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WHAT TO DO WITH VINCENT'S CAR... ... AND THE OTHER 600,000 JUST LIKE HIS?



© PUB PHOTO

**WE, THEREFORE, PROPOSE USING
A PART OF THE FONDS VERT
(GREEN FUNDS) TO HELP WITH
THE MAINTENANCE OF VEHICLES
EIGHT YEARS OLD AND OLDER.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Lachance'.

Richard Lachance
President and CEO

At 23, Vincent still didn't have a driver's licence. Until recently, he had studied, worked and got around by metro or bus. Then his situation changed and he needed to move beyond the public-transit zone. He promptly got his driver's licence and bought a used 2008 Corolla – a good deal found through the classifieds. So, he switched to driving, like you, me and millions others.

Vincent acknowledges that owning a car has several advantages. At the same time, however, he's well aware that it has a greater impact on the environment than taking the bus. When asked, he confirms that he takes good care of his car. But the tires are under-inflated and the annoying "check engine" light on the dash is lit up – two common problems that increase fuel consumption.

We know this to be true, thanks to the results of CAA-Quebec's most recent study of eight-year-old, and older, vehicles. Three out of 10 had failed emissions tests. In other words, roughly 600,000 cars currently operating on our roads emit more pollutants and generally burn more fuel than they should. That translates into thousands of tonnes of CO₂ in the air and millions of wasted dollars. And when you consider the average age of vehicles is at least seven years and getting older, you'll appreciate the importance of what's at stake.

So what can be done about it? Taking 600,000 vehicles off the road is clearly unrealistic. Truth is, when it comes to transportation issues, ideals quickly collide with reality. Vincent knows that necessary repairs could cost hundreds of dollars that he hasn't budgeted for. What should he do? Should he just keep on polluting the environment?

We at CAA-Quebec have thought long and hard about the problem and the fact that, unlike California or Ontario, Quebec has no emissions-control program. We, therefore, propose using a part of the Fonds Vert (Green Funds) to help with the maintenance of vehicles eight years old and older. This would create a voluntary emissions-inspection program through which drivers can have access to affordable inspection costs as well as partly subsidized repairs – somewhat along the lines of the RénoVert energy-efficiency program.

And, yes, Vincent is a fictitious character, but the situation is all too real and so widespread that it justifies the creation of such a program.

Motorists make a substantial contribution to the Fonds Vert, so why not help them play a more concrete part? One thing is for sure: We will keep up our efforts to persuade public authorities that a plan to help motorists reduce emissions is a win-win situation.

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/ Nunavik / SIREN SONG FROM THE NORTH

Inuit throat singing, or *Katajjaq*, is alive and well in Nunavik, even among the young.

BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEBLANC

Surrounded by dozens of teenagers, two young Inuit women stand face to face then begin exchanging guttural sounds back and forth. The sounds mix and mingle, flowing into a strange melody so haunting that it gives me goosebumps. Soon, other female duos take their turn in the friendly competition. The winner will be the singer who does not run out of breath and refrains from laughing, ultimately outlasting the others.

We are at the Okpiapik summer camp set up in the middle of the tundra, a five-hour flight from Montreal. A land of lichen and rock, it is so exotic I can hardly believe I'm still in Quebec. Against this backdrop of glacier-sculpted mountain and sea, of extreme nature where the July temperature rests at a meagre 5°C, some one hundred indigenous young people, mostly Inuit, gather to reconnect with



old traditions. They learn survival skills – and make new friends, a luxury they can't possibly afford in the Arctic where the nearest village is never less than a hundred kilometres away and there's no road to travel from one village to another.

It's here that I observe the popularity of throat singing among young Inuit who practise it spontaneously. It reminds me of verbal sparring by rappers – except that in this distant place, the repertoire dates back several centuries.

© JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEBLANC



In step with the 21st century

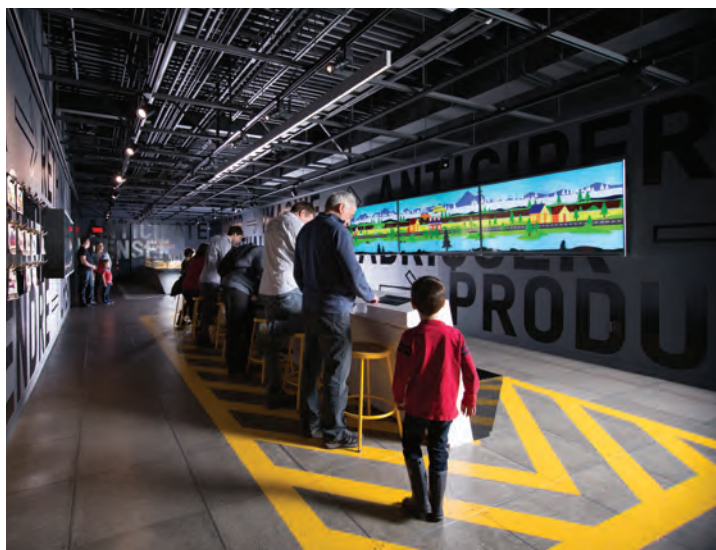
This spring, the Museum of Ingenuity J. Armand Bombardier in Valcourt will showcase both its permanent (interactive) collection and its very first travelling exhibit. It re-opened its doors in 2016 after major renovations.

The exhibition, which will tour Canada starting in 2019, is devoted to bio-mimicry technologies. “For example, it demonstrates how the wings of a plane imitate those of birds, and also how some water-repellent fabrics mimic duck feathers,” explains Marcelle Rousseau, event manager for the J. Armand Bombardier Foundation, who oversees the museum’s activities.

Visitors can also put their ingenuity to work (by reservation only) in the museum’s Fab Lab, the first of its kind in Quebec. The lab provides supervision, space and all kinds of manual and digital tools (like a 3D printer or laser cutter) to help visitors construct projects no matter how wild, whether robotic or artistic. And they get a chance to interact with various laboratories around the world.

Here’s a sign of the times: The multimedia Bombardier show was created by Moment Factory, the Montreal entertainment studio whose expertise in sound and light is renowned the world over – just like Bombardier itself. **A. McK.**

museebombardier.com ▶ Members get a \$5 discount on the regular price of a family pass, valid for two adults and their children.



©JEAN-MICHEL NAUD

Quebec City’s comic-strip festival

Comic-strip fans will be delighted to learn that the Festival de la Bande Dessinée Francophone de Québec (FBDFQ) will return this spring. In-town events will be held at some 20 venues, including the Quebec City Salon International du Livre and the Musée de la Civilisation. Activities abound – shows and exhibitions, creative workshops, live drawing sessions – providing ample opportunities to discover and appreciate the richness of the “ninth art.” As happens every year, the festival will feature both homegrown and international cartoonists, so that fans from 7 to 77 years of age can interact with their favourites and go home with an autographed drawing. **D. N.**

fbdfq.com ▶ April 7 through 15



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TRAVEL INSURANCE ARE YOU WELL PROTECTED?

Does your credit card or employee group insurance give you adequate travel coverage? Check the following points to be certain.

BY JACQUELINE SIMONEAU

It's no use buying duplicate policies: You won't receive any more compensation for the same loss. Instead, you must make sure that the proposed coverage suits your actual needs. Not all insurance are created equal and coverage may vary enormously from one policy to another. Check the amount of protection as well as the limitations and exclusions. Protection offered by, for example, credit cards varies depending on the type of card used (like platinum or gold). And, since this kind

of insurance is designed for a group of individuals, the product is not personalized; hence, the importance of reading the contract carefully.

Questions to ask yourself

Is there an age limit for medical care abroad? If you decide to extend your trip, can your coverage also be extended? What kind of ceiling, deductible or co-payment will apply? Are some destinations excluded?

If your credit-card company or employer group benefits offer all-inclusive coverage (international 24-hour telephone assistance; emergency medical care; trip cancellation or interruption; baggage loss, damage or delay; accidental injury or death), then you won't need individual travel insurance. Otherwise, it's a must. But Suzanne Michaud, CAA-Quebec Vice-President – Insurance, points out that it's possible, for example, to get à-la-carte insurance for emergency medical care or for trip interruption or cancellation.

Insured persons

Some credit-card insurance and group insurance include the cardholder as well as his or her spouse and children, but others cover only the cardholder. In this

case, your family members should get individual insurance. And what if you require repatriation in case of a medical emergency? Will your spouse and children be taken care of? So it's important to get insurance for your family – ideally with the same insurance company as yours. This will make things easier when it comes to emergency travel back home.

The length of the trip

Pay attention to the wording in your contract. For example, coverage for 15 “consecutive” days means that you can make several 15-day trips in the course of a year, whereas coverage of 15 “cumulative” days means that you are insured for only 15 days per year.

“Obviously, if you travel to South America for two months, your insurance needs won't be the same as if it was for a week in Vancouver,” says Suzie Pellerin, Deputy Vice-President, Public Affairs at the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA). “There's a good chance that credit-card insurance or group insurance will be insufficient if you travel for several weeks or to a country where health costs are high. In this case, you'll need individual insurance for extra coverage.”

Furthermore, the length of medical coverage may vary depending on the policyholder's age. The older the policyholder, the shorter the coverage period will be. If your trip exceeds the number of days stated in the contract, you should get complementary insurance. In other words, if your main insurance covers 30 days, the complementary policy will kick in on day 31. But be mindful of pre-existing conditions.

“Let's say your group or credit-card insurance covers you for 30 days,” says CAA-Quebec's Michaud. “If you broke a leg on day 20, your medical expenses will be covered until day 30. But beware, it's very



GOOD TO KNOW

As a rule, credit-card travel insurance is conditional on the use of this card to pay for your travel arrangements. Therefore, you should pay – usually in full – for your flight and hotel reservations with your card in order for the coverage to be valid. Finally, to get compensation, you must advise the insurer and obtain his authorization before incurring fees. Note that coverage can be suspended if your balance hasn't been paid off entirely.

possible that your complementary insurance won't take over if you need to have your cast removed on day 45 since your condition could be considered as pre-existing. To avoid unpleasant surprises and since coverage and exclusions can differ a great deal from one insurance to another, it's simpler to get a single individual insurance policy for the entire duration of the trip. Finally, it's important to note that, if your trip exceeds the duration of the credit-card protection, you might not be covered during the entirety of your trip, starting from day one. Be sure to check.

