David Miles’ latest round-up of car facts, figures and information

Published: April 16, 2020

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/david-miles-latest-round-up-of-car-facts-figures-and-information/



MOTORING NEWS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED THIS LAST WEEK...

...By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

With the motoring media World in lockdown the supply of new models and new model test driving events are all cancelled so instead of road test reviews we are keeping the wheels turning by covering some news items you might just have missed.

Some that caught my eyes in the last week or so are as follows.

Adversity is driving innovation at Skoda



Skoda’s latest innovation, the ‘Live Tour’.

Virtual showrooms in the car sales industry is not a new thing, it’s click and view, tick a few boxes, download a brochure and if you are lucky you might get a call-back from a sales person.

With UK car dealer showrooms closed those Skoda people who use the ‘Simply Clever’ marketing strapline have come up with an innovative potential sales solution where you use on-line technology to view but then actually talk to somebody whilst you are viewing your potential new car of interest.

Skoda has brought sales service to their own product expert’s driveway so they can continue to meet the needs of customers and provide demonstrations of vehicles. Within the last week since the service went fully remote, they have already handled hundreds of video

calls from the safety of their homes.

Through 4G capability and video technology, a Skoda product specialist will connect with customers and live stream their model of choice via a mobile, tablet or desktop device, enabling them to experience the car on their terms.

Currently, six hosts are providing live demonstrations from their driveways of the Kamiq, Superb, Octavia and Karoq and are using pre-recorded video footage to demonstrate the rest of the Skoda model range.



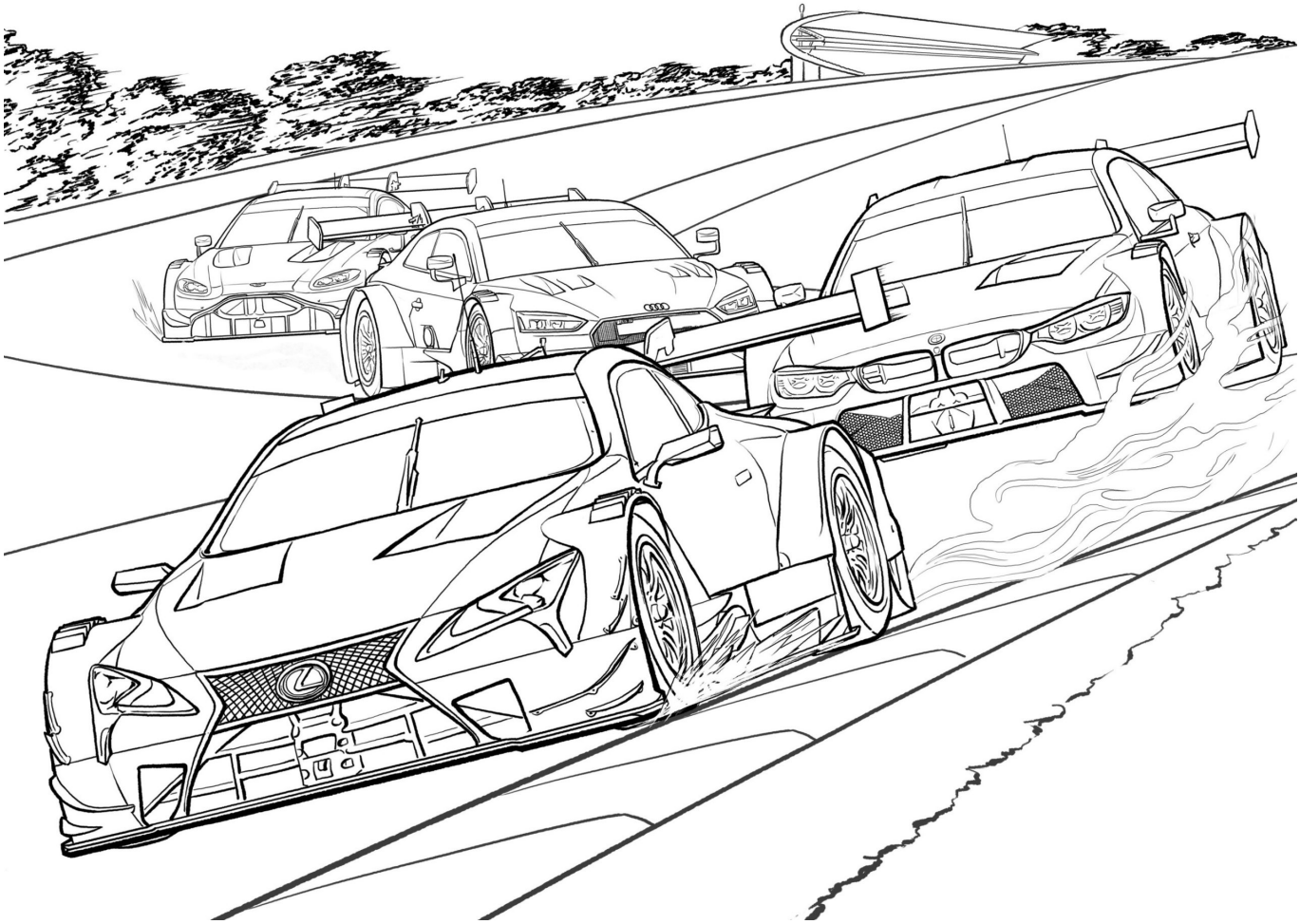
Skoda Kamiq – on-line real-time tour with a brand expert.

