



In Accord

WE got all sort of breathless last week about the enhanced specifications of the 2005 Honda Accord Euro — 17-inch wheels and tweaked suspension on the Luxury range, plus full-size spares for the entry-level and Luxury Euros.

With price reductions of \$300 to \$500, this makes a pretty brilliant car nigh on irresistible. Honda, however, is really getting with the tariff-drop program by offering free rego, CTP, five-year roadside assistance and a five-year warranty on most models until January 31.

Oh, for some feeling

“WHEN you’re on a good thing,” as someone with a wobble board and a beard once said, “stick to it.”

Equally, when you’re selling a record number of units a year, you can tell the auto hacks where they can stick it.

Toyota is to excitement as BMW is to standard equipment. Despite that — or quite likely because of it — Toyota finished 2004 as the best-selling marque in Australia. (Bimmer did all right too — proving that you can gouge some of the people all of the time.)

So why bother building models that are in any way engaging or anything other than whitegoods on wheels when you’re winning? Because you CAN, that’s why.

Pits is the first to acknowledge that we auto hacks are apt to myopically obsess on



Less than sporty: Lexus IS300

cars that nobody buys or can afford to buy. Weirder yet, we prefer manuals.

But would it kill Toyota to give us a genuine sports sedan? (No, the Lexus IS300 does NOT count.) How about a decent hot hatch or coupe?

I mean, how does Ralf Schumacher feel about his new company car?

Online bottom line

PITS had more or less decided on our next private car when we logged on to www.carsurvey.org — a library of assessments by owners from all over the world. New Zealand, even.

The Lifers section of www.topgear.com serves a similar, if Brit-specific, purpose.

It’s a truism that people seldom write or e-mail unless they have something unpleasant to say.

Then again, given our feeble lemon laws and official bodies’ lack of interest in collating data on model reliability, another truism takes precedence:



A-class act: Evelyn Lundstrom and her practical Mercedes-Benz A-Class

Picture: Matthew Vasilescu

Showing you’re going places

By MARK ABERNETHY

“YOU can tell a lot about where someone’s going by the car they use to get there.” That’s the view of image consultant Evelyn Lundstrom, owner of the First Impressions consultancy.

Her business advises ambitious and powerful people how to manage perceptions about themselves through their clothes, their grooming, their speech and their car.

“A car says a lot about the owner,” Lundstrom says. “And it’s not just the car itself, but the condition it’s kept in.”

“A Mercedes S-class says you’re a serious person, interested in classic prestige. A big Lexus is about safety: ‘I’m playing the game.’

“Neither is creative. Porsches and Peugeots are creative.”

So what does Lundstrom herself drive? “I’ve got an A-class Mercedes right now. I’m basically between cars.”

Lundstrom urges her own clients to embrace their dreams and be generous with themselves.

So it was galling for Lundstrom two years ago when she had to give up the white 1986 Porsche 911 Carrera she had

Me and my car

Evelyn Lundstrom Mercedes-Benz A-Class

in the Porsche and had taken an advanced driving course to get the best out of the German rocket.

The Mercedes is a change of pace that she uses as a city car and transporter for her clients.

“It’s actually quite roomy, and it’s amazingly good for parking,” she says.

Lundstrom usually takes her clients shopping when she’s rebuilding their image, and she likes to be able to shop-hop around the city.

“You can lay the back seats down in the Mercedes and it becomes like a panel van. You’d be surprised how many bags you can fit in an A-class.”

The reason Lundstrom considers herself between cars is that she commutes at weekends to her house at Leura and would like a bit more oomph than the Mercedes delivers.

used to the power and the handling,” Lundstrom says.

“You take it for granted that you can change down a gear and overtake anything. So this car (the Mercedes) is a bit frustrating.”

Lundstrom, the eldest of five children, grew up in Tasmania. Her father was a fan of big American cars, but the young Evelyn liked Euromobiles.

“My father loved Pontiacs, Chevs, Customlines: anything that was big and American,” she says.

“I remember being very young and trying to persuade him to get a Citroen. I thought they were so nicely engineered, but my father said they were too ‘Froggy’.”

Lundstrom has advised thousands of executives, directors and entrepreneurs during her career. She has suggested that most of them change cars, and very few have baulked at her advice.

“Most of the people who employ my services work unbelievably hard to be where they are,” she says.

“Yet so many feel it’s an indulgence to get a really nice car. I tell them it’s okay to have a car that reflects where you want to go.

“That’s what cars are doing, after all: