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**IN TODAY'S E-MAIL**

Monday, July 12, 2004

The latest in auto industry news and reviews, culled from The New York Times and other sites on the Web. **Compiled by Nick Kurczewski** and edited by James G. Cobb.

↓ **JOY RIDES**

↓ **ROAD SIGNS**

↓ **SHOWROOM FLOOR**

↓ **BEHIND THE WHEEL**

↓ **ON TRACK**

↓ **MOTOR MOUTH**

**AUTO LOG**

**Suzuki Resolves Dispute With Consumer Reports**

The Suzuki Motor Corporation and Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports, reached a settlement Thursday in a bitter eight-year legal dispute over the magazine's assessment of how prone the Suzuki Samurai sport utility vehicle is to roll over.



Associated Press

Consumers Union did not agree to pay any money or issue a retraction. The group has never done either in more than a dozen lawsuits against it in its 68 years of evaluating products.

• [Go to Full Article From The New York Times, by Danny Hakim](#)

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**JOYRIDES: FUN STUFF**

**Between a Rock and a High Place**

Rock crawling just might be the slowest, most carefully planned way to end up crashing your car or truck. Even as the sport scrambles for recognition, participants are enjoying spirited competition and a close-knit community.

• [Go to Article from The New York Times, by Anna Bahney](#)



Christopher Berkey for The New York Times

**Study of Taxi Drivers Finds More Immigrants at the Wheel**

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The New York Times  
**Travel**

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**Future Cars**

It's no surprise to New Yorkers: 84 percent of the Big Apple's taxi and livery drivers are immigrants, reflecting the larger picture of the city's population trends.

- [Go to Article from The New York Times, by Michael Luo](#)

### **Stop the Car: 'Star Wars' System Immobilizes Motorists**

Apparently, strong electromagnetic pulses from a Royal Air Force base are wreaking havoc on cars — even preventing them from starting.

- [Go to Article from AutoWeek](#)

### **Cameras Catch Car Thieves on Tape**

Several police departments have taken to using "bait cars" to catch car thieves in the act. The vehicles serve as techno-laden four-wheel sacrificial lambs, with hidden cameras and vengeful stereo systems at the ready.

- [Go to Article from NBC10.com](#)

### **Hot Wheels**

In the beginning, hot-rodders coveted "mag" wheels because they weighed less and improved performance. Now, it seems, big wheels are only about the look.

- [Go to Article from The New York Times, by Rob Walker](#)

### **Does That Include a Butler and a Maid?**

A survey has found what it calls the priciest parking spot in New York: \$86 a day for an S.U.V.

- [Go to Article From The Daily News](#)

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## **BEHIND THE WHEEL: PRODUCT REVIEWS**

### **2004 Toyota Sienna and Nissan Quest**

The modern minivan has reached maturity — it's 21 now — to the accompaniment of a burst of activity in the segment. At least one may be too radical and another, too bland.



- [Go to Review from The New York Times, by John Broder](#)

### **Driving the New Cadillac STS**

Remember the Seville? Cadillac would prefer that you didn't, and the new STS might be the ideal way to wipe the slate clean.

- [Go to Review from Forbes](#)

### **2005 Ford Focus ZX4 ST**

The boy-racer SVT Focus might be dead, but the spirit of the car lives on in this 2005 Focus. Some of SVT's edge is gone, but the ZX4 ST is still a grocery-getter with attitude.

- [Go to Review from Car and Driver](#)



### **2006 Chevrolet HHR**

- » [About This Car](#)
- » [Future Cars](#)

### **Top 10**

#### **Top 10 Vehicles to Take to the Beach**

1. [Jeep Wrangler](#)
2. [Honda Element](#)
3. [Toyota Matrix / Pontiac Vibe](#)
4. [Mazda MX-5 Miata](#)
5. [Chrysler PT Cruiser Convertible](#)
6. [Volkswagen Passat Wagon](#)
7. [Ford Explorer / Mercury Mountaineer](#)
8. [Honda Pilot](#)
9. [Nissan Titan](#)
10. [Toyota Sienna](#)

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#### **Most Researched Exotic Coupes**

1. [2004 Ferrari 360](#)
2. [2004 Bentley Continental GT](#)
3. [2004 Acura NSX](#)
4. [2004 Maserati Coupe](#)
5. [2004 Lamborghini Gallardo](#)

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**SHOWROOM FLOOR: PRODUCT NEWS**

**Soon, the Car Will Know Traffic Is Snarled Ahead**

If you get stuck in the jam, it'll be your own fault, because the next-generation navigation systems will display accident locations and road construction sites right on the dashboard.

• [Go to Article from The New York Times, by Ivan Berger](#)



**The Eight Worst New Car Features**

Will intelligent cruise control and radar parking assist someday go the way of curb-feelers and the 8-track car stereo?

• [Go to Article from TheCarConnection.Com](#)

**With So Many Gasoline Choices, What's a Driver to Do?**

Choice is usually a good thing, but the multitude of gasoline blends offered today make filling up the tank as baffling as trying to select the best bottled water.

