

Drastic changes coming to our vehicles

by Mark Pavilons

Innovative, luxurious, curated interiors.

Automated everything, sensors that sense, well everything.

There's no precise definition of 'luxury car' and it all depends on personal taste. Some say it's an 'indulgence that provides pleasure, satisfaction or ease.'

I don't know if executives or designers at the major car manufacturers poll drivers about their wants and needs. Sure, it's a no-brainer that people want something stylish, even distinctive. But when it comes to the automobile, how much is flash, and how much is practical performance? How much is too much?

Personally, I need a dependable car that's safe, has good resale value and checks all the boxes.

Do I need a heated steering wheel? No. Do I need moving headlights that turn as I turn? I certainly don't need the \$2,500 price tag to fix one! Do I need sensors that detect road noise? No. A panoramic sun roof that changes colour?

Here's a GM advertising blast from the past, since I actually owned this car, a 1970 Camaro RS: '... deeply contoured front buckets ... road-hugging stance ... more glass for super visibility ... with enough dials to make you think you're piloting a 707.'

I would happily give up one of my non-vital organs for one of these again.

Classics like this had nothing in the way of technology. Front disc brakes were as good as it got. But these were steel machines, with strong, made-in-North America parts. You could creep into the engine bays and change anything you wanted. They had carburetors. Few had air conditioning. I rolled up my windows.

One of my cars, a 1973 Dodge Dart, had standard steering and brakes. Wasn't a big deal.

I always wondered why auto-makers have to revamp every make and model each year. I guess if you're buying a new car, you want it to be well, 'new.'

But just how many more options can car-makers squeeze into a four-door sedan?

I have a 2005 Buick Century with 52,000 km on the odometer. It's clean and solid. It still has a cassette deck, but also has a CD player! It's strong and dependable, and repairs are fairly reasonable. It's a decent size and boasts a V6 engine. It's safe.

Strangely enough, my son's 2004 Acura TL has more bells and whistles than I thought were available at the time. It has a leather interior, a sunroof, power everything and an innovative (for its time) navigation system. It even has bluetooth - unheard of back in 2004!

Automotive technology will continue to evolve exponentially in the next decade.

Almost every manufacturer around the globe is aiming to go fully electric within a decade.

That will change the personal transportation landscape forever.

And, with technological innovations comes private ingenuity, too.

Already, smaller electric vehicle producers are popping up, offering their spin on things. Those making electric bikes, scooters, even electric unicycles will get into the car game. There's no limit to what engineering, coupled with smaller, stronger batteries, can produce.

Also, many EV makers are already toying with flying vehicles ? electric hovering craft and cycles; cars that turn into airplanes, car cabins that get snatched from their bases and taken across the city via electric helicopters.

We will likely not recognize the world by 2035, but we will have a lot of fun exploring it!

By end of the decade, I doubt we'll be seeing much in the way of 10-seater SUVs and monstrous pickup trucks.

No, my friends, we will no longer have fine Corinthian leather as an alternative (okay, that was a shout out to Ricardo Montalban).

No more horsepower giants and supercars that suck you back in those fine racing seats.

Our new electric people-movers will go back to basis. They will be much simpler.

I see them as larger, open cabin spaces, with seating for five or six, some with seats facing one another. They may have TV screens, wifi outlets and individual headsets. They will take you where you want to go with a simple voice command. They may even stop on the way and get you a drink at your favourite drive-through.

These quiet rides won't be spewing fossil fuel byproducts out of dual exhaust pipes. They won't growl and they won't blast music for the entire neighbourhood to hear.

They will be quiet, comfortable, safe and reliable.

Sure, they can be stylish but what's the point?? Maybe one day we all join together in a bit of a conveyance revolution of sorts. We may all join the conga line of bubble-top people movers. Our roadways may resemble conveyer belts rather than actual hard surface lanes.

The gas-powered luxury imports and 1970s muscle cars will be even harder to get and maybe even less desirable. Why would someone want a 400-hp Chevelle SS when you can sit back, relax and be driven to work in your plexiglass hamster ball?

Okay, I will admit that car shows and drag strips may become quite boring in the distant future.

Maybe it's time to hide away any current gas-powered vehicle and bring it out of mothballs after the apocalypse.

Mad Max would be proud.