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Old Town Alexandria exudes colonial-era charm.

A FEW DAYS IN Virginia

There's so much to see around Washington, D.C. The history of the United States was written here. America's colonial heritage is evident everywhere you look. But there's much more to appreciate in this history-rich region on the doorstep of the U.S. capital.

BY CATHERINE ELIE

Take your time and enjoy a meander through the charming towns and beautiful countryside. Food lovers will discover a thriving culinary scene in restaurants presided over by young chefs. Visit the vineyards or sample local beers at the many microbreweries — now a hot spot for visitors and residents alike.

Food, wine and scenic vistas

Located some 40 kilometres west of D.C. (as the locals refer to the District of Columbia capital,

without specifying “Washington”), Loudoun County is horse country through and through — bucolic landscapes, exquisite homes, perfectly manicured equestrian farms framed by white picket fences.

Ditch the highway for local roads winding through hill and dale. At Leesburg, for example, take Route 15 and head north. Stop for a bite at Roots 657 Café and Local Market, one of the latest examples of the farm-to-table movement. Local products — charcuterie, cheese, wine, beer — take pride of place, farm-fresh and served informally at long communal tables. Designed by celebrity chef Rich Rosendale, the menu features Maryland crab and corn soup, grilled cheese sandwiches with Virginia ham, salads, burgers, home-cured beef briskets, among other delights.

It's no surprise that the café is popular with local winegrowers. “I eat there five times a week,” says Jordan Harris of Tarara Vineyard, one of the first in a region that now boasts 250. Tarara is less

PHOTOS: JEAN LESSARD



You can travel from Alexandria to Washington, D.C., by water taxi.

than a 10-minute drive from Roots 657. The ambiance is informal and you can sample wines accompanied by bite-size charcuterie and cheese – locally sourced, of course. On weekends, musicians perform on the vineyard's terrace nestled among the trees. There are summer concerts and you can picnic on the premises. In a nutshell, enchanting.

Colonial charm

Just south of D.C., on the other side of the Potomac River, Alexandria moves at a totally different pace from the Capital. The historic centre – the “Old Town” – is a portrait of colonial-era charm, with tree-lined cobblestone streets and red-brick sidewalks. You can take a leisurely stroll along the river in the morning, or pause for a drink in the shade at a sidewalk café in the calm of a languid afternoon. But it's in the evening that the town comes alive. “It's very safe here and people go out a lot,” says Leah Spellman, Communications Manager for Visit Alexandria. “It's anything but a bedroom community, although a great many residents work in D.C. What's great is that you can take a water taxi to D.C., spend the day in the museums then return in the evening. Hotels are less expensive here, and there are excellent shops and restaurants.” ▶



The Virtue Feed & Grain terrace is bustling, noon and evening alike.

WHERE TO STAY



IN LEESBURG: LANSDOWNE RESORT & SPA ▶ is an CAA/AAA-rated four-diamond establishment 50 kilometres from D.C., set in a sprawling 476 acres along the Potomac. Amenities include pools, tennis courts, hiking and biking trails, luxury spa and golf courses.

IN ALEXANDRIA: HOTEL INDIGO ▶ is a boutique hotel opened in 2016 and conveniently located in Old Town. It is the city's first waterfront hotel. Its restaurant, **Hummingbird**, offers delicious local fare from a menu that changes with the seasons (like clambakes, grilled fish, Chesapeake Bay crab, locally sourced beef). A few steps away, the **Virtue Feed & Grain** has a pleasant terrace (it's a little noisy inside), delicious tuna tacos and a great variety of local beer.

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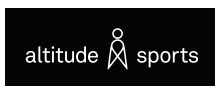
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ARLINGTON CEMETERY ▶ faces the Lincoln Memorial on the opposite side of the Potomac. It's difficult not to be moved by these long rows of white headstones under which rest fallen soldiers from the Civil War up to present day.

STEVEN F. UDVAR-HAZY CENTER ▶ the less well-known but imposing companion to the National Air and Space Museum in Washington. Opened in 2003 and located just minutes from Dulles International Airport, its two huge hangars display extraordinary aircraft from every time period. The collection includes a Concorde, the Space Shuttle Discovery, a lunar module and thousands of other related artefacts. A fascinating place even if you're not an aviation-and-space buff.



▶ For more information and addresses, consult the magazine's digital version.

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SPOTLIGHT ON WASHINGTON, D.C.

If you have just a day or two to spend in this fascinating city, consider these spots. They'll make you want to come back!

BY CATHERINE ELIE

You've seen it a hundred times on television or in movies, yet you can't help but gasp at the sight of the National Mall. It's huge, stretching over three kilometres from the Lincoln Memorial on the shore of the Potomac River to the U.S. Capitol at the other end, with the obelisk-shaped Washington Monument in between. Fabulous museums – the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, the Air and Space Museum, and the National Gallery, to name only the best known – stand on either side. They're all teeming with amazing treasures, and they're all free!

But there's one spot often neglected by visitors: the United States Botanic Garden, adjacent to the Capitol. On a wet day, it's a treat to luxuriate in the tropical heat inside the Conservatory. Discover, in turn, a jungle, a desert, orchids, cacti and strange-looking creeping vines. If the weather is pleasant, stroll through the exterior gardens amid roses and water lilies with butterflies darting among the trees and flowers.

Obviously, you'd like to see the White House. A visit takes months to organize, but at least you can slowly saunter on foot in front of it. If it's time for a drink, hop over to POV Rooftop Lounge, the W hotel bar. Its terrace affords a breathtaking view of the city, including the White House across the street. That's the place where visitors and residents alike go to see and be seen. (515 15th Street NW)

For a more "confidential" setting, try Off The Record, in the basement of the Hay-Adams Hotel, a D.C. institution. Everything here is red and plush: velvet seats, padded booths, carpets... The coasters are illustrated caricatures of familiar politicians including Donald Trump, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. You might imagine you're on the set of *House of Cards*. (800 16th Street NW)



The Capitol



The Fairmont Washington lobby

WHERE TO STAY ▶ The Fairmont Washington D.C. Georgetown is conveniently located between Georgetown and the fashionable West End. This CAA/AAA-rated four-diamond hotel is a real oasis, with its interior courtyard where you can relax and also sample the fine cuisine of Juniper Restaurant. Come evening, gather around the burning braziers on low tables to try the signature Bee Tini drink, sweetened with honey raised on the hotel's rooftop. Delightful!



My favourite neighbourhood here is Georgetown, with its picturesque row houses and lively streets – nothing like the imposing Mall or the federal buildings. This part of town, the capital's oldest, is a joy to discover on foot. M Street and Wisconsin Avenue are the main shopping arteries, but be sure to also take a stroll alongside the Potomac River.

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TRAVEL / TAKING OFF

GALÁPAGOS

ISLANDS AN ODE TO ENCHANTMENT



When you leave the equatorial jungle for the Galápagos Islands, you swap emerald-hued forests for myriad shades of Pacific blue – where strings of islands vein the ocean like a sprinkling of stones.

BY AURÉLIE RESCH

A whiff of dry air, in striking contrast with the ever-present humidity I experienced in Ecuador's Napo Province, greets me as I set foot on Santa Cruz Island, the Galápagos' most populated. There are no trees or vines, only grass and earth, where roam hundred-year-old tortoises. Santa Cruz is the departure point for many sea excursions and home to the world's largest tortoises. Utterly indifferent to human beings, they go about their business at a leisurely pace, commandeering the entire area. The dignity of these creatures that have tamed time and slowness is something to behold. They bequeathed their name (*galápagos*, in Spanish) to these islands. Averaging 1.2 metres in length and 220 kilograms in weight – some can actually reach up to 422 kilograms – Galápagos tortoises are found nowhere else, living peacefully and contentedly, sometimes for 150 or even 200 years.

Going to sea in this part of the Pacific is an adventure in itself. Depending on the weather and the currents, the ocean can be calm or rough. The water changes colour subject to the distance from the coastline, the time of day or the wind agitating its surface. Contemplative souls never tire of it. A tiny speck floating in the immense solitude of the ocean, a boat sometimes crosses paths with dolphins and sharks, now and then accompanied by schools of fish or a graceful flock of birds.

As I slowly discover, the islands feature a complex, often inhospitable, volcanic landscape. There are impressive lava formations and vegetation such as mangrove trees, ferns, cacti and leafless shrubs. No two islands are alike. Each has its unique legend, offering chance encounters with many an endemic species.

North Seymour Island is where I discover a number of strange birds that display astonishing behaviour. Male frigate birds, for instance, puff up their striking red throat pouches to attract a mate. Swallow-tailed gulls are elegant fliers – they barely flap their wings, instead letting air currents keep them aloft. Blue-footed boobies are placid creatures, nonchalantly watching me approach them on a trail specially designed to leave the local ecosystem undisturbed. But I also see them in action, plunging deep into the water to seize their prey. At one point, a booby flies off with a fish in its bill. It is chased by a frigate bird, which ultimately catches it by the tail feathers, shaking it vigorously until the distracted booby drops its prize!

