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A Special Supplement to the Winchester Press

FALL CAR CARE



October 27, 2004

Winchester Tire Sales offers winter car special

WINCHESTER — It is always a good idea heading into the harsh winter season to do some preventative maintenance on your vehicle instead of waiting until it's too late and costly repairs have to be made.

Jansen Taylor from Winchester Tire Sales recommends the Fall Car Care Special offered by the west-end service centre. The 20-point inspection which includes lube, oil and filter, all fluids topped up including a four-litre jug of washer fluid and tire rotation will get your vehicle ready for winter for a cost of $38.95.

Taylor says a commonly asked question is, "Do I need winter tires?" That answer depends on if you answer yes to any of the following questions. Do you need to accelerate, corner or stop when driving this winter? If you do then he recommends winter tires. The fact is, all-season radials have to survive the heat of mid-summer driving, so they use rubber compounds that will be much harder than similar winter tires in cold weather. In addition, their tread patterns are a compromise between snow and ice performance and rain/dry traction. Compromise isn't a good thing on winter roads.

ALL-WHEEL TIP

Another statement frequently heard is, "I have all-wheel-drive!" All-wheel-drive options from manufacturers are marketed to imply that their technology is the answer for snow and ice. The TV ads often show them blasting through snowdrifts, but you never see them trying to stop on an icy highway!

By distributing the drive to all four wheels, an all-wheel-drive vehicle can accelerate much faster than a conventional car or truck in slippery winter conditions. Unfortunately, when stopping, there's no difference between an all-wheel-drive and a two-wheel drive vehicle. In fact, acceleration that feels dry-road strong, combined with the extra weight of the all-wheel drive system, can lull the driver into a false sense of security.

Another service that is often neglected is regular transmission maintenance — winter is hard on a transmission. In as much as most people change their engine oil and filter religiously to protect their motor, most neglect to change their transmission fluid and filter, which protects their transmission which can be very costly to repair. The cost of a transmission service is only about $89.95 for most vehicles and only has to be done about once every two years. It's a small price to pay to protect one your most expensive purchases.

Submitted by Winchester Tire Sales a division of Akcent Motor Sales Inc., 12032 Dawley Dr., Winchester.

ON OUR COVER



Parts pro

Behind the parts counter at Parcoll Products in Winchester Clarence Watson has 35 years experience. The warehouse at the back of the store contains a vast inventory of NAPA auto parts. Watson explained that servicing exhaust part needs for customers can often be challenging.

Press Photo — Zabel

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Preparing your vehicle for winter's worst

With winter quickly approaching and frigid weather on its way, motorists should plan ahead to ensure their car is ready for the harsh Canadian elements.

• Have your battery and charging system checked to ensure it will have enough power to start the car on those cold mornings.

• Test the heating system to ensure that it can generate sufficient hot air.

• Choose an anti-freeze that can handle severe winter temperatures of up to minus 40 or 50 degrees Celsius.

• Check the tread wear on tires to ensure proper traction on slippery roads. Ideal for providing extra traction on wet and snow-covered roads, winter tires should be installed now to avoid getting caught unprepared in the first snowfall.

• Lubricate locks and have a supply of lock de-icer at home ensure access to the vehicle in very cold temperatures.

• Check wiper blades for signs of wear and cracking and replace if necessary. Better yet, change to heavy-duty winter blades like teflon wiper blades

• Top up on windshield fluid for extreme temperatures and always keep an extra jug in the trunk.

• Inspect engine belts for signs of fraying or cracking, sure signs belts need replacing.

• Extreme cold is hard on the engine oil. An oil change and new filter are good ideas for the change in season.

• Avoid the discomfort of climbing into a freezing cold car by investing in a remote starter. Most have a built-in alarm, keyless entry and 500 foot range, which means that warming up the car is a snap, without ever having to leave the warmth of your home or office.

• Special winter oils are also available that relieve the strain on the vehicle's battery and engine and provide easier start-up in the cold weather.

– News Canada



Fall tune-up

Now is the time to get your vehicle in shape for winter driving. Mechanic Larry Mott works on a Ford half-ton pick-up at Rob's Automotive Services in Vernon.

Press Photo – Slack

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Did you mount your cold weather tires yet?

Every year there is this dilemma: should you mount winter tires or should you stay with your all season tires?

