

DRIVE ON

Nissan LEAF supports
EARTH DAY

YOUR SAFETY
is our priority

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 1
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 EDARAN TAN CHONG MOTOR

Your Safety
IS OUR PRIORITY

*MOVING
WITH THE
TIMES*



Vessels Of An
ECONOMIC
TRANSFORMATION



WORLD RECORD
2 Second Pit Stop

Journey to
ZERO EMISSION

CHALLENGING BOUNDARIES
THE KING OF THE MOUNTAIN



Innovation that excites

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THE ALMERA AFFAIRS

WITH KAVIN JAY, THE COMEDIAN



THE INTELLIGENT KEY
SAVES THE DAY

SEXY EXTERIOR
MADE FOR EXTRA LOVIN'

SUPER SPACIOUS
MORE REASON TO HAVE FRIENDS



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GOOD DAY, MALAYSIANS,

This is an unprecedented beginning for Drive On. For years, we have had the honour and privilege of talking to you, our dear customers through our owner's only magazine. Without your support for the brand and the company, we wouldn't have made it thus far.

From this issue onwards, we will be embarking on an ambitious journey. One that moves not only in tandem with our beloved Nissan owners, but resonates on a grander scale, hand in hand with all Malaysians, who we at Tan Chong, have had the privilege of serving for more than half a century.

As one of the nation's first carmakers, we've come a long way, progressing with the nation. From the early years of trying our very best to offer Malaysians an affordable and reliable car that Malaysian families could depend upon; namely the 130Y, and moving towards the nation's first ever mass-market luxury car, the Datsun Cedric and then the Nissan Cefiro, we've always quietly, humbly, worked very hard to offer the best to our customers.

We will never rest on our laurels, because we know for a fact that it is the trust from Malaysians, the spirit of 'Boleh' and that of challenging boundaries that has given us the opportunity to serve you

We hope that our dear customers and fellow Malaysians who come across Drive On, will enjoy the read regardless if your car ownership experience has crossed our paths not, and perhaps you might consider sharing our magazine, birthed out of automotive hedonism and passion amongst your peers. We hope you find it as fun to read as we had putting it together. We're eager to hear your thoughts and feedback!

Hope you enjoy the read, thank you!



DRIVE ON

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Your Safety IS OUR PRIORITY

NISSAN TO USE ADVANCED HIGH TENSILE STRENGTH STEEL FOR VEHICLE PRODUCTION

Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. will be expanding the use of Advanced High Tensile Strength Steel (AHSS) up to 25 percent of the vehicle parts (measured by weight) installed in its new production models.

The facts show that vehicle weight and size have increased in recent years in accordance with the pursuit of safety and comfort, and that weight reduction is an unavoidable path for automotive manufacturers, in order to improve fuel consumption and reduce CO2 emissions. With this, Nissan is consistently carrying out tasks right from material development in order to reduce body weight. In order to clear the challenges of "Weight reduction for reducing environmental impact" and "Impact safety improvement" at the same time, Nissan have focused on high tensile strength steel, which is not only strong, but also formable.

In the past, application of high-tensile strength steel was limited because it is difficult to manufacture the material into highly-complex shapes. Generally, the elongation of high-tensile material is reduced if the strength is increased. The reduction in elongation causes "cracks" to occur in the cold-pressing of the material. Applications of previous high-tensile strength steel have been limited as "cracks" occur during cold-pressing complex shapes.

This will soon change at Nissan, which has successfully developed a 1.2 GPa Ultra High Tensile Strength Steel with High Formability, with higher elongation as compared to the previous 980MPa class high-tensile strength steel. With the wider adoption of AHSS, vehicle weight can be reduced further, without compromising structural strength.

One of the characteristics of the newly developed 1.2 GPa Ultra High Tensile Strength Steel with High Formability is in the compatibility of both strength and elongation through micronising of the material structure as much as possible.

As a result, the material is able to be applied to much more body structural parts than previously possible. Furthermore, the 1.2 GPa Ultra High Tensile Strength Steel with High Formability can be used for the body structural parts such as the center pillar rain hose, front roof rail, and side roof rail, thanks to the development of a spot welding method which suits this material. The 1.2 GPa Ultra High Tensile Strength Steel with High Formability will be applied to post-2013 production vehicles, and Nissan is targeting a weight reduction of approximately 15kg; overcoming the most challenging of all obstacles in order to create cars that are able to protect people and coexist with the earth's environment— this is "Nissan of Technology".

Nissan will be introducing the AHSS technology in the Infiniti Q50, which will be launched in Malaysia in the near future.

Most modern cars use high tensile strength steel which starts at 400 MPa (Mega Pascals).

High strength steel provides exceptional protection for occupants, and serves as the primary passive safety defense.

Nissan will begin production using Ultra High Tensile Strength Steel, at 1.2 GPa (Giga Pascals) or 1,200 MPa.

Smaller engines can then be employed to further conserve fuel when cars are made lighter.

High strength steel also helps conserve fuel, because less steel is needed to achieve the same crash protection zones, thus resulting in lighter cars.

To go further, crucial areas can again be reinforced with ultra high tensile strength steel for further protection.

NISSAN LEAF supports earth day



"WILL HELP THE CITY ACHIEVE 1/3 ELECTRIC TAXI FLEETS BY YEAR 2020." - MICHAEL BLOOMBERG

"THIS IS THE PAYOFF FOR THE LONG YEARS NISSAN HAS DEVOTED TO CREATING CARS WITH ELECTRIC MOTORS." - CARLOS GHOSN



NEW YORK NISSAN LEAF TAXI FLEETS



New York's switch from the 4.6 liter V8 Ford Crown Victorias to the Nissan LEAF will change the cityscapes entirely. Cleaner too.

In support of Earth Day on April 22nd, Nissan and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg launched a new electric vehicle taxi pilot with the world's best-selling electric car, Nissan LEAF.

Six Nissan Leaf taxis will begin their service in New York City in the third quarter of this year.

As part of the pilot, Nissan and partners in New York City will also install several CHAdeMO-based DC quick chargers, which will enable drivers to re-charge their electric taxis quickly during their shift. With quick charging, Nissan LEAF can be recharged to about 80 percent in under 30 minutes.

Closer to home, Edaran Tan Chong Motor, in collaboration with MyTeksi smartphone taxi booking service, also supported Earth Day

FIRST MASS PRODUCE ELECTRIC CAR - NISSAN LEAF



The LEAF marks Nissan's unprecedented success in producing the world's first affordable, mass produced electric car.

celebrations in Malaysia by offering free taxi rides in the Nissan LEAF.

On the other hand, Coca-Cola's regional organization, Coca-Cola Central Japan Co. Ltd., is using Nissan's electric commercial van as a regional sales vehicle in Yokohama, evaluating its performance and practical usability against conventional internal-combustion engine vehicles. The test will determine if the nightly charge is sufficient to meet user needs during the day. Overall, Nissan is looking for feedback as to the e-NV200's suitability for commercial use.

This encouraging development was made possible as Nissan has already road tested the e-NV200 with several other major companies, including AEON Retail Co., Ltd., FedEx Express and British Gas in Japan and Europe and Singapore. The great response from the collaboration of these parties has convinced the spearheading of the e-NV200 to be scheduled into production by 2014.

Aside from leading the industry in spearheading zero emission technology, Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. also place plenty of effort in workforce development. As the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has recently included Nissan as one of the proud 'Diversity Management

COCA-COLA EXPERIMENTING WITH ELECTRIC NV200



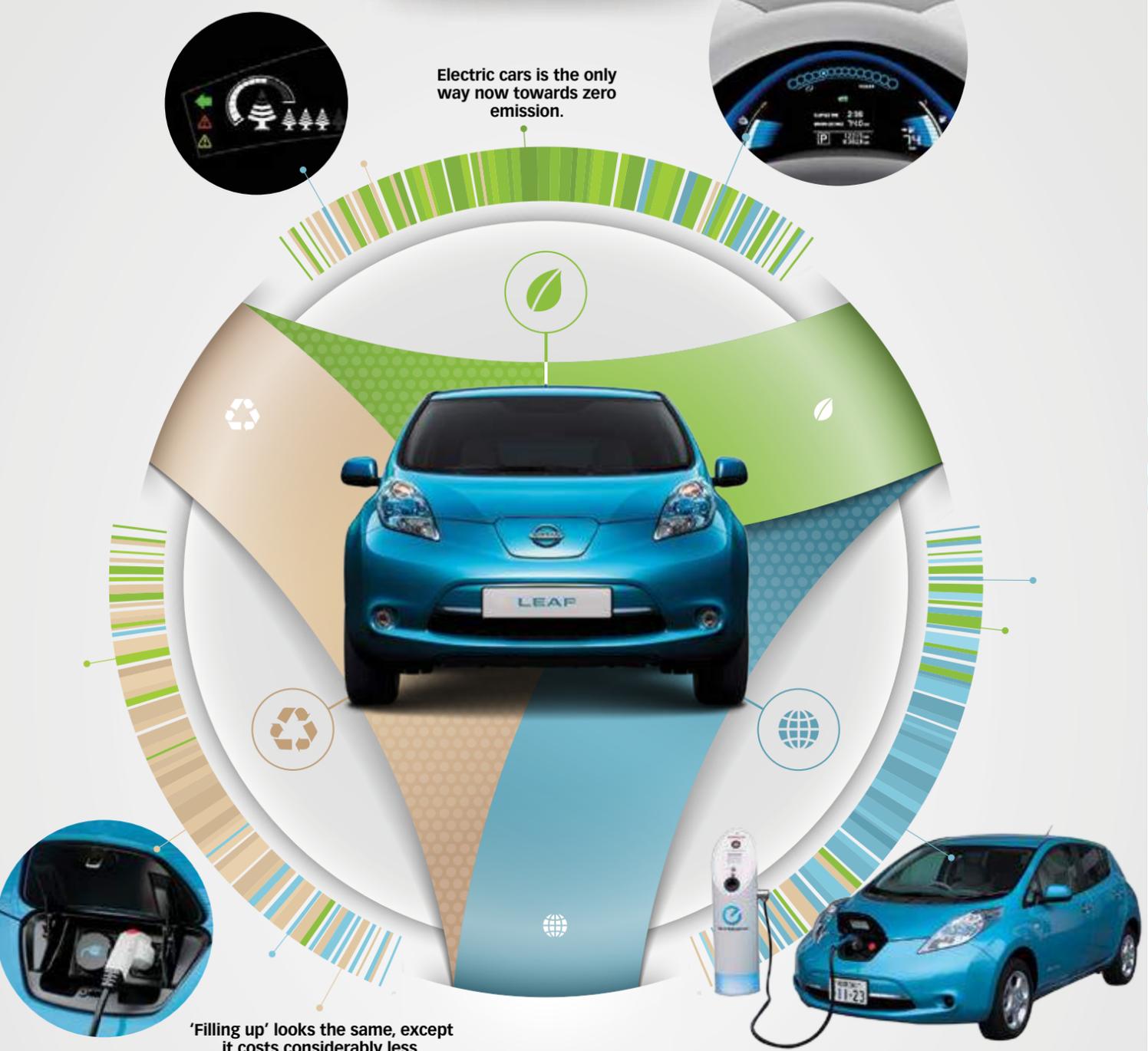
The goal of zero emission for logistics transportation is now achievable with the electric NV200.

