

A stylized, high-contrast black and white illustration of a car's interior and exterior. The top half shows a close-up of a car door handle and a side-view mirror reflecting a person's face. The bottom half shows a driver's perspective from the steering wheel, with hands on the wheel and a view of the dashboard and gear shift. The text 'Fall Car Care Guide' is written in a large, elegant script across the center.

Fall Car Care Guide

Motorists line up for green gas

Ethanol blend becomes more popular at gas stations in area

Liz Edwards
Press Staff Reporter

WINCHESTER — The grass might not be greener on the east side of Highway 31 near Winchester but the gas certainly is.

The gas bar at Johansen Truck and Auto Centre Ltd. has switched to ethanol gas — referred to as a green fuel because it is more environmentally friendly.

Ethanol is a high octane, water-free alcohol produced by the fermentation process for grain such as corn, wheat or barley. About 10 litres can be made from a bushel of corn. Mixed with gasoline, the resulting fuel reduces carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide tailpipe emissions that contribute to the global warming effect.

As well, a litre of non-renewable fossil fuel is saved for every litre of ethanol that is produced. Canada currently produces about 21 million litres a year. It is one of the environmental choice products of Environment Canada.

But there are other benefits as well says David Johansen, owner of the filling station located just south of the Hwy. 31 and Hwy. 43 East junction. He started selling the fuel about three weeks ago.

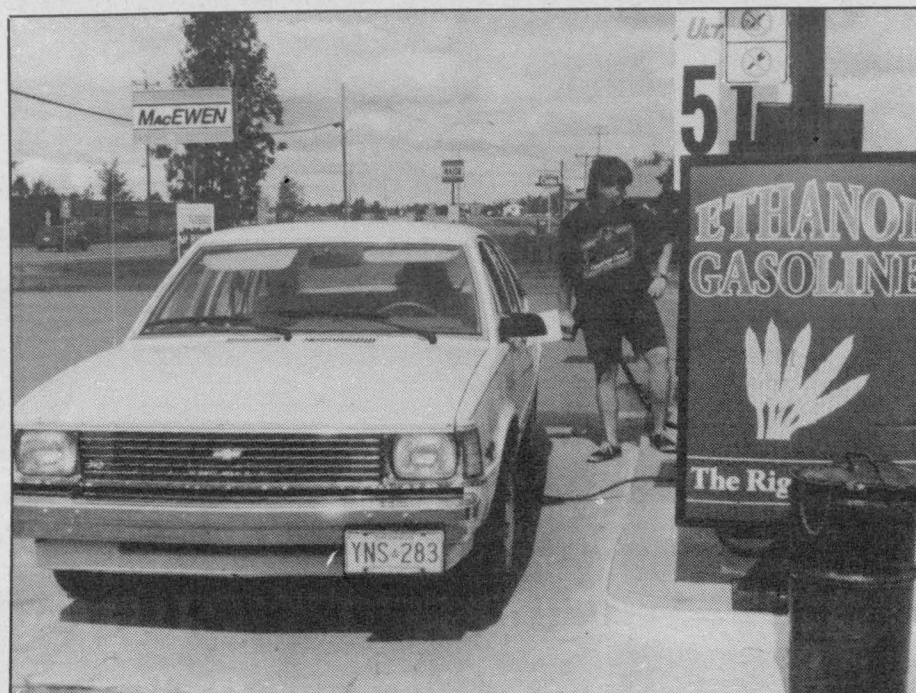
"The gas octane is almost the same as super yet it's the same price as the regular no-lead. So it gives everyone the best of both worlds," he explains.

"The customers say it's improved their gas mileage."

Other filling stations across Ontario have also made the green choice. The Co-op Gas Bar in Embrun switched to ethanol earlier this summer along with numerous other stations across the province.

The fuel may also eventually give a boost to the local economy. The Seaway Valley Farmers Energy Co-operative is looking for a potential site to build an ethanol processing plant in Eastern Ontario.