In a study done by the Quebec Ministry of Transport comparing all season vs winter tires, results showed that you can get up to 25 percent better breaking and 38 percent better collision avoidance by using a proper winter tire.

The ministry summary concluded: "Winter tires perform better than the all season tires, particularly in very cold temperatures. Furthermore, during braking, a crucial component of road safety, winter tires do provide superior results when compared to all season tires."

Many summer and all season tires start to lose their tread compound flexibility as the ambient temperature drops. With the current increasing trend for vehicles to come equipped with performance tires right from the factory, it is even more important to consider "cold weather tires" for winter driving.

One of the primary design criteria for a performance tire is to provide improved handling through better braking, cornering and acceleration capabilities in dry or rainy conditions. Although it's virtually impossible to achieve the same results in winter conditions, to enhance the cold weather driving experience of your performance vehicle you need a dedicated winter tire.

Your best option for those cold, icy, slushy, wet winter days is a full set of four cold weather tires and a dose of common sense driving.

- News Canada



Driving school

• continued from previous page

Just because the speed limit is 80 doesn't mean you have to drive 80 in a blizzard. The posted speed limit on any road is for ideal conditions, and winter is less than ideal.

Make room. The law says that you must leave two seconds distance between cars at the minimum. In winter, we recommend you add a second or two to that. Give yourself lots of space to avoid trouble, or to never get into trouble in the first place.

How far away is two seconds? At a speed of 50 kilometres per hour, your car will be travelling 45 feet per second. Two seconds following distance at 50 kilometres per hour is therefore 90 feet. Winchester drivers should consider whether they're following at 90 feet the next time they're driving on St. Lawrence Street.

Space and speed are the two biggest reasons why people are involved in collisions, regardless of weather. Slow down, leave room, and make sure that your vehicle is ready for winter.

This article was submitted by driving teachers Sylvie Bazinet, Dan Bagyan and Fred Gingras at Signature Driving School which has its head office in Williamsburg. The school teaches Ministry of Transportation approved courses in Winchester out of Henderson Hall.

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Parts man extraordinaire:

35 years on the job

by Chris Zabel
Press staff

WINCHESTER — When Parcoll Products in Winchester was celebrating 35 years in business a couple of weeks ago, parts manager Clarence Watson marked a 35th anniversary as well. He joined the company shortly after Parcoll opened its doors on Main Street and he's been parts manager ever since.

"He knows the ins and outs of a car like no one else. No matter how much training you have, you can't replace experience," said Kathy Shay who owns Parcoll Products with her brother Bill Collins. The sibling team is the third generation of the family to operate Parcoll which now has four locations. They both agree that they couldn't do it without Watson.



Nifty

Long-time customers were recalling some of their past purchases at the Parcoll Products 35th anniversary barbecue. Gib Jones showed a Proto Tools mini screwdriver which had obviously seen service. Parcoll used to sell the discontinued brand.

More than 200 customers dropped by the Winchester Parcoll location for an anniversary barbecue lunch on Oct. 14. Watson probably knew the name of just about every one of them from selling them parts over the years. He's actually had a role in the village automotive industry since he was old enough to work.

Watson worked at Louis Weiner's wrecking yard summers and weekends when he was in high school. He remembers salvaging steel and hauling it to Ottawa to make extra money. "We did more destruction than fixing back when I was a kid," he recalled.

He also worked at Don Billings Top Value gas and garage, which became his first full-time job when he finished school. Then he worked at Raymond Kelly's Garage on St. Lawrence Street. But it wasn't until 1969 that he found his true calling. Bill Collins Senior and his son Gary had introduced an auto parts division to their aluminum products manufacturing business and they opened a retail showroom.

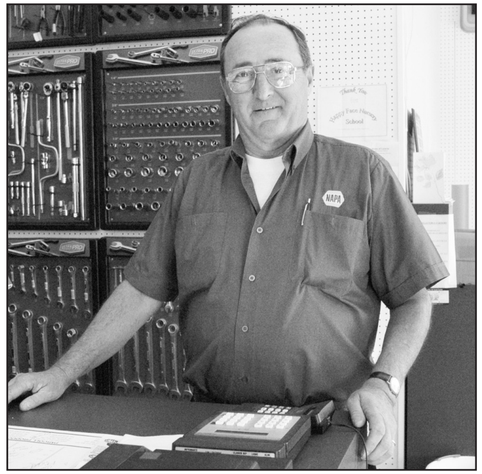
"That's when Gary and Bill approached me about taking on the parts counter position," said Watson. "It sounded like a better job to me than getting my hands all greasy every day, so I took the job," he said.

