

**O**ver the last few months, we have featured several Indian automotive museums. Doing this series I realised that all are individual enterprises and not a single automobile manufacturer in India has its own museum. Global carmakers like Mercedes-Benz etc. have museums in their own home countries. Most museums of such manufacturers have an amazing collection of classic vehicles that showcase the journey of that particular carmaker. A couple of years back I participated in a German classic car rally, and Volkswagen Classic generously loaned me from its museum collection a 1980 Volkswagen Scirocco that had done just 500km!

Sadly, in our country we have nothing like this. Even Indian car companies like Maruti, Tata, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Motors etc. do not have any museum. And as far as I am aware, neither do they have in their possession all the various models of cars made by them. In times to come, all memories of these will be erased. This is a gloomy thought for any auto enthusiast and shows how casually we take our heritage and history.

Speaking with some global manufacturers, I learnt that before stopping production of a model, they ensure they have at least one for their museum or collection. I don't understand why this practice has not been followed in India. Imagine if Mahindra had a museum with every vehicle made by them. It would provide a wondrous window of the growth and evolution of Mahindra. And why just them. I think every single company making vehicles in India should have its own car museum and collection.

Fortunately, it's not too late. If a manufacturer decides, it can still search for its vehicles and find and buy them. Many are with Indian car collectors, and I am certain they can be persuaded to part with them. Interestingly, for the last couple of editions, the Cartier Concours D'Elegance event has been having an 'Indian Heritage' class where many of the 'made in India' vehicles have been showcased. I am confident if the manufacturers speak to the right people and authorise them to start collecting cars, most if not all vehicles can be procured. As an auto enthusiast who loves the heritage and history of cars, I will be delighted if this happens.



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### The simple fact is a good driver can be safe at 200kmph, while a bad one is lethal even at 5kmph

Now to another matter. Recently, the Save Life Foundation in partnership with Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation Ltd (MSRDC) and supported by Mahindra & Mahindra launched a "Safety under 80" campaign to target overspeeding on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. This campaign aims to educate about the dangers of speeding, and its promoters expect it to reduce the number of road crash fatalities on the expressway from an annual average of 130 to 0 by the year 2020. Talking about the campaign, Saji Cherian of Save Life Foundation said, "Although the speed limit on the expressway is 80kmph, we know that adherence to it is quite minimal. Through this campaign, we want to remind the commuters that speeding has serious consequences and encourage people to be more responsible while driving."

While such campaigns to reduce accidents and road fatalities are extremely essential, I don't think overspeeding is the only cause of accidents on the expressway. In western countries, especially on the Autobahns in Germany, people regularly drive safely at high

speeds. The simple fact is—a good driver can be safe at 200kmph, while a bad one is dangerous even at 5kmph! And let's accept it—most Indian's are bad drivers. Awfully bad. I have spent lots of time driving on the expressway and have seen and experienced some absolutely suicidal driving. Very few observe any lane discipline. You have vehicles moving at the same speed running side by side and creating barriers for people wanting to overtake. This results in dangerous overtaking manoeuvres from the left and sometimes even on the shoulder. You often have drivers diving into non-existent gaps and crashing. Sometimes they even come on the wrong side, or reverse if they miss an exit. They cross onto the other side where it's not permitted. You also have people stopping

suddenly or parking wrongly. Some months back, we had a massive accident in which many lives were lost because a moron stopped to change his flat tyre in the right lane! At night! He was not speeding. He was not even moving. But he stopped in the wrong place which resulted in the loss of many lives.

One other thing you often hear is that a tyre blowout led to loss of control. I have also seen this happening. But tyres normally only blow if they are not in good condition or damaged. Or if they are run with the wrong pressure. Whose fault is this? Obviously the owners. And the authorities. Have they ever caught and punished someone for driving with bad and bald tyres. The expressway being largely straight (except for the Ghat section) and not so chaotic for an Indian highway leads to many drivers losing concentration. Several also fall asleep at the wheel. When travelling in a cab, I have personally experienced this couple of times. When I fired the driver, he said the expressway was straight and that's why he got bored and fell asleep. All this will also have to be corrected to reduce fatalities on the expressway. **OD**