

presents **Cars...**
it's a girl thing

A woman's place is behind the wheel...

Forget the image of women choosing cars to go with their handbags and leaving the technical bits to their fellas. Women may drive less than half (45%) of the cars in Britain but it's generally acknowledged in the motoring industry that women also influence about 80 per cent of car purchasing decisions.

But next time you see a woman in a car dealership appearing a little dizzy about what she wants, don't be fooled. The chances are she's putting on an act to get a bargain, in much the same way that men become macho mechanics.



These are some of the findings from brand new research by **eBayMotors.co.uk** into the attitudes, opinions, experiences and realities of female car ownership in Britain today.

Recognising the quandaries women face, as well as the growing importance and influence of female purchasing power, **eBayMotors.co.uk** has launched **www.MissMotors.co.uk** - a new motoring website tailored just for women.

The research used to create this new all-female motoring site is detailed in this report **"Cars...It's A Girl Thing"**.

The report is all about what women want from their cars and from the motoring industry; revealing how they feel behind the wheel and their knowledge of the road. The report will also prove certain car clichés and dispell other motoring myths!

One of eBay's largest car-selling companies is online firm AutoQuake, run by Jeanette Moskovits. She said:

"When buying a car women don't know where to start, who to trust, and they often end up asking male friends for help and advice."

MissMotors.co.uk is geared towards solving these problems and empowering women with confidence to make a smart choice when buying a car.

“Women now know what they want when they buy a car. In the same way that the insurance industry has recognised the importance of female customers, the market for selling cars is catching up.

“Online growth has made a massive difference to how cars are traded: in 2005 alone, more than £1billion worth of vehicles, parts and accessories were bought and sold on eBayMotors.co.uk, meaning that there is a clear and legitimate way for women to buy cars without having to go through the macho atmosphere of a showroom.”

Jody Ford, eBayMotors.co.uk

Wheel Meet Again: what women want from their cars and the motoring industry...

So what is it that women want? According to research from eBayMotors.co.uk, the top five reasons for purchase are the same for men and women (price, economy, reliability, make / model and miles on the clock). However, it is the small differences that are interesting.

Perhaps surprisingly, women are much less concerned about a car's green credentials than men. When asked what might change their mind about looking for a more eco-friendly car, the top three responses all boiled down to price: better fuel consumption rates making it cheaper to run, road tax reductions and lower insurance costs.

When we asked them what they thought women had a lot to say...

“It's something people want to do in theory, but they don't want to have to pay more to benefit the environment.”

“Why should I pay more and try to be green when Bob round the corner is still driving around in his big 4x4?”

Whilst women look more for practical factors such as whether a car is suitable for child seats or is comfortable on long journeys, they still take into consideration the car's engine size, image and prestige – things traditionally thought of as male dominated areas in the motor trade.

Women are more heavily influenced than men by price – 72 per cent of women compared to 65 per cent of men. However, women are less bothered by a model's reliability record – only 30 per cent of women compared to 38 per cent of men.

After price, it's fuel economy and running costs that are the most important to women. Surprisingly, the engine size is one of the main factors that influences a woman's decision to purchase a car whereas miles on the clock has little effect on this decision.

The research also shows:

- 28 per cent of women prefer a family car to any other
- 17 per cent rate safety a prime factor, but only 11 per cent of men do
- 45 per cent of men but just 38 per cent of women think they should get a greener car
- Women are less likely than men to understand the environmental issues facing the motoring industry
- 36 per cent of women and 31 per cent of men buy a car “to reward themselves”



Driving Miss Crazy: how women are treated behind the wheel...

It's behind the wheel that the gender differences become most apparent, although both sexes have a similar capacity for getting easily annoyed whilst driving. The top bugbears for both sexes are other motorists driving dangerously, for example, undertaking, tailgating and changing lanes without signalling.

One in five women find the sight of another driver on a mobile immensely frustrating, but the biggest loathing is kept for men who are “arrogant on the road” and “show no concern for other drivers”, with half of women citing this as easily the most annoying part of being on the road.

“Women follow the rules of the road. Men take the law into their own hands – they think they own the road.”

“I think women are more apologetic drivers. Blokes never say they're sorry.”

It seems that this irritation can be exacerbated into real temper - women seem to be the nation's snarling beasts of the road, with 99% admitting to losing their cool at some point.

Hormone highway...

This could have something to do with hormonal fluctuations, with a quarter of women confirming men's own prejudices by admitting the time of the month makes a difference to how they behave behind the wheel – and not necessarily a positive one either, with parking, general driving and all-round temper levels all adversely affected.

