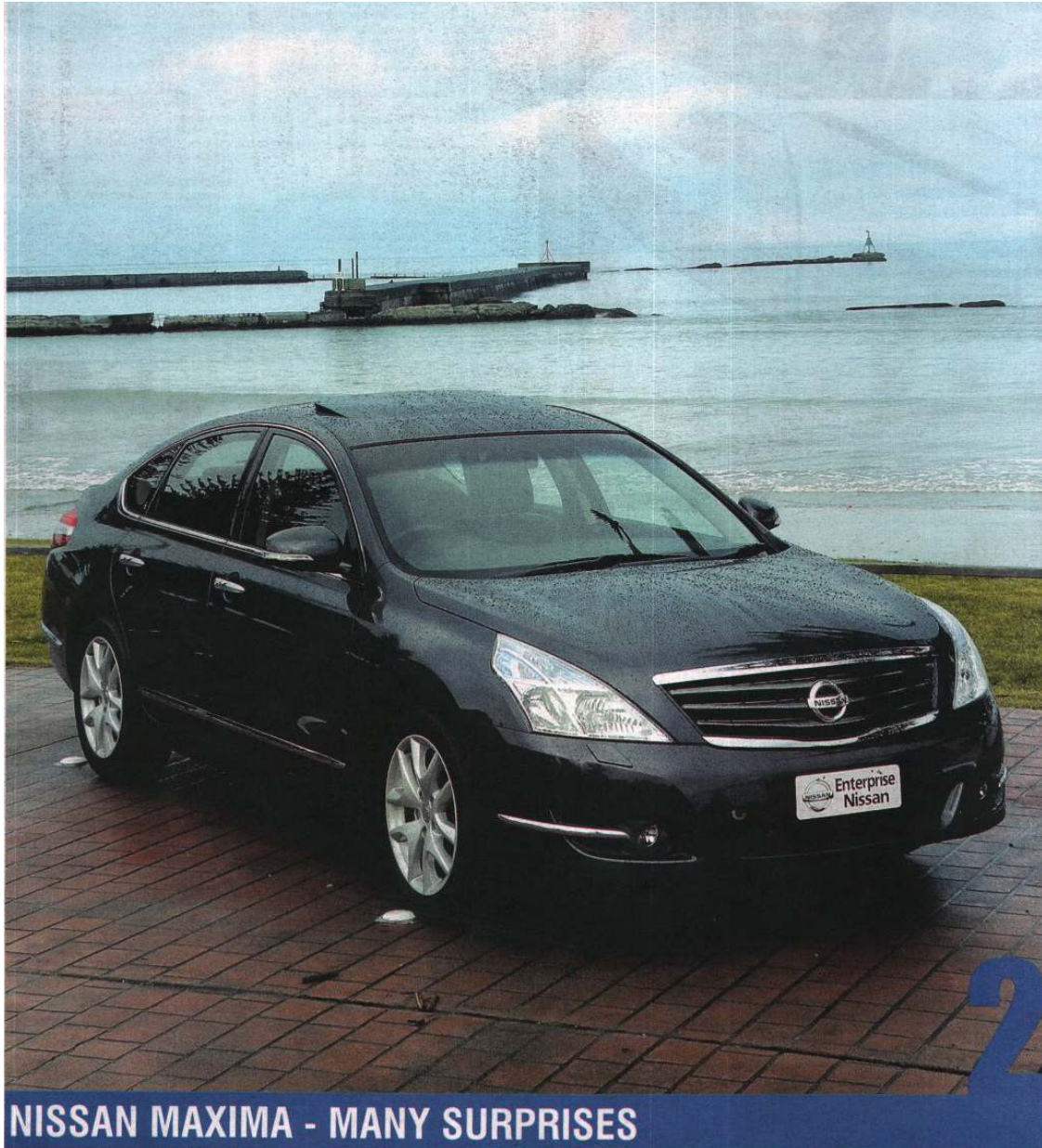


Gisborne Herald
16/06/2009
Page: 1
Supplements
By: John Jones
Region: Gisborne
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Frequency: MTWTFS-



NISSAN MAXIMA - MANY SURPRISES



Nissan Maxima many surprises

by JOHN JONES

PREPARE for some pleasant surprises with Nissan's new 2009 Maxima.

Nissan often seems to fly under the radar of the motoring public with its understated ethos but with the Maxima it has something to beat the drum about.

The top-of-the-range 350L genuinely belongs in the luxury class with a list of specifications longer than a British MP's expense account claims.

The 3.5 V6 engine (maximum power of 185kW at 6000rpm and torque of 326Nm at 4400) offers relaxed driving with the knowledge that all the power you could want is there the second you need it.

That laid-back driving experience is furnished thanks to an automatic CVT transmission with a six-stage manual mode.

The fuel economy is surprising — the 3.5 is barely in double figures for the consumption per 100 kilometres — 10.2 to be exact.

Improvements have been made to the suspension to eliminate torque steer.

Overall, the Maxima offers firm ride with effortless and extremely accurate handling all combining to provide a high level of comfort.

Stabilisers have been added and the Maxima benefits from Nissan's vehicle dynamic control. The driving experience is completely satisfying.

The new Maxima is a few millimetres shorter than the previous model, but wider.

Its appearance is a little more sporting





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than before, without going over the top — a typical Nissan trait.

It has ASB brakes with electronic brakeforce distribution, six airbags, active headrests, front seatbelt pre-tensioners, an immobiliser and intelligent smart key entry.

More pleasant surprises await inside.

These start with the front seats which are heated and have automatic memory settings.

It continues with dual zone air conditioning, and six-disc audio with six speakers, auxiliary input and steering wheel controls.

The gauges with their red background are particularly easy to see.

Overhead there is an electric sunroof with a tile facility — something that

has its admirers even in the age of air conditioning.

There is a real back seat in the Maxima — three people can sit in comfort once the large middle console is pulled back.

A particularly large boot is complemented by a porthole to the back seat that allows the carrying of longer items.

The 350 L gets automatic Xenon headlights with washers, front fog lights, mirror-mounted indicator lights, a rear boot lip spoiler and sporty side skirts.

The deep amethyst colour scheme — one of six available — adds to the aura of quality for this flagship sedan.

The final pleasant surprise comes with the price tag. You can get all this luxury for \$46,995.