Everything was done manually when the parts counter opened: invoices, returns, stock orders and inventory. Locating the right part required a fair about of memory work, but there were fewer parts to remember then than there are today. It used to be that manufacturers would use the same parts for five or six years at a time and parts would work with different models of cars from the same company.

Lots of things have changed in the after-market auto parts business over the years. Parcoll Products has been a NAPA dealer ever since the parts giant took over UAP in 1992. Adapting, however, hasn't been impossible. "Yes, there have been a lot of changes, but a tie-rod end is a tie-rod end. That hasn't changed much," said Watson.

The biggest change in the industry came with the introduction of computers. The Parcoll parts counter got its first computer in 1989. "It was a blessing," recalled Watson. Although the entire staff was completely computer illiterate at the time, everyone immediately realized the benefits of computerized inventory control.

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Behind the counter

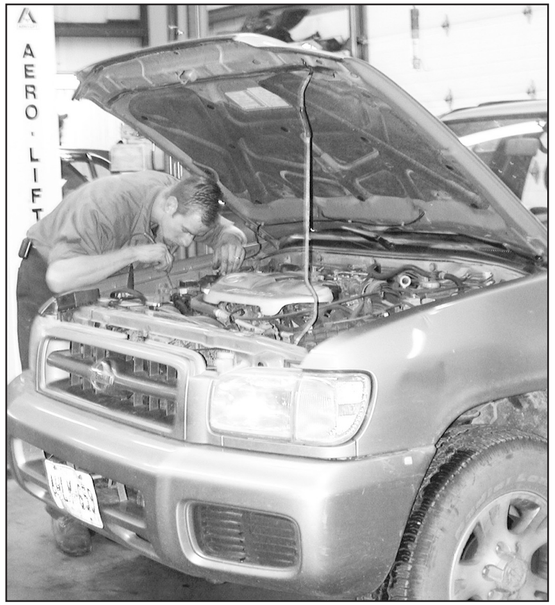
For the past 35 years, Clarence Watson has been parts manager at Parcoll Products in Winchester. He joined the company a few months after founder Bill Collins diversified into auto parts.

Press Photo — Zabel

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Ready for winter

Phil VanNoppen of Winchester Automotive Services in Winchester is hard at work. The business has been servicing all makes and models of cars and trucks for more than 24 years.

Press Photo – Rushford

Parts counter

• continued from previous page

For example, the days between Christmas and New Years were no longer given over to hand counting every single item in the stockroom. All of a sudden, a year-end inventory didn't require any counting at all.

The first fairly basic computer system has continued to evolve to make the operation more efficient. NAPA now offers its own software to dealers. Watson said a new system they began using last year is "the Cadillac" of inventory control. All of their parts catalogues are now computerized.

"You can have anyone on the parts counter now," said Watson. "As long as he knows how to work a computer and can get a part, the customer pays and we're smiling." He speculated that someday the computers will probably also be able to retrieve the part for you, although that's not likely ever to happen at the Winchester shop.

Watson said the greatest asset the person working the parts desk can have is being able to listen to people and figure out what they need. Many customers don't have much more knowledge of their vehicle than it has four tires and a steering wheel. The customer has to feel confident that they're buying the part that they need. "And you have to be interested in the industry; you've got to have an interest in cars," said Watson.

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Driving school offers tips for safe winter driving

WINCHESTER — There are literally hundreds of minor collisions reported on the first snow day of the season. How do you avoid becoming one of those numbers that are reported on the radio? The first thing Signature Driving School recommends to its students in Winchester to prepare themselves for winter is to prepare the car.

Make sure your battery is cranking well before the cold weather hits. Check your heater in September, before you decide that you need it only to realize that it no longer works.

Have all your fluids checked and replaced if necessary. Change your air filter. Run a fuel system cleaner to make sure that your car is running at optimum efficiency. Have your brakes and suspension checked out by a licensed mechanic.

Buy a set of winter tires and have them installed before the first snowfall so that you are prepared. The hardest time to get winter tires installed is right after the first snowfall. You get put on a waiting list. If you can't afford to buy four winter tires, at least buy two and put them on your drive wheels.

