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30-year-old cars: classic car plate instead of crisis of purpose

Unlike many a motorist, cars do not enter a crisis of purpose when they hit 30; yet 30 is a genuine turning point for them, too: If they've got what it takes, they may be culturally worthy of joining the ranks of our "automotive cultural heritage". Their reward is to be issued the H number plate, marking them out as a "historically noteworthy vehicle".

Digital used car purchase: personal contact still essential

The Germans have long since embraced the digital world in the world of buying and selling used cars. For example, the majority of interested parties make a beeline for the internet for an online search. Results of a survey conducted by Ipsos and DEKRA reveal that 60 percent prioritize digital contact with the trade, yet still do not want to miss out on direct, personal contact.

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Driving license exchange: arrange an appointment in good time

Millions of motorists need to exchange their driving licenses

Time to get digital

Many motorists have still yet to exchange their driving license before the end of 2022. The old paper wallet format of the driving license issued before December 31, 1998 and the owners of which were born between 1953 and 1958 are the first to be affected. This group should have exchanged by January 19, 2022, but due to the current Corona-related problems, no sanctions will be imposed until mid-2022.

“Motorists should arrange an appointment at the driving license center as soon as possible so as to receive the new driving license document in good time,” says Thomas Riedel, head of DEKRA’s driving license center. Motorists are legally obliged to exchange their documents so any car driver or biker continuing to use the old documentation risks a fine of 10 euros and possible problems abroad. The non-exchange of truck and bus driving licenses is even considered a criminal offence.

Those born between 1959 and 1964 have until January 19, 2023, to exchange their driving license booklet for the new check card format. Driving license experts at DEKRA inform readers that this format has been standardized across the EU and provides better protection against falsification.

The exchange can be carried out at the driving license authorities responsible, but also at some local council offices. The process costs 25.30 euros. Delivery to your door by the federal printing office entails an additional, one-off fee of 5.10 euros. Motorists will be able to retain their old driving license; however, these will only have nostalgic value as the old driving license will be invalidated by the driving license authorities.

In contrast to the old driving license, the new driving license will have an expiry date. Riedel explains: “The new regulation requires a driving license to be issued every 15 years. This means the demise of the frequently decades-old, photo-booth shot in the old document. The regulation will also require an update of the license if the holder changes his or her name.”

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Spring check: fill up with summer windshield washer fluid

DEKRA tips:

Getting your car fit for the spring

With the advent of spring, it is once again time to do some work on the car, removing the traces of winter and getting it ready for the warmer months. This work ranges from a thorough wash to patching up paintwork, and extends to tire change and minor repairs.

Aggressive salts and dirt residue from the winter are best removed with a thorough wash, which includes the underbody. This also means a prewash, as otherwise hardened dirt stains could leave unsightly scratches in the paint. Small imperfections in the paintwork are best remedied by using a touch-up pen before the damage spreads. This should be followed by applying a hard wax finish to the bodywork to protect against undesired attack from things such as acid rain, insect residue or weather.

Winter equipment such as snow chains, anti-freeze or starter cables is no longer required and should be stowed away in summer quarters. This saves weight and reduces fuel consumption. Putting the car out in the sun and opening the doors wide helps against moisture around the floor pan, spreading out newspaper on the floor here is also beneficial. Also, grease the door locks, give some loving care to the door rubber seals and replace worn wiper blades. The windshield fluid should also be switched over to a summer version. A brief check will show if all the lights and headlights function perfectly.

The checklist also includes the switch from winter to summer tires. "Examine the tires for damage and uneven tread wear and consult a tire specialist if you come across anything," recommends DEKRA tire expert Christian Koch. "It also only makes sense to fit summer tires if they still have sufficient tread depth and not just the legally prescribed 1.6 millimeters." After this, the tire pressure has to be adjusted when the tires are cold.

People who do not fancy getting their hands dirty themselves, can also take advantage of the spring check offered by many garages and take this opportunity to have the vehicle mechanics including air conditioning and interior filter checked. DEKRA Info



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30-year-old cars: classic registration plate instead of crisis of purpose

30-year-old cars can be awarded a classic registration plate

Categorization as a “cultural asset” has its advantages

Unlike many a motorist, cars do not enter a crisis of purpose when they hit 30; yet 30 is a genuine turning point for them, too: If they’ve got what it takes, they may be culturally worthy of joining the ranks of our “automotive cultural heritage”. Their reward is to be issued the H number plate, marking them out as a “historically noteworthy vehicle”.

