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## Funkwerk has an Ego

**GADGET** • Just as Freud determined the ego to be the mediator between the id and the superego, the Ego Cup is also a mediator for making hands-free cellular calls in a world where operating a hand-held phone while driving is becoming increasingly frowned upon. This device is a unique Bluetooth hands-free kit that is mounted in the car cup holder, giving it a leg up on its competition. The device supports mobile phone-based voice commands, has a built-in loud-speaker, uses DSB for noise and echo cancellation and can be used with multiple phones. The Ego Cup is manufactured by German company Funkwerk, \$100; visit [www.egohandsfree.com](http://www.egohandsfree.com).



## Renaissance GPS for active lifestyles

**GADGET** • Garmin's Nuvi 550 is a GPS unit for people with active lifestyles. This navigator, which combines in-car, on-foot and in-boat capability, is a daring release as it could hobble sales of the company's single-purpose products. Featuring North America map data, the device has all the bells and whistles one can expect from a basic unit in 2008. It has voice prompt, 3D perspective, installed and custom points of interest and a touch-screen, waterproof 3.5-inch LCD display. It leaves out high-end features such as Bluetooth and speech recognition, but this is likely a compromise geared toward providing land, air and sea capability without breaking the bank-\$500 US; visit [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com).

— Lowell Corn for Canwest News Service

## DRIVING.ca AUTO FILE



Ford Motor Co. says its 2009 Lincoln MKS can run just as well on regular gas as on the higher-octane gas.

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## Yes, some luxury cars can run on regular gas

**TREND** • Although there's a growing trend among automakers to recommend that drivers pump premium into their cars, Ford and General Motors are quietly touting the fact that some of their luxury models take regular gas.

Ford Motor's 2009 Lincoln MKS and General Motors' Cadillac CTS were both engineered to run just as well on regular-grade fuel as the high-octane stuff.

By contrast, automakers recommend premium gas for nearly 62 per cent of new vehicles on the market, up from

47 per cent of models in 2002, according to Kelley Blue Book.

Both Ford and GM are encouraging dealers and their salespeople to play up their no-premium-gas cars to potential buyers worried about the high cost of gas. It could be a key selling point at a time when consumers are seeking more fuel-efficient cars. Premium fuel generally costs about 20 cents a gallon more than regular gas.

Stephen Russ, a technical leader in Ford's powertrain operations, says engines in the MKS and Ford Edge were

designed to detect whether premium or regular fuel was added to the tank. Ford will roll out the technology on more engines in coming years, he says.

The Cadillac CTS, which was introduced last year, was designed for regular gas. "We could see that the cost of fuel was going to become an increasing issue," says Cadillac spokesman Kevin Smith. Though premium gas is recommended for many models, most will run — with a little less horsepower — on regular gas.

— Sharon Silke Carly, USA Today

## The big, honkin' Caddy could go the way of tail fins and Elvis

**WHAT'S NEXT** • Cadillac's biggest sedans, once a symbol of the American dream, are in danger of joining Elvis Presley and tail fins in the pop-culture obituary column.

Plans are on hold for new versions of the largest Cadillacs, which trace their lineage to the 1950s-era car so beloved by Johnny Cash's fictional factory worker in One Piece at a Time that he smuggled one out part by part. General Motors has sidelined replacements for the Cadillac DTS and STS in favour of more fuel-efficient models, people familiar with the plans said.

"In the bad ol' days, the big old Caddy and the big Buicks were the way you showed you'd made it," said Alan Baum, director of forecasting at the auto consulting firm Planning Edge in Birmingham, Mich. "To the ex-

tent people still want Cadillacs, they want a very different car."

GM is rethinking a brand that captured the imaginations of pioneer rocker Chuck Berry in Maybelline and the face-painted group Kiss in Cadillac Wagons.

CEO Rick Wagoner is de-emphasizing fuel-hungry models and accelerating those that use less gasoline or none at all. He already suggested selling the Hummer line and delayed new large pickups and SUVs.

About 1,500 workers build the DTS at the GM Hamtramck, Mich., factory that has produced Cadillac models since 1955. The plant is scheduled to switch over to the hybrid-electric, plug-in Chevrolet Volt in 2010.

— Jeff Green, Bloomberg

