

Daily Herald

AUTOFOCUS

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# AutoSunday

Check battery, prepare car as winter approaches

**Q.** What do I need to do to prepare my car for winter?

**A.** This is a great question and a service that is often misunderstood.

Getting your car ready for winter is really not a lot different from preparing it for any other season. Extreme temperatures, either hot or cold, can play havoc with your car, especially if there is anything that is marginal.

Your battery would be an example of something that could be marginal. It might start the car fine when it is 65 degrees, but if the temperature falls to 0 it may fail. I have also seen gaskets let go when the temperature dips into the single digits.

To be sure you are ready for the winter, focus on the following:

- Be sure you have a current oil change with the right weight oil. Heavy weight oil makes it harder to start and uses more gas.

- Be sure the antifreeze is clean and protects the engine from freezing to -30.

- Make sure that your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread for traction in the snow.

- Be sure your windshield washer and wiper system is working properly.

- Check to be sure all the lighting on the car is working, including the flashers.

- This is a good time to make sure all your maintenance is current, including fluids, ignition system and brakes. If uncertain, have them checked.

- Test your heater and defroster for proper operation.
- Test your battery and charging system.

- Inspect for leaks that may indicate a potential gasket failure.

- Check the exhaust system for leaks that could allow fumes into the car.

- Keep your gas tank half full or more. This is a good practice all the time because it is better for the fuel pump.

- Don't forget to put your ice scraper back in the car.

- Finally keep an emergency kit in the trunk.

**Q.** Should I have different tire tread for winter vs. summer?

**A.** Most front-wheel or all-wheel drive cars do just fine in the snow with standard all-season tires. When the tire starts getting low on tread (about 4/32nds) they can start to get a little slippery in the snow and may need to be replaced.

If you are driving a rear-wheel drive luxury car like a BMW or Lexus, you will be amazed at how much better the traction can be if you go to a winter tire on all four wheels.

I have several clients who have purchased a winter tire package so they are already to go when the snow flies. The tires come all mounted up on a set of wheels so it is just a matter of switching them out.

I have seen a car like this go from undriveable in the snow to where the traction and braking are excellent with the winter tires.

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## Revlon fortune heir raced to the top on his own terms

By Jason Stein  
Wheelbase Communications

He could have taken the easy road in life. He could have stayed in his native New York, remained committed to a family fortune and perhaps even appeared in one of those luscious ads.

Could you imagine it? Peter Revson, world-class race car driver, Formula-One legend, pushing red-hot lipstick for Revlon?

### Pro-Files

Automotive legends and heroes

Not a chance. Certainly, Revson was an heir to a cosmetics fortune, but he was much happier hanging it out on a hairpin than creating new ways to use one. He could have been content to stay committed to an easier life, but, instead, he died pushing the edge of the envelope. There haven't been many Americans who have made an impact in Formula One. Revson was one of the best.

"I really feel he was one of the top-six drivers in F1," former Formula-One McLaren team manager Teddy Mayer once said.

He was known as Revvie. Revvo. The "speeder with style," as his autobiography once proclaimed.

Born in 1939, Peter Jeffrey Revlon Revson had it all: looks, charisma, wealth and driving talent. He had a will to hang it all out and determination to not hold back.

While growing up, he attended several preps schools and colleges, which had little effect on his path. Revson had always been interested in sports and racing and that's where he was heading.

His career began in 1960 at age 21. An utterly restless young man, Revson was living in Hawaii and, while attending the University of Hawaii, he competed in several local events. He won in just his second race, but after his third — also a victory — he was banned for being "too aggressive." He was unfazed.

The next year, Revson competed in Formula Junior. One season after that, he was racing in Europe, doing it all on his own with \$12,000 from his business earnings and living out of the back of the transporter that carried his car.

It wasn't easy. Revson tried Formula

Three and Formula Two for a few years, and did well, but returned to the United States in 1966 after failing to land a job in Formula One. After a couple of years driving in endurance races for Ford, Lola and McLaren, and racing in the Indianapolis 500 (where he finished fifth in 1969 after qualifying 33rd), his career finally began to blossom.

The scrutiny became just as intense as his desire to win. The U.S. press called him the "rich kid from New York." Some said that racing was just a hobby for a kid who was bored sitting on a fortune. Revson bristled at media characterizations that he was just a playboy heir to a fortune.

"I'll do it my own way," he would say. "Just because someone walks around with a famous name doesn't mean

there isn't hard work involved."