Be sure to equip your car with a winter safety kit including jumper cables, a blanket, candles, matches, a flashlight, cell phone and toque. Include everything you feel you may need to get out of a bad situation if you are stranded in winter. Make sure your wipers are in good working order, that the spring is holding them firmly to the window, and that the rubber on them is live. New wipers are about $20 for a set, well worth it to be able to see clearly.

Now that you have prepared your car for winter, what can you do as a driver to prepare yourself for the dangers of winter driving?

Leave early. Try not to be in a rush to get anywhere, so you won't be tempted to take unnecessary risks in the snow and ice. Slow down.

• continued on next page



Student at the wheel

Cars from Signature Driving School are commonly seen around Winchester. With classes at Henderson Hall, the school teaches a course consisting of 25 hours of driving theory and 10 hours of instruction on the road.

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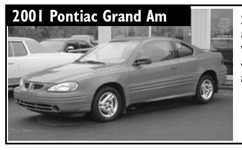
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D's Collision provides Discount rentals

By Bonnie James
Press staff



D's Collision on Dawley Drive in Winchester now offers vehicle rentals through Discount Car and Truck Rentals. The staff, from left, are: Phil Parent, Faron Fawcett, Bev Stewart, Kathy Carkner, Phil Carkner, Theo Janssen, and Dennis Carkner.

Press Photo — James

WINCHESTER — Winchester residents can now turn to D's Collision for all their vehicle rental needs, as well as the collision repairs the company has built its reputation on. The shop recently became a full-fledged Discount Car and Truck Rentals outlet.

D's Collision has been in business for 16 years, 12 in its current location on Dawley Drive. The shop specializes in collision repairs for both individual customers and insurance companies. The "D" stands for owner Dennis Carkner.

Fleet of 10 vehicles on site

The shop currently has seven staff members, including Carkner's son Phil — who has joined in the management and estimating end — and wife Kathy. Several of the staff members are long-term employees, like Bev Stewart who has been with the company since the beginning, anchoring the administrative and accounting departments.

Three years ago D's was the first Ontario shop to sign on with the Fix Auto brand. Now there are 50 Fix Auto storefronts in the province.

Carkner explained that while the label offers some brand recognition, the Winchester shop is still autonomous and able to maintain its own approach.

Carkner takes pride in the quality of service that D's offers. The shop undergoes a quality audit every six months and consistently performs at the top of the list of Fix Auto locations in the province.

The trend these days is for many customers to pay for their own collision repairs rather than going through their insurance company. To help facilitate that possibility, D's works with a financing company.

"A rental company is always an asset to a collision shop," said Carkner about the decision to become a Discount Car and Truck Rentals depot. He explained how his staff used to spend time chauffeuring clients to rental agencies in Cornwall or Ottawa.

"It was time consuming, gas-guzzling, and inconvenient for the customers," he said.

D's has been working with Discount Car and Truck Rentals for about the last four years, but only offered the rental service to its collision customers.

Now as a full-fledged Discount rental depot, D's is serving its own collision clients, as well as those who are just looking to rent a vehicle. The shop regularly has a fleet of about 10 vehicles on site and can accommodate requests for everything from compacts and full-size cars to vans and trucks. The fleet is always made up of new vehicles.

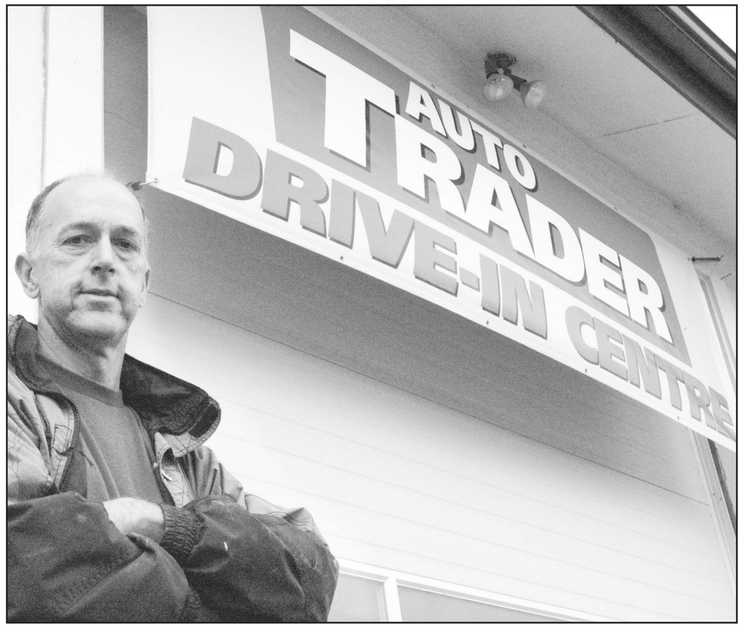
"It's been a steady increase every month," said Phil Carkner about the rental business. With no similar rental outlet in the surrounding villages, word is spreading about this new perk for area residents.