Here's how the service works:

- Log onto skoda.co.uk and click the 'Live' pop-up
- Enter phone number for an immediate call back or to schedule an appointment
- A host will connect with the customer on their mobile, tablet or desktop via video feed
- The host will demonstrate the vehicle of choice, talking through everything from performance of the car to infotainment settings
- If interested, customers can be guided through a step-by-step configuration process
- The service is available Monday – Friday from 11:00 – 21:00 and Saturday – Sunday from 11:00 – 19:00.
  For further information about the virtual showroom, visit https://www.skoda.co.uk/discover/virtual-showroom.

Certainly 'Simply Smart' innovative ways of actually talking to a potential customers and potentially driving sales for the brand.

Lexus puts colour back into our lives



Lexus LC-5oo-Super-GT-colouring-template.

We could all do with our lives brightening up in these dark days of lockdown and Lexus have met that challenge with an innovative way of adding colour to our at-home lives.

To entertain children and adults during lockdown, the team at Lexus has created some colouring templates of the Lexus LC 500 sports coupe.

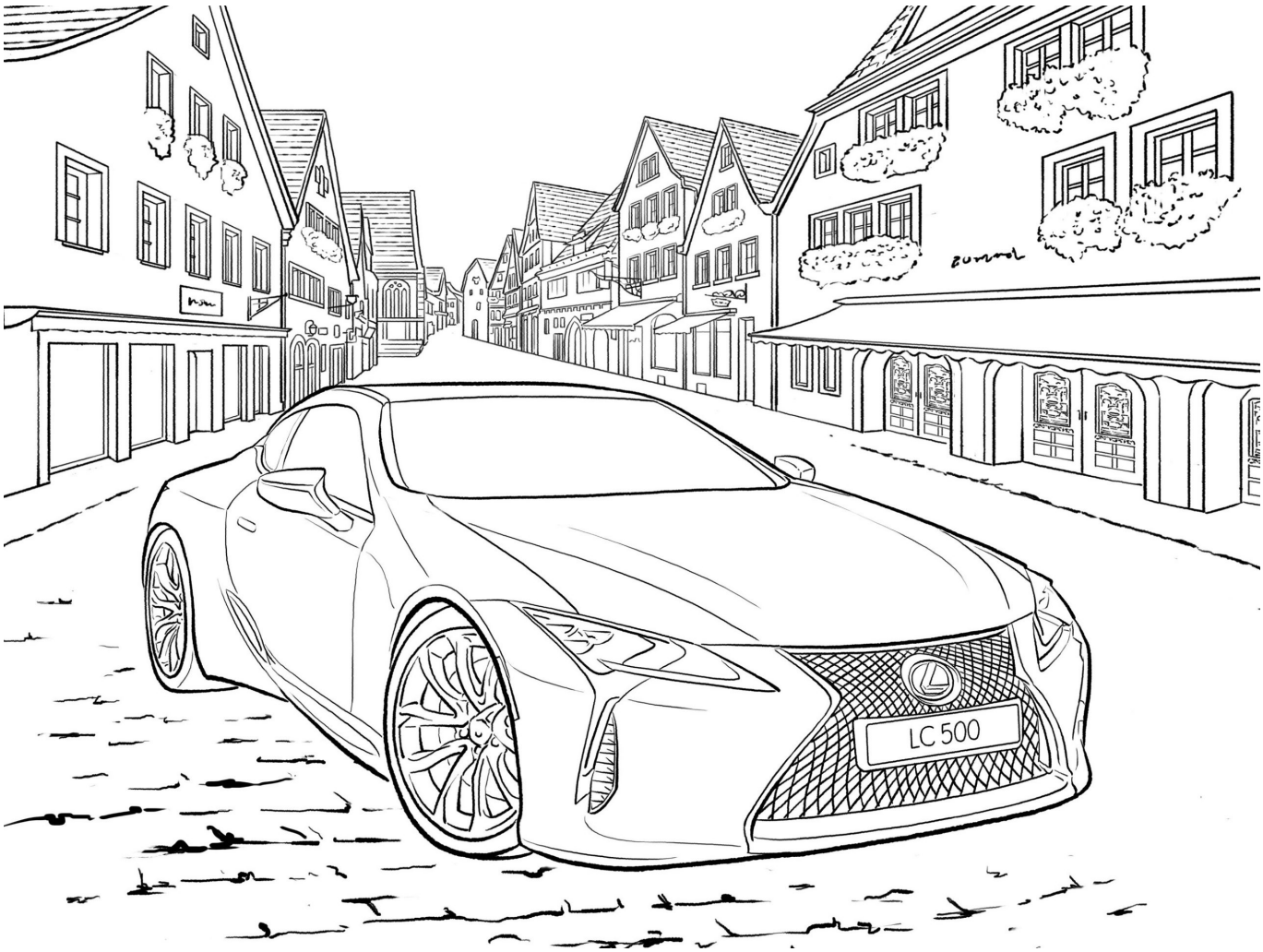
Finished designs can be shared with Lexus on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram by including the @LexusUK tag in your post.

