



What's a classic? Where's a classic? A current best-seller is *1,000 Places to See Before you Die*.

The author claims that each of the thousand places is a classic. Unlikely. Here is one per cent of that number that I'd consider classic – though I'd bet not everyone will agree.

1 > London, England: The hometown of Charles Dickens, Mary Poppins and Sherlock Holmes. Despite being crowded and over-priced, your first trip to London initiates you in the classic travel experience of seeing a place through the eyes of imagination: your own imagination and generations of other imaginers.

2 > The Pyramids of Giza: Even if you have the sure and certain knowledge that they were built by aliens, they're still real. Even if you know that the bodies of their owners have long been removed with their desiccated penises ground up for aphrodisiacs, the pyramids remain a pre-classical wonder.

3 > Bali: Every nook and cranny in Bali, every washroom, parking lot, rice paddy and temple is adorned with the tiny meals for resident spirits that the Balinese put down each day. It's an extremely beautiful island and if you want to feel that everything in the world has – or is – a spirit just go to Bali.

4 > The Canadian Prairies: When driving across the prairies you inevitably get to thinking "this is totally flat, boring and empty." That's the time to

'every nook and cranny in bali, every washroom, parking lot, rice paddy and temple is adorned with tiny meals for resident spirits'

get out of your car and notice how your head is the tallest thing for as far as you can see, how big the sky is and how small you are. Don't tell me that's not a classic experience.

5 > The Canadian Rockies: Best to go right after the prairies – hey what a coincidence, that's how they're arranged! Clean, clear, countless tons of rock thrown up as if it were so much shaving cream. On the off chance that Star Trek is a fiction, the Canadian Rockies may be the closest thing to another world we're ever going to see.

6 > The little roads of France: As other classics are impossibly big and impressive the little roads of France are impossibly human. The whole darn country has a fine web of nice, paved roads that go from vineyard to restaurant to chateau to quaint village and back again. France is basically one big well kept garden; the little roads are the garden paths.

7 > Australia: A big, warm country filled with nice people. Beaches are a dime a dozen. Men are men and women are Sheilas. Mountains are blue and the trees drop their bark not their leaves. Classic dilemma: far too much to see and do no matter how long you stay.

8 > The blooming bulb fields of Holland: We know that tulips and windmills are classics – maybe a classic cliché, but here's a secret: when the bulb fields of Holland are blooming, they're almost deserted. Think of aromatic prairies with psychedelic wheat.

9 > South Africa: Never been there myself – not yet. Lions, tigers, elephants, great wine and over there they locked up Nelson Mandela for 28 years, but he got out and became president. If that's not a classic, neither is the Parthenon.

10 > The Acropolis of Athens: Of course the Parthenon is a classic. It looks like half the public buildings in the world. Socrates, for heaven's sake, carved some of those stones, St. Paul preached on its doorstep when it was already old. It's also from Greece's classical period, so it must be a classic.
JOHNNY LUCAS



Tech companies are doing something auto manufacturers – especially North American auto manufacturers – aren't.

While Chrysler, Ford and General Motors all put out throwback vehicles like the Charger, Mustang and HHR to try and find themselves again, tech companies are building on every innovation to create an environment where operating a click wheel or using an LCD screen is second nature.

Case in point. My wife, who wasn't entirely comfortable using e-mail until about a year ago, has recently been burying her face in a PSP for hours on end while she attempts to tackle the level one boss on Syphon Filter.

Just down the road, my mother has set up a wireless network so she can check her e-mail while preparing dinner and wirelessly printing out pictures of her grandson to the photo printer in the bedroom.

While technology advances in leaps and bounds, our intuition to operate it becomes more sophisticated – and tasks that would have taken a steep learning curve only five years ago are now accomplished with just a little bit of trial and error.

Companies that manufacture our favourite gadgets – mobile phones, MP3 players, digital cameras and laptops – are constantly innovating and bringing fresh designs to the market, but the way we access the controls

volvo does maui: up, down and all around

the hawaiian island's scenic vistas and winding roads proved to be the perfect complement to volvo's new droptop c70
story and photography by johnny lucas



The Volvo PR guys will tell you that the new C70 is two cars in one: a convertible and a coupe. Maui, where I went to try out this new "hard top convertible" also seems like more than one destination.

Three faces of Maui

The three places I slept represent the range of personalities that Maui has to amuse and accommodate its visitors. Hale Ho'okipa Inn is a plantation house, built in the 1920s and is now run as a bed and breakfast by the lovely Cherie Attix. She came to Maui in the 1970s when the island was best known for Maui Wowie (a fragrant and illegal export for those of you too young or innocent to remember). She stayed, raised a family and she now embodies the cheerful, warm, calm of the ideal hostess. This is in central "upcountry" Maui on the slopes of the big volcano between the beaches and the volcano, surrounded by ranches, sugar plantations, artisans, retirees, natural health spas and a few old hippies. Willie Nelson has a place a few miles away.

The west of Maui is where most of the resorts are: high towers, timeshares, superlative beaches, every restaurant you could want, family-friendly yet great for singles. Honey-mooners account for a good percentage of the business.

We stayed at the Napili Kai Beach Resort, an enterprise founded by a Canadian and still owned by a Canadian/American consortium. The B.C. premier is a shareholder and often comes with his family. Word has it, his kids were younger they had to grease the flagpole to keep the young Campbells from stealing the flag. It's the sort of place you could come, park yourself on the beach, do the odd round

of putting golf, watch the weekly hula dance and not move beyond the front gates for two weeks. Or so I suppose – I stayed a day and then drove to the other end of the island to meet the C70.