Plunging into another world

Exploring the Galápagos also means finding yourself up close and personal with a rich and varied marine fauna. Each dive is a chance to play with the inhabitants of these turquoise waters. Given a pair of yellow flippers on the boat, I worry that the colour might attract sharks, a danger I remember learning from National Geographic. So I plunge in, shivering with some trepidation and the cold water temperature. But instead of sharks, the colour attracts sea otters. These sea acrobats promptly lunge toward me (their top speed clocks in at 30 kilometres an hour), only to zoom past at the last minute and head straight for my flippers. Gripping one firmly in its teeth, an otter brandishes the flipper senselessly back

NO TWO ISLANDS ARE ALIKE. EACH HAS ITS UNIQUE LEGEND, OFFERING CHANCE ENCOUNTERS WITH MANY AN ENDEMIC SPECIES.

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EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS



48

The Galápagos are strictly protected. Of the 48 islands and islets that constitute the archipelago, 29 are uninhabited. The local population is concentrated on four islands: Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal, Isabela and Floreana. There is a quota on the annual number of visitors, pets are forbidden, and home and hotel construction is restricted to a handful of islands. Fruit, cereals and other foodstuffs from the mainland are prohibited.

and forth, with me at the other end! (The experience later becomes a source of entertainment for my diving companions.) Sea otters are anything but shy. They swim beside me on many a dive and approach me whenever I relax on the beach, caressing my mask or rubbing their whiskers on my legs as if to coax me to join the fun. Nonetheless, our guide is adamant: We are in the presence of wild animals and must always be alert. Playful in the water, otters can become aggressive on land when approached by humans. Their sharp teeth can inflict serious damage. We find the largest sea-otter colony on Rábida Island, known for its red-sand beaches, and confirm that their behaviour is both playful and aggressive.

The relatively clear waters surrounding the islands make it easy to observe all manner of marine creatures, great and small. Schools of multicoloured fish move in unison, changing course abruptly whenever they find my presence inconvenient. Iguanas are more accommodating, letting me dive with them into the deep or follow them to nearby rocks for a siesta in the sun. Once there, they cling tightly with the help of their sharp claws. Dark-tinted or fiery red, they blend



IN DEEPER WATERS ▶ Far down, the sharks I so feared are hardly moving. Hovering above them, I try to gauge their size. Will I have time to return to the boat before they surface? In the meantime, they seem harmless enough. Their silhouette looks familiar and, when they advance calmly, I follow them, fascinated, managing to forget the formidable predator from *Jaws*.



DISCOVER THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS WITH CAA-QUEBEC CRUISES

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS ▶ *Sauvages et intrigantes*
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easily into their on-shore habitat. The sea turtles maintain a respectable distance as we swim away from the coastline and the boat – as do manta rays, whose graceful ballet induces a sense of meditation.

Under the stars

After dinner, we come out on deck to admire the stars. The anchored boat lights up its lantern. At times a quick movement and a splash interrupt the stillness of the night, signs of a flying fish trying to escape the jaws of an otter. The chase makes a ruckus and my eyes follow the activity until the protagonists vanish into the darkness.

In their place one fin appears, then two, and a third. You can make out streamlined, silvery shapes glinting just beneath the water's surface, each shape measuring a good three metres long. The shapes slowly circle in the reflected light, eventually moving out of sight beyond the beam's range. They appeared less intimidating in the daylight when they were deep underwater. At nightfall the drama offers an altogether different sensation.

Exploring these islands is an enriching pursuit. Bartolomé and Santiago conjure up a lunar aspect. Their landscape has been created by magma lava –



Hiking trail on Rábida Island

rugged and sometimes sharp – on which nothing grows. Only red crabs live on this black and hostile land. The majestic setting warrants a hike, strenuous and perilous though it may be. The lava's onyx and ashen hues offer a stark contrast with the cobalt-hued Pacific and the white sands of the beach. Should Jules Verne suddenly materialize, you'd only be half-surprised. On Bartolomé, the ascent to the summit affords a breathtaking view of all the Galápagos Islands. Look closely and you'll recognize a set from the film *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*.

When I'm no longer on the open ocean, but instead flying above the archipelago, I still feel cradled by the waves, unable to forget the chance encounters and the unique discoveries made in this magical spot that the locals dub "The Enchanted Isles."



▶ **Featured in the magazine's digital version:**
Don't miss our Ecuadorian-style shrimp ceviche recipe, a cooking video from the *explore* series.

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See the *Member's Handbook and Discounts and Privileges Guide* for complete descriptions of services, discounts, products, benefits and rules related to CAA-Quebec membership, or visit caaquebec.com.



EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS



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There's only one number to remember: 1-844-629-9799. Calls are free and unlimited. So contact the appropriate service experts as often as you want. The package includes the renowned residential services already available to, and much appreciated by, CAA-Quebec members.

- ▶ **The Assistant for legal advice and identity theft:** Our on-duty lawyer will provide answers to your questions about legal issues and, in case of identity theft, will guide you through all the necessary steps to regain your ID.
- ▶ **The Assistant for personal life:** This service is intended to help solve a variety of family situations, urgent or less so. We can put you in touch with reliable and appropriate resources like an assisted-living residence for an aging parent, childcare services, housekeeping services, etc.
- ▶ **The Assistant for health:** A registered nurse is standing by 24/7 (365 days a year) to answer all

health-related questions: allergies, medications, vaccinations, etc.

- ▶ **The Assistant for pet health:** This service brings pet owners and veterinarians or animal technicians together over a range of matters like diet, grooming, transportation and training.
- ▶ **The Assistant for residential advice:** This service is ideal for all things pertaining to the maintenance of your home, apartment or cottage: kitchen renovation, post-disaster cleaning and restoration, recommendations for reliable contractors and services, and much more!

These five services are offered to new holders of the residential No-Stress Policy® as well as to clients who have been with our insurance agency since day one. The Assistant is also available to them right away.

The newest additions reflect CAA-Quebec's determination to continue its primary mission unabated, thus ensuring the peace of mind of members and clients alike. After all, we've been in the business of helping people – not just cars – for more than a century.

Three new Quebec establishments have made the prestigious CAA/AAA Four-Diamond list



Three new Quebec establishments – two hotels and a restaurant – have made the prestigious CAA/AAA Four-Diamond list for 2018.

One diamond is good but four marks a guaranteed seal of quality! Guests frequenting a four-diamond establishment can expect unequalled service from a top-notch staff for whom no detail is too small and who are totally committed to excellence. The goal is to give clients a unique and pleasurable experience.

And that's exactly what you'll receive as soon as you set foot in our three newly minted four-diamond laureates: Montreal's Mount Stephen Hotel, Quebec City's Hôtel Manoir Victoria and Percé's La Normandie restaurant. Visit CAAQUEBEC.COM to see the complete list of Quebec's four- and five-diamond establishments.

Quebec City's St-Amour restaurant, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary, is also part of this exclusive four-diamond club. Chef Jean-Luc Boulay says the quality and diversity of the cuisine and the products used are of paramount importance. The knowledgeable staff – whom he refers to as “family” – is another key ingredient. The decor has to be attractive as well. Boulay prefers a traditional setting, with crisp white linen. “Our clients are guaranteed a truly memorable experience!”

Why the emphasis on the CAA/AAA Diamond ratings?

Tens of thousands of restaurants and lodgings in Canada and the United States – ranging from the least expensive to the



Master Chef of France Jean-Luc Boulay, St-Amour's chef-co-owner (centre); Éric Lessard, head pastry chef (left); François Hugues, executive chef (right)

most exclusive – are given a one-to-five-diamond rating by professionals. The rating system is a reliable scale for those wanting good value for their money as well as those looking forward to celebrating an important social event in a reputable establishment.

Participating restaurants and hotels and their CAA/AAA Diamond ratings are listed in the TripTik® Travel Planner maps, accessible on line, and in Tourbooks® distributed upon request to CAA-Quebec members.



EXPLORE SIGNATURE / for the traveller in you

Have you seen our new *explore* Signature brochure? Recently released online and throughout our 14 Travel Centres, the 2018-2019 issue features several uncommon journeys, with an emphasis on cruises. Discover Indonesia and Australia, or the South Pacific via French Polynesia. Nature fans will enjoy our African safari, complete with sailing along the famous Chobe River and stopping in Kruger National Park. Train travel also beckons – from Venice to London aboard the legendary Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

Do you get a kick out of travelling differently and still want to know more? Contact our travel counsellors or consult the CAA-Quebec travel-conference schedule on our website. There'll be a conference held near you. Bon voyage!

CELLPHONE USE AT THE WHEEL /

CAA-Quebec proposes measures to reduce the problem

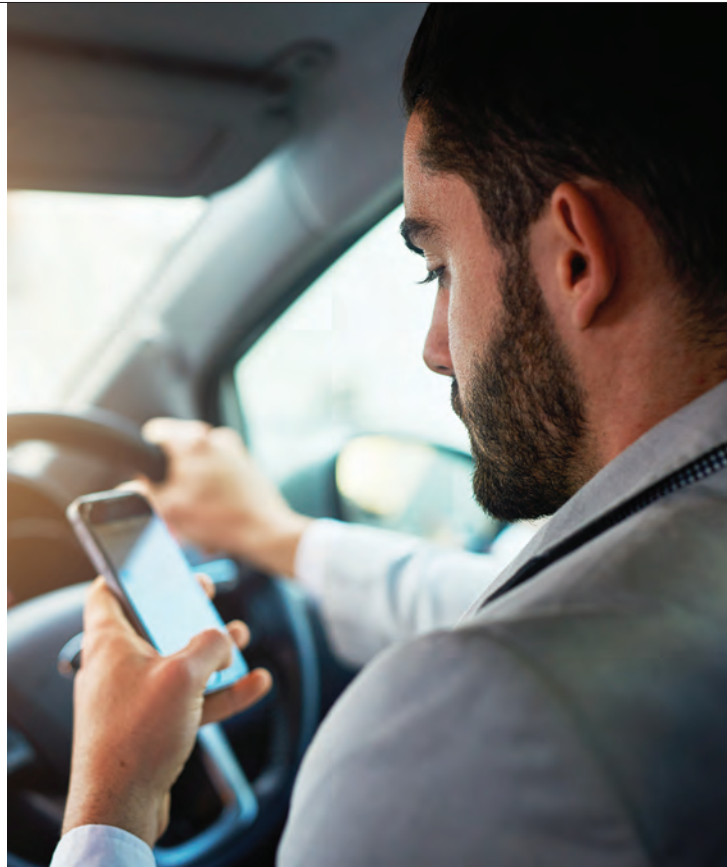
Last November, CAA-Quebec presented its recommendations to the Committee on Transportation and the Environment in response to an initiative mandate regarding cellphone use while driving.

