

Multiple factors have owners holding on to vehicles longer

Life expectancy has risen dramatically in recent years for motor vehicles. Supply-chain issues, and rising costs and interest rates have played leading roles in more Americans keeping their vehicles more than a decade.

Recent data from S&P Global Mobility finds that the average life of passenger cars is 13.6 years, light trucks 11.8, which leads to a combined total of 12.5 years. It's the sixth consecutive rise and the three extra months added between 2021 and 2022 represent the biggest annual jump since 2008-09.

It doesn't help that the annual cost to drive a new vehicle rises each year. AAA research found that owning and operating a vehicle in 2023 rose to \$12,182 – or \$1,015 monthly. That is a more than \$1,000 annual increase from 2022.

Retail sales of new vehicles dropped by 8% last year, the lowest level in a decade, according to S&P Global Mobility. It's disturbing news for new-car sales representatives but great for the aftermarket-service industry. The average cost of a new vehicle in the U.S. is well more than \$40,000. Longer loans and higher



KEEP IT RUNNING – Preventive maintenance can extend the life of a vehicle. Rising prices and interest rates has consumers keeping their vehicles more than a decade. Image: Minerva Studio. Adobe Stock.

interest rates have made it nearly essential to keep the vehicle an extended period of time.

Longer ownership has consumers paying better attention to preventive maintenance and learning that having problems repaired by a mechanic are more financially beneficial to purchasing a new vehicle.

Motorists in need of a reputable repair shop should consider finding a nearby AAA Approved Auto Repair shop. There are more than 7,000 locations across North America. Visit AAA.com/AutoRepair to find a facility.

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Green valleys sparkle with sea in Wales

Art, castles and landscapes come to life in British country

To be born Welsh could be considered a work of art. Cliché intended. It's that undeniable. There's even a proverb. It goes: "To be born Welsh is to be born privileged. Not with a silver spoon in your mouth, but with music in your blood and poetry in your soul."

How did they get to be so lucky? It only adds to Wales' luster and makes it a gem in Great Britain.

The country is located on the peninsula in central-west Great Britain, covering an area similar in size to Massachusetts. The glens and valleys fan out from Welsh capital Cardiff and are movingly described in Richard Llewellyn's "How Green Was My Valley," as greener now than they were a century ago.

Wales has a number of sayings synonymous with its history. Often referred to as "the land of song," it is particularly famous for its male choirs. English is considered the spoken language, but nearly 20% of its residents speak Welsh – a language known for its missing vowels and unpronounceable names like Cwmystwyth and Bwlchgwyn.

Researchers say the dolphins in Cardigan Bay whistle and click in their own distinct Welsh dialect. Thousands of visitors board tour boats to witness escapades of these clever marine mammals.

Arts and cultural institutions have grown in popularity through the years.



COASTING – Quilted clouds and a blue-hour sunset highlight Three Cliffs Bay on the Gower Peninsula in Swansea, Wales. *Image: Leighton collins. Adobe Stock.*

Cardiff's former docklands once was considered the largest port in the world. Today, it's a cultural playground.

Climb to the top of the 12th-century Cardiff Castle in the middle of town to absorb expansive sights of the city. Caroline Street – known locally as Chippy Lane – is famous for its fast-food restaurants. Chips and curry sauce are

the most popular items on the menus.

Swansea is 40 miles west of Cardiff and is the birthplace of Dylan Thomas. Guests can visit the home of the famous Welsh poet and writer at 5 Cwmdonkin Drive. The Dylan Thomas Center is near the waterfront and chronicles his turbulent life. He inspired Bob Dylan to borrow his name.

Witness some of Britain's most picturesque and unspoiled scenery off Wales' 750 miles of coastline. The seaside village of Mumbles marks the beginning of the Gower Peninsula coastline.

The view over Cliffs Bay can be seen from the south coast of the peninsula and describes a perfect semicircle of sea cliffs and white beach that is framed by extraordinary rock formations. Castles, medieval churches, iron-age fortifications and prehistoric stones highlight the landscape.

Wales has more than 600 castles – none is made from sand. That's more per square mile than any place on Earth. Beaumaris Castle on the Isle of Anglesey is a medieval fortress that dates to the 13th century. Constructed by an ingenious "walls within walls" plan, it's considered the most technically sound castle in Great Britain.

It's surrounded by a moat and known as the "Mother of Wales." It's believed to be the site of Avalon – the legendary island of Arthurian legend.

Welsh food represents the country's mix of moorland, mountains and coast. Cawl is a traditional broth that mixes with lamb, root vegetables, leeks and onions. Lavabread is made from boiled seaweed rolled in oatmeal and is eaten fried with bacon and cockles for breakfast.

Art comes to life in Wales. There's no doubt it always will be a masterpiece.

Tech company creates innovative lenses

Improving drivers' optics should lessen odds of accidents

Artificial intelligence is sneaking its way into most aspects of our lives. Whether it's a good thing remains to be seen.

A technology company is using AI to help make driving safer. Shamir Optical Industry recently launched an innovative product. Its Shamir Driver Intelligence lenses are designed to transform operating a vehicle by making it safer, more comfortable and visually clear.

Its new lens development began with Shamir's decision to address the issue of visual challenges that confront drivers on roadways, such as sudden changes in conditions, varying light intensities from the sun, streetlamps or oncoming headlights, and the need to keep switching focus from the close vehicle interior to the distant road.

Its research showed one in five drivers suffer from eye fatigue and 25% have trouble focusing quickly on varying distances. This modern technology introduces disturbances to drivers, such as in-car, digital-screen displays and bright LED lights.

The lenses' designs are based on extensive measurements of head movements and eye-tracking, providing comprehensive understanding and prediction of a driver's visual behavior. By applying elements of AI, Shamir invented a lens solution ideally suited



SEEING IS BELIEVING – Shamir Driver Intelligence glasses are meant to make driving safer all hours of the day. *Image: NewsPress USA.*

to all types of drivers.

Shamir Driver Intelligence comes as a set of two pairs of glasses, available as single or progressive vision – "sun" for daylight and "moon" for nighttime driving to provide uncompromised-optimal vision for all conditions.

The "sun" lens incorporates an advanced filter that enhances color perception, making colors and objects appear more vivid, similar to the effects of Formula F1 racing-helmet visors. The clear "moon" lens is designed for conditions of low-light and nighttime driving, with visual age-based myopic

shift for improved low-light sharpness. It reduces visual noise, eye fatigue and improves drivers' reaction times for safer performance.

"The rich insight and extensive data received from professional drivers under conditions of extreme challenges have enriched our big data set and have been invaluable in the development of the new driving-dedicated performance lens," said Shamir CEO Yagen Moshe. "Going the extra mile with this valuable partnership, Shamir exercises its ability to see through the eyes of its consumers, to study the environment, the activities and needs of the users, and then to apply the most advanced technologies, including elements of AI to maximize the user experience. The lens solution we have developed upgrades the driving experience to premium, allowing drivers (professional as well as passionate and everyday drivers) to enjoy clarity of vision, whether of the road ahead or of the image in their mirrors, bringing them safely to their destination."

Shamir Driver Intelligence is available throughout Europe, the Asian Pacific and North America. Visit Shamir.com for more information about the product.

Seeing the road ahead is getting easier, thanks to AI. Drivers can put on their shades and lessen the odds of getting into an accident.