The plant would provide a market for tonnes of local corn. As well the by-product of ethanol production can be used in dairy and beef cattle rations.



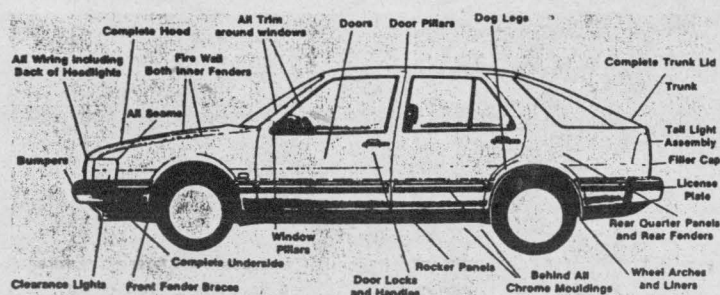
Green alternative

A motorist fills up on ethanol fuel at Johansen Truck and Auto Centre in Winchester. The grain-based fuel burns cleaner than regular gasoline and is a comparable price.

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Ontario dealers offer protection to buyer

Aside from choosing a make and model, one of the most important decisions facing the car buyer is who to buy from. Motor-vehicle experts at Ontario's consumer ministry want car buyers to know about two programs that can help them make a well-informed choice.

The buyer of a car less than four years old may be protected by the Ontario Motor Vehicle Arbitration Plan (OMVAP) and a vehicle of any age is covered under the Motor Vehicle Dealers Compensation Fund (MVDCF), provided it was bought from a provincially registered dealer.

OMVAP is an arbitration program to settle disputes between consumers and auto producers when cars driven for personal or family use — not commercial vehicles — show signs of manufacturing defects.

"Whether you bought a Lamborghini or a Land Rover, if it's a lemon you may be awarded compensation for repairs or even replacement of the vehicle under this plan," says Bob Pierce, the ministry's registrar of motor vehicles. "OMVAP provides an alternative to court action with no cost to the consumer."

Because the plan is funded by manufacturers and importers of cars in Ontario, only residents of the province may apply for arbitration.

Other application requirements include:



Drewery Pontiac Buick Ltd. is a provincially registered dealer.

- the vehicle must initially have been bought from a dealer authorized by the manufacturer,
- it must be less than four years old
- only cars or light trucks or vans, up to 4,545 kg or 10,000 pounds will be considered for compensation,
- the owner must have made a reasonable attempt to resolve the problem with the dealership and auto manufacturer.

When applications are made to OMVAP's central office, the files are handled by one of six branches of the

Better Business Bureau across the province or the Arbitration and Mediation Institute of Ontario.

One of these offices will contact the applicant and ask for any documents needed for the case. A neutral third party will then be assigned to arbitrate.

The arbitrator may find that the company has no liability. However, if the applicant's claim is found to be justified, any of the following may be awarded:

- vehicle repairs,
- reimbursement for the cost of

repairs,

- replacement of the vehicle,
- buy-back of the vehicle, or
- limited compensation for certain out-of-pocket expenses.

Most people who call OMVAP to enquire about the program don't file a claim. However, the majority of those who do file receive an award.

As well as the protection against mechanical defects offered by OMVAP, car buyers are protected by another safety net when they buy from a dealer — the Motor Vehicle Dealers Compensation Fund.

This fund is sponsored by dealers and applies to any vehicle sold by a car dealer registered in Ontario.

For more information on buying a car, including private sales, contracts and trade-ins, write or call for a free copy of the brochure 'Tips on Buying a Car and Rust Inhibition'. It's available from the Consumer Information Centre, 1st floor, 555 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario, M7A 2H6. The telephone number is 1-800-268-1142.

For compensation fund information or application forms, contact the Motor Vehicle Dealers Compensation Fund Administrator, 3rd floor, 555 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario M7A 2H6.

Contact OMVAP at 55 Bloor St. West, Suite 400, Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A5, telephone 416-972-5115.