For CAA-Quebec, whose values and preoccupations focus firmly on road safety, it's a major problem. According to the U.S. National Safety Council, nearly 26 percent of road accidents are attributable to mobile-phone use, including hands-free operations. It's high time to put a stop to this menace!

Our organization has six recommendations:

- ▶ Increase the number of demerit points for repeat offenders.
- ▶ Amend the Highway Safety Code to allow police officers to issue a ticket for the use of any device resembling a telephone.
- ▶ Begin discussions with the federal government on criminalizing mobile-phone use while driving in cases of accidents causing death or serious injury.
- ▶ Improve consciousness-raising efforts by all parties concerned.
- ▶ Document the use of cellphone-silencing devices (jammers).
- ▶ Regulate the use of infotainment systems in vehicles.

Imposition and enforcement of coercive measures are essential for getting tangible results. Driving is a privilege and, to benefit from it, motorists need to behave responsibly.



THE LATEST

Just before the start of the holiday season, Quebec Transport Minister André Fortin tabled a bill detailing major changes to the Highway Safety Code. CAA-Quebec will have an opportunity to make its voice heard before the ad hoc parliamentary committee in February, especially as regards stricter sanctions against cellphone use while driving.



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It pays to show your card

Have you seen our new ads about the CAA Dollars and Discounts Program? Now more than ever, thanks to CAA-Quebec partners across a wide range of business types, members can benefit from fantastic savings – whether through instant discounts or by accruing CAA Dollars.

This spring, for example, you can earn four CAA Dollars when you spend \$150 or more on new tires and an oil change at a CAA-Quebec-approved garage. Does your living room need freshening up? Buy two 3.5-litre cans of paint at Bétonel-Dulux and get a \$34.50 discount plus three CAA Dollars. Does your growing child need a new jacket or new running shoes? Save \$10 on each \$50 spent at Joe Fresh. And you'll get still more discounts and CAA-Dollars when visiting our other partners.

Furthermore, if you use your National Bank CAA Reward® Mastercard® credit card, you'll get an extra 1 percent in CAA Dollars on all purchases.

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AUTO AND HOME INSURANCE / It's easier than ever to get a quote

Since last fall, you can reach out to our insurance division online. All you need to do is fill out a short request form. Your answers on the form will allow our brokers to study your file before contacting you – within two business days of your request and at the time you have indicated.

So, no more waiting on the phone! In one fell swoop, you'll get a prompt reply and a quote that meets your needs.

In addition to saving money on your annual premium (\$252 on average), you'll find that getting insurance with CAA-Quebec is incredibly easy. What's more, our insurance division, which celebrated its second anniversary last November, now offers still more value, including a host of assistance services in our No-Stress® Home Insurance section (see "Front & Centre" on page 25).





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MEMBER TESTIMONIAL**A true-to-life fisherman's tale!**

A few years ago, Michel Fréreau reeled in a splendid catch during one of his annual "walleye-teasing" trips to Lac Kempt, located north of Saint-Michel-des-Saints.

But his most vivid memories of that particular June involve two misadventures with his truck and trailer. Fortunately, CAA-Quebec was there!

The Laval fishing fan and his son-in-law, Vincent, had driven 80 kilometres along a gravel road when his trailer broke down. "I didn't even think anyone could reach us there," he recalls. As there was no cellphone signal, Fréreau unhitched the trailer and drove to the Communauté Atikamekw de Manawan to call CAA-Quebec. It was two p.m. when he returned to the trailer to wait with his son-in-law. "And it was one in the morning when the patroller finally showed up!" he says. "There had been a major accident, so the road was completely blocked. But the patroller didn't let us down – that's what I call perseverance! While we waited, we lit a small fire by the side of the road. The trailer was towed to a garage in Saint-Michel-des-Saints and repaired on Monday morning." The two anglers were finally on their way.

On the return journey, however, misfortune struck again. This time, it was the truck's turn to break down – a problem with the differential, to be precise. "At least this time, we were already past the gravel road. So I parked on the shoulder and called CAA-Quebec again." And quite by surprise, the same patroller appeared. Sympathetic and helpful, he took them home.



"On both occasions, the patroller was courteous and took care of everything. With my CAA Premier RV card, I didn't have to pay a cent."

Fréreau returns to Lac Kempt every year in addition to taking at least one other fishing trip. He can't imagine going fishing without his CAA-Quebec protection. "With automatic membership renewal, I go where and when I please, completely worry-free."

TELL US YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH CAA-QUEBEC. ▶ Does your no-stress card give you a boost? Email your story to CAAQUEBECMAGAZINE@CAAQUEBEC.COM. It could appear in the next "Member Testimonial" column and earn you 100 CAA Dollars.

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- ▶ The number of roadside-assistance service calls you've already made in the current year;
- ▶ A quick link for ordering gift cards. This link will appear once you've accumulated 25 CAA Dollars. The gift cards will be mailed directly to you within five business days;
- ▶ Details on how to renew your membership using your CAA Dollars.

BE SURE TO VISIT YOUR MEMBER SPACE OFTEN. ▶ You'll discover, if you haven't already, the extent to which CAA-Quebec is part of your daily life.



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AUTO SHOWS /

Ideal for trying out electric cars

Montreal

This past January 19 to 28, CAA-Quebec's automobile experts were at the Montreal International Auto Show to offer visitors a chance to try electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs). Now in its fifth year, the free test-drive program signals CAA-Quebec's ambition to play a role, in partnership with Transition énergétique Québec, in the province's transportation-electrification effort. The organization's main goal here is to educate prospective buyers and help them make sensible EV or PHEV choices for themselves. Participants test drove the following nine models in an urban setting: BMW i3 REX, Chevrolet Bolt EV and Volt, Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid, Ford Focus Electric, Honda Clarity PHEV, Hyundai IONIQ Electric, Kia Soul EV and Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV. As in previous years, the event was a huge success.

Quebec City

The same free event will be repeated at the upcoming Salon International de l'Auto de Québec, from March 6 to 11, featuring most of these vehicles. Participants must be at least 21 years old and hold a valid driver's licence. The test drives are made possible thanks to the Quebec government, the Montreal and Quebec City auto shows, and the FLO charging-station network. All are welcome.



© JEAN RODIER



Annuel de l'auto d'occasion 2018

This annual used-car guide (in French only) is a collaboration between CAA-Quebec and car columnist and publisher Benoit Charette. In addition to profiling nearly 300 models from 2012 to 2017, it features a rundown of Transport Canada recalls; issues to watch out for on these particular vehicles, their reliability indexes and resale values; technical specifications and a comprehensive market-price list. Readers will also benefit from CAA-Quebec's expertise as outlined by informed articles on the projected overhaul of the Highway Safety Code and a proposed voluntary emissions-inspection program for vehicles that are eight years old and over.

► CAA-Quebec members get a \$2 discount on the purchase price of the *Annuel de l'auto d'occasion 2018* at participating Couche-Tard stores or at any of the 14 CAA-Quebec Travel Centres.

DID YOU KNOW...

Your teenager can be an associate member as of age 14. So, think about including him or her in your member file, especially if he or she plans to use a scooter this summer. The additional fee is only half that for the CAA Classic membership.

► Visit CAAQUEBEC.COM for more details.



ANGELINA MICONIATIS,
SENIOR DIRECTOR,
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— J. BOUCHARD, MONTREAL

ANSWER / Ah, but that's our tour packagers' secret! We've got quite a team at CAA-Quebec Travel, and their specific job is to build tour packages. The goal is to create unique and memorable experiences.

The first step is deciding on destinations. There are the usual destinations, classics like the United Kingdom, Greece or Italy. But for other ports of call, tour packagers must often do a great deal of research, if only to detect the latest trends. They also get ideas from talking to tour suppliers at travel conferences and trade fairs or during exploratory tours of their own. And they listen carefully to our agents and clients who never hesitate to tell us about the places they'd be excited to discover.

Once the destinations are nailed down, the packagers go looking for knowledgeable local partners with whom to establish the various tour components. These details will include centrally located hotels, restaurants offering terroir cuisine, and activities with a genuinely local focus. Nothing will escape their notice, from flights to airport transfers,

the suitable number of daily activities and the duration of each, or the availability of French- or English-speaking local guides. And they map out local tours and outings down to the tiniest details (for example, how far to travel every day, the distance between two proposed activities, and the accessibility of tour buses in neighbourhoods with narrow, twisting streets).

In order to ensure that our tours stay fresh and up-to-date, we carefully study comments from our clients and tour escorts, making practical adjustments along the way. Finally, the success of our *explore* products over the past decade is due in large measure to the professionalism and enthusiasm shown by a dedicated team, including our packagers. So spare a kind thought for them the next time you travel abroad.

PHOTO CONTEST



WINNING PHOTO

KOTOR, MONTENEGRO ▶ During an Adriatic cruise, we had a stopover at Kotor in Montenegro. Despite the intense heat and the short time available, we decided to scale the ramparts that dominate the old town and the bay. More than 1,300 steps later, we were rewarded with a breathtaking and spectacularly panoramic view. Despite all this, we were happy to descend to rest in the shade and drink the litres of water we should have brought with us.  [GENEVIÈVE LAURIN, LA MALBAIE](#)

Send your favourite travel photo (maximum 5 megabytes) to CAAQUEBEC.COM/CAAQUEBECMAGAZINE before March 11, 2018, along with a description of approximately 80 words. If your photo is published in the next issue of the magazine, you'll win a Samsonite Ziplite set of two suitcases (21" and 25") - a \$280 value.



