisted. I have a dog that chews on my valve stems whenever he can. It causes tiny fractures in the stem which quickly causes loss of air. It's what we refer to as 'chorai leak'.

When you can't find a leak in the tyre, it's the valve attached to the rim. They are easy to replace and quite cheap. At most they cost Tk 100 a piece.

E R RONNY

Alfa Romeo 4C

Undoubtedly the best looking car on sale today, and a contender for the best looking car ever. Disagree if you will, but the Alfa Romeo 4C injects every last drop of "Alfa-ness" and sports car DNA that the Italian marque could muster up. The tiny younger brother to the 8C has similar design features, but they work better on the small sports car in the 4C than in the grand tourer 8C. We're practically weak in the knees.



The best-looking cars today

SHAER REAZ



Maserati Ghibli

It started with Ken Okuyama's design of the Quattroporte. Finding the luxury sedan market very lucrative, Maserati's success with the Q-porte enabled it to introduce the Ghibli, a smaller, sportier sedan. And what a looker it is. It may not eclipse the Q-porte in understated elegance or smart, refined design, but the Ghibli is an astounding evolution of its bigger brother. Are the days when a top tier luxury sedan meant a slab sided simplicity in muted colours truly gone?

Aston Martin Lagonda

Contradictions suck. Aston's latest sedan offering to the ultra rich of the world comes in the form of the straight cut Lagonda, a staunch statement against all of this flame surfacing nonsense the rest of the world is fauning over. It isn't exactly beautiful, but it certainly has a commanding presence, similar to the yacht-pretender super saloons of 60's Detroit. The retro-styled Lagonda is entering a car-world where tastes have changed significantly, so opinions are obviously divided.



Jaguar XE

The all-new baby Jag takes aim at the 3 and 4 series BMWs, and the rest of the German offerings on that level. The XE has no bold statements to make, instead adopting the family design language and making the whole package more compact and streamlined. It's a lesson in low-key luxury sedan design.

Lexus RCF

This is the future. Yasuo Kajino's design is propelling Lexus forward into a future of wild slashes, knife-edges, and hyper modern surfaces, transforming a brand that previously produced relatively docile looking cars into a market leader putting out violently gorgeous machinery. The RCF is, at the moment, a hit-or-miss design, but give it a couple more years and it will grow on you as the norm. Almost reminds us of what Chris Bangle did with a certain German brand over the



Mercedes Benz S63 AMG

Powerful, muscular lines coupled with the corporate design language of Mercedes, the S63 is an evolution of older S-class coupes. The overall design embodying elegance and luxury, the rear three quarters are taut and follow the wrap-around rear windshield, while the front end features minimal overhang, every individual design feature flowing onto an almost retro-styled grille. You can't miss the three pointed star on this one, as with most modern Mercs.

Ford Mustang GT

While the last Mustang was squarish, bullish, and far removed from the dainty proportions of the original Mustang (relatively dainty, the late 60's American iron were quite large by world standards), the design of the all-new Mustang seems to have matured enough. It looks like a proper sports car now, exuding the vibe of a well-polished Grand Tourer, something that will sit better with potential European buyers. The stylish retro touches still remain by the boatloads, but as a mimicry of the 1964 Mustang, the new one fares much better than the outgoing model.



Mazda MX-5

Mazda definitely knows how to design sports-cars. The MX5, when compared with the rest of Mazda's offerings, has always been called a "girly car", meant for teenage girls and whatnot. Moving away from the sexist view, however, it's clear that the last few iterations of the MX5 were a little bland, and to liven things up more, the latest one dials up the oomph by quite a few notches. It literally has snake slit eyes.

BMW M6

Take the image of the old M6, put it next to the new one. From every angle, the newer one is properly, positively beautiful. The flame surfacing introduced by Chris Bangle was called disastrous when it was first introduced in the early 2000s, but, 14 years on, it has matured to a point where it adds to the visual drama of a very capable GT car. The proportions are perfect, the lines magical. Who knew the Germans had soul?



Lotus Exige S

Same basic formula, same astounding results as in the past. The Exige is a purpose built sportscar, and in typically English fashion, it strips away the fancy exterior, leaving only simple surfaces, and necessary styling bits. It makes it all the better, because it is a top notch design.



Haojue cool 150 CC

Haojue has been consistently ranked number one in sales and customer satisfaction for past twelve years in China.
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