

# motors north

Fri 1st – Thurs 7th **JANUARY 2010**



## WILD THING

**TESTDRIVE** P2+3

Latest Z4 is just too headstrong for its own good

**NEW CHAPTER FOR  
MAZDA'S FAMOUS 5** – P4



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# Eco-exercise put me on the road to efficient driving

Always conscious of rising fuel costs and the environmental impact of exhaust emissions, **motorsnorth** editor **DAVID MORGAN** took to the road under the critical eye of an eco-driving instructor to see how he could improve his economy and drive with a little more concern for the environment.

**THE Energy Saving Trust contacted me recently and suggested that, when it came to driving, I "could do better".**

Not a comment on my car-piloting skills – but an invitation to see if I could improve my driving and use less fuel, drive more smoothly and help do my bit for the environment.

Fair enough – but, as someone who likes getting as much out of a gallon as possible, I doubted they would be able to hone my economy to any significant amount.

I met DriveSense instructor Clive Scott in Forres and was introduced to his two-litre Toyota Auris turbodiesel – an “ordinary” family hatch that should be able to average around 54 mpg.

“I’m not here to criticise your driving,” Clive reassured me. “I’m here to see how you drive and suggest how you might improve economy and

cut your car exhaust emissions.”

Okay, let’s do it!

Over a pre-arranged route of just over eight miles of urban, trunk and side roads, Clive had earlier averaged 58 mpg at an average speed of 36 mph and covered the distance in 13 minutes.

My go.

Attempt number one, driving as I would have done normally, saw me achieve 52.6 mpg at an average 38 mph in 12 minutes.

Clive was reasonably impressed – and I was reasonably pleased with myself.

“But I think you can do better,” he added.

Eh?

“Try getting into a higher gear earlier, anticipate what traffic is doing ahead of you a little more. Judge your approach to traffic lights so the car progresses smoothly, and maintain as steady a speed as

traffic conditions allow,” he advised.

Taking his advice to heart, I did “try a little harder” and attempt two saw me hit 66.7 mpg with an average 34 mph and a route time of 14 minutes.

“Now, that’s better,” Clive told me. “You were smoother, in a higher gear nice and early, and your cruising speed was steady but not too slow for other traffic... But I think you could do better!”

Eh?

We discussed smooth use of controls, planning manoeuvres that might use extra fuel, and how to maintain speed and safety without having to brake and accelerate where it was not necessary.

All sensible stuff and easy to tackle.

My third and last attempt was a revelation. Putting into practice what we’d just discussed, I improved my econ-



DriveSense eco-driving instructor Clive Scott – his advice on a light touch at the wheel and on the throttle delivered big dividends for David Morgan.

omy to 69.9 mpg, maintained a 37 mph average and completed the route in 13 minutes.

In other words, a significant increase in economy with a consequent reduction in emissions, and a route time just 60

seconds longer than my first effort which had been accomplished with 17 fewer miles to the gallon.

The exercise proved how taking time to think about how you drive, progressing

more smoothly, and avoiding unnecessary throttle and brake pumping can make a world of difference – to your pocket and to the environment – with little impact on the time you spend on any given journey.

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\*Source: ABC Combined Newspaper Titles Jan-Dec 08

## Top tips for a cleaner, greener journey

DRIVESENSE instructor Clive Scott offers the following 10 tips for more efficient, cleaner driving:

- 1 Shift into a higher gear earlier – the engine’s working less hard
- 2 Drive a little slower – it saves fuel
- 3 Switch off air conditioning – it cuts fuel use
- 4 Don’t drive with windows open – it causes drag
- 5 Check your tyre pressures – under-inflation generates drag
- 6 Maintain a steady speed in a high gear – it uses least fuel
- 7 Anticipate road conditions – it helps to avoid

fuel-greedy braking and acceleration

8 Remove excess weight – detritus in the boot guzzles fuel

9 Take roof racks and boxes off – they generate huge drag factors

10 Switch off the engine if you are stationary for more than a minute or so – idling for too long costs money in fuel

● It’s not rocket science – smooth, careful driving really can help stop your pocket haemorrhaging money.

Follow Clive’s advice and you really will make a difference to your economy.

Plan your journeys so you are not having to rush and that’ll bring another benefit – your journeys will become smoother and less stressful.

With petrol and diesel hovering around the 110p-a-litre mark, none of us can afford to be wasteful.

Even my early attempts as eco-driving ended up saving me more than a litre in every gallon – that’s a £+ saved every 50 miles or so, and less pollution too.

To find out more, call 0800 512012 or log on to [www.energysavingtrust.co.uk/scotland](http://www.energysavingtrust.co.uk/scotland)

*David Morgan*