

## 2007 TECH HIGHLIGHTS

# Technology and safety see eye to eye

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*Wasn't this supposed to be the year of the highway in the sky, the driverless car and the flying automobile?*

We are well into the 21st century, after all. And not too long ago (give or take 50 years), authors such as Jules Verne were predicting all of the above by the turn of the millennium.

Six years into the new century, we aren't using rocket fuel instead of gasoline, but we are getting more technologically savvy.

This year alone, automakers will introduce cars that park themselves, brake to avoid accidents and tell you if an intruder is hiding in your car.

Verne would have been proud.

Here's a quick look at this year's hottest technology.

side-view mirrors to sense if another driver is in the lane next to you. A yellow light is illuminated on the mirrors when a car is in your blind spot and will blink repeatedly if you engage your turn signal while that car is still there. Volvo's BLIS (Blindspot Information System) is similar.

BMW and Mercedes have night-vision systems that use a thermal imaging camera to detect objects hundreds of feet in front of the car at night and display those objects as



**VOLVO S80**

bright images on a screen in front of the driver.

**Intruder alert:** Peace of mind is essential when you are approaching a car parked in an empty parking garage. Volvo has a solution.

information button on the key fob, the car will tell you whether the vehicle is locked or unlocked and whether someone has interfered with the car and caused the alarm to go off. A flashing red light on the fob means that the internal heartbeat sensor - yes, there's

**ACURA TL**



actually a heartbeat sensor built into the car -- has been activated and that there is a person, possibly an intruder, in the car.

**Noise reduction . . . make that noise cancellation:** Talk about cabin insulation. Acura's RL and TL have the ability to block out the exterior noise that can become really irritating on a long journey. Acura's Active Noise Cancellation System (ANC) can reduce the unwanted cabin road noise by

**ACURA RL**

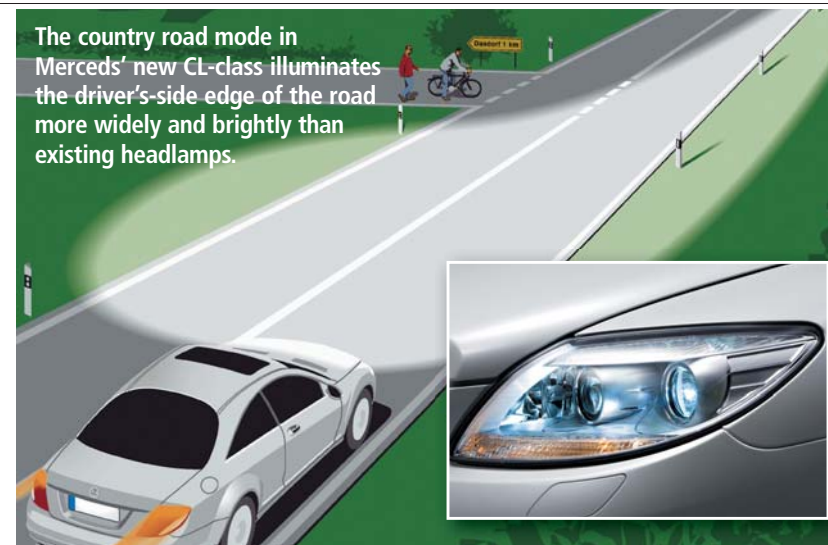


countering it with opposing sound frequencies from the audio system. ANC uses two microphones located in the ceiling to monitor low-frequency noise in the cabin. When detected, ANC unit passes an equivalent waveform

**BMW X5**



The country road mode in Mercedes' new CL-class illuminates the driver's-side edge of the road more widely and brightly than existing headlamps.



to the stereo where its is amplified to an inaudible volume that matches the original sound.

**A faster network:** BMW's new X5 sport-utility vehicle isn't only better, stronger and faster, just like the Six Million Dollar Man, it's more intelligent thanks to a new network. Flexray is a protocol that delivers information for communication between active and passive safety systems, collision avoidance, powertrain and driver assist systems. The car's systems are constantly "talking" to one another at faster rate via this new high-speed internal network.

**Park it for me:** Are you so bad at parallel parking that you don't even bother to try? With the

**LEXUS LS460**



Advanced Parking Guidance System (APGS) in the Lexus LS 460, just about anyone can park a car. Here's how it works: a driver pulls ahead of the desired space, about three feet from the car in front of that space. With the touch of a button, the car moves into reverse by itself, using the backup camera, electric power steering and parking sonar sensors. All you need to do is work the brake. Mercedes also has a system for its new CL that will find a parking spot for the driver as the car is cruising

along the city streets. It automatically sizes up empty spots and if the space is big enough, the CL provides a visual line on the dash-mounted screen to guide it in.

**Better lighting:** Mercedes' new CL-class is helping the driver see the road better.

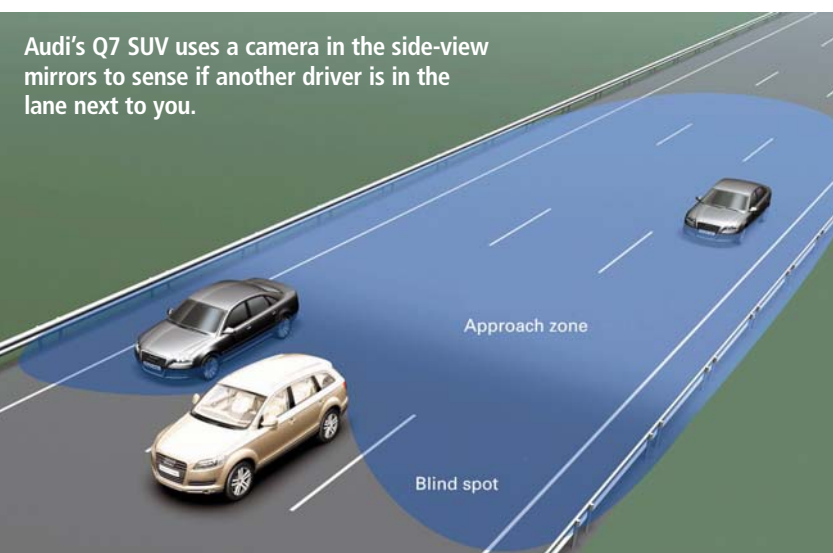
Its Intelligent Light System replaces the standard high-/low-beam headlights with five different lighting functions that are activated to match driving and weather conditions.

The country road mode, for example, illuminates the driver's-side edge of the road more widely and brightly than existing headlamps. Motorway mode - which comes on automatically when driving above 55 m.p.h. - delivers a cone of light that illuminates the entire road width.

**Avoiding a crash:** Acura's RL luxury sedan can "see" the accident before it happens.

With Acura's optional Collision Mitigation Braking System on the RL, Acura uses a radar unit mounted behind the grille to monitor distance and closing rate between the RL and the vehicle in front of it. If the distance and closing rate exceed a predetermined threshold, the system will sound audio and visual alerts to warn the driver. If a crash is inevitable, the front seat belts are tightened and strong braking is applied, lowering speed of impact. Similar pre-crash systems are also available in high-end Lexus and Mercedes-Benz models. ■

Audi's Q7 SUV uses a camera in the side-view mirrors to sense if another driver is in the lane next to you.



**Better vision:** Have you ever wondered if there really is someone in your blind spot or walking in front of you down a dark country road?

Audi's Q7 SUV uses a camera in the

With its Personal Car Communicator (PCC) remote control available for the S80 sedan, Volvo can give you a security status report at a range of up to about 300 feet. By pressing the