

FOR almost half a century, Darryl Starr has steered opinion about all-things motoring on the Border and North East.

As *The Border Mail*'s long-time motoring editor – along with many other job titles over the years, often at the same time – Darryl has road-tested pretty much every new car released in Australia since 1967.

Collecting a different vehicle each week, Darryl's favourite road routes include some of the most scenic towns in North-East Victoria and the Southern Riverina, covering more conditions and test variables than any city-based motoring writer.

After 51 years spending an average of 50,000 kms a year on the road (at Border Cafe maths is not our strong suit, but we estimate that is more than 2,500,000 kms in total), you could forgive the 'road Starr' for being a little travel weary by now. Not so.

After retiring from *The Border Mail* almost three years ago, the Border-based legend is still behind the wheel of test cars to pass on his wisdom.

"I couldn't just retire and do nothing," Darryl said.

Admittedly, he has changed gears a little in semi-retirement, combining a love of motoring and travel for his own publication, thecountrydriver.com – something that fits in well with wife and travel companion, Julie.

One of the most popular sections is Great Drives, something that has a special focus on North-East and Southern Riverina roads and tourism hot-spots that Darryl knows so well (or, as the website reads: 'From the mountains to the Murray to the Murrumbidgee, we've got it covered').

Inquiries from trip-planners have come from as far away as the United States, proving the popularity of 'lifestyle motoring' and the need to promote this aspect of tourism in the region.

In his early days as a motoring editor in print news, Darryl had also been quick to understand what readers wanted, realising that people in the market for a new car wanted to know more than what was under the bonnet.

“Once I got into it, I realised people wanted to know more than just ‘nuts and bolts’ – it is their biggest investment after a house after all,” he said.

“They also wanted to know about things like sun visors and mirrors.”

A one-time member of the Albury and District Car Club and supporter of the former Hume Weir motor racing circuit, Darryl’s personal and professional interests came together in a five-year labour of love to produce the paperback book: *A Spirit of Progress – 110 years of motoring in Albury-Wodonga*.

The book’s popularity took Darryl by surprise and sent the book into reprint – twice.

“I’ve only got one personal copy and the proof copy left,” he said. – Sally Harding

For more on Darryl and his online publication: <https://www.thecountrydriver.com/>