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The Taurus has earned five stars - the highest possible U.S. Government crash test rating - for front impact for both driver and front passenger - two years in a row.**

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WISE BUYERS READ THE LEGAL COPY: *0.9% purchase financing on new in-stock 2000 Taurus/2000 Explorer/2000 F-150 excluding SVT Lightning and Harley Davidson Limited Editions for a maximum of 48 months to retail customers, on approved credit. E.g. \$15,000 financed at 0.9% annual percentage rate for 48 months, monthly payment is \$318.27, cost of borrowing is \$276.96 and total to be repaid is \$15,276.96. Down payment or equivalent trade may be required, based on approved credit. Financing not available with any other offer. **\$1000 customer credit to the purchase of any new in-stock 2000 Mustang. Credit paid to dealer. Limited time offers. Offers may be cancelled at any time without notice. See Dealer for details. **The highest front impact rating for both the driver and front passenger in U.S. government National Highway Traffic Safety Administration testing (www.nhtsa.com). Based on retail registrations year to date R.L. Polk Registration for August 2000 CYTD, May 2000 CYTD, December 1999 CYTD. Ontario FDA, P.O. Box 2000, Oakville, Ontario L6J 5E4



The 2001 Honda Civic has earned a nomination for the Best new Economy Car from the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC)

Stiff competition for Best new Economy Car

By Rob Beintema
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

Long strings of light glow mysteriously ahead as you creep slowly through the morning mist, a fuzzy image reminiscent of a fog-bound airport, Bogart and Bergman in "Casablanca." Or, maybe, you decide, a scene from the X-Files, as you notice blurred, dark figures moving eerily through the glare, blinking from light to light.

It's only as you draw closer that the picture finally resolves, revealing long lines of cars and trucks beneath the dawn shadows of Shannonville Motorsport Park. Parked in staggered rows with their lights on, engines warming, as detailing teams scramble around the vehicles, readying them for the early morning start of the 2001 Canadian Car of the Year Test Fest.

Every year, automotive writers from across the country - members of the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC) - gather at a racetrack just outside Belleville, Ontario to test the yearly crop of automotive products - brand new or significantly altered models in every category from cars to minivans to trucks. This year's competition featured sixty-six different new entries in fifteen distinct categories.

It's a competition unique to the international automotive world and Canadian journalists evaluate each entry thoroughly, weighing pros and cons through manufacturer's presentations, walk-arounds, track testing, off-road testing and driving comparisons on repetitive routes along public roads. Most of the automotive writers have also familiarized themselves with the vehicles by attending international auto shows, going to automotive launches of the new products and through test-drives throughout the year. At the end of the competition, when the comparison testing is completed, teams cast individual ballots that are independently tabulated, the results to be revealed at the next spring's Canadian auto shows.

I was involved in several test teams, most of them bread and butter categories that included Best New Economy, Best New Station Wagon, Best New Minivan, with one eclectic exception that reflected the best and worst of the sport utility craze - Best New Luxury SUV.

(See 'Impressive' page C5)

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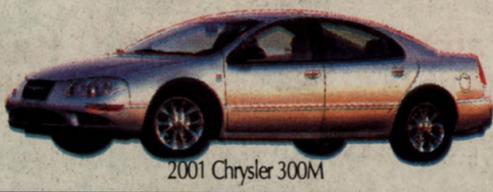
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Night driving tips

☐ Look as far ahead as you can. If you can see an object that might present a hazard, assume that it will, and slow down until you are absolutely certain it is not a hazard. Keep your windshield clean. A windshield that is dirty inside or outside causes glare, decreasing visibility. Windshield wipers that leave streaks or chatter across the windshield also decrease visibility and should be replaced. Clean properly aligned headlights are also very important for identifying hazards.

☐ Avoid over-driving your headlights. When an object becomes illuminated by your headlights, you should be driving slow enough to stop your car safely without hitting it.

☐ Make sure other drivers can see you. Keep your tail-lights, turn signals, and brake lights clean and in good working order. It only takes a moment to walk around the car to check these systems. Have someone sit inside the car to operate the lights, brakes and turn signals. Or it's easy to check yourself in an enclosed area. Use your high beams, but don't forget to dim them for on-coming traffic or cars in front of you.