

Stop that *car*

A high-tech remote control system that can bring speeding cars to a halt is being developed as the latest weapon against crime.

Police forces in the UK and the US have ordered tests of the new system which has the capability to stop vehicles in their tracks from up to 50 metres away. The device is designed to fit in a car boot and consists of a battery and a bank of capacitors that can store an electrical charge. Flicking a switch on the dashboard sends a burst of electricity into an antenna mounted on the roof of the car. The antenna then produces a narrow beam of intense radio waves that is directed at the vehicle ahead, interfering with the vehicle's vital electronics systems and causing it to grind slowly to a halt.

There is a worry however that the system is so effective that it could stop all cars in the vicinity until it has undergone some fine tuning.



Citroen *Pluriel*

Described by maker Citroen as a three-door hatchback, a pillarless coupe, a cabriolet, a full convertible, and an open top two-seat ute all rolled into one, the quirky C3 hits showrooms here this month. Key to its versatility is its full-length power-operated roof and rear glass window that folds fully under the floor of the boot and removable roof rails, which gives scope to turn the C3 into any of its other incarnations. To make the ute version, the two back seats of the C3 fold flat and the drop-down tailgate makes this an easy vehicle to load and unload.

Prices are expected to be in the region of \$38,000 including power windows, air conditioning, CD audio and remote locking.

Under the bonnet is a 1.6-litre 83 kW four-cylinder engine driving through Citroen's five-speed sequential manual gearbox with its electronically controlled clutch which does not require the use of a pedal.

Double *trouble*

Peugeot has been embarrassingly forced to change the pronunciation of its new 1007-mini-MPV at the last minute.

The seething owners of the James Bond trademark disputed Peugeot's 'one-double-o-seven' pronunciation, claiming it was too close to the MI6 codename of the ubiquitous secret agent.

In a rather humiliating back-down for the car manufacturer, Peugeot have had to turn out press releases announcing that the model will be pronounced the 'one thousand and seven' instead.

Smog *sense*

Truck drivers in Europe will soon be able to fill up with urea along with regular diesel, as manufacturers race to meet European Union rules being introduced in 2007 to reduce smog-forming nitrogen oxides and soot.

Such pollutants are linked to about 200,000 deaths a year in EU countries but catalytic converters supplied with urea can cut out as much as 60 percent of the pollutants emitted by even the cleanest diesel engines, transforming most of the nitrous oxide in the exhaust into harmless nitrogen and water.

The cost of the urea solution, marketed as AdBlue, combined with diesel will increase fuel prices by about two percent.



Ford *Falcon*

The new Ford Falcon is due to hit the showrooms next month. The new BA MkII

Falcon is set to build on the reputation of the original BA Falcon which was introduced in 2002.

A new six-speed manual transmission in the XR6 Turbo and XR8 performance vehicles heads a list of changes for the new Ford Falcon, including improved handling thanks to the Control Blade IRS, fully independent double wishbone front suspension, five high-tech engines, standard cruise and audio controls, and a 60/40 split fold-down rear seat back.

Perhaps one of the most significant additions is the Intelligent Safety System, which won the Gold award at the Society of Australia Engineers Excellence Awards in 2003. In the event of an accident, the system transfers information gathered by a network of sensors to the Advanced Restraints Module (ARM), which instantly decides how best to deploy modern safety technologies such as dual stage inflation airbags, front seat pyrotechnic seat belt pretensioners and energy seat belt retractors. Other safety features on the BA Falcon MkII include an anti-intrusion (collapsible) brake pedal on automatic models, front and rear impact management body structure, and ABS with electronic brakeforce distribution for improved stopping performance and steering control.



G-wizzy

This is the G-wiz, a tiny electric car made in India and expected to become a fixture on roads

all around the world.

The little runabout plugs directly into a normal 240 volt electrical socket, reaches 40mph and will run for 40 miles on a single six-hour charge. With its carbon-fibre body and a choice of 2,000 different colours, the G-wiz is being produced by Bangalore-based Maini Group and has been developed in conjunction with the AEV company in California. By 2010, its manufacturer aims to be rolling 50,000 of the vehicles off the production line and a leading UK electric car retailer has already placed a \$5m order for 500 of the vehicles. A sporty convertible four-seater with wind-down windows and a retractable soft top is also in production, but this or its sedan counterpart might prove to be a little cramped for taller drivers.

To save on costs, the G-wiz will only be available to buy on the internet, and will have a list price of \$19,500 or £17,000 for a three-year lease deal.

Double the DVD

Good news for the square-eyed among us - set to hit the shops later this year are new-generation DVDs with the capacity to hold up to four hours of our favourite films and television programmes.

Thanks to its innovative dual-layer technology, the new DVD will offer double the storage space of the DVDs currently in circulation and will play on DVD players and PCs currently on the market, as well as the range of new-style recordable DVD players soon to be launched.

Porsche museum

Architects are being invited to submit designs for a brand new Porsche museum in Stuttgart, Germany to replace the current building which is too small to house more than 20 of the manufacturer's collection of 300 varieties of the Porsche.

The new museum will explain the history of the Porsche marque and incorporate a restoration workshop, which will be open to visitors.

Once the winner of the architects' competition has been chosen, building work is expected to start next year on a site in the Porscheplatz, next to the factory, warehouse and sales showroom.

Play-write

As if there weren't enough multi-tasking gadgets around - now there's an MP3-playing pen to add to the list. Japanese company, Thanko has decided to create a ballpoint pen complete with integrated voice recorder and MP3 player for entertainment while you work.

Wwwacky websites

Did you notice the modern-day gas canister in the back of the chariot in *Gladiator*? How about Matt Damon's now-you-see-it-now-you-don't car crash damage in *The Bourne Supremacy*? Call yourself a movie buff?

Well, if you like to read about all the continuity and factual errors that appear in movies, then

www.moviemistakes.com is for you. The editor of this site certainly doesn't spend 90 minutes with his head in the bucket of popcorn, he's far too busy with his light-up pen noting all the big-screen bloopers and there are certainly plenty of them - 314 in *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* and 185 in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, for example, and usually at least half a dozen in most movies, though a few do appear in the 'perfect' category (but you can be sure there's someone out there working on it). This is a fascinating and fairly addictive site, with each movie and its errors listed comprehensively.

If you'd like to tell us about your favourite Wwwacky website, just e-mail us at fleettorque@fleetcare.com.au.

Tall tail?

A Japanese car accessory manufacturer has launched an unusual gadget to help polite motorists express their gratitude to fellow roadusers.

Named the Thanks Tail, the bizarre device resembles a dog's tail and is positioned on the roof of the vehicle. One press of a button fixed inside the car sends a signal to the tail to wag from side to side to mark the driver's appreciation of a kind deed, such as being let into a queue of traffic. Its creators are sure that the Thanks Tail will be a popular Christmas stocking filler.

Surf surfing

If you like to take to the waves and chill out on the beach but don't want to feel too disconnected from the outside world then this would be the ideal gift for you. Intel has developed a first - a surfboard with a built-in wireless laptop. The board houses a Rock T200 tablet laptop, with an Intel® Pentium® M Processor, capable of speeds of 1.7Ghz, and 80Gb memory capacity. The PC connects to a 'hotspot' on the beach allowing users to check their email, record footage of their rides and surf the web whilst they surf the waves.

That's a fact ...

Only one person in two billion will live to 116 years old.