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AUTOMOBILE AND TOURING CLUB OF QUEBEC (A.T.C.Q.)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Notice is hereby given that an annual general meeting of members of the Automobile and Touring Club of Quebec (the "Association") will be held at the Omni Mont-Royal Hotel, 1050 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec, on Wednesday, April 18, 2018, at 11:30 a.m., for the following purposes:

1. To receive the Management's reports;
2. To receive the Association's financial statements for the fiscal year ending November 30, 2017, as well as the auditor's report thereon;
3. To elect Directors;
4. To appoint the Association's auditor and authorize the Directors to establish his compensation;
5. To deliberate on any other item that may be duly submitted to the meeting or to any adjournment thereof.

Quebec City, December 18, 2017
Sophie Gagnon
Corporate Secretary



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MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS A NEW WAY OF LIFE

Solar Uniqartier
is a colossal project.

New neighbourhood housing projects mix residential units (sometimes numbering in the thousands) and daily amenities like shops and restaurants – all within easy reach. So long, bedroom communities!

BY CHANTAL LAPOINTE

The trend is growing in major North American cities. Brand new residential neighbourhoods have sprung up in old industrial areas where people can live, work and play – usually without needing a car. “Developers increasingly opt for this mixed-use approach, creating self-contained communities clustered around public-transit hubs. And residual land value is a contributing factor,” explains Roberto D’Abate, a vice-president in the Pricewaterhouse Cooper (PwC) real-estate division.

“When you build vertically, you use up very little green space. It’s an argument that appeals to potential buyers,” says Marco Fontaine, sales and marketing manager at Devmontco, the developer behind the estimated \$1.3-billion Solar Uniquartier multi-use real-estate project in Brossard, on the south shore of Montreal.

An integrated approach

Currently, there’s barely a new development that doesn’t combine residential, office and commercial space. Devmont recently announced the \$250-million Westbury Montreal project to be built near the future Royalmount shopping complex (located at the crossing of Highways 15 and 40). It will include condos, a luxury hotel, a park, a gym, plus ample retail space. It will be focused on public transportation and designed in concert with sustainable development standards. “Mixed-use proj-



ects are developed around the ‘live, work, play’ formula. The goal is to live without having to leave the neighbourhood,” says Devmont president, Sam Scallia. “It all started with a deep desire to spend less time in the car.”

Symbiocité is a 1,400-unit project located next to La Prairie’s Parc de Conservation du Marais, at the junction of Route 104 and Highway 30. It’s counting on the likely arrival of an electric light-rail transit (LRT) system on the South Shore, as is



Westbury Montreal will be focused on public transportation.

Brossard's Solar Uniquartier. The latter project features some 2,600 residential units; a conference centre; an interactive business centre; a fitness, sports and recreation complex; hotels; shops; restaurants and a large public square northwest of Quartier Dix30.

Mixed-use mega-projects are not solely confined to the Montreal region. Quebec City boasts the \$200-million Lebourgneuf project, spearheaded by Développement Beaubourg in partnership with Nova Construction. The touted human-scale village will combine condominiums, rental apartments and retail establishments. "It's not a fad," says Développement Beaubourg president, Guy St-Gelais. "People long for a better quality of life. They're fed up with wasting time in traffic."

Mixed-use challenges

Is mixed-use real estate a sound investment? We asked Elaine St-Denis – a chartered real-estate appraiser with Bourassa Jodoin in Longueuil – that key question. "Given the rise of traffic congestion, family breakups and a high level of individualism in society, these recreated mini downtown cores are especially appealing since they make a social life easier to achieve," she says. "Quebecers are not yet accustomed to living in compact housing. But with foreign investments and newly arrived



Westbury Montreal

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Whether you rent or own a home or condo, there's a variety of suitable home-insurance options from which to choose. In addition to dwelling and personal property coverage, residential insurance also offers civil liability protection, a handy feature should you be held responsible for involuntarily causing harm to another person.



immigrant families readily embracing apartment living, demand for these units will grow and their value will appreciate.” Still, caution should be taken, says PwC’s D’Abate. “If you buy a condo, check to make sure that the building or complex is well managed, has a reserve fund and complies with the Condominium Act.”

Combining residential and retail space fosters a sense of conviviality and safety, but it may also bring challenges. “Ensuring residents’ privacy is a key concern in large-scale complexes,” says Scalia. Another factor is the cost of maintaining amenities like parks, gardens and leisure facilities. “The infrastructure must be impeccably maintained,” St-Denis adds.

And when it comes to mega-projects, the greatest challenge of all is to come up with the ideal design concept. “People don’t want to feel as though they were in a ghetto-like setting,” says Devimco’s Fontaine. “So we aim for an architectural style that avoids being too homogeneous and allows nature to play a role.” It’s this kind of balance that makes these venues harmonious and attractive places to live for baby-boomers and millennials alike.

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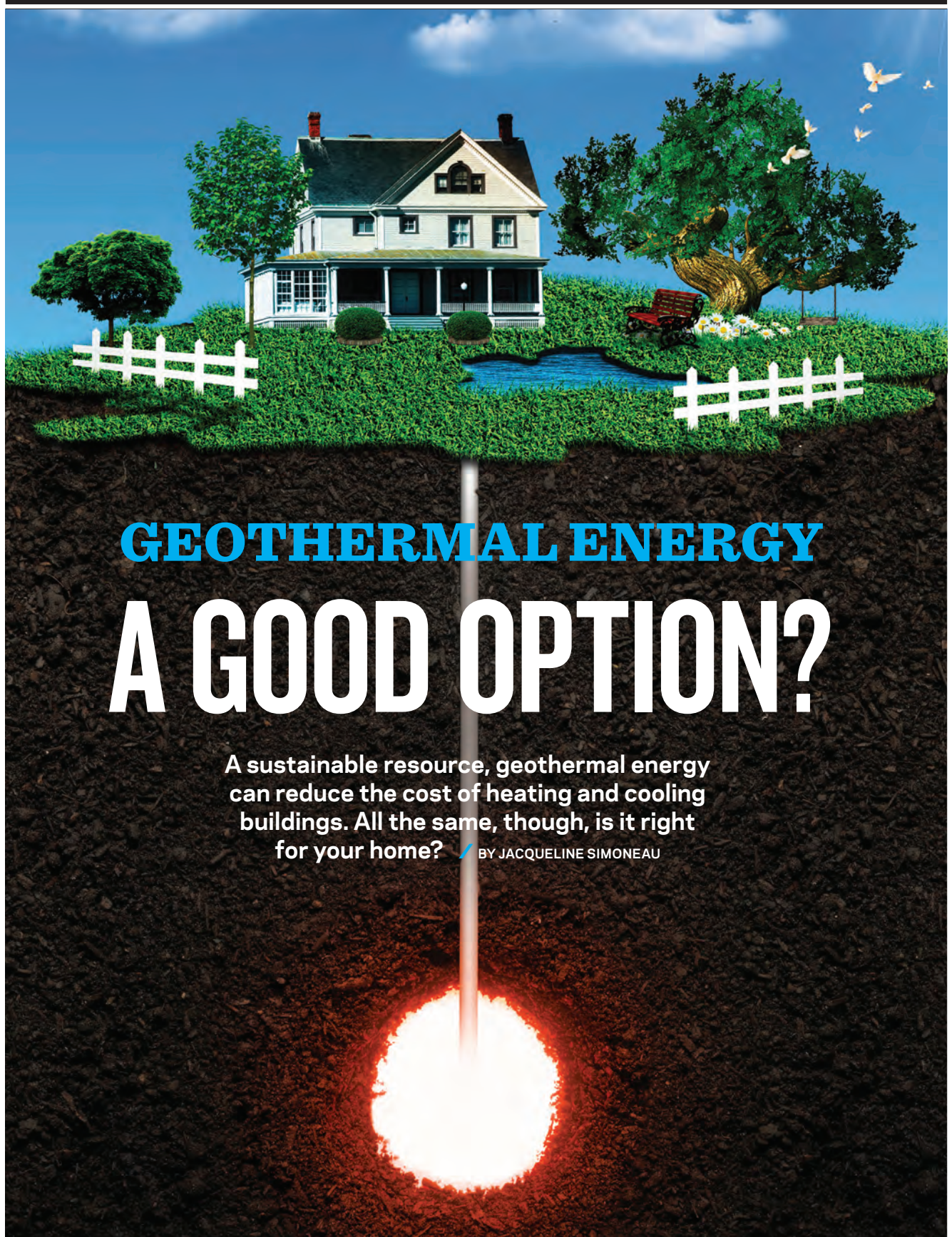
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GEOTHERMAL ENERGY A GOOD OPTION?