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Buying snow tires

For most Canadians selecting snow tires is more significant than almost any other decision you'll make for your car. The reason is obvious — safety.

You rely on your car's ability to transport you and your family through challenging winter conditions. Your tires are your only link to the road and if your tires provide insufficient traction, the control of the vehicle and the safety of its passengers are at risk.

Not all snow tires are created equal. Yokohama Tire does its research and testing in both the mountainous terrain of Japan and in the northern reaches of Canada to ensure your tires will really work in the driving conditions Canadians must face.

Three factors affect snow tire performance and your tire dealer can help you to assess them on the tires you are considering. Tread design is critical — the pattern of the tread blocks and sipes is engineered for snow and ice.

In Japan, where studs have been banned for years, engineers have been working on tread patterns that combine open, overlapping tread blocks with extended, wave-type, edges and sipes (the slender grooves in the tire tread) for maximum bite.

The cold weather performance of the tire compound (ie. the rubber) can

make the difference between sticking and sliding. The compound used for all-season and summer tires can get hard and rigid in the cold.

Discuss your driving plans with your dealer so they can be certain that your tires are built with a compound that will stay flexible and provide grip in the coldest conditions you'll face.

Here's an important note — when you're buying snow tires, keep in mind that the most modern snow tires don't look like the heavy lug-type tires you remember. Today's designs look much more like aggressive, all-season radials and deliver a smooth, quiet ride even on dry pavement, without giving up a thing in snow performance.

The latest design in snow tires uses a rounded footprint for maximum contact. Comparing the profile of a conventional tread, you can see that with a modern rounded shoulder profile there is more gripping edge on the road and a greater ability to roll over ruts to deliver maximum control.

And one last tip — inflation. Check your tire pressure when the mercury drops. A change of 11 degrees Celsius reduces tire pressure by two psi. Under-inflation is very hard on tire life and reduces stability.

The experts agree — pick the best snow tires for your car and then take care of them. They'll last longer and keep you in control all winter long.



Vintage wheels

Vintage automobiles, such as this Ford Fairlane, attracted crowds at Winchester's Dairyfest this year.

Tires often neglected

Of all the components on a vehicle, the tires are perhaps the most critical. But all too often, they are also the most neglected.

The four rounded pieces of rubber compound are the only point of contact between several thousand pounds of a vehicle and the road. Driving on a slippery road surface can

be treacherous, and it becomes even worse when the tires are not up to optimum standards.

It's also important to have your vehicle's suspension checked according to the maintenance schedule in your Owner's Manual. Proper wheel alignment improves tire tread life.

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Used Vehicle Information Package helpful

Many people say buying a used car isn't a pleasant experience. Until now, experts at Ontario's Consumer Ministry have rated purchasing a used car from a private owner as one of the riskiest major investments many consumers will ever make.

But consumers shopping for personal cars, trucks, motorhomes, vans and motorcycles on the private market — which accounts for more than 75 per cent of used-vehicle sales — can now have some of the guesswork taken out of the deal. They

can choose to buy from a private seller who'll give them a 'Used Vehicle Information Package' (UVIP) or they can purchase a UVIP themselves.

Recently made available, the UVIP provides buyers with one-stop-shopping for information on a particular motor vehicle. A UVIP, which costs \$20, includes important consumer information.

"The package contains an information sheet that provides a full description of the vehicle. The sheet also lists any liens that may be

registered against the vehicle," says Katharine Smith, director of the ministry's Personal Property Security Registration Branch.

"If there is a lien against a car, there may be money owing on it. The unwary buyer can wake up one morning to find a truck towing away a vehicle that has just been purchased."

There may be several reasons for a lien being registered against a vehicle. A seller may have borrowed money to buy the car, but not paid it all back. The car or truck could have been used as collateral to obtain a loan. Or a garage may have placed a lien on the vehicle, for unpaid repair or storage costs.

If the lien existed before the current owner bought the vehicle, it's possible he or she doesn't even know it exists.

