



CAR CARE CORNER

Today's Performance Parts Kick Your Car Into Gear And Save Gas

(NAPSI)—How many times have you tried to accelerate onto a freeway with cars zipping by and couldn't get the power to do it safely? It's kind of scary, right? Or how about when the van's filled with kids you're taking to a soccer game and the super-slow-going uphill quickly turns the trip downhill. It's kind of frustrating, right? The problem isn't your driving. Most likely, it's something lacking from what you're driving: automotive performance. You don't have to be a car nut, watch "Pimp My Ride" reruns religiously or have a "Fast & Furious" tattoo to know your vehicle is underpowered. All you need to do is step on the gas and wait and wait...and worry.

"Performance is not just a need-for-speed type of scenario," says Peter MacGillivray, vice president of events and communication for the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), a 50-year-old automotive trade organization with 6,500-plus member companies.

"Performance-challenged vehicles are a common issue. We're finding more drivers of all ages are now looking to heighten their driving experience and even improve gas savings via performance add-on products." MacGillivray likened the performance products trend to home entertainment.

"Consumers go out and buy a new 55-inch flat-screen TV and find the sound quality is good but could be much better. So then they go buy additional speakers, subwoofers or soundbars to pump it up. It's the same with a



car. People are adding a variety of performance parts to make their vehicles run better."

SEMA has a website at www.enjoythedrive.com where consumers can find and learn about a litany of performance parts, as well as the latest products to improve a vehicle's appearance, comfort and overall ride.

"It's a good place to start, especially for the nonautomotive person," says MacGillivray. "Today's automotive aftermarket products are highly innovative and technologically advanced. For example, in many cases, you don't have to give up engine performance for fuel economy, which is pretty cool technology."

For the automotive novice, MacGillivray offered some performance upgrade suggestions:

- **Breathe easy:** Like a human body, a car's engine needs air to run better (and faster). A variety of products, ranging from performance air filters to air intake systems, will make your car breathe easier, and the extra airflow will translate to more horsepower and better gas mileage.
- **Keep cool:** We've all seen overheated cars on the side of the road,

hood up, steam pouring out and frustration boiling over. In short, the biggest performance killer is heat, so let cooler engines prevail. To make sure the heat's not on, there are a number of cooling performance upgrades such as thermostats, cold-air intakes, intercoolers and automotive cooling fans.

- **Sound off:** Performance exhaust systems and sporty mufflers boost horsepower and can improve gas mileage. But wait, there's more: They sound so cool. Dropping the kids off at school and watching their friends do a double take when your engine growls: priceless.

- **Chip in:** Used to be a big, bad gas-guzzling engine was the key to power. Today, a small performance chip can do the same, sans the fuel consumption. Consider it a computer upgrade for your car that will bring better engine efficiency, which will allow you to do things like accelerate faster, pass quicker and tow more without burning extra fuel.

- **A real kick:** As mentioned, forcing more air into an engine creates more horsepower. The air force will really be with you with a turbocharger or supercharger. These are big-time fun boosters with acceleration aplenty.

- **Take a seat:** OK, a race-style performance seat won't make your car go faster, but they are supercomfy and will make you look and feel like Speed Racer.

- **Rubber hits the road:** Tires are, unfortunately, mostly overlooked, but they are the only part of a vehicle that touches the road. If you're upgrading your car's performance, supersticky rubber should be considered. The correct set of tires will provide more grip for sharper road handling and braking. Also, keeping them properly inflated will get you better gas mileage.

"Performance products are very mainstream and easy to buy and get installed," says MacGillivray. "They are readily available from local auto parts stores, mass retailers, car dealerships and, of course, online."

