

Ed Lines ...

Helping you get the car you want and the very best deal

Knowledge really is power when it comes to buying a new car, and all you need to do is a little enjoyable homework.

Motorshow Car Buyers' Guide 2011 again brings you that knowledge. Every car is rated by experts and no nonsense verdicts are given. We also cover the Government Scrappage Scheme extension and all the EuroNCAP crash test ratings

When you go shopping for your new car, you should know what new models are coming, so that you can plan with that knowledge. Besides the influence that may have on what you buy, there is also the opportunity to use that information to maximise the discount or trade-in allowance that you get. That's why our unique 'Worth Waiting For?' section is so valuable for Irish new car buyers. Use this information when deciding on your shortlist and again when negotiating because you will know more on this than most sales persons.

The best time ever to buy a new car

We will probably never again see new car value like that, which currently exists in Ireland these days. And I can assure you that is not a sales pitch on behalf of car dealerships. It is quiet simply a fact!

This has come about because the Irish distributors have negotiated very well with manufacturers on the basis of a massive economic collapse in sales, post Celtic Tiger.

They also used the fact with manufacturers that very poor consumer credit availability would be likely to diminish sales further if price reductions were not forthcoming.

The lowest prices and offers have also come about because of a new ultra competitive nature of the trade with some new and some refreshed distribution operations. And it must also be said that the more favourable CO2 rating system for VRT (Vehicle Registration Tax) has played an important role in lower car pricing.

However, I suspect that the current position, where we have the least expen-

sive new cars (before tax is applied) in Europe will come to an end in the not too distant future. The cost of raw materials has been rising and so has inflation in major car producing markets like Germany. Currency fluctuation issues, rapidly rising energy costs, and reduced salaries have started to creep up again in strongly unionised car plants around the world.

Without doubt margins have diminished in the new car business and we will see car prices rising again sooner than we think. But you must remember, the price reduction by manufacturers of every €1 in the last three years really turned in to a reduction of twice that because taxation makes up over half the price of a new car. So for example when manufacturers raise a wholesale price by say €500, that will turn in to €1,000 retail to you and me after tax.

Another positive consideration for car buyers right now is that we have never had better standard specifications on our cars with the exception of some very price sensitive entry level models. As you would expect, the quality and drivability of new cars has never been better. They are more environmentally friendly, as well as being more economical to run and maintain. And as our Euro NCAP coverage shows, the addition of ever improving active and passive safety technology is making new cars safer all the time.

If you qualify for the extended Government Car Scrappage, then you really should be considering availing of the opportunity, because after June 30th. such a scheme will not return again in this decade.

A final reason to buy a new car now is a growing scarcity of used cars in Ireland. Dealerships want to trade in cars and prices are better than last year, so use that to your advantage. So all of the positives I have outlined add up to a

buyers market.

Access to car finance is an issue for many

Of course there is always a problem or two. And as with last year, the lack of access to finance for many motorists wishing to buy a new or used car has been very problematic. But when you do get offered finance, make sure you check against competitors rates - compare like with like - APR rate and number of payments etc.

And remember if you have your mortgage paid, have a retirement stash etc, cash is king now more than ever. Those in a position to access savings, will do car deals now that will surprise them. The trick is shop-around and use your cash to haggle, haggle, haggle!

I do believe however that you should always give you local dealer the last chance to do the deal. I say this because it suits buyers to have convenience of good relations with their nearest dealer for warranty, service etc. But they must be competitive with trade-in pricing etc.

When buying a new car, you should also give good consideration to the other on-going costs that effect motorists such as economy. The debate between petrol and diesel as applied to your projected motoring plans in the next couple of years. Indeed, more advanced hybrids (and soon also all-electric cars) are now worthy of your consideration

Look at Insurance costs and shop around. I'll guarantee that you will make savings, and with premiums going up these days, by phoning around you will find more competitive rates elsewhere. Again haggle and make sure you are comparing like with like with regards to cover.

With the knowledge that Motorshow Car Buyers' Guide provides, you should enjoy shopping for the new car that you want with optimum confidence. You could also save yourself a lot of money.

Padraic Deane,
Editor.



Padraic Deane

Padraic Deane represents Ireland on the 'World Car of the Year' jury. In addition, he is the Irish juror for selection of the 'World Green Car', the 'World Performance Car', and the 'World Car Design of the Year'.

He is also Ireland's representative on the international jury for the 'International Engine of the Year Awards'. This additionally includes the selection of the 'Green Engine of the Year' and The 'Best Performance Engine of the Year'.

For the domestic market, he is also a juror for the 'Irish Car of the Year', 'Irish Van of the Year' and 'Commercial SUV of the Year' awards.

In addition to his role as Publisher and Editor at Automotive Publications, he writes syndicated consumer motoring columns weekly in several regional newspapers. He also writes frequently on motoring related subjects in other national media, including newspapers and magazines as well as broadcasting on radio.