

CONTACT US
Erick Bengel | Features Editor
ebengel@dailyastorian.com

**WEEKEND
BREAK**



FOLLOW US
facebook.com/
DailyAstorian



SUMMER WHEELS

WHICH RIDE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Buying a vehicle is a complex decision. It pays to do your research.

Today's new cars are stocked with amazing features regarding both safety and technology. By taking the time to research different models before even walking onto a dealer's lot, you'll have the upper hand in scoring a great deal and buying within your means.

Using resources such as the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's rating system allows you to scrutinize details to discover the safest car to bring home. This tool is incredibly helpful for parents who will be using their vehicles to transport young children.

While the protection a new car offers should be one of your main priorities, there are other useful factors you should research to make your buying experience a breeze.

Find prices for the same model at different dealerships.

Having a firm grasp on the sale price of a vehicle in several different dealerships in your area might give you the edge in negotiating a better price.

Don't be afraid to tell your salesman of the deals you find elsewhere. They might be willing to beat the final cost or include awesome extras to entice you into buying from them.

You can also benefit from discovering similar models in different lots around your community.

Even if you are fixated on a certain vehicle, you might find a type from a competing manufacturer that works better for your likes and budget.

It saves time on the lot.

When you head to a dealership, it can be easy to get distracted by the incredible features on vehicles you might not have considered. Try to keep your eyes on the few models you studied and deemed appropriate for your budget and lifestyle.

Making a spur-of-the-moment purchase on something as expensive as a car can have disastrous results financially.

Show your salesman you know your stuff.

When you know the ins and outs of the vehicle you are considering, you will have a sense of confidence when negotiating. This is a big advantage when trying to work out a price that satisfies both parties.

It will also help to know the trim levels of a particular model. Rather than including individual "extras" like in the past, manufacturers package different features

DRIVING SAFETY: BY THE NUMBERS

While you may be an attentive and exceptional driver, don't let yourself become convinced that accidents won't happen to you.

The following statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2016 Fatal Traffic Crash Data reveal the serious dangers present each time you're behind the wheel.

- There were 10,428 fatalities attributed to drunk-driving accidents — a four-percent increase from 2015.
- U.S. roadways saw a 5.6-percent increase in fatal accidents in 2016: 37,461 vs. 35,485 in 2015.
- Alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 28 percent of the overall fatalities in 2016.
- The country averaged 102 fatalities per day on its roadways; pedestrians accounted for 16 of these daily tragedies.
- There were 5,286 motorcyclists killed in accidents, 2,089 of these drivers were not wearing helmets.
- Large trucks were involved in collisions which took the lives of 4,317 people.
- In fatal truck accidents, its occupants accounted for 17 percent of those who perished, other vehicles made up 72 percent and non-occupants made up 11 percent.
- 5,987 were killed in traffic collisions; 2,222 of them had a BAC of .01 or higher.
- Seat belts were credited with saving 14,668 lives for people 5 years of age and older.
- Frontal airbags saved 2,756 lives of people 13 and older.
- There was an average of 29 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per day.
- The nationwide seat belt usage rate is at 90.1 percent. However, 10,428 of the year's fatalities were unrestrained.

—Green Shoot Media

into separate sub-models. If there is a trim that works best for you but isn't on the lot, see if the salesman can order you one. You might even be able to arrange delivery to your home.

4WD vs AWD TRUCKS

Pickup trucks are incredibly popular in America because of their rugged ability to haul heavy loads or act as family vehicles. Their cabins are more luxurious and spacious than ever, and safety features on newer models are cutting edge.

A common feature in trucks is the incredible convenience of making all the wheels work together.

While the general operation of all-wheel drive and four-wheel-drive provide similar results, there are major differences in how it is achieved. Understanding the difference is important when deciding which one is right for you.

Be sure to consult with your local dealership experts to weigh each option, as each has advantages and disadvantages.

How 4WD works

The heart of a four-wheel drive system is its transfer case. This system of intricate gears is used to distribute power to the front

and rear differentials, which in turn power each axle to turn both sets of wheels.

Four-wheel drive is typically considered a part-time system as it is not engaged until the driver turns it on.

Older vehicles used manual-locking hubs which forced people out of their trucks to manually unlock them before the wheels would be freed from the front-axle shafts. Today, most trucks feature a switch in the cabin to easily turn it on and off.

How AWD is achieved

The major difference in this system is that it does not require manual activation. Instead, it is always on, waiting on cues from sensors that sense loss of traction and report to the computer, which determines how much power is needed to grip the road.

Rather than relying on a transfer case, all-wheel-drive trucks feature a center differential to distribute power from the transmission to the front and rear axles.

Advantages and disadvantages

The power of four powerful wheels moving is extremely helpful to those who live in areas with inclement weather conditions and who use their trucks for hauling.

So which one is the best for you?

Four-wheel drive is typically considered a part-time system. If you feel you can get by without it, driving in rear-wheel drive provides better gas economy and less strain on the system.

It is a great asset to enlist when traveling off-road or driving through heavy snow. However, there are many moving parts to keep the system working properly. Some come with expensive repairs.

All-wheel drive gives vehicles better traction, automatic acceleration in poor-weather conditions and impressive handling on smooth roads.

One problem you might have when traveling in heavy snow or rain is the sensors in charge of switching to all-wheel-drive might become obstructed, and no longer able to interact with the computer. Components of this system can also be expensive to repair.

Be sure to understand what your truck is capable of by consulting with local dealership experts or referencing your owner's manual.

All-terrain pickups

It seems that vehicle manufacturers have been so concerned with fuel economy, luxury and comfort that they forgot about the truck enthusiasts who want a rugged option to take off road.

That isn't the case anymore as popular vehicles are getting all-terrain packages that are sure to appease every fanatic.

If you love beefy suspensions, off-road tires and expanded maneuverability, you'll be excited to know that three of the largest vehicle manufacturers offer all-terrain pickups.

CONSIDERING AN ELECTRIC CAR?

If you're in the market for a new car and are looking for a complete change of pace from the vehicles you owned in the past, an electric car might be the breath of fresh air you need.

There are, of course, many factors you should consider before making the investment.

An electric vehicle is one that's powered by an electric motor rather than a gasoline engine. While hybrid vehicles are sometimes confused as electric, they rely on fuel and incorporate a battery and engine to boost efficiency.

See RIDE, Page 2C



A silver pickup truck with four-wheel drive



An electric car plugged into a charging station