

LEASEPLAN MAGAZINE / AUTUMN 2015

It's easier to leaseplan



FORGET CAMPING,
go glamping

What's On

AUTUMN 2015

APRIL

03-05

Go 'overseas' and chill out at the Waiheke International Jazz Festival. From the Good Friday Groove to the Grand Finale on Sunday, there's something for everyone. And if you're down in the Bay of Plenty, check out the sounds at the 53rd annual Tauranga National Jazz Festival. www.waihekejazzfestival.co.nz; www.jazz.org.nz



04



The streets of Methven will come alive to the rumble of motorcycle racing this Easter Saturday, in the annual Mountain Thunder street race. www.mountainthunder.co.nz

25

The 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings will be marked around the country with ceremonies and parades, including the Camp Gallipoli mass sleep-out at Ellerslie Racecourse in Auckland, Anzac Apple Day at Founders Park in Nelson (on April 27), and the national commemoration in Wellington. ww100.govt.nz



MAY

02



Get your running shoes on or at least give a cheer for the Rotorua Marathon. As well as the full round-the-lake run, there are also 5.5km, quarter and half marathon events. www.rotoruamarathon.co.nz

10

Relive those romantic moments of the 80s with the kings of the New Romantic movement, Spandau Ballet. The original band re-formed will play Vector Arena with Nik Kershaw — remember him? — in support. www.ticketmaster.co.nz

28-31

Oamaru goes both back and forward in time as it hosts the 2015 New Zealand Steampunk Festival. Markets, music, story readings, workshops, a fashion show — and teapot racing. www.steampunknz.co.nz



JUNE

06

How tough are you? Enjoy the rare opportunity to try out the physically challenging course at Linton Army Camp near Palmerston North in the Loaded Tough Guy and Gal Challenge. The event offers swamp running, crawling under barbed wire and plenty of mud. There are also events in Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Wellington, Hamilton and Rotorua over the winter. www.eventpromotions.co.nz

20

Think you know your beers? Try out Wellington's Craft Beer College 'Exam' — a blind tasting at the Hashigo Zake cult beer bar and see if you can tell your Saison Poodlefaker from your Dead Canary. www.craftbeercollege.co.nz



27-28

Want to be more healthy and kinder to the planet? Check out the Green Living Show and Organic Natural Expo at Auckland's ASB Showgrounds. www.organicexpo.co.nz



Welcome to the first edition of *Steering Column* for 2015. We hope you made the most of the great summer, getting out and about.

In this edition we showcase Mighty River Power's initiative in support of electric vehicles.

We have seen a growing interest in this technology as businesses look to supplement their traditional vehicle fleets with strategically placed electric vehicle options. LeasePlan New Zealand is pleased to work with Mighty River Power on this project.

It's not often that vehicle costs come down, but from July 1, annual vehicle licensing is being reduced, reflecting the consistently strong financial performance of the ACC over recent years (see page 03 for more details).

LeasePlan Corporation recently released its results for 2014. Both profit (372 million Euro) and fleet size (1.42 million) have recovered to pre-GFC levels and expansion is planned, as is significant investment in new services. Locally we will be taking advantage of these later this year to continue to provide ways of making it easier to LeasePlan.

And put it in your diary: Fleet Forum 2015 will be held on September 29 in Wellington and October 1 in Auckland. This event continues to rise in popularity, so watch out for updates over the next few months.

Charles Willmer
Managing Director, LeasePlan New Zealand

Contents

FEATURES

04 RE-WIRING THE NO. 8 PHILOSOPHY
Challenges facing our heritage of innovation

08 SHOP SMART
Kiwi inventions for your home

09 GLAMPING OUT
Get away from it all — in comfort

14 LEADING BY EXAMPLE
Mighty River Power shows the EV way

21 DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION
Keep your mind on your driving

REGULARS

02 NEWS
What's happening on the road

12 CAR CORNER
Ruggedly handsome new utes

19 STAFF PROFILE
The return of the love bug

20 EYES ON THE ROAD
The TAM team's tips for autumn

08



09



news...



NISSAN GLOWS WITH NEW ZEALAND INVENTION

An innovative glow-in-the-dark paint invented by ex-patriate New Zealander Hamish Scott has been used to light up an electric Nissan LEAF. The special coating, called Starpath, absorbs UV energy during the day and enables the car to glow for eight to ten hours after dark. At this stage the luminescent LEAF is just a marketing gimmick, but it showcases technology which may become common in the future.

Scott developed and patented the coating to be used on footpaths, so councils could cut back on lighting without compromising safety. It also seals the surface, repelling chewing gum and graffiti, and is long-lasting.

Nissan says while glowing car paint and wrap-on graphics are already available, the bespoke, ultraviolet-energised paint created especially for Nissan is unique thanks to its secret formula made up of entirely organic materials. 'While the recipe is a closely-

guarded secret, it contains a natural product called strontium aluminate, which is solid, odourless and chemically inert.

'Various third-party companies have applied non-organic glow-in-the-dark paint to vehicles before, but Nissan is the first car maker to directly apply such technology. Nissan's unique paint, if made commercially available, would last for 25 years.'

Last year Nissan showcased a Note coated in Ultra Ever-Dry, a 'nano-paint' which repels water and oil, touted as 'the world's first self-cleaning car'. The coating, which feels slightly rough to touch, works by creating a protective layer of air between the paint and the environment, effectively stopping standing water and road spray from creating marks on the car's surface.

'So far, the coating...has responded well to common use cases including rain, spray, frost, sleet and standing water. Nissan will consider the coating technology as a future aftermarket option,' the company says.

WELLINGTON MOTORWAY GETS SMART

Work is underway on the construction of New Zealand's first 'smart motorway', the Johnsonville to Terrace Tunnel section of Wellington's Northern Corridor.

The 'smart motorway' will be actively monitored and managed by traffic operators through a network of sensors and radars, cameras, and speed and lane-control signs. Operators see or are alerted to slowing traffic or an incident, and adjust the speed limit and lane controls if necessary to stop congestion before it starts. Active motorway management has also been shown to reduce collisions.