• [Go to Article from The New York Times, by Matt Richtel](#)

**BMW Releases the M5 With a 507-Horsepower V-10**

The M5 was fearsomely quick in its last incarnation. So the fun-loving engineers of Bavarian Motor Works installed a brutish V-10 engine, just as a reminder of how corrupting power can be.

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**ROAD SIGNS: CONSUMER NEWS, RECALLS AND SAFETY ISSUES**

**Chrysler Aloof From Latest Incentive Duels, for Now**

What a difference a few months make. With some hot-selling products at last, Chrysler can sit back and watch while Ford and General Motors wave more cash in front of shoppers.

• [Go to Article from The New York Times, by Fara Warner](#)



Associated Press

**Report Says Honda Vehicle Fires Linked to Oil Changes**

Fires in Honda CR-V sport utility vehicles soon after they have been serviced have been traced to improper installation of oil filters.

• [Go to Article from Reuters](#)

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### **[Toyota Recalls 1,489 Lexus Sedans in China](#)**

In a rare recall, Toyota's Lexus division may have to replace transmissions in about 1,500 LS430's sold in China as part of a larger repair action.

- [Go to Article from MENAFN.Com](#)

### **[Hybrid Vehicle Owners Gather to Tout Efficiency of Electric Cars](#)**

Al Gore would give this road trip his seal of approval. Hybrid vehicle owners are a passionate bunch, ready to explain the benefits of green-motoring to anyone willing to listen. • [Go to Article From Portsmouth Herald](#)

### **[Councilmen to the Rescue of Motorists Who've Been 'Framed'](#)**

New York City police have ticketed drivers if just a part of their license plates are obscured by dealers' plate frames — even if it's just the "Empire State" slogan — prompting a call for legislation.

- [Go to Article From The Daily News](#)

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## **ON TRACK: MOTOR SPORTS**

### **[Schumacher Wins British Grand Prix](#)**

Ferrari's Formula One dominance continues, but Kimi Raikkonen, driver for the resurgent McLaren Mercedes-Benz team, made sure it was no Sunday drive for Michael Schumacher.

- [Go to Article From The Associated Press, via The New York Times](#)
- [Webber-Williams Deal Done \(The Australian\)](#)



EPA

### **[Bourdais Wins Toronto Molson Indy](#)**

It was a wild race in Toronto for everyone except Sebastian Bourdais. The young Frenchman stayed out of trouble while other drivers slid into walls, each other, or sometimes both.

- [Go to Article from The Associated Press, via The New York Times](#)
- [Mixed Emotions at Forsythe after Toronto \(Crash.Net\)](#)

### **[Wreck Mars Stewart's Win at Tropicana 400](#)**

A pit-lane brawl overshadowed a dominant win by the always-controversial Tony Stewart. Fisticuffs, while officially frowned upon by Nascar, but they sure don't hurt the TV ratings.

- [Go to Article from The Associated Press, via The New York Times](#)
- [Harvick Is Nascar's Driver to Catch \(The New York Times\)](#)

### **[Rodger Ward, 83, Two-Time Indianapolis 500 Winner, Dies](#)**

Rodger Ward represented a golden age of racing at the

Indianapolis 500, when the cars were unruly front-engined roadsters. He won the 500 in '59 and '62, years after a horrific crash nearly caused him to quit racing.

- [Go to Obituary from The New York Times, by Richard Goldstein](#)

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#### **ASSEMBLY LINE: NEWS FROM DETROIT AND OTHER MOTOR CITIES**

##### **[Saab and Subaru to Develop Crossover Vehicle](#)**

The first "Saabaru" — the spry Saab 9-2X — has proved better than the automotive press expected, despite its blatant badge-engineering. Will the second helping of Sapporo and Swedish meatballs be as tasty?

- [Go to Article from The Associated Press, via The New York Times](#)

##### **[Mitsubishi to Shut Plant a Year Early](#)**

Mitsubishi's woes continue with another plant closure. However, with sales in a free-fall both here and in Japan, it might be the least of the company's worries.

- [Go to Article From Reuters via CNN/Money](#)

##### **[G.M. Daewoo Workers on Strike](#)**

Workers at G.M.'s Daewoo unit went on strike in an effort to secure pay raises and assurances over the fate of the Incheon auto plant.

- [Go to Article from Channel News Asia International](#)

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#### **MOTOR MOUTH: CAR CHAT**

In response to last week's question: *Are legislators going too far in trying to keep drivers' eyes on the road?*

**jtwang85** said: On a practical basis, it probably doesn't matter too much whether a state has a law specifically governing the use of cellphones while driving. If you do cause an accident due to talking on your cellphone while driving, you could be charged with reckless driving under most traffic laws. The cellphone law only makes it more specific. However, I think it is everyone's business whether you drive with a cellphone if it affects public safety."

##### **[This Week's Question](#)**

Always-on parking lights? Radar-guided park assist? What new car features can you live without?

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