

Automotive art



You may own a car, and if you don't, chances are you will. Since automobiles are entertainment to some and transportation to many, it is the duty of the Gazette to say something about them. Here is the first instalment of our informal buyer's guide

BY RAHUL KRISHNAN

The Ford Taurus's unique design, introduced in 1996, is the first thing you notice about the car. Since aesthetic preferences vary, it may be hard to see the innocent, I-am-a-family-car look about the Taurus. It is obvious that the car's new external suit is radically different from its recent models. Ford describes the design as a "Symphony of Ovals."

When you sit in the driver's seat, the first attraction is the control panel — one big oval with smaller ones for buttons. Fortunately, the instrument panel has not been so boldly modified. The analog gauges are conventionally placed behind the steering wheel with fuel, temperature, speedometer and tachometer gauges — the bare necessities. The GL version of the car came well equipped with power windows and locks, dual airbags, air conditioning, tilt steering, and an anti-lock braking system (ABS). The interior also featured a handy centre console with separate places for cups, coins and tapes. The arrangement of this console is probably the most well-planned compared to many cars in this class. With just your elbow on the handrest, you can comfortably swivel your forearm to reach all the buttons. There is also a shoulder and lap belt for the passenger sitting in the middle of the rear seats.

As for new audio innovations in the GL, the speakers have been placed on the door pillars near the windshield instead of the bottom of the front doors where they were in the old model. This seems to make more sense. These are a few of the simple design additions and alterations in this car which make the ride that much more welcoming.

And making this user-friendly car even more wel-

coming was the 3.0 litre V6 engine and the four speed automatic transmission. Together they worked smoothly and incredibly quietly as I test drove the car. Even though the GL had a V6 backing it up, it still lacked power that one would expect from an engine this size. In order to get to highway speed, I couldn't help but ask myself, "Is there any more acceleration back there?" This problem can easily be remedied by purchasing the V8 version of the Taurus — the SHO.

The power steering is clearly variably-assisted (by this I mean the faster you drive, the less help the power steering gives). There wasn't even a slight hint of this at high speeds which allowed good road feedback. However, there is an overdose of power steering at low speeds, as you can easily turn the wheel with your little finger! You can be the judge of that being good or bad.

The extra light steering sets the tone that this is a typical heavy American sedan with a soggy suspension system. But to my surprise, the suspension did a surprisingly good job of holding the road, sucking up the local potholes of Halifax and keeping the car level. The suspension did its best to prevent the car from diving forward when I applied the brakes. The ABS stopped the car smoothly without the tell-tale shudder of other systems.

This car is just on the heavy side when compared to the Honda Accord and the Nissan Maxima. The GL wasn't designed for precision handling like the other two, but instead offers more room and conveniences at a competitive price. If you are in the market for this kind of sedan, once you drive it you will appreciate what else lies behind those ovals.

Next week, Rahul will look at the new Honda Accord.

Paying Lip Service

Lip Service
by Kate Fillion
Harper Collins

According to the modern script, women love, men lust. Women are nurturing, men are aggressive. Women care about relationships, men are only looking out for themselves.

Although it may sound old-fashioned, the truth is, most of us still believe it, to varying degrees. This is dangerous to both sexes, says Kate Fillion, author of *Lip Service*.

Fillion argues in her book that by buying into this outdated notion of the differences between the sexes, we are imposing unfair limits on one another. As we all know, women often act in typically feminine ways, but women often act in typically masculine ways, as well.

Fillion tries to convince her readers that if we could do away with the notion that men and women are supposed to be different, we'd find we are really quite the same.

Particularly annoying to Fillion is the myth of female moral superiority. Good girls don't want sex. Good girls only give sex to get love. Such ideas are confusing to women who face typically masculine desires every day.

"Currently, girls are taught defensive sexuality: how to say no, how to use birth control, how to react to boys who want to have sex," writes Fillion.

Females today are taught very little about their desires and Fillion believes that if girls were taught not to suppress or feel guilty about their desires, they would not be as ashamed to use birth control and there would be fewer teenage pregnancies.

Fillion believes that the current idea that women are morally superior is trapping many of them. After a one night stand, many women are so ashamed at having done something "un-feminine", they are likely to convince themselves that they are in love with whoever they slept with. After all, women only give sex to get love, right?

"Until we acknowledge our own sexual agency, we will never truly be free and we will never own sex or define it for ourselves," writes Fillion. "We will continue to pay lip service to roles we aren't

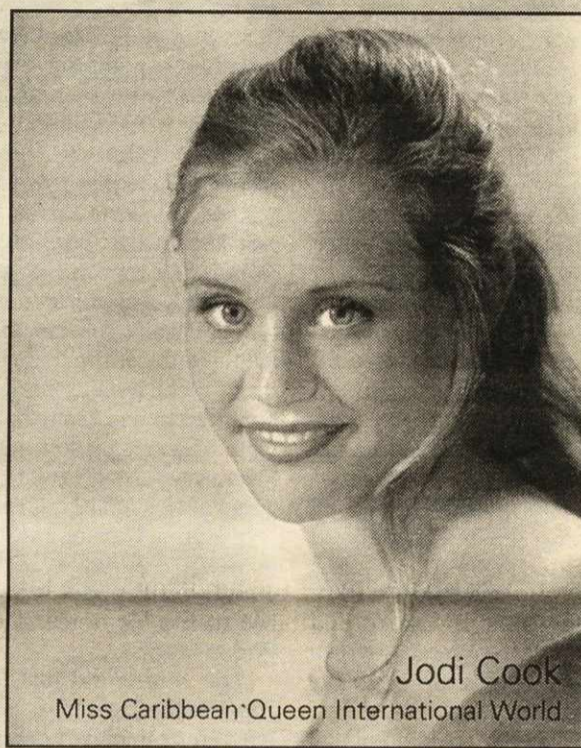
even following, desperately trying to convince ourselves that we aren't those kinds of girls, even though, in fact, most of us are."

While I must admit that Fillion did make some very good points, her method of supporting these points left much to be desired. She jumped from purely anecdotal evidence to overwhelming statistics and failed to make her story as interesting as the points warranted.

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN



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