The first stage of the works, the upgrade of the 3 kilometre section between Ngaurunga and Aotea Quay (NtAQ), began late last year and is designed to help relieve some of the city's worst evening peak congestion. When complete, northbound travellers on the motorway will enjoy an extra lane of capacity and less congestion, and the Hutt Road will be freed up for faster bus journeys.

LEASEPLAN UNDERFOOT

Next time you step into your new lease car, look down. New high-quality, custom-fitted LeasePlan-branded car mats are being installed in many newly ordered vehicles.

The branding will be subtly placed on the edge of the black mats.

'They will make life easier for you and your drivers,' says Johannes Jacobs, LeasePlan's Commercial Director. 'They will help identify the vehicle as a LeasePlan vehicle to maintenance workshops, so your drivers spend less time off the road and you are correctly invoiced for maintenance work every time.'

DID YOU KNOW: New Zealand's first section of motorway opened in December 1950. It ran for 3 miles (4.8 km) between Takapu Rd and Johnsonville, Wellington.



ACC LEVY REDUCTION

At a time when prices seem to be going up and up, one major motoring cost is coming down. As of July 1, 2015, the cost of annual licensing (or a car's 'rego') will be reduced by an average of 41 per cent for commercial and private light passenger vehicles, cars, utes and vans less than 40 years old and weighing less than 3500 kilograms.

The New Zealand Transport Agency has been able to reduce the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) levy portion of the annual licence because the ACC has reached its goal of being fully funded — having enough money set aside to cover the ongoing costs of vehicle-related claims.

Levies for motorcycles and mopeds have not been reduced, due to the disproportionately high costs incurred to ACC by accidents involving these types of vehicles.

Licences expiring before July 1 will be renewed at the current rate, so NZTA is advising drivers and fleet managers to look at renewing existing licences for just three months if they are due to expire before July this year, then renewing for a year once the new charges are in place.

ACC has also introduced a risk-rating system for vehicles, determining the safety level of light passenger vehicles, based on crash data, which has been used to set the new levies.

For more information, see www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle/registration-licensing



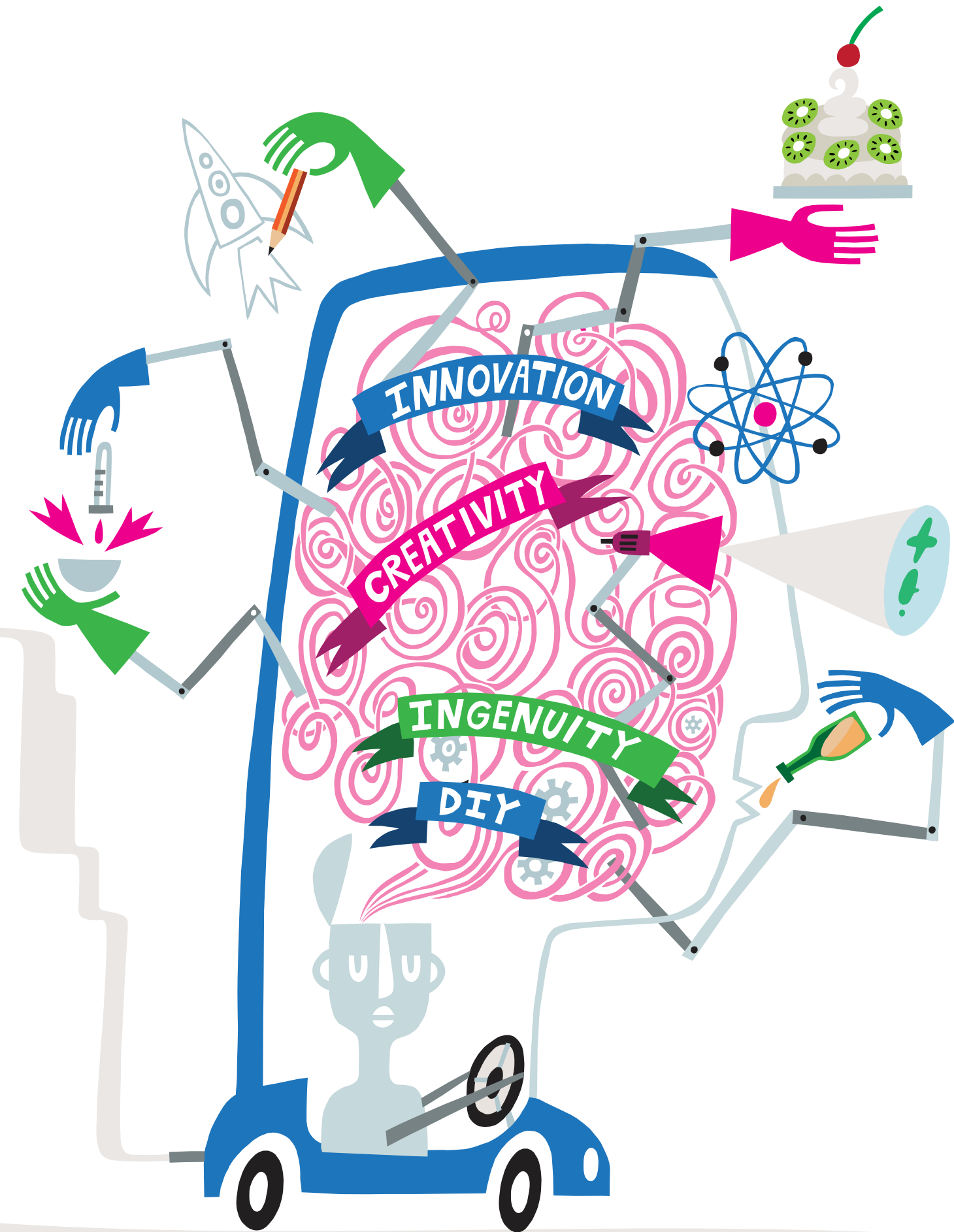
DRIVING AHEAD WITH RESEARCH

MobilityMonitor, a recent global survey of more than 3000 drivers undertaken for LeasePlan Corporate, showed that nearly half work for companies which are focused on improving driver safety, but the majority of them still multitask while driving.