Legislators offer a favorable flat-rate vehicle tax to encourage classic car owners to apply for veteran status for their vehicles. DEKRA classic car expert Andreas Lahne says, “the H registration plate means that nothing stands in the way of driving the classic car on the road. Also, the car can be driven in environmental zones without a green sticker as long as there are no other contrary regulations at the regional level.”

Owners merely wishing to take their pride and joy to classic car events are well served by the red 07 registration variant, which does not require an operating license. This registration variant is also of interest to collectors possessing several vehicles, especially as the number plate can be used for more than one vehicle. Preconditions for the red 07 plate are a classic car expertise conducted by an automotive expert in accordance with Section 23 of the Road Traffic Licensing Authority as well as the consent of the local registration center.

In order to apply for an H number plate from the registration center, the vehicle must have received its first registration for road use more than 30 years ago, have a valid inspection approval sticker and to be in good condition. Moreover, it must for the most part comply with the original state or have been restored using original parts. However, modifications typical for the first ten years of the model after initial registration are permissible.

The following documents are required for H registration: in addition to a valid passport, the electronic insurance confirmation (the eVB number), the registration certifications I and II (certificate and document), a valid main inspection report, as well as valid classic car expertise in accordance with Section 23 of the Road Traffic Licensing Authority and in some cases, the previous registration number.

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Used car purchase: One in three appreciates personal contact

Used car purchase: the triumph of digital media

Personal contact still essential

The Germans have long since embraced the digital world when it comes to buying and selling used cars. For example, the majority of interested parties make a beeline for the internet to do an online search. Results of a survey conducted by Ipsos and DEKRA reveal that 60 percent prioritize digital contact with the trade, yet still do not want to miss out on direct, personal contact. This figure represents an increase of 8 percent on 2017.

Despite the triumph of digitalization, a good third (34%) of people interviewed still valued direct, personal contact with the trade representative. One out of four of interested parties (25 percent) favored – even despite the influence of the Corona pandemic – a face-to-face conversation on site with the dealer. And 9 percent of those asked prefer contacting the dealership by phone.

Utilization of internet sources to gather information for a used car purchase was a standard approach for the majority (79%). Top spot is taken by online vehicle exchanges such as mobile.de or autoscout24.de, visited by two out of three car buyers (68%). The car dealership (41%) and vehicle manufacturer websites (30%), were equally well frequented, and came ahead of special used car apps (25%) and internet forums (20%). The DEKRA study recorded a heightened interest in video films. Special YouTube clips containing buyer advice or tests are on the rise in popularity. As a source of information for buyers they have increased from 6 percent four years ago to 16 percent now.

The general public's leaning towards the digital media also frequently goes hand in hand with a high level of expectation. For example, many customers in Germany expect a swift reaction to an online question, 41 percent expecting a response within a maximum of two hours. When deciding on a vehicle purchase, buyers in Germany do not place the greatest emphasis on price. The price is only the second most important criterion and comes after an uncomplicated purchasing process.

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Getting into lane: Stay on track

The technical services organization DEKRA reminds readers that anybody that joins a lane at a junction or a turn-off road entrance must continue driving in the indicated direction, even if they have inadvertently joined the wrong lane. Crossing over lanes to continue one's journey is not allowed, for example. The Road Traffic Regulations require motorists to get into lane as soon as possible so that vehicles behind are prepared for the maneuver. In heavy traffic, anticipatory driving is called for and an early change of lane advisable. In addition, each lane change is to be indicated by timely and clear use of directional indicator lights. Motorists turning left or right are also obligated when conducting the maneuver to look behind them one more time before performing the maneuver. Motorists turning right should be wary of cyclists coming up on the right-hand side and motorists turning left should check whether a following vehicle has commenced an overtaking maneuver.

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Online trade: numerous violations of chemical regulations

Cleaning agents, paints, clothing, furniture or electrical devices – you name it, products sold on online platforms frequently violate the current regulations on hazardous substance maximum limits and labeling. The European Chemical Agency conducted a test of around 6,000 products offered for sale by online shops in 2020 and found cause for complaint concerning 70 percent of the products on offer because they contained carcinogens, mutagens and substances toxic for reproduction (CRM) impermissible for use by the end user. Three out of four of hazardous substances legally required to appear on the label were either not mentioned at all or insufficiently so in the online offer. DEKRA experts remind readers that the REACH Regulation stipulates strict maximums for numerous hazardous substances such as lead, cadmium, nickel, PAK and plasticizers. Violations are deemed a criminal offence in Germany.

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