There is certainly evidence of girls behaving badly behind the wheel with 25 per cent of women having experienced rude hand gestures from other female motorists, although twice as many have had the same treatment from men too.

On the flip side of the coin, women are flirting and are flirted with while on the road. Some 43 per cent of women aged 18-24 having been given the eye while in traffic or stuck at lights.

Yet the flirting doesn't necessarily last once the couples get together, with three quarters of British couples admitting to regularly falling out with a partner while in the car.

Buy, buy baby...

It seems the cliché is true and women really do have less knowledge about motoring in general than men.

50 per cent of women surveyed said they felt confident enough to be able to discuss just 12 out of 22 commonly-used car terms from a list provided. In contrast, the same percentage of men said they would happily be able to discuss 19 out of the 22 terms with a car salesperson.

Our survey pointed to the following top 3 shocking statistics:

1. Only 52% of women are sure of the term MPG (miles per gallon) compared to 82% of men
2. 65% of women car buyers are NOT sure what a V5 document is – this figure is double the male equivalent
3. Less than two thirds of women feel confident enough to talk about the clutch and how it works

It is no wonder, then, that many women feel intimidated when talking to car salesmen and mechanics.

And this might also be why only 52 per cent of female motorists surveyed have actually had the final purchasing decision about the car they drive, compared to 67 per cent of men.

A further 37 per cent of women and 30 per cent of men say it is a "joint decision". But four times as many women leave the final say to their partner - whether this is a lack of confidence on the part of the woman or simply a need 'to keep the peace' and let the man decide is yet to be fully ascertained.



"I think women look for reassurance from the man, who knows more about cars"

"If I were buying a car with my boyfriend, I'd probably leave it to him to say 'that's the car we're going for.'"

Women would prefer to buy from other women if they could, saying that they think a car that has been owned by a woman has been better treated. One in five people would prefer a car that was previously owned by a woman and 83 per cent of all these purchasers say it is because they think it will have been more carefully looked after – it is less likely to have been driven too fast and too furiously.

Dave Sargent, executive director of European Operations for JD Power, a motoring market research company, said: *“Men are more likely to think of cars as toys or status symbols but women are more practically minded.”*

“Men drive their cars harder and faster, more recklessly. But then again you could say that men take pride in their cars, so they might have looked after them better too.”

The experience of buying a car from a fellow female is also seen as smoother because, according to 35 per cent of female buyers, one woman will not try to sell a car to another woman by blinding her with science or pulling the wool over her eyes.

However, women will use a few tricks of their own to get what they want when buying cars. One in four have lied to a vendor about how much they have to spend, for instance, and nine per cent have played dumb to get a dealer to take pity on them and give them a better deal with a further one in 10 having flirted for the same reason.

The study found 45 per cent of women would be open to buying online and only 27 per cent would not consider it at all.

Many of those against the idea believe (wrongly) that they would not get a chance to test drive a car or meet the seller if they bought online, both of which are possible and recommended by eBayMotors.co.uk.

The finishing line...

Female initiatives: The conclusions are simple – there are definitely differences between men and women when it comes to the overall motoring experience, which warrant more female-friendly initiatives by the industry.

Women underserved: Women are badly underserved by the market as it stands and the market could be losing out too by not targeting the female market more successfully.

Win trust: Everyone in the industry needs to do more to win the trust of female car consumers and encourage more women to come into the market and to be confident about doing so.

Knowledge: Women feel they do not know enough about the subject but the truth is they know a lot and can easily learn more with the right kind of service.



Ladies, we give you www.MissMotors.co.uk

MissMotors.co.uk intends to concentrate on four areas of the motor trade and make them more attractive to women customers.

- 1. Basic car knowledge** – by explaining everyday car terms in everyday language, women will instantly be able to recognise more about a car and what it does, enabling them to make informed choices.
- 2. The environment** – everyone wants to be greener but the industry needs to explain itself better so that women can make up their own minds about a car's ecological performance and economic suitability.
- 3. Transparent car buying** – women want a service they can trust and see how it works right the way through, so MissMotors.co.uk will provide tips and advice on the entire car buying process.
- 4. Men are from Mars** – by recognising the differences between the sexes, MissMotors.co.uk can provide information geared towards women.



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NOTES: ICM interviewed a random sample of 2071 drivers aged 18+ from ICM's online panel between the 7th and 8th of March 2007. Panellists were recruited from across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults. ICM is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Further information at www.icmresearch.co.uk Further studies were conducted among a focus group of 12 women on 12th March 2007.