Selection 100' companies, which is a group of 100 enterprises in Japan that promotes workplace diversity for competitive advantage. Nissan was chosen for this honor in recognition of its work to actively promote diversity amongst its employees.

The "Diversity Management Selection 100" project started in fiscal year 2012. The project recognizes enterprises that have created better value through their management of initiatives which promote diversity. Organizations are selected based on the results achieved in areas such as innovation and improved productivity by using the various talents of its employees, including women, staff from different countries, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

Journey to ZERO EMISSION

Electric cars is the only way now towards zero emission.



'Filling up' looks the same, except it costs considerably less.

On October 2012, First Energy Networks Sdn. Bhd. (FEN), a wholly owned subsidiary of Tan Chong Motor Holdings Berhad (TCMH) launched Malaysia's first commercial electric vehicle (EV) charging station service provider. Although this is an initiative by ETCM, the service is open to compatible EV models by any manufacturer. For now, the service is available to the public free of charge. "The launch of the charging stations is aligned to FEN's support towards the

government's efforts to set up EV charging infrastructure, starting with the Bukit Bintang Pilot Program" said Reza Mutalib, Director of FEN. There are currently four EV commercial charging stations in Malaysia. A few short hours is all it takes for the vehicle to be charged. A few short hours is all it takes to be charged compared to a standard domestic power socket. FEN considers several charging solution providers such as, Greenlots, Panasonic and

General Electric as its partners. The four FEN locations are at Level P2 of Suria KLCC, Level 5 of Lot 10, Petronas Solaris Serdang and Bangsar Shopping Centre. Besides the four commercially available locations, ETCM has two more charging locations at its Jalan Ipoh headquarters and its showroom in Seksyen 12, Petaling Jaya. Of course, these are exclusively available for use by ETCM's company cars or customers.

World Record 2 SECONDS PIT STOP

- 01 AVERAGE PITSTOPS IS 4.5 SECONDS IN F1
- 02 F1 DRIVERS WILL BE SUBJECTED TO 6 TIMES THE GRAVITY
- 03 TOP SPEED OF THE INFINITI REDBULL F1 - 350KM/H



REDBULL F1 PIT STOP SECRET



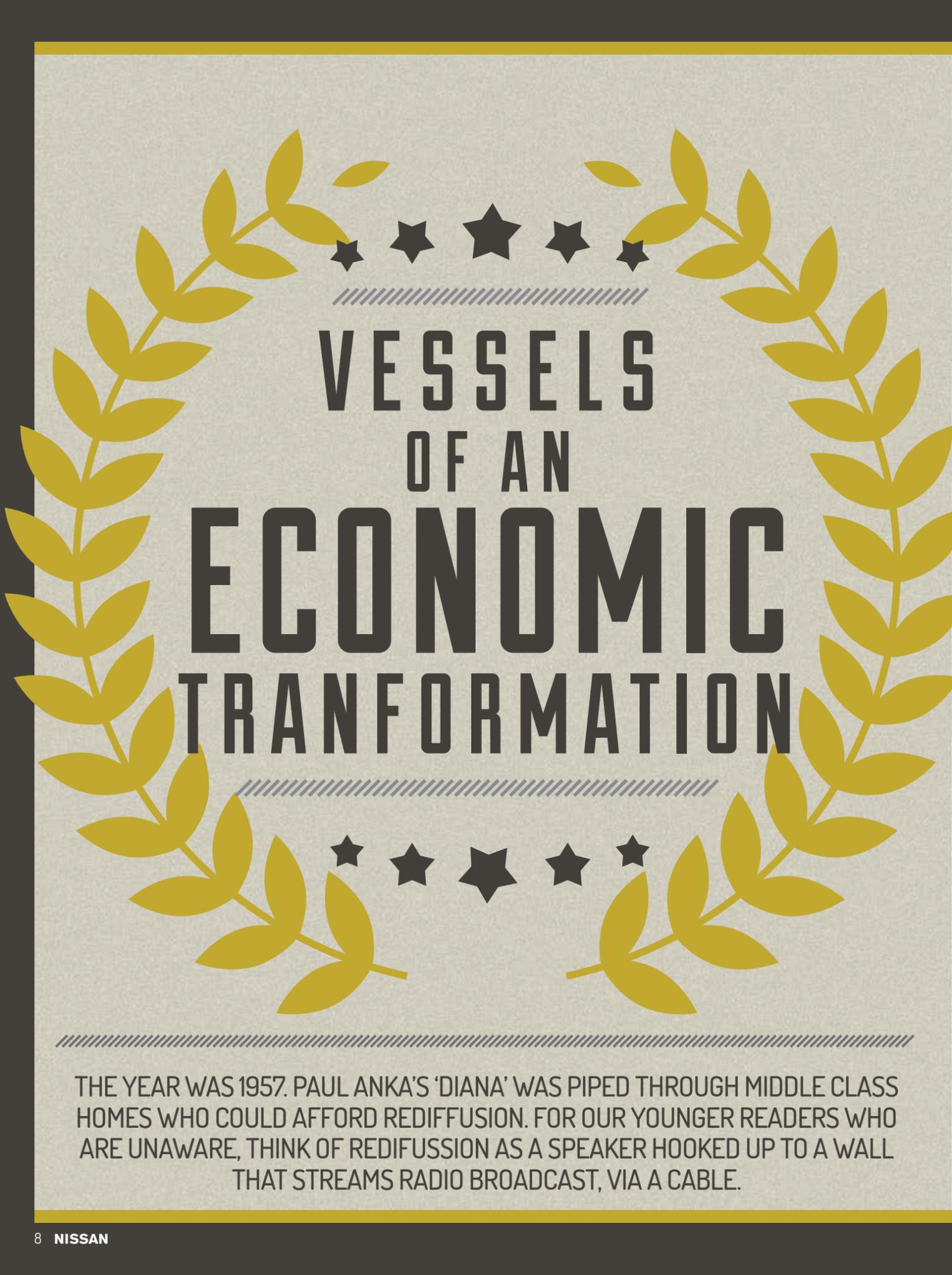
REDBULL WR PITSTOP

BREAKS NEW PIT STOP RECORD IN SEPANG

After claiming his 38th pole position in his career, Sebastian Vettel carried his top form right from the start to the end of the race. Vettel and his team-mate Mark Webber secured a one-two finish for the Infiniti Red Bull F1 team. Along the way, the team set a new record for the fastest pit stop, not once, not twice, but five times! Up until then, team McLaren held the record, set during last year's German

Grand Prix, where they changed four wheels for Jenson Button in 2.31 seconds. Infiniti first broke the record on lap five of the race, when they changed Vettel's tyres in just 2.13 seconds. Two laps later, the pit crew changed Weber's tyres in the same 2.13 second period. The crew then lowered the new benchmark to 2.05s when Mark came in again, and his two subsequent stops were 2.21 seconds and 2.26 seconds.

What F1 fans won't hear, however, is anyone from the Infiniti team using the word 'perfect'. There's always a quicker stop out there, and it's possible this season to see the magical two-second barrier breached at some point. However, rather than chasing individual times, improving consistency is always the thing coveted by the crew; breaking records is merely the consequence of doing that well.



VESSLS
OF AN
ECONOMIC
TRANSFORMATION

THE YEAR WAS 1957. PAUL ANKA'S 'DIANA' WAS PIPED THROUGH MIDDLE CLASS HOMES WHO COULD AFFORD REDIFFUSION. FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS WHO ARE UNAWARE, THINK OF REDIFFUSION AS A SPEAKER HOOKED UP TO A WALL THAT STREAMS RADIO BROADCAST, VIA A CABLE.



From small little flats of the 1950s to the glamorous condominiums of today, Malaysia's economy has progressed greatly. So does one company, and of course, it's products.



TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN was travelling across the country in a Chevrolet Bel Air bearing registration plate BE 52, to spread the good news of our nation's independence.

In a time when the mean household income was just 207 Malayan Dollars per month, cars of any make and model were an unimaginable luxury for most families. A Holden sedan would set you back 7,245 Malayan Dollars.

On the bustling streets of Kuala Lumpur, street peddlers were clamouring for attention, men and women alike were dressed in similar shades of dull colours. Fabrics with vibrant colours were expensive and are only worn during festive season.

Rickshaws outnumbered cars. To those who could afford it, riding a rickshaw is a luxurious indulgence. Only the rich could afford travel while looking up to the clear blue sky. Quite a bit like being driven in a convertible car.

Living among 316,000 people in Kuala Lumpur is one Tan Yuet Foh. Like many of his contemporaries, Yuet Foh was poor, had little formal education and only spoke Hokkien dialect. Once again, like many of our country's pioneers, Yuet Foh made up for his lack of formal training with tenacity.

An often mentioned folklore within the Tan family today was a tale of how Yuet Foh, upon learning that the President of Nissan was in town and will be visiting the Japanese Embassy, decided that he had to seize this rare opportunity to meet him.

With little formal education and zero connections with anyone that could put him in touch with the president, Yuet Foh made full use of the only quality he had – tenacity. He stood outside the gates of the Japanese embassy, braving the blazing tropical sun and waited for the president to come out.

His resolute patience was rewarded when the president granted him a brief audience. Somehow he was able to communicate his message across, that he was interested in securing the franchise to sell Datsun cars in this young country.

"Just give me a chance to sell a few cars and I will show you what I can do," said Yuet Foh to the president.

His tenacity impressed the president and soon the first shipment of Datsun models, as Nissan's cars were known then, were on their way to Malaya, as our country was known then.

Tan Chong & Sons Motor Company was formed in 1957 and soon began selling the first Japanese cars in the country, mostly 1200DX sedans.

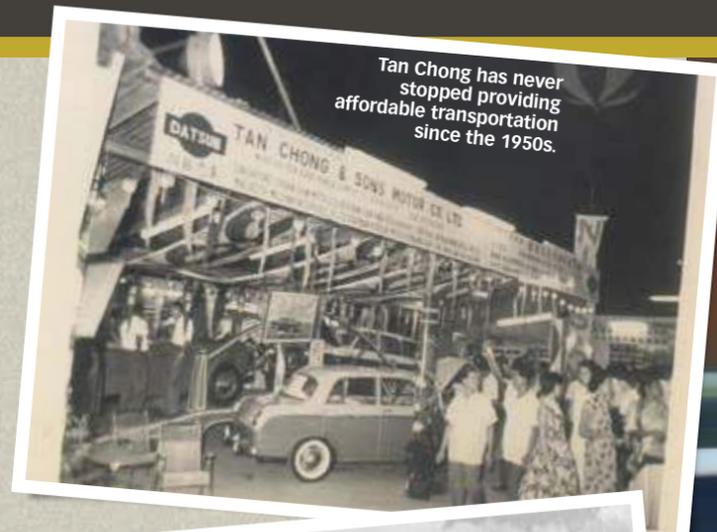
A DREAM TOO FAR

This is not a fairy tale of man discovering a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Far from being a pot of gold, Tan Chong would soon learn that convincing Nissan to award them with the Datsun franchise was a relatively simple matter when compared to convincing affluent Malaysians to buy a Japanese car.