LeasePlan says it has noticed a growing interest from fleet managers in topics which affect individual drivers and their performance, both in terms of safety and efficiency. 'Influencing driver behaviour is the next

level of fleet optimisation,' says Nathalie de Vries, Senior Consultant at LeasePlan. 'We need to engage drivers to modify their behaviour to meet various objectives in the area of safety, but also cost control and CO₂ emissions.'

While most drivers surveyed understood the risks of distracted driving, 73 per cent admitted to making phone calls while behind the wheel, 37 per cent to eating and nearly a quarter to checking social media.



RE-WIRING the No.8 PHILOSOPHY

WORDS BY SARAH ELL ILLUSTRATION BY BECK WHEELER

New Zealand has a tradition of being inventive with next to nothing.
But a new book suggests it's time for a change of thinking.

Every Kiwi knows what No. 8 wire is — or, at least, what it represents. Originally used to denote a grade of fencing wire, the expression has become shorthand for the Kiwi 'can do' philosophy: the idea that we can think up and create amazing innovations using very little.

But today Kiwi innovators have to operate in a global market. We might be happy beaver away at the bottom of the world, tinkering away in our garden sheds, but to compete on the international stage we need to up our game. So say Jon Bridges and David Downs, the authors of a recently published book, *No. 8 Re-wired*.

Bridges says New Zealand individuals or companies need to move beyond the mindset that having good ideas is

sufficient for success, and towards accessing the best technology available, sharing information with others, working with specialists in design and marketing and being open to global cooperation.

'That number-eight wire mentality that we celebrate is no longer enough,' he says. 'It's still a really good thing about us, but the world has changed. We need to add more strings to our bow in terms of what we do once we come up with the ideas — how we research and collaborate.'

'A lot of the things you can invent with number-eight wire or in the back shed have already been invented. We need to take a more modern approach to getting experts involved.'

Investment in research and development — both by the government and private companies — needs to be

increased, Bridges says.

'We spend far less than other countries our size on research and development. We need to work out how we can spend more, and get more out of it.' He uses the example of Fisher & Paykel, which accounts for around 10 per cent of the country's entire industrial R&D spend. 'They do it because they know it works, and they have become world-leaders in healthcare products.'

Our isolation is no longer an excuse, in these days of the internet and global communications. 'It makes some things more expensive, in terms of shipping products and getting materials here, and we don't have a large domestic market, but these things can be overcome. It is a positive, the way we sit outside the rest of the world and can get a good view of it.'

What does No. 8 Re-wired have to say about some of New Zealand's most famous transport innovators...

1. GIBBS AQUADA AND QUADSKI

Millionaire businessman Alan Gibbs spent 16 years and an enormous amount of money trying to develop a commercial amphibious vehicle. Based on another New Zealand invention, the Sealander designed by Terry Roycroft, the Aquada was finally launched in 2003. *'Time'* magazine named it among the best inventions of 2003 [and] on 14 June 2004 it looked the part as Richard Branson swashbuckled across the English Channel in it...But the pieces still wouldn't fall into place for a commercial release.' Stymied particularly by the Americans' insistence that it have airbags for road use — which Gibbs pointed out would deploy every time it hit a wave at sea — production was shut down after just 45 of the amphibians had been built. Gibbs' team then came up with the Quadski, 'a quad bike that goes on the water, and a jetski that goes on land. Finally, a solution to the age-old problem of how to annoy people on sea and on shore!' A factory in Detroit is now turning out 100 of them a month, and it has even featured on the holy grail of all things motorised, *Top Gear* — success in anyone's book.

2. THE BRITTEN MOTORCYCLE

Kiwis like to go fast, and to make a lot of noise while doing it. Christchurch engineer and motorcycle enthusiast John Britten excelled at both of these, designing a motorcycle which has become a legend. 'Sometimes fame outstrips deserving, but in this case his exploits are, if anything, more incredible than the legend surrounding him. Throwing away the motorcycle manufacture manual and starting completely from scratch in terms of design and materials technology, John Britten and his small team built the fastest four-stroke superbike in the world. On the way they pioneered

technology that is now being exploited by motorcycle manufacturers everywhere.'

Only 10 Britten bikes were ever built — 'For Britten, manufacturing took the creativity out of design' — but the innovations he pioneered have been adopted by such big names as Triumph and Bimota, and 'one of his V1000 bikes adorns the main hall of Te Papa in Wellington.' Britten died in 1995, but his legacy continues.

3. HARRY WIGLEY'S SKI PLANE

'Henry Rodolph Wigley (b 1913, d 1980) continued the Kiwi tradition of being first with an aviation exploit and then having the world largely ignore it. In Wigley's case, he was the first to land on snow in a plane that had skis as well as wheels. He also survived, which makes the story even more interesting.' Today we don't think twice about a plane being able to take off with wheels and land on snow on skids, but in 1955 it was unheard of. Wigley, who flew with the air force in World War Two and was a keen skier and mountain climber, designed his own adaptation to his Auster aircraft which meant he could lower either wheels or skis, depending on the surface he wanted to land on. 'He had to lean out the window to operate it, but having spent years developing the system, Wigley was in no doubt that it would work.' He was right, and after a few tweaks so it could be controlled from inside the aircraft, Mount Cook Airlines was soon running a commercial ski-plane service.

4. HAMILTON JET

'On the one hand, Bill Hamilton embodies the pure No. 8 Wire spirit of the self-taught inventor who changed the world from his workshop in the Mackenzie Basin, but the truly great thing about the achievements of the inventor of the jetboat is that he also embodies the re-wiring of the No. 8

tradition. This is because his creative genius was married to the business acumen to ensure that his legacy is not just an idea, but a company that still leads the world today.'

