

A TVR Health Warning!

Has the world gone mad? Or is it just me? If you believe what you read in the papers, everything is polluted, dangerous or makes you fat! If it isn't/doesn't then it must be illegal!

OK – so health warnings on cigarette packets are probably a good idea, but we seem to be getting so paranoid about everything that I'm just wondering how long it will be before we get warnings on packs of cheese, chocolate bars and bags of chips that state that eating this may lead to weight increase and death from heart disorders!

There are already health warnings on most things these days – even McDonalds had to put a warning on their coffee cups that “The liquid in this cup may be hot and cause burning...” or words to that effect after some numpty burnt her mouth and then sued McDonalds for not warning her that the coffee was hot!

I know we need some warnings – things like don't use electric drills whilst sitting in a bath and standing on the top rung of ladders, leaning out at 90⁰ with one leg in the air to counterbalance, and holding on to the branch you are sawing off is not advised – but aren't some a bit over the top?

(Actually, I probably shouldn't have suggested that last one – because that's exactly what I did! When? About 30 seconds before I fell off! But that's another story!)

I was eating a packet of nuts the other day when I noticed a large warning on the outside of the packet. It said: “May contain nuts”. Hmm! Really? Surely if I had a nut allergy and I could read, the title of the product – “Salted Nuts” might just give the game away – and I wouldn't need to be warned that it might contain nuts! And if I couldn't read, then why bother with the warning?

Another daft warning was seen on some Christmas lights last December which said:

“Warning – these lights are intended for indoor and outdoor use only”

- really? What else is there?

Some warnings are quite frightening. I mean, if you saw a written warning that said that something you were about to do may cause dizziness, vertigo, confusion, blurred vision, hallucinations, feeling unwell, vomiting, taste disturbances, wind and tiredness, would you do it? Well, unless it involved alcohol, probably not! But if that list continued with headaches, diarrhoea, stomach pains, hair thinning, muscle and/or joint pains, fluid retention, swelling and depression, you'd probably think twice, wouldn't you?

But these were possible side effects I read about on a leaflet concerning some tablets the doctor has prescribed for me! Obviously, sometimes life threatening diseases need drastic actions, and sometimes we have to take chances. But these tablets were for heartburn! What was even more worrying (at least for me) was that the document also stated that I might experience temporary breast swelling and sexual function problems!

Well the latter hasn't happened, but I'm already up to a 38D!

What about cars? Are we fast heading for the day when everything will be labelled with cautionary notices? We've already got on some door mirrors "Vehicles behind may be closer than they seem", which, by the time you've donned your reading glasses and read the note, you've smashed into the car in front anyway, so you're not that worried about the vehicles behind!

Next we'll have "Driving this car with any of the wheels not attached could be dangerous" and "Cleaning this vehicle with a brillo pad may lead to paint damage"! Well, I know I'm being silly, but as soon as someone tries to do it, they'll be claiming damages because the manual didn't tell them not to!

Think I'm over-reacting? Well, in America, some clown with an IQ of about ten and a half bought himself a new, super-duper, three blocks long, camper van. Read all the instructions and was delighted to read that the vehicle also came with Cruise Control. So out onto the highway he goes, driving along quite happily, when he fancies a cup of coffee. So, he gets up from the drivers seat and walks into the kitchen area to put the kettle on! Oops!

Next thing, he's in the ditch, upside down! He proceeded to sue the vehicle manufacturer (and I think he may have won) because the manual wasn't clear enough and he thought Cruise Control meant that once it was on, the system took control!

This is why I suggest he had an IQ of ten and a half – clearly doesn't know the difference between Cruise Control and Auto Pilot!

What about warning signs in TVR's? How about "People of a nervous disposition should either not travel in the passenger seat of this car, or should ensure their bicycle clips are in position" on the dashboard, and "Wigs and hairpieces should be removed or tied down before using this vehicle with the roof off" in the Owner's Manual?!

Or how about "When using in slippery or wet conditions place heavy body in boot!"

Indeed, why not go the whole hog and have a list of possible side effects like they do on tablets. Something like:

Occasionally, driving a TVR may cause unwanted side effects in some drivers. Such side effects do not last for long. However you should consult a relevant specialist if any of the following become severe or troublesome:

Loss of hearing due to exhaust noise and related loss of goodwill from neighbours, weight loss in wallet and related headaches and worry, road related hallucinations and unnecessary feelings of aggression and rage, hair thinning associated with too much roof off, chest swelling, unexpected feelings of pride and excessive wind!

After I took the Tiv out just after Christmas, on a dead straight and dry road, I decided to "give it a bit of welly!". Well, there must have been some damp on the tyres as we

progressed rather quickly, but sideways! Beloved, who was sitting beside me, immediately said, “Well, if you’re going to do that you can let me out right here!”

Honest, I didn’t mean to do it – but perhaps another warning notice should be “Please note TVR’s are prone to travel in any direction at any time without warning!”

What’s even more worrying is when you see such warning notices on the dashboard in Braille!

But some signs can be very misleading. A few years ago I got a parking ticket. I tried to argue against it, along the lines that the sign said “FINE FOR PARKING HERE” – but I didn’t win!

Of course, some things don’t need to be on a notice – they’re really facts (otherwise known as the law)! For instance, as from last December you cannot drive and use a non hands free telephone at the same time. Have you ever tried to carry on a conversation on a mobile whilst at full pelt in a TVR? It’s impossible!

“Hello? Who did you say it was? Can you speak up a bit – I can’t hear you over the exhaust and wind noise! What? No, not me – the car!”

My mobile rang sometime last year when I was out, so being a good citizen, I stopped to answer it (alright, I didn’t stop because I wanted to be a good citizen, I stopped because I genuinely couldn’t hear the caller). Even when I had stopped I still couldn’t hear the person on the other end of the phone, so in the end I had to switch the engine off!

But imagine having a hands free in an open TVR – absolutely no chance!

I also think there should be a sign over the door of every TVR showroom that reads:

WARNING: Owning a TVR may cause obsessive behaviour and will seriously affect your wallet!

But the best warning notice I’ve ever heard of goes right back to the days of prohibition in America. Bootleggers started to make compressed grapes into bricks, which was not illegal, and then sell them, but they put a warning note on them which read:

“WARNING: Please be aware that if this brick is left in one gallon of water for 21 days it will ferment and turn into illegal wine”

Now that’s what I call a sensible warning!

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