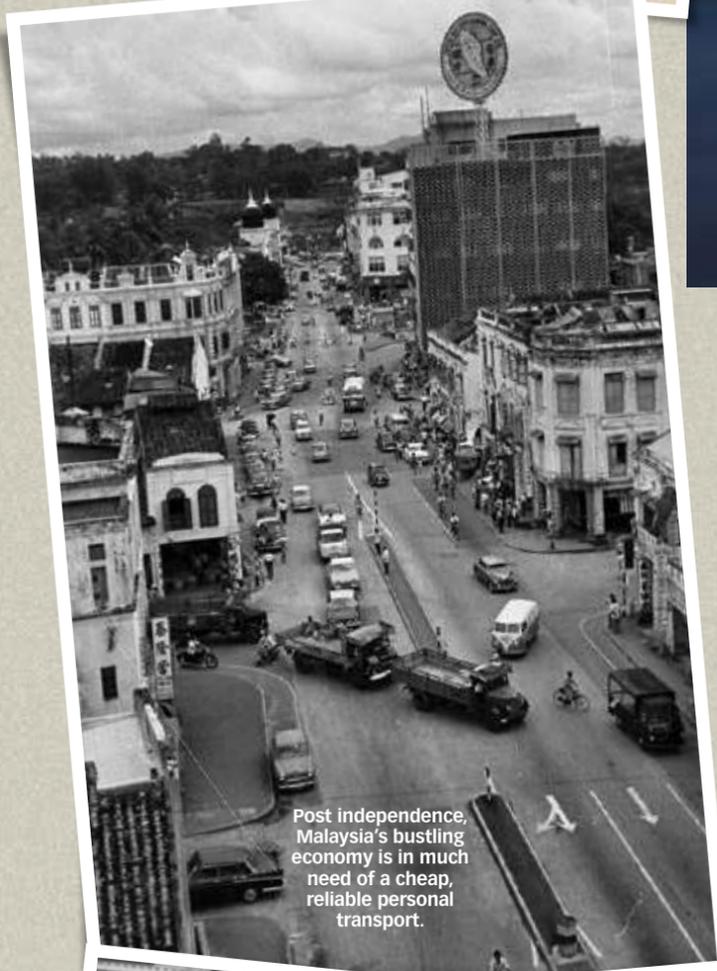
The war had just ended twelve years earlier and tales of people tortured by the Japanese Kempetai military police was still fresh in the mind of the populace. Selling a Japanese car in those time was extremely difficult. At that time, Japan was synonymous with the war rather than high quality cars. Together with Nissan, Tan Chong trailblazed the path for the first Japanese car in old Malaya.

Those who could afford cars, would go for a British Austin or Rover, which weren't very reliable on our poor road conditions and tropical climate.

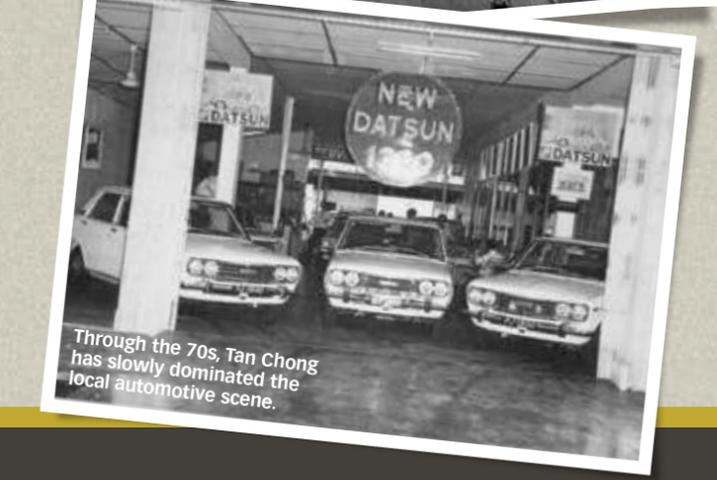
With little capital, fancy showrooms were out of the question. Tan would sell the Datsun cars by carrying brochures and riding their bicycles to meet prospective customers. Riding on bicycles to sell cars, they gave a new meaning to 'travelling salesmen.'



Tan Chong has never stopped providing affordable transportation since the 1950s.



Post independence, Malaysia's bustling economy is in much need of a cheap, reliable personal transport.



Through the 70s, Tan Chong has slowly dominated the local automotive scene.

"STORIES OF THEIR FOUNDERS EXPERIENCE HAVE MORAL BEHIND THEM, STORIES THAT ARE NOT TOO DIFFERENT FROM THOSE PASSED DOWN OUR ELDERS. THEIR PRODUCTS TOUCHES THE LIVES OF MALAYSIANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE."



To prove the durability of Datsuns, Tan Chong approached taxi operators. Indeed some of the earliest 1200DX were used as taxis. The Datsun's superior reliability and fuel economy were not lost on the taxi operators, who drove them day and night, clocking more miles on a single month than most private owners would in a year and they were very pleased with the Datsun's fuel economy and reliability.

RIDING THE WAVE

Overtime Nissan would craft a strong reputation for producing affordable, very reliable and economical cars. A range of more upmarket products like the Laurel and Cedric were introduced to match the rising expectations of new group of Malaysian customers.

By 1969, a Saturn V rocket had propelled Neil Armstrong to the moon. Young people crowded outside electrical shops to watch the news on black and white television, which were still too expensive for many of their parents.

They saw a space man stepping foot on the moon, a celestial body their parents believed to be populated by mythical beings. Suddenly, rigid traditions are opened to be questioned and challenged.

By the '70s, Malaysia's mean household income was already reaching RM300 per month. In



urban areas, the figure was closer to RM 500 per month. Young people were leaving their kampungs to make their fortune in the city.

Nothing seems impossible. "If you have a pair of hands and feet, you won't go hungry in Malaysia" became a common phrase uttered by Malaysians.

Shakespeare's "Why then the world's mine oyster? Which I with sword will open," was a very apt description for this generation of youth.

THE FAMILY'S FIRST CAR

Household incomes are rising, jobs are plenty and motorization was starting the take off in a big way. For the first time in many families, sons and daughters are getting their driving license. Within just one generation, the prospect of owning a car went from the domain of the elite to the mainstream.

Tan Chong had just the right product to put these young workers on the road - the Datsun 120Y.

In those days, an overheating engine was a common problem among car owners. It is not uncommon to see cars stopped by the roadside, with the bonnet opened and steam billowing out while the driver looks on helplessly.

Driving up the steep Genting Highland stretch was considered risky and older folks will remember listening to many stories of cars overheating from the strenuous drive up.

When the 1.2 litre Datsun 120Y was introduced, it was equipped with a device called 'Idling Compensator,' which enables



The brand that has accompanied Malaysian's growth since independence.

more air to enter the fuel intake manifold in hot idling conditions, like during a traffic jam. As far as Datsun cars are concerned, the problem of 'overheating engines' was banished to the realm of automotive folklore.

This was still a time when electronics were analogue rather than digital, the technology required to realize anti-lock braking system (ABS) weren't developed yet, but Nissan had already fitted an early anti-skid control-like function in the 120Y's self-adjusting split circuit brake system. The 120Y was fitted with an anti-skid valve which minimizes wheel lock-up under emergency braking, a first in its segment.

The combination of affordable pricing, bullet-proof reliability, economical operation and safety features made the 120Y Malaysia's favourite car.

By 1980, Tan Chong had sold over 10,000 120Ys in less than two years, breaking all vehicle production records in Malaysia.

The 120Y's legacy was succeeded by the Sunny 130Y in 1983. One year later, Nissan retired the Datsun brand and all new Nissan models will carry the same name as the company.

Although the Sunny 130Y was the cheapest entry point to the Nissan brand, the car was far from being a rudimentary car cobbled together for poor families in third world countries.

The Sunny 130Y was one of the earliest sedans in the country to adopt front wheel drive, an innovative drivetrain layout at that time. Front wheel drives were not new as the Mini already had it. However, problems within the British Leyland group meant that full potential of front wheel drive was not fully exploited by family sedans.

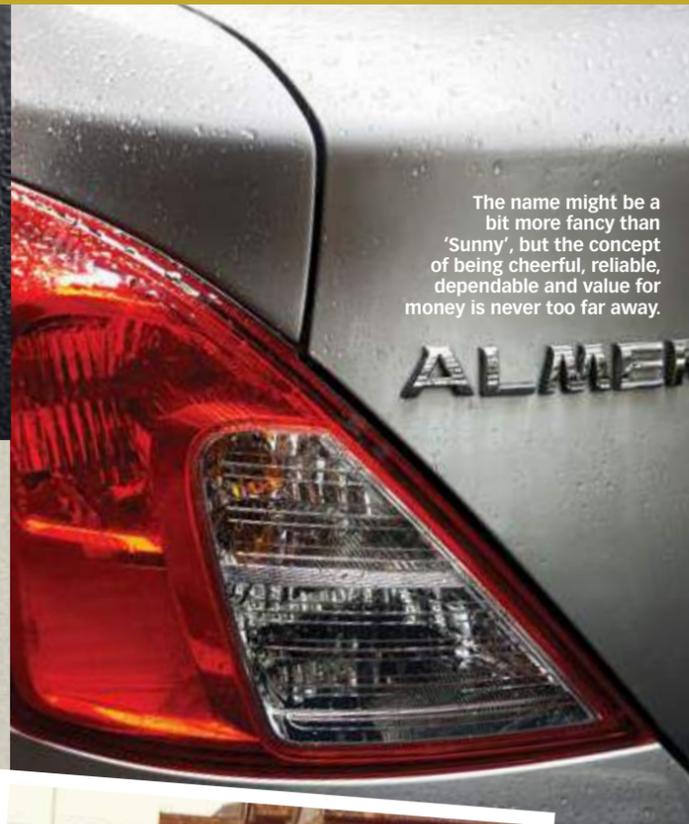
When most cars were still built with the engines mounted north-south driving the rear wheels, the affordable Sunny 130Y introduced packaging innovation to a segment that is more commonly associated with cheapness.