Hamilton had already invented many things before he turned his hand to designing a propulsion system which would enable the navigation of shallow rivers. Working with a team of other talented Kiwis, Hamilton created the world's first high-speed jetboat, powered by water being pushed through an Archimedes screw. The market was ready for fast, lightweight, shallow-draft boats, and now Hamilton jet engines power recreational and commercial craft around the world.

5. BRUCE MCLAREN

Number 8 Re-wired features a section on 'high-tech innovators' — 'the companies that come to people's minds when you ask them to think of great New Zealand inventions that have grown to lead the world through ingenuity and innovation.' Under this umbrella comes McLaren, the motor-sport team founded by a kid from Auckland who became an internationally famous motor-racing driver and designer. Bruce McLaren, who died on the race track in 1970, left a lasting legacy in the form of the motorsport team which still bears his name, and is the most successful in the world.

'The success of the team stems from Bruce McLaren's engineering genius and innovative know-how in the early days. McLaren cars became the fastest in the world with his pioneering work on aerodynamics and down force, and they have stayed that way to the present day. Though based in Britain, Kiwi DNA and McLaren's inventive spirit lie at the heart of the McLaren Group — a multi-billion-dollar company employing 5300 people.' ●

Number 8 Re-wired, by Jon Bridges and David Downs, Penguin, RRP \$45

Reproduced with permission from No. 8 Re-Wired by Jon Bridges and David Downs. Published by Penguin Group NZ. RRP \$45.00. © Text copyright Ten Speed Limited and David Downs, 2014. Photography copyright © Alexander Turnbull Library (WA-42009-F); Photography copyright © Hamilton jet; Photography copyright © Harry Ruffell. www.brittendvd.co.nz; Photography copyright © Gibbs Sports Amphibians Inc; Photography copyright © Gibbs Sports Amphibians Inc



BOOK GIVEAWAY

STEERING COLUMN HAS FIVE COPIES OF NO. 8 RE-WIRED TO GIVE AWAY.

Email the answers to these two questions, along with your contact details, to marketing@leaseplan.co.nz. Winners will be drawn on April 30 2015.

1. Which international car-maker is using the New Zealand innovation Starpath to make its cars glow in the dark? (See page 02)
2. What new innovation is being added to selected new LeasePlan lease cars? (Hint: it's underfoot, see page 02)

SHOP smart

CELEBRATE KIWI INGENUITY WITH THESE CLEVER PRODUCTS, THOUGHT UP BY NEW ZEALANDERS USING A MINIMUM OF NO. 8 WIRE.

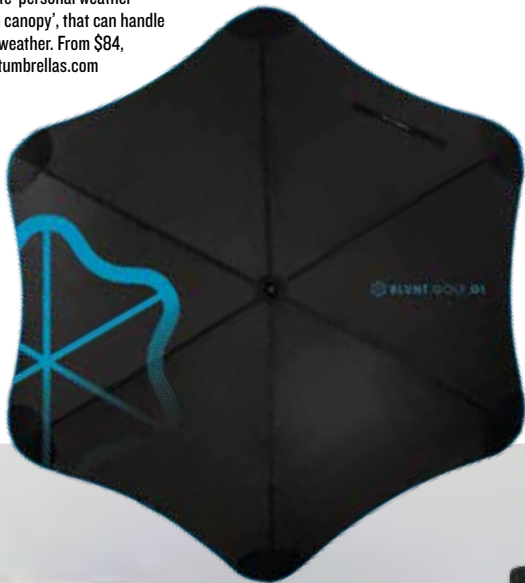
1. ANTIPODES SKINCARE

The Antipodes range, created by Wellingtonian Elizabeth Barbalich, is now sold in 12 countries worldwide. The range is certified organic and vegetarian-approved and comes in recyclable packaging. Grapeseed Butter Cleanser, \$46.90, www.antipodesnature.com



2. BLUNT UMBRELLAS

Kiwi engineer Greig Brebner designed the ultimate 'personal weather protection canopy', that can handle the worst weather. From \$84, www.bluntumbrellas.com



3. DAVID TRUBRIDGE LIGHTING

David Trubridge's elegant lamps and furniture have become design icons, combining natural influences with high-tech CNC production. Hinaki lamp, kitset from \$550, www.davidtrubridge.com

4. FISHER & PAYKEL WASHSMART™

The WashSmart™ Front Loader utilises Fisher & Paykel's SmartDrive™ technology to eliminate the traditional belt drive, creating a washer so quiet you'll forget it's running. SmartDrive™ Front Loaders from \$1399, fisherpaykel.com



5. GROVE AVOCADO OIL

Grove pioneered avocado oil production in New Zealand, combining the growing conditions of the Bay of Plenty with the science and art of processing. Extra-virgin avocado oil, 250ml bottle \$11.50, www.avocado-oil.co.nz



Glamping

OUT

WORDS BY SARAH ELL

Warm nights under canvas, waking up on a beautiful sunny day and toasting marshmallows under the stars — sadly, the camping dream rarely seems to come true. As well as the notoriously fickle summer weather, the reality is a packed campsite, queues for the loos and an airbed which deflates around 3 a.m.

But there is an alternative, as New Zealand wakes up to the worldwide trend of glamping, or 'glamorous camping'. You still get to sleep in a tent, or an unusual and unique shelter like a shepherd's hut or a pioneer-style wagon, but you get a comfortable, real bed, a hot shower, private cooking facilities and a decent toilet. Sites are often off the beaten track, offering glampers a unique experience of native forest or farmland which they get all to themselves. It's a way to disconnect from modern life, get unplugged and enjoy quality couple or family time — without a soggy tent fly, forgetting the can opener and sharing the shower with strangers.

Turn over for a selection from the wide range of glampsites around the country.



NORTH ISLAND

BETHELLS BEACH
Wainamu Luxury Tents

BAY OF PLENTY
Chattan Farm

The Chattan Farm glampsite is tucked into rich native bush.



The glampsite at Lavericks Bay has two luxurious tents and an amenities block.