Lexus LC 500 Super GT. You can create your dream racing car livery with the Lexus LC 500

Super GT car colouring template, but remember to stay within the (racing) lines.

This illustration also includes race cars from, BMW, Audi and Aston Martin because it commemorates the 2019 race when Super GT cars from Japan and cars from the German DTM series competed against each other for the first time. The first of these so-called ‘Dream Races’ was held at Fuji Speedway, with Nick Cassidy taking victory in the Lexus.

Lexus LC Road Car. If high-octane motorsport isn’t your thing, the other template features a Lexus LC road car in two idyllic settings.



Lexus LC-500-colouring-template.

Go on brighten up your locked-down life – start colouring whatever your age.

The new Land Rover Defender joins the fleet of British Red Cross support vehicles.



Land Rover Defender 110 in Namibia.

Land Rover has donated 27 new Defender models, among 57 vehicles in total, to help the British Red Cross deliver supplies and to provide medical support during the Coronavirus crisis.

In fact Jaguar Land Rover has made available over 300 vehicles to support global emergency response organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic period in addition to making other items of medical equipment needed by frontline medical staff. Other manufacturers have done the same – making support vehicles available and are also making medical equipment and components in the fight to help the medical staff fight to keep us alive.

As for the rugged Defender it is available in three door form designated as the 90 priced from £40,290 and the 110 five door models priced from £45,560.

To keep us in the picture and potentially active with our colouring-in pens Land Rover has supplied a series of images featuring the new Defender in Namibia where the company recently held the international media test driving event. You can download your own high-res versions and share your handywork with LR on Twitter@LandRoverUK.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Nissan is going that extra mile to assist key workers



Nissan goes that extra mile to help key workers.

Key workers currently driving Nissan vehicles can now access roadside assistance services free of charge, to help them stay mobile during the Coronavirus lockdown.

Nissan has adapted its existing vehicle assistance programme to cover these workers, regardless of their vehicle's age or warranty coverage.

In the event that roadside assistance is required, key workers can simply call Nissan Assistance on 0330 123 1231, give the details of their Nissan vehicle and a technician will be dispatched to assist them.

The cover includes roadside repair and recovery to the nearest Nissan dealership still able to stay open for after sales service. In addition, Nissan will also prioritise free-of-charge

courtesy cars for key workers should their vehicle need to be repaired at a dealership.

Also Nissan has reassured all of its customers that vehicle warranties will still be honoured if they miss a scheduled service or warranty repair work as a result of the ongoing government-imposed restrictions.

Every bit of help for everybody is to be applauded don't you think!

Car-loans could be granted a three-month payment holiday



Possible car loans holiday…

In my previous 'news you might have missed' editorial you might have seen there are worrying times for the millions of UK motorists who have acquired new cars using PCP

(personal contract purchase) schemes. It is estimated that 80% of UK retail customers use this method of purchasing a new car.

The fear is that with owners being laid-off from work they will be forced to hand-back their new cars if they cannot keep up the monthly payments and for the motor industry that will cause a glut of used cars being handed back to dealerships and that in turn will cause a severe drop in residual values.

However news from The Times says the Financial Conduct Authority plans to extend new protections designed to help borrowers. It has told some lenders, including credit card firms and PCP providers, to offer borrowers a three-month payment freeze if they are unable to meet their repayments, similar in fact to the mortgage lenders offering payment holidays to homeowners.

Advertising watchdog is watching celebrity endorsements for premium brand cars

This story is not exactly new but The Mail on Sunday raised the issue again of ‘celebrities’ flashing pictures of themselves with expensive cars on Instagram and their social media accounts. The issue is that for many of these ‘flashers’ the cars are not owned by them but are freebies or sometimes leased cars at peppercorn fees. The MoS highlighted Audi as a supplier of cars this time but they are just one of many motoring brands who drive the Celebrity Endorsement, Brand Ambassador and Influencer routes.



Audi A3 Sportback.

Now the Advertising Standards Authority say recipients of vehicles should make it clear when it's advertising or has a commercial message – a clear and prominent disclosure is needed. The ASA said it would now be examining again the social media posts of actors and suchlike.

Also HM Revenue and Customs said any benefit-in-kind should be declared on tax returns. 'There are no special rules for those walking the red carpet'.

Celebrity endorsements of new cars is not new; in the past it was called 'sponsorship' but in this age of new-media and the various www platforms the supply of the latest models by

some manufacturers has gained pace and now car brands call the people who have access to vehicles ‘Brand Ambassadors’.

There has also been growth of ‘freebies’ fuelled by the army of ‘Influencers’. These can be the freeloading parasites of the social media industry with dubious and unsupported numbers of followers. The ASA says these people need to be upfront if any free gifts or money are given in exchange for exposure.

David concludes his round-up this week by saying, “Keep safe, keep well and stay locked-in”.