With a more compact packaging, the Sunny 130Y had a significantly larger cabin space than its peers. By transferring driving motion directly to the front wheels, the Sunny 130Y kept its weight low by doing away with complicated mechanical components. This allowed weight to be kept low and delivered huge dividends in fuel economy.

The Sunny 130Y had a bigger 1.3-litre engine and a unique 8 km/h 'absorber bumper,' which when subjected to a low speed impact, would not be damaged, another segment first by Nissan.

Mechanics have a love-hate relationship with the Sunny 130Y because it required so little maintenance and it was very difficult to make a profit from a Sunny 130Y. Owners who were new to Nissan found themselves checking the fuel gauge repeatedly, wondering if there was anything wrong with it.

The Sunny 130Y was so popular that nearly everyone knew someone who owned a 130Y at one point or another. It was responsible in mobilizing many Malaysian families. The Sunny 130Y represented a



The name might be a bit more fancy than 'Sunny', but the concept of being cheerful, reliable, dependable and value for money is never too far away.



Organising drives for the media still is a tradition until today.

turning point in Malaysia's path to personal mobility.

Every country has one car that was responsible for putting the masses on wheels. The Ford Model T transformed America. It made travel across the country's vast land possible. Farmers were able to make a better profit by delivering their produce to the market themselves rather than relying on middle men. People could afford to seek better paying jobs further away. The Model T fuelled the expansion of the middle class.

Post-war France was put on the road to recovery by a rudimentary Citroen 2CV, whose design brief was to be a small, cheap 'umbrella on wheels', that was durable enough to be driven across ploughed fields by farmers at 50 km/h, while carrying a 50 kg payload, including a crate of eggs without breaking them.

If automotive historians were asked to nominate a Malaysian equivalent of the Ford Model T and Citroen 2CV, it had to be the Nissan 130Y. Unlike our Western counterparts, our rapidly growing economy allowed us to skip the whole 'umbrella on wheels' phase, jumping from bicycles into air-conditioned family sedans within just one generation!

The transition is so remarkable that if there is a Malaysian automotive equivalent to our Gregorian calendar, it should be split into the BS and AS era, Before Sunny and After Sunny.

FROM SWAMP LAND TO THE WORLD'S THIRD BEST - COMMITMENT TO MALAYSIA

Rewind back to 1974, demand Datsun cars were higher than ever. At this point, all locally assembled Datsun models sold by Tan Chong were assembled at the Swedish Motor Assemblies plant in Shah Alam. It became clear that to meet rising demand for Datsun cars, Tan Chong would need to have its own vehicle assembly plant.

A few possible sites were surveyed, many of which were priced too high. With little capital on hand, the still young Tan Chong company could only afford a 47 acre land in Segambut for their first car plant, a decision which many said was crazy because the area was formerly a swamp land and had a dodgy reputation.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry was aware of the shortage in assembly plant capacity to meet domestic demand for cars. In February 1974, Tan Chong was granted approval to begin construction of a new assembly plant in Segambut.

Two years later, the company held a line-off ceremony for a Datsun 120Y (B210 series) at the newly completed plant.

By now is now Datsun is Malaysia's best selling car brand, an unthinkable achievement just two decades ago.

By 1989, Tan Chong's Segambut was judged by Nissan Motor Company Ltd. Japan as the best assembler of Nissan cars in Asia, and the third best in the world, behind USA and Britain.

Considering that the American and British plants were highly automated and had the luxury of far higher investment, coupled with the fact that Malaysia was still a relatively little known country, Tan Chong pulled off a major feat that put Malaysia on the map.

"Today Asia, Tomorrow the World" was the battle cry drummed into staff of the Tan Chong Motor Assemblies (TCMA). Nissan's then manager for overseas quality management Kenichi Yamashita delighted a group Malaysian press gathered in Kuala Lumpur when he said "It has been a long process but TCMA has managed to assemble vehicles comparable in quality to those assembled by Japanese factories."

In 1993, the Segambut plant became the first motor assembly plant in South-East Asia to be awarded the ISO 9002 (Quality Systems) certification.⁷ Since then, TCMA has regularly lend its expertise in setting up several Nissan affiliated plants in South Asia, a practise that continues until today.⁸

Quite a feat for a car plant built on former swamp land. The story of TCMA's Segambut plant, built on former swamp land, parallels with the growth of Kuala Lumpur, whose name means 'muddy river junction,' journey to become a renowned city.

In 2007, TCMA opened its second plant in Serendah. Two years later, the Serendah plant was awarded the ISO 14001:2004 Environmental Management System (EMS) and ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System (QMS) simultaneously, the first motor assembly plant in Malaysia to do so.

Today, TCMA is still seen as one of the 'leader plants' in the region. TCMA's second plant in Serendah is now used as a benchmark by other Nissan affiliated plants across the region.



Yes, that's a Datsun strolling along our parliament building.

REVISITING ITS ROOTS

Nearly 30 years after launching the Sunny 130Y, Tan Chong would revisit its origin as the progenitor of affordable cars. Falling trade barriers and the gradual removal of special benefits accorded to national car brands made it possible for the brand to return to its

roots.

The present day Almera is a spiritual successor to the Sunny 130Y. Although it no longer carries the Sunny 130Y name, the Sunny 130Y's DNA runs deep within the Almera.

As a pioneer in putting many Malaysian families in their first car, Tan Chong understood buyers in this segment very well. Together with Nissan, associates at Tan Chong worked hard to re-interpret the Sunny 130Y for the 21st century, keeping qualities that were well appreciated while updating other areas to appeal to a new generation of buyers.

In between these 30 years. Much has changed. Fuel prices are more volatile and the Malaysian peninsular is now connected by a North South Highway. Work culture have also changed dramatically, with today's young workers expected to be contactable by their colleagues and business partners via cellular phones. The growing urban sprawl and high property prices meant that today's young are staying further away in sub-urban areas and are spending more time in their daily commutes. Where the old Sunny 130Y drove two-lane trunk roads, today's Almera has to keep up with much faster traffic along the North South Highway.

In the same way the lifestyle and requirements of today's young are dramatically different from their parents', so too are their requirements from a car. The longer commutes, higher speed, heavier traffic and more time spent inside the car meant that expectations on fuel economy and cabin comfort are now much higher.

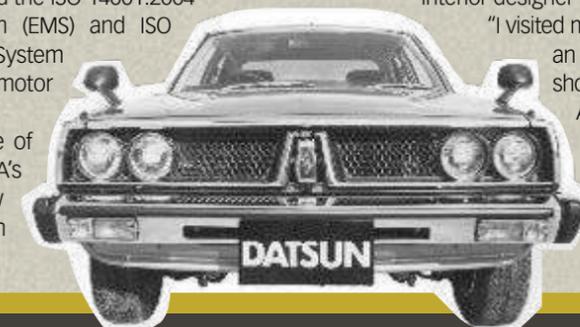
Conceptually, the Almera is carries the Sunny 130Y's heritage but it is yet so different. Perhaps giving the car a new name and a new identity was a good idea after all.

When the Almera was launched late last year, it introduced innovation in a segment known only for its low price. Like the 120Y's Idling Compensator and anti-skid valve, and the 130Y's absorber bumpers and spacious cabin accorded by its compact front wheel drive layout, the Almera continued Nissan's tradition of marrying premium class innovation with entry level class affordability.

Far from being a downgraded model for developing markets, the global model Almera features engine ignition push-start button, true keyless entry and a rigid body that complies to all safety regulations in USA, Japan and Europe.

Even something as mundane as the instrument cluster became the subject of many brain racking hours of study. "The meter is always in view, so we were especially committed to its design," said Nissan's interior designer Hiroyuki Amagi.

"I visited many places searching for the hint to design an attractive meter. One day, when I was shopping, I passed by a beautiful jewelry shop. A sparkling jewelry caught my eyes. It was so beautiful that I even wanted to touch it, but of course, it was protected carefully by a glass showcase. At that moment, I thought that this is similar to the meter," he explained.





"There's always a cover at the front of the meter too, so you can't actually touch the meters and dials inside. Our design idea started there, with the possibility of comparing it to jewelry in a showcase. To make the meters sparkle like jewelry, we placed 0.5mm pyramids around the dial."

"We asked the model maker to provide us with various samples to achieve that spatial effect of sparkling precious stones, a crystal-like image. A slight change in the face pattern affects its attractiveness. We repeated a process of trial and error to come up with the most beautiful effect. It was all about working on details. People look at a precious stone and think 'Wow, that's beautiful!' regardless of their age and gender, and such a feeling is universal. I wanted to bring into the instrument panel the appeal of jewelry that would amaze people of different backgrounds."

"When driving at night, a woman in the passenger's seat will notice the sparkles in the instrument panel. I hope that will provide a pleasant surprise while enjoying a drive."

In a philosophical circle of life kind of way, today's young are repeating similar balik kampung journeys in their Almera, to visit their parents who one generation ago was doing a similar trip in a Sunny 130Y.

While their parents' Sunny 130Y's radio were tuned to Radio 4's Patrick Teoh, today's young can plug-in their iPods and iPhones into the Almera. They can also update their parents on their arrival or even call the office to check on today's business progress using the Almera's Bluetooth handsfree telephone connectivity function.

The 636mm best-in class legroom will surprise relatives who drive far more expensive D-segment cars, let alone those owning C-segment models.

Just as their grandparents did to their parents, today's young will have to accept a boot full of goodies to be taken back with them. Not a problem for the Almera's 490-litre boot. The only concern is that the Almera is so comfortable and spacious that talkative relatives may insist on hitching a ride home.