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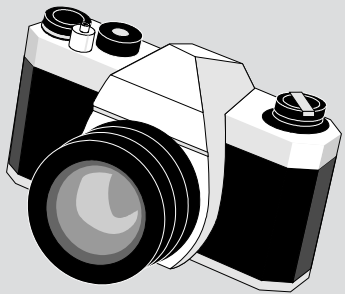
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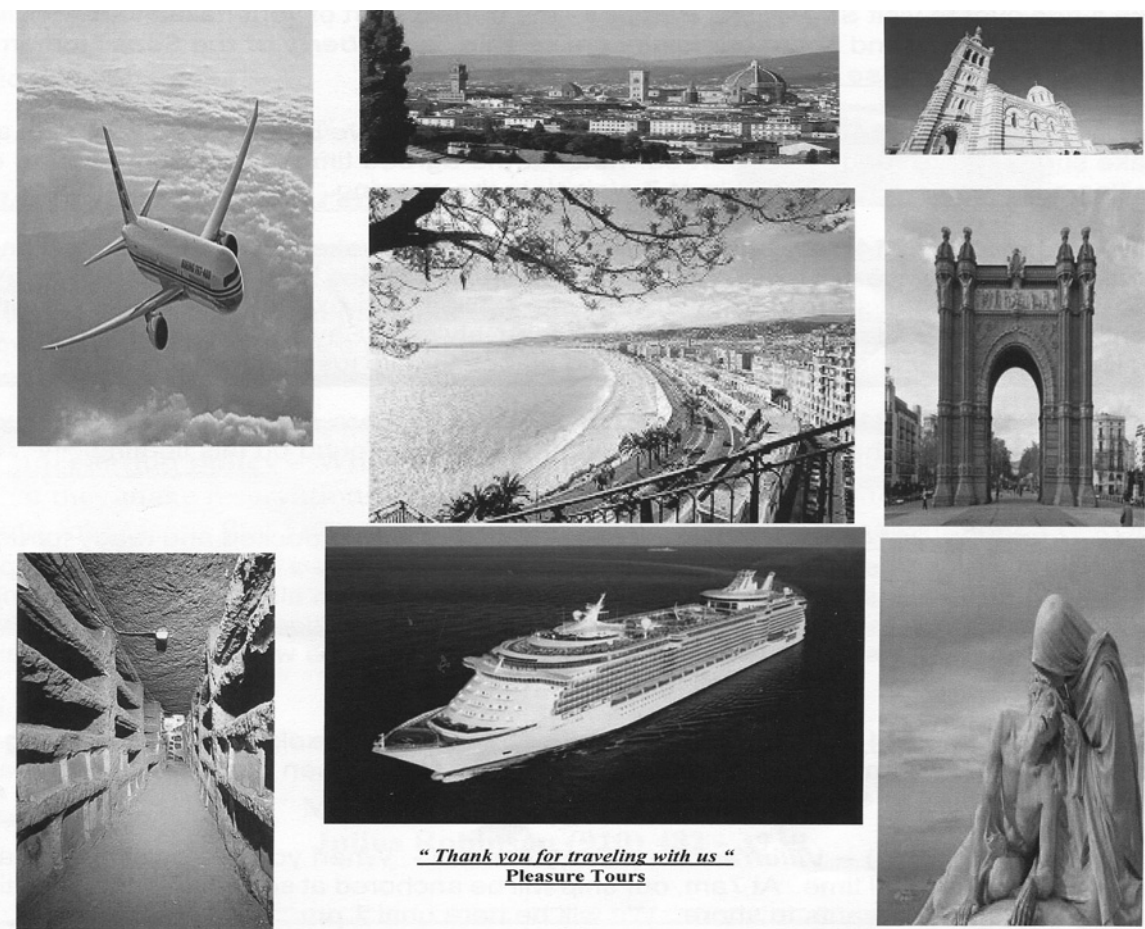
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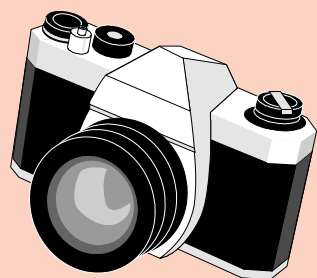
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