Once the conditions of the lien have been satisfied — the loan's been paid off, for example — the holder of the lien is obliged to discharge it within 30 days.

"But that sometimes doesn't happen," says Smith. "If a lien is listed in the UVIP the consumer should call the lien holder to find out whether the debt has been repaid."

Another way the UVIP assists consumers is by helping them determine if they're dealing with curbsiders.

Curbsiders, so named because they often park the vehicles by the curb

near their homes, are people who sell cars illegally for a living, operating without a licence.

In the vehicle history section of the UVIP, a list of current and previous registrants of the car or truck is given. If the date of the last change in registration is quite recent, the buyer may be dealing with a curbsider. Similarly, the buyer should check to make sure the vehicle is actually registered in the name of the person selling it.

On the other hand, a list of current and previous registered owners can also help confirm the seller's honesty.

The UVIP also gives the average wholesale and retail values of the vehicle. This aids the buyer in determining the amount of retail sales tax that will be payable when the registration is transferred. However, it is not possible for the package to provide information on the condition of the vehicle.

A Safety Standards Certificate, which must be provided if the vehicle is being sold as roadworthy, ensures it has been inspected and certified as safe. But the certificate is no guarantee the vehicle won't soon need repairs.

The consumer most satisfied with his or her used vehicle knows it is in good mechanical shape because it was inspected by a reputable garage before money changed hands.



This beautifully restored 1964 Plymouth shows off the Krown rustproofing offered by Johansen Truck and Auto Centre.

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Boyd Chrysler offered people attending the recent Winchester Trade Show a view of the popular Plymouth Voyager mini van.

Child restraints a must

Many parents forget the most basic of road safety measures — that all children, regardless of age, are properly buckled into their seats when riding in cars.

In fact, surveys show that less than 44 per cent of Ontario's children are safely seated when riding in their parents' cars, which is one reason why motor vehicle accidents are now the leading cause of death in children.

But scientific studies have shown that the proper use of child restraint systems in vehicles can reduce the risk of death by up to 90 per cent and crippling injuries by 65 to 70 per cent.

Purchasing, properly installing and using a child safety seat at all times when travelling in a motor vehicle is the best way to ensure a young child's safety. As a general guideline, infant safety seats, recommended for children from birth to 20 pounds (9 kg) must always face backwards (towards the rear of the car) so that the impact of a crash can be distributed across the padding of the safety seat. Toddler safety seats should face

forward in a car and can be used for children weighing between 20 and 40 pounds (9-18 kg).

For children who are too big for toddler seats but still too small to be properly restrained by a seat belt, child booster seats can be used with a regular lap belt pulled over the lap and thighs.

If the shoulder strap is angled too high and cuts across the child's face and neck, place it behind the child's back. Shoulder straps should never be worn under the arm of a child or an adult, since this could result in injuries to the ribs, chest and internal organs in an accident.

Remember to read all manufacturer's instructions carefully to ensure safety seats are securely fastened to the inside of vehicles. Seat belt use is not only good preventive medicine — it's the law!

This information is sponsored by the Ontario Nurses' Association, the voice of about 50,000 registered staff nurses in the province.

Manufacturer welcomes customers' complaints

Do manufacturers want to hear complaints from consumers about their products? Yes, according to market researchers at General Motors. Without complaints, the manufacturer has no basis to improve on customer relations, product deficiencies or help resolve problems with dealerships.

According to GM's researchers, of all the customers who are dissatisfied with a particular product, only 40 per cent take the time to complain. The other 60 per cent remain silent.

This 'silent majority' can make it tough on manufacturers looking to preserve and build a customer base.

Based on past marketing research, it's generally accepted that while satisfied customers tell eight to 10 people of a 'good' experience, dissatisfied customers tell 16 to 20

others. And one-quarter of those dissatisfied may tell as many as 40.

This doesn't mean, however, that those customers who are dissatisfied with their purchase are lost for good. Excellent response and handling of customer complaints by manufacturers will convince 80 per cent of those who complained to repurchase the product.