Some companies are just mere corporate entities. Some companies tell a story, a story that reflects our nation's progress, the triumphs and the struggles. Stories of their founder's experience and the moral behind them, stories that are not too different from those passed down our elders, Tan Chong's products touches the lives of Malaysians from all walks of life, from then, till now, and will always be. ■



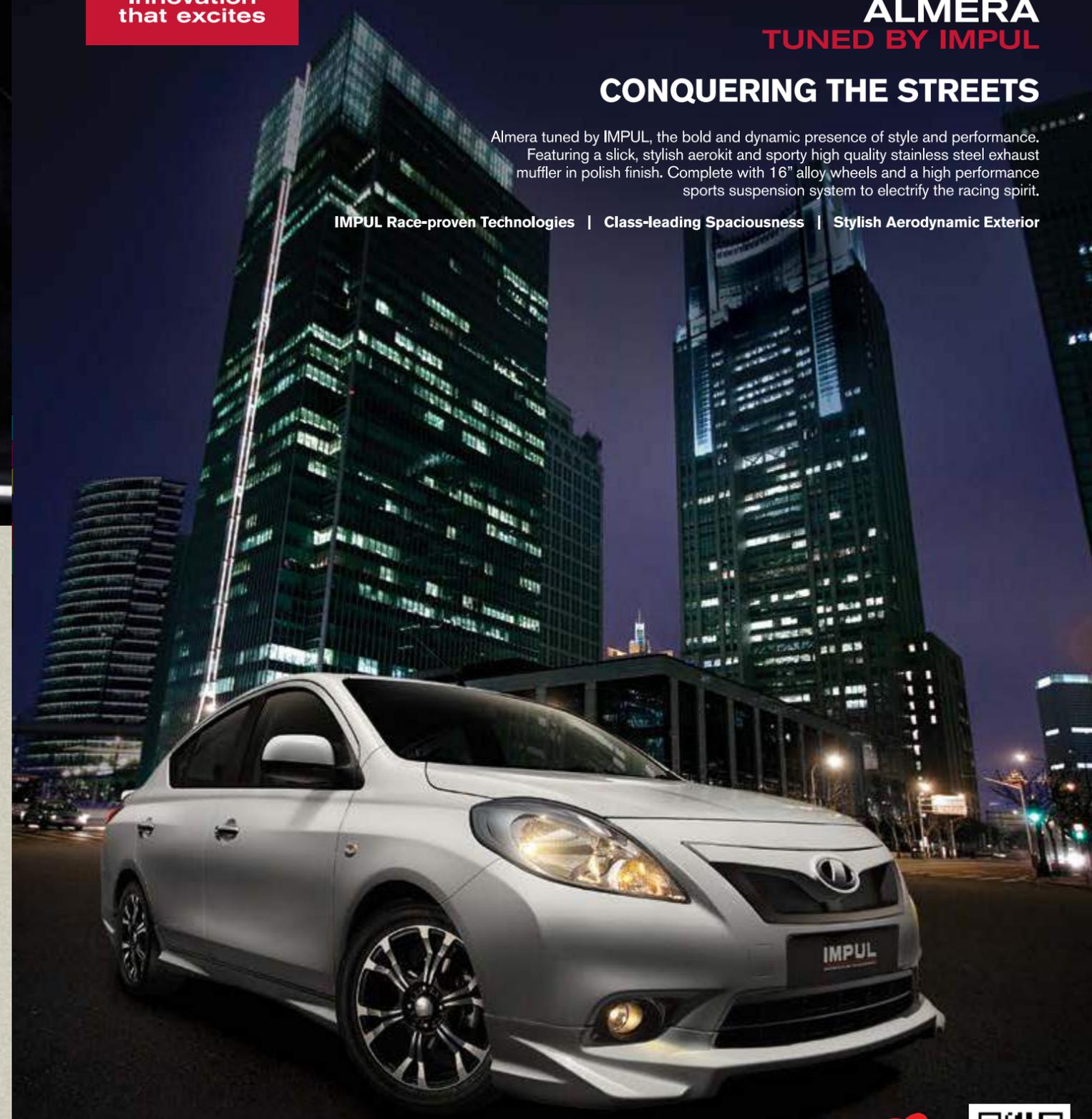
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- democratising luxury and innovation for the masses



IT WAS DECEMBER 1989. THE '80s ERA WERE COMING TO AN END, AN ERA MARKED BY WAVES OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATIONS ENVELOPING THE OLD WORLD. BARRIERS SURROUNDING THE COMMUNIST BLOC WERE BREAKING AND THE COLD WAR IS AT ITS LAST VESTIGES.



THE BERLIN WALL WAS TORN DOWN AMIDST LOUD CHEERS FROM JUBILANT CITIZENS OF A UNIFIED GERMANY. THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY LOST IN THE SOVIET PARLIAMENT'S FIRST FREE ELECTION.

The Berlin Wall was torn down amidst loud cheers from jubilant citizens of a unified Germany. The Soviet Communist Party lost in the Soviet parliament's first free election.

A picture of an unknown man, holding two grocery bags, standing defiantly in front a convoy of tanks headed to the Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China became the most memorable picture of the '80s. Closer to home, the Malaysian Communist Party signed a peace accord and laid down their arms, allowing our country to heal and moved forward.

Meanwhile in suburban neighbourhoods around the country, innocent children were eagerly waiting to upgrade their Game and Watch Donkey Kong to play Super Mario on Nintendo's newly launched Game Boy. Teenagers were dancing to Paula Abdul's 'Straight Up' and families planned their dinner time around 'Dallas' TV series.

At that time, there is a very clear hierarchy for cars to match a person's professional image. Sitting at the upper tier is a Mercedes-Benz 230E for the businessman and a BMW 3-series for the young stock broker.

Young and upwardly mobile executives however only had two choices - the Ford Telstar and for those who could afford more, a Volvo 240.

Meanwhile, executives grouped in a corner on the upper floors of Ebaran Tan Chong Motor's head office in Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur are busy putting together final touches on their marketing plan to launch a new model that is set to turn the established hierarchy upside down.

This new model promises to combined Japanese quality and reliability with luxury features commonly associated with high-end luxury cars, minus the prohibitive price. It will feature the latest microprocessor technology, a big word in those days, electronically controlled automatic transmission matched to a silky smooth inline six cylinder engine, projector headlamps, telescopic steering and electric wing mirrors.

About five years earlier, the company was faced with a dire challenge. When the national automotive policy came about, excise duties on non-national cars like the Nissan Sunny 130Y, the best-selling car in Malaysia and Tan Chong's main rice bowl back then, was priced out of competition by the new duty structure.

Staffs at Tan Chong have been working hard to raise the profile of the Nissan brand in Malaysia. The company's management could see the writing on the wall since 1983, when the national car project was first mooted.

In a Darwinian struggle to adapt and remain relevant to the new automotive ecosystem, the company diversified into commercial vehicles and parts manufacturing. It even became a supplier for Proton, which neutralized Proton's threat to a certain degree.

Still, new car sales remained the company's main business and it was clear to Tan Chong's management that the company needed to move upmarket. The survival plan would involve uprooting the company out of its comfort zone and to start competing in new unfamiliar segments.



For a large established company such as Tan Chong, this was a Herculean effort and business school textbooks are filled with many case studies of companies who did not survive the transition. Remember how Sony ruled the market with its Walkman but failed to adapt when the MP3 revolution came along? Or the once dominating Nokia missing the smartphone revolution?

Harvard Business School have a term for such drastic renewal - creative destruction, a term first coined by Austrian American economist Joseph Schumpeter in 1942. In this post-modern world, the term takes on a new meaning. It is akin to a champion hill climber, forced by changing conditions, to make a dangerous descent down from the peak to scale a different peak.

Knowing that the company cannot sustain itself in the long term by just being very good at selling one type of cars, Tan Chong laid down the foundation to venture into other segments many years earlier in the late '70s. The company started selling light duty commercial vehicles like the Datsun pick-up and Urvan commercial van as well as heavy duty Nissan Diesel lorries.

Tan Chong had earlier learned the ropes of selling higher end cars with the 2.8-litre Cedric, it was among the most expensive Japanese car on the road. Positioned below the Cedric is the Bluebird.

Although both the Cedric was doing well in matching its competitors, Tan Chong was looking to leap frog the competition with a luxurious car that will leave the competition far behind, just as what the Sunny 130Y did for the entry level car segment.

In comes the Cedric. The name was adapted from Zephyrus, the Greek god of the west wind. Blowing eastward from the west, the west wind is considered to be the most gentle favourable of all wind directions. In western tradition, the west wind is believed to signal the coming of spring, changing from the bitterly cold winter to a more temperate season.

The name had a zen-like message behind it, implying that through the Cedric, Nissan will weather the difficult season and brighter days lay ahead.

In keeping with the 'changing winds' theme, the company also shed its "Datsun, The Better Buy, Always" to "You Come First," signifying its move away from selling good value affordable cars to selling on aspirational values, appealing to ambitious young executives looking to move up in their career.

Against the sea of increasingly similar looking cars, the Cedric represented a quantum leap. While its competitors have become increasingly bulbous to appeal to American consumers and inadvertently piled on weight, the slim and taut Cedric stands out like an Olympian athlete.

When it was launched in December 1989 under the tagline "Flowing With The Winds Of Change," echoing the inspiration behind the 'Cedric' name, the car's combination of a slim silhouette with an even slimmer front nose flanked by a pair of projector headlamps shocked many Malaysians, young and old alike.

from VINYL to CORINTHIAN



The Cefiro Brougham was a favourite amongst Malaysians for class leading comfort, space and power from its award winning 3.0V6 engine.

The ultra-slim headlamps was a head turner. A set of three round recesses house the lighting units, two for the projector headlamps and a third for the conventional clear lens side light. This allowed the Cefiro's bonnet to be made very low, shrinking the radiator grille to a minimum, another ground breaking design during that time.

While the Cefiro's front was revolutionary, a RB20E six cylinder engine installed under the hood meant that it was the rear of the Cefiro that most drivers get to see. The rear design is dominated by a stylized panel that gave an illusion that the tail lamps are connected as a single unit stretching the entire width of the car.

The Cefiro's slim nose granted it exceptional aerodynamic efficiency, with a drag co-efficient value of just 0.32. In simple terms, the Nissan Cefiro was able to slip through the wind using less energy than a Ferrari F40, then the fastest production supercar, with a drag co-efficient value of 0.34.

To understand the impact of how this single design piece was so revolutionary in the '90s, remember that not even high-end luxury models from BMW or Mercedes-Benz have started incorporating vehicle lighting as an integral part of a car's design identity.

The Cefiro was a turning point for Malaysian car buyers because it took luxury and innovation out from the domain of high-end German cars and placed it within the reach of the working class. It was the proverbial working class hero.

The circle is now complete. Nissan, the company that delivered the working class' first car, have progressed alongside its customers who are now ready to aspire for something more premium.

The market reacted by snapping up all forty units of the first batch assembled by Tan Chong, big numbers in those days. Long waiting lists quickly build up as eager buyers were pressing Nissan sales people hard to deliver their Cefiros before Chinese New Year in February.

So strong was the demand that Tan Chong was forced to delay the customary test drives for the motoring press. Every single available car had to be delivered to waiting customers as soon as possible.

Veteran motoring writer Lee Pang Seng, who was then attached to the New Straits Times recalled that it was only in July 1990, nearly six months after the Cefiro's launch that he was able to secure a media test drive unit, even that was a unit that belonged to a Tan Chong staff who was attending a study course abroad.

Later in its model life, a higher range fully imported variant of the Cefiro joined Nissan's local line-up. The CBU model had a new RB20E engine featuring twin-cam 24-valves and anti-lock brake systems, features which at that time were more synonymous with a BMW.

Nissan had also developed the world's first electronically controlled five speed automatic transmission for a passenger car. The unit had three driving modes - Power, Auto and Hold. This ground breaking transmission made its Malaysian debut in the new Cefiro, launched in November 1992.

The Cefiro was such a big leap that even nearly 25 years later, it continued to wow enthusiast drivers, some of whom were still playing Super Mario on their Game Boy when their father first bought the car.



The Teana continues Cefiro's promise of offering levels of comfort a class above its segment, and will always be.