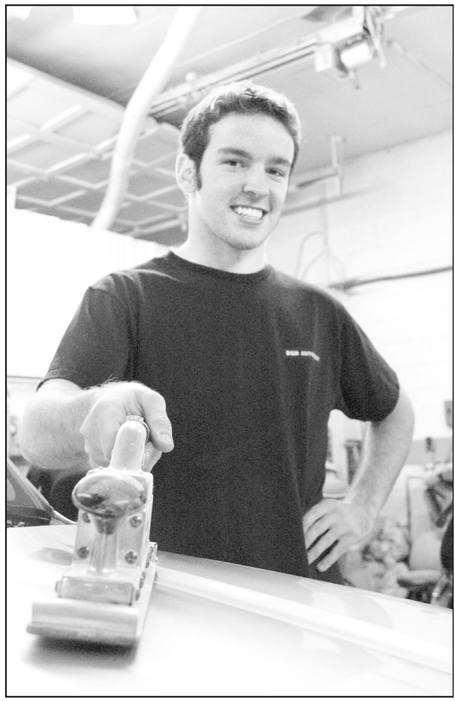
D's Collision often offers weekend rental specials, so keep them in mind the next time you need to rent a vehicle for out-of-town guests or to take a road trip.

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Above: BGM Autobody is now an Auto Trader photo depot. Right: Tyler Maloney, a part-time employee at BGM Autobody, works on his newly purchased 1998 Toyota Tacoma.

Photos — Meagher

BGM Autobody

Bodyshop now an *Auto Trader* photo depot

by Sean Meagher

METCALFE — The *Auto Trader* magazine has officially extended its reach to areas around Winchester, Metcalfe and everywhere in between with the help of BGM Autobody.

The Metcalfe car body repair shop recently announced that it will serve as a photograph drop-off spot for people who wish to place an advertisement for their car in an issue of the *Auto Trader.* Customers can bring their vehicle to BGM Autobody, have its picture taken, then have it sent to the new and used car sales magazine.

"It's a drive-in centre for locals to come in and place an ad [for *Auto Trader*] rather than go into town to do it," said Brian Maloney, BGM Autobody owner.

"They bring us the car then we take a picture of it and we just take it from there," said Maloney, who makes sure the various advertisements are distributed to the *Auto Trader* for its weekly deadline.

BGM Autobody offers services such as custom parts sales and installation, insurance related repairs and overall vehicle body repairs. The business is run by Maloney as well as three full-time and two part-time workers including his two 16-year-old sons, Tyler and Ryan.

Although repairing a car's body can be tedious and sometimes frustrating work, Maloney said the outcome is well worth the effort. "I like to see the turnaround and outcome of the cars," said Maloney who believes the best part of his job is to see the looks of appreciation of his customers after seeing their vehicles repaired. "It's a very gratifying job," he said.

Complete paint and collision repairs are Maloney's specialty and the shop is also equipped with a state-of-the-art paint-mixing machine that helps achieve exact color matches.

"The paint-mixing machine really helps us to get the colors right and to make the cars look as appealing as possible," said Maloney.

A few rows of cars lined up outside BGM Autobody display opposite ends of the car repair spectrum. Some cars have rusted holes and rotted bottoms, while others have just finished drying after a new coat of paint and are looking brand new.

"We get people from Winchester, Embrun, Manotick, Russell, and all over Ottawa," said Maloney. BGM Autobody is located on County Road 31 just south of Metcalfe. For more information about the *Auto Trader* drop-off or service price inquiries call 821-3345.

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New Chrysler 300 a classy ride

by Bonnie James
Press staff

WINCHESTER — It's sleek looking and a smooth ride. Test driving the 2005 Chrysler 300 is a delicious treat.

One of the latest offerings from Chrysler, the 300 is a rear-wheel drive sedan with power to spare. The design features more steel and less glass, giving it a unique look with excellent safety cage construction. Standard features include 17-inch wheels, four-wheel disc brakes and an Electronic Stability Program.