A sustainable resource, geothermal energy can reduce the cost of heating and cooling buildings. All the same, though, is it right for your home? / BY JACQUELINE SIMONEAU

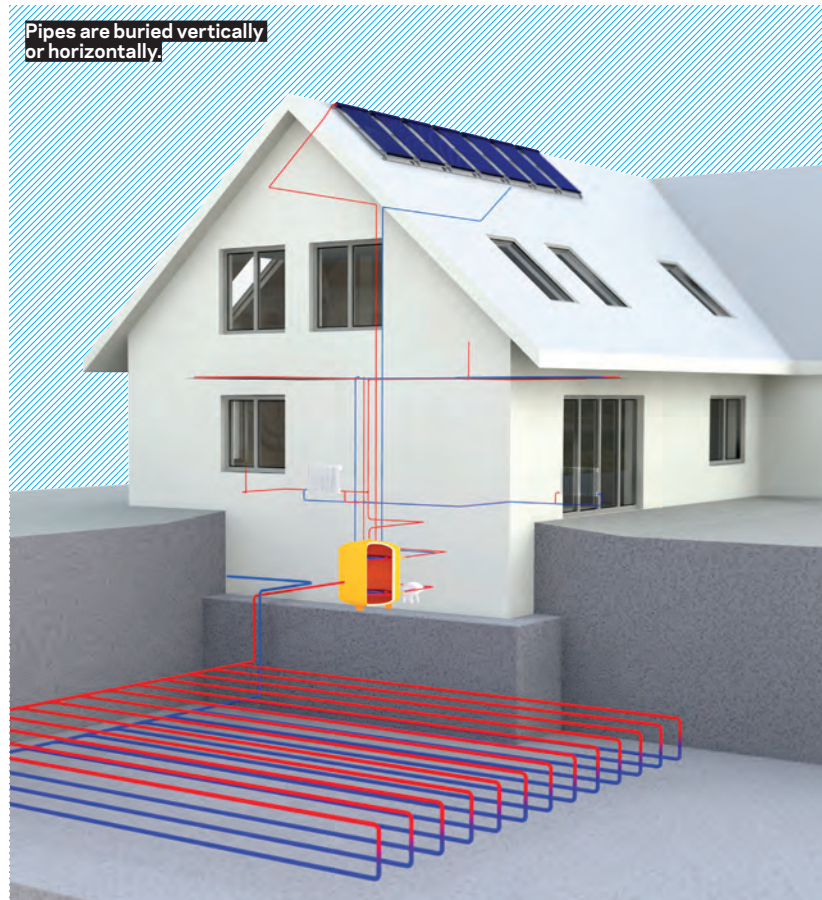
This technology makes use of the heat already present in the ground. There are three parts to a geothermal system: an underground network of pipes buried below the frost line (vertically or horizontally, depending on the space available), a heat pump, and a distribution system using forced air or water. In cold weather, fluid circulates through the pipes to absorb the earth's heat before reaching the heat pump. The heat pump extracts and then transfers the heat to the distribution system for delivery throughout the house. In the summer, the process is reversed: The heat pump extracts the warm air from the house, transfers it underground, then returns the cooled air to the interior of the house.

While geothermal energy is generally intended for office, commercial and industrial buildings (for example, it will be used as the main energy source for Quebec City's airport terminals), it has increasing appeal to homeowners. This is not surprising because a well-calibrated geothermal system can reduce a residential heating bill by up to 65 percent, according to Ted Kantowitz, president and CEO of Canadian GeoExchange Coalition (CGC). But it is an expensive proposition. So before you take the plunge, ask yourself if the investment is really worthwhile.

Is it cost-effective?

Experts generally concur that if geothermal systems have not yet taken hold in Quebec, it's mainly due to their high purchase-and-installation costs. For an average-sized house, the cost ranges between \$30,000 and \$35,000, says France Sergerie, vice-president of Lysair, a Laval-based company.

But several factors can impact the price: system type, house size, required energy, insulation quality, soil conditions, site access, drilling work, excavation work (in the case of an existing home) and existing heating-system modifications. Some people, there-



BE SURE TO CHECK IF YOU QUALIFY FOR ANY ASSISTANCE OR TAX CREDIT AIMED AT ENCOURAGING THE PURCHASE OF A GEOTHERMAL SYSTEM.

fore, will find geothermal energy advantageous while others will not.

Gaël Gilard, who appeared in the Spring 2012 issue of *Touring* magazine, chose geothermal energy, in 2007, for the 3,500-square-foot home he was building. His decision was based on ecological and economic factors. Ten years later, is he still happy with his choice? "Absolutely! I recouped my investment in five years. It certainly helped to combine geothermal energy with an insulating formwork system on my concrete walls. Electricity and heating currently costs \$100 a month for my family of five. The savings are considerable."

"I do no special maintenance work beyond changing filters and cleaning ducts – the same kind of chores that you would do with standard heat pumps."

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THE LARGER THE HOUSE, THE GREATER THE SAVINGS ON HEATING AND COOLING COSTS AND THE FASTER THE INVESTMENT RECOUP TIME.



But geothermal energy is not for everyone...

Just ask Emmanuel Cosgrove, director of Ecohome, whose experience wasn't nearly as clear-cut. "Ten years ago, I renovated a century-old 3,500-square-foot triplex," he says. "After carefully insulating it, I had a geothermal system – for heating, cooling and hot water – installed throughout the entire building at a cost of \$45,000. Unfortunately, the air ducts were poorly designed and the compressor died after nine years. Luckily, it was just before the warranty on the parts expired, but it still cost me a large sum for the labour. I initially hoped to get my investment back in 17 years, but now it'll take longer for sure."

If you plan to get a geothermal system, be meticulous in your choice of contractor and system (the latter should be CGC-certified). And carefully calculate its cost-effectiveness. According to CGC's Kantrowitz, the average recoup time is eight to 12 years, which would make geothermal energy a worthwhile option since the underground ductwork can last up to 50 years and the heat pump about 20 years.

"In fact, the larger the house, the greater the savings on heating and

cooling costs and the faster the investment recoup time," says Sergerie. For his part, Cosgrove specifies that geothermal energy is particularly interesting for houses 3,000 square feet and more.

"Let's say you own a small home and your energy bills are \$2,200 per year. If you invest \$30,000 on a geothermal system and your energy bills decrease by 50 percent, you'll get your investment back in 27 years. Since a geothermal pump lasts on average only about 20 years, such an investment wouldn't make sense. On the other hand, it can be cost-effective in the case of a house that costs \$4,000 per year for electricity and heating."

The technology has evolved in the meantime. Both hardware and installation methods have improved in recent years, says the CGC. More and more geothermal systems are now connected, making it possible to remotely control the home heating and cooling from a mobile device. So it's certainly worth considering while, at the same time, making sure that the system meets your own comfort criteria. Another must is a reliable and experienced contractor, able to calibrate the device according to your specific requirements.

HOME INSURANCE AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Do innovative technologies – like geothermal energy or home automation – impact insurance premiums? It depends. “Geothermal heating is considered as safe as electric,” says Suzanne Michaud, CAA-Quebec Vice-President – Insurance. “Your premiums stay the same because there’s no increased fire risk.” The same goes for home automation. But note that, if some insurers offer a discount to users of these technologies, it’s more a way of attracting these particular customers than it is because the technologies reduce the frequency or gravity of potential losses.



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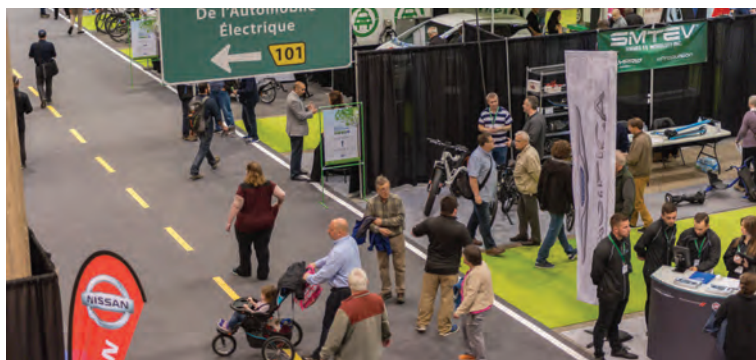
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For this second version, the venue has doubled in size to accommodate more automakers and other exhibitors. "The show features everything that moves electrically – cars, bikes, boats, trucks, and so on," explains show co-promoter Luc Saumure, "except that the focus this year will be on cars and road tests." Ford and Volvo will more than double their space. Other carmakers, like Honda, will participate for the first time, promising plenty of surprises.

"Expect lots of new products. Some will make their debut at the show," says Saumure. "And as always, test driving cars is very popular with visitors. We conducted 1,200 road tests in 2017, and hope to double that this year." CAA-Quebec will be on hand, holding a daily conference on its vision of electric vehicles. The MEVS is at the Place Bonaventure, April 20, 21 and 22.

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PEDESTRIANS WATCH OUT!

Road-sharing between cars and pedestrians remains a tricky business, and pedestrian deaths are on the rise. Caution is the operative word. / BY JACQUELINE SIMONEAU

The SAAQ 2016 road-safety record for motorists is one of the best in the last 70 years. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for pedestrians. The number of pedestrians fatally hit by a vehicle was up by 40 percent during 2015, and by 8.6 percent compared to the 2011-2015 average.

Another surprise is that 65-year-olds, and older, were the hardest hit group, contrary to what you might think would be texting-distracted teenagers. Seniors constitute 55.6 percent of all pedestrian deaths – more than half. They are more vulnerable when crossing the road, prone to lose their balance and to walk slower. Their age will also contribute to making injuries more severe. “The population grows older as automobile traffic increases,” points out Marie-Soleil Cloutier, a professor at the INRS Urbanisation Culture Société Research Centre and director of the Centre’s Laboratoires Piétons et Espace Urbain. “We need to do something about the existing infrastructure; otherwise, there are going to be more pedestrian accident victims.”

The SAAQ report also reveals that accidents causing bodily injury to pedestrians of every age occur more frequently in 50-kilometre-per-hour, or less, speed zones. It’s in the 30- to 50-km/h zone that you see a sudden spike in the risk of fatality. In fact,



pedestrians have a 10-percent chance of dying if they’re hit by a vehicle travelling at 30 km/h, a 75-percent chance at 50 km/h, and an almost 100-percent chance at 70 km/h.

So if you enjoy walking, be extremely vigilant, especially from Monday to Friday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. That is when the majority of accidents involving pedestrians occur. Note also that the period from October to December chalks up the most traffic casualties. Two-thirds of serious injuries happen on clear days (perhaps because people are more inclined to go out in fair weather) and 13.4 percent of these accidents occur in a parking lot.

Finally, be especially careful at intersections, the scene of roughly half of all road accidents, according to the SAAQ.

The weather factor

Snowbanks or bitter-cold snaps at winter's end complicate matters for pedestrians. Poorly cleared sidewalks not only force them to walk slowly – or even on the street – they also increase the risk of falling. A bad fall can lead to serious consequences like chronic pain or a disabling injury that causes permanent mobility loss.