> LAVERICKS BAY

Set on a 1000 hectare farm which has been owned by the same family since the 1850s, the Lavericks Bay site on Banks Peninsula offers a pair of luxury tents for two families or a group of friends to glamp together. A 15-minute walk leads down to a secluded bay, ideal for exploring during the day and toasting marshmallows over a campfire in the evenings. There are also mountain-biking trails and the farm to explore. The nights are dark, but the stars have to be seen to be believed.

From \$200 per night per family,
www.canopycamping.co.nz

> THE HEXAGON

Glamping doesn't have to mean sleeping in a tent. On the West Coast near Punakaiki, you can spend a night in your own hexagonal home on stilts. Built by an astrologer in the 1970s as part of a hippy commune, The Hexagon can only be reached on foot (while your host brings up your bags on his quad bike). It is built of native timber, with hand-made stained glass windows and million-dollar views from the outdoor kitchen. Totally off the grid, it's a chance to completely disconnect from the outside world.

From \$190 per night per family,
www.canopycamping.co.nz

SOUTH ISLAND

PUNAKAIKI
The Hexagon

BANKS PENINSULA
Lavericks Bay



Get right off the grid on the Punakaiki coast.

> WAINAMU LUXURY TENTS

Romance and camping don't usually go together, unless you like sharing a saggy airbed. Romance and glamping, however...Anna and Jim Wheeler get plenty of honeymooners and couples celebrating anniversaries at their luxury glampsite near Bethells Beach in West Auckland. There are two private sites, each with a two-room canvas tent — inspired by both safari tents and a Maori whare — and a private outdoor bath, as well as a camping kitchen, hot and cold running water and a flush toilet. The tents are surrounded by farmland and bush-clad hills, and it's a short walk to the dramatic black-sand dunes.

> \$250 per night per couple,
www.facebook.com/wainamu

> CHATTAN FARM

There aren't many places you can lie in bed and listen to the kokako calling, but Chattan Farm in the Bay of Plenty is one of them. Nestled into a block of covenanted native bush, from which all animal pests have been exterminated, this glamping site offers privacy, isolation and natural beauty — with the added benefits of a hot shower, composting toilet, and solar fairy lights. Guests can explore the bush and farm, or just put their feet up and enjoy the silence and birdsong. Filling the outdoor bath with one turn of the tap then lying back and soaking up the experience is highly recommended.

> From \$250 per night per family,
www.canopycamping.co.nz

Cooking around the fire is a family activity.



Ruggedly HANDSOME

WORDS BY RICHARD BOSSELMAN

One-tonners accounted for 20 per cent of new vehicle sales in 2014: an impressive achievement, not least when it's been estimated maybe only about 60 per cent of those are likely to get down and dirty as bone fide weekday workhorses. The emerging preference for high-specification double-cab diesel auto models as recreational vehicles and family hacks is obvious. Here are four current models, tested in top-spec diesel double-cab format, that seem as content living in the city as at an RD address.



> HOLDEN COLORADO LTZ

What a difference 24 months makes. In that relatively short period of time, Holden's hunk has undergone not just one update, but two. To clarify, that's one major change — at the end of 2013 the Duramax 2.8 litre four-cylinder turbo-assisted engine was given a big fizz-up — and the more recent minor follow-up sharpen, specific to the LTZ crew-cab flagship. So much ongoing revision activity is rather unusual, but it's good to see, for the model is much improved over its first-try format. Start-up roar seems a trademark of all Colorado powerplants but on the move it's less gruff than before and feels healthier. As much as the updated engine's extra zest is a big attraction, especially in auto where there's 500Nm torque

(60Nm more than the manual), fundamentally the vehicle benefits just as much by adopting other refinements. There's a smoother ride quality, resulting from a rear-spring retune, and the addition of a touchscreen that would not look out of place in a luxury car. This not only offers a class-best reversing-camera viewer to accompany the rear parking sensors but also provides Holden's excellent MyLink controller. Overall, Colorado stands as a comeback champ; whereas the original edition misread obvious market trends and consumer likes, this one is spot on. > \$59,990 manual, \$61,990 automatic



> VW AMAROK TRENDLINE

Amarok has been here since 2011 and still stands as the only 'European' rival to the established Asian-made utes in the segment. One thing about the Amarok which is immediately apparent is that while the cabin fitout says 'VW car', the driving doesn't. It's a lot meatier. Getting down to specifics, the steering, though sharp, has more turns lock-to-lock and the ride is lumpier. All of which makes it a typical ute but also nonetheless a good one. It sets a good standard for ride, handling and comfort, with surprising suaveness and enough genuine friendliness to engender trust and faith. Don't underestimate the drivetrain. The 2.0 litre twin-turbo four-cylinder diesel has lots of oomph, with 132kW power and 420Nm of torque, and that 2F eight-speeder, lifted from prestige car duty, is a true bonus feature. Amarok continues to convince as a solid, sensible, stylish and well-sorted rig. It's not so much built to match its rivals as to strive to step ahead. > \$61,990 automatic

> TOYOTA HILUX SR5

Students of ute-ology will know it all changed last year. After 32 successive years of sector domination, the Hilux lost its crown to the Ford Ranger. Still, it was a close-run fight, reflecting that after a decade of service, Hilux still does the job for a lot of customers. No argument, it marches to the beat of a different drum. But regardless of appreciable improvements — swapping the four-speed automatic transmission for a new five-speeder; implementing new interior materials and trim colours; adding a 155 mm audio display (with a reversing camera and sat-nav); and finally a proper three-point belt for the centre rear (a job that sounds simple enough but actually required substantial re-engineering work) — Hilux hasn't the grunt, in more than the merely mechanical sense, to equal the freshest alternates. What it needs to return to full fighting fitness is a wholly fresh start...and that'll occur before year-end. Still, it certainly maintains styling credibility and feels as robust and as challenge-ready as anything else around. This is one very tough truck and the 126 kW/343 Nm four-cylinder common-rail turbo diesel still has a ballsy feel. > \$62,790 manual, \$65,290 automatic