It's only 80 miles from the Napili Kai to the Hotel Hana Maui at the other end of the island, but it takes three and a half hours to drive it. Four and a half if you stop for a swim by a waterfall. Five and a half if you stop for lunch. Okay, there are too many distractions in Hawaii to go quickly; driving those 80 miles took me all day.

Curvaceous Maui

The last part is the famous Road to Hana. The road is so celebrated that it has its own CD – not a music CD, but a pause-and-play guide to all the possible stops along the way. Everyone warns you that it's the road that makes the trip worthwhile, not the tiny outpost of the town of Hana at the end. The road is about 30 miles long, has 54 single-lane bridges and more curves than audition night at a strip bar. A reasonably prudent driver can drive the Road to Hana in an hour and a half.

The third and most luxurious of the Maui bunks that I personally got to sample was waiting at the end of that road: the Hotel Hana-Maui. Not cheap, but after steering through several thousand corners to get there, I felt I had earned some time in its spacious, calm embrace. The grounds are carved out of a corner of the Hana Ranch. I sat on the deck of my cabin and watched the horses graze while the surf broke in the distance. If you believe in reincarnation, put your name on the waiting list to be a Hawaiian horse.



> You can [download video footage](#) of this feature at www.drivenmag.com.



The end of the road

Volvo had twenty C70s in Hana waiting for our pack of journalists. Hana is a great place, but it's not somewhere you stumble on by accident. The cars are made in Sweden and to get to Hana, they went by boat to New Jersey, by transport to California, by cargo ship to Honolulu, by smaller ship to Maui, and then by flatbed down the Road to Hana to be shined up and arranged like a flock of multicoloured birds on the front lawn of an old plantation house.

Why, you've got to ask, did they go to all that trouble to get those cars and an unruly gaggle of journalists to Hana? Well, duh, it's the curves. If you want to show off how well a car takes corners, put it in a place where there's nothing but corners. Other journalists were airlifted into Hana; I drove a Chevy Malibu to get there. That made for a nice comparison: the Malibu is a decent car, but the Volvo C70 corners way, way better.

Bang! You're safe

The C70 also has a lot of things that the Malibu engineers, or perhaps accountants, never imagined. Volvo safety features such as an ultra-strong frame for the windshield that serves as a front end roll bar, air bag "curtains" that pop up over the side windows on impact and a roll bar at the back that literally explodes into position when required. When the car rolls over or is hit hard from the rear, a pyrotechnic device blows off underneath the rear roll bar and pops it into position. That's one hot feature I didn't test.

I was with a film crew shooting a pilot for a car show. Spending time with a film crew is like having a nymphomaniac for a girlfriend. You do something good and immediately you hear, "Do that again." We drove the complete Road to Hana six times, one section of it at least 20 times, and I drove up the big volcano five times. I got the point: the car does curves very well.

20 climates, two cars

Haleakala, the big volcano, is pretty amazing. You can go from sea level to 10,000 feet (actually 10,023 feet) in a two-hour drive. According to the park ranger, you pass through 20 major vegetative, climatologic and wildlife zones – about the same as a trip from the Yukon to Mexico. There's so much unique flora and fauna in Hawaii, the ranger claimed that if Darwin had stumbled on these islands first "the Galapagos would have been just a small footnote."

Aside from the curves in the road up the volcano, the most amazing thing about the road is that it exists at all. From the viewpoint on the top you can see other islands in the Hawaiian chain, the enormous crater of the dormant volcano you're standing on and a

massive satellite tracking system (the real reason for the road).

The other amazing thing about driving up Haleakala is the temperature change. Sea level can be a balmy 80 degrees (Americans still use the same thermometer as George III), but at the top it can be freezing. Of course, you want to walk around at the top and see the view, kick the rocks and contemplate the clouds that are now below you. There was a gaggle of tourists unprepared for the cold who were wearing flowered shorts with their upper bodies wrapped in beach towels. How cold was it? At the visitor's centre, the guy standing at the urinal next to me said, "I'm only doing this to warm my hands."

Two cars in one

And that brings me back to the car. A hard top convertible: what a great car for Canada! With our nine months of winter we want and need to bust out in the flash of summer – and what better way to do that than in a convertible? When the roof of this car is up, however, you really would have a hard time to tell it is a convertible. I actually prefer the styling with the roof up – it achieves the coupe look perfectly. With a push of the button, the roof folds into three pieces, eats itself like a child's transformer toy and hides in the trunk. Fun and practical – what a combination. It really is like owning two cars.

Be happy

The optional sound system is killer: 910 watts and 14 speakers. I drove with the top down, Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor playing at a level the Hearing Society would not approve, and can't remember ever feeling happier. If you can be depressed when driving one of these cars, in Hawaii, you need help. Driving a red convertible in Maui is not going to be written up in *The Lancet* as a medical breakthrough, but it sure is good for blowing the cobwebs out of your head in the winter. Sunshine anywhere and a C70 will put a smile on your face.

The only thing is that if you haven't got it on order now, you're not going to get your hands on one until 2007 – 100 per cent of the Canadian allotment has been pre-sold.

Make it real

- > Rooms at Hale Ho'okipa Inn (www.maui-bed-and-breakfast.com) start at \$95.
- > Napila Kai's (www.napilikai.com) rooms begin at \$120.
- > Hotel Hana Maui's (hotelhanamaui.com) suites start at \$425.
- > Joe's Rentals in Hana (where I didn't stay; www.joesrentals.com) has rooms starting at \$45. Word is that the rooms are shared with several other life forms.
- > www.volvocanada.com has stats on the C70.

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