“Many pedestrians have good reason to be fearful of winter,” Cloutier says. “It’s hard enough to walk on a slippery surface, but people must often cope with street-crossing signals that are generally based on a healthy adult’s walking speed: 1 to 1.2 metres per second, compared to about 0.8 metre per second for older folk. If you factor in wide intersections, chances

are that slower-than-average walkers will be stuck in the middle of the road when the light turns red. Some municipalities have begun to allow more crossing time, especially in areas near hospitals and nursing homes, but that’s nowhere near enough.”

Design is key

Street and artery design contributes to the accident toll, according to the SAAQ. Bus stops, medians and bike paths, for example, can have a negative impact on safety. “One of our observations involves pedestrians crossing a street with a two-way bike path running along it,” says Cloutier. “They hesitate before crossing the path, then again before stepping into the street.” The result is that they are then six times more likely to complete the crossing on a red light.

The good news is that “more and more citizens are banding together to demand modifications to existing facilities in order to improve pedestrian safety,” Cloutier reports. Downtown Victoriaville is a case in point. Citizen comments and suggestions made during the course of public hearings resulted in several improvements: wider and flatter sidewalks, new pedestrian crosswalks and brighter street lighting. “We’ve also levelled the slope between the street and the sidewalks,” says Jean-François Morissette, Victoriaville Director of Urban Planning. “Surprisingly, this new environment also has a positive effect on drivers. We note that motorists drive at 30 kilometres an hour even where 50 is permitted.”

Following the example of other municipalities (including Quebec City), Victoriaville has also adopted exclusively pedestrian traffic-light cycles on a number of arteries. During such a cycle, cars coming from all four directions must stop so that pedestrians can cross the street without concern. “That’s excellent,” Cloutier says. “But traffic-light cycles are long so impatient pedestrians often cross without waiting for their turn. This is especially the case if they have to cross two perpendicular streets in succession, because they have to wait until the next cycle to complete their crossing.” The solution, according to Cloutier, is to permit diagonal crossing when all four traffic lights display red. In fact, the City of Montreal has implemented a pilot project that permits diagonal crossing at two downtown intersections: one at McGill and Saint-Jacques streets, the other close by at Victoria Square and Saint-Antoine Street West. Stay tuned.

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SOLUTIONS

During the SAAQ's public consultation on road safety last year, CAA-Quebec presented its recommendations on a host of related issues. The organization is also closely following the Bill aimed at amending the Highway Safety Code, introduced last December 8. "For us, the safety of all road users is paramount, and it starts with better road-sharing," says Marco Harrison, CAA-Quebec Foundation Director. "That's why we salute the Minister's willingness to enshrine the principle of protecting the most vulnerable road users in the Highway Safety Code. Our recent participation in the parliamentary commission on this Bill allowed us to reaffirm our recommendation, put forward during the public consultation."

CAA-Quebec is convinced that the principle of protecting the most vulnerable road users is essential if we are to be serious about better road-sharing. It must be combined with increased respect for the rules by pedestrians and cyclists. "One of the key factors for success in this endeavour is the mutual respect between different road users. And one of the ways of demonstrating this respect is to observe the rules as they apply to us, regardless of our method of mobility."



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Busy streets, no signage

How would motorists, cyclists and pedestrians behave if faced with an intersection without traffic lights or stop signs? More politely, it seems, and in a safer manner.

BY NADINE FILION

A city or an urban thoroughfare without signage of any kind sounds impossible. Who would have the right of way? Would motorists drive against the flow if there were no one-way signs? How would municipalities balance their budget if they had no traffic fines to collect?

Known as “shared space” or, more recently, “naked streets,” the concept developed in the 1980s by Dutch traffic engineer Hans Monderman may seem foolish but is, in fact, a reality. It refers to a streetscape stripped of all right-of-way indications and limitations – traffic lights, stop signs, pedestrian crosswalks, raised sidewalks, white lines down the middle of roads – which traditionally outline the rules of engagement to be observed by different users of the same road network.

Instead of a road-safety code telling them what to do and how to do it, shared-space users – motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, even wheelchair occupants – need only abide by two rules: Respect the speed limit and yield the right of way to anyone approaching from the right. They rely on eye contact, a nod of the head, friendly gestures and good old common sense to take care of the rest. In other words, each individual must personally negotiate their way through the streets by interacting with, and reacting to, one another in a safe, courteous manner. Everyone takes control of his or her social responsibility, and everything seems to be working out well.

More or less dangerous?

In 2002, the Netherlands city of Drachten was one of the first to eliminate traffic signals. This agglomeration of 45,000 inhabitants – the popula-



tion of Quebec’s Victoriaville – has been cited as a worldwide example for having removed 18 sets of traffic lights and reorganized its urban space according to the needs of road users. The result? The town saw an immediate drop in accident numbers from an annual average of eight to just one, and no accidents at all in 2005.

This came as no surprise to Hans Monderman, who died in 2008. He had observed similar results in pilot projects that showed traffic flowing more smoothly and almost twice as fast, even though motorists drove more slowly. He also noticed a new hierarchy emerge in the shared-space zones, with the most vulnerable people at the top. And when there are



WHY NORTH AMERICA REMAINS LUKEWARM TO SHARED SPACES IS ANYONE'S GUESS.

Could it be counter-cultural: a reluctance to revisit an urban-planning approach developed over a century ago? Or could it be the advent of autonomous vehicles, which demand more than their share of road signage?



no traffic lights, pedestrians are seen as fellow road users rather than obstacles in the way of the next green light, Monderman asserted. Indeed, intersections are one of the most dangerous areas in any city, where everyone should be concentrating on everyone else around them, but instead they all stare at the lights, waiting for orders. And when the orders come, they imagine all is safe... and that's when a collision occurs.

Accident rate zero, but no rush to change

While the shared-space concept can hardly be applied where large cities are concerned, some have adopted the idea for specific streets or neighbourhoods. London's borough of Kensington is a case in point. Museum-filled Exhibition Road, which attracts 11 million visitors a year, went "naked" in 2011, removing 95 percent of what was then a maze of signage, railings and speed bumps.

Last year, the *Guardian* newspaper reported that an estimated 400 thoroughfares and towns across Europe had gone entirely or partly signage-free. The results, writes journalist Simon Jenkins, are "dramatic falls in accidents" and main streets that "have become virtually accident-free zones."

As a matter of fact, online research shows no increase in accidents and no accidents at all in some cases. With such results, and now that the first shared-space experiment in the Netherlands has passed its 15th-anniversary milestone, you would imagine that there would be a mad rush to eliminate traffic lights and road markings.

But that's not the case in Europe, where the very first traffic lights were installed in London 150 years ago (in 1868), and far less so on this side of the Atlantic. A couple of U.S. cities – including Florida's West Palm Beach and Normal, Illinois – have tested the notion, but on such a small scale that it's impossible to draw any conclusions.

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CAR CHALLENGES FOR 2028

It is unlikely that all automobiles will drive by themselves in the next ten years. They may not even achieve “zero emission.” But they will have changed a lot – that is, if you still own one.

BY JESSE CARON

Electric, self-driving, autonomous... these were the words we heard over and over again last October at Tokyo's Big Sight Exhibition Centre. We were invited there by Toyota Canada to cover the 45th Tokyo Motor Show.

The concept cars we saw invariably boasted notions like driver assistance, clean mobility and versatile transportation, or any combinations thereof. Some advances seemed entirely plausible while others posed major challenges. Here's an overview.

All-electric cars

First appearing on the market seven years ago, all-electric cars have already proven to be especially suitable for predictable drives. Companies like Honda and Nissan have taken advantage of the Tokyo Motor Show to unveil prototypes as visually seductive as they are audacious. Nissan's IMx, for example, touts a 600-kilometre drive range combined with a 430-horsepower engine!

CHALLENGES ▶ Current EV batteries are very heavy and cumbersome in order to provide a drive range equivalent to that of gas-powered vehicles. Toyota, which has no all-electric models in its portfolio, is working on smaller, lighter solid-state batteries that could offer a partial solution. Stay tuned to hear more during the next decade.



All electric
Nissan IMx



Honda Sports EV Concept



Toyota's hydrogen concept
Fine-Comfort Ride

Hydrogen-powered vehicles

An explosive growth of all-electric cars would necessitate the deployment of thousands of fast or even ultra-fast charging stations capable of charging batteries in mere minutes. The technology exists, as does the raw resource needed to power it (especially in Quebec). But some experts voice concerns about the capability of the electric-power-distribution network to support such infrastructure.

This is where compressed hydrogen comes in as a viable power source for electric-drive cars. Hydrogen-powered vehicles, like their gas counterparts, can refuel in five minutes – for a 500-kilometre drive. Currently, only three hydrogen models are available in select North American markets – the Honda Clarity, Hyundai Tucson FCEV and Toyota Mirai. At last year's Tokyo Motor Show, Toyota also introduced a hydrogen-concept mini-van. Called Fine-Comfort Ride, it offers a 1,000-kilometre drive range. General Motors (GM) and BMW are also at work on this technology.

CHALLENGES ▶ Hydrogen-powered cars do not emit greenhouse gases (GHGs), but the hydrogen itself is not completely CO₂ free as it is commonly sourced from fossil fuels. Cleaner production processes are currently under study. We visited a small wind-produced hydrogen plant in Yokohama, southwest of Tokyo, expressly set up to service the area's dozen or so forklifts equipped with fuel cells recovered from the Toyota Mirai. The only emissions observed at the plant came from the diesel truck used to transport the hydrogen to the various forklift sites.

