



GOING GREEN...

for all the right reasons

by Stephanie Savill

Press Release

Recently I asked a group of FOXY Lady Drivers whether they thought that a new car was more environmentally-friendly than an old one. The general consensus was that the new one was probably greener because the old one 'produces dirty emissions', 'does fewer miles to the gallon' and 'uses older technology'. No-one considered the environmental pluses of driving an older car, by which I mean one that has been properly maintained and looked after during its life.

From several comments made at the time it was also clear that many women associate a car with our status in life, which I put down to clever marketing on the part of new car manufacturers.

The reality however is that if we always buy new and replace our car regularly, we're not helping the planet much because each new car has already used up 20% of its lifetime energy before it leaves the showroom. This is because most of the car's component parts are likely to have been transported as much as halfway around the world; from the time the iron ore has been extracted, smelted, melted, pressed into shape and finally welded into shape, until it goes on sale.

For example, if we compare the likes of a classic Mini alongside today's BMW model, the 'old' car would need to be driven 20,000 miles to consume the same energy used to manufacture the 'new' Mini. And that's before the 'new' car produces its own emissions on our roads. Furthermore, when today's cars are discarded, they are full of materials that use more energy to recycle than their predecessors.

In short, if you buy a new car every four years, and simply store it in the garage (for the purpose of making this point) you're likely to use a similar amount of energy as a neighbour driving an older model for some 5000 miles a year.

Until quite recently I'd have assumed that a car with a catalytic converter would make a real difference to emissions but I now realise that converters don't work when the engine is cold or when I'm driving flat out.

In other words, if we need our car for short local journeys or spend our days plying motorways, chances are we're emitting similar levels of pollution whether we are driving a new or considerably older car. In fact, she who runs an older car for longer, driving less than 10,000 miles a year, may well be the more environmentally-friendly motorist, as long as she keeps it in tip-top condition.

So, if you are looking after an older car for your own very good reasons, please award yourself a pat on the back and remember that you are probably doing the environment a favour, as well as your bank account.

FOR THE EDITOR:

Stephanie Savill is the Founder of FOXY Lady Drivers Club, the only everyday-motoring club that puts women first. FOXY provides VIP motoring services for women, helping them run more reliable cars, stay safer on the roads and save money on everyday motoring bills.

Annual membership costs £30 plus a £5 joining fee. Benefits include a friendly FOXY Helpdesk, trustworthy UK garages, member-recommended local services, preferential perks, special offers and FOXY news, views and reviews.

For more information, see www.foxyladydrivers.com or phone Stephanie on 0870 225 5369.

Photos are available on request.