Combination of engineering innovations like a BMW-style inline six-cylinder rear-wheel drive powertrain configuration, sports-car like handling courtesy of MacPherson struts in front and multi-link suspension at the rear made it a cult car.

By October 1996, the A31 series first generation Cefiro was retired. Its successor would take on a very different concept. Customers who were wowed by the earlier Cefiro have aged, progressed higher up in their career and needed more space to accommodate their bigger family.

While they wouldn't mind having the racy A31 series Cefiro on weekends, market research suggested that customers wanted a spacious and comfortable luxury sedan for their daily use.

Thus the A31 Cefiro's performance oriented rear-wheel drive configuration was dropped in favour of a more space and fuel efficient front wheel drive layout. The racy Nissan Skyline derived RB20E inline six-cylinder engine was swapped for a more refined, multi-award winning smooth running 3-litre V6 engine that would set the all new A32-series second generation Cefiro apart from its competitors as a true luxury car.

The main highlight of the all new model was its VQ30DE engine, which was hailed as one of the best engines in its class. To prove its claim, Nissan took the Cefiro's V6 engine and installed it into an E-Racer aircraft, which took off and flew to a maximum airspeed of 481 km/h while carrying a payload of 362 kg.

Fullpage advertisements for the Cefiro were often accompanied by pictures of an E-Racer aircraft. "Now You Can Fly First Class" was Nissan's message to prospective buyers.

The market responded positively to Nissan's new direction, as the Cefiro continued to accelerate further ahead of the competition. It would be some years before Nissan's fellow Japanese rivals would introduce comparable models to match the Cefiro.

The Cefiro was replaced by the Teana in November 2010. An earlier generation of the Teana was sold alongside the Cefiro a few years earlier, but as it was only fully imported from Japan, thus limiting its ability to replicate the Cefiro's success. The second generation Teana however, was locally assembled and thus far more affordable.



Like the Cefiro, the Teana continues to stand out by offering superior levels of comfort, thanks to the combination of a seamlessly shifting XTRONIC Continuous Variable Transmission (CVT) and a VQ series V6 engine.

The most powerful testament to the Teana's comfort is a real life experience related by a member of the motoring press, who were conducting a five car comparison test which included the Teana and other competing models from Japan and Korea.

As usual, the test revealed many strengths and weaknesses of each model. They were also impressed with some of the latest designs from the newer models and the handling of some of the more performance oriented models.

After a long day of driving and photo shooting, it was time to return to the office and the group had to navigate themselves through evening rush hour. There was only one car whose keys everyone wanted to grab - it was the Teana's keyless entry 'Intelligent Key' fob.

Suddenly, the gimmicky features, sporty handling, aggressive styling of Teana's competitors, qualities that were the subject of much heated debates earlier didn't matter anymore. Everyone in the group just wanted to get home in the comfortable and easy to drive Teana.

This positive experience was the result of a very radical design approach adopted by the Teana's designers, who had set out to create not just a typical luxury car but to introduce what Nissan designers call the concept of "Modern Living" in a car.

Aiming to transfer the warmth and comfort of a home to a car, Nissan's designers approached 30 prospective customers whose lifestyles fit that of a Teana's target customers. The customers were then given cameras to take pictures of their favourite items from their home, an approach that has never been done before.

"We tried to express an "unattainable lightness," explained Toshiya Matsuo, designer of the new and the first and second generation Teana. Many features in Teana's interior create an airy feeling of the interior

such as its panel design. For example, the "floating pads" above the wood-grain of the instrument panel and doors give the Teana's interior a very light and spacious feeling. "We were inspired by the cushions on those wood-panel chairs which are often found at the beach in front of a resort hotel," explains Matsuo.

Matsuo's design team used elements such as wave-like curves to promote a calming or soothing effect on the Teana's interior space.

A car like the Teana is often chauffeur driven. So great emphasis was also placed in the rear. To promote this feeling of "lightness," Matsuo's team emphasised on giving the interior a certain depth.

To replicate the comfort of a sofa in a car, the Teana's rear seats comprises of three layers of shock-absorbing seat structure. However, the team carefully avoided the impression of a bulk by eliminating unnecessary elements in the cabin. By intelligently matching different design elements and colours, the team achieved a balance between comfort and modernity.

Careful attention was also paid to the armrest, which normally ends at the point where the driver puts his/her elbow. In the Teana, the armrest extends further out and is closely joint to the seating surface, just like a sofa.

People perceive luxury not just with their eyes, but also with their touch. Customers forms his or her first impression of a car not just with their eyes but all their senses. Nissan calls this PQ, short for "Perceived Quality." This is a very difficult challenge as our sensory perception are highly subjective and is difficult to quantify these into actionable data for engineers.

"We scientifically analyze the senses and incorporate these findings into product development. Although 'likes and dislikes' vary among individuals, we found that, after studying the opinions of hundreds of people from six different countries, what feels 'good or bad' is almost universal, irrespective of age, gender or location," says Takashi Takeuchi at Nissan's Interior and Exterior Engineering Development Department.

"When you touch a leather handle, you'll feel leather-specific warmth. If it's cold, you'll think it is fake. Or when you touch aluminum or metal products, you'll feel it's hard or cold. If metal is soft, we get an odd feeling," he explained.

"We used to think of a car as luxurious as long as any real leather was used. But actually, we have a variety of leather grades available, don't we? What we found in our studies is that what we feel the most comfortable with is closest to finger-pad softness," said Takeuchi.

In the Teana, the door trim and the armrests not only have a soft, tactile feel, they also provide exactly the same degree of softness regardless of their material. Providing the same softness to the entire surface area is a quality standard of many upscale sofas.

"Everything that should be hard feels hard and everything which should feel soft is soft. It is very important to consistently keep the same hard surface feel," explained designer Mitsuru Yamazaki who was in charge of ensuring the Perceived Quality for the Teana.

Reducing dividing lines in the interior is another important factor of "Perceived Quality." The L-design of the wood-grain paneling, one of the new Teana's characteristic marks, was made out of one seamless piece of wood.

Nissan's research found that the human eye can detect gaps of between 0.2 mm and 0.3 mm. Accuracy of parts and fit is another key influence on Perceived Quality. "Even a piece of paper cannot be slipped into the openings between interior parts used in Teana – even under extreme conditions, such as in Arizona where it's so sizzling hot we can fry an egg on the dashboard during daytime or in Alaska where the temperature is 40 degrees below zero Celsius and Fahrenheit. To maintain this level of accuracy, precise measurement is essential," says Takeuchi.

Teana owners will be proud to know that the same Perceived Quality team who developed the Teana were also responsible for the Infiniti M. This is a testament of Nissan's effort to democratize luxury to the masses.

While Tan Chong strives to deliver great value to its customers by promoting luxury to the masses, the company is keenly aware that luxury goes beyond our five senses.

Sometimes, invisible objects can threaten to bring this nice feeling of luxury to a crashing end. What the eye cannot see or the ears cannot hear, Nissan attempts to seek them out with techno-wizardry.

Earlier this year, the Teana 2.5-litre V6 was upgraded with a segment-first Blind Spot Warning Radar system. Previously, this crucial safety feature was only available in high-end luxury cars. The system works by incorporating advance radar technology to alert drivers when there is another vehicle in the driver's blind spot.

After three model generations, Tan Chong's message, as relayed by the Teana, remains the same as it was with the introduction of the Cedric more than three decades ago. The company is here to stay and will continue to grow with the country, adapting its products to meet the changing needs of Malaysians.

As a carmaker that brings forth innovation from extreme spectrums, from the LEAF to the GTR, Nissan has always been a company that democratizes innovation to the masses. As the caretaker of this great brand in Malaysia, Tan Chong too has always remain true to its roots, from Sunnys to Teanas or vinyl to corinthian. Of bringing honest, value for money, high quality cars to Malaysians. ■

STAYING TRUE

FOR GENERATIONS, FROM THE CEDRIC,
THE BLUEBIRD, THE CEFIRO AND TOWARDS
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Innovation
that excites



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CHALLENGING BOUNDARIES

THE KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

"Someday I am going to climb Everest," said a young Kiwi boy to his friend in 1940, just as World War Two threatened to engulf the world. Edmund Hillary was the boy's name, a boy whom his peers described as shy. Of course, nobody thought much about Hillary's dream but they certainly could not be faulted for it. Everest was a place no man had ever been before.

But beneath his shy demeanour, Hilary was serious about attempting to scale the world's tallest peak. The war may have halted his dream for a while, but his big break came in 1951, when Eric Shipton, a distinguished mountaineer and Hillary's hero, was putting together a team to explore a new approach to Everest. Shipton had heard about Hillary's mountaineering skills and wanted him on his team.

Two years later, Hillary would join another expedition. This time, he and his Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, would attempt to reach the summit. On the May 26 1953, the duo would reach the South Summit, the final camp site. Everest's summit lay just 91 metres ahead.

From here onwards, Hillary and Norgay proceeded on their own. They took almost three days to scale the last 91 metres. Heavy snow and strong wind held them up for two days, limiting their progress.

"SOMEDAY I AM GOING TO CLIMB EVEREST."

“THE TEAM ABANDONED THEIR ATTEMPT TO REACH THE SUMMIT AND ORGANISED AN UNPRECEDENTED RESCUE MISSION, INVOLVING 12 SHERPAS, WHO SUCCESSFULLY BROUGHT HALL DOWN TO THE BASE CAMP WHERE HE WAS NURSED BACK TO HEALTH.”

At 11.30am, on May 29 1953, the two weary, but exhilarated climbers finally set foot on the summit; reaching the peak together, in joint jubilation and excitement. In his own account however, Norgay revealed that it was actually Hillary who first ascended the summit.

Ever the exemplary gentleman adventurer, Hillary lived out the rest of his life modestly, and maintained the belief that scaling Everest was the result of a team effort, and not the efforts of one man alone.

Following Hillary's success, Mount Everest would become the focus of multiple ego-boosting mountaineering expeditions. In 2006, an ill-prepared British climber, David Sharp, suffered altitude sickness and frost bite while descending the mountain. 40 climbers were said to have passed an ill and helpless Sharp on their journeys, but none of them made any serious attempt to rescue him.

When news of the circumstances surrounding Sharp's death reached Hillary, he was furious. In an interview with the New Zealand Herald, Hillary said, "I am absolutely certain that if any member of our expedition all those years ago had been in that situation, we would have made every effort. I think you have to have your priorities. If the priority is just to get to the summit and let another man die, okay, you do it. But if you have someone who is in great need and you are still strong and energetic, then you have a duty, really, to give all you can to get the man down and getting to the summit becomes very secondary."

"I think the whole attitude towards climbing Mount Everest has become rather horrifying. The people just want to get to the

top. It was wrong if there was a man suffering altitude problems and was huddled under a rock, just to lift your hat, say good morning and pass on by," he added.