Closer to home, the Quebec government has recently added 50 Toyota Mirais to its fleet in order to test both the technology and refuelling. The nearly total absence of service facilities is the main obstacle to the introduction of fuel-cell cars to Quebec. Hydrogen cost for consumers is another problematic issue. ▶



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Infiniti Q50 Pro Pilot

Autonomous driving

Less than a decade after their arrival, driver-assist features like lane-departure warning with automatic steering correction are a reality in most vehicles. Automatic emergency braking will boost car safety in 99 percent of vehicles by 2022. Fully autonomous prototypes have already made their appearance here and there on the continent, and a number of companies have even promised to put them on the market in the next decade. Nissan, for example, actually tested its autonomous Infiniti Q50 sport sedan during the 2017 Tokyo Motor Show. We had a chance to experiment with a very effective automatic lane-changing function behind the wheel of a 2018 Lexus LS 500h on a Yokohama highway.

CHALLENGES ▶ Current driver-assist technologies generally do their job on clearly marked arteries. But there are some situations in which this artificial intelligence may not perform as intended. For example, the lane-keeping aid on the LS 500h we tested hesitated long enough between the highway lane and the exit lane – separated by a concrete curb – that we decided to take the appropriate corrective action ourselves.

Toyota Chief Safety Technology Officer, Kiyotaka Ise, tells us that he doesn't yet know when autonomous driving will be fully functional in winter conditions. Other considerations – regulations, insurance and road-sharing with conventional vehicles – could also delay the growth of self-driving cars on our roads.



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2018 GMC TERRAIN

PRICE: \$31,990 to \$47,050

PROS: Flexible and powerful 2.0-litre engine, exemplary automatic transmission, good soundproofing, stable and comfortable ride, clear controls, generous equipment.

CONS: Light and numb steering, diesel engine (SLE) is expensive and noisy when accelerating, tight rear headroom, just adequate cargo room, automatic emergency braking restricted to most expensive models.

► The GMC Terrain has undergone its first full remake in eight years, following its close cousin, the Chevrolet Equinox, by just a few months. No longer solely relying on its silhouette to differentiate itself from the Equinox, it now has its own distinct cabin and exclusive mechanicals-and-features pairings. Like so many of its rivals, it has switched from a conventional V6 to a turbo engine, and it shares with the Equinox the only diesel engine available in the segment.

Without stirring up driving enthusiasm, the 2018 Terrain is a well-designed vehicle that outclasses its predecessor in terms of performance, refinement and comfort. It even offers the best nine-speed transmission on the market. That's all good news, but is it enough to justify its high price in the face of ferocious competition? Nothing is less certain, especially with one of those rivals selling for much less in the same showroom.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 2.0-litre turbo, direct-injection 4-cylinder (252 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 9-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

FUEL ECONOMY, CITY/HIGHWAY COMBINED (NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA): 10.2 L/100 km

2018 HYUNDAI ACCENT

PRICE: \$16,100 to \$22,100 (estimated)

PROS: Smooth and flexible engine, exemplary automatic transmission, stable handling, improved soundproofing, simple controls, rigid chassis.

CONS: Uninformative steering, overly firm ride (17-inch tires), poor rear headroom, rather soft seats, restricted access to automatic emergency braking.

► Built on a new platform, the fifth-generation Accent grows in volume and receives updated technology and active safety features. The sedan goes on sale in January 2018, with a hatchback version following in the spring (the latter has been dropped from the lineup in the United States). The engine remains the same for both models, and driving fans can still opt for a manual transmission for the majority of trims.

In Canada, one out of five purchasers of a subcompact chooses the Accent. The secret of its success is pricing and financing that genuinely makes the Accent more accessible than the compact Elantra. If Hyundai pursues this same strategy, the 2018 Accent has the comfort, capability and just enough equipment to uphold the tradition. If automatic emergency braking was offered on all models, and not just the GLS, it would become very hard to beat.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 1.6-litre direct-injection 4-cylinder (130 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: Front-wheel drive

FUEL ECONOMY, CITY/HIGHWAY COMBINED (MANUFACTURER DATA): 7.4 L/100 km





2018 JEEP COMPASS

PRICE: \$26,695 to \$43,985

PROS: Unique Jeep styling, comfortable ride, well-soundproofed cabin, uncomplicated controls, clear touch screen.

CONS: Engine power, slow transmission, body roll in curves, vague steering, hard seats.

► The Compass got a first complete remake in 10 years for 2017. Jeep now slots it between Renegade and Cherokee, two vehicles with which Compass shares its basic architecture. Apart from its mini-Grand Cherokee allure, the redesigned model presents several updates in terms of mechanicals, cabin and safety. Patriot, the boxy clone of the former Compass, did not survive the mutation.

The renewed Compass surpasses its predecessor, which some will say was easy to do. Solid, updated in terms of safety, and unbeatable off-road (at least for the segment), it also deals kindly with passengers at highway speed. Unfortunately, a disappointing powertrain and awkward driving position hold it back, along with a reputation for poor reliability that hopefully will be dissipated one day soon.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 2.4-litre 4-cylinder (180 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 9-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

TEST TEMPERATURE: 13°C to 27°C

TESTED FUEL ECONOMY: 9.7 L/100 km

2018 KIA RIO

PRICE: \$16,355 to \$25,505

PROS: Smooth and lively engine at low RPMs, excellent automatic transmission, good balance of comfort and handling (15-inch wheels), generous equipment for the price, comfortable seats.

CONS: Overly light steering, stiff ride (17-inch wheels), tight rear headroom, automatic emergency braking restricted to most expensive model.

► Kia is launching the fourth generation of the Rio as a 2018 model. The redesigned body encloses an updated cabin and an all-new platform similar to that of the Hyundai Accent, which is also poised for an update. While the engine is largely unchanged, equipment is enhanced and technology gets a boost. Very popular in Quebec, the hatchback arrived at dealerships in August 2017, while the sedan followed suit a few months later.

It is amazing to see how subcompacts have progressed with each generation in terms of refinement. The new Rio, quieter and better balanced than ever, is the best example. That applies as much to the \$25,000-plus EX Tech model as to the \$18,270 LX+ manual. The LX+ though is the most price-worthy Rio, even if it means giving up automatic emergency braking, a key feature than certain rivals already offer as standard equipment.

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 1.6-litre direct-injection 4-cylinder (130 hp)

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: Front-wheel drive

FUEL ECONOMY, CITY/HIGHWAY COMBINED
(NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA): 7.5 L/100 km





2018 SUBARU OUTBACK

PRICE: \$31,020 to \$43,920

PROS: Quiet and compliant ride, smooth and powerful 6-cylinder engine (optional), very roomy cabin and trunk, comfortable seats, efficient all-wheel drive, assured safety.

CONS: Just adequate 4-cylinder engine, body roll in curves, brakes still soft, uncertain engine reliability (4-cylinder).

TEST MODEL

ENGINE: 2.5-litre flat 4-cylinder (175 hp)

TRANSMISSION: Continuously variable automatic with manual mode

DRIVETRAIN: All-wheel drive

TEST TEMPERATURE: -5°C to 5°C

TESTED FUEL ECONOMY: 9.5 L/100 km

► Like all Subaru vehicles, the Legacy and Outback have been a big hit with the public since their last makeover, in 2015. It's especially true of the Outback thanks to its crossover connections. To keep the momentum going, the two models receive a mild styling revision, refinements to the interior and technology updates for 2018. A manual transmission is no longer listed, but unlike several rivals, the mid-size Subarus retain their optional 6-cylinder engine.

This year's modifications to the Outback enhance its comfort, ease of operation and equipment-to-price ratio. No matter that its unique character of yore is diluted still more, because customers love the current formula. But as secure and pleasant as the Outback may be on a daily basis, it faces the same question as the other Subarus: is uncertain engine reliability finally a thing of the past? Let's hope so.

CAA
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SPRING 2018

PUBLISHER
CAA-Quebec
caaquebec.com

COORDINATOR
Stéphanie Fortier Allaire

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CAA-Quebec Magazine is published
four times per year.
ISSN 0838-6846

DIRECTION GROUPE TVA INC.
President and CEO:
France Lauzière

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TVA Publications inc.
Custom Publishing Division

TVA Publications inc. Vice-President & Group Publisher Lyne Robitaille / **Head Manager** Robert Renaud / **Editor** Catherine Elie / **Manager, Design Studio and Print** Diane Gignac / **Art Director** Louis-Philippe Verrier / **Graphic Artists** Jocelyn Dauphinais, Sylvain Villeneuve / **Project Managers** Andrée-Anne Gauthier, Élodie De Smet / **Writers** Jesse Caron, Julie St-Hilaire, Pierre-Olivier Fortin / **Translator** My-Trang Nguyen / **Copy Editor** Donna Jensen

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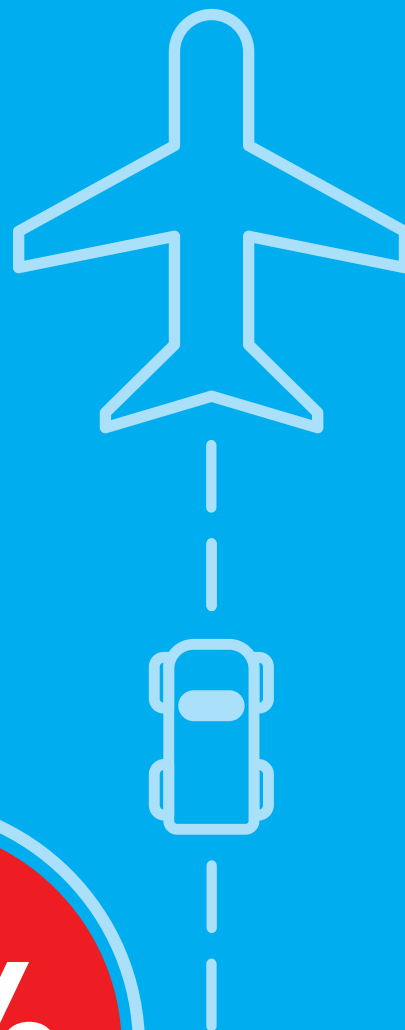
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