"They're selling the same way that the PT Cruisers were when they came out," said Derrick Benda, sales manager at Boyd Chrysler in Winchester. The first one the shop had stayed on the lot for a week, and the second one for a mere hour. Interest is high in this new sedan.

The car comes in several models: the top-of-the-line 300 C, 300 Limited, 300 Touring, and the base 300 version. Depending on the model you select features such as a sunroof, rear park assist, leather interior, navigation system, and heated seats are all available.

One of the keys to the 300's popularity is the option of a 5.7L HEMI V8 engine. "It's got everybody stir-crazy," said Benda. While the power of the HEMI is what attracts some drivers, the engine is updated to take into account modern considerations as well.

The Multi-Displacement System HEMI system deactivates four of the eight cylinders during light acceleration or cruising, making the vehicle more fuel economical. The 300's fuel economy rating is 35 miles per gallon.



The rear-wheel drive will please many drivers and the car has an Electronic Stability Program — consisting of an anti-lock brake system, traction control, yaw control, and steering control — to assist in less-than-ideal weather conditions. "It will correct you if you're into a slide or a spin," said Benda. It's also cheaper to repair a rear-wheel drive vehicle in the event of a front-end collision.

Safety is a prime consideration in the 300. Side-curtain air bags are available and front air bags are multistage — meaning they determine the forcefulness of their deployment based on the passenger's weight.

The 17-inch wheels also contribute to safety. "More tire holds the road better," noted Benda.

"They are the future," he added about the 300. The car's technology combined with a reasonable price point make it attractive to a wide range of consumers.

TEST DRIVE

The car this reporter test-drove was the 300 base model which houses a 3.5L V6 engine. It is incredibly swank looking. The 300's design and feel is luxurious beyond its price point. The wide front grill and the narrower windows provide a unique and almost retro style.

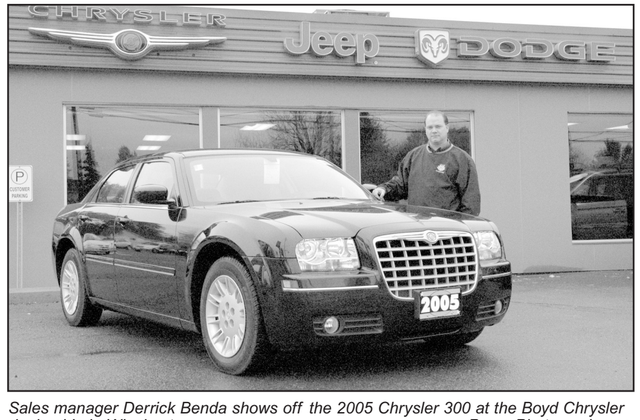
The interior has an uncomplicated layout and most everything is touch control. Benda pointed out that since Chrysler was acquired by Daimler — the makers of Mercedes — the Chrysler interiors have become simpler and more stylish. A nice touch is the analog clock on the dash — which reminded me of a classy wristwatch.

The small details such as tilt steering and an ergonomically shaped windshield-wiper lever go a long way to making the car comfortable to drive.

The interior is spacious, including the back seat: lots of room to get in and install a child's car seat or to allow passengers to relax on a long trip. The trunk is decently sized as well. A false bottom lifts to reveal the spare tire and the car's battery.

The car rides smoothly and has lots of oomph when you hit the gas. It corners well and always feels safe — without feeling too bulky to manoeuvre. The Chrysler 300 is easy and enjoyable to drive.

Winchester's Boyd Chrysler is a five-star DaimlerChrysler dealer. The shop has built its business on service.



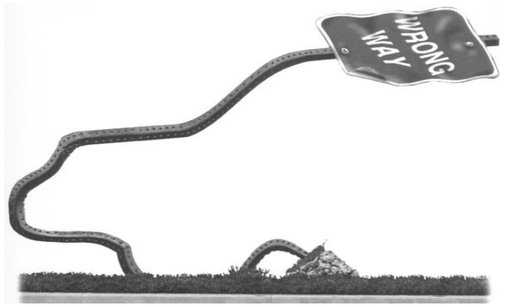
Sales manager Derrick Benda shows off the 2005 Chrysler 300 at the Boyd Chrysler dealership in Winchester. *Press Photo — James*



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