Even 40 per cent of customers who are not entirely satisfied with the response to their complaint will still repurchase a product. By contrast, only 10 per cent of those who don't complain will generally repurchase.

So, if you're dissatisfied with a product, complain. It's good for the manufacturer to know of your displeasure and the manufacturer just might be able to rectify the problem. In the end, both parties may win.

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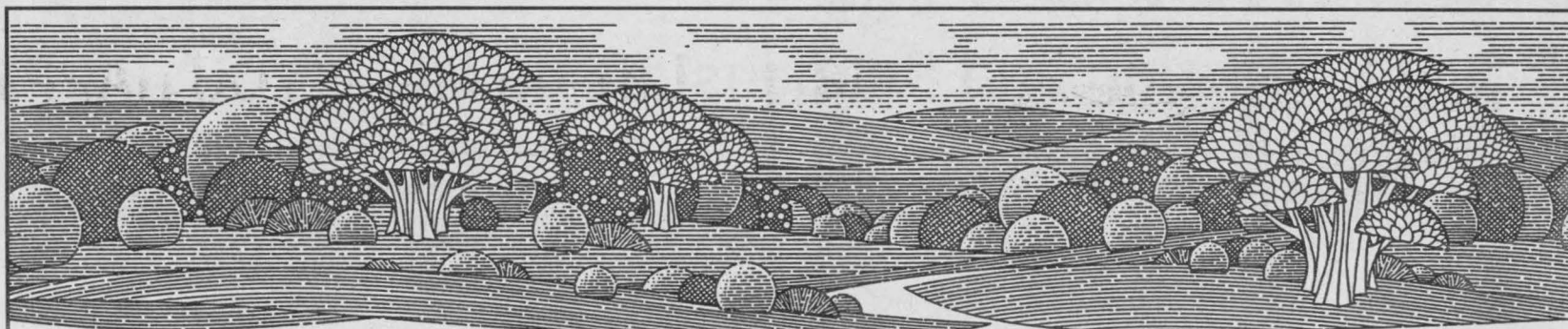


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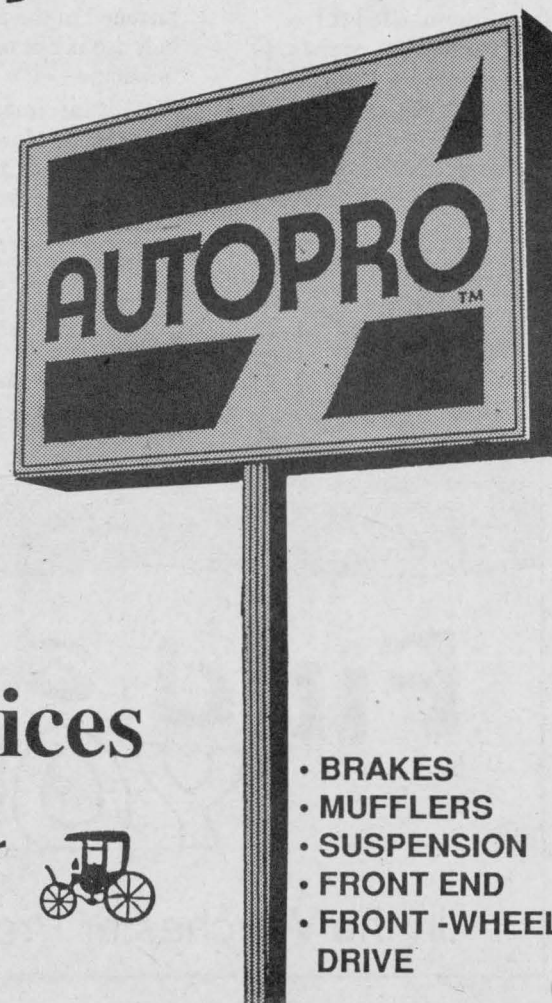
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