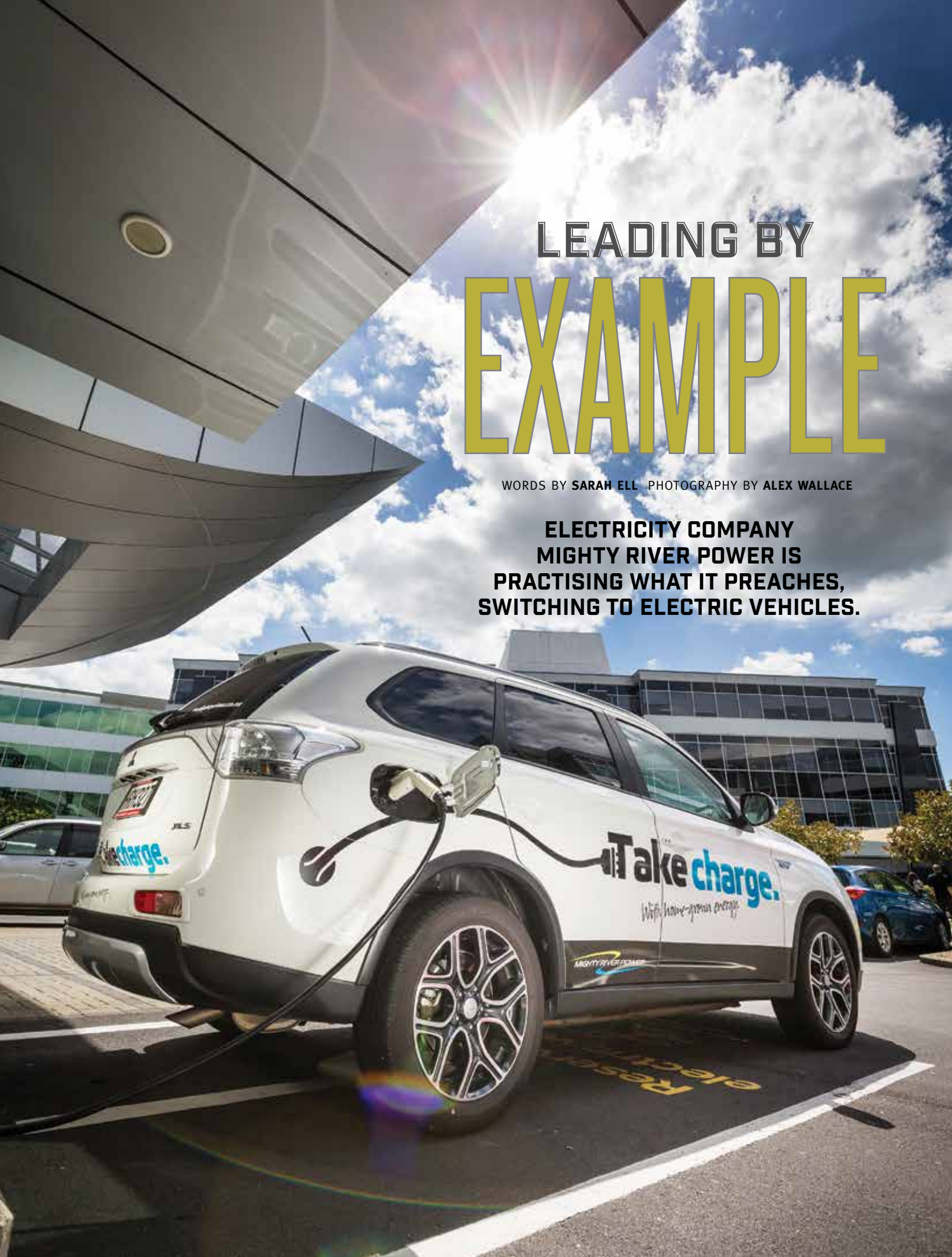
> MAZDA BT-50 LTD

There's no denying that on price, specification, performance and sheer driving feel-good, the BT-50 is a powerful force, providing an excellent example of how a light commercial vehicle can be turned into so much more. In so many ways, you're looking at a family friend that just happens to have a deck on the back, and extraordinary capability for coping with cross-country shortcuts. As tested, it has comparable equipment levels to other models, pitches a winner for safety systems — traction control, stability control and roll control — and heads the pack for refinement, dynamics and comfort. There's also an excellent after-sale support package. It's a classy, well-sorted machine, oozing engineering excellence and brilliant quality. > \$62,395 automatic

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

WORDS BY SARAH ELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEX WALLACE

**ELECTRICITY COMPANY
MIGHTY RIVER POWER IS
PRACTISING WHAT IT PREACHES,
SWITCHING TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES.**



LEFT Mighty River Power now has 12 plug-in vehicles in its fleet, including eight Mitsubishi Outlanders, which can be used for longer-distance trips. **RIGHT** The Karapiro hydro station is part of New Zealand's rich resource of renewable electricity.



New Zealand is blessed with an abundance of renewable power sources. We might moan about the frequent wind and rain, but the supply of energy they provide — along with geothermal activity — means we lead the world in generating clean, virtually infinite electricity. And that also means we are well-positioned for the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs).

Electricity generation company Mighty River Power produces more than half of its output from nine hydro dams on the Waikato River, and about 40 percent from geothermal stations in Kawerau and near Taupo. So the company decided it made sense to use some of that electricity to power its vehicle fleet, working with LeasePlan on a plan to convert as many of its petrol-powered cars to plug-in EVs as possible over the next three years.

The move is part of a larger campaign for Mighty River Power called 'Take Charge' — encouraging private and public-sector

fleet managers to start plugging their cars into New Zealand's home-grown energy, and to create some additional momentum around the adoption of plug-in EVs in New Zealand, says Chief Executive Fraser Whineray.

'About 60 per cent of new cars in New Zealand are bought by fleet owners, so it is important that we see plug-in electric vehicles in large fleets. This will attract more [electric] car models to New Zealand, providing options and developing the second-hand market.