It is worth noting that just 10 days after Sharp's incident, an Australian climber named Lincoln Hall was left to die by his own team members in a similar situation, having declared him dead themselves. The next morning, the abandoned Hall was discovered by another climbing team, headed by American Daniel Mazur, on their way to the summit.

The team abandoned their attempt to reach the summit and organised an unprecedented rescue mission, involving 12 Sherpas, who successfully brought Hall down to the base camp where he was nursed back to health.

When asked about his team's tremendous efforts and sacrifice, Mazur said, "The summit is still there and we can go back. Lincoln only has one life."

A Twilight Rescue Mission in the Jungles of Malaysia

"Mayday, Mayday!" crackled the radio at base camp 3 of the Rainforest Challenge 2012. The emergency distress call jolted organiser Luis Wee, who feared the worst.

Memories of dramatic land-sea rescue missions during the Rainforest Challenge 2010 and 2011 returned to Wee's mind. There's a good reason as to why the Rainforest Challenge is touted as one of the world's top ten toughest off-road challenges.

In 2010, an Australian competitor was hit by a falling tree branch while he was winching a vehicle. His back was injured and he was in great pain. Unable to sit or walk, a rescue

“I THINK THE WHOLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CLIMBING MOUNT EVEREST HAS BECOME RATHER HORRIFYING. THE PEOPLE JUST WANT TO GET TO THE TOP.”



mission involving the army and police was quickly assembled.

Although the distance between him and the rescue team was only five kilometres, waistline-deep mud pools and 100 per cent winching terrain made speedy progress impossible. Several participants abandoned the expedition and volunteered themselves to deliver him out of the jungle.

The 4x4 vehicles only managed to clear the jungle by midnight, where a waiting marine police boat sped him away to an ambulance that had been standby for more than two hours. He was promptly treated at a hospital and has since completely recovered.

Sir Edmund Hillary would have been proud of the camaraderie and sportsmanship.

The 2011 event was even more dramatic. There is a saying amongst organizers of the Rainforest Challenge, "Mother Nature does not respect our timing and programme." Monsoon rains had been pelting down for three consecutive days.

Water levels at the base camp in Sungai Nipah, Terengganu, were rising fast and threatening to flood the entire area. Some areas had recorded water levels rising by a full metre within just half an hour. A decision was made to call off the event and evacuation orders were given out.

However, this time around, the distress call was for a different sort of emergency. The terrain around the "Twilight Zone" stage near Rompin was only seven kilometres long, but competitors had been inching their way through for the last 13 hours with very little progress. One American-Australian team's car had broken down and the team's essential supplies like food and drinking water were running dangerously low.

The organizers had two specially-equipped Nissan Navaras on standby at the

base camp to deal with such emergencies. After several frantic radio calls and with the sun setting quickly behind them, the organisers managed to pinpoint the distressed team's location and with two Nissan Navaras loaded-up with supplies, food and water; they drove off into the night. Difficult terrain, steep hills and sharp turns meant that it took the Navaras a gruelling three hours to make their way to the rendezvous point, but they finally did, much to the relief of the by then dehydrated and starved team. With their supplies replenished, the participants took three days in total to clear the unforgiving terrains of the "Twilight Zone."

Wee was particularly impressed with the performance of the Navaras. To cope with the significantly tougher terrain, the Navaras had been upgraded with heavy duty 4x4 equipment.

The standard front bumper was replaced with an ARB bull bar, to accommodate a Warn winch. The suspension was upgraded with Old Man Emu shocks, which Wee says is arguably the best of its kind. A snorkel air-intake system was also fitted to enable the Navara to confidently traverse deep rivers. IPF spotlights were particularly useful throughout night missions at the Twilight Zone. At the back were additional jerry cans.

Interestingly, the Navara's engine and transmission are considered to be well up to the task and were left in its original factory specifications. Explaining the modifications made, Wee said, "The standard Navara is already a robust off-road machine capable of tackling the rough terrain found along Malaysian plantations and logging tracks."

PHOTOGRAPH BY RUDDIEE KHAW

"NISSAN NAVARA COMPLETE WITH LEATHER SEATS AND A CABIN MORE REFINED THAN MOST PASSENGER CARS, INTO A COUNTRY CLUB VALET WITHOUT HAVING ANYONE MISTAKE IT, IN ANY WAY OR FORM, FOR A CONTRACTOR'S CAR."

For the nature-loving car owner intending to take it on activities like fishing or camping, Wee said that the Navara is more than capable for work and recreational use. "Of course, joining the Rainforest Challenge is like joining an F1 race in a 4x4, thus the necessity for upgrades to face the obstacles not found in everyday driving and usage," he explained.

"Most people who buy a Navara will be able to appreciate the joys of taking it for a drive on the highways or off-roads, with the confidence that it is "an escape machine", one that will take you to places where no saloon car can go," he added.

From Workshop Floors to Country Club Driveways

Decades before pickup trucks became the car du jour of urbanites, they were workhorses for tradesmen and small enterprise owners. Some of you may still be able to recall a time when every plumber, electrician or contractor, plied their trade into a Datsun model aptly named the 'Pickup'.

It was a trusty, unpretentious truck that was the backbone of our country's hardworking self-employed skilled tradesmen. Today, travel far enough out of the city and into the smaller towns and you will eventually come across Datsun Pickups that are still being used in the same manner as they were in the '70s.

Now, nearly four decades later, pick-ups are no longer used purely as workhorses. Today's generation of skilled tradesmen no longer sell their services just by word-of-mouth. Datsun owners have since passed on their trades to their sons and daughters, who have upped the competition by adopting sophisticated marketing skills and in doing so, reinvented the use of what once was considered to be a pure functional vehicle into something that now, plays a dual role of carrier and advertiser.

So instead of bland Datsun Pickups, this new generation of young, savvy entrepreneurs are turning the more current, stylish NV200 that offers lower running costs and bigger cargo space, into mobile billboards of brightly painted headlines, logos and graphics.

Like many other things in our country, pickup trucks have evolved significantly. Never before, could parents imagine their children driving a Nissan Navara complete with leather seats and a cabin more refined than most passenger cars, into a country club valet without having anyone mistake it, in any way or form, for a contractor's car. ■



MOVING WITH THE

It is estimated that by 2050, 70 per cent of the world's population, or 5.3 billion people, will be living in cities.

TIMES

Better utility, a commanding view and easier to park than conventional wisdoms suggests. Meet the new SUV for urban landscape.

NOT JUST BEING THE HOME for a huge concentration of human life on earth, cities have become more than another fixture to earth's landscape. Where humankind has built their settlements on the land they choose to make their homes on, taking sustenance from the environment around them, the city of the 21st century, with its structures made of glass and steel which rise amidst a mass of asphalt and piping capillaries, have shaped and shifted its surroundings to its requirements.

In an urban landscape, there's hardly a need for 4WD. The benefits of better fuel efficiency, less maintenance costs whilst retaining all functionalities of an SUV is the concept behind the all new X-Trail.



The taut clean lines of the new X-Trail is an echo of the surroundings it'll most likely traverse in.

“Humans have built cities that override thoroughly the natural laws of nature that dictate the environment itself.”

The natural terrain are shaped to accommodate its planned infrastructure, soft ground is pounded to form firm foundations onto which its inhabitants will erect massive structures, hills are moved to make way for life-giving roads to make their way in.

Networks of metal pipes form the city's veins that burrow their paths through the ground below, while wire crisscross the skies above bringing comfort and convenience to its inhabitants.

Through the ingenuity of engineering have human built cities thoroughly overridden the natural laws of nature that dictate the natural environment they are in.

Deserts have been turned into thriving oasis of life, while frozen frontiers has given way to cities whose constructs of cement and metal keep their occupants safe and warm inside.

Impervious to climate and terrain, cities steadily stretch out their reach of development to its surroundings, linking other smaller urban areas to create a huge ecosystem of its own.

It isn't just humans who have made cities their home, but wild fauna who have adapted their instincts and methods to better exploit new man-made food sources and shelters.

So much so that the urban environment has become an environment in its own right, with its own native inhabitants, and laws.

Just as fauna have adapted to suit the urbanisation of their surroundings, so too have the vehicles of its inhabitants evolve to suit it, such as Nissan's updated X-Trail SUV.

The intricate patterns of roads, which border and divide the various segments and living spaces of a city, are made smooth and organised to allow its inhabitants to easily move about and navigate them.

No longer do the urban driver need to face poorly constructed pathways to reach their destination.

Instead the modern driver would have to contend with throngs of other drivers all of whom are traveling to their respective destinations within the city.

In such conditions, a commanding point of view from atop a high



The greater advent of modern technology comes with unexpected privileges: Have you ever realised that GPS devices in your car saves fuel?



A minor convenience that is the reverse camera also prevents unnecessary incidents.



“A commanding point of view from atop a high-riding vehicle provides drivers with an unassailable view of the traffic ahead.”



Xenon headlights with L-shaped clearance lamps provide excellent visibility and a dynamic front view.

riding vehicle provides drivers with an unassailable view of the traffic ahead, allowing them to anticipate traffic flow and movements.

Having a raised ride height would also bring the added advantage of wading comfortably through flooded streets, should the odd weather anomaly were to suddenly overwhelm the city's drainage systems. Despite its size, the X-Trail is equipped with ABS braking, electronic brake force distribution, to keep it well within the driver's control.

The addition of an on board multimedia navigation unit not only ensures that its drivers could navigate the myriad of highways, roads, and lanes, but meet their demands for entertainment while on the go.

The multimedia unit comes with everything occupants need with DVD playback capabilities, and USB, iPod and Bluetooth connectivity.

Access to the cabin is made easier with the keyless access key fob and electrically adjustable front seats.

Even though life in the urban jungle is often a life of plenty, the higher living costs in cities will put considerable constraints on the availability of fuel for drivers to feed their vehicles with.

Which is why the X-Trail does with an efficient 2-litre 4-cylinder petrol engine mated to a silky smooth XTRONIC CVT.

Not only do these two components complement each other by maximising the use of its fuel and giving more mileage for the same amount of fuel used, but its smoothness and refinement would maintain the calm and serenity of the cabin.

For all the convenience and amenities it offers, every now and then urban dwellers would want to step out of the confines of the city and head for the open road in search of a change of environment.

For that the X-Trail engine's power output of 139PS and 198Nm of

torque, is plenty to deliver the needed thrust for drivers to traverse the open roads and highways.

With six virtual gear ratios, the CVT gearbox allows drivers to maximise the engine's power outputs.

Beyond the restricted speed limits of the city, the X-Trail's multi-link rear suspension would maintain the smooth ride quality whilst keeping it planted to the road.

Even if your destination is slightly off the beaten path, the X-Trail's redesigned front bumper allows for light off-roading as it has been design to take into account its approach angle.

Occupants won't have to leave everything behind though, as the X-Trail has a boot space that boasts up to 603 litres of space, enough for all your outdoor excursion needs.