And he would prove it. In 1971, Revson took the pole at the Indy 500 and backed it up with a second-place finish. He also won the CanAm endurance racing title.

But, with Revson driven, committed and passionate to his only goal — Formula One — the future seemed inevitable.

With his mix of solid showings in 1971, Revson was named to the 1972 McLaren F1 team and finished fifth overall. He scored his first pole position that year and five times in nine races he began from the front.

The 1973 season was even better. Revson won the British and Canadian Grand Prix races and, with skill and a

stoical demeanor, drove to another fifth-place finish.

However, with his career barely under way, it was close to the end.

When 1972 World Champion Emerson Fittipaldi was added to the 1974 McLaren team, Revson was out. Undaunted, he set out to prove himself on his own.

He would sign with the Shadow Formula One team, a move that would ultimately prove tragic.

In the beginning, Revson was pleased with Shadow's cars and became involved in developing a new racer with the intent of taking the team up a notch. On March 22, 1974, with his spirits high and the solid finish from the 1973 season

under his belt, Revson took a corner at the Kyalami race track in preparation for the South African Grand Prix, and never came out. The front suspension snapped and Revson crashed into a guard rail. He was instantly killed.

In a tough-hearted fraternity filled with various forms of royalty, Revson was unique. He made it on his own merit, and not on his name or the family fortune.

The dashing, handsome, heir to it all, left this world the same way.

• Jason Stein is a feature writer with Wheelbase Communications. He can be reached on the Web at [wheelbase.us/mailbag.html](http://wheelbase.us/mailbag.html).



# PETER REVSON

## Nissan hits the mark with all new 2009 Maxima

By Frank A. Aukofer  
Scripps Howard News Service

There are many things that can tilt a buyer toward a particular car: price, fuel economy, size, passenger comfort, performance, handling and ride.

But the biggest determining factor, as it always has been, is styling. Nobody buys a car that is perceived to be ugly — unless, of course, it is way too good a deal, and even that might not be enough.

But styling, as it always has been, lies in the eye of the beholder. The stunning beauty

to one person might be a piece of horse hockey to another. That's why so many choices survive from so many domestic and foreign manufacturers.

Once in awhile, however, an automobile comes along that develops a consensus verdict as a looker. Such a car is the 2009 Maxima, a front-drive sports sedan from Nissan of Japan.

Not only does it have flowing, muscular lines, it is — gasp! — smaller than its predecessor. Stop the presses. It's almost unprecedented, at least in the United States, where bigger has always been

better.

The new Maxima is shorter by almost 4 inches than the 2008 model, though it is wider by about an inch and a half. Not unexpectedly, that results in less passenger space (down by about four cubic feet) as well as a smaller trunk (down by 1.3 cubic feet).

But the proportions, along with curvy, muscular bodywork, give the Maxima the look of an expensive European grand touring car. Follow one down the highway and you get the impression that you're looking at an Audi or BMW coupe.



SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE  
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### Checked flag

#### Gibbs hires another teen race driver

It seems like Joe Gibbs Racing is cornering the market on 18-year-old racing phenoms.

Marc Davis made his NASCAR Nationwide Series debut Saturday at Memphis Motorsports Park in the No. 18 Toyota, joining fellow JGR driver Joey Logano, who made his NASCAR Nationwide Series debut in May.

Davis, an African-American, is a product of the JGR driver development program founded by Gibbs and his fellow NFL hall-of-famer, the late Reggie White, in May 2003.

Racing in the NASCAR Camping World Series East series the past two seasons, the youngster has racked up eight top-five finishes and 13 top-10s in 26 races. He was ninth in the points as a rookie and finished fifth this season.

"I've learned a lot about big cars and big tracks, so I think it's prepared me well for the Nationwide Series," Davis said. His father Harry Davis called the Memphis race "another beginning" for his son.

"My philosophy has always been, if you give your child expectations, and give them the tools to go forward, it all comes down to their focus," he said.

### Car contest winner



Robert Hanania of Burbank won this 2008 Subaru Impreza in a raffle that raised nearly \$19,000 for the Oak Brook, Hinsdale and Burr Ridge chapters of the American Cancer Society. The car was donated by Schaumburg Subaru, owned by Rick Weissberg. From left are Tim Buti, vice president of Schaumburg Subaru; Richard Buti, sales director of contest co-sponsor National Van Lines; Chris Hensley, regional vice president of the American Cancer Society; and Maureen Beal, CEO of National Van Lines.