'The decision to move our fleet to plug-ins was driven by a sustainability initiative that's real — with sound economics and environmental rationale. It's a really good philosophical fit for an electricity business.

'This is a stunning opportunity. There is a huge incentive for consumers, us as a company and for New Zealand to plug our cars into home-grown, renewable energy — our own hydro, geothermal and wind. Our country is blessed with a wealth of clean, renewable energy — there is no



ABOVE Charging stations have been installed at Mighty River Power sites, so cars can be charged up when not in use. FACING PAGE, TOP Mighty River Power Chief Executive Fraser Whineray in one of the company's new Mitsubishi Outlander showcasing the 'Take Charge' branding.

country in the world that's more "EV-ready" than New Zealand.'

Mighty River Power has had some plug-in vehicles in its fleet for several years, but in 2014 committed to shifting 70 per cent of its fleet to electricity by 2018, as existing leases expire.

'That will be pretty much every vehicle that we can practically convert to a plug-in option,' says Whineray.

LeasePlan Key Account Manager Jessica Wait says the first introductions were three fully electric Nissan LEAFs in 2012, and eight Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicles) in 2014-15.

'We offered our expertise and prepared Total Cost of Ownership comparisons for electric and hybrid models vs petrol and diesel models. These comparisons detail the depreciation and operating costs, factoring in fringe benefit tax,' says Wait. 'This also helped Mighty River Power open up discussions with other companies regarding electric vehicles.'

While the market for electric vehicles is still developing, it will only grow, Wait says.

After weighing up the costs and benefits, Mighty River Power's commitment to the electric cause meant the company chose to take the plug-in route. As the infrastructure required for charging the cars away from their home base is also in its infancy, converting the fleet to electricity over time made sense.

The Nissan LEAFs are used mainly as pool cars for around-town running — although they have a range of around 150 kilometres between charges — while the Mitsubishi Outlanders are used for longer-distance trips, where the option of switching to petrol consumption is required. However, Mighty River Power's Fleet Manager Peter Corner notes that staff can travel between the company's Auckland and Hamilton offices in the LEAF 'on a single charge — and with juice in the battery to spare', at a cost of about \$2.50 on electricity, compared with the equivalent of \$15 for a

similar-sized petrol car. 'As a fleet manager, running costs are really important, which is why I see plug-in electric vehicles as a good addition to our fleet.'

Corner says staff have responded enthusiastically to the new additions.

'It's great to see people's reactions when they drive a plug-in electric vehicle for the first time. Often their expectations are very different [to the reality], and they come away from it feeling really positive, having had a great experience in terms of comfort, quietness and performance. We often get people saying they've forgotten that they're driving an electric vehicle at all.'

Mighty River Power has installed charging stations at every site where the electric vehicles are based, 'so charging up is really simple, you just plug it in when you park — it's certainly easier than stopping off to fill up at the service station!'

The response from the public has also been positive. 'People get really excited about the idea of powering themselves from home, running their car on New Zealand's own home-grown energy rather than imported fossil fuel, and at the equivalent of 30 cents a litre,' Corner says.

Whineray says Mighty River Power has received positive feedback from businesses across New Zealand, recognising the logic of the move and seeing it as a practical sustainability initiative. 'We continue to get great stories back from our employees, who use these cars as part of their daily work travelling to our generation sites and offices through the upper North Island. This feedback — and the really positive interest we see from people outside our business — reinforces our decision and the economic and environmental rationale.

'We're actively providing drive experiences for large fleet owners and business leaders, and their feedback has been incredibly positive and supportive. Every business or government leader that we can get behind the wheel of a plug-in EV is a potential convert, and someone who can help drive this forward.

'People who try a plug-in EV are usually converted, as they enjoy the drive experience so much — it quickly dispels the myths around electric vehicles. And the economic and environmental logic behind it is very compelling.' ●



RACHEL BROWN, CEO OF THE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS NETWORK, SAYS:

'Our mission is to have 1000 electric vehicles in New Zealand by the end of this year. To do that, we've got to get more companies asking for EVs as part of their fleets.

'We really love Mighty River Power's leadership. CEO Fraser Whineray is really effective in explaining the business benefits of switching, and a number of our members are now interested. It takes a brave person to stand up and make a change.'

WHAT BENEFITS DOES MIGHTY RIVER POWER SEE FOR ITS CUSTOMERS IN SWITCHING TO EVs:

- > Running your car off electricity instead of imported fossil fuel makes sense — both for your wallet and the environment.
- > Petrol will never be as cheap as electricity, at the equivalent of about 30 cents per litre. It's also great for drivers and companies to be supporting our domestic economy.
- > It's better for the environment. Every electric vehicle on the road, powered by renewable electricity, takes more than two tonnes of carbon out of our environment every year.
- > This is a great opportunity to power ourselves from home. As the owner of a plug-in vehicle, starting every morning with a 'full tank' of home-grown energy is a fantastic feeling.

'MIGHTY RIVER POWER HAVE TAKEN A STRONG STANCE IN LEADING THE FLEET SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE. OUR PART IS TO PROVIDE THESE VEHICLES AS ONE ELEMENT OF AN OVERALL EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE FLEET FOR OUR CUSTOMER.'

LEASEPLAN'S MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHARLES WILLMER

THE *love bug*

WORDS BY SARAH ELL

For LeasePlan's Larney Hutchinson, love is spending nine years building a VW beach buggy virtually from scratch.



The buggy is modelled on the famous Meyers Manx beach buggies produced in the 1960s by Californian Bruce F Meyers, using fibreglass kits applied to shortened VW chassis.

Everyone remembers their first car — but not everyone spends nine years of their spare time trying to re-create it. But for LeasePlan staffer Larney Hutchinson, building a custom VW beach buggy has been a long-term labour of love.

Hutchinson, currently LeasePlan's IT Services Manager, has been with the company almost since its beginnings in New Zealand, apart from a six-year stint working for himself — and contracting back to LeasePlan.