That said the boot can be fitted with a double luggage floor, which allows handy luggage drawers to be fitted underneath it.

These small luggage drawers are not only useful in storing small loose items such as shoes and small bags, but also keeps them hidden away from the prying eyes.

Just as the SUV genre could trace its roots back to the rough and tumble world

of off-road driving, many would look upon them as an anachronism in a city.

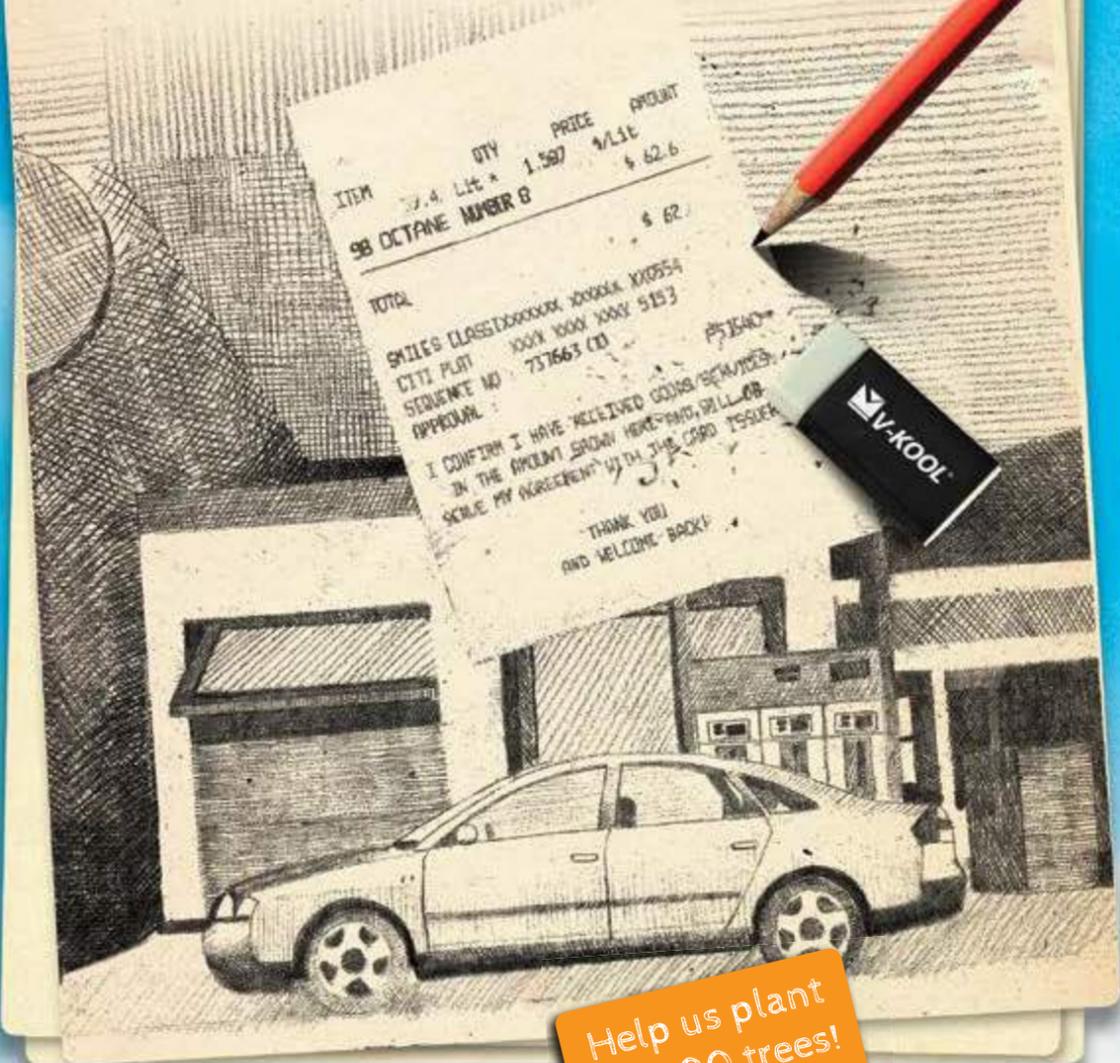
Contrary to that the inherent architecture of an SUV is still relevant to traversing the urban jungle just as its crude ancestors forged its way through natural ones.

Instead the X-Trail has adapted itself to suit the needs of urban dwellers, and by the way things are going over the next decade and beyond, it looks right for the 21st century driver. ■

“There’s a 603 liter boot space – before the rear seats fold.”



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TRUST & CARE



THE PERFORMANCE, THE INTERIOR, THE HANDLING; THESE ARE THE FEW THINGS WE TEND TO AUTOMATICALLY LOOK FOR IN A CAR. AND, RIGHTLY SO! OWNING A CAR IS A BIG DEAL AND CONSIDERING THAT MOST OF US CITY DWELLERS SPEND A GOOD PROPORTION OF OUR TIME IN OUR CARS, (NO THANKS TO TRAFFIC JAMS!), DRIVING A CAR THAT YOU'RE COMFORTABLE IN AND LOVE MAKES GETTING BEHIND THE WHEEL ALL THE MORE ENJOYABLE.

And for the enthusiasts amongst us, to 'love' your car is really like being in a relationship, is it not? It's a sacred relationship almost; where two 'people' – you and your car share a bond. It is also a relationship that Nissan and Edaran Tan Chong Motors (ETCM) want to be a part of. So "pooh-pooh" to those who think that two's company and three's a crowd, here at ETCM, we're committed to giving as much 'love' to our customers as we do to designing, manufacturing and distributing high-performance, innovative vehicles.

We like to think that our relationship with the customer continues even after they've left the showroom and isn't only renewed during routine service and maintenance checks. We keep them involved and pride ourselves in staying connected through the various events, programmes and activities that we organise throughout the year.

Here are some of the unique Nissan owner's initiatives that ETCM has conducted over the past few months.

ECO AMBASSADORS

'Going Green' is something that we at Nissan and ETCM fully embrace. As a car company, it's great to know that our vehicles are designed to contribute towards a more environmentally-friendly planet. A good example of this is the Nissan ALMERA, which was the highlight of this year's Nissan Lightfoot Quest 2013, an event designed to educate Nissan ALMERA customers on fuel-efficient driving techniques.

A further extension of our Green initiative led us to partner with MyTeksi, Malaysia's largest on-demand taxi booking network, in conjunction with Earth Day in April. The Nissan hero this time was the appropriately named Nissan LEAF, which supplied a fleet to ferry MyTeksi customers around the Klang Valley.

Apart from its name, we thought that the Nissan LEAF was the perfect example of a green car; one that provides uncompromised driving pleasure while producing zero-emissions. And in addition to exercising our 'green muscle' and offering Malaysians a luxurious ride, we were also able to introduce the benefits of electric vehicles as an option for sustainable transportation, in an innovative and customer-loving, fun way.

JOURNEY TO ZERO EMISSION

The culmination of various efforts from ETCM brought this program to yet another success where four lucky participants get to experience the Nissan LEAF for six weeks each to themselves.

The great experience where the ability to drive the Nissan LEAF daily without emitting any harmful greenhouse gases into the air is a gratifying experience, which all participants felt there's a whole paradigm shift in how they see their daily habits are actually affecting the environment.

"To me, it serves as a constant reminder that we should all be taking care of the environment." cited Ms Fazuin.

David on the other hand, showed his long trusted mechanic the Nissan LEAF and cited his friend's comments "I would be out of business if all cars went electric, there would be very little servicing and repair to be done as it is now." said his mechanic friend.

The pilot program has given a great exchange of information between us at ETCM and Malaysia's discerning car owners, while allowing both to have a glimpse into each other's perspectives with regards to the future, that arrived sooner than everyone thought.



FABULOSITY IN MUSIC, FASHION AND ART

Now, if there's one way to get to the hearts of your customers, it's getting to know them better.

We at ETCM saw an opportunity to engage with a younger group of customers in a space that was creative, vibrant and exciting – arts, music and fashion! So we slapped on our trendiest outfits, rolled out our 'hippest' cars and partnered up with the Publika mapKL Arts Festival 2013 to sponsor the Nissan Fashionably KL event.

Moving away from the heat of the tracks, this was 'hotness' of a different kind.

The ETCM team showcased four of our best-selling models – the Nissan ALMERA, Nissan TEANA, Nissan X-GEAR and the then not-launched Zero-Emission All-Electric Nissan LEAF.

Speaking at the event, Dato' David Chen, Executive Director of Edaran Tan Chong Motor commented, "Nissan Fashionably KL is definitely a great platform to associate the Nissan brand alongside stylish fashion and aesthetics which will definitely garner interest from glamorous fashion stars and perhaps the rich and famous too!" he added.





BUT ABOVE ALL, SAFETY FIRST

It goes without saying; personal safety is extremely important – especially in today's world. Equipping yourself with the knowledge of what to do in an emergency situation is the best weapon that you can carry. And, knowing what to do is, not only handy; but it could also prove quite critical.

To this end, we at Nissan and ETCM are committed to empowering our customers with more road-safety knowledge so that they'll be more assured and feel more comfortable and confident on the roads.

This year, we conducted two programmes across both Peninsula and East Malaysia; the City Survival Workshop and Road Survival Workshop, the former being a new module specially designed for female owners. It covered important tips and training such as self-defence techniques, and the importance of being vigilant, to better enable our lady customers to handle dangerous situations.

"The safety and wellbeing of our Nissan customers throughout Malaysia has always been the utmost importance to our company," said Dato' David Chen, Executive Director of ETCM.



"WE AT NISSAN AND ETCM ARE COMMITTED TO EMPOWERING OUR CUSTOMERS WITH THE RIGHT DRIVING SKILLS AND ROAD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE SO THAT THEY FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE AND CONFIDENT ON THE ROADS."



IT'S
MORE THAN
JUST GREAT
CARS



When it comes down to it, a solid relationship is one that is built on trust and commitment; values that are nurtured over time. At ETCM, it's more than just the cars and services we sell, it's also about the friendships we forge, the trust we build and memories that we create.

We are honoured to have been able to share some of this year's most memorable outings such as the family-fun-filled day at the Nissan Treasure Hunt at LEGOLAND® Malaysia and the 4x4 off-road, adventure-packed Nissan Jurassix Park event in Miri.

"ETCM believes in going the extra mile to make our customers feel like they are a part of the ETCM-Nissan family, regardless if they've purchased their car six weeks or six months ago. This is our commitment to building a relationship based on trust and friendship with our 'extended family'.

"When you buy a car from Nissan, you're not just buying a car, you're buying a lifetime of support and commitment that you (and your car) deserve".

In keeping with Nissan's motto, "Innovation that Excites", we will continue to bring you more fun, exciting and informative events and experiences, so do take note of our Facebook.com/NissanMalaysia page for updates on our other ETCM customer initiatives later this year. ■



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