Another long-term passion has been building a classic VW beach buggy, based

on the chassis of a 1962 Beetle and fitted with a hand-built fibreglass body. The seeds were planted when Hutchinson was 15, and his father bought him his first car: a Meyers Manx-style 1962 VW buggy.

'I had it until I was in my early twenties, but as my tastes changed I sold it. I went through a few other cars through the years but that was the only car I really regretted selling. So I decided to get another one, and the only way to do that was to build one from scratch.'

Hutchinson found a 1969 Beetle in Tauranga with a seized engine block but a decent chassis. 'We stripped it back to the

flat pan, cut it in half, shortened it by 380 millimetres, and welded it back together. Then we fitted the new body on, fixed the engine and put it back in, wired it up and got it all street legal,' says Hutchinson — making it sound easy. In fact, the process took nine years of evenings and weekends, with family and friends helping out.

Now the hard work is over, the fun has begun, with Hutchinson using the car at weekends and for the occasional school run. And is that the end of such projects? Well, no. Hutchinson now wants to build a four-seater buggy, so the whole family can go out together. ●



REMEMBER!
**BE
EASTER
ROAD
SAFE!**

Now that cooler weather is on the way we urge you to take extra care on the road over the Easter holiday weekend. Holiday driving requires extra care and patience from everyone!



CHANGE OF seasons

THE SEASONS ARE CHANGING, AND WITH THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER COMES WET, WINDY AND POTENTIALLY ICY WEATHER. STAY SAFE ON THE ROAD WITH THESE TIPS FROM LEASEPLAN'S TECHNICAL ASSET MANAGEMENT TEAM.

- > Summer driving in wintry conditions can be deadly. Remember to respect the road and weather conditions and adjust your speed and driving technique accordingly. Roads can be especially greasy when it rains after a long period of dry weather.
- > If you're heading away this Easter, take your time on the roads. Plan plenty of time for your journey, and factor in regular rest stops. There's no point in arriving at your holiday destination more wound-up than you were when you set out!
- > The two-second rule — the space between you and the car in front — might be OK in dry, good-visibility conditions, but in poor weather, make it four seconds. Having plenty of time and room to react is vital.
- > Get your car ready for winter. Make sure your servicing is up to date: breaking down in fine weather is one thing, being stuck on the side of the road in pouring rain is another.
- > Do a quick check of your head-lights and tail-lights — make sure all bulbs are working as they should.
- > Top up your windscreen-washer fluid and check your wiper blades. They are about to get a lot more use, and finding out they don't work when you need them is not only inconvenient but dangerous.
- > Turn on your headlights when driving in low-light conditions, to improve your visibility to other road users. Just remember — if you're not lucky enough to have automatic headlights on your vehicle — to switch them off when you reach your destination.
- > Good tyres are vital in wet conditions. Correct inflation will not only improve the handling characteristics of the tyre in all conditions, as it increases traction by ensuring all the tyre tread contacts the road; it will also positively affect your fuel consumption. Take your vehicle into your local tyre shop for a check of inflation and tread.
- > Pack a winter 'survival kit' into your car: an effective torch, with working batteries, and a rug or some warm clothing, in case you get caught out. Make sure your cellphone is well charged, so you can call for help.
- > Water and brakes don't mix. If you have driven through a flooded area, your brakes won't work as effectively. Use them lightly a few times once you are out of the water, to dry out the discs and get them working again.
- > If you don't have ABS brakes, don't brake hard in wet conditions — instead, pump your brakes to avoid skidding. Even if you do have ABS, be cautious — firmly press your brakes and steer your way to safety. If you find yourself aquaplaning — losing all traction when a 'wedge' of water forms between the tyre and the road — don't use your brakes, just take your foot off the accelerator and steer the car in the direction you want to go. The aquaplaning will stop and you'll regain traction. ●



DRIVEN TO distraction

We know we shouldn't do it, but still we do...Driving while distracted by phones, food or other people in the car is an all-too-common phenomenon, but it's also highly dangerous — and often deadly. According to the Ministry of Transport, driver distraction is a factor in around 11 per cent of road crashes each year, and in 2013 resulted in 21 deaths and 170 serious injuries.

Road safety charity Brake recently conducted a survey of Kiwi drivers to find out the main distractions when behind the wheel. Thirty-four per cent of respondents admitted to using a hand-held mobile phone and 39 per cent to using a hands-free phone while driving at least once in the previous 12 months — yet 84 per cent agreed with the statement 'it is dangerous to drive while using any type of mobile phone'.

More than half of respondents named changing the radio, children in the car and eating or drinking while driving as major distractions.

Brake says statistics show drivers using mobile phones are four times more likely to crash, whether the phone is hands-free or hand-held. Texting, emailing or browsing on your phone are even more dangerous; texting drivers are 23 times more likely to crash than a driver paying full attention.

Brake provides best practice guidance to managers on tackling road risk through its Brake Professional service. It runs events on a range of fleet and road safety topics, and provides resources including guidance reports for managers and tools for drivers such as advice sheets, posters and interactive training resources. ●

You can find out more by visiting their website (www.brakepro.org) or contacting at Brake on 021 407 953 or brakecharity@gmail.com.



BRAKE SUGGESTS THAT FLEET MANAGERS TRY THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF DRIVER DISTRACTION:

- > Educate drivers on key distraction risks including mobile phones, sat navs, eating and drinking and conversations with passengers.
- > Have appropriate policies in place to guard against distractions; for example, banning the use of hands-free as well as hand-held mobile phones while driving.
- > Support drivers to keep to these policies, for example by allowing adequate time on journeys to take lunch breaks, rather than eating at the wheel.
- > Enforce policies consistently and take action on drivers who violate them.
- > Communicate policies to suppliers, customers and other contacts, to manage expectations and spread best practice throughout the supply chain.
- > Run anonymous staff surveys to measure engagement with road safety messages and policies.

ISUZU

DEPEND ON D-MAX FOR 3.5T TOWING*



0800 ISUZUNZ | www.isuzuutes.co.nz

*Braking towing capacity on 4x4 models only.